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THE PEACE EDUCATION CENTER'S STATEMENT SUPPORTING
BLACK LIVES MATTER AND OPPOSING THE USE OF THE U.S.
MILITARY AND ANONYMOUS LAW ENFORCEMENT AGAINST PROTESTORS

The Peace Education Center of the Greater Lansing Area, along with thousands of Americans all over the country in cities large and small, are righteously and peacefully exercising their First Amendment right to protest against the police murder of George Floyd and to support Black Lives Matter and police reform. While most protesters have acted peacefully, a few have marred these protests by engaging in violence and in property destruction.

Under our country's system of federalism, the first-line responsibility to preserve social order and to protect the rights of First Amendment protestors normally falls upon the shoulders of local and state governments, not the federal government. But President Donald Trump has threatened to unilaterally exercise his presidential authority to introduce federal military forces into local and state jurisdictions to "dominate" although such a move remains unnecessary, unrequested by local and state authorities and unseemly as an attempt to bolster his reelection chances by pandering to a political base wanting law-and-order.

Moreover, in Washington DC, unexplained paramilitary forces without organizational insignia or individual name tags have appeared on the streets carrying weapons and other materials for crowd control, apparently an amalgam of personnel from different organizations under the control of Attorney General William Barr. The use of unidentified and unaccountable paramilitary forces represents a breach of federal government's fundamental duty to openly exercise its responsibilities and to be held accountable.

The Peace Education Center calls on all people of goodwill and public officials both to support reforms improving law enforcement conduct and to speak out in opposition to any effort by President Donald Trump to introduce active-duty United States military personnel to supersede or to assist local and state authorities in protecting the First Amendment rights of protestors or in maintaining public order. Further, Attorney General William Barr or other supervising authority should withdraw all unidentified paramilitary personnel in Washington DC from any responsibility to protect First Amendment protestors or to maintain public order.

Approved: Board of the Peace Education Center

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