

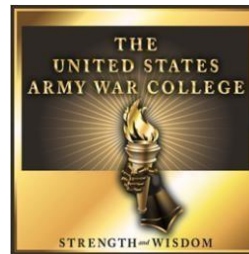
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# Curbing the Trend of Retired General/Flag Officer Political Endorsements

by

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# Curbing the Trend of Retired General/Flag Officer Political Endorsements

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## Abstract

The 2016 presidential election caused debate over the propriety of retiree endorsements. The debate has occurred every election cycle since at least 1992. The trend toward partisan advocacy in retired senior flag officers threatens the apolitical nature of the U.S. military profession. Past efforts to end retiree endorsements failed due to complacency, key leaders opposing change or remaining silent, and the failure of those seeking change to develop and communicate an effective vision and strategy. Absent a new approach, the increasingly disturbing trend of retiree endorsements will continue. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), as the steward of the military profession, joined by other senior military leaders and key stakeholders beyond the active duty military, must engage in a deliberate, continuous, and holistic effort to change military culture and establish the norm that retired military personnel refrain from partisan campaigning. By developing and communicating an effective vision for change, the CJCS can guide military professionals to promote the military's apolitical nature, foster healthy civil-military relations, and preserve the military's trust with civilian leadership and the public.

## **Curbing the Trend of Retired General/Flag Officer Political Endorsements**

While the public knows there is a legal distinction between the active duty and retired officer's right to speak out publicly, when the retired officer does so in . . . partisan debate, . . . his argument takes on political taint—and, to a degree, the military's purity as a whole is diminished.

—General (Ret.) Charles C. Boyd<sup>1</sup>

During the highly contested 2016 U.S. presidential election, retired General John Allen and retired Lieutenant General Michael Flynn supported the Democratic and Republican National Conventions (DNC and RNC), respectively, with ringing endorsements for their party's presidential candidate. These recently retired general officers, and the objects of their endorsement, parlayed their military experience, rank, and association with active duty military to influence the election of the President of the United States.<sup>2</sup>

Generals Allen and Flynn's endorsements, and General (Ret.) Martin Dempsey's immediate rebuke, sparked a national debate about the proper role of retired General Officer/Flag Officers (GO/FO) in partisan politics. Positions on political endorsements ranged from support for full participation of retired GO/FOs in the political process to abstention of retired GO/FOs from partisan politics, including political endorsements. Those advocating for retiree endorsements cite civic duties and First Amendment rights, whereas those condemning the practice indicate the negative impacts of retiree behavior on the active military.<sup>3</sup> General Dempsey, for example, stated that "Generals and admirals are generals and admirals for life."<sup>4</sup> As Steve Corbett and Michael J. Davidson noted, no consensus on the right answer exists among retired general officers, the active duty military, and the public, leaving it up to the individual retired

officer to make a moral decision regarding the permissible extent of participation in partisan politics, including political endorsements.<sup>5</sup>

Does the current trend toward partisan advocacy in retired senior flag officer ranks threaten the apolitical nature and status of the U.S. military profession? If so, what steps can be taken to mitigate the negative effects of that trend? This paper proposes that to curb the problematic trend of retired GO/FOs providing political endorsements, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), joined by other senior military leaders and key stakeholders beyond the active duty military, must engage in a deliberate, continuous, and holistic effort to change military culture and establish the norm that retired military personnel refrain from partisan campaigning.

The paper first details the renewed debate on retired GO/FO partisan politics resulting from the 2016 presidential election campaign, including a brief review of the rising trend of endorsement activity. Next, the paper describes why retiree endorsements are problematic in the context of civil-military relations and the military as a profession. Then, using concepts from leadership and organizational culture theories, the paper analyzes past efforts to combat the recent trend in military endorsements and why they have been unsuccessful. Next, the paper discusses potential changes to law and regulations to reduce retired GO/FO endorsements or mitigate the negative effects, concluding that such measures are not suitable to address this problem. Finally, the paper presents a course of action for the military to effect lasting change to its culture to curb problematic GO/FO retiree political endorsements.

#### The Renewed Debate

In the 2016 presidential election, retired GO/FOs continued the disturbing trend, which retired Colonel Matthew Moten noted began in 1988, of presidential campaign

political endorsements.<sup>6</sup> Retired Generals Allen and Flynns' speaking engagements at the DNC and RNC were arguably the most visible military endorsements of the 2016 campaign.<sup>7</sup> In addition to having senior retired military officers provide endorsements at the respective national conventions, both presidential candidates rolled out lists of retired GO/FOs endorsements.<sup>8</sup> Among other endorsements, General Allen appeared in an advertisement for Secretary Hillary Clinton, which opened with a still shot of General Allen in his military uniform, and General Flynn avidly campaigned for Donald Trump.<sup>9</sup>

Senior retired military officers, academics, and journalists criticized Allen and Flynn for their political endorsements, characterizing these retired general officers' behavior as violating the military profession, being contrary to healthy civil-military relations, and undermining the trust the United States has in the military.<sup>10</sup> Both Generals Allen and Flynn defended their respective endorsements. As part of his announcement declaring his endorsement of Secretary Clinton, General Allen stated that he "had stayed out of the political arena [his] entire adult life, but given the complexities of issues facing our country today and its longtime allies, [he] felt compelled to speak up and be heard."<sup>11</sup> General Flynn stated he felt "obligated [to support Mr. Trump] because of [his] service to this country, because of the experience that [he has], the relationships that [he has, and] that [he] can continue to help his country."<sup>12</sup>

The debate about whether partisan political behavior of retired military officers is proper is not new.<sup>13</sup> Arguments over the propriety of retired GO/FO endorsements of political candidates have occurred in each presidential election, to a greater or lesser extent, since 1992.<sup>14</sup> Academic experts in the field of civil-military relations, high ranking

retired military personnel, and more recently, high ranking active duty personnel, have voiced their opposition to the practice, with no apparent lasting effect on those retirees intent on partisan endorsement.<sup>15</sup> James Golby, Kyle Dropp, and Peter Feaver offered clear recommendations to reverse the trend based on their analysis of retiree endorsement activity in the 2012 election. However, GO/FOs continued to ignore this advice in the 2016 election along with the guidance of two of the last three CJCSs.<sup>16</sup>

### The Problems of Endorsements

Numerous senior military leaders, academics, and journalists have captured the troubling problems that retired general officers and admirals have caused by endorsing political candidates. Military historian and civil military relations expert Richard Kohn argued that retired GO/FOs “never really ‘retire,’ but . . . embody the core culture and collectively represent the military community as authoritatively as the active-duty leadership.”<sup>17</sup> Kohn noted that the association of a retired political spokesman with the active service risks politicizing the military. Kohn argued that politicization of the military runs the risk of the public perceiving the military as just another interest group, undermining the trust the military enjoys “as a neutral instrument of the state and the embodiment of the nation.”<sup>18</sup>

Kohn also observed that retiree endorsements risk healthy civil-military relations because “partisanship . . . poison[s] the relationship between the president and uniformed leadership.”<sup>19</sup> As Kohn noted, the President and senior civilian leaders may be cautious with senior military leaders out of concern for what that senior military leader may say or do post-military service.<sup>20</sup> In a general admonishment of retired GO/FOs who give political endorsements, Kohn warned that “these officers must recognize the corrosive effects on military professionalism and the threat to the military

establishment's relationship with Congress, the executive branch, and the American people that such partisan behavior has."<sup>21</sup>

Retiree endorsements and the concurrent debate of them in the 2016 presidential election raised additional problems. Following his election, President Trump appointed retired LTG Michael Flynn as his National Security Advisor (NSA).<sup>22</sup> At a minimum, Flynn's appointment created the perception that he used his military rank and experience for personal gain. Professor Don Snider, an ethics professor at the U.S. Army War College, observed another significant issue with the 2016 presidential election endorsements. Snider recognized the problematic impression upon junior professionals of having one of their "esteemed leaders—Allen--used as a pawn in a political campaign."<sup>23</sup> Snider noted, "As this campaign proceeds and these events fade, the junior professionals will come to see clearly that, for the presidential candidates, winning the weekend news cycle, not the partisan advocacy of the generals, was the real prize."<sup>24</sup> Additionally, Snider stated that junior professionals may lose trust in their military leadership when they see retired GO/FOs take actions contrary to the military profession. Snider also noted that the diametrically opposed arguments of Generals Flynn and Allen versus Dempsey over appropriate behavior of retired military personnel may confuse junior professionals.<sup>25</sup>

As a senior active duty military member, I am greatly concerned about the retiree endorsement trend, particularly the negative impacts upon junior professionals to whom Professor Snider refers. To put my comments in perspective, I am a service academy graduate with over twenty-four years of active-duty service. I served in the command of one of the retired general officers who publicly endorsed one of the 2016 presidential



election candidates, who I continue to admire greatly as a military leader. Until this election cycle, I was unaware that retired GO/FOs had previously endorsed political candidates. Based upon my socialization, frame of reference, and internalization of Army values, I believe military retiree political endorsements clearly violate the apolitical norm of military professionalism. It is important to note that *Army Doctrine Reference Publication-1 (ADRP-1)* published in 2013 includes retired military as members of the military profession.<sup>26</sup> I took for granted that retired general officers recognized they still represented the military, a fact they cannot disclaim, and therefore would withhold public comments about political candidates for the greater good of preserving the merits of an apolitical military.

In addition to the valid arguments of General Dempsey and Professors Kohn and Snider, GO/FO retiree endorsements are problematic because these retired GO/FOs presume they can speak on behalf of active duty military members. Active duty military members, however, may not want to be associated with partisan political activity, particularly criticism of the President or potential President. As Golby, Dropp, and Feaver noted, political candidates seek endorsements from retired GO/FOs for the very purpose that in the eyes of the public, retired GO/FOs represent the perspective of the military.<sup>27</sup> The intention of the retired GO/FO is irrelevant; how the public perceives the retired GO/FO's status and/or relation to the military is beyond the GO/FO's control.

Consequently, Golby, Dropp, and Feaver noted that retired GO/FOs will endorse political candidates and members of the public will presume that active military members agree with that GO/FO's political position. Because active members of the military are prohibited, and rightly so, from commenting publicly on political matters,

active military members cannot defend themselves against perceptions that they support candidates or issues with which they may personally disagree.<sup>28</sup> Unintentionally, when endorsing political candidates, retired GO/FOs take advantage of the apolitical norm that active duty service members observe.

The current trend toward partisan advocacy in retired senior flag officer ranks, which threatens the apolitical nature and status of the U.S. military profession, is likely to continue in the future. As Professor Marybeth Ulrich of the U.S. Army War College noted, the number of retired GO/FO political endorsements in 2016 showed a downward trend from 2012. However, this may be due to the nature of the Trump candidacy, which spawned a “Never Trump” movement within the Republican Party, which usually unifies around its nominee.<sup>29</sup> Golby, Dropp, and Feaver observed that political candidates’ incentive to compete for the support of the military as a highly trusted military institution is likely to remain strong.<sup>30</sup>

Moten argued that retiree endorsements for this year’s presidential election were more problematic in both degree and substance than in past years. “[In 2016] some [retired officers] crossed another red line. Both campaigns now have retired officers regularly acting as surrogates for the candidates, giving speeches and appearing on television and radio. And the more they talk, the shriller they sound.”<sup>31</sup> Lieutenant General Flynn’s appointment as NSA as a reward for endorsing presidential candidate Trump can only serve to inspire other retired senior officers to hitch their stars to political candidates in hopes of gaining prominent senior positions in government.<sup>32</sup> The question, then, is what steps can be taken now to either eliminate or mitigate the negative effects of this trend?

## Failure of Past Action

Though laudable, prior efforts to end GO/FO retiree political endorsements, as Dan Lamothe noted, failed to create lasting change.<sup>33</sup> Organizational culture and behavior theory can help identify the problems with past change efforts and assist with crafting a successful course of action. In *Leading Change*, leadership expert John P. Kotter presented a model for organizational change, identifying common errors organizations seeking change have made and proposing a process for achieving success.<sup>34</sup>

The lack of a sense of urgency among senior military leaders to address the problem is a significant reason for the failure to curb retiree political endorsements. Kotter referred to this error in seeking organizational change as “allowing too much complacency.”<sup>35</sup> As Golby, Dropp, and Feaver noted, General Dempsey and Admiral Mullen’s condemnations of the practice stand in stark contrast to their predecessors’ participation in political endorsements.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, Lamothe noted that the current CJCS, General Joseph Dunford, “has declined to express an opinion” on the propriety of retiree endorsements.<sup>37</sup> However, General Dempsey and Admiral Mullen’s efforts lacked the frequency, visibility, consistency, and clarity to effect lasting change. The opposing positions of retired senior leaders, combined with the lack of supporting statements from other key stakeholders inside and outside the military, characterized General Dempsey and Admiral Mullen’s positions as opinions as opposed to mandates for change.

The previous paragraph alludes to another significant problem with the effort to end partisan retiree behavior: the lack of buy-in of key stakeholders. Kotter referred to this as “failing to create a sufficiently powerful guiding coalition.”<sup>38</sup> To date, key

stakeholders, including active duty military, retired military, and civilian leadership, have failed to join together in any concerted effort or movement necessary to lead change in what certain retired GO/FOs consider acceptable partisan political behavior.<sup>39</sup> As Kotter stated, “individuals alone, no matter how competent or charismatic, never have all the assets needed to overcome tradition and inertia except in very small organizations.”<sup>40</sup> The fact that no joint or service doctrine other than the Army's *ADRP-1* recognizes retirees as members of the military profession is evidence of the current lack of stakeholder buy-in.<sup>41</sup>

Changing the behavior/minds of retired GO/FOs intent on engaging in political endorsements is an extremely difficult undertaking.<sup>42</sup> These individuals are officers who have risen to the heights of their profession through decades of service. Upon retirement, they undoubtedly feel committed to continued service to the nation and the preservation of fundamental rights. These officers have grown up in a military that did not advocate restricting the political behavior of its retired members, and as Ulrich noted, only recently has the Army formally extended the concept of the military profession to retired members.<sup>43</sup>

Retired General Charles Krulak, for example, condemned arguments for limitations on retiree political activity in 2000 as “an insult to [those who served in the military],” stating that military members “not only [fight] for our own First Amendment rights and the right to vote, but defend those same rights for our fellow citizens.”<sup>44</sup> Former CJCS retired General John Shalikashvili, responding in 2004 to criticism of retiree partisan endorsements, stated that “[upon retirement, generals] share the same responsibility as . . . the rest of America to participate responsibly in the political process

. . . [which] is a responsibility to our nation that is both honorable and consistent with their military service.”<sup>45</sup> As Leo Shane III observed, retired Generals Allen and Flynn defended their 2016 endorsements as “a defense of national security.”<sup>46</sup>

In addition to the noble reasons retired GO/FOs who engage in partisan political activity have articulated, current retirees have seen their fellow generals and admirals endorse political candidates for decades.<sup>47</sup> Further critically undermining any effort to change retiree behavior is the fact that many former CJCSs, including retired Generals Powell and Shalikashvili and retired Admiral William Crowe, have participated in this activity.<sup>48</sup> Consequently, any effort pushing for retirees to refrain from endorsing political candidates requires a strong consensus of institutional leaders pushing for change, which has yet to develop.

The need for consensus among key stakeholders to push for a change in retiree behavior begs central questions to solving the retiree endorsement problem: who should lead this effort, and who is the target audience for change? To answer these questions, one must focus correctly upon what the debate over retiree activity is truly about. Scholars such as retired LTG David Barno, Nora Bensahel, and Ulrich have focused on the establishment and preservation of the norms of the military profession.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, as Kori Schake argues given the potential damage to the military profession that retiree political endorsements can cause, the active duty military has the greatest interest in curbing retired GO/FO political endorsements.<sup>50</sup> The views of senior civilian leaders are important on this issue, but as Schake noted, positive public perceptions make “it easy to see why politicians want to wrap themselves in the public

adulation of the military.”<sup>51</sup> This, however, does not mitigate the civilians’ responsibility to oversee the profession.

Opinions of retired military members are also critical to this effort, but retirees lack the organization, authority, and hierarchy to create lasting change across the military profession. Further, as Barno and Bensahel noted, “[It] is too late to try to instill proper norms of civil-military conduct once these senior officers have already retired. The military must set expectations early, while generals and admirals are still serving on active duty, to create a lasting change in behavior.”<sup>52</sup> Consequently, the CJCS, as the senior active duty service member and acknowledged senior steward of the military profession, must lead this change effort and encourage the service chiefs to back him up.<sup>53</sup>

Additional errors in the effort to create lasting change in retiree behavior include the failure of proponents of change to establish and communicate a “sensible vision” as a vehicle for change. As Kotter noted, a “sensible vision” plays a “key role in producing useful change by helping to direct, align, and inspire actions on the part of large numbers of people.”<sup>54</sup> “Vision,” Kotter described, “refers to a picture of the future with some implicit or explicit commentary on why people should strive to create that future.”<sup>55</sup> “A good vision,” Kotter continued, “[clarifies] the general direction for change, . . . motivates people to take action in the right direction, . . . and helps coordinate the actions of different people.”<sup>56</sup>

Key leaders critical of retiree political endorsements have not articulated a “vision” for change, per se. However, analysis of the positions Admiral Mullen and General Dempsey have taken as CJCSs and how they fell short in Kotter’s concept of

“vision” is instructive to an overall solution to the retiree endorsement problem. As described previously, the CJCS is the necessary lead agent to change the norm concerning retiree partisan political behavior, targeting active duty and retired members of the military profession.<sup>57</sup> To their great credit, both Admiral Mullen and General Dempsey identified the serious negative implications that retiree political endorsements have for the military profession, and they saw it as their role, actual or implied, to protect the military profession by addressing this behavior.<sup>58</sup> Neither officer, however, effectively articulated a position to change the expected behavior of retirees concerning partisan political activity.

In 2008, Admiral Mullen was the first senior active duty military member to speak out against retired GO/FO partisan activity.<sup>59</sup> Admiral Mullen repeatedly voiced his reservations, even convening a conference on military professionalism at the National Defense University in January 2011 to address myriad concerns about the profession, including “active campaigning for Presidential candidates by retired flag officers.”<sup>60</sup> But Admiral Mullen’s position on retired GO/FO political endorsements at that time, as reported in some venues, was more implied than explicit, leaving room for misunderstanding. For example, when discussing retired military personnel political behavior at a media roundtable in 2008, Admiral Mullen stated,

Certainly, any retired individual from the military, if they’re American citizens they’re certainly free to both express their views and also align themselves with who they want to politically. I, quite frankly, worry sometimes that those views actually do potentially impact on – as – or get stated as views that are supported by the military, by the active-duty military, but certainly their right to do so is nothing I question.<sup>61</sup>

Admiral Mullen's statement was not an explicit condemnation of retired GO/FO endorsements and the damage they cause the military profession. The lack of clarity fails to paint a clear "picture of the future" or "clarify the general direction for change."<sup>62</sup>

Upon succeeding Admiral Mullen as CJCS, General Dempsey consistently spoke out against retired senior officer endorsements. For example, in 2012, in a short Department of Defense (DOD) article entitled "Chairman's Corner: Civil-Military Relations and the Profession of Arms," General Dempsey stated that

former and retired service members, especially Generals and Admirals, are connected to military service for life. When the title or uniform is used for partisan purposes, it can erode the trust relationship. We must all be conscious of this, or we risk adversely affecting the very profession to which we dedicated most of our adult lives.<sup>63</sup>

This apparently straightforward statement, however, lacks clarity in two important aspects. First, one can interpret the statement to mean that retired GO/FO officers who mistakenly believe that if they refer to themselves as "retired" and conduct their endorsement activity in civilian clothing, then the behavior is acceptable. Second, one could interpret General Dempsey's DOD statement as extending to prohibiting retired senior military officers from running for political office. Both arguments are commonly made in support of retiree endorsements.<sup>64</sup>

General Dempsey has addressed these arguments in other venues, such as in a 2012 Question and Answer session with the Atlantic Council.<sup>65</sup> By omitting them from his high-profile DOD statement, however, General Dempsey risked communicating less than his complete message to his target audience who may be unaware of General Dempsey's other statements on his position. Similar to Admiral Mullen, General Dempsey's DOD statement, to the extent it characterized his vision for necessary



change, failed to paint a “clear picture of the future” or “clarify the future direction for change.”<sup>66</sup>

Even if Admiral Mullen or General Dempsey effectively communicated a “sensible vision,” the “under communication” of that vision is another Kotter error that hindered change of retired partisan behavior. Kotter noted that for a vision to succeed, the proponent for change must communicate the vision frequently, other key leaders must support and repeat the vision, and “highly visible individuals [must not behave] in ways that are antithetical to the vision.”<sup>67</sup>

Predictably, the debate over the propriety of retiree partisan behavior tends to coincide with the presidential election cycle. The lack of frequency of the debate over proper retiree political norms and associated advocacy for change to retiree behavior undoubtedly serves to preserve the status quo. More significant to the failure of Admiral Mullen and General Dempsey’s message to take root, however, is the action or inaction of other key leaders. As previously discussed, other key leaders, such as the service chiefs, Combatant Commanders, and senior civilian leaders, did not appear to assist Admiral Mullen or General Dempsey by further communicating their messages.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, the actions of former CJCSs, by endorsing candidates themselves in retirement, severely undermine any message of the active CJCS.<sup>69</sup> “Without credible communication, and a lot of it,” Kotter warned, “employees’ hearts and minds are never captured.”<sup>70</sup>

Another aspect of past failure to communicate a vision for change is the lack of support for the messages of past CJCSs in concurrent guidance published on acceptable political behavior and military professionalism (with the notable exception of

*ADRP-1*).<sup>71</sup> For example, the Department of Defense Directive (DODD) on political behavior, *DODD 1344.10*, Political Activities by Members of the Armed Forces, does not comport explicitly with Admiral Mullen and General Dempsey's position on retired GO/FO political endorsements, nor does the 2016 DOD Standards of Conduct Office (SOCO) guidance on acceptable political behavior.<sup>72</sup> A formalized set of accepted behavioral norms for retired personnel, as Ulrich has suggested, does not yet exist.<sup>73</sup> Additionally, there is no current joint doctrine on the military profession, nor has acceptable retiree political behavior been a widespread topic of Professional Military Education.<sup>74</sup> Addressing retiree political activity in the above-mentioned ways would go a long way toward spreading and reinforcing the CJCS's message.

#### The Problems of a Legal/Regulatory Solution

Commentators on retiree partisan behavior predominantly suggest adherence to an ethical norm as the recommended vehicle for curbing retired GO/FO political endorsements.<sup>75</sup> Additionally, some commentators have discussed a role for law and regulations to play.<sup>76</sup> Upon retirement, military personnel remain subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice, and they are potentially subject to a range of command disciplinary actions, including no action, administrative action, and courts-martial.<sup>77</sup> However, enforcement or enactment of a law or regulation is not an acceptable way to address retiree partisan activity.

Several authors have suggested that the military can penalize retired GO/FOs for endorsement activity that crosses a legal or regulatory threshold.<sup>78</sup> J. Mackey Ives and Michael Davidson argued that in extraordinary cases, "military jurisdiction might properly be invoked" over retired military officers who "in their capacity as a retired military officer [endorse a political candidate] and while doing so, treat a sitting President, Vice

President, or other person or entity with obvious contempt.”<sup>79</sup> The threshold Ives and Davidson described for a military court-martial is extremely high, and as Houghton noted, problematic endorsements such as those associated with the 2016 presidential elections do not reach this level.<sup>80</sup>

Alternatively, Colonel George Smawley suggested that retired GO/FOs could potentially receive administrative reprimands for unethical conduct.<sup>81</sup> Even if the activity met the much lower threshold for an administrative reprimand, however, the military should refrain from taking adverse action against the offending individuals. Adverse action risks public misperception that the military’s motive for action is partisan. Instead, key military leaders should address instances of problematic retiree partisan activity by immediate public condemnation in the press. Through the press, key leaders can criticize the officer’s behavior in a manner that communicates that the military is not choosing sides, but rather enforcing apolitical standards of behavior as part of the military profession.

#### Proposed Course of Action

Leadership and organizational culture theories serve as useful tools for developing a more effective course of action to curb retiree political endorsements. Kotter’s process for leading change is a comprehensive treatment of the problem.<sup>82</sup> Additionally, organizational culture and leadership expert Edgar H. Schein’s concept of embedding and reinforcing mechanisms is also a helpful framework for effecting lasting change.<sup>83</sup>

Kotter stated that the first step to create major change is the need to “establish a sense of urgency.”<sup>84</sup> As previously noted, the active duty military has the greatest incentive for change and the greatest ability to effect change due to the CJCS’s

authority, access, resources, and opportunity. Consequently, the CJCS must explicitly recognize that retiree political endorsements violate the military's apolitical nature, and that curbing this unprofessional activity is his responsibility as the steward of the military profession.

After acknowledging the problem and taking ownership, the CJCS can establish a sense of urgency through recognition that the trend of endorsements, in both degree and substance, is becoming increasingly problematic for the profession.<sup>85</sup> The fact that retired GOs publicly declared that the 2016 presidential candidates were unfit to serve as Commander in Chief indicate that a potential crisis exists for the military profession and should prompt the CJCS to take immediate action. Additional concerns should have arisen when President Trump rewarded LTG Flynn, who publicly criticized President Barack Obama and made disparaging comments about Secretary Clinton, with an appointment as his NSA.<sup>86</sup>

After establishing a sense of urgency, according to Kotter's model, the CJCS must "create a guiding coalition."<sup>87</sup> As Kotter noted, "a strong guiding coalition is always needed—one with the right composition, level of trust, and shared objective."<sup>88</sup> In addition to the CJCS, the guiding coalition should include other active duty four-star GO/FOs, influential retired GO/FOs, and senior civilian leaders.

Current conditions appear favorable for the CJCS to form such a coalition. First, as the senior active duty member, the CJCS should be able to influence urgency and conformity within the senior active duty ranks, including the service chiefs and the Geographic and Functional Component Commanders. Second, given their public stances against retiree endorsements during the 2016 campaign, Admiral Mullen and

General Dempsey, powerful members of the retired military community, will likely join the CJCS's coalition.<sup>89</sup> Third, the CJCS can potentially work with retired General James Mattis, Secretary of Defense in the Trump administration, to influence the opinions of civilian leadership. During military retirement, General Mattis has been a role model for the military professionalism of retired GOs. He did not publicly endorse a candidate during the 2016 election, and according to Ralph Peters, General Mattis was "happy in retirement, studying, helping his fellow Marines, and contributing thoughtfully to our national security behind the scenes."<sup>90</sup>

To effect change, according to Kotter, the CJCS must also "develop a vision and strategy."<sup>91</sup> As previously described, Kotter's effective vision "[clarifies] the general direction for change, . . . motivates people to take action in the right direction, . . . and helps coordinate the actions of different people."<sup>92</sup> To that end, the following draft vision statement, tailored narrowly to address retiree endorsements, attempts to comport with Kotter's vision requirements while addressing common counterarguments to restrictions on retiree partisan activity:

Retired military members remain members of the military profession.<sup>93</sup> The public attributes the actions of retired military members, particularly those of general or flag officer rank, to the active component. Retired military members cannot disclaim this association. Consequently, retired military members must not undermine the professional norms of active duty members, including neutrality in politics.<sup>94</sup>

Recently, senior retired military officers have endorsed presidential candidates. Although such conduct is legal, it is contrary to the apolitical nature of the military, undermines healthy civil-military relations, and places the military's esteem as the

nation's most trusted institution at risk.<sup>95</sup> Such conduct cannot continue. However, retired military members can run for political office. In doing so, they effectively step away from their military role.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, retired military members can privately educate candidates and the public in nonpartisan ways.<sup>97</sup> Partisan endorsement, particularly by retired General and Flag officers, is not acceptable.<sup>98</sup>

Our military culture must change regarding the proper behavior of retired military members. Senior leaders must educate the force at every level through all means available that retired service members remain members of the military profession and must uphold its apolitical tradition.<sup>99</sup>

After establishing a sensible vision, the next step in Kotter's model is to communicate the vision effectively.<sup>100</sup> In doing so, Kotter identified key elements of effective communication, including "simplicity," "multiple forums," "repetition," "leadership by example," and "explanation of seeming inconsistencies."<sup>101</sup>

The vision stated above is a clear, concise statement of where the military needs to go and how to get there, and it conforms to Kotter's requirement of "simplicity." By addressing common counterarguments, the statement attempts to address "seeming inconsistencies." To further communicate the vision, the CJCS and his key leader coalition must repeat the message in multiple forums. The CJCS should start by sending a message to the force in multiple venues, such as a message in *Joint Forces Quarterly*, stating his vision and expectations for implementation.<sup>102</sup> The CJCS should also send a service chiefs' endorsed message to the force, similar to Chairman Dempsey's February 2, 2015, letter to all service members who served since September 11, 2001, stating his vision and plan for implementation.<sup>103</sup> In addition to

repeating and supporting the CJCS's vision, key leaders can take the following actions to support the CJCS's message:

a. The military should incorporate the CJCS's vision into training and professional military education (PME) on the military profession at all levels, but particularly at formal education targeting field-grade officers.

b. Building upon *ADRP-1*, the Department of Defense should develop Joint Doctrine recognizing retirees as members of the military profession and associated standards of behavior, including abstention from political endorsements.<sup>104</sup>

c. As Ulrich suggested, the military should develop a formalized set of professional norms for retired personnel.<sup>105</sup>

d. As Barno and Bensahel commented, the CJCS and the service chiefs can send a letter to promotable Colonels, asking them to recognize their responsibilities as members of the military profession during retirement and requiring them to pledge not to engage in partisan endorsements upon retirement.<sup>106</sup>

e. The Department of Defense should amend visible guidance on ethics, including the DOD Directive on political activities, *DODD 1344.10*, SOCO guidance on permissible election activities, and the *Joint Ethics Regulation* consistent with the CJCS's vision. As previously discussed, these documents should not make endorsement activity punitive, but must make clear that retired GO/FOs should not make political endorsements because they damage the military profession.

f. The CJCS should encourage key retired leaders, such as Admiral Mullen and General Dempsey, to be more vocal on the issue. Perhaps these retired officers can spread their influence through engagement with civilian organizations with high retired

officer membership, such as the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) and The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA).

g. The CJCS should encourage the Secretary of Defense to speak publicly on the issue, and advise Secretary Mattis to take candidates' views on permissible post-military partisan activity into account when selecting GOs for senior positions.<sup>107</sup>

Edgar Schein argued that for change to take root, an organization must develop “mechanisms for culture embedding and reinforcement.”<sup>108</sup> Among Schein’s mechanisms are “what leaders pay attention to,” “leader reactions to critical incidents,” and “deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching.”<sup>109</sup> Schein’s mechanisms reaffirm the significance of key leader support and promulgation of the CJCS’s vision for change. The actions described for transmitting the CJCS’s vision, including key leader engagement, doctrine development, and PME, all serve to embed and reinforce the CJCS’s change effort. Significantly, Schein indicated that subordinates not only pay attention to what their leaders react to, but they observe “what . . . does not get reacted to.”<sup>110</sup> Consequently, when retirees endorse political candidates, key leaders must condemn the practice publicly and to their subordinates.

### Conclusion

The current trend toward partisan advocacy in retired senior flag officer ranks, as Moten and others have noted, threatens the apolitical nature and status of the U.S. military profession.<sup>111</sup> As Kotter’s model indicated, past efforts to curb retiree endorsements have been unsuccessful due to complacency, key leaders opposing change or remaining silent, and the failure of those seeking change to develop and communicate an effective vision and strategy. Absent a new approach to the problem, the increasingly disturbing trend of retiree endorsements will continue.



The CJCS, as the steward of the military profession, joined by other senior military leaders and key stakeholders beyond the active duty military, must engage in a deliberate, continuous, and holistic effort to change military culture and establish the norm that retired military personnel refrain from partisan campaigning. The highly visible and problematic endorsements of the 2016 presidential election must compel the CJCS with a sense of urgency to address this issue now. With Admiral Mullen and General Dempsey as potential allies in the retirement community, and Secretary Mattis as an ally with civilian leadership, Chairman Dunford has favorable conditions for building an effective coalition of key stakeholders. By developing and communicating an effective vision for change, the CJCS can guide members of the military profession to promote the military's apolitical nature, foster healthy civil-military relations, and preserve the military's well-earned trust with civilian leadership and the public.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Charles C. Boyd, "Air University Graduation Remarks," public speech, Maxwell Air Force Base, AL, May 25, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Sisk, "Former Joint Chiefs Chairman Slams Retired Generals' Political Remarks," August 1, 2016, <http://www.military.com/daily-news/2016/08/01/former-joint-chiefs-chairman-slams-retired-generals-remarks.html> (accessed November 2, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> Martin Dempsey, "Keep Your Politics Private, My Fellow Generals and Admirals," *Defense One Online*, August 1, 2016, <http://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2016/08/keep-your-politics-private-my-fellow-generals-and-admirals/130404/?oref=d-topstory> (accessed December 2, 2016); Martin Dempsey, "Military Leaders Do Not Belong at Political Conventions," *Washington Post Online*, July 30, 2016, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/military-leaders-do-not-belong-at-political-conventions/2016/07/30/0e06fc16-11e6-b652-315ae5d4d4dd\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.e93f0e8ff1010](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/military-leaders-do-not-belong-at-political-conventions/2016/07/30/0e06fc16-11e6-b652-315ae5d4d4dd_story.html?utm_term=.e93f0e8ff1010) (accessed November 2, 2016); Kilmeade and Friends, "General Michael Flynn Sounds Off on Generals Allen and Dempsey, Khizr Khan," *Foxnews Radio Online*, August 1, 2016, <https://radio.foxnews.com/2016/08/01/general-michael-flynn-sounds-off-on-generals-allen-and-dempsey-khizr-khan> (accessed November 2, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> Martin Dempsey, "Keep Your Politics Private, My Fellow Generals and Admirals," *Defense One*, August 1, 2016, <http://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2016/08/keep-your-politics-private-my-fellow-generals-and-admirals/130404/> (accessed March 31, 2017).

<sup>5</sup> Steve Corbett and Michael J. Davidson, "The Role of the Military in Presidential Politics," *Parameters* 39, no.4 (Winter 2009-10): 67; Dan Lamothe, "Generals Have Waded into Presidential Elections for Decades. Their Colleagues Still Hate It," *The Washington Post Online*, August 2, 2016, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2016/08/02/generals-waded-into-presidential-elections-decades-ago-their-colleagues-still-hate-it/?utm\\_term=.b69acdd63a3b](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2016/08/02/generals-waded-into-presidential-elections-decades-ago-their-colleagues-still-hate-it/?utm_term=.b69acdd63a3b) (accessed December 2, 2016).

The comment section to General Dempsey's *Washington Post* rebuke is illustrative of the public's confusion concerning retiree endorsements. Many comments supported Dempsey's position, such as "the problem with endorsements is that the credibility of the endorsement is based almost entirely on the retired generals' ranks. That risks politicizing the senior officer corps." Dempsey, "Military Leaders Do Not Belong at Political Conventions," *Washington Post Online* (Comment Section) (comments on file with author). Another commentator furthered this position, stating that "a perception of a politicized senior Officer Corps . . . will undermine the credibility of the professional military advice that the Officer Corps provides civil authorities [and] risks politicizing the [future] selection of senior military leaders." *Ibid.*

Commenters critical of General Dempsey ranged from those who misunderstood his position, disagreed with his position, or both. Among those at odds with Dempsey, some commenters incorrectly characterized Dempsey as prohibiting all forms of retired GO/FO political activity, including running for political office, apparently unaware of Dempsey's more comprehensive statements on permissible retiree political activity. Others conflated legal and moral proscriptions, opining that because no law or regulation legally proscribes retiree endorsements, they should be allowed to do so. Some commentators adamantly defended against any prohibition on retiree's First Amendment rights and the right as private citizens to participate fully in the electoral process. Perhaps the most sophisticated responses contrary to Dempsey's position supported retiree GO/FO endorsements to provide the public with the opinion of military experts when weighing the qualifications of a presidential candidate to serve as Commander in Chief. *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Matthew Moten, "We Have a Big Problem with Retired Generals Wading into Partisanship," *Foreign Policy Online*, September 12, 2016, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/09/12/we-have-a-big-problem-with-retired-generals-wading-into-partisanship/> (accessed December 30, 2016). Moten noted that the trend of retired GO/FO political endorsements has its roots in 1988 with retired General P.X. Kelley's endorsement of Vice-Presidential candidate George H.W. Bush. *Ibid.*

Professor Richard Kohn identified that the trend escalated in 1992, "when retired Joint Chiefs Chairman William Crowe and a handful of other retired flag officers endorsed Bill Clinton, defusing his draft dodging as an issue." Richard Kohn, "General Elections; The Brass Shouldn't Do Endorsements," *The Washington Post Online*, September 19, 2000, in LexisNexis (accessed December 4, 2016).

Moten described that high profile endorsements increased in number and visibility from 2000 (lead by President George Bush's 80 endorsements, including former CJCS Colin Powell), through 2004 (including former CJCS John Shalikashvili appearing at the DNC for John Kerry), through 2008 (in which "more than one hundred retired generals and admirals publicly endorsed Senators Obama, Clinton, or McCain") through 2012 (in which, as Stephen Dinan identified, candidate Mitt Romney received 500 GO/FO endorsements). Moten, "We Have a Big Problem with Retired Generals;" Stephen Dinan, "Retired Top Military Brass Push for Romney," *The*

*Washington Times Online*, November 4, 2012, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/blog/inside-politics/2012/nov/4/retired-top-military-brass-push-romney/> (accessed December 4, 2016).

<sup>7</sup> John Allen, "Full Speech Democratic Convention 2016 - July 28," July 28, 2016, *YouTube*, video file, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oYuH5fKUn\\_0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oYuH5fKUn_0) (accessed December 27, 2016); Michael Flynn, "Full EXPLOSIVE Speech at Republican National Convention (7-18-16)," *YouTube*, video file, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bA-Z2vmaFU> (accessed December 27, 2016).

The conventions introduced Allen and Flynn as retired general officers and identified both men by their military rank, without indicating their retired status, during their presentations. Allen, "Democratic Convention Speech," July 28, 2016; Flynn, "Republican Convention Speech," July 18, 2016. In his address at the DNC, General Allen, the former Commander, U.S. Forces Afghanistan and most recently the Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition against ISIL for the Obama administration, had numerous military veterans join him onstage when he delivered his remarks, which included veiled barbs at Donald Trump. Allen, "Democratic Convention Speech," July 28, 2016.

At the RNC, LTG Flynn, the former head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, criticized President Obama and infamously lead a chant of "Lock Her Up" when referring to Secretary Clinton. Flynn, "Republican Convention Speech."

<sup>8</sup> Nick Gass, "Trump Earns Endorsement of 88 Retired Generals, Admirals," *Politico*, September 6, 2016, <http://www.politico.com/story/2016/09/retired-generals-admirals-endorse-trump-227755> (accessed November 2, 2016); Nick Gass, "Clinton Camp Fires Back: We Have 95 Retired General, Admiral Endorsements," *Politico*, September 7, 2016, <http://www.politico.com/story/2016/09/retired-generals-admirals-endorse-clinton-227814> (accessed November 2, 2016).

As Nick Gass reported, on September 6, 2016, Donald Trump rolled out a list of 88 retired generals and admirals (introduced by LTG Flynn), a list Trump's campaign referred to as "assets." Trump/Pence Campaign, "88 Retired U.S. Generals and Admirals Endorse Trump," September 6, 2016, <https://www.donaldjtrump.com/press-releases/88-retired-u.s.-generals-and-admirals-endorse-trump> (accessed December 2, 2016); Trump/Pence Campaign, "Open Letter From Military Leaders," September 6, 2016, [https://assets.donaldjtrump.com/MILITARY\\_LETTER.pdf](https://assets.donaldjtrump.com/MILITARY_LETTER.pdf) (accessed December 2, 2016).

The next day, Gass reported that Secretary Clinton released her list of 95 retired generals and admirals, touting her list as "More Than Any Recent Democratic Nominee for President." Hillary for America, "Ninety-Five Retired Generals and Admirals Endorse Hillary Clinton," September 7, 2016, <https://www.hillaryclinton.com/briefing/updates/2016/09/07/ninety-five-retired-generals-and-admirals-endorse-hillary-clinton/> (accessed December 4, 2016).

Both campaigns released their lists to coincide with the "Commander in Chief Forum" media event on NBC, though it appears that only Mr. Trump referred to his endorsement list as part of his remarks. Ryan Teague Beckwith, "Read Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump's Remarks at a Military Forum," *Time Online*, September 7, 2016, <http://time.com/4483355/commander-chief-forum-clinton-trump-intrepid/> (accessed December 28, 2016).

<sup>9</sup> John Allen, "Hillary for America TV Commercial, 'General Allen,'" *ispot.tv*, video file, undated, [https://www.ispot.tv/ad/A\\_k4/hillary-for-america-general-allen](https://www.ispot.tv/ad/A_k4/hillary-for-america-general-allen) (accessed December 27,

2016); Dana Priest and Greg Miller, "He Was One of the Most Respected Intel Officers of His Generation; Now He's Leading 'Lock Her Up' Chants," *The Washington Post Online*, August 15, 2016, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/nearly-the-entire-national-security-establishment-has-rejected-trumpexcept-for-this-man/2016/08/15/d5072d96-5e4b-11e6-8e45-477372e89d78\\_story.html?hpid=hp\\_hp-top-table-main\\_flynn-1pm%3Ahomepage%2Fstory&utm\\_term=.cd7242fff2f](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/nearly-the-entire-national-security-establishment-has-rejected-trumpexcept-for-this-man/2016/08/15/d5072d96-5e4b-11e6-8e45-477372e89d78_story.html?hpid=hp_hp-top-table-main_flynn-1pm%3Ahomepage%2Fstory&utm_term=.cd7242fff2f) (accessed December 4, 2016).

<sup>10</sup> On the heels of the RNC and DNC, retired General Martin Dempsey, the most recently retired CJCS, wrote a letter to the editor in *The Washington Post* stating his disagreement with Generals Allen and Flynn appearing at the national conventions. Restating a position he stated while on active duty, General Dempsey stated that "as generals, they have an obligation to uphold our apolitical traditions." Dempsey, "Military Leaders Do Not Belong at Political Conventions," Marcus Weisgerber, "Dempsey to Retired Generals: Shut Up When it Comes to Politics," *DefenseNews*, May 19, 2014, <http://intercepts.defensenews.com/2014/05/dempsey-to-retired-generals-shut-up-when-it-comes-to-politics/> (accessed December 27, 2016). General Dempsey elaborated on his position in a subsequent article for *Defense One* on August 1, 2016, and in a National Public Radio interview on August 3, 2016, clarifying, among other things, that he had no issues with retired officers running for elected office. Dempsey, "Keep Your Politics Private," National Public Radio, "Gen. Dempsey to Fellow Officers: Stay off the Political Battlefield," *NPR Morning Edition*, August 3, 2016, <http://www.npr.org/2016/08/03/488442470/gen-dempsey-to-fellow-officers-stay-off-the-political-battlefield> (accessed December 2, 2016).

Other retired GO/FOs, including former CJCS Admiral Michael Mullen; former Commander of U.S. Southern Command General John Kelly; and former Vice Chief of Staff of the Army General Jack Keane joined General Dempsey in his condemnation of the political endorsements. Leo Shane III, "Another Former Joint Chiefs Chairman Blasts General's Involvement in Politics," *Military Times Online*, August 16, 2016, <http://www.militarytimes.com/articles/mullen-election-concerns-generals> (accessed December 4, 2016); Molly O'Toole, "Ex-General to Top Brass: Stay Out of the 'Cesspool of Domestic Politics'," *Foreign Policy Online*, July 11, 2016, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/07/11/ex-general-to-top-brass-stay-out-of-the-cesspool-of-domestic-politics/> (accessed November 2, 2016); Jack Keane, "Military Leaders Getting Too Involved in Partisan Politics?" *Fox Business*, video file, August 1, 2016, [https://twitter.com/gen\\_jackkeane/status/760129142180413442](https://twitter.com/gen_jackkeane/status/760129142180413442) (accessed December 27, 2016).

Numerous academics and journalists also criticized the retired general officers for their presidential political endorsements. Among them, Don Snider, a professor at the U.S. Army War College, argued that Allen and Flynn's endorsements violated the U.S. military's professional ethic, and applauded Dempsey's rebuke as an act of self-policing. Don Snider, "The Problem with Generals Backing Candidates at Conventions," *Washington Post Online*, August 4, 2016, [www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-problem-with-generals-backing-candidates-at-conventions/2016/08/04/8830be9c-59af-11e6-9aee-8075993d73a2\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.d068b90434d5](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-problem-with-generals-backing-candidates-at-conventions/2016/08/04/8830be9c-59af-11e6-9aee-8075993d73a2_story.html?utm_term=.d068b90434d5) (accessed November 2, 2016). Retired LTG David Barno and Nora Bensahel, Distinguished Practitioner and Distinguished Scholar, respectively, at the School of International Service at American University, argued that the public endorsement of presidential candidates "deeply affects the profession of arms by putting at risk the apolitical reputation of the U.S. military and by eroding civilian leaders' trust in the non-political nature of our senior uniformed military leadership." David Barno and Nora Bensahel, "How to Get Generals out of Politics," *War on the Rocks Online*, September 27, 2016,

<http://warontherocks.com/2016/09/how-to-get-generals-out-of-politics/> (accessed November 2, 2016).

Kori Schake, currently a Research Fellow at Stanford's Hoover Institute, stated that the endorsements are problematic "because when officers start playing politics, it undermines the independence of and trust in our military." Kori Schake, "Why Donald Trump's Endorsements by 88 Generals is So Dangerous," *Foreign Policy Online*, September 6, 2016, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/09/06/why-donald-trumps-endorsement-by-88-generals-is-so-dangerous-civilian-military-relations/> (accessed November 2, 2016); The Hoover Institute, "Kori Schake," <http://www.hoover.org/profiles/kori-schake> (accessed December 30, 2016). Noted author and retired Lieutenant Colonel John Nagl echoed Schake's point, stating that the endorsements risk "damaging the trust that both the American people and American leaders place in our military. National Public Radio, "Military Leader's Endorsements of Political Candidates Questioned," *NPR Morning Edition*, September 8, 2016, <http://www.npr.org/2016/09/08/493073644/military-leaders-endorsements-of-political-candidates-questioned> (accessed December 2, 2016). Retired Colonel Matthew Moten, author and former head of the history department at West Point, argued that "when retired generals and admirals engage in partisan advocacy they risk the military's professionalism and prestige, which they labored for decades to protect. Moten, "We Have a Big Problem with Retired Generals."

<sup>11</sup> Hillary for America, "Retired Marine General John R. Allen Endorses Hillary Clinton," July 25, 2016, <https://www.hillaryclinton.com/briefing/statements/2016/07/25/retired-marine-general-john-r-allen-endorses-hillary-clinton/> (accessed December 30, 2016).

<sup>12</sup> Kilmeade and Friends, "General Michael Flynn Sounds Off on Generals Allen and Dempsey, Khizr Khan."

<sup>13</sup> Rick Houghton, "The Law of Retired Military Officers and Political Endorsements: A Primer," *Lawfare*, blog entry posted October 3, 2016, <https://www.lawfareblog.com/law-retired-military-officers-and-political-endorsements-primer> (accessed November 2, 2016).

<sup>14</sup> David Evans, "Crowe Endorsement of Clinton Raises More Than Eyebrows," *Chicago Tribune Online*, September 25, 1992, [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1992-09-25/news/9203270346\\_1\\_crowe-iranian-territorial-waters-clinton-campaign](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1992-09-25/news/9203270346_1_crowe-iranian-territorial-waters-clinton-campaign) (accessed November 2, 2016); Thomas E. Ricks, "Bush's Brass Band Raises Some Questions," *The Washington Post Online*, September 22, 2000, in LexisNexis (accessed November 28, 2016); James Golby, Kyle Dropp, and Peter Feaver, "Military Campaigns: Veteran's Endorsements and Presidential Elections," *Center for a New American Security*, October 2012, 6-8, [https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.cnas.org/documents/CNAS\\_MilitaryCampaigns\\_GolbyDroppFeaver.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.cnas.org/documents/CNAS_MilitaryCampaigns_GolbyDroppFeaver.pdf) (accessed January 2, 2017).

Criticism of retired GO/FO political endorsements accompanied the growing trend. As examples, in 1992, David Evans reported that a retired senior officer "lamented that [Admiral retired] Crowe's political activity marks a subtle erosion of civilian control." Evans, "Crowe Endorsement." In 2000, Thomas Ricks reported that retired LTG Bernard Trainor criticized retired General Charles Krulak's endorsement of President Bush, stating that "to lend one's name and title to a political campaign is a form of prostitution." Ricks, "Bush's Brass Band." Richard Kohn, professor at the University of North Carolina and expert on civil-military relations, condemned the endorsement practice as early as 2000, arguing that such partisan activity endangers the perception of military neutrality and "signifies a serious erosion of military



professionalism.” Kohn, “General Elections.” Other significant academics, including Eliot Cohen and Lawrence Kaplan, criticized the endorsement practice as early as 2004. Lawrence F. Kaplan, “Officer Politics/Generals Used to be Neutral,” *New Republic Online*, September 13, 2004, <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1209904/posts?page=51> (accessed November 28, 2016); Eliot A. Cohen, “General Malaise,” *Wall Street Journal*, August 4, 2004, in ProQuest (accessed November 28, 2016).

<sup>15</sup> Golby, Dropp, and Feaver, “Military Campaigns,” 6-8; Mark Thompson, “The Military Vote,” *Time Online*, November 5, 2012, <http://nation.time.com/2012/11/05/the-military-vote/> (accessed November 2, 2016).

<sup>16</sup> Golby, Dropp, and Feaver, “Military Campaigns,” 7.

<sup>17</sup> Kohn, “General Elections.”

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Richard Kohn, “The Erosion of Civilian Control in the United States Today,” *Naval War College Review* 55, no.3 (Summer 2002): 28.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>22</sup> Eric Bradner, Sara Murray, and Ryan Brown, “Trump Offers Flynn Job of National Security Advisor,” *CNN*, November 18, 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/11/17/politics/trump-offers-flynn-job-of-national-security-adviser/> (accessed January 7, 2017).

<sup>23</sup> Snider, “The Problem with Generals.”

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *The Army Profession*, Army Defense Reference Publication-1 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, June 2015), 5-4.

<sup>27</sup> Golby, Dropp, and Feaver, “Military Campaigns,” 15.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*; U.S. Department of Defense, *Political Activities by Members of the Armed Forces*, Department of Defense Directive 1344.10 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, February 19, 2008).

<sup>29</sup> Marybeth Ulrich, “The Retired Officer and the State,” unpublished paper presented at International Political Science Association World Congress, Poznan, Poland, July 2016, 19.

<sup>30</sup> Golby, Dropp, and Feaver, “Military Campaigns,” 7-8.

<sup>31</sup> Moten, “We Have a Big Problem with Retired Generals.”

<sup>32</sup> Bradner, Murray, and Brown, “Trump Offers Flynn Job of National Security Advisor.”

<sup>33</sup> Lamothe, "Generals Have Waded Into Presidential Elections for Decades."

<sup>34</sup> John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1996).

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>36</sup> Golby, Dropp, and Feaver, "Military Campaigns," 7.

<sup>37</sup> Lamothe, "Generals Have Waded Into Presidential Elections for Decades."

<sup>38</sup> Kotter, *Leading Change*, 6.

<sup>39</sup> Dr. Marybeth Ulrich, Professor, U.S. Army War College, interview by author, Carlisle Barracks, PA, January 4, 2017.

<sup>40</sup> Kotter, *Leading Change*, 6.

<sup>41</sup> Dr. Marybeth Ulrich, interview by author, January 4, 2017.

<sup>42</sup> Stephen J. Gerras and Leonard Wong, *Changing Minds in the Army: Why It Is So Difficult and What to Do About It* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College Press, October 2013), 2.

<sup>43</sup> Ulrich, "The Retired Officer and the State," 13-14 (describing *ADRP-1*'s inclusion of military retirees as members of the military profession).

<sup>44</sup> Charles C. Krulak, "Veteran's Right to Endorse," *The Washington Post Online*, September 24, 2000, in LexisNexis (accessed November 28, 2016). Arguing in response to Robert Kohn that retired military officers are entitled to the full rights to participate in the selection of elected officials as other citizens.

<sup>45</sup> John A. Shalikashvili, "Old Soldier's Don't Have to Fade Away," *Wall Street Journal Online*, August 17, 2004, in ProQuest (accessed November 28, 2016). Arguing in response to Eliot Cohen that retired military personnel have the same responsibility as every other citizen "to participate responsibly in the political process.

<sup>46</sup> Shane III, "Another Former Joint Chiefs Chairman Blasts General's Involvement in Politics."

<sup>47</sup> Moten, "We Have a Big Problem with Retired Generals." Noting that the trend of retiree political endorsements began in 1988.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Barno and Bensahel, "How to Get Generals Out of Politics"; Ulrich, "The Retired Officer and the State," 15.

<sup>50</sup> Schake, "Why Donald Trump's Endorsements by 88 Generals is so Dangerous." Stating that the military "is a better guardian of the restraints on policy activism by the military than the general public" because retiree political endorsements "erode public trust in the military" and "encourages the military to see themselves as political actors".

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Barno and Bensahel, "How to Get Generals Out of Politics."

<sup>53</sup> Martin Dempsey, *America's Military—A Profession of Arms: White Paper* (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff), 3, <http://www.ics.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Publications/aprofessionofarms.pdf> (accessed February 16, 2017). Acknowledging that "[the CJCS] is the steward of the profession"; Ulrich, "The Retired Officer and the State," 19. Arguing for the role of the CJCS as the steward of the profession in establishing norms of the military profession for retired members.

<sup>54</sup> Kotter, *Leading Change*, 7.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 68-69.

<sup>57</sup> See notes 52-53 and accompanying text.

<sup>58</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, "Transcript, Media Roundtable with Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen," March 5, 2008, linked from the *U.S. Department of Defense Home Page*, <http://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=4168> (accessed December 10, 2016) (quoting Admiral Mullen's concerns with retiree endorsements); Martin Dempsey, "Chairman's Corner: Civil-Military Relations and the Profession of Arms," June 25, 2012, linked from the *U.S. Department of Defense Home Page*, <http://archive.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=116891> (accessed February 16, 2017). Stating General Dempsey's position against retiree political endorsements.

<sup>59</sup> Golby, Dropp, and Feaver, "Military Campaigns," 7.

<sup>60</sup> Albert C. Pierce, "Chairman's Conference on Military Professionalism," *Joint Force Quarterly* 62 (July 2011): 8, <http://ndupress.ndu.edu/portals/68/Documents/jfq/jfq-62.pdf> (accessed February 16, 2017).

<sup>61</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, "Media Roundtable with Robert Gates and Admiral Mike Mullen."

<sup>62</sup> Kotter, *Leading Change*, 68.

<sup>63</sup> Dempsey, "Chairman's Corner: Civil-Military Relations and the Profession of Arms."

<sup>64</sup> For an example of common arguments in support of retiree endorsements, see the comment section to General Dempsey's *Washington Post* article discussed at note 5. Dempsey, "Military Leaders Do Not Belong at Political Conventions." Lieutenant General Flynn is one who thinks a retired GO/FO can distance himself from the active military. Responding to criticism about retiree political activities, Flynn stated that he thinks such criticism "does a disservice to the intellect of those that are serving in the military and it speaks to the American public as though they are a bunch of dummies." Kilmeade and Friends, "General Michael Flynn Sounds Off on Generals Allen and Dempsey, Khizr Khan."



<sup>65</sup> Weisgerber, “Dempsey to Retired Generals: Shut Up When It Comes to Politics,” May 2012, included the following:

If you want to get out of the military and run for office, I’m all for it. But don’t get out of the military . . . and become a political figure by throwing your support behind a particular candidate. If somebody asks me when I retire to support them in a political campaign, do you think they’re asking Marty Dempsey or are they asking General Dempsey? I am a general for life and I should remain true to our professional ethos, which is to be apolitical for life; unless I run. Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Kotter, *Leading Change*, 68.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>68</sup> Ulrich, interview by author, January 4, 2017.

<sup>69</sup> Moten, “We Have a Big Problem with Retired Generals.” Noting past political endorsements of Generals Powel and Shalikashvili and Admiral William Crowe.

<sup>70</sup> Kotter, *Leading Change*, 9.

<sup>71</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *The Army Profession*, 5-4. Stating at paragraph 5-18 that “Army professionals . . . who have retired remain members of the Army Profession”.

<sup>72</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Political Activities by Members of the Armed Forces*; U.S. Department of Defense, Standards of Conduct Office, “Guidance on Political Activity and Support 2016,” July 6, 2016, [http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/defense\\_ethics/resource\\_library/elections\\_guidance\\_2016.pdf](http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/defense_ethics/resource_library/elections_guidance_2016.pdf) (accessed January 15, 2017).

<sup>73</sup> Ulrich, “The Retired Officer and the State,” 15.

<sup>74</sup> Ulrich, interview by author, January 4, 2017.

<sup>75</sup> Corbett and Davidson; Golby, Dropp, and Feaver; Barno and Bensahel; Snider, and Ulrich are examples of those recommending adherence to ethical norms. Corbett and Davidson, “The Role of the Military in Presidential Politics,” 69-70 (stating that “existing law does not provide an adequate vehicle for addressing the issue,” and that “in the near-term, the most effective restraint on political endorsements is the military itself”); Golby, Dropp, and Feaver, “Military Campaigns,” 20 (stating that “the prudent course is to adopt norms of behavior that create the brightest line between the sphere of partisan politics that picks the American commander in chief and the sphere of military professionals who must serve unreservedly regardless of what the other sphere produces”); Barno and Bensahel, “How to Get Generals Out of Politics;” Snider, “The Problem with Generals;” Ulrich, “The Retired Officer and the State,” 15-19 (recommending professional norms for retired members).

<sup>76</sup> George Smawley, “Stewardship and the Retired Senior Leader: Toward a New Professional Ethic,” *Military Law Review* 220 (Summer 2014): 313-14, [https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military\\_Law/Military\\_Law\\_Review/pdf-files/220-summer-2014.pdf](https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/Military_Law_Review/pdf-files/220-summer-2014.pdf) (accessed February 17, 2017); J. Mackey Ives and Michael J. Davidson, “Court-Martial

Jurisdiction Over Retirees Under Articles 2(4) and 2(6): Time to Lighten Up and Tighten Up,” *Military Law Review* 175 (March 2003): 70-71.

<sup>77</sup> Uniform Code of Military Justice, Article 2(4) (2012) <http://www.apd.army.mil/pdf/files/mcm.pdf> (accessed February 17, 2017). The DOD’s *Manual for Courts-Martial* conveniently republishes the UCMJ as Appendix 2.

<sup>78</sup> Smawley, “Stewardship and the Retired Senior Leader,” 313-14; Ives and Davidson, “Court-Martial Jurisdiction Over Retirees,” 70-71.

<sup>79</sup> Ives and Davidson, “Court-Martial Jurisdiction Over Retirees,” 70-71.

<sup>80</sup> Houghton, “The Law of Retired Military Officers and Political Endorsements.” Ives and Davidson provided the following example illustrating the high threshold for appropriate military jurisdiction: “a retired senior military officer [appearing] before a national audience in uniform and using his military title, [speaking] contemptuously of the President [or other protected person enumerated by the UCMJ].” Ives and Davidson, “Court-Martial Jurisdiction over Retirees,” 84, footnote 494.

<sup>81</sup> Smawley, “Stewardship and the Retired Senior Leader,” 313-14.

<sup>82</sup> Kotter, *Leading Change*, 21. Kotter’s 8-Step Model also includes “empowering broad-based action,” “generating short-term wins,” “consolidating gains and producing more change,” and “anchoring new approaches in the culture.” *Ibid.* This paper omits these steps for brevity and economy.

<sup>83</sup> Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1985) 224-25.

<sup>84</sup> Kotter, *Leading Change*, 35.

<sup>85</sup> Moten, “We Have a Big Problem with Retired Generals.” See text accompanying note 31.

<sup>86</sup> Flynn, “Republican Convention Speech,” July 18, 2016; Allen, “Democratic Convention Speech,” July 28, 2016; Bradner, Murray, and Brown, “Trump Offers Flynn Job of National Security Advisor.”

<sup>87</sup> Kotter, *Leading Change*, 51.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>89</sup> Dempsey, “Keep Your Politics Private, My Fellow Generals and Admirals”; Shane III, “Another Former Joint Chiefs Chairman Blasts General’s Involvement in Politics.”

<sup>90</sup> David Wright, Ryan Browne, and Naomi Lim, “88 Former Military Leaders Write Letter Backing Donald Trump for President,” *CNN*, September 6, 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/09/06/politics/donald-trump-military-leaders-endorsement-letter/> (accessed February 11, 2017); Ralph Peters, “What Our Nation Would Get With Gen. Mattis as Defense Secretary,” *FoxNews*, December 1, 2016, <http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2016/12/01/ralph-peters-what-our-nation-would-get-with-gen-mattis-as-defense-secretary.html> (accessed February 11, 2017).

<sup>91</sup> Kotter, *Leading Change*, 67.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 68-69.

<sup>93</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *The Army Profession*, 5-4.

<sup>94</sup> Dempsey, "Keep Your Politics Private, My Fellow Generals and Admirals." Arguing for retired GO/FOs to refrain from political endorsements in part because "It is . . . nearly impossible for them to speak exclusively for themselves when speaking publicly. If that were even possible, few would want to hear from them".

<sup>95</sup> Kohn, "The Erosion of Civilian Control," 28-29.

<sup>96</sup> Snider, "The Problem with Generals."

<sup>97</sup> Dempsey, "Keep Your Politics Private, My Fellow Generals and Admirals." Stating that "retired admirals and generals are free to speak to those seeking elected office . . . privately"; Ulrich, "The Retired Officer and the State," 16. Arguing for how the retired military can participate in policy and strategy in the role of "restrained expert".

<sup>98</sup> Dempsey, "Keep Your Politics Private, My Fellow Generals and Admirals."

<sup>99</sup> Ulrich, interview by author, January 4, 2017. Discussing measures to establish the norm of apolitical behavior by retired military personnel.

<sup>100</sup> Kotter, *Leading Change*, 90.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.* Kotter's other key elements of communication included "metaphor, analogy, and example" and "give-and-take." *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *Joint Force Quarterly* has been a common venue for the CJCS to comment on the apolitical military profession, including messages from Admiral Mullen, General Dempsey, and Admiral Dunford. "An Interview with Admiral Michael J. Mullen," *Joint Force Quarterly* 54 (July 2009): 7-11, <http://ndupress.ndu.edu/portals/68/Documents/jfq/jfq-54.pdf> (accessed February 18, 2017); Michael Mullen, "From the Chairman," *Joint Force Quarterly* 62 (July 2011): 2-5, <http://ndupress.ndu.edu/portals/68/Documents/jfq/jfq-62.pdf> (accessed February 18, 2017); Martin Dempsey, "From the Chairman: Putting Our Nation First," *Joint Force Quarterly* 65 (April 2012): 4-5, <http://ndupress.ndu.edu/portals/68/Documents/jfq/jfq-65.pdf> (accessed February 18, 2017); Joseph Dunford, "Upholding Our Oath," *Joint Force Quarterly* 82 (July 2016): 2-3, <http://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/jfq/jfq-82/jfq-82.pdf?ver=2016-07-08-153513-167> (accessed February 18, 2017);

<sup>103</sup> Martin Dempsey, "To All Who Have Served in Uniform Since 9/11," February 15, 2015, linked from *The Joint Chiefs of Staff Home Page*, <http://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Publications/CalltoContinuedtoServiceLetter.pdf> (accessed February 18, 2017).

<sup>104</sup> Ulrich, interview by author, January 4, 2017.

<sup>105</sup> Ulrich, "The Retired Officer and the State," 15-19.

<sup>106</sup> Barno and Bensahel, "How to Get Generals Out of Politics."

<sup>107</sup> Ulrich, interview by author, January 4, 2017.

<sup>108</sup> Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 224-25.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid. The complete list of Schein's mechanisms is "(1) what leaders pay attention to, measure, and control; (2) leader reactions to critical incidents and organizational crises; (3) deliberate role modeling, teaching and coaching by leaders; (4) criteria for allocation of rewards and status; [and] (5) criteria for recruitment, selection, promotion, retirement, and excommunication." Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 229.

<sup>111</sup> Moten, "We Have a Big Problem with Retired Generals"; Snider, "The Problem with Generals"; Kohn, "The Erosion of Civilian Control," 28-29.