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STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

# THE PEOPLE AND THE ARMY: DIFFERENT CULTURES, SAME BELIEFS

BY.

COLONEL TERRY M. PECK United States Army

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## USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

THE PEOPLE AND THE ARMY: Different Cultures, Same Beliefs

by

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#### **ABSTRACT**

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The United States Army has been representative of the nation's population since its creation. Historically, a common set of values and ethics, and adherence thereto has been part of that bond. The latter is no longer true. With the dramatic change in American social norms in the 20th Century, the population's tolerance for reinterpretation of institutional values and ethics rose significantly. This tolerance, in conjunction with a transition to the primacy of personal rights over institutional needs, has resulted in a society where the good of the many is subordinated to the good of the few. Conversely, the Army has taken a divergent path. Based upon two centuries of battlefield experience, the Army has learned that it can not properly defend the nation, unless the 'good of the many predominates the good of the few'. This difference in cultural perspectives and resultant adherence to clearly defined values and ethics has raised concerns that the Army will become alienated from society and a risk to civilian control. This will not occur. American society and its Army have taken these different paths as a result of each striving to overcome the challenges of tremendous internal and external change. As both cultures struggle to realize their potential, both remain rooted in America's Constitutional beliefs, including subordination of the military to civil control.

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## Representative of the Society They Defend

America's Army has been representative of the nation's populace since its birth. Appropriately, through most of history, the Army's adherence to values and ethics has also been representative of the general populace. This second fact is no longer true. Today, the cultural values and ethics to which the average American is held accountable are no longer the same as those deemed necessary for America's Army to operate as a cohesive organization in its defense of the nation. Accordingly, the Army has established, and strives to maintain values and ethical standards different from those of society to ensure success in its ever growing missions. The result is a widening division between the Army's adherence to values and ethical standards, and American society's. This separation in conformance to values and ethics between America's society and its Army has been much studied for its potential to create a confrontation of cultures that could irreparably damage the civil-military relationship in our country. Through discussion of the issue and its background, I will show that this difference in cultural standards has been a dynamic but necessary transition. That even as the people and the Army operate in different ethical environments, they are inseparably linked by the nation's core beliefs laid out in the Constitution. As a result, this divergence doesn't threaten the military's relationship with the populace, but rather demonstrates the Army's commitment to keep faith with its original purpose in the midst of an ever changing world.

Before we go further in this discussion, we must establish some clear definitions for the terms 'values' and 'ethics'. <u>Values</u> are defined as those principles or norms a

society deems important<sup>1</sup>. Ethics are the discipline dealing with what is good and bad, or right and wrong as it pertains to moral duty and obligation<sup>2</sup>. Given these definitions, values may change as a society changes, however, ethics are more firmly based on what is universally and intrinsically right or correct and what is universally and intrinsically wrong or inappropriate. For any group of people, values and ethics guide popular opinion and action.

#### Army Born from the Populace

As a result of negative experiences with large standing European armies, the founders of America's Army designed it as a small regular federal force which could be supported by an expandable militia from the states. Additionally, where European armies generally owed their allegiance to a king or individual, America's founding fathers tied the United States Army's allegiance to the Constitution and the people. This concept of manning the force had at its roots the intent of ensuring that the core values and beliefs of the populace were reflected in the Army. In so doing, the character and personality of the Army would be determined by that of American society.

Although a strongly individualistic society, American social values of the 18th and 19th centuries, such as 'family before self', 'the greater good', 'deference to elders', and others, conformed well with the disciplinary needs of a military organization where 'unit before self', 'selfless service', and 'subordination to command' were essential for success on the field of battle. Thus, the concept of a militia based force with a small

regular, standing military ensuring a strong connection between America's societal values and the Army's institutional values proved beneficial. In the 20th century, this values based relationship has been significantly modified, but not all together severed. Why has that occurred?

The first half of the 20th century saw our nation's military much the same as it had been for the two previous centuries in manning concepts, institutional values and ethics. Its small regular Army consisting of a mix of careerist and short term conscription soldiers manned the camps, posts and stations across the nation. This force could be expanded by a larger reserve of mostly state controlled militias that conducted monthly drills at local armories and training areas. As a democratic country with secure borders, America didn't need to maintain a large pool of militarily trained personnel in peacetime, and as a result depended on distance from conflicts to allow the time to properly prepare her forces. When we became embroiled in two world wars, each war required the United States to expand its military far beyond anything envisioned by those who developed our system of raising a force for conflict. Additionally, the manner in which we entered these world wars required commitment of forces as soon as they were marginally trained.<sup>3</sup>

20th Century warfare demanded more technical knowledge and professional skill in the application of the 'art' and 'science' of conflict. The introduction of aircraft, machine-guns, armor, wireless communications and other technologies made warfare much more lethal. Although conscription was adequate for raising the necessary forces to execute these world wars, the time to effectively train inexperienced civilians in military skills and concepts prior to commitment was inadequate. As a result, 80 percent of all

U.S. forces deployed in each world war had less than six months training and indoctrination prior to initial commitment to combat. The result in loss of life and injury attributed to this lack of training, experience, and indoctrination were well documented by historians and painfully noted by military leaders. The old American concept of 'quantity having a quality all its own' lost most of its validity during these major conflicts. As a result, the Chief of Staff of the Army during World War II, George C. Marshall, pushed the American civilian leadership for approval to establish a larger, more capable force of active component military "professionals". Additionally, he encouraged the establishment of Universal Military Training (UMT) for all males between 18 and 24 years of age. 5

There was another, equally important reason for a highly capable standing force following the end of World War II. The United States became mantled with the position of 'free world' leader postured against the specter of global domination by communism. America had never needed or ever desired a large military, however, world leadership and the evaporation of secure borders as a result of weapons with global reach, created a totally different demand on our nation's approach to raising an army. UMT, as recommended by the military, would require all males to enter the active military for a two to three year period and then continue service in the reserves for a total of seven years. Such a concept would firmly tie the Army's values to society's, but had a tremendous impact on the population. Just following World War II, this was unacceptable. In an attempt to maintain the historical ties between the military forces and

the nation, meet the manpower demands of a large force, and minimize the impact on the overall population, the civilian leadership instituted a selective service system.<sup>6</sup>

This system conceptually would draw the necessary manpower from across the entire spectrum of the nation's eligible male population for a two year service period. Such an even handed approach for meeting the military's manpower needs would have maintained a richly diversified force with equally diversified personal values. Ultimately however, the vast majority of the force came from the lower half of the nation's social structure which skewed the force mix as well as the capabilities of the inductee population. This less than perfect selection process would prove to be detrimental not only to the potential capability of the force, but also the popular image of the Army. The process resulted in the vast majority of non-technical requirements in the Army being filled by two year conscripts. The perspective on values and ethics brought into the service by these conscripts was dramatically different from that brought by the generations before, who had filled the ranks of the military for the first half of the century. Why was this so?

During and immediately after World War II, the social norms of America changed significantly. The requirement for women to work in World War II industrial plants had changed their role in society and identified them as a new, highly capable workforce.

Returning servicemen had been introduced to a multitude of different cultures and social conduct while fighting around the world. As a result they brought new perspectives on values and social concepts back to America with them. The American populace became more "me" focused and demanding as a result of World War II rationing and the desire

to make up for the sacrifices of war. Additionally, American society as a whole became more liberal and less isolated in its views as a result of international exposure through America's interaction as a world leader. All these and many other changes such as vastly improved media capabilities, started a social transformation throughout the 1950s and 1960s that created an environment far different from that of pre-World War II America.<sup>8</sup>

Subcultures no longer tried to assimilate into an 'American' norm. Instead, they prided themselves on their ability to prevent assimilation. Families became more loosely organized as job markets scattered generations and both parents went to work. Religion was no longer as strong a force for cultural integrity, and school systems lost credibility for academically preparing America's youth for world competition. These and other societal shifts created a significantly more complex and individually focused culture, whose values and ethics were much more open to interpretation and highly situational.<sup>9</sup>

#### An Army in Transition

Also in the 1950s and 1960s, the civilian and military leadership struggled with a changing civil-military environment. The historical concept of a small active force, bolstered as necessary by a large reserve of primarily state militias was replaced. Instead, a large standing Army, expanded by a equally large federal and state controlled reserve force was established to offset Cold War realities of the Soviet threat. But the heart of the issue was how to make the Army more capable, not just larger. How do you optimize the human resource!<sup>10</sup>

General George C. Marshall and others had noted how effective German units were in World War II, even when those units were reduced to 40 percent operational strength. They wrote about and incorporated into U.S. Army field manuals concepts of soldier values, leadership codes, and decentralized command concepts similar to those the Germans had used to optimize their soldiers' capabilities. 11 Additionally, research showed that Wehrmacht units had trained together prior to commitment and replacements came forward as cohesive company or larger size units. 12 America had employed an individual replacement concept which did not support soldier integration into the unit. But at the center of all these techniques was the objective of instilling in the individual soldier a set of military values, identification with a unit, and soldier commitment to the greater good of the organization. This did not mean 'blind obedience to orders', which had been the uninformed perception of the German Army. It was a concept of well trained soldiers in cohesive units, committed to a military ethos, a military culture, that gave German units their combat edge. Now the question was how to incorporate the advantages of this 'concept' into the American way of manning the force.

On the surface building unit cohesion and organizational commitment appeared simple. The Army always had a rigorous individual indoctrination process from basic training through individual skill training. By introducing teambuilding and unit affiliation into the process, then coupling that with 'American values' the soldiers brought from society, the Army should be able to gain the commitment of the individual. As all too often happens, the simple became complex. As previously mentioned, the American values of drafted recruits in the 1960s were not the same as their parents and no

longer supported teambuilding concepts. 'Family before self' had been replaced with 'what's in it for me'. 'The greater good' was replaced with 'not my job'. 'Deference to elders' was now 'don't trust anyone over 30'. American ethics had become more situational, so many inductees came into the service believing that 'do it if you can get away with it' was acceptable conduct. All of these views ran counter to the trust and dependence soldiers must have in each other in combat. The Army quickly learned that you could force soldiers to repress these traits during initial training, but once they were assigned to units, individual attitudes resurfaced. Since most soldiers remained on active duty for only their two year commitment, behavior modification and cultural indoctrination were impossible. <sup>13</sup>

To compound the situation, Americans normally commit themselves to an organization only if they join voluntarily, if the organization has a positive image, and/or the need for the organization is popularly recognized. In the Army's case, most recruits were being conscripted, the Army was perceived as an organization of misfits or undereducated, unemployable social rejects, and the Cold War had not gained popular support for the expanded Army.<sup>14</sup>

Civilian and military leaders were unable to find an agreeable manning system to correct these problems. To apply the European model of UMT and longer enlistments was unapproachable, since most Americans still believed in a modest active force and minimal interference by military duties in their civilian lives. Equally unacceptable was to speak of a "professional" army. This raised tremendous resistance from the nation's liberal populace which equated the term with a total severing of the Army from the

people. The selective service system, as the political compromise, provided an adequate flow of manpower, but the constant turbulence created by a two year inductee obligation jeopardized cohesion and severely limited training and experience. Therefore, as the debate continued, the Korean and Vietnam Wars were fought by American military forces inadequately trained or experienced, similar to those of World War II. Again, significant losses due to these shortfalls only served to confirm what had already been documented from the World War.<sup>15</sup> The two facts of the inability to adequately prepare an inductee for war under the current manning system, and the magnitude and destructiveness of war, which required an immediately available, expertly prepared and committed force, underscored America's inability to continue its historical values and manning link between the people and the Army.<sup>16</sup>

As the 1970s began, America's Army was in a cultural shambles. Its conscription heavy force consisted predominately of an undereducated, uncommitted enlisted population; an equally undereducated, unprofessional noncommissioned officer population; and a questionably competent officer population, inadequately struggling to establish some cohesion in a drug afflicted, highly turbulent military. <sup>17</sup> In every part of its organization, the Army reflected the social compromise occurring in American society. As such, it lacked a universally accepted set of values and ethical standards that committed its members to a greater organizational goal. The reasons for this intolerable situation were a blending of many.

First and foremost was the fact that the Army had lost credibility with the populace. As mentioned earlier, the general perception was that only 'losers', those

incapable of getting a better job or the poor, enter the Army. Additionally, the unresolved 'police action' in Korea coupled with the highly unfavorable conflict in Vietnam had created a perception in the minds of the American people that the Army could no longer win a war. These perceptions, combined with the low qualification criteria for induction in order to meet the services' manning numbers all but guaranteed poor quality soldiers. As a result, many recruits entered the Army without a high school education, from highly dysfunctional backgrounds, and at odds with a set of military cultural values they felt unfairly imposed on their individual rights. All this was counter to achieving an effective, disciplined military. Arguably, the Army's attempt to remain linked by values to American society had become its undoing. 19

