

**This an excerpt of a book chapter by CMR President Elaine Donnelly titled “Defending the Culture of the Military,” published in May 2010 by the Air Force University Press as part of a book titled *Attitudes Are Not Free: Thinking Deeply about Diversity in the U.S. Armed Forces*. Footnotes are in sequence but different from the original text, which begins on page 249. The chapter is available at <http://books.google.com/books?id=5FnvJEclewC&lpg=PP1&pg=PA249#v=onepage&q&f=false>.**

## **Foreign Countries as Role Models**

Activist groups promoting the cause of gays in the military frequently cite as role models for the United States 25 mostly-Western European countries that have no restrictions on professed homosexuals in their militaries.<sup>i</sup> The number is small compared to approximately 200 nations in the world, and comparisons by sheer numbers put the picture into clearer perspective.

Cultural differences between America’s military and the forces of other countries, to include potential adversaries such as North Korea, Iran, and China, also are important. For four basic reasons, nothing in the experiences of other nations justifies repeal of the 1993 law, Section 654, Title 10, U.S.C.:

1. There are vast differences in the culture and missions of the American military in comparison to much smaller forces maintained by countries that depend on America for defense.
2. Foreign military authorities do not provide independent, objective information about the effects of gay integration on the majority of personnel—not just those who are homosexual.
3. Official or self-imposed restrictions on homosexual behavior in the militaries of foreign countries, which are comparable to the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy in this country, would not be acceptable to American gay activists whose definition of nondiscrimination is far more extreme.
4. Our superior military is a role model for other countries, not the other way around.

With all due respect to Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France (excepting the elite Foreign Legion), Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and Uruguay—none of these 19 nations’ small militaries bear burdens and responsibilities comparable to ours.

The American Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines accept far-away, months-long deployments, and our direct ground combat battalions, special operations forces, and submarines require living conditions offering little or no privacy.

**Israel.** Israel’s situation differs from the United States because all able-bodied citizens, including women, are compelled to serve in the military. In addition, deployments

do not involve long distances, close quarters, or other conditions comparable to those common in our military, which elevate the potential for sexual tension.

Israeli popular culture is somewhat accepting of homosexuality, but most homosexuals in the Israel Defense Forces are discreet.<sup>ii</sup> Israeli soldiers usually do not reveal their homosexuality, and used to be barred from elite combat positions if they did.<sup>iii</sup>

In the United States, gay activists are not asking for the right to be discreet in the military. The goal is to celebrate and expand that status into every military occupation and eventually into the civilian world. The limited experiences of homosexuals in the Israel Defense Forces do not recommend implementation of this goal.

**Germany.** The late Prof. Charles Moskos noted that nations without official restrictions on gays in the military were also very restrictive in actual practice. Germany, for example, dropped criminal sanctions against homosexual conduct in 1969, but also imposed many restrictions on open homosexual behavior and career penalties such as denial of promotions and access to classified information.<sup>iv</sup>

According to veteran foreign correspondent Dr. Uwe Siemon-Netto, Germany has conscription for both civilian and military duties. About one-fifth of Bundeswehr soldiers are draftees who are not subject to deployment overseas. Homosexuals used to be exempt from conscription but are now subject to it. Due to strong feelings in the ranks, there are few homosexuals in German elite combat units that are subject to deployment in war zones such as Afghanistan.

There are few complaints about the treatment of homosexuals in the German military because young homosexuals of draft age tend to choose alternative forms of civilian national service, including hospital, hospice, or ecology-related assignments.<sup>v</sup> According to the chairman of their own advocacy group, few of the gays in the German military choose elite combat units that are subject to deployment in war zones.<sup>vi</sup>

In 2009 Germany had some 7,700 troops stationed abroad, with 4,000–4,500 in northern Afghanistan and Uzbekistan. Because draftees are not deployed, and because there are strong feelings of opposition to gays in close combat units, these troops do not provide a model for American forces or for the type of force envisioned by homosexualists in this country.<sup>vii</sup>

In his correspondence, Dr. Siemon-Netto added a comment about the French Foreign Legion, which consists primarily but not exclusively of foreign volunteers. Considered to be one of the toughest fighting forces in the world, the French Foreign Legion's corps of nine regiments has been deployed to international crises in Afghanistan, Africa, and the Middle East. Dr. Siemon-Netto wrote, "I have mentioned the Foreign Legion only in support of the assertion that Continental European forces, to wit the German airborne elite units, are not a happy venue for homosexuals to 'out' themselves."

