



CHAPTER VI

*Societal Effects on Cohesion in the North
Vietnamese, US, Soviet, and Israeli
Armies*

Potential for Nationalism in Vietnam

POPULATION: With a population approaching 50 million, the Vietnamese are certainly numerous enough to form and maintain a nation.

Territory: With approximately 127,000 square miles, Vietnam has sufficient territory. Geographical diversity, however, could be a source of vulnerability. Vietnam is 1,400 miles long, 39 miles wide (at the 17th parallel), with two distinct climates and highlands and lowlands. Vietnamese often describe the geography of their nation as a chain dependent upon the narrow links nestled between the mountains and sea that connect the population centers of the north and south.

A Common and Unique History: Dating from 208 B.C., Vietnam has had a history of constant struggle against foreign domination (Chinese and French), internal rebellion, and expansive wars to the south into the lands of the Champa and Khmer.¹ Whether fighting an outside threat or expanding into the territory of others, the Vietnamese have looked to their history as a source of guidance and national unity.

A Common and Unique Culture: The Vietnamese people have a strong sense of cultural heritage. The telling and retelling of tales by poets, grandparents, and parents perpetuates Vietnamese culture. Such oral history passed from generation to generation not only perpetuates but strengthens the sense of a common heritage and values that positively affect cohesion. Vietnamese literature and history reaches even the lowest peasant by word of mouth. Ellen Hammer describes how minstrels carry in song the past of the nation, the value of independence, and the exploits of its favorite heroes.²

A Common and Unique Language: In the nineteenth century, a new and even more distinctly Vietnamese writing system (*quoc ng̃y*), which relied upon a romanized translation of spoken Vietnamese, was adopted throughout the country. It was in the Vietnamese spirit of *doc lap*, or independence (from China), that the new language was introduced into Vietnam by Vietnamese intellectuals and helped to distinguish the Vietnamese from all surrounding peoples.³

A Common and Unique Religion: Vietnamese religious culture is diverse. Among the most significant are the four great philosophies and religions imported from abroad—Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Christianity. While the values imported by these religions are generally compatible with Vietnamese nationalism, they have also been the source of significant interreligious conflict and conflict with communist ideology. Consequently, religion has not strongly enhanced the potential of nationalism in Vietnam.⁴

A Common and Unique Race: The Vietnamese have a strong sense of belonging to a unique race. They trace their origins to 500 B.C., when several clans living in the Yangtze River region of China decided to migrate south to the Red River delta and farther after coming under strong pressure from the Chinese to assimilate.⁵ Approximately 15 percent of the present population is not considered to be Vietnamese. They include highland aborigines, overseas Chinese, Chams, and Khmers who occasionally came into conflict with the dominant Vietnamese.⁶

Primary Loyalty of the Elite for the Nation: Within the North Vietnamese leadership, the question of whether the nation

or the party came first did not weaken nationalism among NVA soldiers. Although evidence has been cited that supports both views, it appears that Vietnamese soldiers saw their immediate leaders as nationalists rather than as communists. The typical North Vietnamese soldier was not aware of any other midrange or top communist party leader other than Ho Chi Minh. In addition, squad, platoon, and company leaders usually explained the necessity of fighting the South Vietnamese and the Americans in terms of Vietnamese nationalism.⁷

Vietnamese People's Perception of Vietnam as a Unique and Viable Nation: Vietnamese of all generations are aware of the Vietnamese nation and its uniqueness. Possibly the most popular legend in Vietnam, for example, concerns Le Loi, a national hero who led the Vietnamese to freedom from the Chinese. Part of the legend, quoted below, was made popular by the Vietnamese poet Nguyen Trai and is learned by most Vietnamese children:

Our people long ago established Vietnam as an independent nation with its own civilization. We have our own culture. We have our own mountains and our own rivers, our own customs and traditions, and these are different from those of the foreign country to the North [China].⁸

Potential for Nationalism in the United States

Population and Territory: As one of the largest countries in the world, having a population of well over 200 million, the United States is well suited for nationalism.

