

We the undersigned state the following:

President Trump has threatened to deploy active-duty military to try to quell the nationwide unrest sparked by the police's killing of George Floyd. As retired leaders in the U.S. military, we believe such an action would be not only unnecessary but also counterproductive. We urge the nation's governors to continue to resist the President's attempt to militarize the response.

Our country has a wise tradition of keeping the U.S. military out of domestic law enforcement. Like the deployment of troops abroad, their deployment at home should only be a last resort. Nothing happening in the country right now comes close to requiring this extraordinary step. States and cities have sufficient resources to address those exploiting otherwise peaceful protests to commit crimes. At the same time, officials at all levels should work to meet the demands of the law-abiding protestors justifiably enraged by the loss of Black lives, systemic racism and police brutality.

Just as we reject the militarization of the response, we reject the politicization of our armed forces. The U.S. military is among the most admired institutions in the country, and rightly so. It should be no one's prop.

This is a particularly challenging time for our country: a broad and restive protest movement against the backdrop of a pandemic and related economic distress. It calls for bold and imaginative leadership. If the President is unable to provide it, he should at least try to do no harm.

Sincerely,

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