

The Political Reeducation of America's Military

by [Michael Angley](#) (April 2021)



We are Making a New World, Paul Nash, 1918

The United States military has often been the petri dish for social experimentation by Democratic presidents and politicians. The left sees the all-volunteer force through the archaic eyes of conscription, when drafted men were

'Government Issue' (GIs) and a form of chattel.

Despite servicemembers having Constitutional rights, politicians seemingly ignore them in ever increasing encroachments on their liberties. Democratic politicians manage to get away with demanding compliance with all manner of causes that they would never be able to foist upon the civilian population. The same goes for the bodies of military members when it is time for immunizations, vaccinations, and other 'medical' whims.

Increasingly, social issues have become the focus of the left and its interest in infusing a progressive political belief system upon Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, and now, Space Force Guardians. Most recently, seizing upon the January 6th 'insurrection' at the U.S. Capitol, the Department of Defense rushed to develop a program to ferret out so-called extremists and supremacists (essentially, supporters of President Donald J. Trump).

The new policy is dangerously (and intentionally) vague and is designed to give commanders maximum leeway in deeming who is a threat. It also compels mandatory reporting (a snitch program) wherein fellow servicemembers are under threat of prosecution for failing to report even mere suspicions about their brethren. Nothing kills morale, good order, and discipline faster than that approach. The military can only survive when there is trust and unit cohesion. This new policy is guaranteed to damage war readiness.

How did we get to where we are now?

The Insurrection that Wasn't

All eyes were on the [United States Capitol on January 6, 2021](#). That was the day Congress met to certify the November 2020 election results, the election that propelled Joe Biden

into the Oval Office. That day's perfunctory legislative process was mired in controversy ever since the election itself. Allegations of widespread fraud, ballot box stuffing, voting machine software manipulation, and many other forms of election shenanigans dogged the results.

Incumbent President Trump was ahead on election night when the polls traditionally closed, but the country woke to find Biden well in the lead the next morning. Something strange and widespread happened during the 2:00 am witching hour around the country. Massive new votes for Biden mysteriously appeared in key counties, seemingly defying logic, history, and the laws of probability and statistics.

Seventy-five million Trump voters felt disenfranchised, marginalized, dejected...and angry. To them, January 6th was the last hope of upending a stolen election, a chance to gather at the Capitol and make their voices heard. Thousands of them rallied near the Capitol. They wanted lawmakers to be brave and take a stand, to use every arrow in their legislative quiver to strike dead Biden's certification or at least delay it long enough for the courts to weigh in.

President Trump made an appearance at the rally, encouraging them to speak out. He cautioned them against violence, a fact the media consistently leaves out because it runs counter to their narrative that Trump incited a riot, an insurrection, or a storming of the Capitol as they've variously called it.

A few hundred of the tens of thousands of rallygoers did breach the Capitol. There were reports—now in dispute—that [leftist agitators infiltrated the rallygoers](#) and egged on the crowd, fomenting what little violence that did occur. It was mostly a rush to run the halls and offices, a chance to pose for selfies, and vent frustration with their tin-eared lawmakers who rarely listen to constituents.

Only one person was killed, Ashli Babbitt, an unarmed Trump supporter and military veteran. A Capitol Police officer shot her as she came through a window in what the [coroner has since ruled was a homicide](#). Four others died of chiefly natural causes some distance away from the venue or at much later times, but the media added their body count to the list in a ghoulish attempt at making an otherwise bloodless breach look worse than it was.

A police officer who was at the scene died the following day, but the same coroner who was able to determine all the other causes of death has been silent on his. Allegedly he was sprayed with chemical irritants by the protestors but that claim—or even its relevance to his death—has been disputed as well.

As far as insurrections go, this was a bust. Had Trump actually instigated an attack as alleged (and for which the House of Representatives impeached him a second time), it most likely would have been successful. That's more Trump's style. Rather, this was a spontaneous outburst by a disorganized mob, possibly fueled by Biden agitators.

The fallout was fast and furious. As noted, Trump was impeached a second historic time, and like the first impeachment, the Senate failed to convict him days before his tenure in office ended. The media tripped over themselves, breathlessly casting Trump and his supporters as violent extremists, white supremacists, far right radicals, militiamen, and other assorted depictions.

Channeling their heroes Mao Tse-tung, Pol Pot, and Joseph Stalin, Democratic politicians began calling for the [creation of lists of Trump supporters](#). Others suggested [programs to reeducate](#) them and their children, to deprogram out of them their support for the man and his America First agenda. As if *Making America Great Again* were a dangerous concept.

Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, ordered a fence put up around the Capitol to protect against 'certain' violence at the upcoming January 20th inauguration. As an added show of force, tens of thousands of National Guard troops formed up on the grounds and stood watch in something eerily reminiscent of a Cold War, Iron Curtain, insecure dictatorship. January 20th came and went without incident, yet the fence and troops remain.

But something else became tangled up in the left's political apoplexy. The troops securing the Capitol came under suspicion. After all, they were militia types, the kind more likely aligned with Trump than Biden, or so the Democratic-Socialists suggested. They couldn't be trusted not to turn their guns on the lawmakers themselves or the feckless President-in-Waiting, Joe Biden.

They needed to be vetted, despite already having been vetted for their current service. So, investigated they were, and a [dozen were pulled from duty](#) out of an 'abundance of caution.' Only two allegedly made statements or social media posts deemed radical (but non-threatening) by the masters of political speech and minders of hate speech (anything with which the left disagrees).

And from that seed of doubt about the Guard, an ugly tree grew. The fear set in quickly that there were likely thousands of other so-deemed extremists, supremacists, right-wingers, and hate mongers in the active-duty ranks. But the real fear was that there were Trump supporters and voters who needed to be identified and surgically removed like cancerous tumors.

Under the thin camouflage of rooting out extremism, the United States Military ordered a stand-down in operations for 'training.' Taking a cue from the politicians who openly dream about lists of Trump supporters for reeducation camp, the Department of Defense (DoD) immediately set in motion a

training program to do just that.

How to Destroy Morale, Good Order, and Discipline

I am a retired U.S. Air Force Colonel who served on active duty for 26 years. I've seen my fair share of social reengineering experiments among the ranks. During the mid-1990s, one was the bizarre 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' policy of President Bill Clinton. It welcomed gays to serve in the military, so long as they stayed in the closet. Once out, so were they.

This new effort is little different, but its impact on the Constitution is far more damaging than past experiments. It strikes at the First Amendment (1A) Free Speech right like an armor-piercing round. It's not just average ordinary speech that is threatened, but coveted political speech, the very kind of expression America's Founders intended to protect the most.

Few people will disagree that some speech must be regulated in the military. Threats to commit acts of violence, threats to harm the Commander-in-Chief and other senior officials, and even speech that clearly damages good order and discipline may be punishable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). There have always been gray areas, speech that could be construed as harmful that requires some level of investigation and interpretation before punishment. But even those gray areas were more discernable in the past.

The new policy widens the gray to an expanse the size of the Gobi Desert where nearly anything at all can be considered extremist speech or behavior. Inside this valley of vagueness is where 1A dies. It is subject to the political lens through which a unit commander and his legal team wish to view it. To say there's emphasis to err on the side of finding something to be extremist would be an understatement.

The fact that the DoD rolled out the policy as a direct reaction to the events of January 6th alone should signal that its creation was cradled in politics. The imprimatur unfairly assigned to President Trump and his supporters as extremists or even [domestic terrorists](#) was the foundation for the policy, so it's not a surprise that its intent is to go after those supporting him or future political types like him.

On February 19, 2021, [Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III](#) announced the new policy and stand-down for training via video message to the troops. Two observations. First, he never defines the term extremism, although he tosses it out several times. Second, he reminds the military of the oath each member took to support and defend the Constitution before asking them essentially to ignore that oath.

The very Constitution they swear to defend includes both 1A and 2A (also under attack by the same administration). The mixed messaging is difficult to reconcile. Servicemembers must protect free speech, but they also must not engage in certain (previously protected) political speech deemed to be extremist by a commander.

On February 26th, the DoD outlined the training policy in a [13-page memo](#). It broadly addresses extremism as follows. "DoD policy expressly prohibits Service members from actively advocating supremacist, extremist, or criminal gang doctrine, ideology and causes." ([DoD Policy Memo, Feb 26, p. 5](#)).

It provides slightly more definition in a subparagraph:

"Service members must reject active participation in organizations that advance supremacist or extremist ideology, which includes those that advance, encourage, or advocate illegal discrimination based on race, creed, color, sex, religion, ethnicity, or national origin, or

those that advance, encourage, or advocate the use of force, violence, or criminal activity or otherwise advance efforts to deprive individuals of their civil rights.” ([DoD Policy Memo, Feb 26, p. 5](#)).

Herein lies the problem. While not specifically defining either supremacist or extremist groups, it suggests they form a larger group of prohibited organizations in which there is a certain subset. That subset comprises “...those that advance, encourage, or advocate illegal discrimination based on race, creed, color, sex, religion, ethnicity, or national origin (etc.).”

