

Chairman Banks, Ranking Member Kim, and to the members of the subcommittee; thank you for the opportunity to testify.

The military must balance functional considerations, those capabilities required to fight and win our nation's wars, with social considerations, or those political and ideological realities which define American life.

Gratefully, our society is not militarized, and most children do not grow up with the presumption of combat as their way of life.

This means, however, the military must maintain a strict separation between values unrelated to the military profession in order to maintain competence, and a respect for civil society. Like a drop of ink in a glass of water, the hint of ideals outside the scope of the military profession is corrosive to the force's effectiveness.

Merit is the foundation of military professionalism which must be the exclusive lens through which military leaders make decisions. In my nearly six years of combat service, I was blessed to know countless men and women who exemplified this standard.

Increasingly, objective military professionalism is instead seen as one factor among many that allows leaders to "comprehensively" evaluate a person, system, or policy.

The mere factor of political considerations outside military competence demands that human characteristics one does not choose become critical filters for military personnel decisions. Considerations for diversity is but one mark of the blend of Samuel Huntington's "military mind" with the hallmarks of a society built around contrary ideals. History tells us that this blend never ends well.

At stake is much more than the relative quality of military units. Instead, the integrity of our Republic is in tension with a military that evaluates matters of politics and identity.

History is littered with examples of militaries whose consideration of political ideology precipitated a collapse in military professionalism, all of which served as a precursor to the collapse of their respective nations. America should not wait to find out if we can outrun the drumbeat of such history.

Thank you.