



Safe Streets made in USA: Trump's weapon against gangs and urban unrest

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A clear change, highlighted by the statements of President Donald Trump and various members of his Administration, is now also evident on the Pentagon's website: for months, the highlighted news has concerned the use of the armed forces and, above all, the **National Guard** in internal security tasks.

The president has indeed defined the border with Mexico as a true “front,” mobilizing thousands of military personnel after the declaration of a “national emergency” on January 22 regarding illegal migratory flows. The operation is combined with a strategy to counter narco cartels in Mexico and other Latin American countries, with the possibility of also resorting to special forces.

The National Guard: a unique force in the United States

The **National Guard** is a peculiar element of the U.S. armed forces. It has over **430,000 military-civilians** and is capable of responding to both internal crises and missions abroad. Over its nearly 400-year history, it has transformed from a collection of colonial militias into a modern and well-equipped force, often operating alongside regular units.



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What makes it unique is its dual nature: it can be activated at the state level, for example, to deal with natural disasters, but also employed at the federal level, including **law enforcement** tasks. Furthermore, the president can deploy it for missions abroad, as has happened in Afghanistan or the Horn of Africa.

The organization is divided into two components: the **Army National Guard** and the **Air National Guard**, both military reserves but distinct from the Army and Air Force reserves. At the federal level, there is the **National Guard Bureau**, led by a four-star general who sits on the **Joint Chiefs of Staff**, the highest military advisory body in the United States.

As of 2023, the National Guard was composed of **54 organizations** distributed across the 50 states, Washington D.C., and the three territories of Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

Internal security as a political “front”

In recent days, attention has been focused on the use of the military as support for police forces in cities most affected by crime and drugs. The images released by the Department of Defense are reminiscent of European missions, from the Italian **Operazione Strade Sicure** to the French **Sentinelle**.

Washington has become the symbol of this policy: between August 17 and 19, various Republican governors sent hundreds of men to reinforce the contingent of 2,200 National Guard soldiers already deployed in the capital. From August 25, these men were also granted the use of weapons in case of “imminent threats.”

Trump wanted to personally showcase the results, participating in a patrol in the capital alongside police and military, and claiming to have restored “security and order.” His words have divided public opinion: for supporters, they represent the response to a real problem of urban violence, while for detractors, it is an authoritarian move to consolidate federal power over cities administered by Democrats.



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The controversies with Democratic governors

The model of **“American-style Safe Streets”** is not limited to Washington. The Pentagon is considering similar plans for Chicago, Baltimore, and New York. Chicago has become the new battleground: Illinois Governor JB Pritzker has accused Trump of “abuse of power” and of wanting only to create fear in local communities.

The White House, on the other hand, defends the hard line, emphasizing that the use of the military has significantly reduced crime rates in controlled areas. Despite Washington's Democratic mayor, Muriel Bowser, claiming that violent crimes are at their lowest in the last thirty years, the Trump Administration accuses the local police of falsifying data, so much so that Commander Michael Pulliam is under investigation.

Comparison with Italy

The American debate is reminiscent of the Italian one on the **Operazione Strade Sicure**, which for years has seen thousands of military personnel employed in urban security tasks. In Italy, too, the limits of prolonged military employment in non-strictly training tasks are highlighted, but the growing demand for security from citizens keeps the initiative's popularity high.

The United States, however, can rely on the widespread structure of the **National Guard**, capable of responding to internal emergencies and acting as a reserve for the armed forces. A substantial difference that shows how Washington is evolving towards a model of **integrated security**, where the boundaries between external defense and internal security are becoming increasingly blurred.

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