

THE NATIONAL INTEREST

The Civilian and the Military

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was interested to see the Center for a New American Security's Andrew Exum [condemning](#) ^[3] Peter Beinart's [suggestion](#) ^[4] that a more political military might be a good thing.

Interested in part because scholars at CNAS have* been known to promote the political views of active-duty officers with whom it agrees. CNAS helped elevate General David Petraeus—[who threw his own political views about Iraq into the Washington Post when he was serving in uniform in Iraq in 2004](#) ^[5]—to the status of a cult idol in Washington. One of CNAS's visiting fellows, who is also an active-duty army officer, just published [a flagrantly political op-ed on the war in Afghanistan in the New York Times](#) ^[6].

I think it's fine to say we should have a military that stays out of politics. Except that's not what we have. More importantly, someone making that argument might want to remove the beam from his own eye before picking at the mote in another's.

*Corrected to reflect that CNAS is a group of individuals who have opinions on things rather than a collective. I don't like being anthropomorphized as a mere cog in the Cato machine, so fair's fair for CNAS, too.