Not until the withdraw of American military forces from Vietnam did the Army leadership step back, review the state of the service and determine that the status quo was no longer acceptable. To meet the demands of future combat, the Army had to be a professional force. A <u>professional</u>, as defined in the dictionary, is one who is an expert in his field, highly schooled, with extensive experience and compliant to a set of standards or code<sup>20</sup>. America had painfully learned it could no longer field an Army of 'citizen soldier' masses, marginally trained and experienced, and expect them to survive combat, much less win. The United States Army must be both 'citizens' tied to society by core beliefs, and 'soldiers', professionals committed to a military ideal, an 'ethos'.

In the mid-1970s, the Army took its first true steps toward a professional force and away from its values link to the American populace. Several decades earlier, it had been opined that "To succeed at warfighting, the military must be distinct in values,

attitudes, procedures, and organization, but must, at the same time, represent American society"<sup>21</sup>. This distinction became necessary for a myriad of reasons, but two were of primary importance to the American people, as well as the civilian leadership. The first was the potential cost in lives of any future war. Weapons of mass destruction and even conventional weapons had become so lethal, that fielding a military that was not highly schooled, trained and exercised in the art of war would result in extraordinary casualties. The second was purely fiscal in nature. To keep the cost of the military down, having a professional force would conceptually mean a smaller military would be required to prosecute a conflict. Soldier quality had replaced soldier quantity as America's concept for gaining advantage on the battlefield. Now with the impact of Vietnam fresh in the minds of both civilian and military leaders, the latitude was there to impose these truths in the creation of a professional American Army.<sup>22</sup>

Immediately, the Army's leadership went about the requirements of creating just such a force. This transition would take almost two decades. Through the late 1970s, 80s and into the 90s, the Army made a transformation which resulted in a force entirely foreign from any that had previously existed. But in this transformation, the Army took an appropriately different course from that of American society in the importance placed on values and ethical conduct.<sup>23</sup>

### A Military Transformed

To accomplish this metamorphosis, the Army became an All Volunteer Force (AVF). In 1973, the authority to draft individuals lapsed. With the end of the draft, the old perception of the Army being primarily a force of poor, undereducated individuals faded. However, the service still had to establish itself as a credible organization in the eyes of the populace. To do this, it went through a series of reductions in force to properly size the post-Vietnam Army. During these reductions, emphasis was given on retention of servicemembers rated high in professional conduct.<sup>24</sup>

Additionally, the Army instituted new officer and noncommissioned officer rating reports which required that the servicemember be evaluated on ethical traits. For the Army officer, dedication, responsibility, loyalty, discipline, integrity, moral courage, selflessness, and moral standards became inviolate attributes for professional success<sup>25</sup>. But these were mere words. To ensure proper emphasis, the Army Chief of Staff directed that individual character, focusing on high personal values and ethical standards, be the primary discriminator for recruiting cadets into the officer programs and recruits into the Army. This action, in conjunction with higher aptitude, educational and physical criteria for enlistment, set the standard for the new volunteer force.<sup>26</sup>

Also, greater emphasis was placed on overall servicemember accountability for on and off duty conduct. Deglamorization of Alcohol, drug verification programs and a myriad of other policies were emplaced to encourage and ensure a higher personal standard was established for all soldiers. The Army began the creation of a culture where

here-to-fore unequaled moral, intellectual and physical expectations were being established for soldiers of all ranks.

Concurrent with these actions, the Army revitalized it educational systems for both officers and enlisted. Officer schools had historically been focused to prepare students for his or her expected duties at the next higher level of responsibility. This remained, however, programs of instruction were rewritten to emphasize organizational values, how these applied in lessons learned through historical experience, and the importance of 'lead by example' conduct at all levels of command. The Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES) was established to parallel the officer program in preparing its students for their next level of responsibility. Applying the very basic concepts, noncommissioned officer instruction emphasized 'setting the example' and highlighted the importance of soldier commitment to Army values and ethical conduct'. Overarching the whole educational system was the importance of cultural assimilation into a values based organization centered on - DUTY.

Once in the units, the importance of these values was reinforced on soldiers of all ranks through 'train as you will fight' exercises at home stations and Combat Training Centers (CTCs). The importance of unit cohesion and the relevance of competence, trust, integrity, compassion and other values contained in the Army ethos became apparent as units succeeded or failed based upon their commitment to these concepts.

