

**The Profession of Arms and the Moral State We are In:
The Shared Mission of Ordered Liberty**

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Introduction

We gather this week around the topic “The Professional Ethic and the State.” We have a rich slate of presentations and papers planned that explore different dimensions of a dynamic that goes by a variety of names: the soldier and the state, civil-military relations, the civilian-military gap, and so forth.

Many of us remember well when Thomas Ricks and others proclaimed the dangers of a looming crisis in civil-military relations, growing gap between soldiers and society. That prompted a host of publications and conferences that have fueled a conversation that continues unabated almost 20 years later. Indeed, the conversation today may be more intense than ever in the aftermath of over a decade at war, as we ponder how society should care for returning soldiers, especially the tens of thousands in need of acute care. Several papers this week address this aspect of the issue.

Perhaps fewer of us will recognize that this twenty year conversation actually stretches back several centuries, that the issue of the relation between the Profession of Arms and the State is as old as the country and perhaps as old as the profession of arms.

It is generally acknowledged that the modern conversation traces its roots to the publication of Samuel Huntington’s *The Soldier and the State* (1957) and Morris Janowitz’s, *The Professional Soldier* (1960). Indeed, it would seem that these two works pretty much set the parameters for the contemporary conversation.

In what follows, I am going to do two things. First, as a way of setting the stage for the work we do this week, I will offer a brief summary of the two perspectives represented by Huntington and Janowitz, paying particular attention to how they frame or set the parameters for the conversation about the moral intersection of the profession of arms and civilian society. Second, in the constructive move, I will suggest a way forward beyond the polarities they represent.

What I am going to suggest is we ought to move beyond the traditional framework that simply sets the functional imperatives of soldiering against the social, moral imperatives of civilian society and vice versa, that sees the civil-military relation as a clash of cultures. Instead, we need to think about the shared, if differentiated, task of making / nurturing a common moral culture.

This entails reflecting on the moral character of both the profession of arms and the American experiment as well as considering the relation between the two.

The Problem Defined

Traditionally, the moral issue between the soldier and the state has been cast in terms of how a democracy maintains a military that protects and sustains democratic values. On one hand, it is feared that a democracy will not nurture and support the military; on the other hand, it is feared that the military will disregard democratic values and shed its loyalty to civilian leaders.¹

This tension is sometimes described using the language of professions and organizational theory: An institution's legitimacy in the eyes of the public depends in part upon its moral integration with society. Legitimacy also depends upon the organization being viewed as effective at what it is supposed to do.² Thus we have a tension between two opposed demands: the functional imperatives of proficiency in fighting wars and the social imperatives of moral alignment with society.

Of course, no one thinks that all the differences between civilian and military orders can or ought to be dissolved. In a society based on personal autonomy, civil liberties, and democratic governance, a military that hopes to be effective must subordinate the individual to the group, personal well-being to the mission, and the chain of command cannot be democratic.

Such is the general shape of the problem. As already suggested, Huntington and Janowitz provide the framework for thinking about how to resolve or manage this tension.

Samuel Huntington: Separation

In his classic work, *The Soldier and the State*, Huntington emphasizes the difference and distance between the military culture and civilian society. There are five aspects of his work worth mentioning.

1. Liberalism v Conservative Realism

As Huntington tells the story, the tension between society and the military is rooted in the conflict in North American political history between Liberalism and Conservative Realism. Liberalism, the dominant social ideology in our country, is characterized by an individualism that rejects any restraints upon liberty, is optimistic about human ability to improve, and fears the power of the state.

Conservative Realism, which corresponds with the military ethos, is marked by a stronger sense of community (it is anti-individualistic) and while it is wary of the dangers of the concentration of power nevertheless it recognizes the importance of the well-armed state for security in the face of a humanity that is not disposed to treat one another particularly well (it has a pessimistic view of human nature).

2. Functional Imperatives Trump Social Imperatives

Whereas the political problem of Liberalism is internal, that is, Liberalism is concerned with the individual threatened by an overbearing state wielding too much power, Conservative Realism looks outward; it sees the primary threat as external, coming from other states. Accordingly, the military must focus on the functional imperatives of national security. Speaking at the outset of the Cold War, Huntington writes:

The functional imperative can no longer be ignored. Previously the primary question was: what pattern of civil-military relations is most compatible with American liberal democratic values? Now this has been supplanted by the more important issue: what pattern of civil military relations will best maintain the security of the American nation?³

Huntington is clear: In the face of external threats, the question is, what civil-military relation best serves the functional imperative of security?

3. Manage by Maintaining Separation

Huntington answers his own question by arguing in effect for a kind of isolation of the military from civilian society. He recognizes that the values of the military are necessarily different from those of civilian society and that civilian society needs to recognize and respect that difference. To this end, he emphasizes the autonomy of the professional military and resists trends to civilianize the military, which would undoubtedly undermine military effectiveness in confronting external threats.

4. Objective Civilian Control

This military autonomy, however, is not synonymous with independence. Rather, Huntington espoused a theory of what he called “objective civilian control,” in contrast with subjective civilian control, which would have civilians micro-managing the military in accord with civilian social moral imperatives, hemming soldiers in with ever-increasing legal and institutional restraints.

Objective Civilian Control focused on maximizing military professionalism, understood in a particular way. First, it involved civilians recognizing and respecting that soldiers are experts in the management and application of violence. Second, it involved soldiers recognizing and respecting the political authority of civilian leadership.

What this amounts to is a moral vision that clearly delineates military means and social-political ends. As Huntington says, “the statesman furnishes the dynamic, purposive element in state policy. The military man represents the passive, instrumental means.”⁴

In other words, there is a bright line between politics and the military. “Politics is beyond the scope of military competence,” Huntington says, “and the participation of military officers in politics undermines their professionalism.... The military officer must remain neutral politically.”⁵ The military mind is unconcerned with the desirability or undesirability of any given political end; the only concern of the military is the means.

In other words, a properly professional military is neither politicized nor civilianized. Rather, it is a neutral tool or instrument of the state. As such, the military is granted autonomy in its realm of expertise in exchange for loyalty to the civilian leadership and the ends that leadership selects.

5. The Professional Ethic: Obedience

Unsurprisingly, central to the professional ethic that Huntington develops to accompany this vision is obedience. About this ethic and the soldier, Huntington write, “His goal is to perfect an instrument of obedience; the uses to which that instrument is put are beyond his responsibility. His highest virtue is instrumental not ultimate.”⁶

To be fair, Huntington does raise the issue of the limits of obedience. We will focus on what he calls the conflict between the military value of obedience and nonmilitary values. He identifies four points of conflict.

First, there is the conflict between military obedience and political wisdom. For example, when an officer is ordered by a politician to follow a course of action that the officer knows will lead to national disaster. Huntington concludes that the officer, whose expertise is solely military, must defer to the politician.

Second, there is the conflict occasioned by politicians commanding something that is militarily absurd or intervening in military operations, for example, to decide whether battalions should advance or retreat. Here Huntington is clear: the politicians have exceeded their professional jurisdiction and so military disobedience is justified.

The third conflict involves legality. For instance, a civilian gives an order that exceeds his or her authority. Huntington says that if the civilian knows it is an illegal order, the soldier is justified in disobeying. If, on the other hand, the civilian is acting in good faith, then the soldier should consult the JAGs. If that option is not available, the soldier is left to consult the appropriate law and make their own decision.

Finally, there is the conflict between military obedience and basic morality. What does an officer do, Huntington asks, if ordered by the politician to commit genocide or exterminate the people of an occupied territory?⁷

He answers that it is not as obvious as one might think because political ends may be bound up in the order, that the politician may be under compulsion to violate common morality for the good of the state. Thus he concludes, “As a soldier, he owes obedience; as a man, he owes disobedience. Except in the most extreme instances it is reasonable to expect that he will adhere to the professional ethic and obey.”⁸

Conclusion

Before moving forward, it is worth taking a moment to make a few observations. We can set aside the fact that apparently genocide does not clearly and self-evidently rise to the level of an “extreme instance” where disobedience is justified. Instead we can focus on the moral implications of Huntington’s conception of what it means to be a profession. It is a conception that minimizes almost to the point of extinction the moral dimension of a profession. He conceives of a profession in baldly instrumental terms – expertise that can be applied to any ends provided by the state. According to this vision, the only grounds for a warrior to object to an order is technical efficiency, that is, when politicians intrude upon the realm of military expertise. When one ventures to make a forthrightly moral evaluation, one suddenly finds oneself alone – a solitary individual appealing to private conscience against the weight of both an instrumentalist military and the state.

Huntington fails to recognize that professional soldiers are not just experts in the management and application of military force. They are not simply warriors; they are (to deliberately echo Martin Cook) *moral* warriors. As James Burk notes, soldiers act under civilian authority but they exercise moral discretion in what they do and how they do it.⁹ Thus they are moral agents who bear responsibility for their actions. Burk calls this “responsible obedience” in contrast with “blind obedience.” Specifically, soldiers are responsible for exercising discretion in accord with the moral values and customs associated with the constitutional design of the nation and the laws of war that are part of that design.

Said another way, Huntington’s model for managing the civil-military difference isolates the military too much from the social, moral imperatives that underwrite the nation.

Morris Janowitz: Civilianization

In *The Professional Soldier* (1960) Morris Janowitz counters Huntington’s “isolation” thesis with

a more civilianizing vision of the military that focuses on how the military is *already* integrated to society. Janowitz identifies four trends in military culture that point toward a narrowing of the gap as the military adapts cultural values from the civilian world.¹⁰

1. Changing Organizational Authority¹¹

Janowitz notes that by the late 1950's there had been a change in the basis of authority and discipline within the military that he characterizes as a shift away from authoritarian domination toward more managerial styles of leadership, involving persuasion, explanation, and team building.

2. Narrowing Skill Differential Between Military and Civilian Elites¹²

The necessity that commanders perform managerial and administrative tasks means that officers develop skills and orientations common to civilian administrators and leaders. Moreover, the ever-increasing technological character of modern warfare means that a significant majority of soldiers perform technical tasks that have direct civilian equivalents. Indeed, the concentration of personnel with “purely” military occupational specialties is very small and declining.

3. Shift in Officer Recruitment Patterns¹³

Since the beginning of the 20th century there has been a marked shift in the recruiting base of officers. Recruiting has shifted from a narrow, relatively high social status base to a broader base that is more representative of the population as a whole.

4. Trends in Politicization¹⁴

As the military has grown into a vast managerial enterprise, commanders have been compelled to develop a more political orientation in order to adequately interact with civilian leadership and the public.¹⁵ On one hand, military leadership has had to develop a political ethos in order to engage with the legislative and administrative processes regarding national security policies and affairs. On the other hand, military leadership has been forced to attend to the political repercussions of military actions on the international balance of power and behavior of foreign states. As Janowitz puts it,

The growth of the destructive power of warfare increases, rather than decreases, the political involvement and responsibilities of the military. The solution to international relations becomes less and less attainable by use of force, and each strategic and tactical decision is not merely a matter of military administration, but an index of political intentions and goals.¹⁶

Constabulary Force¹⁷

These trends prompt Janowitz to articulate a vision of civil-military relations around the notion of a “constabulary force.” A military so configured functions more like a police force, that is, a force that is more measured in its use of violence, more cognizant of the political factors that constrain military action, more tolerant of ambiguity and less than clear-cut victory, and more closely integrated with civilian values.

Absolutist v Pragmatic Visions of the Military¹⁸

Janowitz recognizes that this constabulary vision runs against the grain of what he calls an absolutist vision of how the military should be used. The absolutist vision, which he correlates with conservative realism, sees warfare as the fundamental basis of international relations and as essentially punitive in character. It believes that since the political objectives of war are gained by victory, the more complete the military victory, the greater the opportunity for achieving those political goals.

The pragmatic vision on the other hand, sees war not as fundamentally as punitive but as political, that is, military force is just one of several tools in the political tool box, and it can be used in tandem with other tools for the sake of attaining limited political ends well short of total military subjugation.¹⁹

Citizen-Soldier²⁰

The constabulary force Janowitz describes clearly corresponds to the pragmatic vision of the military. It is a military that is more fully integrated into the political and social ethos of the civilian world. According to Janowitz central to this civil-military integration is the requirement of military service by all citizens. The citizen-soldier is a center-piece of his vision. He notes that there are several ways this can be understood, from an All Volunteer Force, to a system of universal public service, to a mixed system composed of both voluntary service and the draft.

While Janowitz is an advocate for the citizen-soldier, he recognizes that the technological necessities of warfare require longer service and more highly trained personnel than the traditional model of citizen-soldier can accommodate.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, it is worth noting what Janowitz does not say. He does not address the military professional ethic and the potential for conflict with civil society because on the basis of the trends he identifies, he assumes significant moral integration between the military and civilian world. Indeed, numerous times in the course of his study he declares that the moral and cultural gap is less than at any other time in modern history.²¹

Moreover, the tension he does identify is principally related to elements within the military profession that cling to an absolutist vision of the military and resist the political and technological realities that are moving the military toward a more civilianized, constabulary force.

Finally, while Janowitz embraces the citizen-soldier he provides no guidance on how that ideal might be revived in the face of counterposing trends.

Beyond the Moral Culture War: The Shared Mission of Ordered Liberty

According to Huntington, the military is essentially an amoral tool that should not be saddled with social imperatives that govern the civilian world. According to Janowitz, the military needs to recognize and embrace the civilianizing process that is already underway. The debate is about two moral poles and which should give way and move toward the other. The model is that of a moral culture war.

In what follows I want to suggest that this polarized model misconstrues both the character of the

military as a profession and the nature of the American experiment and that a more fruitful and promising way forward is one that starts with a sense of both the military and civilian population being joined together in a common project of ordered liberty and then understands the differences between civilian and military not as a clash of opposed moral visions but rather as a matter of professional differentiation within a shared moral vision.

1. Who Are We? The American Experiment in Ordered Liberty

As Huntington makes clear, the socio-political imagination of the United States is torn between two visions of who we are, although he misdescribes the two visions.²² On one hand, there is what I will call atomistic liberalism. Atomistic liberalism understands this country to be little more than a collection of possessive individuals who are devoted to nothing greater than the pursuit of their own private goods. And for the sake of our own private goods or interests, we band together in a kind of *modus vivendi*, or social contract. That is, we agree to rules that will manage or regulate the clash of all these individuals with their competing and conflicting interests so that we can avoid the Hobbesian condition where life is reduced to a war of all against all – solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.

