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August 8, 2023

Lt. General (ret) Mike Gould
Chief Executive Officer
Air Force Academy Association of Graduates
Air Force Academy Foundation
3116 Academy Drive
USAF Academy, CO 80840-4475

Dear Mike:

While attending an AOG event at Polaris Hall at the Air Force Academy on July 27, 2023, you sent me a text stating in part “I’d like to chat with you at the end of the day. Focus on Gen. Schwedo’s [*sic*: Shwedo] pitch in context of STARRS activity.” I have given much thought about our informative conversation in your office for about an hour later that day, and hope our discussions will continue. Based on that, I wish to call the following matters to your attention.

First, as I explained, the presentation I saw at the AOG meeting by Lt. Gen. (ret) Bradford Shwedo about the Institute for Future Conflict (IFC) was impressive. As I recall, you suggested that the STARRS organization had made misleading statements about warfighting training of cadets at the AFA, and I replied that the leaders of STARRS might correct those misleading statements, if there were any, if they were to see and know more about the presentation by Lt. Gen. Shwedo that I saw; and I advocated that Lt. Gen. (ret) Rod Bishop (Chairman of the BOD of STARRS) and Col. (ret) Ron Scott (President of STARRS) be permitted to see Lt. Gen. Shwedo’s presentation as soon as possible. As I distinctly recall, you stated several times that the Superintendent of the Air Force Academy would not allow those STARRS leaders to see the presentation because the Superintendent did not trust them for various reasons, and I replied that denying them the ability to see the presentation was unjustified because STARRS leaders are trustworthy; the presentation is not classified and would be viewed by thousands of others anyway; and STARRS leaders might change their views and correct any errors, or be able to correct the misperceptions/errors of others, if they learned the content and background of the presentation. Please tell me if I am not recalling the above accurately.

Please note that STARRS opposes racism and radical ideologies in the military, including at the Air Force Academy. There is overwhelming evidence that racist and radical Leftist ideologies/political ideas are prevalent and being promoted/taught to cadets at the service academies, including at the AFA. For example, see the attached Statement by an AFA cadet (Exhibit #1); “The DEI Threat to our military Academies,” Colorado Springs Gazette, 5 Aug 2023 (Exhibit #2); and the article about the goals and nature of Critical Race Theory and its derivatives at [In Their Own Words: "What is Critical Race Theory?" | RealClearDefense](#). As another example, the facts that an AFA professor publicly called Caucasian cadets in her classroom, in the presence of non-Caucasian cadets, “White Boy Number 1, White Boy Number 2,” etc., and that that professor was not removed as an

AFA instructor for making those statements (when similar statements about cadets of color almost certainly would have resulted in the professor's removal) evidence how much the past AFA norms of non-discrimination, non-racism, dignity and respect have deteriorated. As another example, the fact that several federal courts, including a US Court of Appeals, ruled that the military, including specifically the Air Force, violated the legal rights of military members, including cadets, to not take the COVID vaccine due to their religious objections evidences how military leaders presumed to violate statutory and Constitutional laws in violation of their oath to support and defend the Constitution.

STARRS believes that these racist and radical ideologies/ideas at the Air Force Academy and elsewhere in the military severely undermine military warfighting readiness and morale, regardless of how much warfighting training and how many warfighting presentations are provided. The facts that Lt. Gen. Shwedo gives excellent presentations and the IFC and the AFA may provide cadets some excellent warfighting training does not negate the detrimental effects of racism and radicalism on recruitment, attrition, morale and warfighting readiness in the military. Clausewitz, in his seminal treatise On War, observed that the moral element is three times more powerful than the physical--both are needed to win wars. IFC represents the physical and should not distract from the fact that the moral element is being tarnished/diminished/undermined at the AFA by CRT/DEI ideology. We should not dismiss or ignore this moral element by letting it be overshadowed by the IFC initiative

Second, it appears that there may be sharp differences of opinions about what is the proper role of the AOG regarding these matters as defined by those who run the AOG versus thousands of AOG members who do not. While it is certain that the AOG has no authority to determine what the AFA does, the AOG and its members do have the authority to express disapproval of and otherwise to not support conduct they consider detrimental to the military and violative of the US Constitution. Many AOG members appear to believe that supporting the AFA should not include supporting specific conduct at the AFA they consider to be illegal or immoral.

For example, many AOG members appear to believe that the AFA and the military have strayed into promoting political ideas instead of remaining non-political, resulting in harm to military readiness and violations of the rights of individuals. Moreover, many AOG members fear, suspect and/or believe that the AOG itself is promoting, aiding and abetting proliferation of these racist and radical ideologies/political ideas not just by its silence but also by its providing financial and administrative support to publish and promote those ideologies, while omitting/censoring contrary opinions. As just one example, some AOG members fear money from the AOG or the Foundation may have been or may be used, directly or indirectly, to purchase and make available to cadets books promoting racist/radical political ideas, including judging people by their skin color instead of the content of their character; substituting forced "equity" for merit and equal opportunity; teaching that all white people are oppressors of black people and have white rage/bias; opening US borders; and denigrating a Republican President and Commander-in-Chief – all of which are blatantly political.

Third, there is much evidence that the military, including the AFA, deliberately has been misleading the public, dissembling and secreting from the public accurate information about the racist/radical ideologies they are promoting. That is evident from the failures of the AFA to provide documents required to be produced by the Freedom of Information Act until sued by Judicial Watch; by the AFA's claims it does not teach cadets Critical Race Theory when it does; by the AFA's failure

to identify or provide evidence of its claims that “systemic racism” exists at the AFA, when asked to do so; and by the Department of Defense’s suspension of the academies’ Congressionally created Boards of Visitors until a lawsuit challenging those suspensions was filed, termination and replacement of all BOV members appointed by a Republican President, and attempted “packing” of the BOVs in subcommittees consisting of non-BOV members. It appears that the AOG also is trying to mislead and to avoid openness about these racist/radical ideologies at the AFA by censoring/limiting the expression of opposing views in AOG publications and by AOG BOD members, and by discussing objections to the AOG’s responses to these ideologies at the AFA in secret “executive” sessions instead of publicly to avoid AOG members knowing the statements and views of their elected BOD members about these issues.

As a representative example of AFA graduate views expressed repeatedly, that the AFA itself misleads/quibbles/dissembles rather than be completely truthful about its spreading radical ideologies at the AFA was expressed this morning by a retired AF Colonel and AFA graduate, as follows:

“[T]he 16 hours of DEI training is at best quibbling and probably in reality a lie. You don’t have 80 DEI/Political Officers running around for something as “insignificant” as only 16 hours of training! You have the goods on the lying leadership with the first hand accounts of the Cadets who have confided in you. Leftist ideology excuses their lies and subterfuge in the interest of ‘the ends justify the means.’...If the Leftists remain in power, the woke/DEI movement at the Academies and overall military will be so far down the road they will be unsalvageable...which is a truly dangerous and sad state of affairs for our country.”

Fourth, many AOG members experience profound disappointment over the dismissive and antagonistic attitude of some AOG BOD members, especially the new BOD Chairman, toward those AOG members who express their genuine concerns about these matters. On May 12, 2023, Lt. Gen. Rod Bishop, AFA ’74, and Col. Ron Scott, AFA ’73, made a presentation to the AOG BOD on behalf of themselves and over 140 other individual AFA graduates in their personal capacities, complaining about the harm being caused by the proliferation of these racist/radical political policies/ideas at the AFA, and the AOG’s facilitation and promotion of the same, in violation of the AOG’s Articles of Incorporation/Bylaws. In response, the AOG BOD discussed that presentation in secret session instead of in an open meeting and to this day has provided AOG members no response to their concerns and specific recommendations. Instead, the Chairman of the AOG’s BOD sent other BOD members the following shockingly hostile/disrespectful statements in response:

“... [T]he group represented by Lt Gen Bishop and Dr Scott want only one outcome—one we cannot and will not provide. I ask that we all not communication [*sic*: “communicate”] with these gentlemen or other members of their organization. They are not welcome on the hill and have not proven to be trustworthy and honest brokers for their cause...Should their organization decide to pursue legal action, we have very competent and experienced attorneys who will represent the AOG.”

The antagonistic content and tone of these denigrative statements are not what AOG members expect from a member of the AOG BOD elected to represent them, especially by the Chairman of the BOD and a retired AF Major General, regarding fellow AFA graduates and senior career officers. AOG members expect, and should receive, from their elected BOD members, especially the

Chairman of the BOD, respect for them and their views and the attitude of a humble servant's heart, rather than contemptuous disdain and unfounded accusations of dishonesty. Nor is it appropriate for the BOD Chairman to have accused fellow AFA graduates and retired senior officers of dishonesty and untrustworthiness without stating the bases for such outrageous/unfounded claims and without giving the accused an opportunity to defend themselves; or to declare that the AOG "will not provide" the relief requested by that Chairman's unilateral fiat instead of by public vote of the entire BOD.

Given the above, STARRS asks also that the AOG inform the AFA Superintendent of these concerns of AFA graduates about racism and radical ideologies at the AFA, and evidence thereof; and cause the AOG BOD to consider the viewpoints of AOG members opposing these racist/radical ideologies at the AFA with good faith concern and respect, and in open meetings so AOG members will know the viewpoints and statements of their elected BOD members about these matters. In addition, STARRS asks that you ask the AOG BOD to publicly respond to the specific recommendations made to the AOG by AFA graduates Lt. General (ret) Rod Bishop and Colonel (ret) Ron Scott, on behalf of themselves and 140 other AFA graduates personally, rather than to continue to ignore them, and to cease making personal attacks against AOG members who express their concerns and recommendations to the BOD members elected to represent them.

Thank you for your consideration.

With warm regards, I remain,

Sincerely,

Michael T. Rose
AFA '69
General Counsel, STARRS

List of Attached Exhibits:

Exhibit #1 - Statement by an AFA cadet

Exhibit #2 - "The DEI Threat to our military Academies," Colorado Springs Gazette, 5 Aug 2023.