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Army Chief of Staff Opposes Private Weapons for Protection on U.S. Military Installations

(CNSNews.com) - "I've been around guns all my life. I know how to use them, and arming our people on our military bases and allowing them to carry concealed, privately owned weapons — I do not recommend that as a force protection," Army Chief of Staff General Mark Milley told Congress on Thursday.

Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah) asked Milley what the Army is doing to provide force protection at military bases and facilities in the United States, following last summer's attack on a Marine recruiting center and a Navy Reserve facility in Chattanooga, Tennessee, that killed four Marines and one sailor.

Milley noted that Defense Department policy does not allow military personnel to carry concealed, privately owned weapons on military bases. "I do not recommend that it be changed," he added.

On small, isolated military facilities, such as the recruiting center in Chattanooga, the force protection assessments are made by local commanders, who decide whether it is appropriate to for personnel to carry weapons.

"One size won't fit all," Milley said. "It'll depend on locality, risk and so on." If a local commander does authorize military personnel to carry weapons, they must be trained and they must carry government-owned weapons.

At larger military installations, "We have adequate law enforcement on those bases to respond," Milley said.

In the 2009 Fort Hood incident, where 13 people were killed and 32 others injured, he noted that "police responded in eight minutes, and that guy was dead. So that was pretty quick.

"And a lot of people died in the process of that, but that was a very fast-moving event. And I am not convinced from what I know that carrying privately owned weapons would have stopped that individual."

Nidal Hasan, the gunman in the Nov. 5, 2009 attack at Ford Hood, Texas, did not die in the attack. He was shot by military police and paralyzed from the waist down. He is now on death row at Fort Leavenworth in Kansas.

It took President Obama six years to publicly identify the Fort Hood shooting as a terrorist attack (<http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/patrick-goodenough/obama-six-years-later-calls-fort-hood-terrorist-attack>) [1] rather than an incident of workplace violence, as the Pentagon insisted on describing it.

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