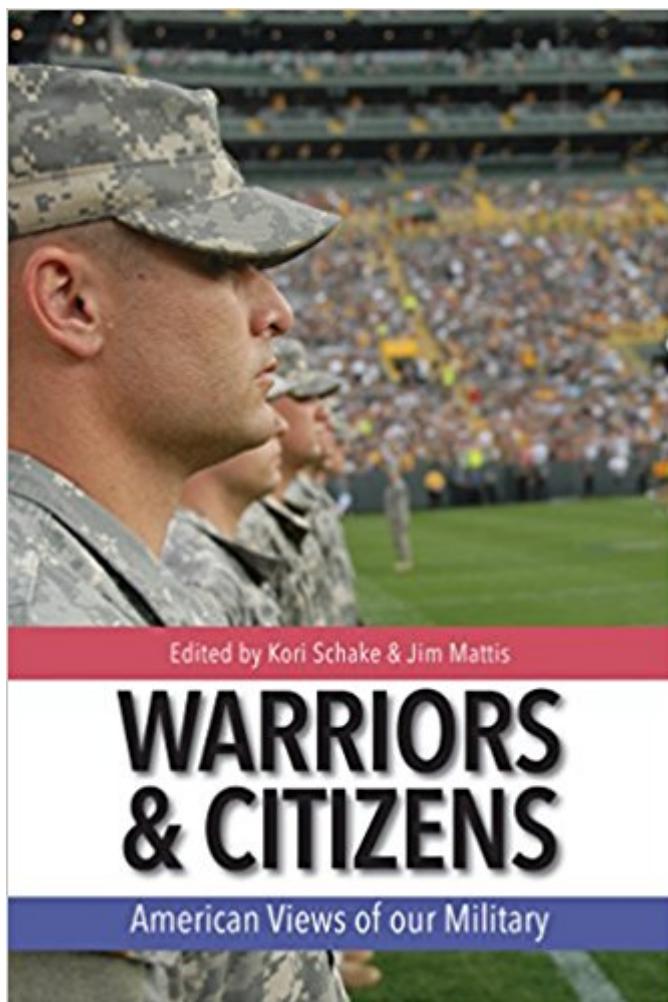


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# Warriors And Citizens: American Views Of Our Military



## **Synopsis**

A diverse group of contributors offer different perspectives on whether or not the different experiences of our military and the broader society amounts to a "gap" and if the American public is losing connection to its military. They analyze extensive polling information to identify those gaps between civilian and military attitudes on issues central to the military profession and the professionalism of our military, determine which if any of these gaps are problematic for sustaining the traditionally strong bonds between the American military and its broader public, analyze whether any problematic gaps are amenable to remediation by policy means, and assess potential solutions.

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## **Customer Reviews**

Full disclosure: I recruited for the AVF for five years, I ran a preparation course for AVF military academy aspirants for five years and was a contract counselor for AVF members and their families at two major bases for five years. On my desk I have a plaque given to me by my sons upon the

occasion of my return from six years in Vietnam: "For those who have fought for it, freedom has a taste the protected will never know." If you are looking for J. N. Mattis aphorisms, truisms or witticisms, this book is not for you. If you want a look at the operation of his "little grey cells" this will give you an insight into the thoughts of the contributors he edits regarding whom he says: "We chose the people we learn from." What we have here is a Situation Report (SitRep) on the status of the greatest social experiment of our lifetime called "The All Volunteer Force." I say greatest social experiment because what is at stake is the survival of our nation as we know it. Can this nation or any nation survive a continuum of internal and external threats protected by a mercenary armed force without a formal declaration of war? This tome gives a snap shot of one aspect as to the answer by addressing the question as to the current health of the relationship between the military and the civilian sectors of society. What seems to be missing is an evaluation of the impact of the political decision to selectively call up segments and individuals from the Reserve and National Guard communities to serve on active duty in the war zones. There are those who claim that one of the great failures of the Vietnam War was the decision to not activate the reserves and saddle the military with "Project 100,000" in an attempt to have a guns and butter society. This fainthearted approach satisfied no one. Forty years later we witnessed our neighbors silently disappearing for months and years at a time slipping off to war and then struggling to integrate back into the community and job with great difficulty. Qui bono? Additionally, we had myriads of service members serving joint duty in war zones with members trained in a manner totally different from them. In 2010 a senior combat officer remarked to me that the USMC could not function in the war zone without direct support of American sailors. He said: "You have more sailors ashore in the middle east in direct support of the USMC than you have on board commissioned ships!" [At that time we had about 300 ships of all kinds in commission.] What do those types of assignments do to unit cohesiveness, service identity and retention? The voices in this book are those that Shake and Mattis listen to which makes those voices worth our time to also listen and understand. After all you really get to know a person when you know what it is they are reading and to whom they are listening in addition to understanding what they are thinking. Good read. Better to think about. I close with a Mattis thought lest you be too disappointed: "You cannot allow any of your people to avoid the brutal facts. If they start living in a dream world, it's going to be bad."

Indepth. For a casual reader like me it will take several readings, actually study to get the full benefit of this book. A most important subject which is becoming more so with the change in our

administration. As a retired service member the perceptions of the citizens I served was always of interest. This book goes way into the weeds to get answers and perhaps will assist future leaders and others in maintaining the balance of understanding which is so critical to our nations defense posture.

Warriors and Citizens is a fascinating edited volume of American views of our military. Guided by a few themes that bind the separate contributions, this book breaks new ground in civil-military relations and raises questions that may plague the interagency decisionmaking process in the Trump administration. It is edited by Jim Mattis, now Secretary of Defense, and Dr. Kori Schake, who served at the White House, Department of Defense, and State Department. In 2017, Schake is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution. One of the themes in their introduction is a narrative for the individual chapters, “Choosing war is the business of elected politicians in America; fighting war is the business of our military.” But not so fast. One of the contributors suggests there must be interplay between the civilian and military, so the two can enhance the national interest. And within the executive branch, there needs to be recognition that civilian control of the military requires each side to know the other’s perspective. This situation is like a civil-military version of the chicken-and-egg problem. At issue is what comes first. Civilians in the executive branch want to give the president a sense of options; without knowledge of constraints and standard operating procedures of the military, however, the process can spiral into uncharted waters. With little comprehension of the complexities of military planning and operations, senior civilian leaders may overestimate military capabilities, such as establishing a safe zone to protect Syrians and other unfolding situations. Per a contributor, “Without political and strategic direction from the White House (How much money are we willing to spend? How many troops are we willing to move? What trade-offs are we willing to make in terms of other ongoing operations? What constitutes success?), military personnel could not properly advise their civilian counterparts.” The “what comes first issue” remained unresolved in the book. Let’s hope this issue is resolved for the first crisis bubbling up—“establishing a safe zone in Syria. An inexperienced White House team of President Trump faces a seasoned military under its Secretary of Defense Gen. Jim Mattis and Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Joseph Dunford. Responding to the idea of establishing safe zones in Syria, Chairman Dunford testified before Congress in September 2016 that, “For us to control all of the airspace in Syria, it would require us to go to war against Syria and Russia, [and] that’s a pretty fundamental decision that certainly I’m not going to make.” In late January 2017, President Trump

decided to establish safe zones in Syria to the consternation of military planners. Joint American-Russian airstrikes conducted in late January, however, could mitigate the risks, so long as the ceasefire holds. The bottom line? The Mattis-Schake volume is a riveting window into an uncertain future in civil-military relations that continues to unfold as breaking news each day. Hold on to your hats: There are bound to be more potential crises like the one in the making about safe zones in Syria!

Exceptional insight into the 'so-called" Military/Civilian gap. Every American should read this.

Great book, well written, honestly written.

Great book with some great essays and insights into the civilian and military differences of opinion.

Great book.

A read for everyone to read.

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