A Common and Unique History: US history is a strong source of common values for the American people. The strong socialization process experienced by most Americans at schools, at home, and with associates fosters consensus about unique American values and their sources such as the Revolutionary War, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the lessons of the Civil War. More modern US history has also reinforced these values. American participation in World Wars I and II appears to represent a high point of confidence held by the people in the American Way. The wars in Korea and Vietnam, however, with their accompanying foreign policies, have created considerable doubt among the citizenry and government about the reasons and

methods of dealing with foreign nations. Such questioning significantly detracts from American potential for nationalism.

A Common and Unique Culture: Although American culture is pluralistic—primarily a blend of Judeo-Christian English and European cultures—most citizens feel and support values that can be described as uniquely American. High among these values is the sense of worth in being an American and a basic loyalty towards and respect for American institutions, among which are the armed forces and their missions.

A Common and Unique Language: Because English is so widely spoken and understood throughout the United States, ease of communication is facilitated among American soldiers and significantly promotes cohesion. Two recent, societal trends, however, appear to work against ease of communications within the small unit and, to some degree, hinder cohesion. First, significantly lower reading and comprehension skills have forced the Army to rewrite many manuals and other directives to grade-school levels of comprehension. Secondly, some minority soldiers do not possess sufficient English skills to allow them to become fully integrated into primary groups—a problem that hinders cohesion, especially if there is also reluctance to learn and use English.

A Common and Unique Religion: The broad umbrella of Christianity that covers most religions in the United States offers some basis for common religious values, which in turn promote the basic values necessary for cohesion. Diversity in values among Christian beliefs in America and also among other religions and their respective leaders can be significant sources of conflicting values capable of hindering a consensus about national values and related military and foreign policies.

A Common Race: Within the US Army, racial conflict between whites and blacks is currently not significant. Ease of communication and general agreement about basic values appear to provide a working consensus among black and white soldiers that supports national values and promotes cohesion. In some units where the percentage of black soldiers is significantly disproportionate, however, reservations are heard on two counts. First, these units are usually combat units; hence, black casualties would

be disproportionately higher in the event of war. In addition, the reliability of these units in the event they were assigned a civil-disturbance mission in a black ghetto raises doubts. Neither situation would promote the basic consensus on values necessary in a small unit in a crisis situation. Second, some evidence suggests that when the proportion of blacks in an organization rises above 10 to 15 percent, racial friction increases significantly.⁹ All this suggests that although racial conflict in the US Army is manageable, the possibility of significant conflict is not remote. Resocialization efforts emphasizing national and Army values for all soldiers, black and white, offer the most promise in achieving the basic value consensus necessary for building cohesive units.

Another ethnic situation that might become more significant for the US Army is the growing Hispanic population in the United States and its distinctly pro-community, nonmilitary tradition and Spanish-speaking values. Again, intense resocialization and policies that maintain Army and national values after initial training offer the best methods of achieving values that promote unity and cohesion.

Primary Loyalty of the American Elite for the Nation: The great majority of the American elite would generally state that the United States is a primary loyalty. When this loyalty is translated into specific areas, however, support for a military tradition is at best fragmented, a fragmentation that represents lack of a unifying military ethos within American society.¹⁰ Because American armed forces have not played a central role similar to the armed forces of principal European nations, the American elite does not generally recognize responsibilities for military service and leadership. The numbers of the American elite (such as members of Congress and graduates of top universities) who have no record of military service to the nation and who recognize no responsibility for any are large and growing. This situation is in distinct contrast to major countries in Europe where, perhaps because of traumatic histories, armies played central roles in national salvation and destiny, and national elites recognize a distinct obligation to serve.

The nature of America's fractured consensus about what constitutes a proper civic consciousness is seen in the following

composite view, drawn from several widely respected observers and commentators:

A breakdown in the cultural legitimacy of the American system has been an object of scholarly analysis and commentary. That a significant section of the American intellectual and media establishment oppose the basic outlines of American foreign policy is a fact of immense importance. It is not that they disagree on technical details, but that they believe the United States is on the wrong side of history . . . political leaders, corporation executives, law enforcement agencies, ranking military officers—have displayed an increasingly cynical if not outright negative tone. An insightful content analysis of American history textbooks in high schools shows an important break in tradition, where formerly a coherent picture of American history was presented in terms of a unified nation. . . . The social portrait since the 1960s has been one that is fragmented and lacking a core theme. Research findings on elite attitudes also present a picture of a divided and somewhat confused, national leadership. If in fact the national elite has no unified consensus about civic consciousness, it may be asking too much to expect it of our soldiers.¹¹

American Perception of the United States as a Unique and Viable Nation: The great majority of Americans have a strong and common cultural heritage within which the concept of an American nation is strong and widespread. Unifying myths and values are plentiful and widely accepted. Exceptions to this generalization exist, however, among some minorities. If they are not successfully socialized and integrated with the mainstream of American values, which give a high priority to the concept of the American nation, the potential for nationalism will be lessened, and greater difficulty will be experienced in building cohesive military units.

Potential for Nationalism in the Soviet Union

Population and Territory: As the largest country with a population of approximately 270 million, the Soviet Union possesses sufficient territory and people to serve as the necessary foundations for nationalism.

A Common and Unique History: Because a common history is the source of many unifying values, the impact of the various

histories of the peoples currently comprising the Soviet Union makes for mixed influences upon the potential for nationalism within the Soviet Union today. In 1917 when the Soviet Union came into existence, it assumed responsibility for what in effect was a Tsarist colonial empire consisting of many peoples with unique histories. Forces toward disintegration were significant. It was not until World War II, called "The Great Patriotic War" by the Soviets, that a real basis for a unifying and common history became apparent for the majority of Soviet citizens. Hedrick Smith makes the point:

What makes World War II so valuable . . . is that it lends itself to blurring the distinction between the devotion of ethnic Russians to Mother Russia and the attachment of minority nationalities to their own regions. It allows propagandists to meld these peoples together in common loyalty to the broader entity of the Soviet Union . . .¹²

The unifying values experienced in World War II are emphasized strongly and great efforts are made to pass them to future generations. Smith again:

From an early age the young get indoctrination in paying proper tribute to the sacrifices made during wartime. One scene indelibly imprinted in my memory is that of young children, boys and girls of 11 and 12, standing as honor guards at war memorials . . . four children in the red scarves, white shirts, blue pants and skirts of the Young Pioneers stood vigil, rigid as soldiers, posted at the four corners of the memorial. . . . Down a long pathway marched a new contingent, arms swinging widely. . . . The crunch of gravel stones underfoot marked the cadence of their steps as they went through the ceremony—silent, disciplined, intensely devoted to the sacred duty of standing guard for the Motherland.¹³

Similar experiences are common for children of all ages growing up in the Soviet Union. Such emphasis on their major trial as a nation—World War II—imparts strongly unifying values to Soviet citizens.

A Common and Unique Culture: Within the Soviet Union, the 1979 census determined there were 102 "Soviet nations and nationalities," or separate cultures. All are subject to the draft and military service. Beginning in 1967, the Soviets decided to emphasize "compulsory military service linked to the Russian

language as a means to create a cultural melting pot.” This is a significant and difficult task. Not only do the 102 separate nations represent different cultures, but in many cases they represent a past history of armed conflict against the majority Russians. In 1917, most non-Russians attempted to break away from the Bolsheviks, but the Russians maintained the old Tsarist empire by force. The Bolsheviks, however, were forced to organize a federal state system that recognized some differences among the “nations” that comprise the Soviet Union.¹⁴ Subsequent Soviet attempts to break down cultural barriers among the various “nations” and to promote the Russian language and culture as the desired model have, however, achieved some success. A dissident Ukrainian nationalist notes:

