

Trump planned to deploy 10,000 active-duty troops to quell protests



Washington, June 8 (RHC)-- U.S. President Donald Trump reportedly came close to deploying 10,000 active-duty troops to quell protests in Washington, DC, against police violence and systemic racism sparked by the recent police killing of unarmed, handcuffed African-American man George Floyd.

According to a senior Pentagon official, Attorney General Bill Barr, Defense Secretary Mark Esper and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Mark Milley advised President Trump against the deployment in a meeting at the White House, the Washington Post and CBS News reported.

“We need to get control of the streets. We need 10,000 troops up here [in Washington]. I want it right now,” Trump said at a meeting last week, according to a Pentagon official familiar with the matter.

Trump's advisors reportedly demanded that the president hold off the deployment of active-duty forces, trying to assure the president that National Guards activated by state governors were capable of maintaining order in Washington and elsewhere.

Trump is reported to have shouted at Esper when the Pentagon chief opposed the use of the Insurrection Act, a senior Department of Defense (DoD) official told CBS News. The Insurrection Act of 1807 allows the president to deploy American military troops nationwide for domestic law enforcement.

President Trump said he was planning to invoke the law to control nationwide protests surrounding the death of Floyd, who died in Minneapolis police custody on May 25th. Esper, however, broke with Trump on Wednesday on using the country's military forces to crush the protests.

The Pentagon chief said that he would not invoke the Insurrection Act, which would allow Trump to use the National Guard against protesters. Trump's own former defense secretary, James Mattis, has even denounced his handling of nationwide anti-racism protests, saying the president is trying to turn Americans against each other.

Former U.S. Joint chiefs of staff chairman Martin Dempsey has likewise slammed Trump for his handling of the protests. "The idea that the president would take charge of the situation using the military was troubling to me," Dempsey said in an interview with NPR on Thursday.

"The idea that the military would be called in to dominate and to suppress what, for the most part, were peaceful protests — admittedly, where some had opportunistically turned them violent — and that the military would somehow come in and calm that situation was very dangerous to me," he added.

Meanwhile, tens of thousands of people in dozens of cities across the United States held demonstrations over the weekend against police brutality, racial profiling and the killing of Floyd.

U.S. police forces in different cities have demonstrated their brutality during protest rallies in recent years by severely beating and arresting protesters and even journalists, using tear gas and rubber bullets, as well as employing helicopter crowd control tactics and other forceful measures.

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