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OFFICIAL ARMY JOURNAL PUBLISHES CRITIQUE OF CSSMM'S INTEGRITY

SANTA BARBARA, CA, May 27, 2004 - Parameters, the official journal of the U.S. Army War College, published a lengthy exchange between a critic, who labeled CSSMM's research as "gay propaganda," and the Center's director. According to the critique, which was written by Major Joseph A. Craft of the U.S. Marines, the CSSMM is "a homosexual activist group spreading pure propaganda poorly disguised as legitimate research." Craft adds that the Center is "engaged in an intense information campaign to market, normalize, and legitimize the homosexual political agenda." In response, CSSMM director Aaron Belkin questions Craft's use of logic and evidence. Belkin's response is below:

To the Editor:

Major Craft frames my research as propaganda and implies that anyone who agrees with me is being manipulated by the gay lobby. Even if this were true, Craft does not show that lifting the gay ban would undermine readiness. And, when one realizes that Craft's accusations about my scholarship are, at best, without merit, his failure to engage in honest debate becomes even more apparent. To save space, the editors asked me not to use footnotes, but I have posted documentation for this reply at www.gaymilitary.ucsb.edu. [Web editor's note: you are reading the fully footnoted version now.]

Craft asserts that "lifting the ban on homosexuality would significantly detract from combat readiness." But why, if allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly undermines readiness, hasn't anyone been able to identify a single military whose effectiveness deteriorated after the elimination of a ban? [1] To the contrary, U.S. officials praise the performance of Britain and other coalition partners. Scholars at RAND and PERSEREC have concluded that eliminating the ban would not undermine readiness. [2] Admiral John Hutson, former Navy JAG, says that the ban is a failed policy that undermines the military, and General Wesley Clark says the ban does not work. [3] During the first Gulf War, the ban was suspended via stop-loss order without any apparent impact on readiness. [4] Military leaders know that gays don't undermine readiness, or they would never suspend the ban during war.

Craft claims that because gay service members are likely to contract HIV and other STDs, lifting the ban would "overwhelm the military's limited health care system." But many thousands of gays already



serve without overwhelming the system, and lifting the ban will not increase their numbers significantly. [5] Currently, approximately 1,000 service members are HIV-positive (.07% of the force) and all personnel are screened for HIV prior to accession and frequently thereafter. [6] There is no evidence that the health care systems of any of the 24 foreign militaries that lifted their bans have been overwhelmed or that rates of HIV or other STDs increased as a result of integration. [7]

According to Craft, gays live "unhealthy, high-risk" lifestyles. But DoD reports that 41.8% of service members engage in binge drinking, 17.9% do not wear motorcycle helmets, and 57.9% of those who are unmarried and sexually active did not use condoms during their last sexual encounter, a troubling finding given our history in places like Olongapo. [8] Sound public policy would address risky behavior as a service-wide problem rather than singling out gays.

While Craft invents imagined costs he asserts would result from lifting the ban, even though no organizations that lifted bans experienced such problems, he ignores actual costs the Pentagon must pay to sustain DADT. These include wasted money and talent and embarrassing media coverage that sometimes puzzles the American public, 79% of which believes that gays should be allowed to serve openly according to a December, 2003 Gallup poll. [9]

As to Craft's charges that my methodology and evidence are flawed, respected, mainstream social scientists see things differently; my work on gays in the military appears in highly-regarded, peer-review journals such as *International Security* and *Armed Forces and Society* which are neither liberal nor pro-gay, and which do not publish research based on flimsy methodology or data. [10]

Craft questions a passage that says, "A 1995 internal report from the Canadian government on the lifting of the ban concluded, 'Despite all the anxiety that existed through the late 80s into the early 90s about the change in policy, here's what the indicators show , no effect.'" The supporting footnote cites a "Personal communication with Karol Wenek, Directorate of Policy Analysis and Development, Canadian Forces, 20 January, 2000." I cited Wenek rather than the document ("Briefing Note for Director of Public Policy," Ottawa, Canadian Forces, 25 August 1995), because the Parameters quote was Wenek's description of the report's conclusion. I am glad to share the report or connect interested scholars with Wenek.

