

# **EXHIBIT A**

2020 PROTESTS

# The DEA Has Been Given Permission To Investigate People Protesting George Floyd's Death

The Justice Department gave the agency the temporary power "to enforce any federal crime committed as a result of the protests over the death of George Floyd."



**Jason Leopold**  
BuzzFeed News Reporter



**Anthony Cormier**  
BuzzFeed News Reporter

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...s Been Given Permission To Investi

Demonstrators raise their fists as they gather on June 2 in St. Paul, Minnesota.

*Chandan Khanna / Getty Images*

The Drug Enforcement Administration has been granted sweeping new authority to “conduct covert surveillance” and collect intelligence on people participating in protests over the police killing of George Floyd, according to a two-page memorandum obtained by BuzzFeed News.

Floyd’s death “has spawned widespread protests across the

nation, which, in some instances, have included violence and looting,” the DEA memo says. “Police agencies in certain areas of the country have struggled to maintain and/or restore order.” The memo requests the extraordinary powers on a temporary basis, and on Sunday afternoon a senior Justice Department official signed off.

Attorney General William Barr issued a statement Saturday following a night of widespread and at times violent protests in which he blamed, without providing evidence, “anarchistic and far left extremists, using Antifa-like tactics,” for the unrest. He said the FBI, DEA, US Marshals, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives would be “deployed to support local efforts to enforce federal law.”

Barr did not say what those agencies would do.

The DEA is limited by statute to

enforcing drug-related federal crimes. But on Sunday, Timothy Shea, a former US attorney and close confidant of Barr's who was named acting administrator of the DEA last month, received approval from Associate Deputy Attorney General Bradley Weinsheimer to go beyond the agency's mandate "to perform other law enforcement duties" that Barr may "deem appropriate."

Citing the protests, Shea laid out an argument for why the agency should be granted extraordinary latitude.

"In order for DEA to assist to the maximum extent possible in the federal law enforcement response to protests which devolve into violations of federal law, DEA requests that it be designated to enforce any federal crime committed as a result of protests over the death of George Floyd," Shea wrote in the memo. "DEA requests this authority on a nationwide basis for a period of fourteen days."

The metadata on the memo says it was prepared by Robert Gleason, deputy chief counsel of the DEA. A spokesperson for the DEA declined to comment.

On Tuesday afternoon, Keith Kruskall, associate special agent in charge of the DEA's New York division, sent an urgent email seeking 25 volunteers to assist with "security" to the Capitol in Washington, DC from Tuesday through Friday.

Two sources knowledgeable about the deployment said 15 people from the DEA's elite Special Response Team, which among other activities conducts surveillance, and 10 special agents were chosen.

Kruskall's email did not describe what specific tasks the detachment would be given. It added that if insufficient numbers of agents volunteered, others would be assigned the job. According to the

sources, fewer than 25 agents raised their hands

“Drug enforcement agents should not be conducting covert surveillance of protests and First Amendment protected speech,” said Hugh Handeyside, a senior attorney for the ACLU. “That kind of monitoring and information sharing may well constitute unwarranted investigation of people exercising their constitutional rights to seek justice. The executive branch continues to run headlong in the wrong direction.”

Three DEA sources told BuzzFeed News they are troubled by the memo and see it as an example of the Justice Department potentially abusing its power in an attempt to smear the protests and crack down on protected First Amendment activity.

The sources requested anonymity because they are not authorized to

speaking with the media.

In addition to “covert surveillance,” the memo indicates that DEA agents would be authorized to share intelligence with local and state law enforcement authorities, to “intervene” to “protect both participants and spectators in the protests,” and to conduct interviews and searches, and arrest protesters who are alleged to have violated federal law.

A day after Shea’s memo was approved, President Trump said he is “mobilizing all available federal resources — civilian and military — to stop the rioting and looting, to end the destruction and arson, and to protect the rights of law-abiding Americans, including your Second Amendment rights.”

Under the Insurrection Act, the president has the authority to deploy the US military for domestic purposes. It has not been employed



since 1992, when troops were sent in during the Los Angeles riots.

There is a long history of federal agencies infiltrating and surveilling protest groups. During the protests in Baltimore in 2015 over the death of Freddie Gray, who died in police custody, the Department of Homeland Security monitored Twitter and other social media platforms for "intelligence" on the protesters. In Ferguson, Missouri, during the 2014 protests over Michael's Brown's killing by a white police officer, DHS planned to "plug" federal officers into protests to conduct surveillance and collect intelligence. And the FBI conducted extensive monitoring and surveillance of the Occupy Wall Street protest movement that began in 2011.

It's unknown if the ATF, FBI, or other federal law enforcement agencies have been granted the same authority as the DEA.

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# UPDATE

June 3, 2020, at 6:14 p.m.

This story was updated on June 3 to include information about new developments.

## TOPICS IN THIS ARTICLE

Justice Department



Jason Leopold is a senior investigative reporter for BuzzFeed News and is based in Los Angeles. He is a 2018 Pulitzer finalist for international reporting, recipient of the IRE 2016 FOI award and



Anthony Cormier is an investigative reporter for BuzzFeed News and is based in New York. While working for the Tampa Bay Times, Cormier won the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for Investigative

a 2016  
Newseum  
Institute  
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of  
Informatio  
n Hall of  
Fame  
inductee.

Reporting.  
Contact  
Anthony  
Cormier at  
anthony.co  
rmier@buz  
zfeed.com.

Contact  
Jason  
Leopold at  
jason.leop  
old@buzzf  
eed.com.

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