

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 4, 2020

The Honorable William P. Barr
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Attorney General Barr:

We and the entire nation are in a state of heightened awareness in the wake of the thoroughly unconstitutional military assault you ordered on peaceful civil rights protesters exercising their First Amendment rights in a traditional public forum in order to make way for the President's blasphemous photo opportunity at St. John's Episcopal Church on Monday night.

But now we write about a related and continuing remarkable assault on the rule of law: your deployment of Department of Justice (DOJ) law enforcement officers, including personnel from the Bureau of Prisons (BOP), to act against protesters in Washington, D.C. without carrying identifying name plates, official insignia, or agency markings of any kind on their "uniforms." Washington, D.C. is the constitutional Seat of Government where all citizens have the right to travel, speak, assemble, and petition for a redress of grievances. These generic "law enforcement personnel" you have sent forth into public spaces to police and harass the citizenry have been refusing to identify themselves or their employing agencies to members of the public and the press. Several have stated that they were not permitted to identify themselves. These officers have been part of a law enforcement operation making arrests, subduing civil rights protesters, firing rubber bullets in the chests of our constituents, and intimidating the public. Who are they and who do they work for?

The United States is a constitutional democracy and all of us who are elected to public office are nothing but the servants of the people. Those appointed to public office, like you and the law enforcement officials under your command, are nothing but the servants of the servants of the people.

The public must know in all cases whether individuals purporting to enforce the law by detaining citizens or using force against them are actually authorized to do so—and by whom. This is critical to police accountability to the people. How can our constituents complain about abusive conduct on the part of your officers if they cannot even identify them or which agency they work for? Anonymity for armed federal agents thus confers on them a cloak of immunity, impunity and omnipotence. There will be no repercussions for trampling the civil rights and liberties of the people.

Identifying law enforcement personnel is also critical to prevent vigilante and impostor groups from masquerading as law enforcement officers and committing random acts of violence and abusing the rights of the people.¹ How do you propose to explain to American citizens the difference between your unidentified but heavily armed law enforcement officers and self-appointed militiamen and camouflage-sporting white supremacists carrying military-style assault weapons?

The failure of law enforcement personnel to provide identifying information on a uniform is “a direct contradiction to the oversight that [DOJ has] been providing for many years to local police” according to former New York City Police Commissioner William Bratton.² Anonymizing law enforcement officials is a step taken by authoritarians like Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet who provide amnesty to loyalists so that their free-wheeling abuse of civilians is never known.³ This obscuring of lines of public authority is antithetical to our Constitution and should never be undertaken by the Attorney General of the United States.

Over the last week, you defied the Constitutional rights of the people. It appears now that under your directive and leadership, the DOJ has formed an army of unidentifiable and unaccountable law enforcement personnel to dominate Washington, D.C. This is an invitation to further chaos, confusion, discord and violence.

We demand that you immediately order the restoration of identifying information to the uniforms of all DOJ personnel deployed within the city of Washington, D.C. We also demand that you provide responses to the following inquiries by Monday, June 8, 2020:

1. Identify the individual(s) who ordered that DOJ law enforcement personnel be deployed to Washington, D.C., without any identifying name plates, insignia, or markers denoting agency affiliation on their uniforms.
2. Identify the authority and basis for allowing DOJ law enforcement personnel to remove all identifying nameplates, insignia, or markers denoting agency affiliation on their uniforms.
3. Identify the individual who ordered the unidentifiable DOJ law enforcement officers to refuse to answer inquiries as to their agency affiliations and the authority under which such order was given.
4. Identify the agencies, field offices, units, and any other identifying information from which DOJ law enforcement have been drawn and deployed to Washington, D.C.

¹ Associated Press, *Officials See Extremist Groups, Disinformation in Protests*, THE NEW YORK TIMES, June 3, 2020 (reporting the presence of “Boogaloo” movement members carrying long guns and wearing tactical paramilitary gear at George Floyd protests), <https://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2020/05/31/us/politics/ap-us-america-protests-behind-the-protests.html>.

² Philip Bump, *A Dangerous new factor in an uneasy moment: Unidentified law enforcement officers*, THE WASHINGTON POST, June 3, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/06/03/dangerous-new-factor-an-uneasy-moment-unidentified-law-enforcement-officers/>

³ Id. (“Many authoritarian leaders issue amnesty that free service people, clean up their records so that their abuses are never known.” – Ruth Ben-Ghiat, professor of history at New York University.)