My research for the Parameters article consisted of extensive literature reviews and interviews of officers and enlisted personnel, ministry representatives, academics, veterans, politicians, and nongovernmental observers (the latter group included activists). Craft questions my decision to interview activists, but consider how vigilantly women's groups monitor the U.S. military for trouble.



[11] My colleagues and I included activists among our interviewees because they are among the most likely to know whether integration caused problems in their countries.

Craft finds it "surprising [that] apparently none of the experts, including the anti-gay ones, had an opinion in support of the gay ban worthy to be included in [my] findings." But none reported that readiness suffered as a result of integration. Consider, for example, Professor Christopher Dandeker, former Chair of War Studies at Kings College London and perhaps the most distinguished scholar of the British military. In 1999, Dandeker wrote that if Britain lifted its ban, readiness would deteriorate. After British policy changed, Dandeker concluded that his prediction had been incorrect. [12] I am glad to help Craft or others contact our interviewees to verify our findings.

Craft claims I did not interview all possible experts, and says my article "fails to identify any... documents and offers no specific data." But Parameters does not allow authors to publish complete bibliographies. I invite anyone interested in my source lists to consult the extensive reference sections of studies listed in footnote 6 of the article. [13] As those studies explain in detail, my colleagues and I used standard social scientific practices to ensure that our search for documents and experts was thorough.

Finally, Craft mischaracterizes my position on anecdotes and statistics. Anecdotes are useful when they illustrate trends. But even a large number of anecdotes featuring red-haired soldiers who undermine readiness would not demonstrate that red-haired soldiers undermine readiness on average. The dishonesty of the 1993 Congressional hearings was not the inclusion of anecdotes about gay service members who undermined readiness, but the failure to determine whether those anecdotes represented overall trends. [14] By contrast, when the totality of experts on a particular military testifies that there is no indication that lifting a ban undermined readiness, that is not anecdotal evidence.

I would welcome the opportunity to analyze the unit cohesion rationale statistically, and I requested permission to conduct such a study. The Pentagon declined to cooperate, and its refusal, which I'll share with interested readers, is fascinating. My complaint about surveys used to justify DADT is not that they are statistical, but that heterosexual dislike of gays is not evidence that lifting the ban would undermine readiness. For example, 66% of male British service members said they would not serve with gays if the ban was lifted, but ultimately the policy transition proved unproblematic. [15]

What about personal and political bias? Perhaps the most important distinction between honest scholarship and propaganda turns on a commitment to report embarrassing findings, to avoid reaching conclusions prior to examining the evidence, and to change one's mind when data contradict original



expectations. My institute's staff and I always report findings that do not confirm our expectations or beliefs (see, for example, the third case of "Multinational Military Units" at www.gaymilitary.ucsb.edu), which is why Charles Moskos, architect of DADT, wrote in an email that my scholarship is "reflective of integrity and honesty." When I asked Moskos for permission to use the quote in this essay, he responded, "Aaron, absolutely. Moreover, I have mentioned to many others that your reporting facts not supportive of your position is more remarkable and rare". [16]

While my passion for research derives in part from a desire to hold experts who fail to tell the truth accountable, my research conclusions follow from evidence, not from personal beliefs. Here's proof. If Craft or others can identify foreign militaries whose effectiveness deteriorated or whose health care systems were overwhelmed as a result of eliminating a ban, I will modify my views accordingly. (My institute will entertain fellowship applications for this research, as always, in good faith). [17]

The difference between Craft and me is not that one of us is political while the other is devoted to fact, but that I examine all available data to determine whether the costs of the ban outweigh its benefits, and remain open to changing my views if the evidence warrants, while Craft actively seeks data, sometimes from dubious sources, and ignores other evidence, to justify his predetermined position. [18] As I argued in my Parameters article, the gay ban is based on prejudice, not concerns about readiness, and prejudice tends to defy reasoned deliberation.

