

THE STEADY STATE

Statement in Support for General James Mattis and Other Military Leaders who have Spoken Out

Our serving military and national leaders are required to professionally, efficiently, and quietly submit themselves to the direction of our elected civilian leaders. The uniformed services and their cousin, the U.S. Intelligence Community, rigorously adhere to laws and norms as they inform and execute policy as they serve policy makers. The IC are the eyes and ears, the military the arm and fist, but our elected officials--most importantly the President and Congress--are the nation's brain and heart.

Even when retired, in ordinary times, most former military leaders do not engage in political debate. The body politic may, however, reach a point where it becomes so ill, the fever so high, that the silent servants of democracy must speak up. It has never happened in our lifetime, or the lifetime of our parents and grandparents. It is happening now. We are a fevered nation and our President is fanning the flames.

In the past weeks and months, we have seen harbingers of this crisis. Department of Justice alumni have spoken with increasing passion about the breakdown of the Rule of Law. Former Intelligence, diplomatic and national security policymakers from both parties joined together to oppose the President's actions and speak for the norms and values of what they named "The Steady State".¹

This week we saw unprecedented deployment of military units at home; we saw a brutal attack on unarmed protestors in front of the White House; we saw senior Senators call for deployment of troops against demonstrators with orders to give "no quarter." And we saw a President and Commander-in-Chief who speaks no words of leadership, takes no care that the laws be faithfully executed, and has adopted the language, style, and actions of dictators and autocrats.

We also saw something different. The demonstrators organized and focused on the horrible injustices against which they march; they worked to rid themselves of the parasitic infestations of violent agitators from the far left and far right. The police (at least in some places) increasingly demonstrated their adherence to the law, and the motto of "Protect and Serve." And, perhaps most dramatically, senior military officers, mostly retired, broke their traditional silence and spoke out. General Mattis, Admiral Mullen, General Dempsey, General Allen, Admiral McRaven, General Clapper, General Hertling, and poignantly, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Wright (backed up in the best sense of the word by General Goldfein) have all made clear: the nation is in danger, and we are at a crisis.

Today the Steady State writes in support of the public statements from these retired military leaders. We do not, in our democracy, need or want the military or intelligence services to control our politics and society. We recognize though that they are wise, and patriotic, and when they speak, no matter how infrequently, they merit careful attention. That is the case here. Listen to the retired Generals and Admirals; listen to what they saw in foreign countries that have teetered to the cliff of utopianism and toppled over. Listen to the warnings.

¹ [The Steady State](#) [hyperlink] is a group of veterans of the U.S. National Security Community who believe that President Trump, unfit for the Presidency, presents a clear and present danger to America's safety and security. The Steady State, including former Intelligence Officers, defense policy makers, Ambassadors and diplomats and Congressional staffers, have served the country during Democratic and Republican administrations. Some have been lifelong Democrats; others, Republicans; some are resolutely independent.