



Duckworth Demands Additional Materials Related to Low-Flying Military Helicopters over Peaceful Protesters from Esper

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Combat Veteran and U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) wrote a follow-up letter to Secretary of Defense Mark Esper requesting a briefing on the findings of a preliminary investigation into the use of low-flying military aircraft over peaceful protesters in Washington, D.C., earlier this month. On June 4, Duckworth [sent letters](#) requesting investigations by and information from both the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) demanding information about the incident. Earlier this week, she [pushed](#) FAA Administrator Stephen Dickson about the dangers associated with flying helicopters at low altitudes over civilians. She also raised additional concerns and is asking the Secretary to send materials related to mission briefing sheets, risk assessments, post-flight action reports and aircrew training records.

In part, Duckworth wrote, “I write to follow up on my June 4, 2020 letter regarding low-flying military aircraft over large groups of people in Washington, DC on June 1, 2020. Statements and information from the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), along with subsequent public reports, have only deepened my concern and outrage over the Trump administration’s willingness to use our Nation’s military to suppress and intimidate Americans exercising their First Amendment rights guaranteed under the Constitution of the United States.”

Duckworth also noted, “Preventing a repeat of the scenes we witnessed on June 1, 2020 requires first understanding the full scope of military operations that preceded and followed the President's bizarre photo op that day, and determining whether aircraft operated in accordance with all applicable Federal regulations and military policies.”

DoD requires flight records for every flight conducted by military aircraft as a way to track military operations, pilot and aircrew proficiency and required aircraft maintenance. Contained within these records will be information explaining who authorized the mission, if these maneuvers were standard operating procedures, and what the associated risk was for the flight operations. The additional documents requested by Senator Duckworth will assist in determining if any federal regulations or military policies were violated and if so, whether those violations resulted in exposing civilians to undue hazard.

Full text of the letter included below and [here](#).

Dear Secretary Esper:

I write to follow up on my June 4, 2020 letter regarding low-flying military aircraft over large groups of people in Washington, DC on June 1, 2020. Statements and information from the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), along with subsequent public reports, have only deepened my concern and outrage over the Trump administration's willingness to use our Nation's military to suppress and intimidate Americans exercising their First Amendment rights guaranteed under the Constitution of the United States.

I am aware the preliminary investigation has been completed and request that DoD leadership brief me on the findings as soon as possible, in addition to providing written answers to my June 4, 2020 letter. In addition, I request that you provide my office with additional supplementary documents that are critical to inform congressional oversight of the June 1, 2020 incident and related activities (if an item refers to the military in the list below, it shall be interpreted to cover all of DoD's military branches and sub-agencies, including Reserve and National Guard forces):

The mission briefing sheets for all military aircraft flown in D.C. Metropolitan Flight Restricted Zone (DC FRZ) on June 1, 2020;

The risk assessments form for all military flights flown in the DC FRZ on June 1, 2020;

The post-flight after-action reports (AAR) for all military flights flown in the DC FRZ on June 1, 2020;

The aircrew training records showing pilots and aircrew were properly trained and signed off by a military flight instructor to fly the tactical "persistent pressure" maneuver reported in the media;

A copy of the parent unit's flight training program to verify unit training and proficiency of the "persistent pressure" maneuver;

The military flight manual detailing the procedures to execute the "persistent pressure" maneuver as well as guidance for its tactical usage; and

Any information included in questions 4-6 for additional military aerial tactics used to support military flight operations flown in the DC FRZ on June 1, 2020.

Your cooperation in providing the requested information is vital in enabling Congress to carry out our constitutional responsibility to conduct oversight of DoD. Preventing a repeat of the scenes we witnessed on June 1, 2020 requires first understanding the full scope of military operations that preceded and followed the President's bizarre photo op that day, and determining whether aircraft operated in accordance with all applicable Federal regulations and military policies. Thank you in advance for your consideration of my urgent request.