

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1309

July 10, 2020

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

The Honorable Mark Esper
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1300

Dear Secretary Esper:

Multiple media reports indicate that Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Alexander Vindman was selected by the Army promotion board to be promoted to Colonel; the Secretary of the Army approved this recommendation and submitted it to your office for your approval; and that you signed off and submitted the Army promotions packet without modification to the White House on Monday, July 6, 2020.

However, I have yet to receive written confirmation from you verifying the accuracy of these reports. As you have known since July 1, 2020, I will not consent to any request to confirm, en bloc, all remaining military nominations and promotions at the O6 level and above on the Executive Calendar and on the Secretary of the Senate's desk until I receive your written confirmation that:

1. The Army Competitive Category promotion board for Lieutenant Colonel (O5) to Colonel (O6) included LTC Vindman among its selection for promotion to O6;
2. The Army included LTC Vindman on its list of promotions to O6 that it sent to the Pentagon; and
3. You or your designee would or had submitted a list of Army promotions to O6 to the White House for approval that includes (or included) LTC Vindman.

LTC Vindman's request to retire from the Army has no bearing on the public interest in making sure there is transparency and oversight into how the Army and the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) handled this matter. The integrity of the military promotion system transcends any single individual.

If the anonymous media leaks from DoD officials concerning your actions signing and submitting the Army promotion packet to the White House are accurate, then merely confirming the validity of these press reports in writing to me should be a simple and straightforward task. I look forward to receiving your written response that will enable the remaining military nominations to be confirmed, en bloc, when the Senate returns to session later this month.

Sincerely,



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator