

Excerpt –Senate Minutes March 4, 2010

IV. Other Reports

A. Reserve Officers Training Corp (ROTC)

Chair Goldsmith welcomed William Perry, Michael and Barbara Berberian Professor, Senior Fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute, Emeritus, and former Secretary of Defense, and David Kennedy, Donald J. McLachlan Professor of History, Emeritus. As they came forward she introduced the subject,

“This report is meant to start a discussion on how Stanford can best contribute to educating students who choose to prepare for a leadership career in the military, including potential relations with ROTC. One possibility is for Stanford to reestablish an ROTC program on the Stanford campus, but there are many other possibilities as well.”

For background, a statement from Professors Perry and Kennedy, entitled “Notes on ROTC,” was sent to Senators via e-mail the previous day.

“At the end of the discussion, I will present a motion that comes moved and seconded from the Steering Committee to appoint an ad hoc committee to explore this issue and report back to the Senate the next academic year”.

There were many guests in attendance to hear this report.

Professor Kennedy spoke first.

“My own engagement with this issue began from a research concern with the implications, especially for political accountability, of having the kind of all-volunteer, relatively small and relatively inexpensive armed force that we now have, and concerns about the broader, less quantifiable issue about the implications of civil-military relationships and the increasing separation of the military from the civil sphere. Being an historian, these concerns drove me to the Stanford archives to do research on the history of how ROTC disappeared from Stanford 40 years ago.

“A set of what you might call academic concerns arose in the 1960s about the professorial status of ROTC instructors, the departmental status of the military science departments, and the awarding of up to 27 units of academic credit for ROTC courses taken at Stanford taught by military officers who had professorial rank. Another concern that loomed large as the discussion progressed in the 1960s had to do with the punitive clauses in individual student contracts, in which a student who departed the ROTC program before the term of education or service was up was subject to immediate conscription. That concern became quite determinative of the outcome. The Vietnam War is at its height.

“The Faculty Senate, which was brand-new in 1968 and met for the first time in September of that year, instructed the president to negotiate with the Army, which took the lead for [the other services]. In 1969, President Kenneth Pitzer reported that the Army had acceded to most but not all of the university’s terms. It was willing to see the military science departments disappear and the professorial status for its instructors disappear. It was willing to do away with blanket credit for ROTC courses. But it reserved the right to petition for academic credit on an individual basis, the committee of undergraduate studies. And it stood by the punitive clause on the grounds that that clause required legislative relief from the Congress.

“The Faculty Senate accepted that proposal in January of 1970, and then reversed itself, May 7th, 1970, the week of the U.S. invasion of Cambodia. [Finally] it reversed its vote entirely and stated, ‘We want ROTC off the campus by the end of the next academic year’ (by August of 1970).

“We think it’s time to revisit the question of ROTC’s relationship to Stanford. The premise that underlies our bringing this question to the Senate is the assumption that the ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell Policy’, which has been a serious impediment to reopening this discussion at all, will probably go away within the next year or two, and the field will be open to have a reasonable discussion. The academic dimensions of this subject were negotiable 40 years ago. There’s no reason to think that they won’t be negotiable again. The punitive clauses are moot in the era of the all-volunteer service.

“It’s our perception, I think shared by others, that our current practice and policy of compelling the one dozen ROTC students at Stanford to go to either Berkeley, Santa Clara or San Jose, depending on their service branch, for their ROTC training, imposes an unreasonable burden on them that we ought to think about doing away with by bringing that instruction back to this campus in some form.

“There are other reasons behind our bringing this thing forward at this time. Some go back to my concern with the implications for political accountability of this very small, very efficient, very inexpensive force that we have. I think we are in danger of seriously compromising a 200-year-old tradition in this society of the citizen soldier, of interdigitating the military services and civil society in ways that ensure that the military arm does not become too separate either culturally or behaviorally from the civil society in our political system.

“... We have quantifiable measures of the emergence of what might be called a military caste. I’ll give you one anecdotal example: In 2008, there were 307 general officers in the United States Army with the rank of brigadier general and above. Those 307 general officers in 2008 had 180 of their children in the service. The officers that I’ve talked with refer to this somewhat jokingly, somewhat not, as ‘the family business.’

“I put a research assistant on the task to identify a comparable civil institution and seeing what [percent of the offspring were in the military. I chose the United States Congress that has 535 elected members. Of those 535 elected officials, there were ten children in military service.

“On the face of it, it suggests a very dangerous development in our society, where the military is increasingly separate from the civil society that is-- theoretically, at least--its political master.

