Twitter Thread by Jim Golby



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I think this thread came from a good place, but I want to add a few thoughts because I think service members WILL be talking about yesterday's events -- and that leaders SHOULD be talking to their troops about them.

They need to be thoughtful, not scared of doing so. 1/

> (2 of 4) Commandant Sends #13: Protest at the US Capitol
>
> "And in light of that, I believe it is prudent to remind everyone of our duty to restrain ourselves from political commentary in any venue. The importance of an apolitical military cannot be overstated."
>
> — Army War College (@ArmyWarCollege) January 6, 2021

Yesterday, our nation's capital was attacked and the capitol was briefly occupied. 1100 members of the DC National Guard were activated, as were more than 6000 NG troops from half a dozen states.

They're now operating in a highly political environment. More could join them. 2/

Calls for our military to remain apolitical really mean: (1) our military must be non-partisan; (2) it should not interfere or influence elections; & (3) service members should not portray their personal opinions as the military institution's opinions. 3/ https://t.co/ROksRHFh6R

While there is a lot we don't know, there are indications that at least some police yesterday acted in a biased way -- allowing the mobs to bypass barriers to attack and enter the capitol building.

Personal/partisan sympathies cannot interfere with a military unit's duties. 4/

Leaders and commanders should talk to their formations about these issues, and try to understand if there are service members for whom that might be a problem. (Hint: there probably are.)

You can't do that if you're not communicating with them and having real discussions. 5/

NG units now play a role in maintaining order to allow the transfer of political power to take place.

Leaders can & should make clear that civilian electoral institutions HAVE decided the outcome. The Electoral College vote has been certified. Joe Biden will be President. 6/

Support for insurrectionists is a threat in military units. Partisan divisions can also hurt unit cohesion and effectiveness.

But leaders should not avoid these discussions or pretend divisions aren't there. They need to work to unify around values and principles of service. 7/

But having these conversations will/may also identify service members who don't share those values, and are unwilling to change their views.

How to deal with those soldiers is a whole different problem, but it is one leaders should be addressing. 8/

Service members should also be careful about whether/how to comment on these issues in public, esp on social media.

In this sense, it is wise to avoid pure commentary, particularly if it could give the impression you're speaking for the military -- intentionally or not. 9/

But professionalism & respect don't amount to pure avoidance, either.

Not talking about these issues won't make them go away, and it could potentially obscure real problems.

So, please talk about them. But be professional & thoughtful. And remember the public is watching. 10/10

PS1/ Here is a great example of how to address and correct these issues when they occur (but I also hope it doesn't just end with the deletion of posts/comments): https://t.co/94H3UUzt9r

> He came on a post one of my former LTs made condemning yesterday. Stated there were many exercising their Constitutional rights and the term \u201cStorming the Capitol\u201d is unfair to them. Profile pic is in ASUs. Told him we expect better of Army Os. Will see if he escalates.
>
> — Brad Duplessis (@DuplessisBrad) January 7, 2021