

The DoD Times (Redacted)



When a Culture of Silence Encounters a Culture of “Fixing Things”

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Did You Know: DoD Civilians, inclusive of the Senior Executive Service, often rely on rotational military personnel, irrespective of rank, to correct known organizational / personnel issues, including initiating the removal of abusive managers. If the organizational response to the military is retaliatory, however, the DoD Civilian must decide whether their own or the military person’s career is more important.

Here are some potential implications of this fact:

1. DoD Civilians who resort to asking Service Members for help correcting known issues inadvertently highlight a larger organizational issue – senior leadership does not protect or value its organic employees (the civilians), and likely will retaliate / reprise against the civilians if they say something to correct a problem. Military personnel likely will understand this larger issue too late.
2. Organizational senior leaders foster unnatural and unnecessary “cultural conflicts” between DoD Civilians and Service Members to ensure that the civilian workforce remains silent and that the military personnel are viewed as outsiders who are “rocking the boat.”
3. Without assuming additional risk to their own careers, DoD Civilians who care but believe they will be reprisal / retaliated against if they report an issue, can rely on military personnel whose cultural and organizational bias is to “fix things.”
4. Rotational Service Members unwittingly step into organizational quicksand that they neither understand nor are provided the protections to fight against, thus prematurely ending their career.

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5. DoD Civilians and Service Members within these types of organizations invest most of their workday “managing” interpersonal office politics, always to the detriment of mission accomplishment.

A question to ask yourself is if Congress and POTUS can cut through the proverbial [Gordian Knot](#) of implications outlined above by creating a truly independent [investigative arm](#) of the Executive Branch that honestly illuminates and punishes reprisal and retaliation against anybody, civilian or military, who attempts to correct a wrong.

If you feel that you have been a victim of this "Did You Know" highlight, feel free to reach out privately or share your story in the comments.