The subset is easy to understand and has always been prohibited activity within the DoD, but the new policy broadens beyond the well-defined to the amorphous ‘supremacist’ or ‘extremist.’ Leaving this hatch open and undefined creates that Gobi Desert in which anything a commander deems to be either supremacist or extremist, even if it does not involve traditional and prohibited forms of illegal discrimination, is now grounds to pursue action against a servicemember.

To make matters more confusing, the [U.S. Army training](#) for this new policy states that an extremist organization is any group or organization that advocates for hatred, intolerance, or discrimination on the “ . . . basis of race, sex (including gender identity), sexual orientation, or ethnicity.” ([Army Training Slide 8](#)).

The insertion of ‘intolerance’ and ‘gender identity’ into the equation is a refinement not found in the broader DoD policy, but is likely in keeping with the Biden Administration’s new policy to allow transgendered individuals to serve. This raises additional worries for servicemembers who hold religious beliefs that run counter to transgenderism. The same 1A that protects Free Speech also protects Religious Freedom. Will servicemembers be punished for using non-

preferred pronouns for fellow troops? Is 'intolerance' really now a form of extremism or supremacy?

The list of 'Prohibited Activities' has also been expanded from previous policies against discrimination. The following is a partial list of what is now prohibited with respect to undefined extremist or supremacist groups: "Fundraising, demonstrating, rallying, recruiting, training, organizing, leading members, distributing material (including posting online)." ([Army Training Slide 8](#)).

Let's face it, the January 6th 'insurrection' that wasn't began as a demonstration or a rally, no matter how you slice it. If a political candidate is pigeonholed by a commander as an extremist or supremacist (like President Trump was daily for four years), will attending one of his campaign rallies now trigger UCMJ punishment? It would seem so. Will this new policy give pause to servicemembers considering attending a political rally? You bet.

It used to be that the only prohibition on engaging in political activities was to do so in uniform. Otherwise, servicemembers were free to support whomever they wished. This smacks of dangerous new ground, and this author ventures to say this is the *real reason this policy exists . . .* to dissuade military members from supporting Donald Trump or Trump-like candidates in any future campaign.

Is the policy being applied evenly and fairly? The author has heard from several active-duty military members and DoD civilians who have attended the training during the stand-down period. While anecdotal, there have been instances of pushback by the troops and tough questions for the trainers and commanders presenting it. It is NOT well-received.

On more than one occasion, servicemembers have brought up the violence committed by Black Lives Matter (BLM) and Antifa, only to be told they were not to discuss those groups,

that somehow, they were different. When they would ask if they needed to report fellow soldiers for participating in BLM or Antifa activities, they've been shut down from further discussion.

It would seem that not all supremacist or extremist groups are equal, but that some are, indeed, more equal than others, to paraphrase George Orwell.

Finally, as if the policy itself isn't bad enough with its wide berth approach to what may be a violation of the UCMJ, the reporting requirements are downright chilling. Servicemembers are obligated to report even mere suspicions about anyone they believe may be in violation of the new policy. The Army (no doubt the other services too) established a veritable 'snitch line' for mandatory reporting of suspected infractions. It's called the iSALUTE Insider Threat Hotline, with a convenient toll-free number. ([Army Training Slide 19](#)).

It's also intoned that failure to report could result in action against the witness. This will lead to all sorts of perverse behavior such as spying on fellow servicemembers' off-duty activities, scouring of their social media posts, or even false reports out of retaliation. Few things will destroy morale, good order, and discipline faster than that.

The DoD Policy Memo states, "Remember, failure to report has a negative impact on the unit or organization. Command climate suffers, groups become polarized, corrosive behaviors undermine confidence in the unit, and readiness is degraded." ([DoD Policy Memo, Feb 26, p. 7](#)).

The irony, of course, is that the fear this policy instills in the troops to overreport will likely do the complete opposite. Readiness will suffer. It may be a novel idea, but perhaps the United States Military should focus on warfighting and do a better job of vetting those it lets join the ranks in the first place.

Joe Biden recently made a peculiar and ominous statement. While addressing actions he planned to take to advance gun control, he commented that [no amendment is absolute](#). While he's wrong (the term unalienable solidly means absolute), that won't stop him from trying. It would seem his administration will go after more than just the Right to Keep and Bear Arms (2A), but also the right to Free Speech (1A) as this new DoD policy demonstrates. Once it takes hold in the DoD, it will receive wild left-wing praise for its 'success.'

It won't take long for Social Justice Warriors and the Democratic Party's Propaganda Arm, the mainstream media, to push for similar policies all throughout the civilian community. Corporate America, academia, even religious organizations will be pressured to toe the line and implement this sort of alarming affront to the Constitution.

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