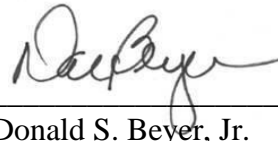
5. Detail whether the Department has developed contingency plans to deal with right-wing agitators, domestic terrorist organizations, and paramilitary groups that may attempt to disguise themselves with paramilitary tactical gear similar to that worn by DOJ law enforcement personnel to infiltrate the District of Columbia or other locations to cause disruption and bodily harm to protesters and governmental personnel. Does the Department have a means to recognize non-law enforcement officers who are dressed in similar paramilitary tactical gear to prevent their incursion into secured areas?

Any refusal or hesitation on your part to order DOJ personnel to immediately affix both personally identifying and institutionally identifying nameplates, insignia, and other markers on their uniforms will only further demonstrate your unfitness to lead the Department of Justice. We therefore look forward to your prompt and positive response.

Very truly yours,



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer, Jr.
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

s/ Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress

s/ Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress

s/ Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress

s/ Tom Malinowski
Member of Congress

s/ John Lewis
Member of Congress

s/ Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress

s/ Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress

s/ Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

s/ Jim Cooper
Member of Congress

s/ Jared Huffman
Member of Congress

s/ Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

s/ Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

s/ Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress

s/ Suzan DelBene
Member of Congress

s/ Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress

s/ Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress

s/ Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress

s/ Wm. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress

s/ Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress

s/ Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress

s/ Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress

s/ Katherine Clark
Member of Congress

s/ Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

s/ Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress

s/ Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

s/ Jesús G. “Chuy” Garcia
Member of Congress

s/ Donna E. Shalala
Member of Congress

s/ Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress

s/ Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

s/ Mike Quigley
Member of Congress

s/ Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress

s/ Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

s/ Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

s/ Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

s/ David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

s/ Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress

s/ James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

s/ Ro Khanna
Member of Congress

s/ Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress

s/ Bill Foster
Member of Congress

s/ Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress

s/ Darren Soto
Member of Congress

s/ Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

s/ Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

s/ Jason Crow
Member of Congress

s/ Filemon Vela
Member of Congress

s/ Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress

s/ Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress

s/ Kathleen M. Rice
Member of Congress

s/ Henry C. “Hank” Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress

s/ Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

s/John Yarmuth
Member of Congress

s/ Al Green
Member of Congress

s/ Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

s/ Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress

s/ Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress

s/ Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

s/ Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

s/ Cedric L. Richmond
Member of Congress

s/ Mikie Sherill
Member of Congress

s/ Peter Welch
Member of Congress

s/ Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress

s/ Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress

s/ Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

s/ Brad Sherman
Member of Congress

s/ Mike Doyle
Member of Congress

s/ Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress

s/ Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress

s/ Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress

s/ Grace Meng
Member of Congress

s/ Jennifer Wexton
Member of Congress

s/ Karen Bass
Member of Congress

s/ Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress

s/ Ed Perlmutter
Member of Congress

s/ Mark Takano
Member of Congress

s/ Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

s/ Abigail D. Spanberger
Member of Congress

s/ Albio Sires
Member of Congress

s/ J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress

s/ Joe Neguse
Member of Congress

s/ A. Donald McEachin
Member of Congress

s/ Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress

s/ Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress

s/ John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress

s/ Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

s/ John Garamendi
Member of Congress

s/ Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress

s/ Adam Smith
Member of Congress

s/ Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress

s/ Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress

s/ Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress

s/ Deb Haaland
Member of Congress

s/ Dina Titus
Member of Congress

s/ Mike Thompson
Member of Congress

s/ G. K. Butterfield
Member of Congress

s/ Hakeem Jeffries
Member of Congress

s/ Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress

s/ Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress

s/ Dwight Evans
Member of Congress

s/ Brian Higgins
Member of Congress

s/ José E. Serrano
Member of Congress

s/ Denny Heck
Member of Congress

s/ William R. Keating
Member of Congress

s/ Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress

s/ Betty McCollum
Member of Congress

s/ Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress

s/ Andy Levin
Member of Congress

s/ Debbie Mucarsel-Powell
Member of Congress

s/ Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

s/ Julia Brownley
Member of Congress

s/ Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress

s/ Paul Tonko
Member of Congress

s/ Jim Himes
Member of Congress

s/ Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress

s/ Judy Chu
Member of Congress

s/ Andy Kim
Member of Congress

s/ Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress

s/ Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress

s/ David E. Price
Member of Congress

s/ Doris Matsui
Member of Congress

s/ Joseph P. Kennedy, III
Member of Congress

s/ Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress

s/ Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

s/ Tim Ryan
Member of Congress

