

July 27, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, Leader McCarthy and Leader Schumer:

We write to express our continued concern and objection to the threatened deployment of federal troops or riot-gear clad forces on the streets of our cities, without consultation with local officials and against our explicit request. We call on Congress to pass legislation to make clear that these actions are unlawful and repugnant.

Over the last several weeks, Americans have responded to the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and others by protesting the structural racism embedded in our country. We are encouraged that so many of our residents are exercising their First Amendment rights to stand up against these injustices. At the same time, we are outraged that the administration has responded to these First Amendment-protected gatherings by authorizing the deployment of riot-gear clad forces to Washington, D.C., Portland, Seattle and other communities across the country without the consent of local authorities.

This must stop. This administration's egregious use of federal force on cities over the objections of local authorities should never happen. As demonstrated now in Portland, these federal forces have used the pretext of protecting federal property to also patrol streets, way outside of their lawful jurisdiction, arrest residents without cause and trample on Constitutional rights. These actions further erode trust in government at all levels; are de-legitimizing local law enforcement; and escalate, rather than de-escalate tensions. We live in a democratic republic, not an authoritarian police state. We must block this type of dangerous and undemocratic exercise of power once and for all.

In an operation to protect lives, what is needed is a clear mission, a detailed operations plan, a clear chain of command, and coordination at all levels of government. These federal forces are not trained in modern policing in a city context, such as de-escalation, have a completely different training and mindset regarding use of force, and have no cultural literacy regarding the communities they are engaging. They are operating without coordination with local law enforcement and show a disregard for the legitimate use of our U.S. military and federal resources.

As mayors, we will not sit idly by and accept the administration's unilateral deployment of federal forces to our cities. The safety and well-being of our residents is paramount, and when it comes to the security

of our cities, we welcome partnership, not partisan threats. There is potential for meaningful engagement with the administration, but it requires respect and coordination. Sending in federal troops without local consultation is not the answer.

To that end, we call on Congress to swiftly pass legislation to block the administration from sending unidentified federal agents to operate with impunity in our cities. With the exception of federal agents assigned to field offices working on existing cases and investigations, the legislation must specifically restrict the administration's authority to deploy federal agents domestically by requiring:

- Notice and consultation with and consent from local authorities;
- Visible identification at all times on federal agents and vehicles unless on an undercover mission authorized by the local U.S. Attorney;
- Limitations on federal agents' crowd control activities to protecting federal property.

We applaud efforts in both the House of Representatives and Senate to require transparency and notification whenever the administration uses military force domestically. But we also encourage Congress' continued vigilance and action to pass legislation in both chambers, including as you consider the National Defense Authorization Act and the fiscal year 2021 appropriations.

We must remain united at all levels of government, in service to our residents and our nation's democratic principles.

Respectfully,

Lori E. Lightfoot
Mayor of Chicago, IL

Jenny A. Durkan
Mayor of Seattle, WA

Ted Wheeler
Mayor of Portland, OR

Tim Keller
Mayor of Albuquerque

Muriel Bowser
Mayor of Washington, DC

Quinton D. Lucas
Mayor of Kansas City, MO