



McMaster's former staff officer in Iraq: A general must not just stand by while a lie is being promulgated

Here is the response I received from retired Lt. Col. Paul Yingling, who was McMaster's deputy commander in Iraq.

By [Thomas E. Ricks](#) | May 16, 2017, 1:19 PM



US National Security Advisor H. R. McMaster denies the report of US President Donald Trump revealing classified information to Russian officials in the Oval Office, during a statement to the press outside of the West Wing at the White House in Washington, DC, May 15, 2017. / AFP PHOTO / SAUL LOEB (Photo credit should read SAUL LOEB/AFP/Getty Images)

I asked several officers who know Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster, President Donald Trump's national security advisor, how they would advise McMaster about his current plight, working for a president who may in fact present a clear and present danger to the nation's security.

Here is the response I received from retired Lt. Col. Paul Yingling, who was McMaster's "effects coordinator" in Iraq, and later became deputy commander of their regiment:

Tom,

I haven't anything to say to you regarding HR. He is my friend and my advice to friends is private. However, I would like to clarify a point regarding the honor code of the officer corps.

An officer may not tolerate a lie.

It is not enough that everything an officer says is true. This standard is too low; it allows an officer to omit facts that are relevant to the matter at hand.

It is not enough that everything an officer says is true and complete. This standard is too low; it allows an officer to remain silent while others lie.

An officer may not tolerate a lie. This standard requires not only that everything an officer says is true and complete, but also that an officer must correct anyone who lies in his or her presence. An officer can never be content with a half truth when the whole can be won.

A minor example illustrates this point. Prior to my retirement, my chain of command insisted that I have a public retirement ceremony. Such a ceremony would include the public reading of an award citation stating that the secretary of the Army valued my service. I informed my chain of command that if they read such a statement in my presence, I would be obliged to correct the record. They cancelled the ceremony.

You are welcome to use this statement in its entirety, attributable to me by name.

An officer may not tolerate a lie.

Regards,
Paul

The headline on this item and the identification of Paul Yingling in the text have been revised to reflect the fact that he was a staff officer for McMaster and became deputy commander of the regiment under the subsequent commander.

Photo credit: SAUL LOEB/AFP/Getty Images

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