

**Statement of LTC Jason Amerine, USA**  
**June 11, 2015**

Warren Weinstein is dead. Colin Rutherford, Joshua Boyle, Caitlin Coleman and the child she bore in captivity are still hostages in Pakistan. I failed them. I exhausted all efforts and resources available to return them but I failed.

One of the resources I used was to exercise my Constitutional right to speak to members of Congress. You passed the Military Whistleblower Protection Act to ensure such access. Apparently it isn't working.

After I made protected disclosures to Congress, the Army suspended my clearance, removed me from my job, launched a criminal investigation and deleted my retirement orders with a view to court martial me after I exercised that Constitutional right.

As a soldier I support and defend the Constitution of the United States in order to have a government in which the voices of the people are heard. Yet I have been cautioned by people I admire and respect against testifying before a committee investigating whistleblower retaliation--for fear of further retaliation.

My team had a difficult mission and I used all legal resources available to accomplish that mission. You, the Congress, were my last resort to recover the hostages.

But now I am a whistleblower, a term that has become radioactive and derogatory. I am before you today because I did my duty and you need to ensure all in uniform can go on doing their duty without fear of reprisal.

Let me be absolutely clear: I have never blamed my situation on the White House and my loyalty is to our Commander in Chief as I support and defend the Constitution. Whatever I say here today is not as a Republican or a Democrat but as a Soldier with no allegiance to any political party.

And what terrible actions brought me before you today?

In early 2013, my office was asked to help get SGT Bergdahl home. We informally audited the recovery effort and determined that the reason the effort failed for four years was because our nation lacks an organization that can synchronize the efforts of all our government agencies to get our hostages home. We also realized that there were civilian hostages in Pakistan that nobody was trying to free so they were added to our mission.

I assessed that both issues were caused by an evolutionary misstep in the government that created stove pipes of our Federal Agencies. The Department of Defense had faced this problem in the 1980's as the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines operated independently of one

another, leading to the Goldwater Nichols Act of 1986. Transformation of the federal bureaucracy on that scale, literally, takes an act of Congress.

To get the hostages home, my team worked three lines of effort: Fix the coordination of the recovery, develop a viable trade and get the Taliban back to the negotiating table. My team was equipped to address the latter two of those tasks but fixing the government's interagency process was beyond our capability. Our agencies seldom admit failure and this lieutenant colonel's opinion of their limitations could not even escape the Pentagon.

Recovering SGT Bergdahl was a critical step to carrying out our Commander in Chief's objective of ending the longest war in American history but the interagency process for hostages had proven incapable of self-repair and could only be fixed with bipartisanship this nation hasn't seen lately. So I went to a Republican Representative in order to repair a dysfunctional interagency process to support our Democratic President. This was as bipartisan as it gets and it would lead to the Army placing me under criminal investigation.

I talked to Representative Duncan Hunter because he is a member of the House Armed Services Committee. I wanted him to buttress our efforts with two simple messages: the bureaucracy for hostage recovery was broken and because of that five hostages and a prisoner of war had little hope of escaping Pakistan. And it started to work. His dialogue with the Department of Defense led quickly to the appointment of Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Lumpkin as the hostage recovery coordinator for the Pentagon. This step enabled the DOD to act decisively on the Bergdahl trade once the Taliban sought a deal.

But the civilian hostages were forgotten during the negotiations with the Taliban. In that respect, I failed miserably.

I continued to work with Rep. Hunter's office to repair our dysfunctional hostage recovery efforts. He set-up a meeting between my office and the FBI. The meeting appeared to be cordial but the FBI formally complained to the Army that information I was sharing with Rep. Hunter was classified. It was not. After my criminal investigation began, the FBI admitted to Rep. Hunter that they had the utmost respect for our work but they had to put me in my place.

Again: the FBI made serious allegations of misconduct to the Army in order to put me in my place and readily admitted that to a US Congressman.

A terrible irony is that my security clearance was suspended on January 15th, the day after Warren Weinstein was killed, as we now know.

We were the only DOD effort actively trying to free the civilian hostages in Pakistan and the FBI succeeded in ending our efforts the day the dysfunction they sought to protect killed Warren Weinstein.

Am I right? Is the system broken? I believe we all failed the Commander in Chief by not getting critical advice to him. I believe we all failed the Secretary of Defense who likely never knew the extent of the interagency dysfunction that was our recovery effort.

Somewhere along the way the military and Congress switched roles. The military was supposed to uphold the uncompromising values needed to fight and die for a cause. And Congress was supposed to represent the best meaning of the word compromise. But now the military will not uphold this Soldier's right to speak to Congress while Congress worries about how my narrative will affect the polarized politics of the day.

For nearly five months, I have received no relief from the military and there has been no transparency in their investigation of me. My pay was even stopped briefly after the Army deleted my retirement orders. The Project on Government Oversight has been a godsend and Representatives Hunter and Speier stood up for me while no committee took action until today.

That sends a terrible message to service members: speak to Congress and you may be abandoned. I ask that you ensure that is not the enduring message.

The outpouring of support from fellow service members has been humbling. Worst for me is that the cadets I taught at West Point, now officers rising in the ranks, are reaching out to see if I'm okay. I feared for their safety when they went to war and now they fear for my safety in Washington.

And let us not forget: Warren Weinstein is dead while Colin Rutherford, Josh Boyle, Caitlin Coleman, and her child remain prisoners. Who is fighting for them?