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—Contributor.....Tatiana Schreiber
—Contributor email.....tatianas@sover.net
—For section.....Voices/Letters from readers
—Format.....LETTERS - Opinions - Letters to the Editor
—Dateline.....Westminster West
—Article Number:.....42835

Notes from editor (not for publication):

Hi, Tatiana — I’m down to the wire with a super early holiday deadline. I pulled info for your bio from the Keene State website. If you see anything before 11 a.m. Monday, please let me know. I can’t imagine I’ve done anything horrible — it was beautifully written. —All the best, Jeff

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

How should Vermonters respond to unlawful orders?

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

Our Vermont Air National Guard is being put in grave danger, risking their own lives, the lives of countless others, and the consequences when the illegal military adventures of the Trump administration are eventually held to account

####END SUBHED####

TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

AMID THE DEBATE concerning whether our Town Meetings ought to consider resolutions on national or international issues, one topic ought to galvanize our attention.

10 The Vermont Air National Guard has been
11 commandeered to serve in the Caribbean, as part of the Trump
12 administration's massive military buildup in the region. Most of
13 the 158th Fighter Wing and most of its 20 F-35 jets are now in
14 Puerto Rico.

15 While Congress has not been provided with any formal
16 explanation for the buildup, the administration's recently released
17 National Security Strategy calls for a "Trump Corollary" to the
18 1823 Monroe Doctrine, aiming "to restore American
19 preeminence in the Western Hemisphere, and to protect our
20 homeland and our access to key geographies throughout the
21 region."

22 What could "access to key geographies" mean?
23 Apparently, it now means control over Venezuelan oil, as the U.S.
24 has seized two, or maybe three, tankers as I write, and our
25 country claims that somehow Venezuelan has stolen our oil.

26 Does the U.S. also plan to claim the natural resources of
27 Mexico, Central America, and South America?

28 * * *

29 MEANWHILE, our military has bombed nearly 30 boats (it's
30 hard to keep up with the numbers) in the Caribbean Sea and
31 eastern Pacific, and it has killed at least 105 people in these
32 strikes.

33 The administration refers to their targets as "drug boats"
34 without providing any evidence of drugs on board, but even if
35 drugs were found, these boats, and the human beings on them,
36 present no military threat to the U.S. and, as is obvious, no war
37 has been declared.

38 These are extrajudicial killings and are illegal, according
39 to numerous military law experts and international human rights
40 law.

41 Yet Vermont citizens are now being asked to participate
42 in a military incursion in the region.

43 * * *

44 WHAT CAN be done?

45 The group Brattleboro Common Sense has one proposal,
46 which it has submitted to the town Selectboard, calling for the
47 creation of a legal defense fund for soldiers who defy unlawful
48 orders.

49 In addition to the practical support such a fund would
50 provide, the proposal aims to offer moral support and remind
51 soldiers that they have taken an “an oath of allegiance *not* to the
52 president, but to the Constitution of the United States — the
53 enduring doctrines of liberty and justice of our nation.”

54 This could enable individuals to be guided by law and
55 conscience, rather than feel coerced to obey.

56 If a Vermont soldier from Brattleboro should decide to
57 refuse unlawful orders, as is required by The Uniform Code of
58 Military Justice, this fund would be available to support them. For
59 more information about this proposal, contact
60 BrattleboroCommonSense@gmail.com.

61 But to my mind, a town fund is not sufficient, given all
62 those Vermonters who may be affected.

63 What else could be done? Should Town Meetings across
64 the state take up this question? Should the Vermont Attorney
65 General’s office sue the administration? How should Gov. Scott
66 respond?

67 I don’t know the answers, but I want to raise the
68 questions.

69 * * *

70 INTERESTINGLY, in a Dec. 8 *New York Times* piece,
71 journalist and lawyer Adam Liptak [reported](#) that just a year ago,
72 the current U.S. Attorney General, Pam Bondi, wrote a [Friend of](#)
73 [the Court brief](#) for a Supreme Court case in which she stated that
74 “Military officers are required not to carry out unlawful orders.”

75 That was before Trump wrote that the six legislators who
76 made just that point in a video had carried out “SEDITIONARY
77 BEHAVIOR, punishable by DEATH!”

78 The administration may be confused about what is legal,
79 but it’s very clear to me that our Vermont Air National Guard is

80 being put in grave danger, risking their own lives, the lives of
81 countless others, and the consequences when the illegal military
82 adventures of the Trump administration are eventually held to
83 account.

84 The rest of us, standing by, are essentially complicit in
85 these actions taken in our names.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

86 **TATIANA SCHREIBER** is a professor in the Environmental
87 & Sustainability Studies program at Keene State College.

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

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LINKS:

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VIDEO:

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####END VIDEO####

LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

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####END LOGLINE####

