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Civil-Military Relations and the Military's Increasing Politicization

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Chairman Grothman, Ranking Member Garcia, members of this subcommittee, and my fellow panelists.

Initial Entry Training in the US Army is meant to melt away the effects of civilian life, and to forge Americans into Soldiers ready to devote their lives to the mass application of violence on behalf of American interests.¹ Initial Entry trainees must sweat and bleed the individual who reported for duty because the Army knows the life of American citizens, bred in individualism and liberalism, is not suited for an easy transition to military service. Policymakers would do well to acknowledge this civil-military distinction.

The American military is a professional fighting force built on competencies and values not commonly found in civil society. Thankfully so, for we do not raise our children under the presumption of a violent life, and most do not even consider joining the military.²

Because the stakes of military operations are so high, the military must exclusively define itself by a commitment to the professional factors that make servicemembers and units more effective. Even though the years of all-out war are beyond our memory, the perils of an uncertain future make the stakes of military policy unquestionably high.

The military must only consider factors of personnel, programs, and policy that genuinely better the Armed Forces' ability to fight and win our nation's wars. Merit must not be the first consideration, but the exclusive lens through which elected officials and military leaders make decisions.³

Diversity exists in our social mores as something the military must embrace and promote as if the Armed Forces march to the beat of a corporate or university drum.⁴ In reality, the existence of a professional, permanent military demands the institution exist apart from the ideologies and politics prevalent in modern-day America.⁵

Some will have you simultaneously believe a diverse military is the cornerstone of our national security,⁶ all the while minimizing any effect diversity considerations have in practical application for men and women in uniform.⁷

¹ "Initial Entry Training," Gateway to the Army. <https://www.gatewaytothearmy.org/fort-jackson/basic-training>

² <https://www.wsj.com/articles/military-recruiting-crisis-veterans-dont-want-their-children-to-join-510e1a25>

³ James Burk, "Expertise, Jurisdiction, and the Legitimacy of the Military Profession," in *The Future of the Army Profession*, ed. Lloyd J. Matthews (Boston: McGraw-Hill Primis Custom Publishing, 2002), 21.

⁴ Signal, Jesse. What if Diversity Training is Doing More Harm Than Good. *New York Times*. Jan 17, 2021.

⁵ Huntington, Samuel P. *The Soldier and the State*, p 143. Belknap/Harvard. 1957.

⁶ Roth-Douquet, Kathy. Diversity and Inclusion are Critical to Future Military Readiness. *Military Times*. May 17th, 2022

⁷ "The Military is not Woke. I don't Even Know What That Means" Milley, Mark. CNN Interview. September 17th, 2023.

A coin with these two sides does not exist; either the military's efforts at diversity serve a critical national need, or they are so insignificant that they are not worth the politicized effect on the military.

Instead, the military must balance functional considerations, those capabilities required to fight and win our nation's wars, with social considerations, or those political and ideological realities which define American life.⁸

Like a drop of ink in a glass of water, the hint of ideology outside the scope of the military profession is corrosive to the force's effectiveness.⁹ Historical examples from 18th Century France to the Soviet Army of the late-Cold War reveal a slippery slope once factors outside the explicit context of military competence affect military decisions.

Increasingly, objective military professionalism is now seen as one factor among many that allows leaders to "comprehensively" evaluate a person, system, or policy; this, of course, being a euphemism for considerations of race and sex.

This programmatic consideration of innate characteristics is toxic for military units, because it redefines the concept of merit-based standards. When "diversity goals" exist for the Air Force Academy and West Point,¹⁰ standards become minimum expectations to meet before fully evaluating applicants. Standards are no longer how the military selects and promotes the very best from society.

These are fundamental policies with drastic implications. Diversity goals become excuses to discriminate. White men and women make up over almost 80% of Air Force officers.¹¹ Current Air Force policy dictates reducing that proportion by almost 15%. To achieve these established quotas will require nothing less than race-based discrimination. Veterans and servicemembers already consider the military too politicized, and this implicates present and future recruiting success.¹²

The mere factor of political considerations outside military competence demands that human characteristics one does not choose to become critical filters for military decisions. Considerations for diversity is but one mark of the blend of Samuel Huntington's "military mind" with the hallmarks of a society built around contrary ideals.

At stake is much more than the relative quality of military units. Instead, the integrity of our Republic is in tension with a military that evaluates matters of politics and identity. When standards become minimum expectations and not markers of achievement. In other sectors

⁸ Owens, Mackubin. "War Goes Woke" The Washington Examiner. April 1st, 2021. Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy Research Institute.

⁹ Huntington, Samuel P. *The Soldier and the State*, p. 59-79. Belknap/Harvard. 1957.

¹⁰ MLP Hearing: Admissions, Curriculum, And Diversity of Thought at the Military Service Academies. House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel. July 19th, 2023.

¹¹ <https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2022/08/30/air-force-leaders-set-new-goals-to-diversify-officer-corps/#:~:text=As%20of%20Tuesday%2C%20the%20Air,5.8%25%20Asian>

¹² American Principles Project Survey of Military Veterans, 2023

of society, the consequences of shirking the primacy of merit amount to a bad hire as University President, or maybe a missed revenue projection last fiscal quarter.

The consequences of having anyone but those who are selected for their professional qualifications are none higher than in the wars our military may soon fight. In May of this year, the Daily Caller reported on the Air Force's efforts to diversify flight school.¹³ The Air Force created classes that mirrored the race and gender demographics of the nation. This manipulation of the most critical talent of our military produced consecutive flight school classes below sustainable levels, far below average. This brutal case study is a harbinger of things to come when diversity becomes an organizing principle of military training and operations.

The Atlantic Magazine published the story of the first wave at Omaha Beach on D-Day in 1960. Rightly so, less than 20 years after the epic invasion of Europe, S.L.A. Marshall described time "softening the horror" of the catastrophic loss of American life at a critical juncture of World War II. Entire companies of Soldiers, over 250 men, never made it off landing craft onto the beach.

Close by, the men of the Army Rangers took to ropes and wooden ladders to scale the cliffs of Pointe Du Hoc, a supposed critical outpost of German artillery between Omaha and Utah Beach. Failure was never an option for these Rangers.

In a single day of this combat, over 2,500 Americans lost their life.¹⁴ The scale of casualties is unfathomable to the modern mind more familiar with the nature of low-intensity wars against terrorism. This should remind us, however, that nothing else matters but the competence and character of the servicemembers who sign up to make the ultimate sacrifice. There is no justification for the adoption of military DEI policies that would make Harvard blush.

History is littered with examples of militaries whose consideration of political ideology precipitated a collapse in military professionalism, all of which served as a precursor to the collapse of their respective nations. America should not wait to find out if we can outrun the drumbeat of such history.¹⁵

¹³ <https://dailycaller.com/2023/05/08/air-force-social-experiment-diversity-minority-discrimination/>

¹⁴ <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/here-are-some-key-facts-about-d-day-ahead-of-the-79th-anniversary-of-the-world-war-ii-invasion#:~:text=Victims%20on%20all%20sides,More%20than%205%2C000%20were%20wounded.>

¹⁵ Huntington, Samuel P. *The Soldier and the State*, p. 19-58. Belknap/Harvard. 1957.