

## The End of the American Military Profession

by

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## The End of the American Military Profession

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### Abstract

This paper is an exploration into the status of the American Military Profession in the year 2047. It is based upon a fictional letter written by General Howie Herding, the 48th Chief of Staff of the Army, to General (Ret.) Martin Dempsey on his 95th birthday. The letter explores how we define and assess professions. Many present-day ethicists and military historians predict that the profession is in decline. Given this presumption, this paper looks to answer the questions of 'Why did the American Military Profession cease to exist?' and 'How did it cease to exist?' The strongest argument regarding the assessment of the profession is centered around professional powers. The loss of power or authority, taken by either the executive or legislative branches, is the manifestation of a decline in the profession. The purpose of this paper is to impart this important lesson in order to guide our self-policing professional requirements.

## The End of the American Military Profession

Professions that cannot change themselves from within, cannot respond to the needs of their clients, and cannot enforce standards of behavior so as to maintain the confidence of their constituencies...are in trouble.

—Dr. Richard Kohn<sup>1</sup>

The status of the American military profession in the modern context and the durability of civil-military relations in the United States has been in constant debate since Samuel Huntington's seminal work in 1957. Military historians, political scientists, ethicists, civil-military relations experts, senior military officials, and others have long been warning of a decline in the military profession. The rhetoric regarding the degradation of the military's professional status historically lacked the specificities to truly make the warnings useful.

The following letter takes us into the future as the 48<sup>th</sup> Chief of Staff of the Army, General Howie Herding, writes to General (Retired) Martin Dempsey on his 95<sup>th</sup> birthday. The profession's demise was slow, incremental, and almost imperceptible over the decades. General Herding, with retrospection spanning his 40 year career, can now detail the answers to the questions of "*Why did the American Military Profession cease to exist?*" and "*How did it cease to exist?*" The following letter is set contextually upon the status of the American Military Profession in the year 2047. This letter is a work of fiction. All personnel, events, and incidents discussed in this letter post-2017 are fabrications of the author's imagination and are being used in an illustrative manner. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or events, is purely coincidental.

March 14, 2047

Dear General Dempsey:

I want to begin this letter, as I always do with my annual letter to you, by wishing you a Happy Birthday. This year, I wanted to especially highlight the milestone of your 95<sup>th</sup>. There have been nine other Chiefs between us, but you remain the most engaged of the group. I cannot thank you enough for the mentorship and tutelage. As a captain who was just out of company command the year you retired, I never imagined that someday I would occupy your old desk. You truly live the life of “The Armed Forces Officer” as envisioned by General George C. Marshall and captured by officer, historian, and author S. L. A. Marshall. In particular, the example you continue to provide in retirement has influenced generations of officers that have followed. Your dedication to the profession did not lessen the day you put “the uniform aside and return[ed] to civilian life.”<sup>2</sup>

Your 95<sup>th</sup> is a landmark that should be celebrated with great fanfare and great-grandchildren, not with the lamentations of the current Chief. However, this letter is my response to the question you asked me at last year’s Association of the United States Army Conference. When we spoke privately, you questioned the profession and specifically my thoughts about its status given the context of the 32 years that have transpired since your retirement. I was obtuse to your initial probe and did not fully appreciate the question you were asking. My initial thoughts and the answer I blurted out were something along the lines, “Of course the Army is still a profession,” thinking merely of common vernacular. We, and most of those who run in national security circles, refer to “the military profession” and to those who serve in the Armed Forces as professionals. After all, we still publish Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 1,

*The Army Profession*. However, you asked me for a more introspective look at the *health* of the profession and particularly its *status*.

Honestly, your question has highlighted an area of personal neglect. The fact that you had to bring this to my attention is somewhat of a personal ignominy. However, as good Soldiers do, we learn from our mistakes, move on, and do not repeat them in the future.

I was surprised at what I learned. The military has effectively ceased to exist as a profession. The insidiousness of the gradual loss of professional status is perhaps most surprising. The continual erosion of civil-military relations coupled with an incremental loss of authorities set the conditions to effectively end the military profession in the United States, at least as we knew it. While most sat through the decline and fall either ignorant or in denial of what was happening to our own profession, the gravity of the events are now obvious with the clarity only hindsight can provide.

My analysis of the profession began in the days following your question with a trip to West Point and a visit to the Center for the Army Professional Ethic. I was eager to hear their assessment of the profession. What I found upon arrival was somewhat disconcerting. What you seemed to already know, indicated by your specific allusions to the health and status of the military profession, is that we are in serious trouble. While much has transpired over the past three decades that has not been positive for the American military, I had not fully appreciated the cumulative effects of the changes to our institution, our place in the national security apparatus, and how we are viewed by both our civilian leadership and the citizenry of this country. As the profession strayed over the past years, the assignment of our best officers to Center for the Army

Profession and Ethic (CAPE) fell as well. The center has become a place for officers to end their careers. The first thing I did was clean house at West Point and then appoint the best four field grade officers we had who were educated and trained in philosophy, ethics, leadership, or sociology. I gave these officers the task of an immediate assessment of the profession.

A couple of months later I met with the newly appointed CAPE Cadre. As we talked about it, we came to the conclusion that ADRP 1 detailed one of the most popular and agreed upon definitions of a profession, based upon the traditional work in the field by Andrew Abbott in his book, *The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor*. The ADRP 1 lists the following attributes of a profession:

- Provides a unique and vital service to society, without which it could not flourish.
- Provides this service by developing and applying expert knowledge.
- Earns the trust of society through ethical, effective, and efficient practice.
- Establishes and upholds the discipline and standards of their art and science, including the responsibility for professional development and certification.
- Are granted significant autonomy and discretion in the practice of their profession on behalf of society.<sup>3</sup>

Others who work in the field may add to this list with ideas such as a strong and lifelong service motive for professionals.<sup>4</sup> However, the five bullets listed in the doctrine reference publication encapsulate the majority of the core attributes.

One of the first things we dug into regarding the health and status of the profession concerned autonomy, trust, and discipline in the context of the changes in *Uniform Code of Military Justice* (UCMJ) that took place in 2025. The scene for these changes was set twelve years earlier with the drafting of the Military Justice

Improvement Act, a bill sponsored by Senator Gillibrand.<sup>5</sup> The following year, 55 Senators, the majority of that body, voted in favor. However, as it required a cloture, they fell short of the required supermajority--60 votes. While the Armed Forces took bold effort and gave the issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment their due attention under your tenure, in the years that followed the priority of those efforts dropped off. Unfortunately for the profession, the term "SHARP fatigue" (Sexual Harassment/ Assault Response & Prevention) became part of barracks lingo. Emphasis faded as the issues of sexual assault and harassment education took a subordinate role under the overarching umbrella priority of "Develop the Force."

On the tenth anniversary of the film, *The Invisible War*, Amy Ziering debuted the sequel, *The Invisible War Revisited*. She had co-produced the original documentary. Much like the first, this second film had a direct and significant impact on the American public. The Gallup polls on the public's "Confidence in Institutions" had been steadily dropping, albeit gradually, since the peak during "The Surge" in Iraq.<sup>6</sup> A war-weary public, the inability to cleanly wrap up operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, coupled with a slipshod performance in Syria brought the approval of the military down towards 60%. *The Invisible War Revisited* knocked the confidence numbers down to 50%.

This was a remarkable event in the modern history of the American military profession. Not since the 1981 poll, following the previous year's failed hostage rescue attempt in Iran, had our numbers been at that threshold. This spurred Congress to act. It was noted by one member of the Senate Armed Services Committee that "If the military cannot reform itself then reform must be brought to the military." Senator Gillibrand was in her fourth term in the Senate that year and was the senior Senator

from New York. When the Democratic Party retook the Senate majority in the 2020 election, she became the Chair of the Senate Armed Service Committee. Senator Gillibrand never wavered from the initial position she took in 2013 and unfortunately, the perceptions of sexual assault, retribution, and lack of prosecution depicted in the documentary persuaded a supermajority of the Senate to pass the bill. The President was late in his second term in office and there was no talk of a veto. It became part of the 2024 *National Defense Authorization Act* and was enacted as part of Title 10 and UCMJ the following fiscal year. You know, as well as I do, the unique challenges of command in combat and potential good order and discipline issues that might stem from a lack of legal authority for commanders. As we have not been in a “hot war” since the passing of the law, its exact impacts may not yet be fully known or realized.

The next concept of the profession I explored with CAPE was that of professional expertise. It is of common consensus that “professions succeed or fail to the degree that they provide expertise that clients need.”<sup>7</sup> The four “broad categories of expertise...required by the Army” are military-technical, human development, moral-ethical, and political-social.<sup>8</sup>

Of these four areas of expertise, military-technical may be the most solid ground on which we have to stand. The requirements for security and the monopoly we have on the use of force, coupled with the defense budget and our capabilities as an Armed Force, still make us the most capable tool for the National Command Authority. However, this area of expertise has been under fire both while you were in uniform and ever-increasingly since. Private Security Companies (PSCs) have continued to gain in prominence and have challenged areas that have traditionally been strictly in the

military's purview. In the late 20s and early 30s an entire peacekeeping mission in Africa was handled by one notable PSC. This area has also been challenged by the promulgation of unmanned and autonomous vehicles throughout the force. The Navy has probably been the furthest in front regarding both the development and implementation of such technology. They currently possess an impressive array of unmanned undersea vehicles, autonomous undersea vehicles, unmanned aerial vehicles, and unmanned surface vehicles. I believe that the massive modernization investment the Navy made over the past decades has been one of the keys to keeping any would-be challengers at bay. Nevertheless, both PSCs and autonomous systems have changed the character of warfare and have levied a functional challenge to how we traditionally viewed the profession.

We also have experienced several political challenges as well. The area of moral-ethical expertise has been most affected by the continued issues we have had with senior leader misconduct. The rates of misconduct are very low, just as they were when you were the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. However, while the issues are isolated to a small percentage of the general and flag officers, they have a disproportionate level of coverage in the media. They also draw a great deal of scrutiny from the public, Congress, and the Executive. The Department of Defense never made the position of Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Defense for Military Professionalism a permanent position due to competing requirements. The General Accounting Office reported this numerous times to Congress as it ran contrary to several of their recommendations.<sup>9</sup>

The issues regarding senior leader misconduct came to a head in 2030. Congress, once again impelled to act as the Gallup Polls hovered just above a 40%

confidence rating, believed that the military was not doing a thorough enough job choosing our general and flag officers. There was a belief we had certain failures in the “late career” professional development of our senior leadership. Ultimately, Congress amended Chapter 36 of Title 10 and the services lost the ability to choose our general and flag officers. While Congress always had the power of confirmation over promotion lists and hearings for three and four-star officers, now there is a Presidentially appointed commission that sits on the promotion boards for our generals. I personally know of several senior colonels from the top of their cohort who did not “opt in” for the next round of promotions due to the politics and scrutiny involved in the current selection and confirmation processes. While the military is resilient, I fear that we have traded one evil for another regarding both how and who we select for our senior most officers. Under the old system a very few bad apples were progressed to general. Under the new system a much larger percentage of officers are promoted for reasons that no longer align with the best interests of the profession. Unfortunately those officers selected for promotion to brigadier since 2031 are now being referred to as *political generals*, while those who are older are being referred to as *Army generals*.

Closely tied to our moral-ethical expertise is our human development expertise. This area also came under fire along with the previous. The logic at the time was that if we could not adequately choose our general officers, we could not be entrusted with the education of the rest of the officer corps. Some perceived politicization of the military, which I will discuss later, also played into these assumptions. Most notably, due to a loss of confidence by both the executive and the legislative branches, the services lost our superintendents at the service academies and our commandants at our war

colleges. Both have been replaced by civilian Presidential appointees. This was obviously met with much angst and many thought that we were one step away from having political officers in units. As you know, these changes led to General Catlett's, the 43<sup>rd</sup> Chief of Staff of the Army, resignation--retirement, in actuality. He took a hard line position against this proposal and viewed it as a personal failure when he could not sway civilian leadership from this decision.

Lastly is the political-social expertise of the military. While not under the bombardment of the previous two categories, much has been written in this field over the years--some of which by you personally. The politicization of the officer corps has been a topic of discussion and debate for my entire career. At the forefront of the discussion is what retired general officers are doing. Interestingly enough, this is a topic as old as the country itself. There are few around, other than yourself and a select group of military historians, who would remember the issues of the 1960s. This was the decade following the greatest breach of civil-military relations in our country's history--that of General Douglas MacArthur and President Harry Truman. The following decade witnessed the only recorded *resignation* of a general officer in the Army, Major General Edwin Walker. Not only was Major General Walker "accused of indoctrinating his troops with right-wing literature from the John Birch Society," but also of calling Eleanor Roosevelt and President Truman "pink."<sup>10</sup> This century has been relatively tame compared to the last, but even if it was not, the problem is somewhat self-correcting.

