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OPINION // OPEN FORUM

Bullets, heat rays and sound cannons: Trump has promised ‘one really violent day’ if elected. It’s not a bluff

By **Brett Wagner**
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Gift Article





Donald Trump, speaks at the campaign rally at Madison Square Garden on Oct. 27 in New York City. If elected president, Trump could invoke the Insurrection Act and unleash the military on civilians.
Anna Moneymaker/Getty Images

Former President Donald Trump, who may now be just hours away from being voted back into the White House, is calling for “one real rough, nasty” and “violent day” of policing should he win the election.

“One rough hour — and I mean ‘real rough’ — the word will get

out.”

As a former U.S. Naval War College professor, my patience is wearing thin with people pretending that we don’t know what that means. Because, by now, we should know *exactly* what Mr. Trump means. Because he’s already tried it once before.

For years now, reports have circulated throughout the media regarding the brutal authoritarian tactics Trump sought to unleash on the Black Lives Matter protesters during his last summer in the White House. Former Trump Defense Secretary Mark Esper, for example, cites in his 2022 memoir, “A Sacred Oath,” numerous meetings in the Oval Office where, following the murder of George Floyd, Esper’s commander-in-chief, growing angrier with each passing day, inquired of the BLM protesters across the street from the White House, “Can’t you just shoot them? Just shoot them in the legs or something?”

As corroborated by other participants and observers in those meetings, the former president sought to invoke the Insurrection Act, deploying U.S. military personnel armed with live ammunition on America’s streets to carry out these orders — i.e., shooting BLM protesters in the legs — putting these young servicemen and women in the unenviable position of being ordered to shoot their fellow Americans — potentially you or someone you know. Trump was prevented only by the secretary’s refusal to comply.

After Trump’s idea of shooting the protesters was dismissed, the discussion turned to another pair of weapons equally troubling: one targeting your eardrums, and the other targeting the nerve-endings in your skin.

The first of these two devices — the “sound cannon,” or Long Range Acoustic Device, as it is formally known — is a hand-held device resembling a bass woofer speaker, sending out

sound waves with a highly directional “beam” of incredibly loud sound, up to 160 decibels. To put this into perspective, imagine the deafening roar of standing directly behind a jet engine as the aircraft takes off; the sound cannon is capable of producing a “sound pressure level” 100 to 1,000 times greater.

The second device — the “heat ray,” or Active Denial System, as it is formally known — targets not just your inner ear, but every square inch of your body’s surface: from your eyelids to your fingertips to your private parts to your toes. The device is shaped like a standard satellite dish, fits on the back of a jeep and shoots out “pulsed directed energy waves” similar to a microwave oven, heating the top 1/64-inch of your skin almost instantly to a temperature exceeding 130 degrees. Excruciating pain by any measure.

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America owes an immeasurable debt of gratitude to the military commanders who stonewalled Trump’s last-minute, seemingly spontaneous attempt to get his hands on these weapons and turn them on the American people. And to the military leadership that prevented him from turning its guns on our fellow citizens. But don’t count on those guardrails a second time. Not with Trump 2.0. Because next time around, Project 2025 will already have all Trump’s toadies lined up in advance.

The former president is making no bones now about his [plans to invoke the Insurrection Act](#) and declare himself [“dictator on day one.”](#) Any election victory will be described by Trump World as a mandate. And the man at the center of it all can’t help but feel emboldened by the recent Supreme Court ruling granting presidents near-total immunity for anything they do in office. This is the perfect storm for what could very quickly become our new Orwellian reality: Heat rays, sound cannons and armed battalions patrolling our streets for the first sign of protest.

This is what Trump has in mind when he says “one rough hour — and I mean ‘real rough’ — the word will get out.”

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Simply put: These are the words of a terrorist. Someone striving to strike terror into a population for his own selfish ends.

Fortunately, for the American people, Election Day precedes Trump’s fantasy day of violence. Let’s just hope the first cancels out the other.

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