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An Open Letter to my Fellow Army General Officers-

We all commissioned into the Army with ideals and a determination to make a difference. We would lead with character, create effective teams to win on future battlefields, and advance our beloved institution, all the while, remaining loyal to our Constitution. During our service, we have faced threats, challenges, and impediments to these ideals – some in the crucible of combat. Yet, we have never wavered. Today, we face a different challenge – unique to our time – that threatens our army like never before. We must not waver now.

Today's challenge is Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). These innocent sounding words represent a “wolf in sheep's clothing”, attacking the foundations of our beloved Army. This growing cancer creates distrust, discord, and doubts throughout the institution wherever it metastasizes. Let me briefly explain what you already know in your hearts to be true.

At its core, DEI operationalizes the tenants of Critical Race Theory (CRT) in the organizational setting. Using agreeable sounding concepts like diversity, equity, and inclusion, the underlying goal is to impose race and gender-based outcomes through discrimination. It is a radical ideology that seeks to undermining the “colorblind”, performance-based organization that we helped to create. Unfortunately, we have grown to accept its catchy slogans, like “celebrate diversity” and “diversity is our strength”, while ignoring the damage they cause. But the fact remains, because DEI programs see the world through a lens of skin color, gender, and sexual orientation, they segment our once-unified force into tribes that increasingly look on each other with suspicion. This destroys the unity and trust that we know are the vital ingredients to winning tomorrow's wars.

Sadly, by supporting DEI principles, we have moved our great Army – which has led the nation in racial and gender integration – into reverse. The DEI bureaucrats that we have installed up and down the Army's echelons, are actively sowing the seeds of discord and distrust in our ranks. By forcing our Soldiers to see the world through a lens of skin color and gender, they are creating suspicion and division – instead of the unity, trust, and cohesion that we know are required for successful teams to win in battle. The result is wormwood in the Army's timbers of readiness.

And it's not just readiness that suffers. DEI is political ideology wrapped in bad social science. Why would we impose this politically controversial experiment on our Soldiers? Army Secretary Christine Wormuth recent said in Army Magazine, “We need to make sure we are keeping the Army out of politics.” Well, here's your chance. DEI is very political. You can't look the other way, when you know that the core tenets of DEI violate the Constitution, it's 14th Amendment, and our civil rights laws. And what of our commanders? Aren't they responsible for building teams, creating healthy command climates, and ensuring their Soldiers are treated with dignity and respect? Or have we lost faith in them too? Our proven Equal Opportunity channels are no longer good enough? Do we really need a separate bureaucracy to make sure our commanders are valuing diversity?

Don't misunderstand me. Diversity is a wonderful thing. But DEI is not about diversity of thought. It is about one thing – diversity of appearance. This should never drive organizational goals – especially in a profession that requires rigorous excellence and high standards. Rather, diversity in today's America, is better seen as a precondition for any organization that wants to recruit talent. This is a good thing. But it's an issue for US Army Recruiting Command, who should be innovating to attract all underrepresented populations into our ranks. But once they wear Army green, it's all about unity. They are on the Army team, never to be separated into tribes.

Unfortunately, as the DEI bureaucracy grows with every passing year, the unfortunate victims are our Soldiers. Each required training session on antiracism, white privilege, implicit biases, and the like, feels indoctrinating. And some topics are even offensive to their traditional religious values and upbringing. We now force them to “celebrate” things that they often fundamentally disagree with. And of course, every new diversity training requirement, takes valuable time away from training warfighters in their key tasks. Yet, most damaging of all, the training drives wedges into the trust, cohesion, and unity that good leaders strive to create. I hope you bristle at the empty phrase “diversity is our strength” when you know from hard-won experience that our army’s strength has always been the direct opposite: Our strength comes from building unified teams from diverse people. These two concepts are diametrically opposed.

Initially, you may have accepted these toxic ideas because they flowed from presidential executive orders. And at a basic level, diversity sounds good. But make no mistake: This is not diversity of thought; this is diversity of nothing more than physical appearance. This imposition of the superficial over substance damages the good order and discipline of the force. Besides, are they lawful orders in the first place, if they directly oppose the Constitution and our civil rights laws? You may have also fallen for the flawed notion that our army “needs to look like the nation it represents”. Who says? This has never been the case in our history. By comparison, does the NBA look like the nation? Of course not. It's a meritocracy in very competitive environment. Do you not see our military as a more important meritocracy in the competitive environment of combat?

You can no longer look the other way. The time has come to confront it. Will you choose unity and trust, or grievances and tribes? Will you choose excellence and high standards, or quotas and prescribed racial and gender outcomes? Will you build social-justice warriors or real warriors? You can't have it both ways.

I was recently assured by a 3-star friend, that work is being done behind the scenes to push back on these destructive ideologies. But he also admitted that if any senior leader speaks out, they will forfeit any future promotion. Duty often comes at a price. If you need support, look to our rich history with a simple question: What would General George Marshall have done? Do you think he would have sat by and watched any administration push politically controversial ideas into the force, when he knew they undermined trust, cohesion, and unity? You know he wouldn't. He would have pushed back, even if he had to risk it all. We need some George Marshalls today.

If you don't see the need to act, I fear you may be out of touch with your Soldiers. Unfortunately, they know they are being watched, many by the DEI commissars that you have installed at every echelon. Can they even be honest with you anymore? And it's not just their rolling eyes in classrooms, they are actively warning people not to join the ranks. Do you see the connection between your embrace of these controversial political theories and the precipitous drop in the public's trust of the military over the past few years? And if you think the current recruiting challenges are driven solely by a tight labor market and disqualifying conditions in our youth, think again. American youth are attracted to excellence. They want challenges and high standards. But the uncomfortable truth is this: These cohorts have traditionally leaned conservative. That's the problem. By helping create a progressive political institution of social-justice warriors, you have created an Army that seems hostile to traditional conservative and religious values. This is significant. For the first time in history, you have broken the important link between the family legacy of military service and new qualified candidates. By some estimates, this link, which has normally averaged around 40% is now down to a paltry 13%.

Your oath was to the Constitution, and your duty has always been to build warfighting readiness. DEI programs are at odds with both. Don't lose this battle. The soul of our army, and our nation's security, depend on it.

Yours in service,

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