

Strategy Research Project

The 'Warrior Caste' Impact on the Civil-Military Gap

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Abstract

This paper explores the existence and consequences of a 'warrior caste' in the U.S. military. The 'warrior caste' is explained as a growing sub-culture within the military composed of legacy family members. The paper both proves that this 'warrior caste' exists and demonstrates how it contributes to the larger civil-military gap. It explains this in context with the creation and development of the All-Volunteer force and gives examples of both positive and negative aspects. Finally, it explores some of the consequences. These consequences are considered as they relate to the use of the military, and their effect on society as a whole.

The 'Warrior Caste' Impact on the Civil-Military Gap

America went to an All-volunteer force (AVF) in 1973. At the time there was great debate about what that would mean for the future of the Armed Forces. Some thought that an AVF would be too costly to maintain. Others thought that it was a peacetime concept and a draft would still be needed in times of conflict. Still others felt that it just wouldn't work over time because the population would start to separate from its military. Lyndon Johnson's former White House aide, Joseph Califano, outlined a key concern succinctly when he argued that "by removing the middle class from even the threat of conscription, we remove perhaps the greatest inhibition on a President's decision to go to war."¹ There was also concern that an AVF would lead to the creation of a mercenary army and a separate warrior class within the society.² This paper is not about the quality of the AVF, or whether getting rid of the draft was a good or bad idea. Rather, it explores the growing separation between the military and the civilian society it serves, as a 'warrior caste' emerges and gains dominance.

This paper will focus on the perceived civil-military gap that now exists because of the AVF, and declining numbers of Americans that have either military experience or exposure. I will argue that there is now a 'warrior caste' in the military that is not only growing and directly contributing to the civil-military gap, but is also an outgrowth of the gap that continues to widen since the adoption of the AVF. I will also provide evidence that the presence of legacy service members, those who come from military families, is significant and growing. The paper will also discuss the positives and negatives associated with this sub-culture. Finally it will discuss the consequences of the 'warrior caste' trend continuing unabated. These include a military that is increasingly less connected to mainstream society and civilian leadership's decreased reluctance to use

the military because there is very little popular backlash when forces are deployed. The long term consequences are a military that increasingly becomes disconnected from the society it serves, and which may eventually start to dictate policy instead of focusing on implementing it.

There is a Civil-Military Gap

When America adopted the AVF in 1973, many thought it would be a more effective force simply because people wanted to be part of it, instead of being forced to serve. There was a strong sentiment that the draft went against American values of freedom when it compelled young people to serve in the military against their will. On the other hand, many members of the military themselves were strongly opposed to the AVF.³ This was based on an opinion at the time that an AVF would result in a poorly educated force comprised of people from the lower classes.⁴ This has not proven to be the case. In 2011, 99 percent of all new recruits had a high school diploma, the highest percentage ever in the U.S. military.⁵

In reality, the past 43 years have proven that the AVF is capable of producing a highly trained, professional force that is capable of conducting a wide array of missions. The number of missions, in fact, is very large. In 2013, the Congressional Research Service documented 144 military deployments since the adoption of the AVF. This is a significant increase from the period between World War II and the implementation of the AVF.⁶

The current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been ongoing at some level now since late in 2001 and have resulted in multiple deployments by a majority of service members, in both the active and reserve components. In fact, some polls depict numbers as high as 94 percent for Iraq service and 79 percent for Afghanistan.⁷ Would

15 years of non-stop warfare be tolerated with a drafted force where any citizen might get called upon to serve? If Vietnam is a valid example, the answer is no.

There is substantial evidence that there is some level of a gap between the military and the civilian cultures in the U.S. One way it may be seen is that 61 percent of military officers are reported as identifying as Republicans.⁸ In contrast, only 25 percent of the general population identifies themselves as Republican.⁹ Another way to view the gap is in the number of members of Congress with military experience. In 2016, only 97 members, or 18 percent, of the newly elected Congress had any military experience. In 1971, that number was 73 percent.¹⁰ The percentage of Americans overall with military experience is going down as well. It can be seen in the declining numbers of people in the civilian sector who either have military experience, or know someone who does.

