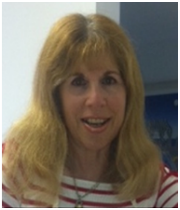


# Politics and the Politicization of the US Military



by Caren Besner

*“If there is one basic element in our Constitution, it is civilian control of the military” – Harry S. Truman*

Americans traditionally have been wary of a large permanent military establishment, believing it to be a threat to democratic institutions. This attitude goes all the way back to the Founding Fathers who deliberately kept the army small, preferring to rely on local militia in case of an emergency. This was done in order to prevent the army from being used to repress the rights of any individual state during the long and ongoing battle over the issue of states’ rights; the echoes of which still reverberate to this very day. The past nine months’ events show how wise this attitude was.

During major conflicts, such as the Civil War and the two World Wars, the military would expand exponentially, only to revert to the size of a constabulary force when hostilities ended. This lasted until the onset of the Cold War, when our newly established rivalry with the Soviet Bloc compelled us to maintain a large standing military force.

All American soldiers swear the same oath to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States. Their oath is not to any political party regardless of which one currently holds the reins of power.

Career military officers occupy a unique place in American

society. Ideally, they are supposed to be apolitical. They vote in elections of course, but they are not free to criticize politics openly nor to deride their Commander-in-Chief, whoever that might be. Senior officers are supposed to be promoted based on competency, efficiency, and ability, not because of loyalty to any political party.

Officers who violate these rules can be dismissed from the military. The most famous example was President Truman's firing of General Douglas MacArthur in 1951. An open critic of the Truman administration's handling of the Korean War, MacArthur delved into the area of foreign policy, urging the Nationalist Chinese on the island of Formosa (now Taiwan) to attack the Chinese mainland. Since this would have entailed an expansion of the war, possibly involving the Soviet Union, this was the last thing Truman wanted. MacArthur had to go.

Seventy years after MacArthur's ignominious dismissal, another American general is in the spotlight: General Mark Milley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the highest-ranking military officer in the armed forces. MacArthur's actions took place at a time when America was beginning its ascendancy to the position of global superpower; Milley's deeds have occurred during a time when America's dominant position is clearly in a state of decline. Both men believed in the righteousness of their cause and both served under presidents whose actions they deemed harmful to American interests. Both men acted in ways that clearly overstepped the boundaries of their authority and both fervently defended their actions, causing a great deal of controversy.

According to Bob Woodward's and Robert Costa's newly published *Peril* (and subsequently reported in the *Washington Post*), in October 2020 and January 2021, Milley placed phone calls to his Chinese counterpart in Beijing (which he later admitted doing). These calls were meant to reassure the Chinese we were not going to launch a nuclear strike against them. Milley stated, "If we're going to attack, I'm going to call you ahead

of time. It's not going to be a surprise."

Milley also allegedly asked his senior commanders to take an oath to him promising to obtain his approval if Trump launched a nuclear attack. A spokesman for the general stated he acted within his authority as the senior military advisor to the President and the Secretary of Defense, yet Milley failed to consult any civilian authority, a fact confirmed by his superiors in the Trump administration, and by the former President himself.

General Milley also undertook at least two other controversial programs. The first was adopting Critical Race Theory as part of the reading curriculum for the military; a program which he personally defended during recent congressional hearings. American soldiers have historically sacrificed themselves on battlefields from Europe to Asia and the Middle East to save their brothers in arms. All that mattered was that the other guy wore the same uniform. Under Critical Race Theory, a soldier would be compelled not to look at the color of a fellow soldier's uniform, but at the color of his skin, before acting. Just how this adds to the cohesiveness, comradery, and fighting efficiency of the military is not explained.

Second, Milley worked closely with Defense Sec. Lloyd Austin, who ordered a "stand down" of the entire military to hunt down "extremism" in the military. This was done in response to Joe Biden's announcement of "white supremacists" as the greatest threat to our democracy. Accordingly, an internal review was conducted to identify any "offenders" within the ranks. Given these facts, it seems that the entire military is being both indoctrinated and politicized.

A large military establishment is now a permanent part of the American landscape. Just exactly how and against whom this force is to be used is now the question. China's recent history provides one possible outcome. In June 1989, more than one and a quarter million protesters gathered in Beijing's

Tiananmen Square to advocate for democratic reforms. Those protests had been going on for several weeks and had spread to dozens of Chinese cities. The Chinese Communist Party, perceiving an existential threat to their power, ordered the Chinese army, the People's Liberation Army, to crush the demonstrators, most of whom were unarmed students. No one knows how many were killed, but estimates run from hundreds to several thousand.

Given Biden's identification of the "real enemy" as white supremacists, it's possible that the military is directing its attention to this new perceived domestic threat. According to the radical left, which appears to control the Democrat party, this enemy consists of the 75 million Americans who voted for Donald Trump in 2020.

For now, we don't know how this will play out. Would the US Army or any segment of it, thoroughly imbued in Wokeism and Critical Race Theory, open fire on a mass of peaceful unarmed protesters if ordered to do so? Only time will tell.

Seven decades separate the actions of Douglas MacArthur and Mark Milley. During those years, the United States of America has fundamentally changed. In 1951, most Americans were fervently anti-Communist. In 2021, only 30 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of Communism, countless millions of Americans seem willing and even eager to embrace it. This shift to the far left is only going to accelerate as more of our younger generation, thoroughly indoctrinated in Wokeism and Neo-Marxist ideology comes of age.

Just where the U.S. military will fit in this "Brave New World" is yet to be realized. One thing, however, can be stated with a degree of certainty: the army can never be used as an instrument of repression against our own people. The current politicization and indoctrination of the armed forces *must* cease. The public trust in our social institutions; not

just the military, but also law enforcement agencies such as the FBI, the Justice Department, and organizations such as the CDC, NIH, FDA, and indeed the government itself is at stake.

[BIO: Caren Besner has written articles published by American Thinker, The Front Page, Dr Swier, Renew America, Sun-Sentinel, NewsWithViews, Published Reporter, The Moderate Voice, The Florida Veteran, Independent Sentinel, and others.]

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