You wrote in your 2016 letter to the Washington Post that "the military is not a political prize."<sup>11</sup> Given that the "Confidence in the Military" during the 2016 election cycle was hovering between 30-40%, retired military leaders were no longer a

commodity for political candidates. Their desire to distance themselves from a potentially politicized, unpopular military is actually helping us get back to our apolitical roots – something you highlighted throughout your career. We still use your words in the epigraph of Chapter 3 of ADRP 1, “This trust is based upon the fact that the members of our profession remain apolitical and would never betray the principles and intent of the Constitution, even at the risk of their own lives.”<sup>12</sup>

In the summer of 2033, just as I was giving up brigade command and heading to a fellowship, the Gallup Polls took their last downward turn following the collapse of the North Korean regime. Kim Jong-un’s health problems had been widely known and discussed for years prior to his death. The fact that he made it to age 49 is actually quite amazing given his weight, probable diagnosis of diabetes, and the fact that he was a heavy smoker.

What was unknown up until that point in time is the nature of the internal melee that would follow his passing. Most amazing in all of this was the response from China. They mounted a military, diplomatic, and logistical effort that was widely thought to be beyond their capability. They secured the entire country, quelled the rebellion, and established the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea as a protectorate of the PRC. This is much more than potential expected suzerainty that we have become accustomed to with China. This was almost *aggressive* statecraft that has shaken up how we view this competitor to our West.

Due to the fact that we did not have diplomatic ties to North Korea this entire fiasco has been viewed as a military failure--to be fair, both a military and intelligence failure, however the military has taken the brunt of the blame. As one national anchor

put it on the evening news, “The military had 80 years to plan for this eventuality. When the opportunity came to reunite the Korean Peninsula, they let that opportunity pass into history.” In the years following the collapse we saw confidence ratings in the low 30<sup>th</sup> percentile.

This brings us up to the last meeting I had at CAPE. I had asked them to approach the evaluation of the profession from a different perspective. I wanted to know what other literature covered the topic of professions and how we could assess the status of ours. Colonel Evans, the director, brought the book, *Professional Powers: A Study in the Institutionalization of Formal Knowledge*, by Eliot Freidson to the attention of the group. We all read the book and used it for the discussion we had just last month. Interestingly, Freidson posits that “the use of formal knowledge to order human affairs is of course an exercise of power, an act of domination over those who are the subject.”<sup>13</sup> Using Freidson’s theory as a guide, we began to unfold an aspect of professionalism that was mostly absent in common literature and discussions. This includes our own ADRP 1.

As you know, I was promoted to Brigadier General in 2034 and attended the Capstone Course that same year. Civil-Military relations were a hot topic--as they are almost every year. I now see that practically all of the discussions we had regarding the profession were flawed. Unfortunately, the strawman that was routinely set up and knocked down was the “Confidence in Institutions” data published by Gallup. Although we were at a level that had not been seen since Vietnam, the military still polled much better than several other professions. The comparisons we chose vis-à-vis the polls were self-serving and led us to incorrectly assess the status of our profession. After all,

there was virtually no talk of lawyers ceasing to be a profession, and their clientele has far less trust in them. This takes us to Freidson's book and his theory about professional powers.

The most accurate assessment of the profession actually comes from the powers of the profession. This is an amalgamation of both powers granted, by our civilian leadership, and powers exercised, by the military. I have already mentioned several actions that have changed the power structure within the profession. First, the 2024 *Military Justice Improvement Act*, incorporated into practice the following year, should have been our first warning flag regarding a major shift in professional status. Within a decade of that change, we also lost our autonomy with regards to both general officer promotion boards and our oversight of the military academy and the Army War College.

Over the years, other authorities, previously exercised by uniformed officers, have slowly left the purview of the service. Notably, prerogatives within acquisition decisions have changed since your retirement. Almost all significant milestone authorities now reside at the secretariat or undersecretary levels. These powers were pulled up under the auspices of "joint synergy." However, the truth was that Office of the Secretary of Defense lost faith in the services to effectively manage their budgets. After Senator McCain worked to break up USD AT&L [Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics] and push acquisition executive authorities down to the services, we saw a significant rise in Nunn-McCurdy breaches. The services had started to appear parochial via their acquisitions at the possible expense of the joint fight and multi-domain battle.

We also lost some discretion when it came to Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) funding. Following the collapse of North Korea, the Department of State was empowered by the President with a fiduciary role in TSC. The combatant commands still execute the TSC budget and the mission. However, the bureaucracy of inter-departmental coordination has introduced inefficiency on a new and previously unimaginable scale.

Finally, there is another aspect of professional power that has slowly eroded over time. We have seen a steady decline in the number of military officers serving in nominative positions outside either joint or service billets. Most notably, few officers have served on the National Security Council (NSC) Staff over the past decade. Officers rotated out on their individual schedules and we were not asked to backfill them upon departure. Due to this our footprint within the Old Executive Building slowly all but disappeared. This change was indiscernible as it happened. I do not make it over to the NSC often, but when I do I am always surprised by how young everyone looks. I do not know if that is a reflection on me or on them.

I know the next question you will ask me – *what are you going to do about it?* I have given the task of drafting preliminary recommendations to the CAPE team for our next meeting which will be in two months. However, I did not give them a blank slate with which to start. The concept of the profession, our required conduct as professionals, and recommendations to strengthen the profession have all been well-covered by previous efforts. During Vietnam, the great 20<sup>th</sup> Century test of the profession, the Army War College put together a “Study on Military Professionalism.” That team made a total of 31 recommendations to the Chief of Staff of the Army. I

believe that many of those recommendations are as applicable today as they were in 1970.

Some examples include the team's recommendation that "interpersonal communication and professional ethics [should be added] to service school curricula."<sup>14</sup> In this case, I believe discrete blocks of instruction are required. Merely adding additional "ethics across the curriculum" will no longer suffice. Another recommendation that has merit concerns the removal of the "optimum career patterns" and the requirement for our field grade officers to "command both at battalion and brigade level as well as serve on high level staffs" in order to advance in grade.<sup>15</sup> While "taking immediate disciplinary action against officers who violate ethical standards" seems obvious, a challenge that still persists today is how we police the retired officers of the profession.<sup>16</sup> The study also recommended that the Army provide "each officer upon commissioning with a hard-bound copy of... *The Armed Forces Officer*."<sup>17</sup> When I was commissioned in 2007 I did not receive a copy of this book. I liked this recommendation so much I have already directed the Training and Doctrine Command to start this practice immediately.

Another source I asked the team to look at was Dr. Richard Kohn's *Tarnished Brass*. Dr. Kohn recommends an overhaul of our evaluation system.<sup>18</sup> We have yet to incorporate any sort of 360 evaluation data into personnel files or make that data available to a promotion board. I believe there is a way to do this constructively.

In order to bolster culture around professional military education, Kohn recommends "officers should be required to apply to staff and war colleges."<sup>19</sup> Both of these recommendations have corollary thoughts echoed in the 1970 Study completed

by the War College nearly four decades earlier. Lastly, Dr. Kohn also recommended that promotion boards should be instructed to “choose a greater proportion of candidates with demonstrated intellectual as well as operational and command ability.”<sup>20</sup> Ironically, since we did not police ourselves in the past, we lost the authority to choose our own generals so this last recommendation must now be forwarded to the Presidential Promotion Panel for their consideration.

Dr. Richard Lacquement was the source for our research and study regarding professional expertise and jurisdictions referenced earlier. He makes a recommendation that includes assessing “physical capacity, psychological capacity, and demonstrated performance” as part of the “qualitative standards for assignment, promotion, and retention of commissioned officers.”<sup>21</sup> Recommendations for improvements to officer career management have far outpaced actual implemented changes. Now, while I admit we cannot let the pendulum swing too far when it comes to personnel management--I do think we can do better.

Regardless of our recommendations and how successfully we implement them, we have a very difficult recovery ahead. While I believe we can strengthen the American military profession from within, we cannot restore the professional status on our own. The return of lost power and authorities will most likely take decades as we rebuild trust with our civilian leaders and the American public. I would not be surprised if a major conflict acts as a catalyst in the restoration of some of the authorities previously enjoyed by the profession.

This has been a difficult journey for me. The last seven months have tested my understanding of this profession, my love for service, and my confidence in leading

change. There are several things I have learned that we will incorporate into the next edition of ADRP 1. First, the status of the profession is not on a linear scale, moving either towards professionalization or deprofessionalization as a result of tension with our bureaucratic nature, civil-military relations, level of trust, etc.<sup>22</sup> It is truly a phenomenon where the profession is being pushed and pulled in numerous directions simultaneously and is in a near constant state of evolution--where "some parts of an occupation may become routinized and cast off, while others may become elaborated and defined as the core of the profession."<sup>23</sup>

Second, changes in professional status tend to be nuanced and incremental. The exact impact of changes may be imperceptible or indeterminate as they occur. Accurate assessments as to the health of the profession usually take years of perspective and accompanying relative change to truly appreciate. While a change may be obvious, the impact of that change may be subtle. Negative changes most often manifest themselves in an erosion of power. Most positive changes restore power or grant new authorities to the profession.

Lastly, the status of the military profession is a matter of opinion and those opinions can vary greatly depending on the perspective of the individual. There is no certifying board or agency that comes around on an annual basis to dub some groups of workers as professions while others remain occupations. This reality led many of us to the dangerous assumption that the military would always be a profession. There were few early indicators that allowed us to accurately assess our status or shifts therein. There were even fewer predictions regarding the actual manifestation of the decline and fall.

As difficult as it has been, I wanted to thank you for sending me on this mission and helping me through this exploration. As promised, I will keep you up-to-date regarding our continued research, recommendations, and progress. Your legacy as one of the true great professionals will be forever engrained in our history. Once again I wish you a Happy 95<sup>th</sup>.

Most Humbly,

*Howie*

Howie W. Herding  
General, USA  
48<sup>th</sup> Chief of Staff

### Epilogue

Dr. Richard Kohn wrote the following in his piece, *Tarnished Brass*, "Professions that rely on outsiders to correct their own deficiencies are in decline--and unlikely to survive in their present form."<sup>24</sup> Dr. Don Snider argued "there are no guarantees that Army 2025...will be an effective participant in the military profession."<sup>25</sup> Charles Allen noted in his *Assessing the Army Profession* that the Army "is still faced with a number of critical challenges that need to be addressed."<sup>26</sup> With regularity, these pieces and others like them, issue dire warnings regarding the status of the profession or the perceived current trends. These authors are not alone. Many others regularly join the chorus of these senior ethicists. This is a conversation we need to have. It is critical to the health and preservation of the profession.

This 30 year thought experiment provided us a hypothetical regarding a *possible* way in which the military could cease to be a profession or at a minimum exist in an

altered form. While some of this fictional piece may seem far-fetched, it is important to understand that it is within the realm of possible. While there are many theories regarding professions, most are based upon thinking that is now quite dated. The exploration into “Professional Powers” and Freidson’s theories is probably the most important facet of this piece.

The shot across the bow for the American military profession should be the *Military Justice Improvement Act*. This is not a repudiation of that piece of legislation. The point of this piece is not to weigh in on the pros and cons of any particular proposed law or how the judicial process works within the *Uniform Code of Military Justice*. The important aspect of this legislation is that Congress has lost trust in the military. In 2014, it was a majority of Congress. Due to this loss of trust, there is a desire to alter the power dynamic within the profession--to change long-standing authorities as they have been previously granted to commanders. This indicator of the status of the profession cannot be ignored.

This was not an easy paper to write. The concept of the Army Profession coming to an end was difficult to conceive and even harder to then codify. As a member of the military profession for the past 26 years, I had an aversion to much of the hypotheses and ideas that came about with this paper. While I believe that this fictional future for the American military profession is far from the direction we are heading, it is not difficult to see how we could lose the trust of the American people, our civilian leadership, and ultimately the power and authorities we have been granted to exercise within our professional ethic. The multidimensional tension that defines the profession is not an equally balanced system. While we may be complicit in the loss of our professional

status, the path to return may be beyond our influence. Ultimately, the future of the Army profession is up to us.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Richard Kohn, "Tarnished Brass: Is the U.S. Military Profession in Decline?" *World Affairs Online*, Spring 2009, 83, <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/tarnished-brass-us-military-profession-decline> (accessed November 20, 2016).

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Kohn, "Tarnished Brass," 82.

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