

Statement of William Darryl Henderson, Former Commander of the Army Research Institute, Author of "Cohesion: The Human Element in Combat"

(37) Numerous researchers have found out that the creation of a cohesive unit... is significantly influenced by broad cultural values, norms, and characteristics that are the result of a common socialization process and basic agreement among unit members about cultural values.

A significant characteristic about a cohesive unit is the consistent observation and evaluation of the behavior of unit members. Any deviation from unit norms, values, or expected behavior brings immediate and intense group pressures to conform to group norms. If the behavior is not corrected, then cleavage results in the group and cohesion is weakened. If the situation occurs in combat, where survival is threatened, then the group can be expected to expel or somehow separate or isolate the nonconforming individual. 249-50

Statement of Lawrence J. Korb, Director of the Center for Public Policy Education and Senior Fellow in the Foreign Policy Studies Program at the Brookings Institution

(38) Research tells us that the more dissimilar the group, the more difficult will be the task of trying to create unit cohesion. I do not think that there is any doubt about that. These dissimilarities can be based on such things as race, creed, gender, philosophy, and sexual orientation.

But research also shows that proper leadership and training can surmount these impediments. 258

Statement of David H. Marlowe, Chief, Department of Military Psychiatry, Walter Reed Army Institute of Research

(39) Ultimately, the group will reject the individual who appears to embody a threat based upon his or her behavior. That person will be extruded and isolated, and often left to fail by himself.

Each time a soldier enters a new unit, he or she will again be the object of a quiet but searching assessment by those already there. 263

**QUESTIONS**

(40) **Sen. Thurmond:** Dr. Henderson, based on your research and expertise on military units and cohesion, what do you think the impact of introducing openly homosexual personnel in the small military units would be? 280

(41) **Mr. Henderson:** ... you get these sorts of data:  
Seventy eight percent of soldiers oppose allowing homosexuals into the military.  
Ninety percent feel very strongly about the privacy issue. They are strongly against it on the grounds of privacy.

Seventy four percent of male soldiers believe

homosexuality is abnormal.

Seventy five percent believe gays serving openly in the Army would be very disruptive to discipline.

Eighty one percent think there would be violence against homosexuals if it did happen.

This indicates to me that if you did that you would have the severe disruption within these primary groups that we have been talking about that are so violative to cohesion...280

**(42) Sen Thurmond:** Dr. Marlowe, are you aware of cases of homosexuals openly serving on active duty? If so, what was the impact of their presence on cohesion? 281

**Dr. Marlowe:** . . .The impact on cohesion depended on two things: whether or not--let me say, knowledge that people were homosexual, whether or not they brought overt homosexual behaviors into the group, in which case the group excluded them, usually moved to have them put out of the army, or whether or not it was considered to be his private thing that is not exhibited while on duty.... The critical variable was, did the individual behave homosexually in the group or restrict his behavior outside of the group and off post? 281

**(43) Senator Kennedy:** Condoning prejudice is an appalling means to achieving unit cohesion. 283

**(44) Mr. Henderson:** To get to that point--and this is I think the essence of what most of us have been saying here. To get to that point, to be able to arrive at those values, you have got to have commonality and group goals. You have got to have a subordination of the individual values to the group so that they can be resocialized into those group values.

If you have gross, widespread dissimilarities in your initial population of recruits, you are going to have an extremely difficult time in achieving that resocialization process. You are going to have fragmentation, you are going to have personal conflict, and so on. 284

**(45) Dr. Marlowe:** It will depend entirely upon the way in which the individual presents him or herself to the group, and the primary identity the individual interacts with the group with. 285

**(46) Senator Kennedy:** ...if you're satisfied that that individual, whether they be gay or lesbian, are prepared to observe the code of conduct, and be willing to train and work within a group--within a unit--and to do everything else, and to lay down their life for their country, that you'd have no trouble with that particular soldier? 285

**Dr. Marlowe:** Or if they meet the rigorous behavioral standards that a small group requires which may also require their not, Senator, proclaiming that they are gay or lesbian

to the group. 285

(47) **Dr. Korb:** It is very important to be up front about this moral issue, because there are some people who believe that having a gay or lesbian sexual orientation is immoral.

I simply reject that point of view. I understand why they hold it, but I think that when a person comes into the service he cannot bring his or her moral values, whether they relate to this subject, or subjects like divorce, or abortion.

I mean, supposing that drill sergeant were divorced, and you had a group of people raised as I was, as a Roman Catholic, how do we handle that? 291

(48) **Dr. Marlowe:** There was never contact or touch. Just the sense of the interjection of an erotic, special view of one person by the other was enough to damage the unit. 296

(49) **Senator Exon:** ...if a homosexual is not open, and does not flaunt their lifestyle, then do you believe we could fashion a code of military justice that would keep that type of individual from being discharged as long as their homosexuality does not cause a problem in the unit or a problem to cohesiveness of the unit? 298

(50) **Dr. Henderson:** If the homosexual behavior is kept private and nobody is aware in the unit that this situation exists, there probably will be no effect on cohesion.... 299

(51) **Senator Exon:** I have always felt that if homosexuals do not come up front and advertise it that it could not cause incohesiveness in the unit because they would be treated as if they were not homosexual. 299

(52) **Dr. Marlowe:** ...do not flaunt, do not talk, and I think under those circumstances, it does not represent a threat, if you will, to unit cohesion, but that remains, then, the issue is openness or nonopenness, rather than status alone. 299

(53) **Senator Kempthorne:** Dr. Marlowe, what types of stress might a typical 18-year-old heterosexual soldier experience living in very close quarters with openly homosexual individuals, especially if this was his or her first exposure to homosexuality, and what are typical symptoms of this type of stress, if there is any, and how would this stress affect unit cohesion? 300

(54) **Dr. Marlowe:** the typical 18-year-old for whom this is an alien experience would feel both stressed and threatened in close quarters with a homosexual who was behaving in an overtly homosexual fashion, that it would probably under those circumstances--and I underline behaving overtly within the organization--polarize the unit, lead to severe division

within the unit, and might have some other psychological consequences. 300

**(55) Dr. Korb:** ...there are lots of things that we do not ask the troops whether we want them to do...What I am saying is that if, in fact, you say we cannot do this even though we would like to, because the troops are against it, I think that you then, to be consistent, would have to say if the troops are against it we cannot do this or we cannot do that...And what the Army basically did, and it darn near did us in, was try and conform the military's values to society's values. And that is the point I was trying to make, that you do not poll the troops about issues that you feel are right to do. 313-14

**(56) Mr. Henderson:** The other point is that...another major objection was the problem of perceived morality amongst the troops and reacting to that particular lifestyle. Now, I am not saying that is right or wrong personally. I am just saying that is--that exists in the ranks and it is there. You do not find that morality problem with women in the service... 321

**(57) Senator Cohen:** We can burn a flag...under the Constitution but that is not an act of speech. You can declare your sexual orientation, that is not speech, that is an act. So I find that we are involved in some serious paradoxes. 321

**(58) Dr. Marlowe:** I would be concerned about the effects in a group of heterosexuals sharing the normative values we see in the United States on someone who proclaimed at that point or within that context that he was publicly homosexual. Given the nature of the intimacy, I would be concerned about his rejection by the group, his exclusion by the group, his loss of support from the group. 328

**(59) Mr. Henderson:** What causes a problem with the cohesion issue is the open declaration... It is a nonproblem as long as there is not open declaration. 329

**(60) Senator Coats:** My question is do we not run the same risk of injecting sexual tension into the small unit and therefore destroying the cohesiveness of that unit, if we allow individuals to openly declare their homosexual preference?... 332

**(61) Dr. Marlowe:** I think we run a risk. I think we run a risk in any situation if there is going to be any open declaration of sexual intent, if you will, within the situation. 332

**(62) Senator Glenn:** Is there going to be a major impact, do you think, on unit cohesion when homosexual orientation

is openly declared as opposed to when it remains a private matter, even though it to be known or suspected? 333

**(63) Dr. Korb:** . . . I think it depends upon when it is declared and well the people know the other person in the unit. 333

**(64) Dr. Marlowe:** It will depend on the group, the relationship of the individual with the group, the experiences they have had, the intimacy that he feels with other members of the group, that will determine whether or not they accept that statement. 333-34

**(65) Senator Glenn:** Well, I think everybody would probably agree that if this goes ahead that the acceptance of openly gay men and lesbians in the military would require a major change in the attitude of most military personnel, or many of them, at least. I think that would be a fair statement.

And I do not think you can just put out a proclamation to change attitudes, so I am concerned a little bit about how we go about changing some of these attitudes, and I am not sure how you go about that... 334

**(66) Senator Levin:** ...do you believe a large amount of antipathy among the troops against homosexuals serving is based on rational grounds of the likelihood of homosexual behavior or is based on prejudice? 339

**Dr. Marlowe:** I believe a significant part of it is based on prejudice. 339

**Dr. Henderson:** A large part of it is based on basic socialization, you know. Kids, 18, 19, 20 years old, raised in the mid-west, they are raised with certain values. I do not take the position I can normatively say their values are right or wrong.

