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June 2, 2020

The Honorable Michael E. Horowitz
Inspector General
Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Mr. Horowitz:

I am writing to seek an investigation of the involvement of Department of Justice (DOJ) leadership and law enforcement personnel in suppressing peaceful domestic protests in response to the unjust killing of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer on May 25, 2020. I am specifically concerned about DOJ personnel's involvement in last night's incidents outside the White House in which "federal law enforcement officers fired rubber bullets and chemical gas at peaceful protesters."¹ This "ambush" of American citizens who were protesting the killing of Mr. Floyd at the hands of a police officer was created to allow the President to partake in a blatantly political photo opportunity.² These attacks on peaceful American protesters steps from the White House were sickening and appalling.

According to a report in the Washington Post, "Attorney General William P. Barr personally ordered law enforcement officials on the ground to clear the streets around Lafayette Square ... a directive that prompted a show of aggression against a crowd of largely peaceful protesters."³ In addition, according to a DOJ press release, agency law enforcement personnel participating in activities in Washington, D.C. included the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and the U.S. Marshals Service.⁴

The role of Attorney General Barr in ordering this attack and then participating in a political propaganda event with the President, and the potential roles of DOJ law enforcement personnel, raise troubling questions about how and why this attack against law-abiding citizens occurred.

¹ Washington Post, "Before Trump vows to end 'lawlessness,' federal officers confront protesters outside White House," June 2, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/washington-dc-protest-white-house-george-floyd/2020/06/01/6b193d1c-a3c9-11ea-bb20-ebf0921f3bbd_story.html.

² *Id.*

³ Washington Post, "Barr personally ordered removal of protesters near White House, leading to use of force against largely peaceful crowd," June 2, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/barr-personally-ordered-removal-of-protesters-near-white-house-leading-to-use-of-force-against-largely-peaceful-crowd/2020/06/02/0ca2417c-a4d5-11ea-b473-04905b1af82b_story.html.

⁴ Department of Justice, Attorney General William P. Barr's Statement on Protests in Washington, D.C., June 2, 2020, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/attorney-general-william-p-barrs-statement-protests-washington-dc>.

To address these questions, I am requesting that you conduct an immediate investigation of the role of DOJ leadership and DOJ law enforcement personnel in the attack on peaceful protesters and the response to the nationwide protests of the killing of Mr. Floyd that began in May 2020. This investigation should address the following questions:

1. To what extent were DOJ law enforcement personnel involved in the attack on peaceful protesters in Lafayette Square the evening of on June 1, 2020? If they were involved:
 - a. What was the exact scope and nature of their involvement?
 - b. Under what legal authority were they operating?
 - c. Under what rules of engagement were they operating?
2. To what extent were and are DOJ law enforcement personnel involved in responding to ongoing protests in other locations in Washington D.C.? If they were or are involved:
 - a. What is the exact scope and nature of their involvement?
 - b. Under what legal authority are they operating?
 - c. Under what rules of engagement are they operating?
3. To what extent were and are DOJ law enforcement personnel involved in responding to ongoing protests in other cities throughout the country? If they were involved:
 - a. What is the exact scope and nature of their involvement?
 - b. Under what legal authority are they operating?
 - c. Which officials are providing orders to these personnel?
 - d. Under what rules of engagement are they operating?
4. What was the specific role of Attorney General Barr in the events at the White House and in Lafayette Square?
 - a. Did Mr. Barr give the order to clear Lafayette Square?
 - b. If so, what was the rationale for providing this order, and was this rationale legitimate?
 - c. What was the role of other officials in DOJ leadership?
 - d. What was the specific chain of command? Were other military or non-DOJ civilian law enforcement officials operating under the command of Mr. Barr or any other DOJ official?

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator