

# STRATEGIKA

CONFLICTS OF THE PAST AS LESSONS FOR THE PRESENT



## Does Political Correctness Pose a Threat to the Military?

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Documenting the wartime viewpoints and diverse political sentiments of the twentieth century, the Hoover Institution Library & Archives Poster Collection has more than one hundred thousand posters from around the world and continues to grow. Thirty-three thousand are available online. Posters from the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Russia/Soviet Union, and France predominate, though posters from more than eighty countries are included.



# Political Correctness and the American Military

*Williamson Murray*

One of the major worries that confronts those who study the American military at present is the question as to whether the accommodation of its units to the social and political agendas of a portion of America's elite might not in the long run damage what has been for the past thirty years the most competent combat organization in the world. Given the darkening strategic picture that confronts the United States at present with the rising threat of China, the collapse of any sort of stability in the Middle East, and the increasingly threatening behavior of Putin's Russia, the international environment represents one of the most important issues confronting the American people as they approach the election of 2016. It is not one to which there are simple or unambiguous answers.

At the heart of the tension between the America's civil world and the effectiveness of its military is the role of women and gays in the services. The change in the fundamental relationship between the American military and the position of women in its ranks began in the 1970s. Richard Nixon's decision to turn the military from one based on conscription into an all-volunteer military resulted from the extraordinary unpopularity of the Vietnam War and the perception among the American people that the cost in terms of American lives was being borne unfairly by the poorer segments of the American population. Exacerbating the transition from the draftee to volunteer force was the fact that the unpopularity of the Vietnam conflict was going to make it difficult to attract suitably competent individuals to the increasingly complex weapons systems that the American military were beginning to deploy. Moreover, by the end of the Vietnam War, the military services were in shambles. There were race riots in all the services; marine and army officers found themselves forced to carry loaded pistols into the barracks of their enlisted personnel. Drug usage was widespread. The Soviet threat added to the demand to improve the caliber of personnel.

Thus, it did not take a great leap of intuition to realize that women volunteers offered a considerable possibility to fill the gap in competent enlistees. The fact that West Point, Annapolis, and Colorado Springs all opened their doors to women cadets and midshipmen in 1976 indicated the extent of the need to improve the manpower pool by reaching out to the 50 percent of the population that to a considerable extent the military had never tapped. Given the fact that military organizations throughout the ages have relied almost exclusively



on young men, the American decision represented a move that was counterintuitive—that young women could add substantially to the pool of well-trained members of the military and perform their assigned tasks in as competent a fashion as their male counterparts.

The process of integrating women into the military has not always been easy; the removal of the hurdles preventing gays from serving in the military represented an even bigger hurdle. At the beginning of efforts to attract more women, a number of combat specialties remained closed to women officers and enlisted personnel. And there were considerable anomalies. In the 1980s, women intelligence officers in the army, in what was not supposed to be a combat specialty, would have found themselves in some cases out in front of US combat formations, had war broken out with the Soviets. Nevertheless, by the early 1990s there was a considerable expansion of the roles that women could fill. The air force, which had opened up pilot slots in transport aircraft to women in the 1980s, now opened up the positions of both fighter and bomber pilots to women. At the same time the navy opened up the positions of carrier pilot and combat ship crews to women. At the beginning of William Clinton's presidency in 1993, the new president attempted to eliminate the strictures against homosexuals from serving in the military. However, he ran into fierce opposition from the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The result of the confrontation was one that most political observers regarded as a victory for Powell: the policy of don't ask, don't tell. That policy lasted until July 2011, when both due to court rulings as well as changes

in popular attitudes, gays were allowed to serve in the military.

How have these major changes in the socialization and personnel of the American military worked? In almost every respect, the women volunteers have lived up to the expectations of those politicians and military leaders who took the gamble. As one of my friends, who was the commander of an A-10 squadron during Operation Iraqi Freedom suggested to me: "The presence of women pilots considerably improved the attitude and atmosphere of the squadron." Admittedly, it has been a relatively slow process of integrating women into the combat forces and it may take less time in terms of the gay community, but for the most



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part the services have adapted undoubtedly better than has been the case with the work place in the civilian world.

Yet, there have been problems; the most obvious has been the persistence of cases of sexual harassment. Nevertheless, a substantial number of problems has been caused by politicians either in Congress or in the executive branch. The media have not helped as well. All three constituencies are peopled largely with individuals who not only have not served, but know little about the military. And they for the most part know no one in their circle of friends who has served. Thus, they are largely ignorant about the military, its history, the extraordinary tasks it must perform, or the difficulties it confronts in training and equipping its forces to exist in an environment the dangers of which most civilians cannot comprehend.

One suspects that for many who live in the gated communities of American society, the services exist as institutions where they can conduct social experiments. In the case of Congress, some seem to feel that that the military exists for them to make grandstand plays to influence the voters back home. On a number of occasions this has led to the short-circuiting of the careers of outstanding officers who still had much to offer their services and their country. In 1994, the president nominated Admiral Stan Arthur to the position of commander of US Pacific Command. However, Senator David Durenberger (R, Minnesota) put a hold on the nomination because the navy's flight school had washed out of its helicopter training establishment one of his female constituents; Arthur had had no responsibility for the decision, but was singled out because of his position. Rather than have his assignment held up at the whims of a Republican senator, the admiral retired and America lost a valuable, experienced officer.

At approximately the same time, under considerable pressure from both the administration and Congress to qualify a woman as a carrier pilot, the navy kept a woman in the F-14 pipeline in spite of her consistent marginal performance. She crashed her F-14 while attempting a carrier landing, and died. The Kelly Flinn affair underlined the media's general ignorance of the crucial importance of officers' not fraternizing with enlisted personnel. Despite the fact that Flinn, an officer and a B-52 pilot, had continued to carry out an affair with an enlisted man despite the orders of her superior officer, media pressure forced the secretary of the air force to discharge her rather than allow the air force to continue with a court-martial.

Perhaps the most egregious example of the services bending their real needs to the desires of the political world came with the army's decision to introduce coed basic training. Because of the intense nature of the effort to prepare young men to meet the demands of the combat branches, a significantly higher number of women were flunking out of basic training. To rectify that situation the army created a much easier basic training that contained little of the demanding physical preparation required for combat and minimized

basic needs such as marksmanship. The argument of the army's personnel system was that by easing the requirements of basic training, not only would the army save money, but a greater number of women would pass basic training. The result in 2003 was the disaster at Nasiriyah, where an army supply convoy, under incredibly incompetent leadership, drove into the city; only one of the soldiers was prepared to fight, largely due to his own efforts; rifles were dirty and many were unloaded despite being in a combat zone; and few of the soldiers knew how to use their weapons. Iraqi soldiers killed, wounded, or captured the entire unit. However, the story of the army's incompetence was largely lost in the media hype surrounding the rescue of one of its soldiers, Jessica Lynch, from a hospital by Special Forces where the Iraqis were holding her prisoner.

Perhaps the most worrying aspect of the current and increasing gap between America's civil side and its military has been the impact of the legal profession on what should be strictly military decisions. The increasingly restrictive "rules of engagement (ROE)" have made it more difficult for the American military to accomplish its missions. It has, moreover, placed outstanding junior officers in situations where the lives of the soldiers and marines may be compromised if they follow the ROE, but not following the ROE may well end their careers.

The long and short of the increasing imposition of societal strictures, guided by the gated communities of the Beltway and the media, could well lead to a steady decline in the competence and military effectiveness of America's military. Moreover, the military draws the great majority of its officers and enlisted personnel from parts of the United States that are far removed from the comfortable circumstances in which the American elite pursue their dreams of a comfortable, peaceful global community that has little relation to the harsh, brutal reality that characterizes much of the world outside the United States, Europe, and the island states of Asia. Should those parents of those outlier communities no longer be willing to send their sons and daughters to defend the interests of this great Republic, the nation will pay a terrible price.



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# Surgical Strike

*Andrew Roberts*

A series of recent controversies have brought to the fore the central question of how much military protocols need to be updated, on both sides of the Atlantic, to accommodate social and political agendas. They go to the heart of the age-old issue of the extent to which the armed forces need to concentrate on the single, overriding objective of winning future wars, or whether they need to try to reflect the society they are trying to defend. At the heart of it lies the question: Are the armed forces different from the rest of us?

Of course the job we ask the armed forces to undertake—to fight, kill, and possibly die in battle—is leagues away from that which society asks of any other public employees. For all the bravery and sacrifice we occasionally ask of them, even the police and fire services aren't trained to go abroad and actively seek out enemies of the state to eliminate. So shouldn't our armed forces be left to choose the personnel who they think will do this unique task most efficiently, and we oughtn't to impose our (usually politically correct) assumptions and prejudices on them?

Yet the whole trend of recent controversies seems to be implying the opposite. Consider the issue over whether sexism was involved in the firing of Lt. Col. Kate Germano of the US Marine Corps; over whether recruit training should be sexually segregated; over where flirting ends and sexual harassment begins; over the invitation of the transgender military couple Logan Ireland and Laila Villanueva to a White House reception; over Department of Defense Instruction 6130.03 which includes as grounds for

honorable dismissal "psychosexual conditions, including but not limited to transsexualism, exhibitionism, transvestism, voyeurism, and other paraphilias"<sup>1</sup>; over the Obama administration's seeming ultimate desire to achieve a 50:50 sexual balance in the armed forces. Even in the British army, which often lags far behind America on such matters, Lieutenant-General Andrew Gregory, the deputy chief of the Defence Staff (Personnel and Training), has recently acknowledged that men who became women might be eligible for close-combat roles.



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The actual number of transgender people serving in either the UK or US armed forces is very small, yet the issues they raise are not. A recent article by Andrew Tilghman on the veterans' website *Navy Times* asks how the Pentagon will answer questions such as: "When do transgender troops begin adhering to a new dress code and grooming standards? How will their fitness standards change? How will billeting rules apply?"<sup>2</sup>

We've come a long way from the days when during the Second World War the Chief of the Army Staff, General George C. Marshall, asked the American people to dig deep into their pockets and make substantial financial sacrifices in order to fund vast, world-class armed forces that would first save democracy in the world and then make the world safe for it afterwards. Soon, taxpayers' dollars are going to be spent, if US Secretary of Defense Ash Carter's statement of July 13, 2015<sup>3</sup> is fully acted upon in all its implications, on hormone replacement therapy and gender reassignment surgery for would-be transgenderists, all paid for out of the military health-care system. (Mr. Carter perhaps fortunately didn't go into whether the taxpayer would be on the hook if the

transgender individual later decides to change his/her mind afterwards, and try to return to his/her original sexual orientation.)

Of course advocates for turning the US armed forces over to a gigantic social experiment on transgenderism point to the undoubted, despicable racial segregation that lasted in them until well after the Second World War, when political pressure rightly had to be brought on the top brass to extend equality to racial minorities. Here is yet another shadow that the race issue hangs over present-day controversies. For there is no genuine analogy between the demands made upon the armed forces by someone who chooses to change their sex of their own free will and people who were born black. One is a demand for new, expensive, unnecessary dispensations and privileges driven by a wholly acquired (and largely imagined) sense of victimhood, the other was a proud demand for deserved equality.

We can be certain that if the military does bifurcate along ideological grounds between traditionalists and those who wish to accommodate the Obama administration's new craze, history suggests the traditionalists will lose out, and the secretary of defense will promote the faddists over them. It must not be allowed to happen.



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the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation, where he is presently chairman of the judging panel for its Military Book of the Year Prize. His thirteen books include *Salisbury: Victorian Titan* (1999), which won the Wolfson History Prize and the James Stern Silver Pen Award; *Masters and Commanders* (2010), which won the Emery Reves Prize; and *The Storm of War* (2012), which won the British Army Military Book of the Year Award; his latest book is *Napoleon: A Life* (Penguin).



1 Department of Defense Instruction Number 6130.03 (April 28, 2010, Incorporating Change 1, September 13, 2011), p. 48. [<http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/613003p.pdf>]

2 Andrew Tilghman, "Transgender troops policy change raises many questions," *NavyTimes* (July 19, 2015). [<http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/pentagon/2015/07/18/transgender-troops-policy-change-raises-many-questions/30256249/>]

3 US Department of Defense, "Statement by Secretary of Defense Ash Carter on DOD Transgender Policy" (July 13, 2015). [<http://www.defense.gov/Releases/Release.aspx?ReleaseID=17378>]



# The Real Danger of Political Correctness

Thomas Donnelly

The corrosive effects of “political correctness” in modern American society are unlikely to divide “traditionalists” from “accommodationists” among the ranks, but they are all but certain to widen the gap between soldiers and statesmen. And given the parlous state of Obama-era civil-military relations, that is indeed something to worry about.

There is no doubt that Americans—pardon me, I mean American elites—have been pulling pretty hard on the PC nitrous oxide of late. College campuses, with their in-class “trigger warnings” and lecture-room “safe spaces” are, as is now to be expected, leading the retreat from reality, particularly any kind of historical reality. In the Age of Call-Me-Caitlyn and Rachel Dolezal, notions of human “identity” have become so fungible and fragile as to be almost meaningless. And if the Supreme Court can find a vaporous right to “dignity” in the Constitution, it suggests that the rot has gone pretty far.

In contrast, military society has been and remains an island of social sanity. To be sure, there are occasional eruptions of PC madness, perhaps the most notable being former army chief of staff General George Casey declaring that, “As horrific as this tragedy”—meaning Major Nidal Hasan’s *Allahu Akbar* rampage at Fort Hood, Texas that killed 13 soldiers—“was, if our diversity becomes a casualty, I think that’s worse.”<sup>1</sup> There hasn’t been, to my knowledge, a wave of anti-Muslim violence or “hate speech” in the Army. Even the from-on-high ban on the term “hajji” as soldier-slang for Muslims is only loosely observed.



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Moreover, the military has managed to accommodate the social changes of recent generations as well if not better than any other element or institution in America. This includes the incorporation of openly homosexual service members. The most recent survey of attitudes by the *Military Times* papers (full disclosure: I was once editor of *Army Times*) found 60 percent support for the new policy and just 19 percent disapproval.<sup>2</sup> While the *Times* survey is not at all scientific, it is at least indicative. Interestingly, the same survey provided a harsh assessment of President

Barack Obama as commander in chief: his approval rating was just 15 percent and the disapprove number 55 percent. My conclusion would be that soldiers can live with the change in social policy, but not Obama's national security policies, especially the retreat from hard-won successes in Iraq.

Even on a topic central to the PC consciousness, sexual harassment and assault, people in uniform have kept their heads in ways that others—such as the University of Virginia—have not. There is very little support, even among women service members, for removing the investigation and prosecution of such cases from the chain of command; indeed, there's something of a backlash. A female air force member had this to say about her annual Sexual Assault Response Coordinator Training: the sessions pushed her to think of herself as “a sensitive, defenseless woman who has no power to protect herself, who has nothing in common with the men she works with.”<sup>3</sup>

Therein lies the rub. The underlying theme of modern “political correctness” is the virtue of victimhood. As a society, or at least in those parts of it most shaped by academic fads, media sensationalism, and the struggle for political advantage, our worth is increasingly calculated by our ability to claim we are

oppressed. To be oppressed is to deserve respect, not to mention special treatment.

This is, to put it mildly, antipathetic to the military professional ethos. And, as people in uniform endure not only the disappointments of recent battlefields, but the slings and arrows of budgetary and political neglect, they are more likely to cling tightly to one another and indeed to define themselves in distinction to self-obsessed, narcissistic civilians. The more the plague of political correctness divides the rest of us into ever-smaller tribes, the more the military tribe will see itself as unique and—dangerously—uniquely virtuous. An overheated debate about the “dangers of PC” in the military would exacerbate that danger.

That said, the widening gap in civil-military relations is almost entirely due to changes on the civilian side of the equation. The professional, “all-volunteer force” is a product of the post-Vietnam years, when American identity politics was still in its infancy. In the 1970s, it was “progressive” to assert that all lives mattered, not just the lives of those whose claims to victimization were strongest or most loudly asserted. People in uniform will cling to these antiquated notions—their lives in fact depend upon its truth.



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From 1995 to 1999, he was policy group director for the House Committee on Armed Services. Donnelly also served as a member of the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission. He is the author, coauthor, and editor of numerous articles, essays, and books, including *Operation Just Cause: The Storming of Panama* and *Clash of Chariots: A History of Armored Warfare*. He is currently at work on *Empire of Liberty: The Origins of American Strategic Culture*.



1 Tabassum Zakaria, “General Casey: diversity shouldn't be casualty of Fort Hood,” *Reuters* (November 8, 2009). [<http://blogs.reuters.com/talesfromthetrail/2009/11/08>

[/general-casey-diversity-shouldnt-be-casualty-of-fort-hood/](http://general-casey-diversity-shouldnt-be-casualty-of-fort-hood/)]

2 Stephen Losey, Chapter 1: “Obama's mark on the military” in “America's Military: A conservative institution's uneasy cultural evolution,” *Military Times* (January 9, 2015). [<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/2014/12/21/americas-military-a-conservative-militarys-cultural-evolution/18959975/>]

3 Whitney Kassel, “Stop Treating Female Service Members as Victims,” *Foreign Policy* (June 5, 2015). [<http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/06/05/stop-treating-female-servicemembers-as-victims-sexual-assault-military/>]

# Reflections on the Military and Society

*Josiah Bunting III*

The question, “Are there new dangers of the military bifurcating along ideological grounds, between traditionalists and those who wish to update military protocols to accommodate social and political agendas?” interests me because I have spent much of my life as a member of the military establishment—and also as a student, writer and biographer, professor and critic, of its members past and present. The great cadre of uniformed leaders, naval and military who led our forces during the Second World War, men born between 1880 and 1900, did not, as a rule, vote. They knew not an active political ideology beyond (I suppose) a quiet Main Street Republicanism. They prided themselves on wholeheartedness acceptance, as practitioners, of the orders of constituted civil authority. They were mainly sons of the American heartland. The military academies were their way out of Dodge. They remained remote from political controversy just as their great grandchildren; now training and being educated to serve their country in uniform are remote from its most intense contention and controversy.

The service academies attract bright and promising youngsters: but from somewhat different sources than those who seek admission to our elite, mainly coastal universities. A distressingly large number of graduates of the academies are leaving uniformed services after their initial commitments. The higher reaches of the officer corps strike me as firmly traditionalists; and whatever “bifurcation” exists along “ideological grounds” between traditionalists and

others, they have little purchase on the formation and implementation of national policy. In brief, I see very little active membership in the ranks “of those who wish to update military protocols to accommodate social and political agendas.” However deep the ideological chasm that separates followers of Fox and Rush from those of MSNBC and the editorial pages of the *Washington Post*, the consequences for the characters of service offered by senior officers strike me as inconsequential.

My own concern has to do with the army’s rigid insistence on an officer’s adherence to rigid career patterns as prerequisite to selection for flag rank; and the intolerance of eccentricity, the occasional “failure,” and outspokenness. For comparison’s sake consider the prosopography\* of the uniformed cohort who led the services from 1940 to 1950.

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\* The study of groups allied in a common purpose by means of a detailed study of the individual members of those groups.

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# Political Battles

Mark Moyar

Since the 1970s, the US military has experienced intense conflicts between traditionalists and individuals intent on reshaping the military for ideological reasons. For the most part, those pushing social and political agendas have been civilian leaders in Democratic administrations, who have sought egalitarian changes to the military's human resource policies, such as opening more jobs to women, giving preferences in promotion to women and minorities, and ending prohibitions against service by homosexuals. These civilians have succeeded in instituting substantial parts of their agenda, and oftentimes in ways that make them difficult or impossible to overturn. Ideological battles are, however, still to come on some issues, such as women in combat and affirmative action.

Since the end of the draft in 1973, the preponderance of Americans who have joined the military have been socially and politically conservative. Hence, most have supported traditional military personnel policies and practices and opposed externally imposed changes. Liberal disillusionment with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan suggest that the military is unlikely to experience a large influx of people who could bifurcate the uniformed military ideologically, at least in the near term.

If, however, liberal Democrats continue to control the White House and persist in efforts to remake the military according to their ideological preferences, it is possible that in the longer term a critical mass of transformers will enter the military. Traditionalist participation in the military might well decline at the same time, out of disillusionment with the subordination of military professionalism to social engineering. If the recent trend of US military disengagement from the world

continues, moreover, the military will become a more attractive destination for those who believe that the military should serve mainly as a showcase of enlightenment and a source of jobs, as has already happened in much of Europe.

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## POLL: WHAT IS THE PROPER METHODOLOGY TO ADJUST MILITARY PROTOCOLS TO SOCIAL CHANGE?

- None: the laws of wars are unchanging and thus the military must remain immune from social transitions.
- The military can adopt slowly to social changes—but only without changing any traditional standards.
- The military is a fluid organization that can easily adjust past “standards” to reflect new social realities.
- The military is America’s first and best cutting-edge tool to force much needed race, class, and gender reform.
- The military must end all distinctions between civilian and military life and be like other government institutions.



# Mission Unclear

*Bing West*

It is manifest of our crazy times that the editorial board of *Strategika* has even posed this question; “Are there new dangers of the military bifurcating along ideological grounds, between traditionalists and those who wish to update military protocols to accommodate social and political agendas?” Generals who focus upon the social and political agendas should transfer to the Department of State. The traditional role of the military is to be capable of winning wars. War is the act of killing and destroying until the adversary agrees to your terms. War begins after the employment of soft power has failed to achieve the desired social and political agendas.

Unfortunately, those at the top of the military over the past decade have succeeded in neutering the “traditionalists.” Senior officers utter as dogma the banality that “wars are not won by killing.” Generals like US Grant or Patton need not apply. Indeed, the commander most admired by the troops for his unflagging leadership and ferocity in battle—General James Mattis—was forced into early retirement.

We are in our second decade of an irregular war. In the forward to the field manual for irregular/counterinsurgency war issued by army General David H. Petraeus and marine General James F. Amos, they wrote: “Soldiers and Marines are expected to be

nation builders as well as warriors.”<sup>1</sup> Nation building required focusing upon social and political agendas. In *The Endgame*, authors Gordon and Trainor lay out the astonishing degree to which our generals concentrated upon politics.<sup>2</sup> Yet in Iraq and Afghanistan, our military failed to build democratic nations.

We do not have a coherent war-fighting strategy. Only our Special Operations Forces are expected to kill the enemy. Our conventional forces are expected to be advisers and community organizers. This is a military bifurcation that does not make sense.

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1 *The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), p. xlvi. [<https://books.google.com/books?id=lbyFWgeCUJ4C>]

2 Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *The Endgame: The Inside Story of the Struggle for Iraq, From George W. Bush to Barack Obama* (New York: Vintage Books, 2013). [<http://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/69618/the-endgame-by-michael-r-gordon-and-general-bernard-e-trainor/>]

*Bing West* is an author and former assistant secretary of defense for International Security Affairs during the Reagan administration. He is a graduate of Georgetown and Princeton Universities where he was a Woodrow Wilson Fellow, and served in the marine infantry in Vietnam. He is the best-selling author of nine books on military history; he travels frequently to war zones. His latest book is entitled *One Million Steps: A Marine Platoon at War* (2014).

# Conflicting Identities in the US Armed Forces

*Angelo M. Codevilla*

My time on navy active duty being long past, my insights into how the social changes imposed on the armed forces impact their capacity for combat flow from my acquaintance with former students who are now serving. My insights into how the ethos of civilian elites affects senior officers come from my experience on the Board of Visitors of the US Army War College.

