

September 14, 2021

President Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write with grave concern regarding recent reporting that General Mark Milley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, worked to actively undermine the sitting Commander in Chief of the United States Armed Forces and contemplated a treasonous leak of classified information to the Chinese Communist Party in advance of a potential armed conflict with the People's Republic of China (PRC). These actions by General Milley demonstrate a clear lack of sound judgement, and I urge you to dismiss him immediately.

It has been reported that General Milley spoke with his counterpart in the People's Liberation Army after learning the PRC was worried about escalating tensions as a result of military exercises conducted in the South China Sea. Reportedly, General Milley told his counterpart: "[y]ou and I have known each other for now five years. If we're going to attack, I'm going to call you ahead of time. It's not going to be a surprise."¹ I do not need to tell of you the dangers posed by senior military officers leaking classified information on U.S. military operations, but I will underscore that such subversion undermines the President's ability to negotiate and leverage one of this nation's instruments of national power in his interactions with foreign nations.

Even more egregiously, reports indicate that General Milley interfered with the procedures by which the civilian commander-in-chief can order a nuclear strike. He purportedly instructed officials not to take orders without his involvement and forced them to take an oath to that effect. A senior military officer interfering with that civilian-controlled process is simply unacceptable at best, and at worst, would cause ambiguity which could lead to war.

General Milley has attempted to rationalize his reckless behavior by arguing that what he perceived as the military's judgement was more stable than its civilian commander. It is a dangerous precedent that could be asserted at any point in the future by General Milley or others. It threatens to tear apart our nation's longstanding principle of civilian control of the military.

¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/09/14/peril-woodward-costa-trump-milley-china/>

You must immediately dismiss General Milley. America's national security and ability to lead in the world are at stake.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Rubio', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator