



Homeland Security Is Already Mobilizing Against Potential Protests by U.S. Truckers

Plus: The EARN It Act advances, against climate despair, and more...

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2.11.2022 9:30 AM

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is preemptively mobilizing against a potential protest by U.S. truckers inspired by their Canadian counterparts, who for weeks have been protesting against a vaccine mandate and other COVID-19 measures. "The White House said the department is 'surging additional staff' to the Super Bowl just in case," the Associated Press reports, as "the convoy could begin in Southern California as early as this weekend."

The surge is happening despite the fact that the U.S. trucker convoy is—by the DHS's own admission—more aspirational than anything.

In a Tuesday memo to federal, state, and local law enforcement, the DHS said "this event appears to be purely aspirational, because the event is only being discussed online and we lack any information indicating the event is actually being organized."

"There are currently no indications of planned violence or civil unrest," the memo added.

And while some discussion of a potential convoy was taking place online, "we have no indication that individuals discussing participating in these activities in the United States are engaged in anything other than First Amendment-protected activity," the DHS stated.

"Nonetheless, DHS remains concerned that these events could have significant public safety implications or potentially be exploited by ideologically motivated actors to potentially act or encourage others to act violently."

That federal law enforcement is springing into action anyway isn't surprising—it's forever creating reasons to enact more of a police state around the Super Bowl, with terrorism, counterfeit goods, and sex trafficking serving as previous pretenses. It seems a hypothetical convoy of truckers is helping to do the trick this year.

It's one of a number of reasons the department is citing for its extreme presence and increased operations at the Super Bowl:

DHS support for Super Bowl LVI includes more than 500 DHS personnel providing extensive air and maritime security resources; anti-human trafficking prevention and enforcement support; intellectual property enforcement; chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives detection technologies; venue, cyber, and infrastructure security assessments; intelligence analysis and threat assessments; and real-time situational awareness reporting for our partner.

Homeland Security Investigations promises that it will be "investigating and arresting those exploiting children, conducting human trafficking, and identifying and rescuing victims of these crimes" during the Super Bowl. (Such "human trafficking" efforts from Homeland Security tend to translate into things like scaring sex workers, arresting immigrants, and federal agents getting handjobs.)

U.S. truck protest rumors simply mean that the Super Bowl will be swarming with even more feds this year.

The Biden administration is also urging Canadian leaders to get tougher with protesting truckers:

The Biden administration urged Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government Thursday to use its federal powers to end the truck blockade by Canadians protesting the country's COVID-19 restrictions, as the bumper-to-bumper demonstration forced auto plants on both sides of the border to shut down or scale back production.

For the fourth straight day, scores of truckers taking part in what they dubbed the Freedom Convoy blocked the Ambassador Bridge connecting Windsor, Ontario, to Detroit, disrupting the flow of auto parts and other products between the two countries.

The White House said Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas and Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg spoke with their Canadian counterparts and urged them to help resolve the standoff.

The Canadian protests have received millions of dollars in donations, first through GoFundMe and then—once GoFundMe rejected them—through another crowdfunding platform, GiveSendGo.

Now, Ontario Premier Doug Ford has persuaded the Ontario Superior Court of Justice to freeze the donations from GiveSendGo.

Meanwhile, a copycat protest has begun in France. "Dozens of trucks and vehicles left southern France on Wednesday and headed for Paris as part of a convoy opposing the country's vaccination pass program," notes *The New York Times*:

The demonstrators in France, who include motorcyclists and car drivers, are expected to be followed by similar convoys on Thursday and Friday. The movement's name, the "Convoi de la Liberté," is a direct translation of Canada's "Freedom Convoy."

FREE MINDS

Against climate despair. "We should be concerned about climate change, but we shouldn't be paralyzed by apocalyptic dread and feelings of helplessness," writes Matt Yglesias, in a post tackling "climate anxiety," unjustified doom mongering, and how people ignore the vast middle between best- and worst-case scenarios on climate change.

Indeed, worst-case climate change scenarios are highly implausible, argues a new study out of the University of Colorado.

Reason's Ron Bailey wrote about that study's findings earlier this week. In a nutshell, the most "dire predictions were based on calculations derived from a scenario of the future in which fossil fuel and agricultural emissions over the course of this century would boost atmospheric carbon dioxide to nearly 1,400 parts per million (ppm) by 2100," notes Bailey. But emissions are unlikely to be this high, thanks to clean energy developments and reducing dependence on coal. "One of the main ways that the [worst-case] scenario goes off the rails of plausibility is that it projects a six-fold rise in global coal consumption per capita by 2100," Bailey points out. But "future coal consumption is likely to remain flat or decline."

FREE MARKETS

Did the pandemic make America more libertarian? At the start of the pandemic, "it wasn't so hard to believe that the COVID-19 crisis would usher in a new American era of big, activist government," writes Scott Lincicome, director of general economics at the Cato Institute:

But a funny thing happened on our way to democratic socialism: America pushed back. Across the country, in all sorts of ways, Americans reacted to the state's activism, overreach, incoherence, and incompetence and... kinda, sorta, embraced libertarianism. Some writers are now starting to notice. "It's too soon to call this a libertarian moment," says the Wall Street Journal's Gerard Baker, using the frequently invoked term for the sudden onset of fiscally conservative, socially liberal policies that just as suddenly retreats after invocation. "But we seem at least to have reached a point where doubts about the wisdom of growing state control are salient." Conservative columnist Sam Goldman sees something similar: a 'new libertarian moment' that's arrived in the form of "opposition to restrictions on personal conduct, suspicion of expert authority, and free speech for controversial opinions have become dominant themes in center-right argument and activism.'

I tend to agree with Goldman and Baker that we do seem to be entering another "libertarian moment" in America, but for almost entirely different reasons. They focus on the populist resistance to various pandemic policies and restrictions, which indeed features a strong whiff of what the New York Times' Ross Douthat once called "folk libertarianism" but (like most populist movements) is unwieldy, incoherent, and most likely ephemeral. As we've discussed, in fact, recent history has taught quite well that libertarian-looking populist movements can—and in last decade's case certainly did—quickly morph into rather un-libertarian things.

By contrast, I see the "libertarian moment" elsewhere—and in a more serious and optimistic direction. In particular, the pandemic seems to have ushered in a rash of real and lasting policy

reforms, as well as a noticeable change in elite national mindset about certain economic issues, that all fall squarely in my libertarian wheelhouse."

More [here](#).