THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

# LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE SERVICE OF GAYS AND LESBIANS IN ALLIED MILITARIES

Washington, D.C.
Wednesday, May 19, 2010

PARTICIPANTS:

**Welcome and Introduction:**

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## PANEL 1: MINISTERIAL POLICY EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNED:

**Moderator:**

AARON BELKIN
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**Panelists:**

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER CRAIG JONES
Royal Navy (ret.)
United Kingdom

MR. ORI KAPARA
Research Specialist, Center for Behavioral Sciences
Israel Defense Forces

MAJOR GENERAL WALTER SEMIANIW
Chief of Military Personnel
Canadian Forces

MAJOR GENERAL SIMON VI. WILLIS
Former Head Defense Personnel Executive
Australian Army (ret.)

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. SINGER: I'm Peter Singer, I direct the 21st Century Defense Initiative here at Brookings, and it's my great honor to welcome all of you to Brookings. I'd also in particular like to thank our partners at The Palm Center who have helped put this together, as well as Chip McLean and Heather Massera , who've really rode hard over this topic for us, we're really pleased by this.

But most importantly, I want to thank all of you for joining us, both the audience, but also the speakers, many of whom have traveled great distances. It's an honor for us to host this and we're very much looking forward to this, and I think by the turn out, you can see the great interest in this topic.

What I thought would be important to do is actually, at the start, to speak to the how and why of this, in particular this event. Our goal in hosting this event is to do something scary and dangerous for our Washington policy debate, actually try to inject some information into it, that is, Congress and the Pentagon have been engaged in a review of the controversial "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, weighing the potential future open service of gays and lesbians in the U.S. military. At the same time, several nations that are allied with the United States have already implemented inclusive policies that allow such individuals to serve openly. Thus, amid all the heated political debate, there's actually underneath it a key policy research question that would be both informative and useful to answer; how were the policies of the other nations implemented and what lessons can be drawn from their experiences?

That is, our goal in this event is not to push one agenda or another, it's not to open with the answers rather than the questions, it's not to host another debate between proponents and opponents that would simply highlight the extremes all over again, it's rather to inform the discussion by learning from our allies who bring in a diversity of experiences.

That is, the goal of this event is to be a forum in which we can discuss both the challenges and the lessons learned by allied militaries on a more practical and operational level.

Now, the way that we've structured this event is through a series of discussion panels that are designed to provide insight at all levels of such military personnel policies, from the

personal experience all the way up to the ministerial level of decision. Now, the course of the panels is designed to engage on what you will see in your packet is a pretty comprehensive list of questions that are pre-planned. And if you haven't picked up one of those, again, they're outside of the table.

These questions are drawn from the key questions that Congress was focusing on back in the prior debate in 1993 and other aspects that we think haven't been explored enough in terms of the public discourse about this topic yet.

Now, you'll notice that there are a great number of these questions and a great number of panelists, and so we've tried to organize the event in a way that's designed to make full use of their time with us.

So what's going to happen is, for each panel, after they're introduced by the moderator, each panelist is going to give an opening statement of their views for about two minutes. After they've spoken, the moderator is then going to engage them on those questions, and again, is going to ask that their answers be crisp, keeping them to around two minutes. After that we're going to open up each panel to a discussion with the wider audience, to you, the participants. When you have a question, what will play out, you'll be called by the moderator, and then we'll ask you to do three things, one, wait for the microphone to arrive, because as you'll notice, there's cameras in the back there, this is being taped both for a webcast, but also various media including CNN; second, introduce yourself and where you're from, the institution you're from; and then third, most importantly, we have a very strange policy here, questions end with a question mark, so please, we, again, have people who have traveled great distances, a lot of views out here, so we don't want to use up time for the variety of speeches and the like, we really want to dig into the facts.

And so with that, it's my honor to introduce our partner in this, Aaron Belkin, who's actually going to give us sort of a scene setter of where the debate stands right now. Thank you again.

MR. BELKIN: Thank you so much, Peter, and thank you to all of you. It's a big honor for The Palm Center to have such distinguished colleagues at Brookings among the panelists and in the audience, and it's a pleasure to be able to contribute to the policy discourse in some small measure. I, as Peter said, would like to briefly frame the debate in terms of where things stand in the

United States and how this conference plugs into the conversation that is now going on in the Congress, in the White House, in the Pentagon, and amongst the public.

As most of you know, the law of the land in the United States has been don't ask, don't tell for about the past 17 years. And the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy is justified quite explicitly in congressional statutes and federal case law by something known as the unit cohesion rational, which is the idea that if gays were to serve openly and were allowed to acknowledge their sexual orientation while in uniform, then unit cohesion and military readiness and morale and other indicators of military performance would suffer.

As part of this debate, going back to the very inception of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," there's been a conversation about whether or not the unit cohesion rational and other questions surrounding gays in the military in this country could be studied and assessed and analyzed in the context of foreign military experiences.

On one side of the debate, people in favor of open gay service have made the claim that we can look to foreign militaries and see what lessons they have learned and try to apply those lessons in this country; and then on the other side of the debate, people have said, well, the U.S. military is different than foreign militaries, and regardless of the impact of open gay service in other countries, that might be less instructive for what happens in the United States.

At this point, at least 25 foreign militaries have decided to allow gays and lesbians to serve openly. The oldest is the Dutch case in 1974, and the most recent was Uruguay last year.

President Obama, of course, during the campaign has pledged to repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and to allow gays and lesbians to serve openly, but there has been opposition from the service chiefs and among some members of the Senate. And so as a compromise measure, the administration has set out this year as a year in which the Pentagon is studying the policy and is trying to figure out if the policy is lifted, what repeal would look like, what the implementation of an open policy would look like, and that is exactly where our conference ties into the question that the Pentagon is studying.

And I would suggest that there are no fewer than three questions that we could think about in order to structure today's conversations. So I'll do it on the one hand and on the other hand.

On the one hand, here are the three questions. First of all, what impact, if any, has open gay service had in countries that have allowed it? Second of all, what lessons, in particular, what implementation lessons have experts in other countries found after they transitioned to a policy of open service? And finally, third, to what extent are those lessons relative for the American case?

Now, I said I would do it on the one hand, on the other hand, so having listed those three questions, I would say, on the other hand, and as Peter mentioned, our hope today is to dig even deeper and get even more sophisticated and not just ask simplistic questions about whether or not open gay service has undermined cohesion, although we will ask that, but to really get down into the details and look at all kinds of questions surrounding privacy, partnership benefits, equal opportunity, and on and on, all the issues you have mentioned in your list of questions.

With no further ado, it is my great pleasure to introduce the first panel. And I would ask the panelists to come up at this point for the ministerial panel, so we're going to start right now. You have full biographical statements in your packets, so I will only introduce each panelist very briefly and you can refer to your packets for the more complete bios. But starting on my furthest right is Lieutenant Commander Craig Jones, who was awarded the Member of the Order of British Empire by Queen Elizabeth in 2006 for his distinguished work on behalf of sexual minorities in the military. Commander Jones recently retired from the British Navy, where he was an officer for over 20 years.

Seated next to him is Mr. Ori Kapara, who's traveled from Israel, is currently a social science researcher in the Israel Defense Forces at the Behavioral Sciences Center, is one of the people most responsible for social science research about gays and lesbians in the Israeli military. But I do want to note that Mr. Kapara's views are his own and do not represent the IDF.

Seated next to him is Major General Walter Semianiw. From February until August, 2005, he was responsible for all Canadian Forces operations in Afghanistan as Commander of the Task Force Kabul, and is currently the chief of military personnel in the Canadian Forces. Thank you so much for coming here.

And finally, seated next to me is Major General Simon Willis, who retired in October, 2004 with more than 38 years of service. And a career highlight included something very relevant to today's conference; he was the head of personnel for the Australian Defense Forces.

So I would ask each panelist to begin with a brief statement and then we will have a conversation. Craig.

CDR. JONES: Terrific, thanks, Aaron. I think the UK case is very interesting in this debate, because in the UK, the lifting of the gay ban was born in a complete firestorm, in a firestorm that lasted for a number of years.

And I remember sitting in the officer's mass in our flagship carrier, Invisible, in '98, and reading on the front page of a national newspaper an open letter from the head of the Naval Service in which he said he believed that unit cohesion and the -- of that service would be irreparably damaged if gays served in the military, and that was a difficult thing to read.

And the Ministry Defense in the UK campaigned in a bitter campaign through all of the UK courts, and finally the European Courts of Justice in 1998 and the European Courts of Human Rights in the summer of '99 just stopped the ban being lifted, and that's something that's sometimes forgotten. The ban was not lifted through altruism or a belief that it was necessarily the right thing to do, however, it was lifted. And I think, in observation, despite those challenges, it was lifted very quietly and has been a very quiet success.

A couple of observations about the lifting of that ban and the firestorm that went before it, first of all, it was a huge distraction for the military service and the Ministry of Defense and the political organization in the UK.

I'm not sure what we talked about in the military before we lifted the gay ban, but life afterwards became really, really dull, and we started talking about whether we should have more aircraft carriers and better equipment to deal with on the front line. And I'm not quite sure why we had senior military leaders taking up the space on the front page to talk about something which was really not so consequential, in my opinion.

I'd also say that, in my personal experience, and I've served with -- in NATO organizations and coalition organizations for the majority of my career, I'm a principal warfare officer, and therefore, have spent most of my time on the front line. I see the U.S. military as very close cousins, and I'd say that the UK is a good comparator to what the experience here might be. And finally, I'd make an observation about my colleagues, and that's the fact that it's my belief that my

colleagues would rather serve with a man or a woman who had unfailingly good judgment and who believed in equality and freedom and the protection of those things than with a homophobe, a racist or a bigot, because at times good judgment is really important.

MR. KAPARA: Well, as Aaron kindly mentioned, I'm here not representing the IDF, so I'll base most of my knowledge on the academic research done. Well, generally the issue of gays in the IDF has not been as problematized as in the U.S. or Great Britain, it has never been hotly debated for long periods of time, that's more than a very few months. Still, there has been a few changes, I'll discuss them. I'll stick mainly to policy, though, practice is, I believe as a researcher, is very much interesting.

Well, we are talking about a conscript model, military, that means that there's a very powerful -- of universal conscription. So it is generally perceived that the exclusion of any group would do harm to the IDF more than the inclusion that the general discourse surrounding the issue of gays, whenever it comes up. All right. A bit about policy. The first command regarding homosexuality in the IDF was introduced in '83. It was perceived as a big -- as recognition of gay identity at the time, but it did exclude gays from certain intelligence roles within the military.

That was all changed in '93, very much in sync with what was going in the U.S. And perhaps most interesting about the Israeli case is a complete removal of that command in '98. So today, at this day and time, there is no command dealing with homosexuality in the IDF. However, we can learn a bit from the IDF spokesperson -- and we can say that generally, whenever this issue comes up, it is said that the service member's sexual orientation is not an issue, and so the IDF is not -- this at all. That's a very powerful saying I find.

However, from a researcher's point of view, and I'm probably crossing my two-minute time limit, I think that this is a bit of a laconic statement since we are seeing a lot of changes, especially in the last couple of years in practice, but maybe we can discuss those later. Thank you.

MR. BELKIN: Thank you. General.

GEN. SEMIANIW: Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. As you can see, from a Canadian military perspective, we're very much here in force with each of the panels with representatives from our services. In particular the group that I brought, the leaders that I brought

are those who have deep operational experience and who have had experience on this particular issue.

My remarks are very much framed within fact and true military fashion to provide you with three lessons that we've learned from a Canadian perspective on this particular issue.

It was in the fall of 1992 that the chief of Defense Staff, that's our top soldier, issued an order to the men and women of the Canadian military. The order was very clear that the Canadian Forces policy with respect to homosexuality was hereby revoked immediately.

In short, a new policy would ensure that sexual orientation, in particular, homosexuality, would no longer be considered an item for a career restriction, which we'll talk about a little bit later, within Canada's military. The policy in place since 1986 on this issue stated that Canada's military neither recruited nor retained practicing homosexuals. In 1988, however, the policy was amended to retain practicing homosexuals, but with career restrictions. They could not be promoted; they could not go on career courses. The reasons for these policies were many and very, but included discipline, security, health, privacy, and finally, operational effectiveness.

The order of 1992 would remove all restrictions for employment and recruitment of homosexuals in and to Canada's military. In the order, very clear, the chief of Defense Staff went on to state that he and the commanders of Canada's military expected all men and women of the Canadian military to accept and to support the changes, knowing that there were men and women in Canada's military who would find the policy change difficult to accept.

Following almost two decades of a new policy with respect to homosexuality and service in Canada's military, the Canadian Forces finds itself in a different battle space on this issue, one where sexual orientation is not considered, in most parts, as an issue for men and women in uniform, a view that is grounded on a sense of duty and fairness and one focused on a soldier's contribution to the nation rather than his or her sexual orientation. Lessons learned over the past decades from a Canadian perspective, I've highlighted us three. First, as pedestrian as it sounds, it's all about leadership. As in all things human resources or personal management, I do that, I command 17,000 men and women in uniform to run this HR system. Leaders set the direction, they set the tone and ensure that policy is, indeed, respected and practiced.

To ensure that policy is useful, remember, it has to be enforced and it has to be seen to be enforced, that is the role of leadership, one of the key pieces that we learned from that experience.

Second, and I state this unequivocally here, there is no negative impact on operational effectiveness. There has been no impact to reflect on operational effectiveness by having men and women of any sexual orientation fighting together, be it in Afghanistan, from what we've seen, be it in Iraq, be it on many key peacekeeping missions over the many, many years.

And finally, our view is that we are stronger together by having a very inclusive military. By allowing men and women in uniform of any sexual orientation to be part of Canada's military, the same men and women in uniform who die for the nation, Canada's military is stronger and more unified, a fighting force that is grounded in the views as a sense of duty, a sense of fairness, and inclusiveness, something which our Canadian military is happy and proud to export around the world. Thank you very much.

GEN. WILLIS: Thank you, Aaron. The Australian Defense Force does not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, it has not since 1992, however, the conditions of service that go along with that lack of discrimination did not follow on immediately and continued to be discriminatory for some time. These filings have been largely remedied, but there are still some outstanding issues.

I must say the lifting of the homosexual ban in the IDF was a bit like the Y2K issue. There's a lot of bluster and screaming and yelling and plans, and everyone had an opinion about it, but it came and went, and that was it, nothing more was heard about it. It was a non-event and it continues to be a non-event in Australia.

Why was it a non-event? Firstly, our concern was based around inappropriate behavior, not about sexual orientation. It wasn't about groups of people, it was about behavior. We kept it simple. Secondly, there was an informal acceptance of homosexual service anyway. Pre-'86, 1986, there was no policy banning homosexual activity in the Australian Defense Force; it was only when state law started to change that we had to make a policy change that lasted for six years only.

Thirdly, why was it a non-event? Because there's a culture in Australian military

and probably abroad about the fair go, and the importance of leadership, education, and training cannot be understated, and it was seen more as a human rights and equal opportunity activity rather than an operational concern.

The benefits, clearly morale, we were one big team and continued to be that. Operational readiness, Craig mentioned, we spent time on important things, not writing briefs for ministers and setting up meetings and having all sorts of distractions.

If you get ideas from 10 people, you get much better ideas from 10,000, so the more inclusive and the more diverse your base, the better you are. Diversity brings strength.

Because we were in the lead in this in some respects in Australia, we became an employer of choice, and therefore, it became an advantage for the Australian Defense Force. It felt good to be on a team that was leading. Finally, we've only got a couple of outstanding issues, and one is the recognition of partnerships, how we recognize partners, and probably some gender identity issues that we're working through at the moment in relation to transgender, but other than that, we're all one team. Thank you.

MR. BELKIN: Thank you so much. I'm going to direct questions to individuals, but then any and all of you should free to weigh in on any issue. General Willis, you said that a key to success in Australia was the focus on inappropriate conduct as opposed to sexual orientation. But with a policy that was only entrenched for six years, isn't that different than the situation in the United States?

We've been banning gays and lesbians since World War II and we've banned sodomy since 1919. We could have a military ball here, and two gay men could show up at the ball, they're partners, and they start dancing together, and that's not inappropriate conduct because the straight people are dancing together, but that would culturally be very difficult for our force to assimilate, so how do you wrap your mind around that?

GEN. WILLIS: My answer to that would be not to wrap your mind around the individual activities, would be to concentrate on the values, and concentrate on the values of the people. And I'm sure the values of the U.S. military are very similar to the Australian military of honesty, integrity, loyalty, courage, et cetera, and you can concentrate on that, and that's basically

what we did.

And our records show that there is far more inappropriate behavior with man on woman or woman on woman or whatever, you spread out whichever way you want to go, than there is with man on man. So I shouldn't have said woman on woman there, but you get the drift. You get the drift that it's -- the inappropriate behavior is the key, and we found that the case.

You talk about dances, et cetera, I've got adult children, and I've been to weddings, et cetera, I haven't seen anyone dancing together for about 15 years. They all sort of migrate to the floor, move around each other, and move off the floor, so -- and I suspect that it's not different in officers' messes and soldiers' canteens and dances like that these days, but if it is, that's a unit issue. It was always dealt with at unit level and it was dealt with as counseling appropriate behavior, like if a soldier drank far too much or was acting inappropriately, it was seen as inappropriate behavior and dealt with that way.

MR. BELKIN: But surely there must be a question of sexual tension. General Semianiw, when you have service members in the same unit in Afghanistan and they're having a relationship with each other, a homosexual relationship, that must cause some problem with cohesion or tension or jealousy or something like that?

GEN. SEMIANIW: And I'd come back and say, you know, as we sit here, we have to answer or ask a question with a question mark coming back to you, but in what way would you say that? For those that I've served with, not just in Afghanistan, but in other parts of the world, in Canada, like some of my panelists have said, it's not an issue. No one sits there and thinks of it.

I think this is really an issue probably more for Washington and for Ottawa than it actually is for troops at the grassroots level. In the end, they get on with the job, as we have found, regardless of their sexual orientation.

Yes, they do know who each other are, what they are, but it doesn't or hasn't seemed to be an issue for those that are serving at unit level. As the chief of military personnel, having a broad view of the Canadian Forces, in the last three years I have not seen one case at my level where an issue has come up where individuals did not get along. To echo the comments of my Australian friend here, more issues are between men and women, not between men and men, when

it comes down to it. So there has not been, we haven't seen it, a negative impact on operational effectiveness.

It's interesting as we moved into the new policy; there was a view that said perhaps there was a large group of those in the Canadian Forces who would disagree with the way ahead. Remember, the Canadian Forces is a volunteer force.

There were very few, if any, people who left the Canadian Forces after the new policy came in. So perhaps we didn't have it right, perhaps it never really was such a big issue for folks at the grassroots level, at the unit level who have to do the tough fighting. Perhaps it is just, throw it up perhaps a little glibly, a Washington issue, it's not a grassroots issue.

MR. BELKIN: Commander Jones, people here worry that there's a question of a line in the sand, and you lift the gay ban tomorrow, and the next day, polygamists are going to demand their rights, transgender service members are going to demand their rights. So how does the British military deal with transgender service, and isn't this a question of, you know, come one, come all, and all of a sudden everyone gets to serve in the military?

CDR. JONES: Well, I think the question is which pieces and freedoms do you want to protect, and I think the reality is that you protect all of those that fit in with -- structure of your political system. Transgender service was affected a little earlier than the lifting of the gay ban, because in the UK, that's considered to be a medical issue rather than a social issue. But the reality is that today, whether you are LGB or T, then you're allowed the same opportunities to develop your career in the service and are required to behave according to the same social conduct and to the same rules.

A couple of things to pick up on Major General Willis' comments, in my 20-year career, I've seen some quite exciting conduct. It's a reality of life amongst people, and especially when you mix in a wine party, but I have never seen exciting conduct between two gay men, and it's an interesting point. I think among service personnel, we recruit from a particular pool of the wider population, people who have an understanding or at least develop an understanding of the services which we serve in. And you develop an eighth sense of what's appropriate and what's right and what's wrong.

I went to my first military ball on the 24th of January, 2000, which was about nine days after the lifting of the UK gay ban, and there was a degree of chaos amongst my colleagues, and particularly senior officers, who wondered what on earth might happen. And the reality was that we went to the ball, we had a few drinks and enjoyed a very pleasant evening with colleagues.

And did we dance in the middle of the floor? No. I'm a military officer and I've got two left feet. And it wouldn't have been right for me, my partner, or my colleagues, and I think that that moves above the issues of the Code of Conduct. It's who you are as a military officer and what feels appropriate.

MR. BELKIN: But then in that case you're asking for the Pentagon to allow discretion to gay and lesbian officers and service members to not use the policy as a test case to advance rights, and what if someone comes in and is just trying to make a political statement or get media coverage?

CDR. JONES: I think that's fair and likely. There were concerns in the late 1990's about officers and men walking across the gangways of ships in feather boas and high heels, that's just not the reality of the people that serve in our military. And I don't think that -- I'm saying that the ethos and the ideals of people leads them towards behaviors that are appropriate. Those behaviors or those processes are underpinned by reasonably clear rules of what's right and wrong.

MR. BELKIN: Mr. Kapara, how do you deal with the question of partnership benefits? In this country we have a defensive marriage act that prohibits federal recognition of gay and lesbian marriages. If the military were to lift its ban, there would be an obvious discrepancy between the spousal benefits that straight service members receive and the spousal benefits that gay/lesbian service members receive. How do you deal with that in Israel, and what policies does the IDF have to deal with gay spouses or partners?

MR. KAPARA: Well, as I said earlier, there is no policy dealing with gays and lesbians, so it is generally understood that there is absolutely no difference, and it doesn't matter what your partner's sex is. But since -- in the Israeli case, gay marriage is not recognized. The question is not so much in the center of debate, so I have not heard of -- a lot about that issue. Generally it's -- there is no difference generally.

MR. BELKIN: Could the other panelists address that, how you deal with any discrepancies, or whether there are discrepancies, and if so, do those undermine moral, lead to a sense of a lack of fairness, or what do you do about partners at the policy level?

GEN. WILLIS: The second part first, no, it doesn't undermine moral or anything like that. At this stage of the game, except for a couple of areas I mentioned early on, there's no discrepancy. Interestingly enough, in Australia, federal and state laws restrict same sex marriage, and they haven't been lifted, that is marriage, but legislation under the Sex Discrimination Act provides that partners must receive the same benefits as spouses.

So as far as that goes, in the Australian Defense Force, partners receive the same benefits these days as spouses, and have for some time. It was slow in being introduced, but it is not perceived to be an issue at this time.

GEN. SEMIANIW: I echo the same comments, and the answer would be, no, there is no perceived inequity in any way, because it comes back to you use the word "partner," what does "partner" mean? What is the definition of "partner?" I have a very broad view of partner, of spouse, of family, and as such, it's broad enough that most, if not all, can actually fit into that to receive the benefits that they're entitled to. It has not been an issue. I haven't seen it in the forces over the last many years, any years.

CDR. JONES: From the UK point of view, there's an interesting point in transition. So at the time of the lifting of the gay ban in 2000, there was no Civil Partnership Act in the UK, and there was a really interesting solidarity between gay couples and straight couples who were not married. And both of those groups did not have rights, if you'd like, to things like military quarters and the particular room and ration benefits that go with being married.

With the Civil Partnership Act in 2004, the Ministry of Defense did something quite unusual in this debate actually. They immediately declared 12 months in advance of the Civil Partnership Act that gay couples in the military would have full benefits as married couples. It was a great reassurance and gave a really clear indication of the fact that the Ministry Defense saw this policy as sustainable and going definitely in the right direction, so quite interesting to see actually.

And just a final point, I think the most important thing here is about the military family

and about looking after the military family. We send our men and women to quite challenging situations, and it worries me that we send, or that the U.S. sends its gay service men and women in the line of fire without affording their partners appropriate protections.

MR. BELKIN: I want to ask two more questions to the group and then throw the conversation open to the audience and people who are sending in questions from the live stream feed. But my second to the last question, for General Semianiw, surely you must have had chaplains for whom the question of homosexuality is a matter of conscience and who did not feel that they could continue to minister to the troops after the lifting of the ban. How did you deal with either denominations for whom this was a difficult issue or just individual chaplains who didn't feel that they could continue to minister in the same way? Did you design special policies or how did you do that?

GEN. SEMIANIW: At the time, I can't tell you if there were any chaplains who left the Canadian military. Again, since it's a volunteer force, there was nothing publicized that any left, so my assumption is, having talked to a number on this, no one did leave at the time. So it didn't happen, what you're assuming.

Secondly, if you look at our chaplaincy, our chaplaincy is very, very progressive in Canada. We have imams; we have rabbis in our chaplaincy, very, very broad. So it is a very inclusive, not exclusive, an inclusive approach to a chaplaincy, who serve, who provide support to any man or woman and soldier regardless of sexual orientation, race, creed, color, whatever it might be.

The key is providing support to someone who needs it, and it has not been an issue, haven't seen it. Chaplaincy in the Canadian military works for me, from an administrative point of view, not from a religious point of view, it works to a much higher authority, but in the end, never been an issue. It comes back to -- and I think it's a theme that, hopefully, the audience is starting to hear. And I would say probably on behalf of all four of us, this is not an issue for our countries, it's just not an issue. You ask if I have a policy on homosexuals in the Canadian military, I don't because it's not an issue. They serve in the military, as does everyone who wants to join the Canadian Forces and serve their nation, it is not an issue. So it's difficult perhaps not to find some of the facts, but looking out ahead, it has proved to be a more unified approach, especially with the chaplaincy.

Very recently we brought in rabbis, we brought in imams, who one would think perhaps had very little in common. They have probably a lot more in common than they have not in common they realized, but they support -- they deliver support to a very inclusive group across the forces.

MR. BELKIN: I'm going to ask one more question to the panel and then open things up. Do you have recommendations about timing and implementation? In this country, there are some who say that we need to, to the extent that "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" is repealed, we need to slow roll the implementation process over time and allow the military perhaps up to a year to adjust. There are other people who warn that if you slow roll implementation, you open yourself up to potential obstruction, and that you should just snap your fingers and announce the new policy of inclusion if it gets to that point politically. Do you have any lessons that you'd like to convey to the U.S. in terms of timing and implementation? And by the way, at the end of the panel, we'll come back for closing statements.

GEN. SEMIANIW: Yeah, if I can just quickly address that, what I did, I brought with me a number of the directives at the time, and it's very clear viewing these that it was done very quickly. There was a little bit of, you know, there's not a view of kind of waiting over a year, but just to get the thing out in the street, which we believe, in hindsight, was the right approach.

Secondly, as they say, if you want to change culture, you need leadership and communication, very, very heavy on the communication side. When you read the directive here from my counterpart so many years ago, he demanded that leaders across the Canadian Forces explain the rational behind the change, sat down, as my counterpart here said from Australia, communicated, talked about it from an educational training point of view, which led to not a need for a longer term implementation, but something happened very quickly, which in hindsight we believe was the right approach.

MR. BELKIN: Why was it important to do quickly?

GEN. SEMIANIW: Important to do quickly, because I come back to what you said, that if you were to drag it on, perhaps there are issues of obstruction over the year. In the end, I come back to what the leadership is all about or the military is all about leadership, making decisions,

even if it's not about everybody or for everyone, it's just to get on with it. In hindsight, there was little, if any, obstruction. People didn't leave the Canadian military; they just got on with the new policy.

MR. BELKIN: Anyone else want to weigh in on this before we -- yeah, please.

MR. KAPARAZ: I'll make this very quick. It's quite similar in the Israeli case, it was done with haste, as I said before, and more interestingly, the cancellation of the command in '98 was actually done silently, so there was absolutely no public debate, it's just the policy shifted overnight.

CDR. JONES: I think it's certainly fair that -- I believe it needs to be done swiftly. In the UK, in August, '99, the ban was suspended, and it took about six months after that for the Armed Forces Code of Social Conduct to be implemented. We got away with that. But I think in the way that the military does its business, it's normal to make the decision and then implement it sharply, to make sure it's a total success. And I think it's very important that senior officers have the opportunity to take ownership of this policy and drive it ahead, because anything else really wouldn't fit with our leadership model.

GEN. WILLIS: There's not much more I can add, other than to say equal means equal, and in my view, if you're looking for equality, you should do it as quickly as you can no matter what circumstances. And I believe in the Australian circumstance, the rapid nature of it was one of the reasons why it was so successful.

I think people underestimate sometimes the ability of a soldier, a sailor, or airman to salute the flag and get on with it under good leadership, and I think good leadership, as Craig points out and the other members point out, is key to it all. So that's what I would say.

The only thing I would comment on in relation to it would be that we were probably a little slow in getting our conditions of service up and running to support the change in policy. And I would recommend that if you're going to change the policy, make sure that it's closer to a concise package than we managed to achieve.

MR. BELKIN: So what does that mean, you had to get your conditions of service up? Where there specific rules or what?

GEN. WILLIS: Well, yes. For instance, travel, in the first instance, partners weren't given travel. For instance, if a gay couple was coming to America on posting, only the serving

person or the primary postee -- they might both have been posted -- got the allowances and the travel, the others had to pay their own way. Initially we didn't give them married quarters as you would give a couple, so we worked our way through that, all the way through the whole system of conditions of service.

It probably took a little bit longer than we would have liked, but we're there, and I would just recommend that it be done more quickly than we did it.

MR. BELKIN: But maybe the slow route is better because it allows people time to adjust.

GEN. WILLIS: Having been head of personnel and seeing the amount of briefs coming across my desk that weren't related to homosexual service, but related to married quarters, leave, postings, sickness benefits, all those sorts of things that I could, quite frankly, have done without, I would recommend that the key decision is whether or not you're going to go that way and the rest of it is just support to it. And if you can get the support wrapped up in it more quickly, I think it's much better.

MR. BELKIN: Thank you so much. We'll come back for closing statements, but we'd like to open things up to the audience. And do we have a roving microphone? Okay. And if you could announce your name and then a reminder to ask a question.

MR. CRAIG: Hi, I'm John Craig. I'm a clinical social worker and addictions counselor at INOVA Hospital in Arlington, in Fairfax, Virginia, and I work with military veterans and others. I also have been a volunteer for SLDN, Service members Legal Defense Network, in their efforts to go to Capital Hill and repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." My question, please, is for Commander Jones.

Most psychologists feel that most individuals experience some kind of same sex attractions early in their lives, especially in adolescents, even if their primary attractions later in life are for the opposite sex. So this may be a passing thing in adolescents for many males. And you mentioned the firestorm of controversy that erupted in the UK around this issue that that surprised you because you felt this was somewhat of an inconsequential issue in many ways. I'm just wondering, do you think the memory of these same sex attractions in many members of the military

are a reason for this kind of firestorm that erupts in these debates in the U.S. and elsewhere?

CDR. JONES: That's a very challenging question, and as a simple sailor, I feel slightly ill-equipped to answer it. I think that there was an unreasonable wish to protect the ethos of the service in a slightly alpha male, rugby club type of organization, which sometimes the militaries can be. It's great to see that in the last 10 years, the services have gravitated away from that. If you ask me if it's to do with earlier misgivings about same sex attraction, I'm not so sure; I couldn't see that necessarily as being likely.

MR. ROSTKER: Bernie Rostker from the Rand Corporation. One could get an image of a rapid change in policy, all the homosexuals came out and everything was fine, but at least our reading, when we last looked at this in 1993, was that coming out was a long process and that most of the homosexuals in service did not come out. In Canada, we were there six months after, and no one had come out. So the policy may change quickly, but the reality is, there is this process, which my hypothesis would be self-adjusting, people come out in environments they are comfortable with, and so the policy may change quickly, but the reality is not that the situations change quickly.

So to put a question mark on that, could you comment from your points of view about the coming out process, and even today, do you have any sense of what part of -- how much of the gay community that is serving has, in fact, made that known to their units or to the institution?

GEN. WILLIS: I'll take that to start with. Quite frankly, I would just like to say that from my perspective, and from a lot of my peers' perspective, I joined the Army in 1967, we all knew that there were probably homosexuals in the Army and we couldn't care less, quite frankly, as long as they did their job, and that was all that was important.

A couple of decades later, the rules changed a bit and they went on, so I think that had some part to play. It's just not relevant on the line essentially. I was an infantryman in Vietnam, and I'm -- I don't know that there were homosexuals there because people never put their hand up, but if I had to make a judgment call, I suggest that there were, and they served just as gallantly and as bravely and as effectively as everyone else. Yes, they -- when we removed the ban, no one came out, and I think it was quite some time before people put their hand up, but I think the Australian soldier, you know, didn't expect anything different, any different at all, it was just the way it

was, and I don't think you should expect anything much different, in my view.

GEN. SEMIANIW: On the question, I kind of look at it from two parts, the what and the how, and the when. If I look at the what and the how, I think there's perhaps a myth there of what coming out is all about. And I think it's across much of the globe, because we haven't seen -- if you consider coming out, as mentioned by a number of the panelists here, as people all of a sudden yelling from the top of some steeple, you know, that they're homosexual, they're gay, it just doesn't happen.

Secondly, the one piece I would agree with you, we even see it today, but that just doesn't apply, I would throw back, not just for homosexuals, but in the Canadian military, no one has any right to know what my sexual orientation is. Heterosexual or homosexual, gay, lesbian, whatever it is, we have a privacy law in Canada that protects that. Granted, you have a law, but at the same time, I come back to it, for soldiers, what we found, it really doesn't matter -- with the comments here -- it's all about what can you do, what are your abilities all about, can you do the duty on the line. It's not about what is it that you represent at the end of it, can you actually be a section mate that can do his part to get rounds down range.

MR. KAPARA: Well, with the idea from a ministry point of view, this question has not been researched very much. However, I will try to supply you with some more direct answers also from my experience doing research with a youth group that's also relevant for -- with the Israeli youth; it's also relevant for the IDF since that's a conscription model military.

We do see the general age of youth coming out in Israel is decreasing. I actually have an exact average number if you'll be interested. Back in 2000, there was, age 22, on average, Israelis would come out; today that's more like 16, 10 years later. So we have seen sort of a revolution, but that's, again, mainly deals with practice and is not dealt with from a military point of view.

CDR. JONES: I think, from the UK perspective, on the day that the ban was lifted, there was a deadly quiet in most matters across the UK, and tumbleweed blowing across the policy desks in the Ministry of Defense, apart from in HMS Fearless where there was a degree of chaos when I was the operations officer. But it was very quiet for three or four years.

I would draw one distinction, though, in that the U.S. Armed Forces have taken a significant step forward, and some of the coming out process amongst individuals I suspect is a bridge that's being crossed.

I'm quite sure that there are lots of gay service men and women in the U.S. Armed Forces who have confided in their colleagues and have, therefore, gone through -- broken down some of the mental barriers about the fact that they will eventually come out. And therefore, I don't think it will be three or four years before you start to see larger numbers of gay men and women. It may be three or four months perhaps, or a little longer than that, so it's interesting.

I think the question also involved numbers. The UK has a network group for gay service men and women, it has over 1,000 members. It's the largest LGBT employee-based network group in Europe and a remarkable advocate of the business case for inclusion. Five or six years ago, the UK military had a very significant number of personnel gaps at the front line. There is no doubt about it, that the lifting of the gay ban has reduced that number of personnel gaps, and therefore, we are operationally more effective for it.

MR. BELKIN: Can I get a sense of how many questions there are? Maybe we should bundle the questions if the panelists can kind of hold the questions so we can hear from more of you. So we'll take two or three questions at once and then we'll get answers.

MS. MAJAWNY: Shanaz Majawny, United States Air Force. I had a question. If there was going to be -- if you saw an increase in violent crime against gays in the militaries after the ban was lifted?

MR. BELKIN: A question about harassment and violence. Actually, let's just hold and get the other questions in the back.

MR. SHAUGHNESSY: Larry Shaughnessy with CNN. I'm not sure if this is true for all your countries, but I think most, if not all your countries, serve alongside some place in the world or another with the United States troops. Do you guys know of any incident where U.S. troops and troops from your country have had untorrid actions between each other over the issues of homosexuality?

MR. BELKIN: There was a hand or two -- yeah, go ahead.

MR. SI: Thank you, good morning. My name is Christian Si and I work for Congressman Alcee Hastings of Florida, here in Washington, D.C. And I must say, as a congressional staffer and a gay American, it's very heartening and encouraging to hear all of your testimonies and how relatively quickly and quietly these policy changes were implemented.

But as you may know, here in the United States, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" is codified, you know, in our laws, and it will take an act of Congress or judicial action to repeal the law. My question is, what role, if any, have your parliaments played in that transition, as well as your executives, and, you know, grassroots organizations?

Thank you.

MR. BELKIN: And let's take -- there was one more hand, yeah.

MR. JIVITZ: Chris Jivitz, RAND Corporation. I was just curious if there have been any studies in your own countries that look at the outcome of the change in policy, any kind of polls or other kind of statistical or other studies that we might be able to look at to support the very positive statements that you've made.

MR. BELKIN: So we have 12 minutes left. I'm going to take moderator's discretion and make a brief comment and then open it up to everyone to give a closing statement and/or answer some of the questions that have just been asked. So, hopefully, you can just hold one more comment and then we'll just go down the row and hear closing statements from all of you.

But I have to say, I've heard at least five differences that separate out your countries from the United States that make me wonder about the relevance of the lessons from your countries for what's going to happen here and makes me think maybe we really are a unit case.

Our tradition of banning gays seems to be much more long standing. We have a very litigious society, and so we could have gay service members trying to use the policy to make statements. We're not going to have equality of partnership benefits any time soon because of defensive marriage. We have a very conservative chaplain's corps, and our NCOs are not on board at all with change, so there is a leadership question. So I guess, and maybe this is something just to discuss throughout the day, whether, given those differences, we really can move forward here in a way that protects readiness.

Okay. That was a lot. Let's go down the row starting with Major General Willis. And we have now 11 minutes left, so you can divide the time.

GEN. WILLIS: In answer to the question on violence and harassment, no, none that we're aware of. Incidents over homosexuality between national groups or groups, none that I'm aware of. As far as legislation, yes, there was legislation through parliament to enable the policies, but that was quite straight forward.

And as far as polls and studies go, no, because we don't know, we don't ask people if they're gay or lesbian, so -- and we don't intend to. We don't see it relevant unless they stick their head up or some incident occurs. But we -- as far as I'm aware, there have been a few incidents, but they were, in the percentage term, they were probably 1 percent of 100 percent of inappropriate behavior incidents and gender on gender incidents, gender on different gender incidents still weighing about the top of the ladder, on top of the league. So the answer to your question is no.

GEN. SEMIANIW: In answering the first question, the answer is no, we did not see an increase in violence, particularly against homosexuals or issues that kind of drew from that. I remember what we did have is, we brought in harassment policy, not just for homosexuals, but for all men and women in uniform, so it became the tool in the toolbox for commanders to pull from to ensure that they could apply the policy in a fair and equitable way.

Having fought in Afghanistan alongside many different nations, particularly with Americans, the answer is no, I haven't heard about it. Given the position I'm in, given the meetings I'm party to, I have never heard once of an issue between American soldiers, Canadian soldiers over homosexuality within the military at all.

On the codification side, remember what we did have which drove us, fair to look at from a Canadian perspective was the Charter of Human Rights. And if you look at the Charter very much, it was something that was pushed by government at the time, and it was, in essence, it said everyone needs to be treated fairly and equally regardless of who they are or what they are. And it was a little bit more complex than that, but this is the infanteer talking in very simple soldier terms, and it ensured that as we drove this through, it opened many eyes to the issue I come back to of fairness and back to a sense of duty and being able to do what you can do.

Studies, outcomes -- common here, no, because we don't even ask. I couldn't tell you with any certainty what percentage of men and women in uniform in the Canadian military are either homosexuals or lesbians or even heterosexuals, or even many different forms of heterosexualism that exists out there, none of our business, I really don't care. For me, it's about operational effect.

And I come back and actually make a statement here, I would say not allowing men and women in uniform who are homosexuals or lesbians to not just practice what they do, but be open about it, leads to a force that is less than operationally effective. The force is more operationally effective if you have them with you and they can actually be open and talk about it, because they are who they are, and that is a part of the issue I throw back. "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" for me is a challenge, not about having gays and lesbians, but allowing people to actually state who they really are, when at the end of the day they're prepared to lay their lives down for the nation, for me, that's a challenge.

MR. BELKIN: What about the relevance to the U.S. case, though, and all the differences that --

GEN. SEMIANIW: Here's what I would say, I think in some part, scope, or scale, given that we're geographically very close to the United States, but we are very different than the United States, I would submit from all of my readings that these were issues, thoughts, ideas that did come up as part of our transition that look what's going to happen. We have deep-rooted traditions and cultures and all of this. Because on your first one, the deep-rooted kind of views of culture, we're shared south of the border and north of the border for a long time together, so I would say it was. It didn't turn into an issue.

Litigious, I come back and tell you I do this every day. I write policy. If you write policy for the one-offs, you'll never be writing policy. Policy is for the group, for the majority, not the army of one, it's the army of many. So we do have those in the Canadian military who fight us on a variety of issues in different ways, and we don't write policy for them, we write policy because it's the right thing to do. And again, I come back to the last two, we had NCOs, as well, and in every case we probably had more NCOs in military leave our military when we moved our bases from one

location to another than over this issue, because it really isn't an issue.

Perhaps there was people resistant to change, but it came back to, and I speak to it, communicating, leaders sitting down with men and women in uniform saying this is what we're going to do; this is why we're doing it. I come back to what some of the panelists said, and just getting on with it, because that's what soldiers do.

MR. BELKIN: Mr. Kapara.

MR. KAPARA: Well, regarding the first question about violence, no, I have not heard of an increase in any violent event. Well, regarding the involvement of the government, yes, it's actually Prime Minister Rabin who was very involved in the '93 change. He was also, to the best of my knowledge, involved with Bill Clinton at the time. So as I previously said, this change was very much in sync with the U.S. No research has been done trying to evaluate the success of the change. And regarding the question of similarity, I do believe both organizations have a lot in common, primarily Navy and most tragically the constant involvement in fighting, a constant fighting in very hostile conditions. So I do think much can be drawn from the early case that is relevant to the U.S.

Thank you.

CDR. JONES: In terms of violent crime, I'd have to agree, no, although I would add that I have greater confidence today that incidents of intimidation or harassment, bullying, and victimization would be reported because the ban has been lifted, and that's very important. And, therefore, I believe our op sec, our operational security, has benefited from the lifting of the gay ban, because people were vulnerable before then.

U.S. troops, no, there's been no incidents of fraca, if you like, between UK and U.S. troops. But I would say -- I've been in UK/U.S. roles for the last 10 years of my career, and I would say that U.S. troops seem to enjoy the opportunity to lift the taboo on this subject when I was in their company.

And I've had some really interesting evenings in the bar, in circumstances whereby the colleagues around me or U.S. colleagues around me enjoyed the opportunity to talk over the issues in a mature and sensible way. What role did our parliament have? No helpful role, unfortunately.

(Laughter) And I note that it should say retired on there, so I'm not subject to the whip, which is great. In fact, on lifting the ban on the 13th of January, 2000, our Secretary of State said in the House of Commons that there are many in the military and in this parliament who would wish to see this ban remain in place, but the law is the law and we can't pick and choose the laws that we wish to implement.

But I'm delighted to say that when the ban was reviewed twice in June 2000 and June 2002, I think the word "non-event" was actually written into the review. And I remember a statement by Vice Admiral Sir James Burnell-Nugent, then head of naval personnel, in which he said, in an interesting statement, that the integration of gay men and women in the military had been far less of an event than taking women to the front line of operations, which is interesting. And that's also been a successful policy, which is terrific.

MR. BELKIN: For those of you who are interested, The Palm Center has conducted, I believe, nine studies of gays and lesbians in foreign militaries, the most recent of which was by my colleague, Dr. Nathanial Frank, a 151-page global primer, 2010, of the status of gay and lesbian troops around the world, and we have summaries of all the research out in the lobby.

This has been a very illuminating discussion. We have distinguished guests from all over the world. Thank you so much for flying to Washington for this conversation.

We're going to break now for 15 minutes and we'll be back for our panel on scholarly studies and lessons learned at 11:00. Thank you. (Applause)

(Recess)