“...The next concern [may be] rather trivial, but it's not immaterial. A bigger presence of ROTC will have implications for Stanford's financial aid budget, because over half of ROTC students receive scholarship funding from the Department of Defense.”

Professor Kennedy's final concern stemmed from Stanford's claim that its mission is to train leaders for next generation. “Our present policy makes it close to impossible for Stanford to contribute in any material way to training leaders for a very important institution in our society and one that's not going to go away--the armed forces. For my own part, I can't see why that is a good idea.”

Professor Perry took over.

“I'd like to start by associating myself with the points that David has made, particularly the very important point of the danger of a military caste developing in the country. I'm going to add to that some personal comments based on my own experiences.

“At the end of World War II, I enlisted in the Army, and after a stint in the engineering school, I was sent to be in the Army of Occupation in Japan. When I returned home, I entered Stanford and joined the Army ROTC program. What was then a small stipend from ROTC was certainly a welcome supplement to my GI Bill. But the main reason I joined the ROTC was that in the event our country faced another crisis, I wanted to be in a position to be in a leadership role in my service. That reason was important enough to me that had Stanford not had ROTC, I would not have come to Stanford.

“Now, fast forward to 1994. I was Secretary of Defense and I was in a position, a unique position almost, to assess the capability of the U.S. military. I found it to be incredibly capable. And I attributed that capability to their outstanding program in training, leadership, and education.

“A good many of our officers got their education at our military academies, but most of them got their education at ROTC. Just to give you one snapshot, in 1994, the Secretary of Defense, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, the Chairman

of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Chief of Staff of the Army were all ROTC graduates. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was Colin Powell, ROTC graduate. A year later, he was succeeded by General John Shalikashvili, another ROTC graduate. Chief of Staff of the Army, Gordon Sullivan, was another ROTC graduate.

“I found all of these men to be not only well educated and highly capable, but also, and most importantly, they had an appropriately balanced view of the role between civilian and military and fully accepted the American tradition and the American laws of political control of the military. We did not have an elite warrior caste, nor should we have.

“Fast forward again to this decade. I’m back at Stanford as a professor. In one of my classes, there were twin sisters that stood out because they were both very bright and very dedicated. It turns out that one of them was the squadron commander of the Air Force ROTC unit and the other was the assistant squadron commander. Each of them every day had to make the commute to San Jose in order to take their ROTC classes, and [participate in] other events there.

“I traveled to San Jose to participate in some of their events, including their commissioning. At the commissioning ceremony, I met their parents. They came from a humble background but they were exceedingly proud of what their daughters had done and they were very grateful to ROTC for making it possible for them to do that. It was absolutely clear that neither of these girls could have come to Stanford without their ROTC scholarships.

“These sisters were some of the best Stanford students I had met. I felt that the loss to them and the loss to other Stanford students of their not being able to participate in campus activities was really a shame.

“I’ll give you one other incident of my personal experiences, tangentially related. Shortly after 9/11, my grandson, Nick, came to me and said, ‘Granddad, our country’s under attack, and I’m going to help defend it...I’m going to graduate from high school in a few months and I’m going to join the Marines.’ His parents could not talk him out of this.

“About a year after he joined the Marines and after one tour in Iraq, he came home on leave. I invited him to sit in on one of my classes. He was in uniform. He was a little reluctant. He had heard that Stanford students were antimilitary.

“I said, ‘Come on. It’ll be okay’.”

“So he came to the class. Before I started the class, I introduced Nick, and told them who he was. There was an instant standing ovation from the 100 students in that class, which I think was heartwarming to him and heartwarming to me as well.

“William Treseder, son of another Stanford alumni, joined the Marines about the same time that Nick did for about the same reason. Both served four years in the Marines, three tours in Iraq. Both are now back home. Nick is a student at San Jose, where he’s getting straight As. William Treseder is at Stanford, in my class, and is an outstanding student and an organizer of people -- he organized early programs for all the veterans here at Stanford.

“These two young men made me proud. I think that they represent the best American tradition of citizen soldiers.

“These experiences inspired me to believe that ROTC should be back on this campus. I discussed it with President Hennessy a few years ago. We both decided because of the ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell Policy’, it was inappropriate to re-raise the question. A few months ago, President Obama announced he was going to work to eliminate that policy [and allow] gays to serve in the military. I don’t doubt he’s going to have problems making this happen, but he seems determined, and I’m determined to help him if I can. I think there’s a good chance that he will succeed. On that basis, David and I decided it was worth coming to the Senate and asking that this question be reconsidered.

“In sum, I believe that returning ROTC to this campus would clearly be the best thing for the ROTC students. Beyond that, I think it would be best for all other students on campus to have these ROTC students participating in campus activities. Finally, I believe it’s clearly best for our democracy to have among its military officers citizens who have a liberal education at the best universities in the country, including Stanford.”

[Applause]

Chair Goldsmith thanked Professors Kennedy and Perry and, before opening the floor for questions commented, “As I said, this is the beginning of a discussion. We’re not here to vote on a motion about ROTC. We’re here to start a discussion and decide if the Senate would like to appoint a committee to look into this issue more deeply.”

Professor Anat Admati wanted to clarify the comment that ROTC would make Stanford affordable for some students in light of Stanford’s needs-blind admission.

President Hennessy responded, “Until the recent changes [in student financial aid], we would have expected some families to take loans as part [of the cost of paying for attending Stanford]. I think for some families, that becomes prohibitive. They just don’t want to go in that direction--particularly new immigrant families who don’t want to be burdened with the loans. As Professor Kennedy pointed out, we are at a time when our financial resources,

particularly financial aid, is stretched thin. To the extent that some of our students would be supported by other sources, that would allow us to reduce the size of the deficit we have [because of] financial aid.”

Professor Stephen Krasner, commented, “I just want to say one thing about the ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell Policy’... We’re confronted with a situation, which, even if it’s not abolished, is wrong -- wrong in principle and wrong for the military, on the one hand. On the other hand, there is a conflicting set of principles, including freedom of choice for our students and the principles David and Bill have articulated. I think those need to be weighed. So if we go forward with this, I would urge the committee to not make it hostage to what happens to ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’.”

Professor Persis Drell had two comments: “One is the emphasis on the benefit of Stanford education to leaders in one of the country’s most important institutions. “I’d like to speak from the perspective of big science. We find in the execution of our billion dollar projects a class of individuals who come from outstanding universities with military training who have chosen not to pursue a career in the military, but to come back into civilian life with a suite of tools that is incredibly useful. It’s a combination of intellectual leadership and leadership training that is very valuable. To have Stanford contributing to that suite of talents, I think, is a very good thing.

“The second comment I’d like to make is a much more general one. For the foreseeable future, the United States will need a military, and we want them to be as educated and as enlightened as possible. What better place than Stanford?”

Professor Admati, noted, “I come from a country, Israel, where the Army is the people’s Army, and everybody [has been in the service]. That does make it special. I do feel that it’s separate here, because I know nobody who serves, really.”

Chair Goldsmith called for a vote on a motion that came moved and seconded by the Steering Committee:

The Senate hereby moves to form an ad-hoc committee to investigate Stanford’s role in preparing students for leadership in the military, including potential relations with ROTC. The committee should explore the logistical, financial, and pedagogical implications of any such relationship for Stanford and its wider mission, and report back to the Senate detailing a range of options the University might pursue, and the consequences they can be expected to have.

The motion passed on a divided voice vote with one nay and two abstentions.

Guests for ROTC

3/4/10 Senate

Staff

JOHN M. VITACCA, Lt Col, USAF

National Defense Fellow

Center for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford University

Gabriela Aoun

Research Assistant for Phillip Taubman

Center for International Security and Cooperation

Scott Calvert

Director of Finance and Administration

Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education

Amanda Crowell Itliong

Student Development and Leadership Programs Director

Haas Center for Public Service - Stanford University

oversees the new "Military Service as Public Service" project for Stanford

Lyn Wyman, Editorial Associate

Haas Center for Public Service

Tiffany Ferguson and Celeste Fowles, Registrar's office (provided DMK info)

Students

Kent Keirse, Law Student Reserve officer

Joe McConnell, GSB student, Reserve officer

Co-teach 1st and 2nd year "Military Science" course

Jimmy Ruck

Junior and also in Army ROTC. Professor Gordon Chang, a current teacher.

Kyle Huwa, Undergrad, reporter for Stanford Review

Thomas Shultz, Undergrad, interested in ROTC

Danny Crichton (ROTC & Fed policy)

Doing Honors thesis on science policy at Stanford in the 1960s, and thought it might be interesting to hear some of the current issues that the university faces in that realm today.

Faculty

David Kennedy, History, emeritus

William Perry, Engineering, emeritus (former Sec'y of Defense)

John Taylor, economics