**Australia.** Australian forces represent one of several nations with civilian and military social cultures far more liberal than the United States. A Web site of the Australian Defense Force has created a romantic image for gays in the ranks, who are described as a “largely invisible” minority.<sup>viii</sup> This may reflect the culture of liberal Australian society, but a recent report in the *Sydney Morning Herald* suggests that the nation has priorities for its military vastly different from our own.

On 17 November 2008, the *Herald* reported that personnel shortages were so severe, the Australian navy found it necessary to shut down for a two-month Christmas break.<sup>ix</sup> The stand-down period was scheduled to run from 3 December to 3 February 2009 and will be a permanent arrangement every year. (If Australia is part of an allied naval force in the Pacific, the best time for an enemy to attack would be during the Christmas break.)

The *Herald* reported that the plan was announced to make the Aussie navy more “family friendly,” in order to improve retention and remedy personnel shortages. Their navy loses 11 percent of its personnel every year and achieved only 74 percent of its full-time recruitment goals in the previous fiscal year.

**The Netherlands and Canada.** The Netherlands and Canada have civilian and military cultures quite different from the United States,<sup>x</sup> and both countries enjoy the protection of American forces. Dutch and Canadian forces primarily deploy for support or peacekeeping missions that depend on the nearby presence of American forces. In these militaries most homosexuals are discreet, but American gay activists are demanding far more than that.

Dutch society, known worldwide for socially liberal policies regarding sexual matters, is not a model suitable for the US military to follow. Deployments normally do not involve offensive combat or conditions comparable to those experienced by American troops.

Canada chose to include homosexuals in the Canadian Forces in 1992, after the conclusion of the Persian Gulf War. Some Canadian troops have been deployed in supportive roles in the current war, but not under conditions comparable to American forces. Canadian society is more culturally liberal than the United States, becoming one of the first countries to legalize same-sex marriage.

Canada’s policy has made it necessary for officials to establish protocols for chaplains asked to perform same-sex marriages. If a chaplain cannot participate as a matter of conscience, a referral to a colleague or civilian officiating clergy (COC) can be made.<sup>xi</sup> Comparable regulations in the American military would not shield a chaplain from disciplinary measures, such as career-ending denial of promotions for refusing to perform same-sex marriages or to bless civil unions. Nor would chaplains or other military officials be protected from predictable litigation claiming discrimination against same-sex couples.

**Britain and the United Kingdom.** In September 1999, the European Court of Human Rights ordered the United Kingdom to open its military ranks to homosexuals. Instead of exercising its option to resist, Britain complied with the order. This unnecessary capitulation, in itself, demonstrated profound differences in British and American governments and the cultures of their respective militaries.<sup>xii</sup>

Independent information about what is happening in Britain is difficult to obtain, since the Ministry of Defence (MOD) no longer releases objective reports on the integration of gays in the military.<sup>xiii</sup> A 2002 MOD report on the subject was kept secret, but in 2007 the *London Daily Mail* obtained a copy by means of a Freedom of Information request. According to a *Daily Mail* article about the 2002 report, Britain's armed forces faced significant protest when the government lifted the ban on homosexuals serving. The Royal Navy, in particular, suffered a loss of experienced senior rates and warrant officers who preferred to quit.<sup>xiv</sup>

Eight years later, homosexual service members have told activists in this country that the integration process, from their perspective, has been a complete success in Britain. This is not surprising, since they have no reason to complain. Same-sex couples live in married and family housing, dance at social events, and march in gay pride parades.<sup>xv</sup>

The Ministry of Defence meets regularly with LGBT activist groups to discuss even more progress for their agenda.<sup>xvi</sup> A multicolored "rainbow" version of the official seal appears on the MOD Web site,<sup>xvii</sup> which posts newsletters and other documents of interest on the Web site of the MOD LGBT Forum. The forum is looking at issues such as future acceptance of transgenders in the military, and the gay activist group Stonewall praised the Ministry of Defence for working with them on "homophobic bullying."<sup>xviii</sup> (This is an interesting comment since activists claim that the British experience has been completely positive.)

Britain is often held out as a model for the United States on social change, but the Ministry of Defence has not cooperated by allowing independent interviews. In 2007, the *New York Times* included this in a story promoting the success of gays in the British military: "For this article, the Defense Ministry refused to give permission for any member of the forces to be interviewed, either on or off the record. Those who spoke did so before the ministry made its position clear." Instead of questioning why the restrictions on interviews were so tight, the *Times* headlined the article as if the British experience were an unqualified success.<sup>xix</sup>

Britain is an ally of the United States, and the efforts of its men and women in uniform are admirable and appreciated. Still, there have been indications that all is not well with British forces. European newspapers have reported recruiting and disciplinary problems in the British military.<sup>xx</sup> When Royal Navy officials stood by and allowed 15 of their sailors and marines to be taken hostage by Iranians in 2007, many observers wondered if the culture of the service had changed, and not for the better.<sup>xxi</sup>

In January 2009, the British military's top commander agreed with American Secretary of Defense Robert Gates that the British military had been less than effective in carrying out counterinsurgency operations against the Taliban in southern Afghanistan when they first deployed to Helmand Province in 2006.<sup>xxii</sup> It is impossible to determine the effect of changes in military culture caused by liberal social policies, but the British military should not be a role model for the American all-volunteer force.

**Middle East and Muslim Allies.** In this debate there has been little debate about the cultural values of some of our allies, which could present problems in military situations. In Iraq and Afghanistan, American forces are training Muslim forces in small units in the field. Nine- to 11-man military training teams in Iraq, called embedded training teams in Afghanistan, live, sleep, and train together constantly.

Reportedly, under Sharia law homosexual conduct is a crime in many countries in the Middle East, punishable by imprisonment, flogging, or primitive, violent death. The US military cannot change such attitudes, but it does try to avoid offending Muslim allies whenever possible.<sup>xxiii</sup> The challenge of training Iraqi and Afghan troops already is difficult enough. If our military creates a serious cultural problem and then "solves" it by exempting openly gay soldiers from close-combat training and deployments with Muslim troops, how would that affect military readiness and the morale of everyone else? Modern history provides few answers to such questions, but members of Congress should consider them before voting to repeal the 1993 law.

**Potential Adversaries.** Conspicuously missing from the list of 25 gay-friendly militaries are potential adversaries China, North Korea, and Iran. Their combined forces (3.8 million, not counting reserves) are more than two times greater than the active-duty forces of the 25 foreign countries with gays in their militaries (1.7 million).<sup>xxiv</sup>

Congress is being asked to impose a risky military social experiment that is duplicated nowhere in the world. Instead, members of Congress should assign priority to national security, putting the needs of our military first.

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<sup>i</sup>. The Michael D. Palm Center, "Nations Allowing Gays to Serve Openly in Military," June 2009; David Crary, AP, "[Allies Stance Cited in US Gays-in-Military Debate.](#)" 13 July 2009; and Otto Kreisher, "Few Armies Accept Homosexuals," *Sacramento Union*, 7 June 1993.

<sup>ii</sup>. Charles Moskos, "Services Will Suffer If Used for Social Experiments," *Richmond-Times Dispatch*, 28 February 1993, F1; Susan Taylor Martin, "Israeli Experience May Sway U.S. Army Policy on Gays," *Israel 21c.com*, 10 January 2007; and author's e-mail correspondence with Israeli policy analyst Ethan Dor-Shav, May 2009.

<sup>iii</sup>. Charles Moskos, "Services Will Suffer If Used for Social Experiments," *Richmond-Times Dispatch*, 28 February 1993, P. F1; and e-mail correspondence with Israeli policy analyst Ethan Dor-Shav, May 2009.

<sup>iv</sup>. Otto Kreisher, "Few Armies Accept Homosexuals," *Sacramento Union*, 7 June 1993, A5.

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v. Caucus of Homosexual Members of the Bundeswehr (AHsAB e.V.). Uwe Siemon-Netto, PhD, a veteran German foreign correspondent, translated this information and other German documents relevant to this subject. E-mail correspondence on file with author, May 2009.

vi. Ibid.

vii. On 22 January 2008, the national German wire service *Deutsche Presseagentur* reported that gay activist and AHsAB e.V. chairman Jan Trautmann, a chief petty officer, said that though he has personally never had "negative experiences" since "coming out" in the navy, "most homosexuals prefer to stay away from elite units such as paratroopers."

viii. Australian Defence Force. "[Understanding Homosexuality.](http://www.defence.gov.au/fr/education/Understanding%20Homosexuality%202003/index.html)" <http://www.defence.gov.au/fr/education/Understanding%20Homosexuality%202003/index.html>

ix. Cynthia Banham, "Navy Closes for Christmas, Families First in New Year," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 November 2008.

x. Kate Monaghan, "Dutch Political Party Wants to Normalize Pedophilia," *CNSNews.com*, 26 July 2006, <http://www.cnsnews.com/ViewSpecialReports.asp?Page=/SpecialReports/archive/200607/SPE20060726a.html>.

xi. Interfaith Committee on Canadian Military Chaplaincy, "Same Sex Marriage/Blessing of a Relationship: Guidelines for Canadian Forces Chaplains," 25 September 2007.

xii. *Lustig-Prean and Beckett v. United Kingdom*, 29 Euro. Ct. H.R. 548, 587 (1999); Human Rights Watch: Uniform Discrimination, 38; and *BBC News*, "Delight and Despair at Gay Ban Ruling," 27 September 1999, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/458842.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/458842.stm) (reporting that the ruling of the European Court of Human Rights was "not binding on the UK Government").

xiii. Lawrence Korb, Sean E. Duggan, Laura Conley, "Ending 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell,'" the Center for American Progress, June 2009, 17. This report cites a report done six months after the United Kingdom capitulated to the European Court order to accommodate gays in the military, but nothing more recent.

xiv. "Lifting Ban on Gays in Armed Forces Caused Resignations Report Reveals," *Daily Mail Online*, 15 October 2007, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-487750/Lifting-ban-gays-armed-forces-caused-resignations-report-reveals.html>.

xv. Chris Gourley, "Armed Forces March United for Gay Rights at Pride London," *London Times Online*, 5 July 2008, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article4276099.ece>; and Chris Johnston, "Navy to Advertise for Homosexual Sailors," *London Times Online*, 21 February 2005.

xvi. Nicholas Hellen, "Navy Signals for Help to Recruit Gay Sailors," *London Times Online*, 20 February 2005; and Chris Gourley, "Armed Forces March United for Gay Rights at Pride London," *London Times Online*, 5 July 2008, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article4276099.ece>.

xvii. Ministry of Defence, *LGBT News* Web site, available at <http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/370C9F8D-4728-4805-BE98-27A0207C2271/0/LGBTNewsletterMay08.pdf>.

xviii. Richard Hatfield, "A Few Words from Our Diversity Champion," in Ministry of Defence, *LGBT News*, May 2008, <http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/370C9F8D-4728-4805-BE98-27A0207C2271/0/LGBTNewsletterMay08.pdf>; and "LGBT Definitions – Transexuality," Ministry of Defence Web site,

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<http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/WhatWeDo/Personnel/EqualityAndDiversity/LGBT/LgbtDefinitionsTranssexuality.htm>.

<sup>xix</sup>. Sarah Lyall, "Gay Britons Serve in Military With Little Fuss, as Predicted Discord Does Not Occur," *New York Times*, 21 May 2007, 8.

<sup>xx</sup>. Tony Czuczka, "British Soldier Admits to Assault on Captive," *Washington Times*, 19 January 2005, available at <http://www.buzztracker.org/2005//01/19/cache/441692.html>; and Glenda Cooper. "Photos Indicating Abuse Renew British Debate," *Washington Post*, 20 January 2005, A18. The reported abuse of male Iraqi soldiers with a forklift involved forced sexual acts, but details are not known because of court-ordered gag orders.

<sup>xxi</sup>. Mary Jordan and Robin Wright, "Iran Seizes 15 British Seamen," *Washington Post*, A-11; also see US Naval Institute *Proceedings*, May 2007, 10, which ran an editorial cartoon comparing the British navy of 1982 that sailed immediately to free the Falklands to a sailor of 2007. The first panel (1982) read, "Britannia Rules the Waves!" The second one (2007), read "Er, I say, Britannia Let Iran Waive the Rules!"

<sup>xxii</sup>. Michael Evans, Defence Editor, "British Were Complacent in Afghanistan, Says Sir Jock Stirrup," *London Times Online*, 30 January 2009.

<sup>xxiii</sup>. "Bringing Serenity to Soldiers," *Army Times*, 6. This article, about the Army's first Buddhist chaplain, reports that "the military is trying to find chaplains who can minister to American troops without offending Muslim allies."

<sup>xxiv</sup>. *Time/Encyclopaedia Britannica Almanac* 2009.