



Duckworth to Defense Secretary: Why Won't You Confirm in Writing that You Didn't Interfere in Lt. Col. Vindman's Promotion

July 10 2020 4:05 PM

WASHINGTON, DC – Combat Veteran and U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), a member of the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) who served in the Reserve Forces for 23 years, reiterated her request for written confirmation that Secretary of Defense Mark Esper signed off on and submitted the Army promotions packet—which included Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman's name—without modification to the White House. Her second request for written confirmation comes after multiple media outlets reported that Esper included Vindman's name on a list that was sent to the White House on Monday.

In part, Duckworth wrote: “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.”

[Earlier this month](#), Duckworth put a partial hold on senior military promotions until Esper confirmed in writing that he did not, or would not, block the expected and deserved promotion of Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman to Colonel. To date, Duckworth has not received any such confirmation from Esper.

Full letter text is included below and [here](#).

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.