[1] The Dutch military became the first to lift its ban on gays and lesbians in 1974. Since that time, twenty-three other forces have lifted their bans. No study has ever identified a foreign military whose performance suffered as a result of a decision to lift a gay ban. For older studies on gays in foreign militaries, see *Gays and Lesbians in the Military: Issues, Concerns, and Contrasts*, eds. Wilbur J. Scott and Sandra C. Stanley (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1994), 165-181. Also see the brief case studies in Gregory Herek, Jared Jobe and Ralph Carney, eds., *Out in Force: Sexual Orientation and the Military* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1996); National Defense Research Institute, *Sexual Orientation and U.S. Military Policy: Options and Assessment* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1993); General Accounting Office, *Homosexuals in the Military: Policies and Practices of Foreign Countries* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. General Accounting Office, 1993); and Frank Pond, "A Comparative Survey and Analysis of Military Policies with Regard to Service by Gay Persons," in *Policy Concerning Homosexuality in the Armed Forces*, Hearing held by Senate Armed Services Committee. 103rd Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1993). For more recent scholarship, see the studies cited in footnote 6 of my original Parameters article.

[2] See National Defense Research Institute, *Sexual Orientation and U.S. Military Policy: Options and*



Assessment (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1993); and Sarbin, Theodore and Kenneth Karols. "Nonconforming Sexual Orientations and Military Suitability." Defense Personnel Security Research and Education Center. PERS-TR-89-002. in *Gays in Uniform: The Pentagon Secret Reports*, edited by Kate Dyer. (Boston: Alyson Publications, 1988).

[3] See Hutson, John D. "Don't Ask, Don't Tell: Retire a Bad Military Policy," *The National Law Journal*, August 4, 2003. For Clark, see, for example, CNN Late Edition with Wolf Blitzer, November 30, 2003, when Clark said, "Well, I think the United States armed forces has got to look at this issue, because the "don't ask, don't tell" policy is not working."

[4] On the suspension of the gay ban via stop-loss during the first Gulf war, see Lambert, Wade. 1991. "Gay GIs told, Serve Now, Face Discharge Later." *The Wall Street Journal*. January 24. P. B1; and Lambert, Wade and Stephanie Simon. 1991. "U.S. Military Moves to Discharge Some Gay Veterans of Gulf War." *The Wall Street Journal*. August 30. P. B6.

[5] As this essay goes to press, Dr. Gary Gates of the Urban Institute is conducting a study that will include an estimate of the number of active-duty gay and lesbian service members. Gates estimates that, conservatively, there are at least 34,000 gays and lesbians serving in the U.S. armed forces today.

[6] See Helen Fields, "Military sees drop in HIV," *Monterey Herald*, November 19, 2002.

[7] For example, a British military report on Australia's experiences surrounding integration found that HIV was "not regarded as a significant issue" in light of routine testing of Australian personnel. See U.K. Ministry of Defence, Report of the Homosexuality Policy Assessment Team. (London, UK: Ministry of Defence, 1996).

[8] 2002 Department of Defense Survey of Health Related Behaviors Among Military Personnel, prepared for the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs) under Cooperative Agreement No. DAMD17,00,2,0057 by RTI International, Research Triangle Park, NC. For the history of the U.S. military's official support for prostitution, see, for example, "The Prostitute, the Colonel, and the Nationalist," in Cynthia Enloe, *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 49-107.