A young marine officer tells me that, during Officer Candidate School, the candidates are asked to evaluate each other weekly and that these evaluations are then used to cull the class. This strikes me as adopting the techniques of reality TV and of pop-psych group dynamics. I can't think of anything more conducive to conformity to the lowest common denominator or more subversive of character.

Sex. Well remembering that after being at sea for a few weeks, the ships on which I served fairly throbbed with sexual tension, I have no difficulty believing my ex-protégé junior officers telling me about their units that "it's high school out there!" Mixing the sexes during a time of life when the hormones are in full flow has made the armed forces a sexual emporium for young people already part of the hookup culture. There is no alternative to tolerating it. Fortunately, even in Iraq and Afghanistan, most troops most of the time are not under enemy pressure. Stateside, military life scarcely differs from civilian. We can only hope what might happen under such pressure.

Homosexuality in the military is a kindred issue, but on a numerically smaller scale. Yet homosexuals' preferences for one another cannot but create a set of loyalties that transcends and subverts the chain of command.

The War Colleges take the best o-5s out of the active force. To prepare them for o-6, what do they teach? Alas, they do not teach them how to win wars. Instead, they acculturate them to the culture of civilian elites: their language, their assumptions, their values. If they want to get ahead, this is how they must adapt. Leadership means conformity. Victory means compromise (remember Schelling's matrix?). Success means satisfying the mission requirements and getting that bump in rank. They might have come in as warriors. They leave as bureaucrats.

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### DOES POLITICAL CORRECTNESS POSE A THREAT TO THE MILITARY?

1. Have past militaries from the Greeks to the present been inclusive of gays and women—and without much controversy?
2. Do high-tech, cyber, and postmodern warfare make the physical requirements of soldiers far less important?
3. In historical terms, does a diverse or homogenous military prove more efficacious on the battlefield?
4. Have militaries been able to enact needed social reform more easily and efficiently than civilian political institutions?

## IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

### DO PAST ARMS CONTROL TREATIES OFFER INSIGHT ABOUT THE PROPOSED IRAN NUCLEAR AGREEMENT?



## Military History in Contemporary Conflict

As the very name of Hoover Institution attests, military history lies at the very core of our dedication to the study of “War, Revolution, and Peace.” Indeed, the precise mission statement of the Hoover Institution includes the following promise: “The overall mission of this Institution is, from its records, to recall the voice of experience against the making of war, and by the study of these records and their publication, to recall man’s endeavors to make and preserve peace, and to sustain for America the safeguards of the American way of life.” From its origins as a library and archive, the Hoover Institution has evolved into one of the foremost research centers in the world for policy formation and pragmatic analysis. It is with this tradition in mind, that the “Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict” has set its agenda—reaffirming the Hoover Institution’s dedication to historical research in light of contemporary challenges, and in particular, reinvigorating the national study of military history as an asset to foster and enhance our national security. By bringing together a diverse group of distinguished military historians, security analysts, and military veterans and practitioners, the working group seeks to examine the conflicts of the past as critical lessons for the present.

## Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict

The Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict examines how knowledge of past military operations can influence contemporary public policy decisions concerning current conflicts. The careful study of military history offers a way of analyzing modern war and peace that is often underappreciated in this age of technological determinism. Yet the result leads to a more in-depth and dispassionate understanding of contemporary wars, one that explains how particular military successes and failures of the past can be often germane, sometimes misunderstood, or occasionally irrelevant in the context of the present.

## Strategika

*Strategika* is a journal that analyzes ongoing issues of national security in light of conflicts of the past—the efforts of the Military History Working Group of historians, analysts, and military personnel focusing on military history and contemporary conflict. Our board of scholars shares no ideological consensus other than a general acknowledgment that human nature is largely unchanging. Consequently, the study of past wars can offer us tragic guidance about present conflicts—a preferable approach to the more popular therapeutic assumption that contemporary efforts to ensure the perfectibility of mankind eventually will lead to eternal peace. New technologies, methodologies, and protocols come and go; the larger tactical and strategic assumptions that guide them remain mostly the same—a fact discernable only through the study of history.



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