Also we found out in cohesion studies... that what causes young men to behave the way they do is the intense masculinity that comes out in a cohesive unit. They are young men, they are exploring their masculinity, they get macho. That is I would not say prejudice. I would say that is a characteristic of being that old and doing what they are doing. 340

[extracts continued]

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Chairman NUNN. I believe Senator Levin is next.

Senator LEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, Dr. Henderson, I would like to ask you a question about the difference between this issue and an issue which will be created if a unit or members of a unit did not like a particular person's religion, and there was a real loss of unit cohesion because the person's stated religion, just the statement of that person's religion, created some real morale problems in that unit. Would you think then that the need for unit cohesion, which I think we all recognize is a very critical goal, would overcome that person's religious right? Or would you think that it would be up to the command to tell the guys who just are upset with that person's religion

you are going to have to live with it. Which would dominate in that situation?

Dr. HENDERSON. The issue of what binds a unit together is a broad issue of values, and you have just mentioned two, religion and homosexuality. I cannot think of any religion currently operative in the United States that would bring the same reaction that you would get to the homosexual issue.

Senator LEVIN. Well, say it did, or say someone's ethnic origin. Say at the moment it would be very unpopular to be an Iraqi American. I am just picking out a hypothetical. If someone's ethnic origin or religion created, the mere knowledge of it and statement of it, created unit dissention - would it then be up to the commander, in your view, to tell the unit you are going to have to live with it, or would it be up to that commander to say look, this is creating dissention in this unit, this person's statement of his religious beliefs. He belongs to that cult out in Texas or whatever it is. This person's statement of religious belief or his ethnic origin - I am giving your this hypothetical - in fact creates dissention and undermines cohesion. What is the obligation of the commander or the CO in that situation?

Dr. HENDERSON. If the commander believes it is a tactical problem, then he ought to deal with it as a leadership problem.

Senator LEVIN. How does he deal with it? Does he remove the person that is creating the dissention by reason of his acknowledgement of his religious belief or ethnic origin, or does he tell the rest of the folks in that unit you have got to live with this? Do you think he has the right to do either?

Dr. HENDERSON. This whole line of questions is not analogous to the homosexual issue. You know, we have got an institutional-wide problem here. You are dealing with one specific unit and a religious question and a very small population.

Senator LEVIN. I understand, but I am just asking you for the importance of unit cohesion, which I think all of us would acknowledge that it is an important goal that is critical, I am asking you whether or not that essential goal would overcome the person's right to a religious belief or that person's ethnic origin. That is my question.

Dr. HENDERSON. If the numbers involved are like 78 percent of the unit were against that particular individual, 81 percent felt that that individual would face violent behavior from the other members of the unit, and so on, then the commander probably would, for the safety of the individual and not on a moral ground, but the commander probably would take steps to safeguard that individual.

Senator LEVIN. By removing the individual instead of telling the other members of the unit who lived with it to live with it?

Dr. HENDERSON. I would say that is what would happen based upon the threat of physical violence.

Senator LEVIN. I am just saying there is dissension in the unit that is created and unit cohesion has been diminished by the person's statement of his own religious beliefs or his statement of his ethnic origin. That is what my hypothetical is. I am saying that there is an undermining of cohesion because of what that person has created by his statement.

And I am asking you, then, do you think the commander should have the right to do either and should he be able to do either, or should we tell that commander that you have got to protect that person's religious beliefs, and a mere statement of that is not going to be permitted to move that person out of a unit but rather you [unreadable] to lead that unit into accepting that person. Which do you recommend?

Dr. HENDERSON. In a combat situation?

Senator LEVIN. No, not in a combat situation first.

Dr. HENDERSON. Do you mean in some logistics unit or some depot?

Senator LEVIN. Right now, in peacetime. Right now.

Dr. HENDERSON. Well, first of all, you have to create cohesion during peacetime for wartime, and actions you take in peacetime have to be directed toward building cohesion. The primary responsibility is to produce a combat high effective fighting force or fighting unit.

Senator LEVIN. Should the Commander be able to do either, either remove the individual or insist that that person be allowed to remain and tell the other members of the unit you are going to have to live with this? Should the commander be able to do both?

Dr. HENDERSON. The commander ought to have the judgment as to what action he will take.

Senator LEVIN. And what would you take?

Dr. HENDERSON. Frankly, Senator, I do not know enough about the situation to really answer that question directly.

Senator LEVIN. Dr. Korb?

Dr. KORB. In my view there is no doubt about the fact you have got to protect the rights of an individual. What happens if someone is pro-life or pro-choice, and that becomes a divisive issue? Dealing with that is what we call leadership. You are supposed to be able to ensure that you can handle that, and I would say if the commanding officer does not know how to handle it, he or she has not been properly trained and they ought to be replaced.

Senator LEVIN. Dr. Marlowe, do you believe that homosexuality, per se, implies impairment in general social capability?

Dr. MARLOWE. No, I do not.

Senator LEVIN. Do you believe that homosexuality per se implies impairment in stability?

Dr. MARLOWE. No.

Senator LEVIN. Do you believe that there should be any stigma attached to one being a homosexual?

Dr. MARLOWE. Do I personally believe there should be any stigma attached? No, Senator.

Senator LEVIN. Do you, Dr. Henderson?

Dr. HENDERSON. I do not approach this whole issue as a normative issue of right or wrong. I approach this whole issue in terms of effectiveness and unit effectiveness and the need to have that in order to avoid casualties and achieve a mission. That is my only purpose.

Senator LEVIN. I understand your purpose, but I am just asking you do you personally believe-

Dr. HENDERSON. I personally believe there should be no stigma attached to that behavior.

[extract continued]

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SENATOR LEVIN. Mr. Chairman, there are some differences, I think, between race, sex, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation. But what we are talking about today is where - we are talking about the impact of any of those, particularly homosexuality, on cohesion.

And there, it seems to me, a lot of the questions become the same. Will we tolerate an impact on unit cohesion? If the source of that impact is race, the answer now is no. If the answer is gender, the answer is now no.

In other words, we are not going to allow anyone, if there were an all-white unit, to say, "we do not want any blacks in our unit; it is going to affect our cohesion." We simply say, "that is too bad. Whether it affects your cohesion or not, whether you think it affects your cohesion or not, it is too bad."

We have adopted a standard - we are not going to let it affect your cohesion. We are going to give the capability to our commanders, and we are going to say, we are not going to tolerate that situ-

uation and we are not going to prevent someone from serving because of their race.

The same thing, I think, is true with religion. The same thing now is true with gender and the question is whether we are now going to do that relative to sexual orientation.

And I am reminded in this regard of - and I think it is fair here to quote the reaction of some of the military leaders when it was proposed that it integrate racially, the services.

The Secretary of the Navy said, in December of 1941 - and this goes directly to the cohesion question, putting aside the source - the close and intimate conditions of life aboard ship, the necessity of the highest possible degree of unity and esprit de corps, the requirement of morale, all these demand that nothing be done which may adversely affect the situation. Past experience has shown irrefutably that the enlistment of Negroes other than for mess attendance leads to disruptive and undermining conditions."

Now, that is what was said by the Secretary of the Navy in 1941. And finally the President of the United States said, whether it does or does not, you are going to live with it. That may affect unit cohesion or not in the short term. We, as a country, are not going to allow that to dissuade us from our course.

That was a decision that was made by the Commander in Chief. And in that regard, it is relevant to look at arguments which were made relative to race. Unless there is a rational basis, unless there is a rational basis here for the antipathy among our troops to homosexuals, and that becomes the issue. Is that a rationale basis or not?

Now, all of you say, as I understand it, that you would allow homosexuals to serve if they keep it to themselves. Is that fair, Dr. Marlowe?

Dr. MARLOWE. Yes, it is.

Senator LEVIN. Dr. Korb, do you say that and Dr. Henderson, you say that?

To put it another way, the current ban on homosexuals serving, you would modify to read that only homosexuals who acknowledged their homosexuality should be banned. Is that accurate, Dr. Marlowe?

Dr. MARLOWE. Publicly presented within the military context.

Senator LEVIN. Right. Who acknowledge in the military context that they are homosexual. Those are the only ones who should be banned. Other homosexuals should not be banned.

Dr. MARLOWE. That is fair, sir.

Senator LEVIN. I want to ask you because your position is different. Dr. Henderson, is that your position?

Dr. HENDERSON. You know, by the use of the word acknowledge, you are implying that somebody is going to ask them about it and they are going to say, yes. Well, I do not agree with that.

Senator LEVIN. Okay. You would use the word state?

Dr. HENDERSON. I would say that if a homosexual comes in and asserts, in a very public manner, that he is homosexual and that his lifestyle and that is what he is going to be, then that is the problem.