Charlie Lewis stated in the *Kennedy School Review* in 2011,

The civil-military gap is one of the most serious and consequential issues facing America today, and its impacts will be felt across all aspects of society. The further removed from the military civilians become, the less they will empathize with the sacrifices service members make. Combat casualties will capture fewer headlines and be tucked away in the back pages of the New York Times. Military members will be viewed as mere instruments of national power, not people with spouses, partners, and children. Those currently serving in the military will in turn feel bitterness toward civilian leadership.¹¹

The 2010 census showed that only 7 percent of American adults have served. In 1970 that number was almost double.¹² Interestingly, Brenda Sanfilippo observed,

Although currently still engaged in the longest war in U.S. history, the military is comprised of only 1 percent of the U.S. population. In the absence of conscription, most Americans are isolated from the experience of combat and limited in their affective connections to war. Despite these limited geographic, psychological, cultural, aesthetic, and affective connections, the costs of war are coming home.¹³

Some further evidence of a civil-military gap can be found in the *Washington Post* and Kaiser Family Foundation (WAP0/KFF) 2014 survey titled *Active Duty Soldiers and Veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan*.¹⁴ The survey involved a total of 819 combat veterans across the services with roughly thirty percent of the respondents still serving on active duty. This survey is useful in looking at the views of veterans in the current wars. It provides insights into a range of issues related to the 'warrior caste' and how that sub-culture is affecting civil-military relations.

In a broader look at the gap, the poll showed mixed thoughts on a sense of entitlement and superiority among the veterans. In the question on patriotism, 63 percent felt veterans were more patriotic and 54 percent felt they had better moral and ethical standards than the general population. On the topic of civilians' respect for the military, 42 percent felt that the respect isn't genuine and that "civilians are just saying what they think we want to hear."¹⁵ With regard to benefits, 56 percent of respondents thought the government was doing a "not so good or poor job" of meeting the needs of the current generation of veterans.

To be fair, there were also trends that showed a majority of veterans felt civilian "thanks" were heartfelt and they appreciated yellow ribbons, but at the same time 63 percent felt they deserved special consideration from civilian employers for their service. The same question, asked in a separate poll to the civilian population, resulted in 80 percent stating the veterans deserved special consideration. The reasons for these disparities are hard to decipher, but it does show a significant gap in thinking between the two sides. The 'warrior caste' only widens this gap since it causes the military to become even more insulated.

Another interesting item in this poll is the role that friends seemed to have on military service. 38 percent of the veterans stated that all or most of their friends served. On the civilian side the comparable number was 17 percent. The poll did not state if these were friends developed before or after entering military service. The conclusion may be that once a person joins the military they tend to become more insulated from civilian society. These examples demonstrate that there is an attitudinal separation between military veterans and civilians on issues related to military service.

A recent survey by three West Point professors discusses the growing gap in the millennial generation that was mentioned earlier. This survey reinforces a number of disturbing trends previously discussed, and highlights that the gaps are even bigger in the younger generations.¹⁶ On the topic of national service, only about 20 percent of civilian undergrads believed that all citizens should be required to do some period of service. The percentage of ROTC and academy undergrads that felt the same way was over 60 percent.¹⁷ In general, the survey found that there was a definite gap between the beliefs of cadets and their civilian undergrad counterparts. Their conclusion is that Millennials know there is a civil-military gap, but they are largely unconcerned about it. What is unknown is whether this trend will continue with Millennials as they age, and if it will be exacerbated over time with succeeding generations.

The evidence shown so far clearly indicates that military experience is decreasing among members of Congress and the population at large. Furthermore, WAPO/KFF survey suggests that those in the military are becoming more insulated and have a sense of entitlement and superiority over the society they serve. However, there remains a certain amount of reverence for the military among the civilian population.

The basis of this may be disputed. There are a number of theories that exist, including that it comes from a sense of guilt that others are defending their freedoms. Polls however, show the military institution as a whole is seen positively by 78 percent of Americans and that positivity translates to service members.¹⁸ All of these trends indicate there is a gap and it appears to be growing larger. Recent decisions to decrease the size of the military only added to this gap, although it appears those decisions are being reconsidered.¹⁹ The Trump administration also appears to be aiming for more military funding in the future.²⁰ Regardless of the eventual end strength of the military, it is safe to say that it will remain small relative to the overall size of the population.

A specific and concerning result of the gap is the growing amount of legacy service members, which some have begun to call the 'warrior caste'. Legacy service members are defined as members who are at least second generation members of the military. They will often be referred to as 'legacies' throughout this paper. In order to understand what legacies mean to the civil-military gap, it is first necessary to prove that they are contributing to it.

The 'Warrior Caste' Sub-Culture Adds to the Gap

There is anecdotal and empirical evidence of the growing amount of 'legacies' contributing to the 'warrior caste.' One may search through many articles on the civil-military gap and find the topic of legacy members appear as a stated fact, but with very little evidential support. Karl Eikenberry and David Kennedy stated in a *New York Times* editorial that,

So many officers have sons and daughters serving that they speak, with pride and anxiety, about war as a "family business." Here are the makings of a self-perpetuating military caste, sharply segregated from the larger

society and with its enlisted ranks disproportionately recruited from the disadvantaged. History suggests that such scenarios don't end well.²¹

General Martin Dempsey stated in 2013, "Children of those in the military are far more likely to join than the children of those who are not."²² Robert Gates, in a speech at Duke University while the Secretary of Defense stated, "I am also struck by how many young troops I meet who grew up in military families, and by the large number of our senior officers whose children are in uniform – including the recent commander of all U.S. Forces in Iraq whose son was seriously wounded in the war."²³

These are informed impressions, but Karl Eikenberry is a retired General and a noted scholar, General Dempsey was the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and Secretary Gates was the Secretary of Defense for two different administrations. If they believe this to be the case, it is understandable why this same sentiment is stated as fact by so many others. Richard Wrona, writing from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point made the same point, "To a large extent, the military has become a self-perpetuating entity, relying for manpower strength on the consistent reenlistment of career soldiers and the commitment of multiple generations of career service members in some families."²⁴ The amount of literature that exists with similar sentiments seems to be endless.

Wrona offered one of the best factual statements on the subject when he stated,

Studies by the individual services have found that the majority of fathers of new recruits are veterans, indicating that sons of veterans are more likely to enlist in the services than sons of nonveterans. At the same time, the number of veteran parents of age-eligible males is decreasing dramatically, from approximately 40 percent of fathers during 1989-1991 to 16 percent in 2005.²⁵

In other words, the number of members with a veteran parent is increasing while those same veteran parents, as a percentage of the general population, are decreasing.

These numbers are over a decade old and do not include the latest generation of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. It seems likely the numbers are going even further towards a 'warrior caste'. This is a dual-impact that may contribute to the sentiments expressed by Eikenberry, Dempsey and Gates. One could argue that the decreasing amount of eligible parents makes the Legacy system unsustainable. That could be true, but the evidence suggests that the number of Legacies is growing despite decreasing numbers of veteran parents.

More recent evidence of the 'warrior caste' and legacies originates from the WAPO/KFF survey mentioned earlier.²⁶ Of the veteran respondents, 71 percent stated they had a parent/grandparent that served in the military. The same question asked of non-military members resulted in 62 percent stating yes. It will be interesting to look at similar polls in 20 years. It seems likely that as the Vietnam generation, as the last drafted cohort, starts to pass away at a higher rate, these numbers will illustrate an increasingly larger gap. Of the veterans' family members, 6 percent had a mother, 60 percent had a father and 68 percent had a grandparent who served.²⁷

A 2011 Pew study shed more light on the topic.²⁸ It raised the point that compared to the general public, veterans were more than twice as likely to have a child who served in the military -- 21 percent to 9 percent. This lends credibility to the earlier Dempsey comment. Among those under 40 years of age, 60 percent of veterans had an immediate family member that served in the military, as compared to 39 percent for the general public. It's difficult to draw any major conclusions from those numbers, but it does raise concerns that there are an increasing number of veterans that are legacies or the parent of a legacy, and that the numbers are growing.

One recent article on the topic from *The Sentinel*, in Cumberland County, PA, reported on a family now on their 4th generation of military members. In it, the current member talks about the pride he takes in being part of the 1 percent that serves in the military and carrying on a family tradition.²⁹ A quick search of the internet will provide a number of similar stories, most of them small local news outlets posted around Veterans Day or Memorial Day.

Taken together, all of the above evidence provides merit to the anecdotal statements made earlier, but does it prove that there is a 'warrior caste' of Legacy service members? A 2000 study by V.A. Stander and L.L. Merrill for the Naval Health Research Center offered further proof. It highlighted that children with a career military father were 8 to 10 times more likely to join the military than children of non-veterans.³⁰ Survey results clearly depict that a majority of members in the military today have a parent/grandparent that served. This number is especially high in the officer corps. The U.S. military therefore does have a 'warrior caste' made up of Legacy service members. Thus, the next question to explore is what are the implications for the military, and society as a whole?

Positives of a Warrior Caste

The positives of a 'warrior caste' are difficult to determine. Some might argue that there are no positives to a military culture that is separate from the society it serves. There are some positives though, especially in a military that has been involved in conflict continuously since 2001 with no end currently in sight. That kind of conflict and the multiple deployments required from a career service member, may take a physical, mental and emotional toll. If one is a Legacy member, it is likely that they entered service in the last 15 years with some relatively realistic expectations of what they might

experience in the future. These members have a family member to question about the facts of military life, or they may have even observed it directly for most of their childhood.

In fact, legacy service members likely entered knowing exactly what was expected of them, and some may have even welcomed the multiple deployments and potential combat operations. There is often a built-in grass roots support system in the military that is more likely to exist among Legacy service members. This support system includes the older generation family members, who can provide career advice as well as emotional support. An example is a 2014 *Yahoo* article on the subject of the military as a family tradition, which described an uncle who gave his nephew “a pile of advice.”³¹ It can also include members of an insulated military community of legacy members that provides emotional support to family members while the legacy is deployed. A non-legacy member won't necessarily be excluded from these same benefits, but may not feel nearly as comfortable or welcome as the legacy member.

For the military as an institution, there are some anecdotal benefits to a large number of legacy service members. As stated above, the legacy member has a built in support system of family members to help guide them. This presumably would mean that legacies are less likely to fail to meet military standards. This is due both to the fact that they are familiar with a lot of those standards before joining, and the pressure of not letting their family down. Legacy members may also be easier to retain since they may have entered service with the idea of making the military a career. All of this would presumably lead to a more motivated force that is easier to recruit and train. This in turn may lead to more resources available to address training and equipping the force, which would increase overall readiness of the force.

Negatives of a 'Warrior Caste'

The negatives of a 'warrior caste' are much easier to determine than the positives. It seems that nearly every writing on the subject of a warrior subculture in America focuses on the negative aspects of the topic. A recent *Los Angeles Times* article made an argument that focused on the myriad negatives, including the perceived civil-military gap in the millennial generation that even exceeds the larger society.³² One of their arguments is a growing sense of separation and hostility between military members and society. The article expresses the opinion that if you are a legacy service member, it is likely that you see yourself as different than, and perhaps morally superior to, the average civilian. Whether civilians are viewed with contempt, envy or indifference, they are viewed as different. Studies that highlights these differences in the millennial generation, demonstrate that less than 20 percent of civilian millennials feel that citizens should be required to do some type of national service. The same number among ROTC and Academy cadets is over 60 percent.³³

Some of the numbers that show an increasing gap in how the military is viewed by age can be seen in a 2016 Pew Research Poll. This poll is different from the millennial study mentioned earlier because it looked at the broader population and not just college undergrads. It found that Americans ages 65 and older are about twice as likely as those ages 18 to 29 to say they have a great deal of confidence in the military (41 percent versus 21 percent).³⁴ This gap at younger ages has more potential to lead to resentment on the part of the service member, because these civilians are the peers of a significant portion of the military. As such, these resentments lead to a growing separation in the civil-military gap.

A second negative with the warrior subculture is that it directly contributes to the growing civil-military gap by limiting opportunities for non-legacies. This in turn reduces military exposure to the general population. The author is the only member of his family, minus a father and two uncles drafted for a few years during the Vietnam era, to serve in the military. Going one generation in each direction and counting cousins and nephews/nieces, that is four service members from a fairly large group of people. Without any feedback to these relatives from the author on trips home to visit, it is safe to say that none of them would have any understanding of what military service is like.

As legacy numbers increase, this dynamic will only become more prevalent. It is plausible that over time there could be almost nothing but legacy members in the military. They presumably have insights, gained from family members, on how to seek advantages in the system to enlist for the career field they want, or to get admitted to officer programs. This in turn could lead to a civilian population whose only exposure to the military comes from the news media and Hollywood. The most politically unbiased of these information outlets will only be able to tell a fraction of the military story, if they even see an economic advantage in doing so. Some will be completely politically biased on military matters and possibly inaccurate as well. An uninformed civilian population will have little idea which is which.

Another negative to the 'warrior caste' is the potential for nepotism. As Legacy members enter the military and work their careers, it is naïve to think that some career military family members aren't going to help them along if they can. If left unchecked, this phenomenon would greatly undermine the credibility of the U.S. military as a

meritocracy. If the military starts to be seen as less than a meritocracy, retaining its best personnel will become more difficult.

One recent example of nepotism is a Marine promotion board for Brigadier General that was thrown out because of a close family member of a selectee sitting on the selection board.³⁵ In this case the Secretary of the Navy corrected the problem and put out a memo to ensure the same thing didn't happen with future boards. As the number of legacy service members continues to grow however, this problem is likely to appear more often.

This is already being seen to some degree as many personnel leaving the military before retirement state promotion practices as the reason. As proof, Tim Kane, writing for *The Atlantic*, did his own research by polling a group of 250 USMA graduates from the years 1989 to 2004. He used a grading scale from A to F to see how they viewed certain aspects of the Army. The evaluation system received 51 percent D's and F's and the promotion system got 61 percent in the same categories.³⁶ This is a small sample size of a specific sub-group, but the author has heard these same sentiments from peers many times over the last 20 years. A military that prides itself on high standards and values will greatly undermine its own credibility and prestige if it's not seen as fair. The best talent that doesn't have a patron looking out for them or doesn't think the system appreciates their skills as much as their connections, will be much more likely to leave service. This will likely increase the influence of the 'warrior caste' as they presumably would have the better connections.

Consequences for the Military and Society

Scott Martello, a reporter for the *LA Times*, states, "I wonder, though, whether a culture that puts so much emphasis on its warriors ultimately finds it easier to put them

in harm's way. Maybe if we had more memorials to peace and nonviolence, we'd be more reluctant to send soldiers into battle in the first place."³⁷ It gets right to the point of the relevance of the 'warrior caste' in society and the gap between themselves and the society they serve. This paper has shown that there is a civil-military gap and the number of legacy members is growing. It has shown examples of families on their 4th generation of military service. If one imagines a future where those same families are on their 10th generation, and the overall number of Legacy service members in the military hits 90 percent, there will be consequences. This section will discuss those consequences.

If the United States stays engaged throughout the globe at the same rate it is currently, a 'warrior caste' is likely to feel more and more disconnected from society. This disconnection will stem from a 'warrior caste' that feels as though it is carrying the entire burden of national defense and thus are more worthy citizens. As long as American society continues to revere its military and the people that serve, this disconnection may not be a problem socially. If however, a series of unpopular foreign hostile actions turns public opinion against both the wars and the warriors, consequences could be severe. It is unlikely that a warrior subculture would meekly take off the uniform and avoid angry civilians the way the draftee military did at the height of unpopularity during Vietnam. The backlash down the road could be violent clashes at airports and other locations where service members were verbally or physically attacked. This same type of activity would also decrease the likelihood of an AVF conducting any kind of recruitment goals from a non-legacy population. It could even be the end of an AVF as it exists today.

The 'warrior caste' has a detrimental effect on citizens' obligation to contribute to the common defense and reduces their concerns about military use. In response to the 9/11 attacks President Bush told the U.S. military to get ready.³⁸ He did not tell the American people to get ready. He told them to carry on with their lives as usual so the terrorists don't win. Not only did the general population not have to worry about fighting any actual terrorists, unless they wanted to, but the whole war would be fought on a credit card.

As an added bonus for the citizenry, all previously planned tax cuts would remain. This would guarantee that no one actually had to sacrifice anything in order to fight the war, unless you were in the military. It is no wonder that many Americans neither know, nor care, how many troops are deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan today. It also might explain why after 15 years of continuous war, 53 percent of Americans in December of 2015 were in favor of sending ground troops into Iraq and Syria to fight the Islamic State.³⁹

That same poll showed 90 percent of Republicans felt our response in Syria hasn't been aggressive enough. This fact is included due to the high number of Republicans in the 'warrior caste'. The consequences of a military populated by a political party more likely to support the use of force, is likely a military that could be used by the government with less political consideration. With very little at stake personally, and a military that is getting more and more separated from them, there is little to no oversight by the American population.

Due to the 'warrior caste', the civilian leadership's future national security decisions may start to consider the military's attitude towards an issue more than the

population as a whole. It is a dangerous precedent to let a 'warrior caste,' whose military expertise far exceeds its understanding of other elements of national power, have control over when to commit to those actions.

Peter Feaver talks about the Iraq surge and its implications for civil-military relations.⁴⁰ He makes an argument that professional supremacists believe that the military should take a more forceful approach to policy decisions that are military in nature.⁴¹ Civilian supremacists on the other hand feel that civilians are too eager to defer to military judgement and civilians should be more forceful on all military policies. Feaver argues "some professional supremacists take the logic a step further: not only should civilians defer to the military; the military should insist that they do so—and take dramatic action to ensure that the military voice is heard and heeded."⁴²

This issue could become even more exacerbated with a growing 'warrior caste.' The Trump administration has retired and active general officers serving as the National Security Advisor, Secretary of Defense, and Secretary of Homeland Security. Two of the three had parents who served in the military, and Secretary Kelly is the highest ranking officer to lose a child in combat in the current wars. Many civilian leadership posts in the government are now filled with former military officers. There is also a growing trend for senior military flag officers to leave service and go to work for the defense industry. From 2004-2008 this number was 80 percent, up 30 percent from just ten years earlier.⁴³ While these officers clearly have skills that lead to their hiring, they also have connections to the military that benefit their new employers. The danger with these issues isn't some nefarious scheme on the part of retired generals to start conflicts. The danger is that with so many former military leaders in civilian leadership

positions, and in the defense industry, past experiences as military officers may lead them to prefer, or advocate for, a military option. It could also lead to the other extreme where the military option isn't used, even when it's needed, due to ingrained concerns for military lives.

There may not actually be an end to our worldwide military activities until the bill comes due and there is no longer any credit left on the card. One way to get the general population more interested in military use, and counter the 'warrior caste' influence, is to affect personal finances. The national deficit number is at \$19 trillion plus and counting now.⁴⁴ The author has no idea how much higher that number can go before it is addressed in a meaningful way. It is a number that now exceeds our annual GDP, the first time that has happened since the end of WWII.⁴⁵ A tax that is directly tied to military use, and changes in accordance with that use, would greatly influence the amount of interest that the general population takes in military matters. At a minimum, it would help hold government leadership more accountable to the will of the people.

Another way to counter a growing 'warrior caste' and its consequent widening of the civil-military gap, is to bring back a draft on a limited basis. In order to be effective in closing the gap and decreasing the growth of a 'warrior caste', a draft needs to be fair and include everyone. The advantages to an AVF are numerous and real. However, a draft that was merely a token percentage of yearly recruitment goals would help meet the intent of bringing the general population back into the game. The Army recruitment goal for 2017 is 62,000 soldiers.⁴⁶ If 25 percent of this goal was met through a draft, even though only a tiny fraction of the eligible population, the possibility would have to be considered by everyone. This possibility would go a long ways towards reversing the

gap that exists today as well as slowing the growth of the 'warrior caste'. Both would be good things for the country and the military institution.

Conclusion

This paper focused on the perceived civil-military gap that now exists because of the AVF, and the declining numbers of Americans that have either military experience or exposure to the military. It scoped further to prove that there is a 'warrior caste' inside the military that consists of legacy service members. I argued that the 'warrior caste' is growing and directly contributing to the civil-military gap. It is also an outgrowth of the gap that continues to widen since the adoption of the AVF. Evidence was provided that proved the presence of legacy service members, those who come from military families, is significant and growing.

The paper also discussed the positives and negatives associated with this sub-culture. The benefit to the military of a 'warrior caste' is a force that better understands what the military is about. Such a force is easier to retain, saving money for other needs. However, if this trend continues it will lead to a military that is more insulated in its views, and from the population as a whole. The consequences of this trend range from mildly negative to potentially extreme. The potential for this 'warrior caste' to dominate the military is real. This could have the negative effect of undermining the meritocracy system that has served the military well. As these Legacy members join and move through the ranks there is great potential for them to work the system to their advantage.

Finally, the consequences of the 'warrior caste' trend continuing unabated were discussed. These include a military that is increasingly less connected to mainstream society and civilian leadership's decreased reluctance to use the military because there

is very little popular backlash when forces are deployed. The long term consequences are a military that increasingly becomes more disconnected from the society it serves, and which may eventually start to dictate policy instead of focusing on implementing it. Ensuring that the American population shares the burden of fighting wars equally, will go a long ways towards preventing unnecessary wars in the first place.

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