

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 19, 2021

The Honorable John P. Roth
Acting Secretary of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20330-1670

General John W. Raymond
Chief of Space Operations
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20330-1670

Dear Acting Secretary Roth and General Raymond,

We write to you out of grave concern for what appears to be an increasingly politicized environment developing in the Department of Defense which has recently manifested in the United States Space Force. Though we remain thoroughly supportive of our nation's youngest military Service and the indispensable role it plays in our defense, events last week have alarmed us. Specifically, we are concerned about the removal of Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Lohmeier from his command in the wake of two podcasts he participated in to discuss his new book.

As you know, Lieutenant Colonel Lohmeier, commander of the 11th Space Warning Squadron at Buckley Air Force Base in Colorado, was relieved of command last week by Lieutenant General Whiting, the head of Space Operations Command, "due to loss of trust and confidence in his ability to lead." According to media reports, "This decision was based on public comments made by Lt. Col. Lohmeier in a recent podcast" and that there is currently an investigation underway "on whether these comments constituted prohibited partisan political activity."¹

Based on the interviews themselves, these statements by a Space Force spokesperson seem entirely divorced from reality. Lieutenant Colonel Lohmeier went out of his way to explicitly express support and admiration for his chain of command. He said "all of my interactions with senior leaders in the Air Force and Space Force have been very positive" and "we've got very good leaders." He goes on to say that they "care a great deal about our people" and "they care a great deal about the lethality of the force." According to his interviews, he raised concerns expressed in his book and on the podcast through his chain of command and through the Air Force Office of Inspector General. Based on the outreach we have conducted in a very limited period of time, Lieutenant Colonel Lohmeier has a stellar service record with no history of insubordination or malfeasance. We also know that the 11th Space Warning Squadron has long served as a premier command post for those officers serving at the top of their year group. These facts combine to paint Lieutenant Colonel Lohmeier in a very positive light.

Additionally, we have plenty of recent examples of active duty military officers and senior enlisted leaders employing much more politicized speech than anything Lieutenant Colonel Lohmeier said last week. Perhaps Lieutenant Colonel Lohmeier observed the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General Goldfein, say in June 2020, "Every American should be outraged that the

¹ <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2021/05/15/space-force-co-who-got-holiday-call-trump-fired-over-comments-decrying-marxism-military.html>

conduct exhibited by police in Minneapolis can still happen in 2020.”² While a reasonable person can share that sentiment, it is an extremely political statement for a Service Chief to make about a then-pending legal case. Or perhaps he read the tweets by then-Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Kaleth Wright in which he accused the Air Force of racism because of “racial disparities in military justice and discipline among our youngest Black male Airmen and the clear lack of diversity in our senior officer ranks.”³⁴ Again, while we can sympathize with Chief Master Sergeant Wright’s passion, these quite-political statements were made in-uniform from his official twitter account. Then there is the example of Colonel Jason Lamb, who anonymously ghost-wrote multiple articles to the Air Force Times and War on the Rocks that were extremely critical of various culture issues within the Air Force.⁵ Rather than being reprimanded, General Goldfein offered “Ned Stark” a job on the Air Force headquarters staff.

From earlier this year, we have the example of multiple senior leaders in the United States military attacking a private citizen and journalist, Tucker Carlson, for comments he made on his political opinion show. Space Command Senior Enlisted Leader, Master Gunnery Sergeant Stalker; both the Commanding General and Deputy Commanding General of Army Training and Doctrine Command, General Paul Funk and Lieutenant General Ted Martin; Fort Hood Deputy Commanding General John B. Richardson IV; even the II Marine Expeditionary Force Information Group weighed in to explicitly attack the views of a private citizen.⁶⁷ There were no actions taken against any of these senior leaders who publicly, in uniform, and from official Department of Defense accounts lambasted a private U.S. citizen for having an opinion regarding defense policy which differed from the official DOD policy. In fact, the official Department of Defense website still proudly trumpets the headline “Press Secretary *Smites* Host That Dissed Diversity in U.S. Military” in response to Tucker Carlson (emphasis added).⁸ We have never seen anything like it.

In addition to all these examples, we note that professional military and Service publications regularly host essays, articles, and discussions that call into question the decisions and policies of the Department of Defense or Services. These articles in no way violate any rules or regulations found in the UCMJ. They are appreciated for what they are: good-faith attempts to improve our national security enterprise.

Ultimately, there seems to be no material difference between the very public statements made by many senior leaders while in uniform and on official social media accounts, and those made by Lieutenant Colonel Lohmeier in an unofficial capacity. The sole difference seems to be the ideological content of his remarks.

² <https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2020/06/02/goldfein-every-american-should-be-outraged-at-police-conduct-in-death-of-george-floyd/>

³ https://twitter.com/cmsaf_official/status/1267572332907954177

⁴ <https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2020/06/01/chief-wright-i-am-george-floyd-promises-review-of-air-force-justice-system/>

⁵ <https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2020/07/22/commentary-farewell-to-ned-stark/>

⁶ <https://www.cnn.com/2021/03/11/media/tucker-carlson-mocks-military-women/index.html>

⁷ <https://nypost.com/2021/03/15/official-marines-account-walks-back-tweet-ripping-tucker-carlson/>

⁸ <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/2534159/press-secretary-smites-fox-host-that-dissed-diversity-in-us-military/source/GovDelivery/>

We further note that euphemisms like “diversity training” used to describe critical race theory are grotesque distortions of reality. Critical race theory is, in fact, a school of thought ultimately and explicitly derived from Marxism. Critical race theory is a subset of critical theory that was developed in the 1980s to focus on perceived legal injustice in the United States trafficking in racial and sexual stereotypes and collective guilt, and viewing any differences in outcomes as evidence of systemic injustice. This is an inescapable fact that senior leaders in the Department of Defense can no longer continue to ignore. Now is a time for choosing: those leaders who are complicit with this poisonous philosophy which promotes racial essentialism and collective guilt in our beloved military will be judged by history accordingly. Promoting critical race theory will disrupt the good order and discipline of the Space Force and eviscerate our nation’s ability to attract patriotic talent to serve in uniform and fight our wars. Why would we expect our nation’s young men and women to join the Space Force to fight, and possibly die, on behalf of a systemically racist country? “Why *should* they fight for a country we say is racist?” is a question our flag officers should be asking themselves if they believe critical race theory is true.

We call on you to reinstate Lieutenant Colonel Lohmeier immediately, barring any violations of the UCMJ which have not yet been publicly disclosed. Whether you agree with him or not, no rational American can review his level-headed critique of the critical race theory-based “diversity, equity, and inclusion” training the military is currently conducting and conclude that his comments on that subject deserve relief of command.

Space Force Guardians conduct can’t-fail missions twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week: we cannot allow temporary political appointees at the Department of Defense who are ideologically motivated to purge those men and women in uniform who do not agree with the cultural or political fads of the moment. As senior defense leaders, it is imperative that you insulate our warfighters from these excesses. We look forward to the expeditious reinstatement of Lieutenant Colonel Lohmeier. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

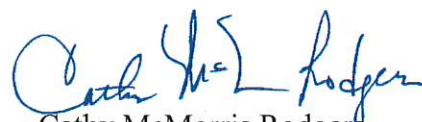
Sincerely,



Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress



Ken Calvert
Member of Congress



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress



Michael Waltz
Member of Congress



Scott DesJarlais
Member of Congress



Brian Babin
Member of Congress

Rick W. Allen
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Matt Gaetz
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Randy K. Weber
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Barry Moore
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