[9] The CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll of 1,004 adults was conducted December 5-7, 2003. Survey participants were asked, "Do you think people who are openly gay or homosexual should - or should not - be allowed to serve in the U.S. military?" On the loss of talent, 9,682 service members have been discharged under Don't Ask, Don't Tell according to Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, Conduct



Unbecoming (Washington, DC, 2004), p. 1. According to the GAO's conservative formula for estimating the cost of firing gay and lesbian service members, the armed forces have spent \$281,499,971 just for the cost of lost training under DADT. See Conduct Unbecoming, p.2, and U.S. General Accounting Office. Statistics Related to DOD's Policy on Homosexuality (GAO/NSIAD-92-98S). (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992). For a small sample of embarrassing media coverage, consider some of the following recent stories: "End Decade-Old 'Don't Ask' Policy," USA Today, November 26, 2003; "A Self-Inflicted Military Wound," Chicago Tribune, December 5, 2003; "Let Gays Serve," New Orleans Times-Picayune, March 28, 2003; "The Price of Not Telling," LA Times, December 21, 2003; "An Insulting Waste," Washington Post, March 29, 2004.

[10] Aaron Belkin and Melissa Levitt, "Homosexuality and the Israel Defense Forces; Did Lifting the Gay Ban Undermine Military Performance?" *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Oct. 2001), pp. 541-565; Aaron Belkin and Melissa S. Embser-Herber, "A Modest Proposal: Privacy as a Flawed Rationale for the Exclusion of Gays and Lesbians from the U.S. Military" *International Security*, vol. 27, no. 2, (Fall, 2002), pp. 178-197.

[11] For three examples of activist groups that monitor the U.S. military, consider the Women in the Military Project at the Women's Research & Education Institute and the Miles Foundation, and Survivors Take Action Against Violence in the Military.

[12] See Tarak Barkawi and Christopher Dandeker, "Rights and Fights: Sexual Orientation and Military Effectiveness," *International Security*, vol. 24, no. 1, 1999, pp. 181-186; and Aaron Belkin and Geoffrey Bateman, *Don't Ask, Don't Tell: Debating the Gay Ban in the Military*, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2003), pp 132-134.

[13] The studies cited in footnote 6 of the original article are Aaron Belkin and Jason McNichol, "Effects of the 1992 Lifting of Restrictions on Gay and Lesbian Service in the Canadian Forces: Appraising the Evidence" (Santa Barbara, CA: The Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military, 2000); Aaron Belkin and Melissa Levitt, "The Effects of Including Gay and Lesbian Soldiers in the Israeli Defense Forces: Appraising the Evidence" (Santa Barbara, CA: The Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military, 2000); Aaron Belkin and Jason McNichol, "The Effects of Including Gay and Lesbian Soldiers in the Australian Defence Forces: Appraising the Evidence" (Santa Barbara, CA: The Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military, 2000); Aaron Belkin and R.L. Evans, "The Effects of Including Gay and Lesbian Soldiers in the British Armed Forces: Appraising the Evidence" (Santa Barbara, CA: The Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military, 2000). All are available at www.gaymilitary.ucsb.edu/Publications/PublicationsHome.htm.



[14] According to Capt. Mike Rankin, USN (Ret.), "Further, those hearings conducted by Nunn and Sen. John Warner of Virginia, then the ranking minority leader, were among the most biased in recent memory. With rare exceptions, retired senior military officers and enlisted troops with long and distinguished careers who asked to speak against the ban were refused the opportunity to do so" ("Our Country Is Better And Our Sailors Are Braver Than That," Navy Times, September 8, 2003). Although Rankin is a Vietnam veteran, some readers may dismiss his account as a result of his service on the board of Servicemembers Legal Defense Network. Skeptical readers are invited to examine the composition of the hearings' witness list and to determine for themselves whether they believe Congress made an honest attempt to determine whether gays and lesbians undermine cohesion on average. See U.S. Senate. "Policy concerning homosexuality in the armed forces." Hearings before the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate, 103d Congress, 2d Sess. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1993), pp. iv-v.

[15] The 66% figure is from "Report of the Homosexual Policy Assessment Team" (UK: Ministry of Defence, 1996), p. G2-15.

[16] Personal emails to author, February 13, 2004 and March 22, 2004.

[17] Fellowship applications are available at <http://www.gaymilitary.ucsb.edu/fellowship.htm>.

[18] For example, Craft cites studies of the American Family Association Journal, the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuals, and the Focus on the Family, whose web site refers to the "sin of homosexuality."