Senator LEVIN. Okay. Let me put it in your terms, then. For the homosexual who does not, on his own initiative, assert his that he is a homosexual, you would permit homosexuals to serve?

Dr. HENDERSON. Yes, as I said before.

Senator LEVIN. Now that is a change to the current law. Not just a change as to whether we ask the question. I think you both have to realize the current law is that homosexuals cannot serve.

Dr. HENDERSON. I thought there was some sort of compromise worked out between the administration-

Senator LEVIN. No, the compromise is, the question is not going to be asked. There is no change to the current law.

Dr. HENDERSON. Well, basically, I am in favor of the current compromise.

Senator LEVIN. There is no current compromise. Are you in favor - I just asked you a minute ago, do you believe that someone who does not openly assert his homosexuality should be allowed to serve? And I thought your answer was yes.

Dr. HENDERSON. If I am reading you correctly, your saying that if somebody keeps it private, should they be able to serve? And I say yes.

Senator LEVIN. Okay. I am just saying that that is a change to the current law.

Chairman NUNN. That is the interim policy, Senator Levin.

Senator LEVIN. That is the interim policy, but it is not the-

Chairman NUNN. Well, the law does not govern this anyway. It is the regulations.

Senator LEVIN. Well, it is a change to the regulations. Because the current regulations prohibit homosexuals from serving.

Chairman NUNN. That has been circumvented by the President's new directive, though, which supersedes those regulations.

Senator LEVIN. The regulation is that that person will - cannot serve if that person asserts his homosexuality. I am talking about the regulations.

Well, let me get back - I just want to make sure we understand each other. You are suggestin that the current ban on homosexuals serving in the regs should be lifted for those who keep their homosexuality private?

Dr. HENDERSON. In terms of the issue before this committee today and in cohesion, I do not see a problem for cohesion issues under that---

Senator LEVIN. Now let us get to the question you got, Dr. Marlowe and I asked the other day. You have a commanding officer now who asks the question, are you a homosexual? If the answer to that question is yes, would You allow that person to serve?

Dr. MARLOWE. Two things, Senator. First, under the interim policy, commanding officer would not ask the question. The question would be asked only if some issue of behavior had come up.

I think my answer would be, if this is a private conversation between the commanding officer and the soldier and not a public assertion on the part of the soldier to his group, which may not want to hear this assertion, I would not have a problem with the soldier continuing to serve.

Under the present guidance, however, the commanding officer would not ask that question and the question would not come up

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Chairman NUNN. Let me ask one final question, Dr. Marlowe. You mentioned that basically there was a great deal of prejudice involved in this area. Right?

Dr. MARLOWE. Yes, sir.

Chairman NUNN. Let me ask this question. Would someone on a rational basis in a barracks or in a military situation, have also a rational basis to believe that if someone announced their sexual orientation, that they might act on that sexual orientation, that there was a likelihood of acting on it? Is that prejudice or is that a rational reason?

Dr. MARLOWE. I think it is a combination of both, Senator, both prejudice but rational expectation given the kinds of things most people in this country are brought up thinking about almost all sexual behavior and all proclamations, particularly of homosexuality within an all male group.

Chairman NUNN. Right, right.

Senator LEVIN. In that regard, could I jump in? Is it also not true then that if a person who is homosexual did not announce their homosexuality, that there is a rational basis to believe that that unannounced homosexual might act on his homosexuality?

Dr. MARLOWE. There is no rational basis for anyone who does not know.

Senator LEVIN. But is there a rational basis to believe that an unannounced homosexual might act on-

Dr. MARLOWE. There is a rational basis to believe that any human being is capable of almost anything, Senator.

Senator LEVIN. So there is a rational basis, whether there is an announced or unannounced policy?

Dr. MARLOWE. Yes. But we have got to distinguish two things. One is the rational basis for you or I believing that any human being can act on any set of intentions.

The other is the belief of the people who live with that person as to what his or her behavioral intentions might be or what risks might be -

Senator LEVIN. And a significant part of that, you said, was prejudice?

Dr. MARLOWE. A significant part of that is prejudice. But prejudice is as great a controller of behavior as rationality. In fact, it is a greater one.

Senator LEVIN. I am afraid you are right.

Chairman NUNN. Senator Levin, you had the last question and the last word. I mean, you have had it.

Senator LEVIN. I think that is the last word.

Chairman NUNN. We have a vote up there. Dr. Henderson, Dr. Korb, Dr. Marlowe, we thank you very much. It has been a very interesting day and we appreciate you spending 5 hours now in educating us. Thank you very much.

[Whereupon, at 2:20 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]