

Immigrants Used to Justify a Homeland Security Police State

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Threats of terrorism and twelve million “illegal” immigrants are being used to justify new police-state measures in the United States. Coordinated mass arrests, big brother spy blimps, expanded detention centers, repeal of the Posse Comitatus Act, and suspension of habeas corpus have all been recently implemented and are ready to use against anyone in the US.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) flooded Mexico with cheap subsidized US agricultural products that displaced millions of Mexican farmers. Between 2000 and 2005, Mexico lost 900,000 rural jobs and 700,000 industrial jobs, resulting in deep unemployment throughout the country. Desperate poverty has forced millions of Mexican workers north in order to feed their families.

In the wake of 9/11, Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) has conducted workplace and home invasions across the country in an attempt to roundup “illegal” immigrants. ICE justifies these raids under the rubric of keeping our homeland safe and preventing terrorism. However the real goal of these actions is to disrupt the immigrant work force in the US and replace it with a tightly regulated non-union guest-worker program. This policy is endorsed by companies seeking permanent low-wage workers through a lobby group called Essential Worker Immigrations Coalition (EWIC). EWIC’s fifty-two members include the US Chamber of Commerce, Wal Mart, Marriott, Tyson Foods, American Meat Institute, California Landscape Contractors Association, and the Association of Builders and Contractors.

A new program, established by the Department of Justice in cooperation with Homeland Security, uses the code-name Operation Falcon (Federal and Local Cops Organized Nationally). Operation Falcon carried out three unprecedented federally-coordinated mass arrests between April 2005 and October 2006. More than 30,000 fugitives, including immigrants, were arrested in the largest dragnets in the nation’s history. The operations directly involved over 960 agencies including FBI, ICE, IRS, Homeland Security and other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies.

To accommodate the detention of tens of thousands of people, Homeland Security, in 2005, awarded Halliburton’s subsidiary KBR a \$385 million contingency contract to build detention camps in the United States. According to the Halliburton website, “The contract provides for establishing temporary detention and processing capabilities to augment existing Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Detention and Removal Operations (DRO) Program facilities in the event of an emergency influx of immigrants into the US, or to support the rapid development of new programs.”

Other new police-state programs include U.S. government contracting with Lockheed-Martin to design and develop enormous unmanned airships, seventeen times the size of the Goodyear blimp, outfitted with high-resolution cameras to spy on the Mexican border. The airships are designed to float 12 miles above the earth, far above planes and weather systems. The high-resolution camera will watch over a circle of countryside 600 miles in diameter and could be moved to spy on any region of the US.

The programs described above combined with two recent changes in US law make the reality of a full police-state in the US increasingly more feasible. The Military Commissions Act signed October of 2006 suspends habeas corpus rights for any person deemed by the President to be an enemy combatant. Persons so designated could be imprisoned indefinitely without rights to legal counsel or a trial. And the Defense Authorization Act of 2007 allows the president to station troops anywhere in America and take control of state-based National Guard units without the consent of the governor or local authorities. By revising the two-century-old Insurrection Act, the law in effect repeals the Posse Comitatus Act and gives the US government the legal authority to order the military onto the streets anywhere in America.

Threats of terrorism and illegal immigrants are being used to justify the implementation of police-state programs. But once started, enforcement can be rapidly deployed to any group of people in the US and we all become endangered. Mass arrests, big brother in the sky, and the loss of civil rights for everyone does not bode well for those who believe in democracy, free speech, and the right to critically challenge our government without fear of reprisals.

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