



Center for Military Readiness — Policy Analysis —

September 2009

Foreign Nations That Accommodate Homosexuals In Their Militaries Are Not an Example for America's Military

Activist groups promoting the cause of homosexuals in the military frequently point to 25 mostly-western European countries that have no restrictions on professed homosexuals in their militaries as role models for the United States military. The number is small compared to approximately 200 nations in the world, and comparisons by sheer numbers put the picture into clearer perspective.¹

Numbers alone, however, cannot measure cultural differences between America's military and the forces of other countries, to include potential adversaries such as North Korea, Iran, and China. For four basic reasons, nothing in the experiences of other nations justifies repeal of the 1993 law, Section 654, Title 10, U.S.C., which is usually mislabeled "Don't Ask, Don't Tell:"

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, 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 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 for weeks or months at a time.

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 comparable conditions, that elevate the potential for sexual tension. Israeli popular culture is somewhat accepting of homosexuality, but most homosexuals in the IDF are discrete.²

Germany has conscription for both civilian and military duties, but draftees are not deployed overseas. 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.³ Young homosexuals of draft age tend to choose alternative forms of civilian national service, include hospital, hospice, or ecology-related assignments.

The Dutch, Australian, and Canadian forces represent nations with civilian and military social cultures far more liberal than the United States. (In 2008 the Australian Navy shut down for a two-

month Christmas break.)⁴ These forces primarily deploy for support or peace-keeping missions that depend on the nearby presence of American forces. In these militaries most homosexuals are discrete, but American gay activists are demanding special status, mandatory “diversity” training, and career-killing “zero tolerance” of dissent to enforce full acceptance.

That leaves the United Kingdom, which demonstrated fundamental differences with American culture by capitulating to a 1999 European Court order to accommodate homosexuals in their military. The *New York Times* reported that the Ministry of Defence refused to give permission for any member of the forces to be interviewed for a May 2007 article on the British experience with gays in the military, either on or off the record, but the *Times* nevertheless headlined an article about the subject as an unqualified success.⁵

It is not surprising that British gay activists are pleased, since same-sex partners get to live in military family housing and march in gay pride parades. The British Ministry of Defence meets regularly with LGBT activists, including transgender groups, to discuss further advances for their agendas. Congress should consider the potential reaction of American military families—and our Muslim allies in the Middle East—if our Pentagon leaders followed Britain’s example in promoting the LGBT agenda for our military.

In Iraq and Afghanistan, American forces are training Muslim local forces in small units in the field. Nine to 11-man military training teams (MTTs) in Iraq, called Embedded Training Teams (ETTs) in Afghanistan, live, sleep, and train together constantly. How would the training mission be improved if a new “non-discrimination” law required these training units to include members who are openly gay?

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 active-duty forces of the 25 foreign countries with gays in their militaries (1.7 million).

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.

Endnotes

1. CMR gathered Information from a variety of sources, including the Michael D. Palm Center, “Nations Allowing Gays to Serve Openly in Military,” June 2009 PDF, David Crary, Associated Press, “Allies Stance Cited in US Gays-in-Military Debate,” July 13, 2009; *Time/Encyclopedia Britannica Almanac* 2009; Otto Kreisher, *Sacramento Union*, “Few Armies Accept Homosexuals,” June 7, 1993; Nicholas Hellen, *London Times Online*, “Navy Signals for Help to Recruit Gay Sailors,” Feb. 20, 2005; and Chris Gourley, *London Times Online*, “Armed Forces March United for Gay Rights at Pride London,” July 5, 2008.
2. Charles Moskos, *Richmond-Times Dispatch*, “Services Will Suffer If Used for Social Experiments,” Feb. 28, 1993, P. F1; Susan Taylor Martin, *Israel 21c*, “Israeli Experience May Sway U.S. Army Policy on Gays,” Jan. 10, 2007; and email correspondence with Israeli policy analyst Ethan Dor-Shav, May 2009.
3. Caucus of Homosexual Members of the Bundeswehr (AHsAB e.V.) Uwe Siemon-Netto, Ph.D., a veteran German foreign correspondent, translated this information and other German documents relevant to this subject.
4. Cynthia Banham, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, “Navy Closes for Christmas, Families First in New Year,” Nov. 18, 2008.
5. Sarah Lyall, the *New York Times*, “Gay Britons Serve in Military With Little Fuss, as Predicted Discord Does Not Occur,” May 21, 2007, p. 8.

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