

The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters

Volume 31
Number 3 *Parameters Autumn 2001*

Article 3

8-17-2001

Commentary & Reply

Mark R. DePue

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Recommended Citation

DePue, Mark R.. "Commentary & Reply." *The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters* 31, 3 (2001).
<https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters/vol31/iss3/3>

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Commentary & Reply

From *Parameters*, Autumn 2001, pp. 148-63.

THE CITIZEN-SOLDIER: AT TWILIGHT OR MID-DAY?

To the Editor:

The Summer 2001 issue of *Parameters* contained a fascinating series of articles on America's citizen-soldier tradition, articles that took a hard look at the meaning of the citizen-soldier tradition today. None was more thought-provoking than Eliot Cohen's article, "Twilight of the Citizen-Soldier," in which he argues that the citizen-soldier paradigm does not apply to today's Army, although he cites one pernicious exception. Cohen's argument is provocative, but unfortunately it is wrong on several key points.

Cohen uses three criteria to distinguish the citizen-soldier from his professional counterpart. It is his third criterion, that "the true citizen-soldier's identity is fundamentally civilian," on which I want to take him to task. On the surface, his definition seems self-evident. Cohen applies the term to America's mass armies that fought the Civil War, World War I, and World War II, but unfortunately leaves out of his discussion today's Reserves and National Guard, and also the tiny Regular Army that existed between those wars. In other words, Cohen defines citizen-soldier in such a way that citizen-soldiers can exist only as a result of mobilization for a large-scale war. While he states, "the true citizen-soldier's identity is fundamentally civilian," he describes the National Guard and Reserves as "merely part-time professionals," and otherwise excludes them from his analysis. It is unfortunate that the traditional banner-carriers of the citizen-soldier tradition are slighted in this way, for more than half the Army today exists in the reserve components, and National Guardsmen and Reservists are increasingly called on to perform operational missions worldwide. Yet they are "fundamentally civilians," whose "participation in military life is temporary and provisional," to use Dr. Cohen's own definition.

Professor Cohen correctly asserts that the citizen-soldier "issue is one of identity." The true citizen-soldier is always, at his core, "a member of civil society." Cohen argues that the contemporary American soldier is not a citizen-soldier because he identifies as being a professional soldier, not a civilian. But an analysis of the American citizen's core values versus those of the soldierly profession can give us a deeper understanding of the dynamics involved. For lack of a more definitive set, let us use the values of the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson's values of "Equality" and of course "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness" as the values of the American citizen. It is certainly useful shorthand in identifying what Americans hold most dear. In contrast to this are the Army's stated values of "Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage." In other words, if a soldier truly embraces his profession, he embraces values that contrast sharply with the citizen's values. Where the individual is supreme in American society, the soldier is taught to subordinate his interests to those of the group--to his unit, to the Army, and ultimately to the interests of the nation. Loyalty and Respect seem in conflict with Life and Liberty. Selfless Service and Duty are the polar opposites of Pursuit of Happiness.

All of this would seem to support Cohen's argument that today's soldiers are no longer citizen-soldiers, but only if they truly embrace their institutional values. While today's soldiers talk a good talk, there are disturbing examples where they are not walking the walk. Indeed, Cohen provides the perfect case in point. Where the Army's values would imply that one's personal welfare comes after the nation's and Army's interests, our military dialog is increasingly dominated by talk of substandard housing, low pay, and disruptive overseas deployments. (This is not to discount the legitimacy of these concerns.) While Eisenhower voted for President his first time in the election of 1952--because to vote while in uniform would somehow detract from the loyalty he owed the next Commander-in-Chief--today's soldiers not only vote as an important exercise of their citizen's obligation, but also "write, call, or email their representatives in Congress," and "delight in ripping into the high command" in the nation's editorial media.

And recently, when the number of volunteer enlistments threatened to dry up, the Army trooped out a new recruiting

slogan--"An Army of One." The slogan perfectly embodies our national values, and contradicts those of the Army. The firestorm of debate over the slogan within the Army is illustrative, for it underscores the Army's current crisis of identity. While the rank and file are appalled by the slogan and the message it sends, the Army's senior leaders are pleased with the positive response from the target audience and ignore the contradictions.

Dr. Cohen's central question is whether today's soldiers fit the citizen-soldier model, and he concludes they do not. However, comparing America's peacetime Army of today with the mass armies that fought World War I and World War II, which in essence is what Cohen has done, does little to advance our understanding of the citizen-soldier dynamic. If one compares soldierly values against the American citizen's values, we arrive at quite a different answer. Today's soldiers appear to be more "civilian" and less the "soldier" than their grandfathers and fathers who manned the peacetime force in the 1930s or 1950s. The real question to grapple with is whether our nation is better served by this new generation of soldiers.

Lieutenant Colonel Mark R. DePue, ARNG Ret.
Springfield, Illinois

To the Editor:

Professor Eliot A. Cohen's "Twilight of the Citizen-Soldier" offers one of the most compellingly unrealistic portrayals of how the current US Army functions in terms of the utilization of citizen-soldiers ever published. Perhaps Professor Cohen's article can best be appreciated as a work of fiction based upon the author's apparent ideological agenda, but with the knowledge that *Parameters* has a most realistic policy focus, I want to bring Cohen's phantasmagoric fantasies about "the twilight of the citizen-soldier" into the actual light of day.

Professor Cohen's arguments are framed by the assumption that there is a lingering "nostalgia" for the concept of the citizen-soldier. He is bothered by this nostalgia, which he admits to his puzzlement "is somehow rooted deeply in the nature of democracy itself." The use of the word "somehow" is disingenuous. It is unimaginable that Professor Cohen is completely oblivious, for example, to the history of the National Guard from 1636 to the present. Assuming he possesses this knowledge, I speculate that his cavalier treatment of the reserve components of the US Army in the opening of the article ("The term [citizen-soldier] seems archaic, even quaint--except, perhaps, as applied to reservists") is a debater's tactic in order to proceed with his argument.

If the author's "perhaps" is a half-hearted assent to the concept that reservists are indeed citizen-soldiers, then Professor Cohen has to contend with the reality that nearly half the composition of today's Army consists of these "twilight" figures who are supposedly on the wane. The Army Reserve has about 461,000 soldiers in an active or participatory status. This makes up 20 percent of the Army's organized units, providing 46 percent of the Army's combat service support and 27 percent of the Army's combat support.

But I want to go beyond merely summarizing the ever-evolving importance of the citizen-soldier in today's US Army, and the steadfast efforts toward integrating active and reserve components, into why Professor Cohen follows a line of argumentation that would render the notion of citizen-soldier a nostalgic "myth." Building on the curious assertion that we "legally" have citizen-soldiers but "historically and philosophically" we do not, he proceeds to make both unproved and ultimately unprovable assumptions about the motivations for some truly mythic entity he labels "the normal volunteer." To cast aspersions upon the motivations of those who serve in both the active and reserve components of today's Army is a game that perhaps should be best played out in academia's ivory towers. The soldiers I know, and those of us concerned with their health and well-being, realize the need for more reports "from the front."

What fuels Professor Cohen's need to debunk without proof the motives of volunteers? Let me suggest that he is caged in by his assumption that "the true citizen-soldier's identity is fundamentally civilian." Unwilling to respect how a reservist methodically transitions from civilian to professional military identity, the professor inhabits a black-and-white world where the militarily effective interpenetration of civilian and military spheres seems virtually unthinkable for him, his mental block lingering as thousands of reservists have accomplished that feat while serving around the world. Let me suggest that Professor Cohen read Professor Louis Zurcher's study of such civilian-to-professional military identity transitioning in the Naval Reserve. Professor Cohen's attack upon the "citizen-soldier" eventually seems to be a rehash of Samuel Huntington's argument in *The Soldier and the State* that an authentically "professional"

army can't be composed of reservists to any large extent. It does little good to continue to recycle this argument as anything other than an intellectual game. The US Army circa 2001 is a force composed of hundreds of thousands of the very citizen-soldiers Professor Cohen seems to relegate to imaginary, irrelevant status. They will not wane in stature to suit the professor's argument.

Since the increasing reliance of the US Army upon reservists, particularly in operations other than war during the past decade, is a well-known fact, I assume that Professor Cohen must try to reverse this trend by playing what could be called the "They Don't Make Soldiers the Way They Used To" card. The basic line of argumentation rests upon an "erosion" of professional military competency due to various nefarious forces of evil ranging from feminists and gay activists to ignorantly liberal baby-boomers who never did military service. Central to this position is a critique of the current doctrine of force protection, though one is left to wonder what the "good old days" of gently accepting tens of thousands of casualties would be like for America to re-experience, if clocks could be turned back. Are the desires of American taxpayers to be sensitive to casualty protection of their soldiers a regrettable fact linked to nostalgia for the citizen-soldier? This illogic stuns.

Attached to this complaint is the notion that the Army is becoming increasingly "politicized" and "civilianized." Professor Cohen writes of "a remarkable inversion of the citizen-soldier concept; instead of subjecting the individualism of civilian life to the discipline of the military life to serve the larger ends of society, it becomes a means of softening the rigors of military tradition." Sound familiar? It should. The identical rhetoric has been in place for over a half century. Supposedly racial integration was going to destroy military cohesiveness. Then sexual integration would irreparably damage the Army's resolve to win wars. Translate Professor Cohen's use of the word "citizen-soldier" into the word "unprofessional" and his argument is at least internally consistent, even if still detached from the reality of nearly a half million citizen-soldiers who are serving the civilian and military worlds that constitute America.

I'm interviewing a reservist next week who just spent the last nine months serving on a peacekeeping mission in Bosnia. His motives? How might he respond to Professor Cohen's identification of his kind as "merely part-time professionals" and whether he's "civilian at heart"? I'll be certain to ask him about where his heart was when he donned his uniform to serve.

Norman Weinstein
Senior Consortium Research Fellow
The US Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences
Boise State University, Idaho

To the Editor:

Dr. Eliot Cohen's thought-provoking essay "Twilight of the Citizen Soldier" contributes to a much-needed debate in our armed services. But I disagree with his comment that America's inability to stomach casualties has constrained our ability to exercise power. I would argue that today's military men and women are more informed and expect their leaders to expend every effort in minimizing needless casualties on the battlefield. This includes giving them not only the technology and arms to win, but also an analysis of the battlefield environment to minimize disease and health risks. I believe this effort by our military leaders can only serve to enhance motivation in the field.

I was also waiting to see him comment on our reserve forces--surely they deserve mention and analysis when talking about what is and what is not a citizen-soldier.

Finally, not to be picky, but when Dr. Cohen alluded to our society he said, "rich and poor, Black and White, Christian and Jew." Do not forget us Muslims.

My thanks to Dr. Cohen for a piece that stirs debate and discussion.

Lieutenant Youssef H. Aboul-Enein, MSC, USN
Great Lakes, Illinois

To the Editor:

Dr. Eliot Cohen's fear of a politicized military is not supported by his observation of the citizen-soldier's demise. The traditional minuteman's decline is, as Dr. Cohen himself points out, a result of many factors, especially technological and organizational changes. In today's world, it is hard to imagine a scenario in which mass armies of conscripted civilians, hastily trained, would be a useful or effective military force. Modern warfare is complex, requiring skilled practitioners at all levels. The days of a few weeks' drilling and musketry, then off to war, are long gone. This is a good thing--just look at the casualty figures from Antietam or Gettysburg. If today's skilled soldiers, active and reserve, can now be described as professionals, so be it. That label takes nothing away from their status as citizens of the nation, the nobility of their vocation, or their acceptance of the core values and beliefs that make our nation the world's longest-lived republic.

Nor do these professional citizen-soldiers threaten civilian control of the military. Certainly, one temporarily gives up certain rights when signing a soldier's contract. As long as one wears the uniform, one agrees to obey orders and be subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Many of these orders take the form of regulations, some restricting a soldier's political involvement. But there is a fine line; restriction is not the same as prohibition. A soldier, especially a senior leader, has a duty to work with political leaders in pursuit of the national interest. That duty increases as the soldier's expertise becomes more specialized, or "professional." As the soldier's responsibilities and professional knowledge increase, so too does his obligation to advocate a professional military perspective in the development of defense-related policies. To do any less would be negligence.

This advocacy is not new, nor does it challenge civilian control. From its earliest days, our military has a long history of both political involvement and civilian control. The origins of this civil primacy are in our British heritage, the army with which ambitious young citizen-soldier George Washington first served. Later Washington was given command of the Continental Army from his seat in Congress, and he remained politically engaged throughout the war. Indeed, had he failed to do so, the outcome of the Revolution might have been different. But Washington knew where that fine line was, and, at Newburgh, he drew it for posterity. Legions of politically engaged generals followed, and a number entered politics. Jackson, Harrison, Taylor, Pierce, Grant, Garfield--numerous generals became President in the 19th century, compared to only one, Eisenhower, in the 20th. At no time in this period was civilian control of the military seriously questioned. Even McClellan's challenge to Lincoln in the 1863 election, at the high point of the Civil War, failed to arouse fears of a military ascendancy. To say that today's military leaders present a new challenge to civilian control of the military is a baseless fear unfounded in history or current reality.

Rather, the prospect of a politically aloof American military is far scarier. In a world of unprecedented military complexity, only six percent of Americans have served in uniform. Military experience is increasingly rare among the political leaders who ultimately, and rightly, control our military forces. Yet war clearly remains a popular political instrument throughout the world. Its evolution accelerated through the last century, and many scholars assert that we are today amidst a major revolution in military affairs. Its emerging realities are most practically and profoundly understood by those dedicated to the profession of arms. Our military leaders have a professional obligation to be responsibly engaged in the melee of ideas and interests from which policy decisions flow.

In sum, the United States has a long history of politically engaged senior military officers and of firm civilian control of the military services. These two counterbalancing traditions have never been seriously challenged, and they have served this nation well for over 200 years. They will surely continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

Major Steven A. Stebbins, USAR
Green Bay, Wisconsin

The Author Replies:

Lieutenant Colonel DePue and I agree more than he may think. Some large proportion of today's reservists and guardsmen (and women) are indeed citizen-soldiers: some are, in fact, closer to the semi-professional that I described in the article. Regrettably, by attempting to use the Reserve and the Guard for extended peacekeeping and presence missions overseas, the Army runs the risk of continuing to blur that identity. His example in the other direction--of soldiers thinking too much in terms of civilian values--is a very good one. "The Army of One" celebrates non-military virtues altogether too much, particularly for what is and ought to be a highly professional force. Alas, I cannot imagine

a sister service advertising itself as "A Marine Corps of One."

Some time ago I decided not to dignify with a reply *ad hominem* attacks of the sort served up by Mr. Weinstein ("apparent ideological agenda," "phantasmagoric fantasies," "work of fiction," etc.). There is, however, something of interest in the phenomenon his letter represents. When writers abandon the notion that serious people may disagree forcefully but politely, and resort to invective in the place of mutually respectful debate, one must assume that either they do not value civil disagreement or that there is something about the topic at hand that causes them to disregard its norms. I merely note that the subject of civil-military relations excites an enormous amount of this kind of indignant insult-flinging. The degree of upset this reveals makes me think that there are, in fact, some large, dark problems here worthy of airing, whether I or anyone else has characterized them correctly.

Lieutenant Aboul-Enein's point about casualty sensitivity may be right, but my argument was different than he suggests: casualty sensitivity (as in the Kosovo war, for example) certainly constrained politico-military decisionmaking at the top. The desire on the part of military as well as civilian leaders to prevent *any* casualties undoubtedly hampered our operations, as General Clark's recent book makes clear. Whether the troops are better motivated as a result I do not know: conversations with junior officers and enlisted personnel tend to make me think not. His point about the religious diversity of our armed forces is altogether correct, and my apologies for the omission.

Major Stebbins believes that officers have a responsibility to "advocate a professional military perspective" on the development of defense policy. Yes, but it all depends on what one means by "advocate." Today that routinely means back-channeling information and positions to congressional staffs and newspapers, using recently retired general officers as spokesmen for service views, and even, on occasion, taking on political leaders in the press (think of Vice Admiral Leighton Smith taking on Senator Dole about Yugoslavia, for instance). That is most emphatically *not* the Marshall tradition, and is considerably worse than the problem of one or two politically-minded generals at the top. His historical judgments are problematic: the idea that the casualties of Antietam and Gettysburg reflect the consequences of "a few weeks' drilling," for example are odd, given that those battles occurred after a year and a half and two years, respectively, of hard experience in the most unforgiving training camp of all--combat, between two armies at the top of their form. Would he take the bloodbath of the Battle of the Frontiers in 1914--fought by thoroughly drilled and indoctrinated armies--to indicate the necessity of mass slaughter by well-trained armies? His judgment that civilian control has never been seriously questioned is just wrong, unless he believes that civilian control is only about avoiding a coup rather than something more subtle. The name Douglas MacArthur alone should give pause to those who think otherwise. As for his coinage, "professional citizen-soldier," I do not understand it. If that is not an oxymoron, the term "citizen-soldier" has simply lost any meaning.

Finally, I commend to the readers of *Parameters* a forthcoming edited volume by Peter Feaver and Richard Kohn, *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security* (MIT Press, 2001). It contains a number of articles, including the fruit of field and survey research, that flesh out some of the arguments advanced in a necessarily abbreviated form in my original article.

Eliot A. Cohen

RECRUITING GAYS AND LESBIANS

To the Editor:

Having read Professor Peter Karsten's article "The US Citizen-Soldier's Past, Present, and Likely Future" (*Parameters*, Summer 2001), I take exception to his recommendation in the last paragraph that gays and lesbians should be recruited by the US military. This group of people has no place in our military. Professor Karsten seems to be suggesting that because we cannot recruit the caliber of personnel we once recruited, we should try to get anyone we can whether they hurt morale or not. We continue to follow in the footsteps of the previous Administration in incorporating the low standards of the civilian world into the military world. The military is not and should not be part of social experimentation. Preparing for war and being in combat are serious business, and we should not waste time, money, and effort on those who want a "touchy, feely" military experience.

I would much rather have a guy next to me who takes his job seriously, who joined the military to be the best soldier, sailor, airman, or marine he could be, as opposed to some kid who wants the prestige of being a military man, but doesn't really want to do the job.

The military is a society unto itself, and we should keep the civilian mores and experimentation out of it. If we cannot recruit dedicated men and women, then let's make the most of the good people we do have.

I am surprised that someone with prior military service would make the suggestion Professor Karsten has made.

SP/4 Robert W. Boatwright, ARNG
Memphis, Tennessee

The Author Replies:

Specialist Boatwright has me calling for the recruiting of gays and lesbians "whether they hurt morale or not." I remind him that, first, I recommended recruiting gays and lesbians in "some fields" (with a footnote indicating that some of these MOS recruitment billets might be "civilianized" for this purpose). And, second, I invited "our military sociologists" (Charlie Moskos was present at the symposium when the recommendation was made, and we spoke of the question during a break) to "determine whether such a step would dissuade some of the traditional recruitable candidates from joining, and whether that effect would be overcome [offset] by bringing greater numbers of able and willing gays and lesbians into the ranks." That is, I am not an advocate of what Specialist Boatwright calls "touchy, feely" "social experimentation." I simply view the question as an open one, designed to address a persistent recruitment problem in a rational fashion. Specialist Boatwright, apparently, doesn't like that method.

So be it. But I, in turn, don't like some of what I hear him saying--to wit, that the military is "a world unto itself," that we should "keep the civilian mores . . . out of it," and that "the previous Administration" had incorporated "the low standards of the civilian world into the military world." The US military in the past generation has become too politically partisan for the good of the nation and the nation's defenses, and enough is enough. I put it to Specialist Boatwright and his professional colleagues that this sort of criticism of the nation's elected Executive must stop, and it must stop now.

Peter Karsten

OPENING COMBAT UNITS TO WOMEN

To the Editor:

In their article "Combat Roles for Women: A Modest Proposal" (*Parameters*, Summer 2001), Majors Kim Field and John Nagl seem to suggest that because the Army has shifted, for the moment, from warfighting to "operations other than war," now is a good time to drop the ban on females in combat-arms units.

Let me see if I have this straight: infantry units are doing military police work, women are in military police units, therefore, women should be in infantry units. The authors have drawn a false conclusion. If mechanized units are doing the job of military police units, it seems to me the correct argument is to develop more military police units. Rather than expand the number of branches that allow women, we should stand up more units that already admit women. If the authors believe the military will be doing more operations other than war, expanding the number of military police units might be more career-enhancing than duty in a combat unit that does not deploy.

The authors fail to understand the difference between the role of the military police and mechanized infantry forces. The military police are qualified, through training, to investigate crime, apprehend suspects, and otherwise enforce the law. Criminals do not seek, in the normal course of their activities, to close with and defeat military police. Criminals, generally, would rather avoid contact with military police. In other words, military police do not have a force trying to prevent them from doing their jobs. Mechanized infantry forces, on the other hand, are designed to close with and destroy the enemy as they take and hold terrain, while the enemy tries to prevent this from happening.

Developmental changes in warfare are not an excuse for social experimentation. The technological development of the aircraft carrier, tank, and amphibious warfare cannot reasonably be placed on the same plane with the concept of mixed-gender forces primarily because the former (in their own way) fundamentally changed the way war was fought. The authors fail to demonstrate, using the above examples, what fundamental changes in warfare will result from mixed-gender combat units.

The argument that only a few women want to join infantry units is also hardly a good reason for doing it. No one doubts that there is at least one woman out there who can shoot better or run faster than the average combat-arms soldier. The questions should be: Are there enough women to justify the change? Will the change improve combat effectiveness? What are the likely negative consequences? Can we live with those negative consequences if combat effectiveness is improved? The argument might be stronger if half the West Point women wanted to be infantry, but five out of 133 is hardly a mandate. (One wonders if the percentages would change if female ROTC cadets and women at Officer Candidate School were polled.) However, suppose the number was not five, but 65. In that case there might be enough women (complemented by the appropriate number of female NCOs and female enlisted soldiers) to justify creating an all-female infantry battalion. The Army could then run that battalion through the same training as an all-male battalion and draw some objective conclusions.

Finally, the argument that integrating women into the combat arms is similar to integrating blacks into mainstream units is disingenuous. Black units proved themselves to be very capable fighters during and since the Civil War. Their ability to do the same job as white units was not the stumbling block to integration; the problem was racial prejudice. If the idea of a female warrior has any merit, the argument should be for the creation of an all-female infantry unit. Objective testing and evaluation would provide an answer to the questions of capability, cost, and reasonable accommodation. Testing might even determine if all-female infantry units enhanced the combat effectiveness of larger units. Even then there would remain the question of whether the American public, despite the polls, is ready for female infantry warriors. That question may only be answered after the ultimate test--combat.

Major Alan Farrier, USAR
Fort Polk, Louisiana

The Authors Reply:

We appreciate Major Farrier's interest in our article. Unfortunately, he appears to have missed the central argument of our work, and there are both logical and factual flaws in the critique he makes of comparatively peripheral points.

"Combat Roles for Women: A Modest Proposal" is built upon the contention that the functional imperative of military service can justify infringements upon the liberty of individual service members only when its demands are essential for military effectiveness. We firmly agree that combat effectiveness is the imperative function for which military forces are organized, but contend that the Army's current policies unduly limit individual rights while failing to maximize combat effectiveness. Under current policy it is not the most capable soldiers who are selected to perform the most demanding missions, but male soldiers. They are selected not for their specific ability to perform combat tasks, but for their gender. Meanwhile, female soldiers, even if capable of performing all combat tasks to a higher standard than the males who currently fill a combat MOS, are forbidden from serving in those positions merely because of their gender. This, we suggest, is both a detriment to the combat effectiveness of our armed forces and a violation of the basic American principle of equal rights for all of equal ability.

We suggest that instead of allowing all male soldiers to serve in combat arms specialties while precluding women from doing so simply because of their gender, the military impose and enforce job-related standards on *all* service members, male and female. The creation of job-specific standards would diminish the number of women in some specialties while increasing the number of women in others. The same standards would also eliminate a number of male soldiers from consideration for the most demanding jobs. All soldiers would be required to have the physical ability to perform the tasks required in their Military Occupational Specialty, a situation that does not exist today but which we contend would both increase the combat effectiveness of the armed forces and be more equitable than the current policy. This is the crux of our argument, and it is not one that Major Farrier deals with in his letter.

Instead, he contends that we "fail to understand the difference between the role of the military police and mechanized infantry forces." The experience of Major Field, whose military police units captured hundreds of prisoners of war in Iraq and confronted violent Somali mobs at roadblocks in Mogadishu, contradicts Major Farrier's argument that "military police do not have a force trying to prevent them from doing their jobs." While military police in Fort Polk may spend their time "investigating crime and apprehending suspects," most veterans of the conflicts of the past decade have seen military police--male and female--fighting on the front lines of freedom in step with their combat arms brethren. Their experience is of relevance as we think about the future of conflict and the missions that female soldiers can accomplish in the post-Cold War world. Major Nagl has elsewhere argued that changes in the international system compel the Army to create more constabulary forces, but that was not the point of this article.

The remainder of the article examines both the costs and the benefits of this policy change before concluding that an experimental standards-based integration of female officers into the Army positions currently closed to them, initially on a small scale, is on balance worth the risk. Rather than being forced to integrate women into combat roles at a time and in a manner not of its own choosing--the situation currently faced by the German army--we suggest that of its own volition the Army run as fair a test as is possible. Major Farrier seems to concur that a test is a good idea; his suggestion of all-female infantry units, however, has unpleasant connotations of the all-black units that he correctly notes "proved themselves to be very capable fighters during and since the Civil War." More than 50 years ago President Truman struck a blow against racial prejudice--against the unanimous advice of the Joint Chiefs of Staff--by integrating the armed forces and ending almost a century of all-black units. We suggest that the Army make the next step forward against gender discrimination on its own, not through the creation of all-female units but through the adoption of gender-neutral, job-related standards for all soldiers.

Major Kim Field and Major John Nagl

MORE ON WOMEN IN COMBAT UNITS

To the Editor:

Dr. Anna Simons introduces her diatribe against including women in combat units ("Women in Combat Units: It's Still a Bad Idea," *Parameters*, Summer 2001) with five specious propositions she attributes to proponents of the alternative point of view. Having demolished her straw men, she concludes that women should not be in combat. Let me propose my own versions of her five propositions.

1. New post-Cold War missions may require an enormous variety of skills ranging from pitched battle to the nastiest forms of urban combat to protecting children on their way to school. Soldiers will need enormous professionalism to understand the differences and to act according to the requirements of such diverse situations. Some women will prove entirely competent throughout this entire spectrum of activity.
2. Twentieth-century soldiers must be competent with a commensurate range of technologies ranging from fighting knives to complex electronics, all of which some women are very good at.
3. The strength of the United States rests on its ability to take advantage of the skills and abilities of all of its citizens.
4. Social bonding is a necessary component of cohesion. Achieving unit cohesion given current assumptions about gender relations will not be easy, but it can be done with intelligent, professional leadership if we consider it worth the effort.
5. No foreign country provides a model in the matter for the United States because our people will shape our institutions according to our needs.

And one addition: 6. While most women probably have neither the desire nor the physical aptitude to become combat soldiers, some women are capable of performing every task required of an infantryman.

There is a pool of female talent in the United States that could be used to augment the supply of male soldiers. There

are women capable of firing weapons, marching long distances, negotiating obstacle courses, driving and maintaining combat vehicles, reading maps, making intelligent decisions under pressure, digging foxholes, cracking jokes, and dying for a buddy. The question is whether employing these relatively few women in combat units is worth the effort. To Dr. Simons the answer is an unqualified no. But her statement that the only things women can contribute to a rifle platoon are "distraction, dissension, and distrust" disqualifies her from the debate. What standing in the argument should we give to someone who cannot see that a woman can have any military ability at all?

If women are useless, then Dr. Simons wins her argument hands down. If, on the other hand, we refuse to dismiss women categorically and instead weigh the potential contributions of qualified individual women to combat units, we may decide that the United States would be ill-advised to ignore the talent available to it.

Dr. Simons' claim that women argue for inclusion in combat units only out of desire for career rewards is insulting. Of course women, like men, seek the career success attainable only in the combat arms. Can they not also share with men feelings of patriotism, honor, loyalty, and selfless service? If women do not advocate all-female combat units, could it be because they believe that the kind of cohesion achievable within mixed-gender units would be worth aspiring to?

To Dr. Simons' query "How would the integration of women improve a combat unit's survivability and the defense of the United States?" one could answer that the quality of military units stems from the quality of their personnel and from their cohesion. Opening combat units to qualified women will increase the country's supply of good soldiers. Cohesion will not come automatically, but, if the quality of the new recruits is high enough, the benefits will be worth the effort.

Dr. Jennie Kiesling
West Point, New York

The Author Replies:

Not only does Dr. Kiesling miss the point of my article completely, but the fact that she doesn't get it helps make my point. No matter how much women might feel they deserve to "belong," their acceptance by men is not up to them. Nor will "intelligent, professional" leadership or legislation change this. It hasn't so far in countless 9-to-5 workplaces. How could it in units where the task demands more than just *having* to get along for a finite period of time to earn a paycheck?

Of course I agree that there are innumerable supremely talented females who can outshoot, outswim, outrun, and outbox many men, just as there are numerous women who are likewise devoted to country and service over self. Nowhere do I argue otherwise. But armies of one only truly exist in the minds of marketers and megalomaniacs. By necessity, the Army is composed of units. Dr. Kiesling never explains how having women present would render an otherwise all-male combat unit more effective. Instead, she continually focuses on individuals. She seems to presume that individual talent proves worth or that cohesion can be attained from on high, by command. If that's the case, why not turn prisons into recruiting pools, since many who are incarcerated can clearly do all the things she lists? Then there'd be no need to augment the supply of males with females.

What's the aim: numbers, equity, or combat-effectiveness? As for what could undercut my argument, proponents would do well to explain how females might be integrated with no ill effect. Dr. Kiesling only presumes this could happen--she never tells us how--though in her fourth point she does admit that introducing women into combat units would pose a leadership challenge. Aren't there already enough leadership challenges? Why create more problems for leaders? Or, to rephrase this in terms of equity: how would *this* be fair? More to the point still, to whom might it be unfair?

We might well wonder what men who are already serving, or have served, in combat units have to say about any or all of this. But Dr. Kiesling doesn't seem to wonder, or to care. Instead, as with so many proponents of gender integration who routinely dismiss or ignore those they want women to serve with, men's concerns don't rate. In a perversely ironic way this not only speaks volumes but sums up the whole problem: Can you belong to something whose ethos you don't understand? Should you fight so that others can belong to something you can't understand? If only Dr. Kiesling's comment addressed rather than highlighted these questions I'd have more to which to respond.

THE BALTICS AND NATO EXPANSION

To the Editor:

Colonel Kent R. Meyer's article, "US Support for Baltic Membership in NATO: What Ends, What Risks?" (*Parameters*, Winter 2000-01) makes an erroneous conclusion based on inaccuracies and misplaced priorities. Current data in the context of US priorities clearly shows that Baltic NATO membership serves US interests.

The author states that NATO movement into the Baltics will create an "irreconcilably suspicious and hostile atmosphere between Russia and the West--one that could result in a return to Cold War postures and policies." This was said of German reunification, 1999 NATO expansion, and the Kosovo air campaign, all subsequently reconciled with Russia.

The US-Baltic Charter supported Baltic NATO membership, a goal which Colonel Meyer claims is misplaced and fails to advance the goals of the Baltic Action Plan. The Baltic Action Plan seeks to integrate the Baltics into Euro-Atlantic institutions, to encourage good relations with Russia, and to demonstrate US commitment to the Baltics. Baltic NATO membership advances these goals. Beyond the integration and US commitment, NATO membership can also promote good relations with Russia. A Russian definition of Baltic "good relations" usually has meant strong Russian influence, leading to eventual dominion. A US definition of "good relations" includes respect for Baltic sovereignty. Recent Russian actions, including reversion to Soviet symbols, solidarity with expatriate Russian-speakers, and crackdowns on a free press, suggest a return to some of the previous era's thinking and an ambiguous attitude toward Baltic sovereignty. Russian President Putin's overtures to "nations of concern," his support for ESDP, and recent revelations of Russian espionage show an undiminished affinity for realpolitik. When presented a hard line, Russia has respected it. Presented uncertainty, Russia has sought to take advantage. If the United States seeks good relations with Russia, then the United States should eliminate uncertainty about the Baltics as members of Euro-Atlantic structures.

Colonel Meyer cites unresolved borders as a "Baltic failure to meet NATO admission guidelines." He admits that the Balts have made every border concession to Russia, including ratifying Russia's version of it, and that the border remains an issue only for Russia to interfere with Baltic NATO aspirations. How is Russian intransigence a "Baltic failure"? Why penalize the Balts for their concessions while rewarding Russia's blackmail?

The author cites an absence of Baltic military capability as another NATO obstacle. He states that Western governments have been unwilling to provide anti-aircraft and anti-tank weapons, and that the peacekeeping role of the combined Nordic-Baltic Battalion (BALTBAT) precludes a defensive mission for this unit. These conditions exist primarily because of an aversion to an "irreconcilably hostile atmosphere between Russia and the West--one that could result in a return to Cold War postures and policies." BALTBAT is a peacekeeping unit because Western governments which sought to placate Russian concerns sponsored it. Western governments shied away from providing weaponry to the Baltics largely to avoid offending Russia.

The author cites 1998 worst-case economic figures as an obstacle to NATO membership. Current numbers show that all three Baltic states recently recovered many of their economic gains. Estonian growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2000 was six percent, and six percent is forecast for 2001. Estonia allocated 1.76 percent of GDP to defense in 2001, roughly equal to the percentage allocated by Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Belgium, all pillars of NATO. Moreover, Estonia is currently on track to spend 2.0 percent in 2002, an increase that none of those countries is expected to match.

The author's assertion of the Baltics as a buffer has tragic precedents in modern memory. It should be firmly rejected by the United States with more resolve than an internal State Department realignment. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact assigned the Baltics to Russia, a status that transitioned to occupation, deportations, and executions. Relegating the Baltics to Russia ratifies an agreement made by Nazi and Soviet governments. Leaving the Baltics uncertain makes

them negotiable bargaining chips, to be surrendered when US-Russian relations face the inevitable future challenge.

Colonel Meyer declares that while European stability is a US vital interest, not all of Europe is significant, and few Americans consider the Baltics sufficiently significant to defend. When NATO intervened in Kosovo, it did so to protect a stateless Muslim minority on Europe's fringes represented by the Kosovo Liberation Army. If the United States fought for Kosovo, should we expect less for the former "captive nations," European democracies with US-based ethnic support, whose US-recognized sovereignty continued uninterrupted for 50 years of occupation? If the United States intervenes anywhere, it should be for national interest and moral obligation. It is reasonable to expect US involvement in the event of a crisis in the Baltics, because both of these conditions are satisfied.

Colonel Meyer's article also cites defensibility as a reason to deny the Baltic states NATO membership. Many of the Baltics' defensive shortcomings can be traced directly to the policy of Western governments to "accommodate Russia" in the early 1990s, a questionable policy the article endorses. For Estonia, those who claim Baltic indefensibility should examine the 1944 Estonian campaign. Heavily outnumbered in troops, tanks, artillery, and aircraft, Estonians prevented Soviet reoccupation for seven months. The campaigns at Sinimäed and Emajõgi showed that smaller numbers of well-trained, well-equipped Baltic troops on the proper terrain can make invasion an unattractive proposition.

Finally, the author allows that defensibility was not a criterion applied to Cold War-era Copenhagen or West Berlin, but asserts that NATO could commit to defend them because Russia did not declare them to be of vital interest. This reasoning suggests that Russian restraint, not Western resolve, kept the Warsaw Pact out of Western Europe. By extension, it recommends that US and NATO goals should be kept within Russian-prescribed limits. As during the Cold War, the West must defend those things it values, even if they are threatened. If they include democracy, free markets, and a common Western civilization, then they must include the Baltics. Further, if the alliance is to survive, it must face challenges squarely--any alliance that repeatedly "goes away" from hard problems will eventually "go away" permanently.

Lieutenant Commander Patrick McCabe, USN
Tallinn, Estonia

The Author Replies:

I appreciate Lieutenant Commander McCabe's interest in my article and this opportunity to respond. I was somewhat taken aback by his very broad assertion that I made an "erroneous conclusion based on inaccuracies and misplaced priorities," and I trust he will understand if I respectfully disagree with his analysis. His comments do suggest that I may have failed to articulately present my views regarding the role that Russian objections should play in the decision on whether the Baltic republics should be admitted to NATO. If my article gave the impression that I believe NATO members should conform their decisions regarding the future growth of the alliance to Russian-prescribed limits, then I failed to clearly express myself. Certainly we should act where possible to allay Russian concerns regarding NATO operations and growth, but the decision to expand the alliance should not be defined or limited by Russian desires, just as it must not be defined by the security needs of applicant nations. Rather, it should be based on the goals, policies, and defensive needs and capabilities of the alliance and its member nations.

