

How the Defense Dept. Reacted to Pleas to Let Soldiers Defend Themselves from Islamic Terrorism

Over 50,000 of you spoke up after terrorism struck on American soil once again in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Now, the Department of Defense (DOD) is responding, reevaluating dangerous priorities. After a *jihadist* murdered five unarmed soldiers at military installations here at home, we spoke up and you stood with us to protect our troops, demanding they be allowed to defend themselves. The current DOD policies and regulations limit our troops' ability to defend themselves instead of realizing the changing nature of our enemies and the wars we fight. They prioritized the limiting of arming our troops instead of protecting them in a time of terror. We demanded that Congress allow our men and women in uniform be equipped to defend themselves. We sent an urgent legal letter to Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter calling for the Department of Defense to change its priorities and protect our troops. Our letter stated:

Mr. Secretary, force protection is one of your prime responsibilities. Therefore, we respectfully urge you to amend current DOD directives and other DOD documents that preclude our Service Members from being armed to protect themselves, so that men and women in uniform are never again without the means to defend themselves when attacked by a fanatical Islamic jihadist. We owe it to our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines to allow them to defend themselves when in mortal danger.

We spoke up, and Secretary Carter has responded. The

Washington Times has more details:

In his first policy response to the killings of five American troops at a Tennessee reserve center, Defense Secretary Ashton Carter released a memo Thursday that will let more service members carry guns stateside while on base or at more vulnerable satellite offices. A two-page memo tells service secretaries to review rules and revise as needed to meet security threats. It could mean that more armed security personnel are added to a base or center and that, in some cases, regular personnel are told to carry guns because of a heightened threat environment. The Islamic State group, based in Syria and Iraq, has put great effort into trying to persuade Muslims via social media to kill U.S. military personnel. "The tragic shooting on July 16 in Chattanooga, Tennessee, illustrates the continuing threat to DoD personnel in the U.S. homeland posed by Homegrown Violent Extremists," Mr. Carter wrote. "This incident and the ongoing threat underscore the need for DoD to review its force protection and security policies, and procedures, particularly for off-installation DoD facilities."

This is a vital step in the right direction. Tens of thousands of you spoke up, we acted, and now the DOD is taking action. As it reviews these policies, new policies must reflect what our proper priorities should be: the safety of those who sacrifice everything to protect our liberties and freedoms. We will continue to keep you updated on this issue. Continue to stand with us as we stand up for our troops.