Even as this transition was taking place in the 1970s Army, outside the military virtually every aspect of America's social values was being challenged. The nation's core beliefs of freedom, security, equality and democracy were still universally

supported, but the institutional values used to sustain these beliefs came under constant attack. Citizens demonstrated their rights not through institutional sources, such as elected representatives and petitions, but rather through challenging the institution in confrontational ways. Flag burning, challenging pray and the pledge of allegiance in schools, draft card burning, and other highly controversial expressions of personal freedom had become the norm instead of the exception in the 1960s and 1970s. In the 1980s, individual desires and rights took precedence over family and institutional values not only in popular expression, but also in legal interpretation. These actions set legal and societal precedents that led to a decade of values and ethical compromises from the national executive level down to the poorest and least educated in America.<sup>28</sup>

From the 1970s through the 1980s, highly publicized ethical issues such as legal proceedings which resulted in murderers, rapists and other felons escaping conviction as a result of 'legal technicalities' made it appear that right and wrong were no longer based on universal understanding, but rather on how the legal system was interpreted. This 'situational' approach to values and ethics, reinforced by ever increasing crime rates, and a highly mobile populace, caused large segments of the individual public to withdraw from routine social interaction. Distancing of the average American, 'the silent majority', from social discourse left values interpretation and maintenance of American ethics to extremists and interest groups which many times expressed positions not representative of the masses. Additionally, media emphasis on these extreme social positions only heightened the perception that American values had eroded.<sup>29</sup>

As a result, although basic American beliefs may not have changed, they were no longer supported by a common values base. Individual rights replaced the importance of a strong, common institutional perspective on values and ethics in American society. Simply put, murder may be universally viewed as wrong in America, but that did not guarantee that a known murderer would be punished for his crime. Likewise, adultery may be seen as a violation of American moral values, but society's tolerance was noted by the frequency and openness of the act.

The outcome was a 1980s society with widely diverse social values and ethical standards. A society where nationalism and the maintenance of American ideals were subordinated to the blending of cultures and international interdependence across a spectrum of social institutions, from banking and commerce to military alliances and religions. But most importantly, it had become a society where the individual took precedence over the needs of the institution in the majority of cases.<sup>30</sup>

This cultural transformation promoted individual commitment to an institution not for what that institution could provide for the common good, but only so long as the greatest personal benefit could be derived from the relationship. A society whose adherence to values and ethics were determined by their impact on personal gain or personal need. Where maintenance of institutional values and ethical standards took a back seat to diversity, personal agendas and political correctness.<sup>31</sup>

From this society, the Army created a professional force whose institutional adherence to values and ethics had to be more rigid than its nation's. In the decade of the 1980s, the Army completed the transition from a force of volunteers, to a force of

professionals. The first step was to ensure quality individuals were being inducted. In 1980, only 52 percent of Army Volunteers had high school diplomas. Only 24.7 percent tested into aptitude category I-IIIA, meaning they ranked in the upper 50 percent of the civilian population. While over 30 percent had more serious than a misdemeanor criminal record. In comparison, by 1988, 92.8 percent of volunteers had high school diplomas. Aptitude category I-IIIA volunteers were up to 65.6 percent, and other than misdemeanor criminal records were down to 5 percent.<sup>32</sup>

A simultaneous process was the establishment of a military ethos to which all soldiers regardless of rank would adhere. "The Army ethos, the guiding beliefs, standards and ideals that characterize and motivate the Army, is succinctly described in one word - DUTY. Duty is behavior required by moral obligation, demanded by custom, or enjoined by feelings of rightness. Contained within the concept of duty are values of integrity and selfless service, which give moral foundation to the qualities the ethos demands of all soldiers from private to general officer." The Oath of Commission for an officer and the Enlistment Oath for a new soldier sets the conceptual foundation for these beliefs. Simply stated in the Oath of Commission, "I, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take the obligation freely, and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office upon which I am about to enter; SO HELP ME GOD." With this weighty commitment made, the profession of arms introduces its members to military values and ethical standards.