Based on my analysis of NATO's admission guidelines, the current military capabilities of the alliance, the state of the Baltic republics, and other considerations, I still believe that the United States and the other Western nations should work to integrate the Baltic republics into the Euro-Atlantic community of nations, but that the admission of the Baltic republics to NATO now, or in the near future, absent a significant change in existing conditions, would be shortsighted and counterproductive. Lieutenant Commander McCabe's comments have not convinced me otherwise. Using Baltic military capability as an example, Lieutenant Commander McCabe challenges my analysis of the status and capability of the Baltic military forces. He states that the Estonian economy is recovering from the 1998 levels cited in my article, that the Estonian government has allocated 1.76 percent of its gross domestic product to defense this year, that the lack of anti-armor and anti-aircraft capability in the Baltic militaries is due to the unwillingness of Western governments to transfer that equipment to those nations, and that the Estonians were able to resist Soviet reoccupation of their nation for seven months during 1944. His assertions all may be correct. However, what Lieutenant

Commander McCabe fails to adequately challenge is the basic premise that the Baltic republics do not now possess, nor are they likely to build in the foreseeable future, a credible military capability worthy of NATO membership.

Furthermore, even were we to ignore the many areas in which the Baltic republics have not yet satisfied NATO admission guidelines, the fact still remains that NATO is not yet ready to accept and adequately incorporate them into the alliance. Complex and unresolved issues--including NATO's continuing, and expanding, involvement in Balkan peace operations; the role of the European Defense Initiative and its impact on NATO military operations and capabilities; and the unexpectedly difficult and continuing incorporation of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic into the alliance--must first be addressed and resolved by NATO members before they assume the many additional challenges that would ensue from Baltic membership.

I agree with Lieutenant Commander McCabe that the West must defend those things that it values, but there is more than one way in which the West can defend the Baltic republics and protect them from Russian interference. NATO membership now for the Baltic republics is not the answer. Requiring that the conditions for Baltic membership be right before admitting those nations into the alliance is not, as Lieutenant Commander McCabe suggests, a case of NATO going away from hard problems. Rather, it is the alliance facing those hard problems head-on with a firm commitment that will ensure that NATO can effectively accomplish its political and military missions now and in the future. Someday the conditions for Baltic republic membership in NATO might be right, but that time is not now. Neither those nations nor the alliance is ready. Until that day comes, the United States and her NATO allies should work with the Baltic republics in helping them to establish and maintain close ties to the West, improve Baltic-Russian relations, and otherwise help establish the conditions that would allow the Baltic republics to one day become contributing members of NATO.

Colonel Kent R. Meyer

THE TACTICAL SKILLS OF STREET PROTESTORS

To the Editor:

Two recent *Parameters* articles, "Bringing Environmental and Economic Internationalism into US Strategy" by David H. Carstens (Spring 2001) and "The Real Military Revolution" by Thomas K. Adams (Autumn 2000), have a real-world intersection in the recent anti-globalization street protests in Seattle and Quebec.

Protests of this nature are, of course, precisely the sort of conflict environment Major Carstens describes in his article. What is not specifically mentioned in Major Carstens' article is the tactical skill demonstrated by many of the street protestors. More aggressive demonstrators, such as the Anarchist "Black Blocs," have shown a high degree of sophistication in employing decentralized, small-team, and individual decisionmaking and personal communication devices (cell phones) to stymie the hierarchical police forces arrayed against them. Being intent on property damage and political drama, anarchist protestors have yet to wield real military force. However, it is worth contemplating what damage they could inflict if they had more lethal intentions and weaponry.

In fact, the decentralized but effective actions of anarchist protestors are an interesting contrast to the structure of the Army as we undergo transformation. As Lieutenant Colonel Adams points out, the increasing digitization of the battlefield is forcing decisions downward to the individual soldier. This may have the positive effect of allowing small tactical advantages to be exploited. However, decentralized decisionmaking also has high potential to disrupt the command and control hierarchy of the military, jeopardizing mission goals.

Despite their anarchist ideology, the street protestors' tactical merits may be worth studying. It is possible that the US Army could derive useful tactical lessons from their anti-hierarchical structure. Indeed, armed protestors may be one of the forces we in the Army face in future conflicts.

Sergeant Christian De Leon-Horton
115th MI Group
Schofield Barracks, Hawaii

The Author Replies:

Sergeant De Leon-Horton raises an interesting perspective in his commentary. While it was not the intent of my article to address the tactics, techniques, and procedures of anarchists, I completely agree that recent protestors have demonstrated an unexpected level of "tactical skill" in their efforts to influence policy.

The potential threat to US military forces abroad brought on by civil uprisings against a variety of issues is alarmingly real. One need only look at Somalia to acknowledge the lethality of a well-organized mob joined by a singular cause and armed with unsophisticated weaponry and non-technical but highly effective command and control measures.

Even Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld recognizes the danger. When asked about his progress in deciding on strategic requirements at a press conference on 8 May 2001, Rumsfeld answered, "Mightn't we want to size our forces also for some other things, like a Bosnia or a Kosovo or a noncombatant evacuation in some country, or maybe one or two or three of those things?" With this in mind, protestor tactical merits are not only worth studying, as Sergeant De Leon-Horton suggests, but the potential small-scale contingency operations brought on by such protests must be accounted for in our future military strategy.

Major David H. Carstens

Reviewed 16 August 2001. Please send comments or corrections to carl_Parameters@conus.army.mil