

Arms and the University

Military Presence and the Civic Education of Non-military Students

Alienation between the U.S. military and society has grown in recent decades. Such alienation is unhealthy, as it threatens both sufficient civilian control of the military and the long-standing ideal of the “citizen-soldier.” Nowhere is this issue more predominant than at many major universities, which began turning their backs on the military during the chaotic years of the Vietnam War. *Arms and the University* probes various dimensions of this alienation, as well as recent efforts to restore a closer relationship between the military and the university. Through theoretical and empirical analysis, Donald Alexander Downs and Ilia Murtazashvili show how a military presence on campus in the form of the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) (including a case study of ROTC’s return to Columbia and Harvard universities), military history, and national security studies can enhance the civic and liberal education of non-military students, and in the process help to bridge the civil-military gap.

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To Jen, Leo, Zoe, Susan, Jacqueline, and Alexander; and to the student cadets and veterans who have striven so ably and honorably to foster the citizen-soldier ideal and to bridge the gap between the military, the university, and society

[Lincoln] expressed the new idea in the Gettysburg Address... He addressed Tocqueville's worry about the longevity of liberal democratic governments. . . . But the Civil War raised the question of whether such a government could survive, "testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and dedicated can endure" . . .

But what gave force to this argument was the occasion and setting of his speech. He delivered his remarks at a battlefield cemetery, dedicating the site. His speech was about death. . . . He said nothing to suggest that death was good. . . . He did not think, as Qutb did, that martyrs go on living in some respect, and that death is a garden of delights. He did not find brotherhood in death – did not see his highest aspirations realized in a field of the dead, as the totalitarians of the twentieth century have done, and are still doing. . . .

But neither did he avert his eyes from death. He spoke about death as "the last full measure of devotion," which Union soldiers had given. . . . Death was not their goal; but death was the measure of their commitment. "From these honored dead we take increased devotion," he said. He was explaining that a liberal society must be, when challenged, a warlike society; or it will not endure.

Paul Berman¹

¹ Paul Berman, *Terror and Liberalism* (Norton, 2003), pp. 169–70.

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We begin with those who represent America's future and who were the guiding light in the movement that led to Columbia University's reopening of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) door in April 2011: the students who led the ROTC movement over the course of the last decade and who granted us interviews and gave us important information. The success of the Columbia ROTC movement was due, first and foremost, to these impressive students. Those who gave us the most assistance among this group include Yoni Appelbaum, Austin Bird, Eric Chen, Elizabeth Feldmeier, Learned Foote, John McClelland, Joe Naughton, Jose Robledo, Tao Tan, Robert Wray, and Riaz Zaidi. It was a true pleasure interacting with these exceptional young men and women, who instill needed confidence in our struggling nation's future prospects.

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