"Duty, honor, country: Those three hallowed words reverently dictate what you ought to be, what you can be, what you will be." These words from General of the Army Douglas MacArthur set the lofty level of expectations for those in the profession of arms. For years, the officer corps in the Army has had a set of values and ethical standards consistent with those above, but not until the all volunteer force concept did these same ethical standards and values begin to be applied to the enlisted ranks. "The enlisted men subordinate to the officer corps are part of the organizational bureaucracy but not that of the professional bureaucracy. The enlisted personnel have neither the intellectual skill nor the professional responsibility of the officer. They are specialists in the application of violence not the management of violence. Their vocation is a trade, not a profession." These comments were made by Samuel P. Huntington in his benchmark book on civil-military relations, The Soldier and the State. Appropriate for 1957 when his book was published, they no longer accurately describe the American military organization or its enlisted persons.

The sophistication of modern military systems and the dynamic environments in which American soldiers find themselves, requires that a common code of values and ethical standards be clear to all within the profession and equally adhered to by all.

Today's soldier may be a radar operator, weapon's control operator, fire control center noncommissioned officer, or integrator of command, control, communications, and intelligence systems. In each of these cases and many more, the lives of hundreds or thousands of soldiers and civilians may depend on the professional conduct of that single soldier based on adherence to military values and ethical norms. <sup>36</sup> Equally, the

operational environment in which a soldier may find himself may require actions that could impact strategic decisionmaking. "As young lieutenants, we know how much more we need from our soldiers than discipline and obedience. Later we tend to forget. On the bottom line, however, military units live, literally, because of the end results of team effort and team spirit. The full mental and physical contributions of each and every soldier are essential." The idea imbedded in these words drives the profession toward a common code of values and ethics to ensure an efficient, disciplined, common organizational approach.

#### 1990s American Society and Its Professional Army

American society of the 1990s is equally individualistic as it was in the 1790s. It believes in freedom, equality, and the democratic process. The difference is, the fabric that holds society together is sewn much more loosely today than it was 200 years ago. Our society is much more diverse, unstructured and interdependent with societies of other countries. The focus of Americans in this decade is toward self-gain, personal advantage and self-interest, and that is not necessarily bad for a capitalistic society. However, the societal struggle in influence between personal and institutional rights constantly changes the importance placed on values and ethics.

Studies have verified that Americans understand civilian cultural demands are different from those of the Army. They understand the Army must emphasize adherence to a high standard of values and ethics for all members, regardless of society's

perspective on the same. American society has a historical and institutional 'trust' that its Army will protect it regardless of how incongruous the two cultures may appear. This 'trust' is borne out in even the most recent polls, inspite of a reduction in direct contact between the two cultures.<sup>39</sup>

Today's Army is the finest in the nation's history. 'Finest' means, it has the highest aptitude and educational levels ever documented. It has the lowest use of alcohol, cigarettes, and illicit drugs on record, below 6 percent for the later. <sup>40</sup> It is rated by the American public at the top of all professions as most credible and trustworthy. The level of experience and training for the multitude of missions expected of the force is the best available. The equipment is the finest of its kind in the world. Finally, and most importantly, the soldiers within the Army are committed to the organization. They believe in the ethos of the Army and believe in the Army's importance to the nation.

At the same time, the soldiers in the Army are 'of the people', and equally individualistic. Demographically, the spectrum of regional representation may be weighted more to one region of the country or another, but the spectrum of racial, religious and gender diversification continues to grow. The education of the Army in its role as protector of the Constitution and the people has never been better. As a result, the commitment of soldiers of all ranks to that concept is unwavering. The adopted American military adage, 'I may not agree with what you say (meaning American society), but I will die for your right to say it' is as true today in our Army as ever.

So, is this divergence in adherence to values and ethics between American society and its Army a threat to their historical relationship? Has the Army's, "inclination to

hold our people to higher ethical standards created the dilemma of having them believe that they do, in fact, embody a superior ethical and moral code which makes them better than those outside the gate?" I say no. I say this because the very basis for the professional ethos within our Army is "...to support and defend the Constitution of the United States...". Within the Constitution lies the Bill of Rights from which all our individual freedoms are guaranteed. The Army as a professional body understands that it exists to guarantee the very divergence that raises concern. Ironically, the very commitment to values and ethics that is seen as conservatism within the Army and a threat by some observers, is the immovable anchor which ensures military subordination to the people and civilian leadership. So long as the Army maintains as its bedrock strong values and ethics based in the Constitution and adheres to the high standards of its ethos, then Army personnel of all ranks will continue to be both good Americans, compliant to the demands of American society, and good soldiers, prepared to represent and defend our nation worldwide.

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