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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6050

ELIZABETH L. KING, STAFF DIRECTOR
JOHN D. WASON, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

October 21, 2021

General Mark A. Milley
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
9999 Joint Staff Pentagon
Washington, DC 20318-9999

Dear General Milley:

Given our long history of professional collaboration, grounded in a shared commitment to sustaining the American way of life and caring for our troops, we write today to express our grave concerns about this administration's imposition of political narratives on our military, at the expense of readiness and morale.

At each hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee, we acknowledge that the world is a more dangerous place than ever in our lifetime and reaffirm our committee's steadfast support for the 2018 National Defense Strategy. Yet today, efforts to recruit, train, and equip a ready and lethal force often appear to take a back seat to the Department of Defense's (DOD) "Climate Adaptation Plan," "Countering Extremism Working Group," and discussions of critical race theory. DOD touts its "Climate Adaptation Plan," while a viable counterterrorism strategy in lieu of our presence in Afghanistan after a chaotic exit goes wanting.

A global "stand-down" curtailed essential military operations so that troops could discuss the perils of "right-wing" extremism. Six months into its existence, a bloated "Countering Extremism Working Group" plods through its endless review of DOD's longstanding definition of extremist conduct. All this is taking place despite clear data that pegs the number of extremists in our military as miniscule. Several members of the Senate Armed Services Committee have solicited feedback directly from service members about the working group and have also shared growing concern about the focus directed towards social issues and away from lethality.

Accordingly, in your role as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and in conjunction with the other members of the Joint Chiefs and the Combatant Commanders, we ask that you provide us the following data and information pertaining to the armed forces, broken down by each Military Service and Combatant Command, to include the same data as it pertains to the Joint Staff:

- The total number of hours expended by any member of the armed forces in researching, developing, writing, or coordinating the DOD “Climate Adaptation Plan,” since January 21, 2021.
- The total monetary value of all other DOD resources expended on the research, development, writing, or coordination of the DOD “Climate Adaptation Plan,” since January 21, 2021.
- The total number of hours expended by any member of the armed forces for any purpose related to the extremism “stand-down” directed by the Secretary of Defense on February 5, 2021, or in furtherance of any effort described in Secretary of Defense Memorandum of April 9, 2021, subject: *Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department and the Establishment of the Countering Extremism Working Group*, together with a description of the current status of each of the efforts established by that memorandum.
- The total monetary value of all other DOD resources expended for any purpose related to the extremism “stand-down” directed by the Secretary of Defense on February 5, 2021, or in furtherance of any effort described in Secretary of Defense Memorandum of April 9, 2021, subject: *Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department and the Establishment of the Countering Extremism Working Group*.
- The total number of hours expended by any member of the armed forces in developing, preparing, delivering, attending, or assessing new diversity, equity, and inclusion training in any form, including training on or discussions of critical race theory, since January 21, 2021.
- The total monetary value of all other DOD resources expended on the development, preparation, delivery, attendance at, or assessment of new diversity, equity, and inclusion training in any form, including training on or discussions of critical race theory, since January 21, 2021.

Although the actual costs associated with each of these undertakings is certainly cause for concern, the opportunity cost they have and continue to visit on the force, its readiness, and morale appears nothing short of devastating—particularly in light of current threats.

We look forward to receiving your written response and your views on these important matters not later than November 8, 2021.

Sincerely,



James M. Inhofe
United States Senator



Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator



Deb Fischer
United States Senator



Tom Cotton
United States Senator



Mike Rounds
United States Senator



Joni Ernst
United States Senator




Thom Tillis
United States Senator



Dan Sullivan
United States Senator



Kevin Cramer
United States Senator



Rick Scott
United States Senator



Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator



Tommy Tuberville
United States Senator