

We Need a Revolt of the Admirals and Generals

The announcement that President Obama and his Defense Department are preparing to allow “transgendered” individuals into the military and that nary a whisper of dissent has come forth from any of the services, or from Congress, tells us just how deeply political correctness and careerism have corrupted the upper ranks of our military under Obama.

This was not always the case.

In the years immediately after World War II a controversy over the organization and budget of the U.S. military broke out that was later dubbed “The Revolt of the Admirals.”

History has generally left the impression that this battle was a petty fight over which service got what mission and how much money in a time of post-war Pentagon austerity.

In reality the battle was over a deeper and more profound issue—the politicization of the military and the ability of military officers to testify truthfully before Congress about the impact of executive branch decisions on readiness and national security.

After President Harry S. Truman was elected to a full term in 1948, he appointed Louis A. Johnson as Secretary of Defense. Johnson was a political appointment. A former Assistant to the Secretary of War, he had been the primary fundraiser for Truman’s campaign for the White House in 1948.

When Johnson cancelled the Navy’s first supercarrier, the *United States*, in favor of more Air Force B-36 bombers, Secretary of the Navy John L. Sullivan and a number of high-ranking admirals resigned in protest.

Sullivan was replaced as Secretary of the Navy by political hack Francis P. Matthews, also a fundraiser for Truman's 1948 campaign. Matthews, who knew nothing about the Navy, allegedly said before the appointment the closest he came to Navy experience was rowing a boat across a lake.

Matthews duly supported Johnson in the budget battles, but as a consequence of the infighting, the battle over the future of the Navy began to go public, starting with a series of articles in the conservative *Saturday Evening Post* that culminated with a hard-hitting article by Rear Admiral Daniel V. Gallery headlined "Don't Let Them Scuttle the Navy!" (As far as we can tell this article is not available online.)

After publishing his critique of Secretary Johnson's policies, Johnson wanted Rear Admiral Gallery court-martialed for gross insubordination; instead Gallery, a genuine hero of World War II, was shuffled off to the Tenth Naval District in Puerto Rico and eventually retired.

In October 1949, congressional hearings were held on the controversy over the cancellation of the *United States*, the capability of the B-36 and the marginalizing of the Navy in the new age of atomic warfare.

The naval officers called to testify were expected to support Secretary Matthews, but instead officer after officer arose to testify that the Air Force reliance on the B-36 was inadequate for national defense, and that the entire strategy of atomic bombing was misguided.

[Note: The Navy officers were proven right when, six months later, the Korean War broke out and the U.S. was forced to confront an invading army with the forces it had on hand. The Truman administration declined to use the nuclear arsenal, making the B-36 irrelevant, and sought to check North Korean aggression with conventional forces. As an initial response, Truman called for a naval blockade of North Korea,

and was shocked to learn that such a blockade could only be imposed "on paper", since the U.S. Navy no longer had the warships with which to carry out his request. (*"Memorandum of Information for the Secretary—Blockade of Korea". Truman Presidential Library—Archives. July 6, 1950*)]

Among the officers testifying were the naval leaders of World War II: Ernest King, Chester Nimitz, William Halsey, Raymond Spruance, Thomas Kinkaid, Richard Conolly, Robert Carney and Captain (later Admiral and CNO) Arleigh Burke.

The result of the hearings was not complimentary to Defense Secretary Johnson, Secretary of the Navy Matthews and the Truman administration.

In disapproving of Johnson's "summary manner" of terminating the *United States* and his failure to consult congressional committees before acting, the committee stated that "national defense is not strictly an executive department undertaking; it involves not only the Congress but the American people as a whole speaking through their Congress. The committee can in no way condone this manner of deciding public questions."

Retaliation by Johnson and Matthews was swift and brutal. Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Louis E. Denfeld was the first to go, learning of his firing in the newspapers. Vice Admirals William H. P. Blandy and Gerald F. Bogan were reassigned to positions below their rank and subsequently resigned.

The House Armed Services Committee condemned the dismissal of Admiral Denfeld by Secretary Matthews, concluding that Denfeld's removal was a reprisal because of his testimony to Congress.

Now here's the key point in the "Revolt of the Admirals" as it relates to today's controversy over "transgender" individuals serving in the military: The Committee asserted that such actions taken by the executive branch to stifle honest

testimony before Congress by military personnel *posed a challenge to effective representative government.*

Given the vast damage done to national security by Private Bradley Edward Manning (now known as Chelsea Manning) who leaked over 500,000 classified documents to Wikileaks, it seems only appropriate that Congress conduct hearings on whether or not admitting to the military individuals suffering from gender dysmorphia endangers national security.

Manning, who was diagnosed with gender identity disorder while in the Army, stands as the most obvious warning that people who have the mental health issues associated with gender identity disorder pose a threat to national security and military readiness.

But Congressional hearings without honest testimony from those military officers called to testify are useless and in Obama's politicized Pentagon, and the environment of political correctness and gender politics in which it operates, it will take men and women of real courage and conviction, who are prepared to tell the truth, and, like the Admirals who revolted in 1948 and 1949, to put their careers on the line.

George Rasley *is editor of ConservativeHQ, a member of American MENSA and a veteran of over 300 political campaigns, including every Republican presidential campaign from 1976 to 2008. He served as lead advance representative for Governor Sarah Palin in 2008 and has served as a staff member, consultant or advance representative for some of America's most recognized conservative Republican political figures, including President Ronald Reagan and Jack Kemp. He served in policy and communications positions on the House and Senate staff, and during the George H.W. Bush administration he served on the White House staff of Vice President Dan Quayle.*