

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on the Judiciary
Washington, DC 20515-6216
One Hundred Sixteenth Congress

July 6, 2020

Mr. Gregory T. Monahan
Acting Chief
United States Park Police
1100 Ohio Drive SW
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Chief Monahan:

In recent weeks, Americans have exercised their First Amendment rights to peacefully protest in the wake of the murder of George Floyd in the custody of the Minneapolis Police Department. Anarchists and left-wing violent extremists, however, have used lawful protests as cover to incite violence and destruction in American cities. In our nation's capital, rioters have defaced and sought to destroy historic statues of our nation's greatest leaders, including George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. I respectfully request more information about the steps that the federal law enforcement, including the U.S. Park Police (USPP), is taking to protect federal property from looting and destruction.

On June 1, 2020, the USPP cleared a crowd from Lafayette Park in order to conduct a pre-planned perimeter expansion around Lafayette Park and the White House.¹ In the following days, you issued a statement explaining the USPP's actions.² The statement described the violence that rioters and looters perpetrated that day:

[V]iolent protestors on H Street NW began throwing projectiles including bricks, frozen water bottles and caustic liquids. The protestors also climbed onto a historic building at the north end of Lafayette Park that was destroyed by arson days prior. Intelligence had revealed calls for violence against the police, and officers found caches of glass bottles, baseball bats and metal poles hidden along the street.³

¹ Charles Creitz, *Barr blasts 'canard' that Park Police cleared out protesters to let Trump visit church: 'Totally false'*, FOX NEWS (June 8, 2020), <https://www.foxnews.com/media/barr-lafayette-park-protesters-trump-church-visit>.

² Press Release, *Statement from United States Park Police acting Chief Gregory T. Monahan about the actions taken over the weekend to protect life and property*, United States Park Police, National Park Service (June 4, 2020), https://www.nps.gov/subjects/uspp/6_2_20_statement_from_acting_chief_monahan.htm.

³ *Id.*

Law enforcement officials eventually expanded the perimeter, but not without having to remove violent lawbreakers who sought to harm officers. You explained:

To curtail the violence that was underway, the USPP, following established policy, issued three warnings over a loudspeaker to alert demonstrators on H Street to evacuate the area. Horse mounted patrol, Civil Disturbance Units and additional personnel were used to clear the area. As many of the protestors became more combative, continued to throw projectiles, and attempted to grab officers' weapons, officers then employed the use of smoke canisters and pepper balls. USPP officers and other assisting law enforcement partners did not use tear gas or OC Skat Shells to close the area at Lafayette Park. Subsequently, the fence was installed.⁴

Despite your explanation that the perimeter expansion was pre-scheduled as a result of the increasing violence, some still accuse the Administration—and especially Attorney General William P. Barr—of clearing the park for a Presidential “photo-op” at St. John’s Episcopal Church.⁵ Attorney General Barr explained that “the decision to expand the perimeter was made the previous evening” and that expansion was necessary following “three days of extremely violent demonstrations right across from the White House.”⁶ The Attorney General emphasized that “this canard that this exercise was done to make [the President’s visit to St. John’s Episcopal Church] possible is totally false.”⁷

Since then, violent left-wing agitators and rioters have defaced and sought to destroy historic statues, including some on federal property. These agitators brought down and desecrated statues of Washington, Lincoln, and Jefferson around the country and attempted to harm others, including a statue of Andrew Jackson in Washington, D.C.⁸ The Trump Administration is working to hold these wrongdoers accountable.⁹ President Trump signed an executive order on June 26, 2020 requiring the prosecution of these criminals to the fullest extent of the law.¹⁰ On June 27, 2020, the Justice Department charged four individuals for attempting to

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Charles Creitz, *Barr blasts ‘canard’ that Park Police cleared out protesters to let Trump visit church: ‘Totally false’*, FOX NEWS (June 8, 2020), <https://www.foxnews.com/media/barr-lafayette-park-protesters-trump-church-visit>.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *See e.g.* Bryant Clerkley, *Statue of George Washington toppled and spray painted in Hollywood neighborhood*, KGW8 (June 19, 2020), <https://www.kgw.com/article/news/local/statue-of-george-washington-toppled-and-spray-painted-in-hollywood-neighborhood/283-6f3d5c28-74c6-4307-88d7-493c5dfcd59b>; Phil Davis, *George Washington monument in Druid Hill Park spray-painted with ‘destroy racists,’ anti-police sentiment*, BALTIMORE SUN (June 21, 2020), <https://www.baltimoresun.com/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-ci-baltimore-washington-monument-vandalized-20200621-h5tbqr6jazb7dfn645to5wb37a-story.html>.

⁹ Jordan Freiman, *Four men charged for allegedly attempting to tear down Andrew Jackson statue*, CBS NEWS (June 27, 2020), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/four-charged-for-allegedly-attempting-to-tear-down-andrew-jackson-statue/>.

¹⁰ Exec. Order No. 13,933 (2020).

Mr. Gregory T. Monahan

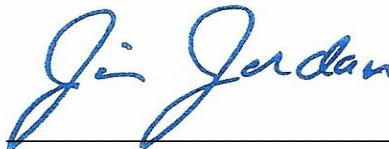
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tear down the Andrew Jackson statue in Lafayette Square.¹¹ U.S. Attorney Michael R. Sherwin explained that the “charges should serve as a warning to those who choose to desecrate the statues and monuments that adorn our nation’s capital: your violent behavior and criminal conduct will not be tolerated.”¹² If convicted of “willfully injur[ing]” federal property, rioters could face up to ten years in prison.¹³

The Trump Administration must protect federal property, especially the landmarks and memorials that celebrate our nation’s history, from violent left-wing agitators. I respectfully request that you provide information about the USPP’s decision to expand the perimeter around Lafayette Square on June 1, including the damage to federal property and injuries to federal law enforcement officers caused by rioters. I also ask that you explain the USPP’s work to protect federal property and landmarks in Washington, D.C., and federal landmarks in localities around the country under the USPP’s jurisdiction. Please provide this information as soon as possible but no later than July 14, 2020.

Sincerely,



Jim Jordan
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable Jerrold L. Nadler, Chairman

¹¹ Press Release, *Four Men Charged in Federal Court for Attempting to Tear Down Statue of Andrew Jackson in Lafayette Square Amid Protests*, District of Columbia, U.S. Attorney’s Office, Department of Justice (June 27, 2020), <https://www.justice.gov/usao-dc/pr/four-men-charged-federal-court-attempting-tear-down-statue-andrew-jackson-lafayette>.

¹² *Id.*

¹³ 18 U.S.C. 1361.