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POLITICS

Trump vows to ‘take care’ of Portland, calls protests ‘insurrection’

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This was the scene outside the Portland ICE facility on Saturday, Oct. 18, the night President Trump said he observed "insurrection" in the city that justifies federal troop deployment. Dave Killen/Special to the Oregonian



By [Betsy Hammond](#) | [The Oregonian/OregonLive](#)

Speaking from the White House Thursday afternoon, President Donald Trump boasted about his administration's success combatting crime in Washington, D.C., and in Memphis – and vowed to do the same in Portland.

He said, based on footage he saw from Saturday in Oregon's largest city, "The whole place is burning to the ground ... That's like an insurrection more than it is anything else."

"So we'll take care of that one," he said.

For the record, Portland was not burning to the ground on Saturday – or any other day in the modern era. Federal agents at the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement complex in South Portland started a few small fires Saturday evening after shooting tear gas canisters at protesters. They sparked when they hit the ground but went out quickly.



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Trump's use of the term insurrection suggests he is aware that the rarely invoked Insurrection Act of 1807 gives the president unchecked power to call out the military on U.S. civilians in case of a true insurrection, which the law does not define.

Speaking extemporaneously, the president highlighted his plans for or accomplishments in five large Democrat-led U.S. cities during a session otherwise devoted to praising himself and top cabinet members for their success deporting or jailing thousands of what he said are violent criminals without legal authorization to be in the United States.

He said his deployment of National Guard troops to Washington, D.C., has ended that city's crime wave and allowed restaurants to flourish. He said Memphis had been too unsafe for business executives to walk so much as a block without security measures but that crime has fallen dramatically since federal officers arrived.

Journalists and others have debunked the president's claims of unfettered lawlessness in both those cities, and visitors' and residents' odds of being murdered. But some experts have credited the D.C. deployment for a temporary lowering of gun violence.

In Thursday's address, Trump also decried the legal actions, including by Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker (who he called "pathetic") and Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson ("very low IQ"), that have so far prevented National Guard deployments in that major city.

And he explained that he had planned to send a surge of federalized soldiers to San Francisco but was persuaded to wait after hearing from "some of the smartest business people," including Salesforce CEO Mark Benioff and Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang.

“We were going to do a big surge in San Francisco, but I got a great call from some incredible people, some friends of mine, very successful people,” Trump said, name checking Benioff and Huang by their first names.

Trump continued: “They said, ‘We’re working really, really hard with the mayor and we’re making progress. Would it be possible for you to hold off? For you to hold off the surge?’” The president said he agreed to do so, trusting the “incredible competence” of the tech executives.

Finally, Trump turned his attention to Portland:

“We won the big court case the other day on the National Guard,” he said, noting Portland “is where we won it.

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“But I mean,” he continued, “I looked at, I looked the other night, Saturday night, Portland is like burning to the ground.

“And these people (in Portland) are saying, ‘It’s just friendly stuff,’” the president said, his tone of voice making clear his distrust of such assertions. “You listen to these radical left people talking about, ‘It’s really OK. You’re seeing things. You’re really seeing things.’

“The whole place is burning to the ground,” he continued. “So we’ll take care of that one. That’s like an insurrection more than it is anything else. That’s crazy. Portland’s crazy.”

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