

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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May 24, 2021

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Austin:

I write today to express my concern with a recent decision to relieve Lt. Col. Matthew Lohmeier of command, apparently for expressing concern with mandated diversity, equity and inclusion training in the U.S. Armed Forces which promotes Critical Race Theory. The decision to relieve him of his command and announcement that he is under investigation appears to be a politically motivated attempt to silence servicemembers' disagreement with Critical Race Theory and its impact on unit cohesion and military readiness.

Recently, I introduced legislation, the Contents of Our Character Act, to prohibit employee training programs that promote race or sex stereotyping or scapegoating within Federal agencies. The proliferation of Critical Race Theory, a radical theory rooted in Marxism which divides and then treats people differently based on their skin color, necessitated this legislation. The actions taken against Lt. Col. Lohmeier further illustrate the need for such a measure.

On May 14, 2021, Lt. Col. Matthew Lohmeier was relieved of his command of the 11th Space Warning Squadron at Buckley Air Force Base in Colorado.¹ A military spokesperson stated that the decision "was based on public comments made by Lt. Col. Lohmeier in a recent podcast" and that Lt. Gen. Stephen Whiting, head of Space Operations Command, "has initiated a Command Directed Investigation on whether these comments constituted prohibited partisan political activity."²

I am concerned that the military has characterized this servicemember's public comments as potentially violating laws prohibiting partisan political activities in the course of his official duties. And particularly in this case, the servicemember did not advocate for or criticize any candidate for partisan political office or political party during his comments in a recent

¹ Pawlyk, Oriana, *Space Force CO Who Got Holiday Call from Trump Fired Over comments Decrying Marxism in the Military*, Military.com (May 15, 2021), available at <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2021/05/15/space-force-co-who-got-holiday-call-trump-fired-over-comments-decrying-marxism-military.html>.

² *Id.*

podcast interview.³ In fact, after reviewing his comments, it is not clear why Lt. Col. Lohmeier was relieved of his command or is being investigated at all. During the interview, Lt. Col. Lohmeier comported himself calmly and with a reasoned approach as he engaged with his studied opinions on the issue of cultural Marxism being propagated within the military. He was polite, courteous, highly deferential to his superiors, and he did not disparage any individuals when expressing his personal concern that such ideologies, including the imposition of Critical Race Theory, would have a negative impact on unit cohesion and military readiness.

Regardless of the popularity of his opinions, expressing his beliefs did not imperil his ability to command or harm the military in any way.

In order to facilitate oversight over the military's decision to demote Lt. Col. Lohmeier and initiate what appears to be a politically motivated investigation against him, I request a staff-level briefing no later than June 1, 2021 on this action, as well the following:

1. All documents and communications identifying the exact remarks made by Lt. Col. Lohmeier which led to the dismissal from his position as commander of the 11th Space Warning Squadron;
2. All documents and communications identifying the exact remarks made by Lt. Col. Lohmeier which would justify initiating an investigation into whether he engaged in prohibited partisan political activity, as well as the provision(s) of law or policy he is alleged to have potentially violated;
3. All documents and communications indicating the exact provision(s) of the Uniformed Code of Military Justice, Air Force regulations, or other laws or policies which Lt. Col. Lohmeier is accused of having violated by expressing his opinion in opposition to Critical Race Theory;
4. All documents and communications between Lt. Gen. Stephen Whiting and any other person regarding the decision of whether to relieve Lt. Col. Lohmeier of his command and/or regarding the decision of whether to initiate an investigation into Lt. Col. Lohmeier;
5. All documents and communications regarding servicemembers who have expressed an objection to training based on Critical Race Theory, as well as any documents and communications demonstrating that disciplinary action or an investigation was initiated against those servicemembers;

³ See Information Operation Podcast, Episode 26, *Interview with Lt. Col. Matthew Lohmeier, USAF on Cultural Marxism in DOD, His Book Irresistible Revolution* (May 7, 2021), available at <https://rumble.com/vgnxbf-io-26-interview-with-lt-col-matthew-lohmeier-usaf-on-crt-in-dod-his-book-ir.html>.

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6. All documents and communications indicating whether the Department of Defense permits servicemembers to hold and express personal opinions in opposition to the use of Critical Race Theory.

To make arrangements for the briefing, document delivery, or to ask any related follow-up questions, please contact Committee on Oversight and Reform Republican Staff at (202) 225-5074.

The Committee on Oversight and Reform is the principal oversight committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate “any matter” at “any time” under House Rule X. Thank you for your cooperation with this inquiry.

Sincerely,



Jody Hice

Ranking Member

Subcommittee on Government Operations

cc: The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney, Chairwoman, Committee on Oversight and Reform
The Honorable Gerald Connolly, Chairman, Subcommittee on Government Operations