from Phyllis Schlafly
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WOMEN IN COMBAT COMMISSION REPORT

Congresswoman Patricia Schroeder and the militant feminists pitched Congress a curve ball when they demanded repeal of the laws that forbid the assignment of servicewomen to military combat.

Congress bunted to a Presidential Commission and, after eight months of investigation, the Commission has just come up with its report. Its more than 300 pages deserve to be read and studied by the public.

The feminists are not happy with the report. The Commission voted to maintain the exemption of women from assignment to combat in ground troops, combat aviation, amphibious ships and submarines.

Desert Storm Commander Norman Schwarzkopf probably spoke for most Americans, including most of the military and the majority of the Commission, when he declared, “Decisions on what roles women should play in war must be based on military standards, not women's rights.” The feminists had tried to establish the notion of women in military combat as a “civil rights” issue, comparable to the racial integration of the Armed Forces in 1948.

But it's not the same issue. The problems posed by assigning women to combat units are very different, and far more formidable, than the problems that were successfully solved on the issue of racial integration. Assigning women to military

combat doesn't just go against "prejudices" and "stereotypes"; it goes against human nature, our culture, and. centuries of experience.

The feminists look upon the military as an opportunity for upward career mobility, but the military must be governed by a very different set of rules and regulations because its principal purpose is to fight and win wars. Military readiness requires the subordination of the desires and interests of the individual to the needs of the service, and discipline is essential at a level that would be intolerable in the civilian workforce.

The most interesting part of the report is the section entitled "Alternative Views" written by five Commissioners who, while voting with the majority on most issues, discussed a wide range of military issues including the inconsistent and obviously politically motivated recommendation that women be assigned. to some combatant ships (which passed by a one-vote margin).

The Alternative Views also defined the essence of a cultural issue of profound significance for the civilian military – "whether we as a society should continue to respect, protect, and defend women." The five Commissioners said that "the successful integration of women into combat units could only occur if we as a society undergo a cultural change discouraging men to if we as a society undergo a cultural protecting women."

"Good men respect and defend women," the five Commissioners said. "Women should not be required, as the price of equality, this fundamental principle that governs a civilized order."

The feminists who have been agitating to assign women to military combat are completely inconsistent on the question of violence by men against women. There's hardly a day when we don’t hear some news about women complaining about “sexual harassment.” As they use that term, it does not refer to crimes but to the way men talk to and treat women in the workplace where there are usually many other people within a 20-foot radius.

Yet, assigning women to military combat would mean combat training where women are taught not only to tolerate but to encourage violence from American men, and taught to accept violence from enemy men as an occupational risk. Assigning women to military combat would mean training men, individually and as units in the armed services, to accept violence against women as no different from violence against men. Those men who harbor stereotypes that “good men should protect women” would have to be desensitized to accept violence against women.

If there is one thing this poor world has lots of experience about, it is fighting wars. The fascination of this sport persists through generation to generation, across lines of geography, race, and religion; Yet no society has, with any success, intentionally sent its young women out to fight enemy men, and those nations which, in desperation, tried it briefly, soon abandoned it as a bad idea.

In America, there is no manpower shortage that would demand such a radical change in American law, policy, custom, and culture. Assigning women to combat would overturn two centuries of settled law and military policy based on deeply held and commonly shared cultural assumptions defining how men should treat women.

Since President Bush is required by law to respond to this report with recommendations to Congress by December 15, he should take a clear and consistent stand against women in combat based on the needs of the military, not on political expediency. If the feminists in the Clinton Administration persuade the new President to reverse this, then let him take the blame for a policy that violence against women is okay.