This is what the political theorist Judith Shklar calls “the liberalism of fear.”²³ What unites us is not some shared good, a *summum bonum*, but a *summum malum*, a common fear of death. The overriding concern of atomistic liberalism is securing the political conditions for the exercise of individual freedom.

Thus, we embrace the classic definition of freedom offered by John Stuart Mill in his essay *On Liberty*: “The only freedom which deserves the name is that of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs, or impede their efforts to obtain it.”²⁴ Freedom thus conceived is a matter of license, autonomy. It a matter of rights with few, if any responsibilities. (Non-interference is a passive restraint, not an active responsibility.) It is a matter of freedom from, not freedom for.²⁵

The other current within the American socio-political imagination is often identified as the “civic republican,” which is not to be confused with the modern political party of a similar name and is considered by many to be a richer strand of liberalism.²⁶ This is a socio-political vision of freedom not merely in the negative sense of individual rights as entitlements and non-interference but also encompasses the positive dimension of freedom for, of rights that are bound up with responsibilities, of freedom linked to service and universal benevolence. Said a little differently, this is a vision of ordered liberty, of freedom ordered toward a shared good – shared in the sense that it is a collective task or project in which citizens participate for the good of the whole.

For many this is linked to the preamble of the Constitution, where the language is decidedly civic republican: We the people ... to form a more perfect Union, justice, domestic tranquility, common defence, general welfare, secure blessings for ourselves and our posterity.... This is not the language of possessive individualism and endless conflict over rights but of a people united in a common project of shared welfare and flourishing.

My argument is that it is more promising to approach the question of the professional military ethic and the state from the basis of the civic republican vision of America. If one starts from atomistic liberalism, then there should no surprise that moral conflict is endemic between the military and civilians and there are no real grounds for hoping for anything other than conflict.

Indeed, I will go further and say that if the military is to endure and flourish as a profession, and not simply as a bureaucratic collection of experts who function as an amoral tool, distinguishable from mercenaries or contractors only on the basis of your pay scale, then we must be about the task reclaiming and reasserting the civic republican vision.

Now I will freely admit that I am making an argument. Like I said, the political-philosophical roots of America are contested. Moreover, I concede that my argument is aspirational, perhaps even more aspirational than accomplished. I am arguing on the basis of the best that both the military and the civilian political order claim about themselves. I see no benefit arguing from the worst that we say and do; nor do I see any benefit gained from yielding to the temptation to compare the *best* that the military *says* about itself with the *worst* that civilian culture *does*.

Acknowledging that this is aspirational only sets the stage for the moral work, the moral task, the moral mission that is shared by both soldier and civilian. And surely soldiers, with their military realism about human nature, did not expect this to be easy. That is why I called this the American experiment. It is a task, a mission, a work-in-progress. More about this in a moment.

2. A Professional Military: Integration with Appropriate Professional Differentiation

Understanding that we – all of us, soldier and civilian – are joined in the common project of ordered liberty sets the stage for approaching the matter of the professional military ethic and the state.

Against Huntington, the issue is *not* rightly framed as if it was a clash of divergent moral visions. Joining the profession of arms does not require renouncing the moral imperatives of civilian society. Insofar as both the military and civilian society are animated by / aspire to / claim the civic republican moral vision of ordered liberty set forth in this nation's founding documents, the civil-military relation is not properly conceived in terms of isolation or separation but of integration.

Indeed, we now know that Huntington was historically wrong in asserting the importance of the military's isolation from civilian mores. The military has never been isolated.²⁷ And it is not isolated today. James Burk convincingly shows that the military's institutional presence – by which he means its material and moral integration with society – remains robust today. He writes (before 9/11),

While the end of the Cold War diminished the military's presence in society, the military has not by any means become isolated – and certainly not a peripheral or predatory – institution, estranged from American society. On the contrary, it remains highly salient, as a central institution affecting our material well-being and active in contemporary projects to constitute what we think is a good and secure society. Indeed, in some respects, it is more central today that it was at the dawn of the Cold War.²⁸

And while we might deplore the apparent cultural ascendancy of possessive individualism, with the attendant problems of subjectivism and consumerism, Janowitz is right when he points out that the military has in countless ways (some perhaps for good and some for ill) embraced civilianizing trends, and it did so long before the 1960s or the rise of the Me generation and the requirements of maintaining an AVF necessitated civilianizing military life in order to keep volunteers content and enlisted.²⁹

My point is that the moral conflict that many in the military feel in the face of the apparent triumph of possessive individualism is not rightly construed as a conflict between military and civilian

cultures. It is more complicated than that; the lines are not so clearly and neatly drawn. Rather, it is a conflict between atomistic liberalism and civic republicanism that runs through *both* the military and the civilian worlds.

The evidence for this is manifold and for those who are interested, I would encourage you to look into the research of the Triangle Institute for Security Studies.³⁰ That research reveals not one but many gaps, between soldiers and civilians, between civilians, between enlisted and officers, between junior and senior officers. And what these gaps reflect is the military's integration with civilian moral culture and the struggles between different moral visions there.

Beyond making the point that the military's integration with society means the moral challenge is not rightly parsed as "military v civilian," I want to make a further, positive point about this integration. In the passage just cited Burk makes mention of the military being "active in contemporary projects to constitute what we think is a good and secure society." The integration is not all negative; integration is not just about the military having to deal with the same moral acids that civilians have to deal with. Rather, there is an upside to this integration as well. The military has participated in and contributed to the project of building a good society.

As Burk shows, the military has been deeply involved in the American experiment, in the ongoing national work of articulating and embodying the vision of domestic tranquility, general welfare and shared blessing that the preamble to the Constitution lifts up as our national mission.

For example, the military is frequently lauded for being a leader in overcoming racial division, an effort that it did not initiate and that it has not perfected but that it has owned and in which it has rightly taken some pride. And for all the work that remains to be done (indicating again the military's integration with civilian culture), even with regard to gender there is evidence that the military is ahead of much of the civilian population regarding embracing the leadership of women.³¹

Moreover, military personnel have benefitted from social moral imperatives as they have gained citizenship rights through the extension of procedural and substantive rights in the UCMJ.³² Likewise, the shifting understanding and practice of authority away from domination by command has contributed to the dignity and empowerment of soldiers through a better and arguably more effective understanding of leadership and followership.

These positive examples of integration of civilian moral imperatives (and no doubt there are many others) are meant to make the point that, in the words of Burk, "these dimensions of moral change – increasing citizens' rights, limiting race and gender discrimination, and expanding the benefits of a democratic peace – are not marginal developments, but reflect core U.S. values."³³ And by participating in these efforts, in leading some of them, the military is not yielding to an alien will but rather is reflecting its ownership of and participation in the shared mission that is the American experiment. It is contributing positively to the normative project that this country professes constitutes a good and secure society.

3. Professional Differentiation: Emphasis, Form, and Accountability

If Huntington's "isolation" thesis errs in positing a moral separation between soldier and civilian, Janowitz's "civilianizing" thesis errs in failing to adequately address the moral difference between soldier and civilian.

Arguing as I have for the moral integration of soldier and civilian in shared mission that is the American experiment in ordered liberty does not imply that there is no moral difference between soldier and civilian. The integration is not total; soldiers are not simply civilians with guns and a license to use them.

Soldiers are different and the moral expectations that attach to the profession of arms are different than those that attach to the generic civilian. As noted earlier, there are restraints placed on some rights of soldiers and soldiers are granted permission to do to things that civilians are not permitted to do.

But this difference is not accurately described in terms of a conflict, a clash or culture war, as if what was in play are rival moral visions. Rather, the difference between the moral ethos of the generic civilian and the profession of arms is properly described as a matter of professional differentiation. I need not belabor this point as it has been thoroughly treated by Anthony Hartle.³⁴

What I wish to emphasize is that the professional military ethic is properly understood as a vision of how to manage and apply military force from within, out of, in accord with the moral vision inherent in the American experiment in ordered liberty. The moral integration of which I speak is a matter of fighting in accord with the values we aspire to embody, to represent in the world, and on good days actually do embody.

Thus the mission of the military is not simply to win the nation's wars by any means possible. Soldiers are not Huntington's public mercenaries, amoral technicians applying their skill for any state-sanctioned end. The US soldier as a moral warrior, as a professional, is dedicated to the ethical management and application of military force. Which means US soldiers apply their expertise in accord with the moral values and customs associated with the constitutional design of the nation and the laws of war that are part of that design. US soldiers exercise their skill in accord with the moral vision that is shared by all citizens, soldier and civilian alike.

Think, for example, about the Army values. Those do not represent a moral vision alien to the American experiment in ordered liberty. They do not represent a moral vision different from that to which all citizens properly aspire.

All of which is to say that professional differentiation is not synonymous with moral division or separation. Rather, professional differentiation is about a shared moral vision that takes a particular shape within a profession. Specifically, it is about a difference in emphasis, form, and accountability.

Within the profession of arms, because of the responsibilities soldiers take on and corresponding permissions they are granted, certain aspects of our shared moral vision are emphasized more than they are for the generic civilian who does not have either your responsibilities or permissions. For example, if a civilian fails to show due respect to another person, that person might be insulted or embarrassed, whereas if a soldier fails to accord persons proper respect as persons, they may end up seriously harmed or dead. In other words, moral standards are emphasized in the profession of arms because the consequences of moral failure may be lethal.

Likewise, within the profession of arms, our shared national moral commitments take a particular form. For example, whereas our shared commitment to justice and dignity/respect will take one form in the classroom, another in the courthouse or the factory, they look very different still on the battlefield.

Again, this is a matter of a shared moral vision that is differentiated; it is not about different or conflicting moral visions. Occasionally, soldiers will matter-of-factly tell me they are murderers. In so doing they are not confessing an atrocity; rather they are expressing the erroneous conviction that the military operates outside of, in accord with a different or non-moral vision than civilians. After all, they argue, civilians are not authorized to kill and we are.

This is wrong because it fails to recognize that the professional military ethic incorporates the just war discipline precisely to distinguish appropriate killing in warfare from murder. In other words, the just war discipline is the form that our shared moral commitment to justice, respect, concern for welfare, etc take on the battlefield. Thus, in waging war justly, including killing within the moral parameters of the just war tradition and the laws of war, soldiers are *not* operating outside of the moral vision of civilians. Rather, just war is the form the justice, etc take downrange. Being a moral warrior, a professional soldier, is about embodying our shared moral commitments in the very challenging moral space of warfare.

Lastly, professional differentiation is about accountability. One of the major moral differences between professional soldiers and the generic civilian involves accountability. Whereas all citizens – both soldier and civilian -- ought to be contributing to the shared work of ordered liberty, ought to be serving the general welfare and embodying civic virtues like loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service and so forth, the professional soldier is held accountable to this moral standard in ways the generic civilian is not. This is due in large part to the responsibilities and permissions soldiers are granted for the sake of fulfilling their particular responsibilities. And, it is worth noting, there are compensations/rewards/honors that accompany this responsibility and accountability.

It is perhaps worth noting, as a kind of consolation, that the profession of arms is not alone in any of this. All professions, insofar as they are healthy, are morally differentiated from the generic civilian by means of emphasis, form and accountability to a shared moral vision..

3. The Task Before Us: What is to be Done?

Thus far I have argued the real moral gap is not between civilian and soldier but between conflicting visions of our national purpose: possessive individualism or ordered liberty. What remains to be done by way of conclusion is to offer a few remarks on what this means for the relation of the professional military ethic to the state.

Joint Responsibility

First, because the moral division is not reducible to civilian v military, addressing the future of the professional military ethic in the moral state we are in is a joint responsibility. It is the responsibility neither of soldiers alone nor of civilians alone but of all citizens. As Janowitz notes, the future of the military profession is not a military responsibility alone but rests on the vitality of civilian political leadership.³⁵ And I take it that the reference to civilian political leadership means more than politicians.

Furthermore, this means, as Eliot Cohen has argued, the professional military ethic cannot be a matter only of internal military discussion.³⁶ Rather, it must be a matter for public debate and discussion.

Soldiers' Particular Contribution

Second, soldiers have a particular contribution to make to this moral mission.³⁷ To the extent that the military is successful at moral formation, to the extent that it does indeed shape competence in the use of military force in accord with a commitment to and character reflective of our national moral values, then it can stand alongside other moral communities that exemplify and inspire participation in the American experiment of ordered liberty. In this regard, John Winthrop Hackett observes,

the major service of the military institution to the community of men it serves may well lie neither within the political sphere nor the functional. It could easily lie within the moral. The military institution is a mirror of its parent society, reflecting strengths and weaknesses. It can also be a well from which to draw refreshment for a body politic in need of it.³⁸

In other words, soldiers contribute to our joint moral mission by serving as exemplars of, for example, the Army values, which are not only Army values but correspond to values that all citizens should aspire to embody.

One other dimension of the particular contribution of soldiers to this moral mission is that of being prophetic truth-tellers. A theme that emerges with some frequency in the growing body of literature on engaging soldiers who are wrestling with the trauma of war (be it PTSD or Moral Injury) is the soldier as one who can help the nation wrestle with its moral shortcomings and responsibilities. As William Mahedy says, reflecting on Vietnam, “each vet, by working through his own moral pain, brings to the larger society the gift of moral seriousness. The ‘turning of America’ requires a retreat from the triviality that threatens to consume us. The . . . veteran’s story, troublesome though it may be to America, is nonetheless salutary because it calls us once again to consider the importance of life and to remember that our actions have consequences beyond ourselves.”³⁹

Edward Tick elaborates upon this theme with a bit more poignancy. “America claims innocence and goodness as fundamental traits. We believe that our young men and young women should be able to go to war, get the job done, and return home blameless and well.”⁴⁰ We believe, in the memorable words of Martin Cook, in immaculate war. Of course, this belief is driven less by concern for the soldier than it is to preserve the civilian illusion in their own righteousness and innocence. Civilians want to claim innocence, immunity from the unavoidable truths that war teaches about the human potential for evil, about suffering and pain.⁴¹ Hence the difficulty in dealing with returning soldiers, for the presence of the soldier threatens our denials and assertions of innocence. They threaten our refusal to approach the military and war with moral seriousness. Again, Tick is helpful:

Our veterans’ terror is real. They come home stumbling out of hell. But we don’t see them as they have become. Instead, we offer them beer and turkey dinners, debriefing and an occasional parade, and a return to routine jobs and weekends in the shopping malls. Because we as a nation are trapped in a consciousness that cannot acknowledge abject suffering, especially if we have caused or contributed to it, we do not see the reality of war.⁴²

As difficult as it may be, the morally serious presence and voice of soldiers in our midst is crucial to the moral work of fostering the civic republican virtue that is central to this experiment in ordered liberty.

Revitalizing Citizen-Soldier

Third, and finally, there is much work to be done with regard to revitalizing the tradition of citizen

participation that is embodied in the citizen-soldier.

Janowitz recognized the importance of this tradition but was unable to articulate a clear path forward. Today it is widely recognized that the AVF has many downsides, including isolating the majority of Americans from the issues and concerns of a professional military while encouraging the military itself to adapt to trends opposed to service and sacrifice for the sake of attracting and retaining volunteers.

Nevertheless, there are serious problems with the suggestion that a return to the draft would do much to solve the moral problems created by possessive individualism. Michael Desch⁴³ argues that a draft would do nothing to address the moral issue. He reminds us that one significant criticism of the draft, even before Vietnam, was that it was not representative. Deferments and exemptions permitted the cultural and political elite to avoid military service. Hence, short of a mass mobilization, a draft would resolve little because the military simply does not need and cannot afford so many bodies.

Moreover, one might ask if the military is justifiably confident that it could in fact reform the moral vision of a huge influx of possessive individuals or if such an inundation might work to civilianize the military (even further) in the direction of the possessive individualism / atomistic liberalism that characterizes much of civilian culture?

Some have suggested that instead of a military draft, a system of compulsory national service that included the military as one option be instituted. While this addresses some of the problems with the draft and certainly might help instill a sense of civic participation and service, the question remains if such service is sufficient to counter the possessive individualism of contemporary culture.

Another dimension of the problem of the citizen-soldier concerns the tradition of the apolitical soldier. Although it runs against the grain of conventional (Huntingtonian) wisdom, the notion that a soldier is properly apolitical can work against both the professional military ethic and the civic republican moral culture that underwrites the American experiment.

As Donald Baucom notes, “Most senior officers in the postwar period were heirs of a tradition that discourages men in uniform from taking an active part in the politics of formulating nation policy; they thus tended to shy away from strategy-making and to concentrate on the execution of policies handed down from civilian experts.”⁴⁴ No wonder the Joint Chiefs had such difficulty during Vietnam articulating and advocating for strategy.⁴⁵

This brings us to the issue of dissent. Here I recall Burk’s notion of “responsible obedience” – obedience and deference within the parameters of the Constitutional design and values of this nation – and perhaps point as well to Martin Cook’s work on this topic in *The Moral Warrior*. There is a panel devoted to this topic as well during this symposium.

But I will also remind you that soldiers remain citizens of a democratic order so they cannot rightly renounce their responsibility as citizens to participate in the common work of the polity. Soldiers returning home from war justly complain when civilians refuse to share responsibility for the difficulties and travails of prosecuting a war. Well, the inverse holds as well. Soldiers as citizens are as responsible as other citizens for the political life and political decisions of this country. While the responsibilities of the military profession may impose certain constraints on the forms and means of political engagement, citizen-soldiers cannot properly renounce political participation.

In this regard, I think it worthwhile to recall Janowitz' treatment of the question of the professional soldier and politics. He notes that the professional soldier is "above politics," by which he means not that soldiers are apolitical, unconcerned with political questions, but that they are "above *partisan* politics."⁴⁶ The profession of arms serves the state and not just one party or faction. The very fact that professional soldiers are committed to the Constitution, that they exercise professional discretion in accord with the moral vision of ordered liberty means they cannot be apolitical.

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Such are a few of the tasks and issues before us – all of us, soldier and civilian alike – as we are about the shared work of an ordered liberty for the sake of mutual welfare and blessings.

1. Peter D. Feaver, Richard H. Kohn, and Lindsay P. Cohn, "The Gap Between Military and Civilian in the United States in Perspective," p. 1 in *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security*, eds. Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001)
2. James Burk, "The Military's Presence in American Society, 1950-2000," p. 262 in *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security*, eds. Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001).
3. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1957), p. 3.
4. Huntington, p. 62-3.
5. Huntington, p. 71.
6. Huntington, p. 73.
7. Huntington, p. 78.
8. Huntington, p. 78. This passage is striking for a number of reasons, not the least being that apparently he does not think the genocide clearly meets the criteria of "extreme case," the way he privatizes conscience, thus leaving the individual alone to face the state, and the way he thinks the state's welfare can be harmonized with genocide.
9. James Burk, "Responsible Obedience by Military Professionals: The Discretion to Do What Is Wrong," 149ff. In *American Civil-Military Relations*, eds. Suzanne C. Nielsen and Don M. Snider (Baltimore, Md: John Hopkins University Press, 209).
10. In an essay published shortly before the end of the draft in 1973 and birth of the AVF, Janowitz places more emphasis on the contribution to civilianization by moral, anti-military dimensions of "advanced industrial societies." See Janowitz, "Volunteer Armed Forces and Military Purpose," *Foreign Affairs*, (April 1972).
11. Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1960), p. 8.
12. Janowitz, p. 9.
13. Janowitz, p. 10
14. Janowitz, p. 12.
15. Janowitz, p. 10.
16. Janowitz, p. 14
17. Janowitz, p. 418ff.
18. Janowitz, p. 264ff.

19. Note that this correlates with Martin Cook's analysis of some military resistance to being used in operations other than war in the 1990s. He observes that the Powell-Weinberger Doctrine (that the military is only to be used to win wars decisively) was an attempt by some to set the terms by which the military would be used. Moreover, it is not a straightforward assertion of military expertise but is a mix of political judgments that do not correspond historically with the array of uses to which the military has been put and the practices in which it has engaged. See Martin Cook, *The Moral Warrior* (Albany, NY: SUNY, 2004), pp. 82-3. For an overview of the array of uses of the military, see Leonard Wong and Douglas V. Johnson, "Serving the American People: A Historical View of the Army Profession," pp. 93-112 in *Future of the Army Profession*, 2d, ed. Lloyd J. Matthews (Boston, MA: McGraw Hill, 2005)
20. Janowitz, p. 421.
21. Janowitz, p. 249, 422-3.
22. Although Huntington does not describe the two visions accurately. His Conservative Realism is actually a species of Liberalism. On this point, see James Burk, "Theories of Democratic Civil-Military Relations," *Armed Forces & Society* 29.1 (Fall 2002): 7-29.
23. Judith Shklar, "The Liberalism of Fear," pp. 3-20 in *Political Thought and Political Thinkers*, ed. Stanley Hoffmann (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
24. John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* Chapter 1, p. 81.
25. This distinction loosely correlates with Isaiah Berlin's famous distinction between positive and negative liberty.
26. The meaning and political-philosophical lineage of this vision is hotly contested. My understanding of the term will become clear momentarily. See Thomas Spragens, Jr. *Reason and Democracy* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990) for an account of Liberalism that encompasses both the atomistic vision previously mentioned and a civic republican strand.
27. Edward Coffman, "The Long Shadow of *The Soldier and the State*," *The Journal of Military History*, 55 (January 1991): 81.
28. James Burk, "The Military's Presence in American Society, 1950-2000," p. 248 in *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security*, eds. Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001)
29. See Donald R. Baucom, "The Professional Soldier and the Warrior Spirit," *Strategic Review* (Fall 1985): 17-24.
30. See Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn, eds. *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security*.
31. See Laura L. Miller and John Allen Williams, "Do Military Policies on Gender and Sexuality Undermine Combat Effectiveness?" pp. 361-402 in *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security*, eds. Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001)

32. Burk, "Military's Presence," 264.
33. Burk, "Military's Presence," 270.
34. Anthony Hartle, *Moral Issues in Military Decision Making*, 2d (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2004)
35. Janowitz, p. 435.
36. Eliot A. Cohen, "Why the Gap Matters," *The National Interest* 61 (Fall 2000): 47.
37. Huntington (p. 88) helpfully enumerates several ways officers have broad influence in society:
1. Affiliations with other powerful groups
 2. Economic and human resources under their control
 3. Authority assumed in other power structures
 4. Prestige and popularity of officers and leaders
38. General Sir John Winthrop Hackett, "The Military in the Service of the State," USAFA Harmon Memorial Lecture #13. <http://www.usafa.edu/df/dfh/harmonmemorial.cfm>
Accessed September 9, 2011.
39. William P. Mahedy, *Out of the Night: The Spiritual Journey of Vietnam Vets* (Knoxville, TN: Radix Press, 2004), p.134.
40. Edward Tick, *War and the Soul: Healing Our Nation's Veterans from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder* (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 2005), p.155.
41. Tick, p. 158.
42. Tick, p. 163. [check this]
43. Michael Desch, "Explaining the Gap: Vietnam, the Republicanization of the South, and the End of the Mass Army," pp. 289-324 in *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security*, eds. Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001). Desch argues that the principal cause of the values gap is the end of the mass army – meaning mass mobilization and not simply the end of the draft – and the ideological shift of the American south toward the Republican party, since most officers come from the south.
44. Baucom, p. 19.
45. See H. R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: Johnson, McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies That Led to Vietnam* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1998).
46. Janowitz, 233.