

United States Senate

June 4, 2020

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

Mr. Sean O'Donnell
Acting Inspector General
Office of Inspector General
U.S. Department of Defense
4800 Mark Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22350-1500

Dear Acting Inspector General O'Donnell:

I write to request an independent investigation into the reports of several military helicopters flying in a hover at low altitudes over densely populated areas around Washington, DC on the evening of Monday, June 1, 2020. I am deeply concerned about the unnecessary risk these low-flying military aircraft posed to hundreds of civilians.

In order to understand the scope of these military operations and identify any undue risk posed to U.S. citizens, I ask that the following questions be answered no later than June 30, 2020, accompanied with all appropriate documentation of the investigation. To the extent a question refers to the military, the question shall be interpreted to cover all of the U.S. Department of Defense's (DoD) military branches and sub-agencies, including Reserve and National Guard forces.

1. What military helicopters were operating in a low hover over densely populated areas and large, open-air gatherings in Washington, DC on the evening of Monday, June 1, 2020?
2. What is the time, duration, and location these military aircraft operated in a hover at low altitudes over densely populated areas?
3. At what altitudes below 500 feet did these aircraft operate and for what duration?
4. What are the parent units of the aircraft identified in the investigation?
5. What are the qualification levels of the pilots operating these aircraft, how much flight time do they have operating in the National Capitol Region Special Flight Rules Area, to include the Flight Restricted Zone, and how much flight time do they have operating rotary-wing aircraft?
6. To what missions were these aircraft assigned?

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7. What were the risk assessments of these missions?
8. Was there a separate risk assessment conducted for the low-level hover operations? If so, what was the level of risk determined to be?
9. In the event of an engine failure or other catastrophic engine or mechanical failure to the aircraft, what was the pilot's intended flight path and what was briefed to the aircrew?
10. Were there any injuries to people or property damage as a result of the rotor wash from the helicopters hovering low-level?
11. Who authorized the mission? Who authorized the flight operations, if different than the mission authorizer?
12. Were there any violations of Federal law, regulation or policy?
13. Were there any violations of DoD or component-specific aviation policy or regulations?

The DoD OIG's support in addressing these concerns is essential to understanding the impact these high-risk rotorcraft maneuvers may have had on U.S. citizens. Thank you in advance for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator