



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

July 22, 2020

The Honorable William Barr  
Attorney General  
U.S. Department of Justice  
Washington, DC 20530

The Honorable Chad Wolf  
Acting Secretary  
Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Attorney General Barr and Acting Secretary Wolf:

In light of the deeply troubling actions by federal law enforcement agents in Portland, Oregon, and recent threats by the President to send federal law enforcement officers to New York City, let me be clear about New York City's position. We do not consent. We object. Do not send the proposed agents and officers from the Department of Homeland Security or other federal agencies to New York City. They have not been requested. They are not needed. And they have proved to bring way more harm than good.

To the degree that the President is concerned about fighting crime, New York City remains the safest big city in America, due in large part to the work of the New York City Police Department and our partners in our communities. Not only is the NYPD widely recognized for its training and policing expertise, our officers work hard every day to build trust with our residents. Community trust, as you know, is the bedrock of public safety. Sending in an army of rogue federal agents, unfamiliar with our streets and community leaders, to engage in tactics like those in Portland, will not help fight crime -- it will undermine public trust in law enforcement. The nation is stunned by the actions of your agents in Portland, and such conduct will be unacceptable in New York City.

We are fully capable of protecting our City, which includes protecting federal properties in New York City. Our experience with handling everything from hostage situations to terrorist attacks have helped us create the necessary infrastructure to safeguard our people and property, and part of that is having strong partnerships with the US Marshals and other federal agents who, for years, have been protecting federal properties in New York City. Sending in a wave of unwelcome federal agents in military uniform and using military tactics will only undermine the important relationships that we have with the Marshals and others.

We are also concerned that the President's statements on fighting crime and protecting federal properties are not the true motivation behind the surge of federal agents in our cities. Rather, it is

clear that these are political steps to quell dissent. As one of our nation's great cities, New York City has a strong tradition of upholding the values of the U.S. Constitution, including the right to assembly and the right of free speech. Our nation is currently going through a deeply-needed conversation about the relationship between communities and law enforcement, and I stand by the rights of individuals to express their views peacefully and responsibly. What the federal agents are doing in Portland – arresting individuals without notice, the use of excessive force, and other apparent acts -- is in violation of those rights and it is not welcome in New York City.

I am sending this letter because it is my duty to keep New York City safe, my duty to protect the rights of our residents, and my duty to do what is right. I am prepared to take all necessary actions to fulfill these responsibilities, as it is clear that the President's proposed actions threaten the safety New Yorkers, the rights of New Yorkers, and the fundamental principles of our nation's constitution.

Sincerely,



Bill de Blasio

Cc: Seth D. DuCharme, Acting United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York  
Audrey Strauss, Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York