Millions of young Ukrainian men come home after several years service nationally disoriented and linguistically demoralized and become in their turn a force exerting an influence for Russification on other young people and on the population at large. Not to mention that a considerable number of them do not return to the Ukraine at all. It is not hard to imagine how tremendously damaging all this is for (Ukrainian) national development.¹⁵

The overall success of Soviet efforts to integrate non-Russian cultures is mixed. Greatest success appears to be with the smaller nationalities and partially with the Slavic groups. But the ethnic nationalism of the major Union Republics of the Soviet Union appears to be withstanding Soviet efforts.¹⁶

The potential for nationalism among the 14 million Russians and some closely related Slavic cultures appears to be great. Smith comments:

Russians are perhaps the world's most passionate patriots. Without question, a deep and tenacious love of country is the most unifying force in the Soviet Union, the most vital element in the amalgam of loyalties that cements Soviet society . . .¹⁷

Patriotism is also reflected strongly in Russian youth. Steeped in “warrior” culture throughout their school years, younger Russians reflect a strong love of country. The answer of one young Russian when asked why there is no resistance by the young to the draft and to other dictates of Soviet society appears

to be typical: "Just because we dig Jimi Hendrix [American rock singer] doesn't mean we are any less ready to fight for our country." ¹⁸

A Common and Unique Language: Within the Soviet Union, there are 66 separate languages. Many of these were unwittingly instituted by the Soviets themselves in an earlier attempt to separate Soviet ethnic groups from ethnically similar groups and movements beyond Soviet borders (such as the Pan-Turkish and Arab-Islamic movements). Soviet attempts to make Russian the primary language within the Soviet Union have shown some gains. Largely because of Army efforts, between 1959 and 1979 the number of non-Russians who use Russian as their primary language rose from 13 to 16.3 million and Russian as a second language rose by 46 percent. As a result, 82 percent of the Soviet population is reported to know Russian.¹⁹ Soviet potential for overall nationalism is significantly limited, however, because the great majority of the population still use their native tongue as their primary language. During the past 20 years the percentage who do not use their native tongue has dropped by only 1 percent, from 94 to 93 percent. In view of Soviet claims of the great numbers of non-Russians who are learning Russian, it has been stated that "the acquisition of Russian may make one bilingual but not necessarily bicultural." ²⁰

A Common Religion: Religion in the Soviet Union, despite official persecution and expropriation of church property, remains a significant influence on Soviet culture. Within Russia, the Orthodox church appears to be healthy. Baptisms are increasing and estimates are that approximately 30 to 50 million Russians are Orthodox Christians, significantly more than are Communist party members.²¹ Baptists and Mormons are also active. In Lithuania, the Catholic church remains strong. In Armenia, the Armenian church is a symbol of national identity. Within the small towns and villages of the Soviet Union, religious influences remain strong. Further east, the Moslem influence still supports separate identities among the Soviet peoples. Throughout the Soviet Union, religion cannot be considered a common and unique characteristic. Instead, it is a source of varied values that tend to support separate nationalities and therefore make more pronounced the cleavages among the various people within Soviet society.

Within a large group such as the Russians, however, a common religion can be a strong force in support of nationalism—as Stalin found when he tried various measures to rally the Russians against the invading Nazis. To this end, Stalin and the Orthodox Patriarch made joint radio appeals to patriotism during World War II.²²

A Common Race: In the Soviet Union, race follows the general pattern described above for culture and languages—that is, races are many, varied, and they are strong sources of differing values and of conflict, especially within those Soviet Army units that have been chosen to be “agents of national integration.” It appears that a major racial cleavage has evolved between Slavs and Asians within the Soviet Union and especially within the armed forces. The list of derogatory terms used in the Soviet Army to refer to members of other races is long; the words have extremely disparaging connotations. At the root of this racism are deeply-held Russian biases towards other races. Herbert Meyer documents the problem:

Russians have always been among the world’s most race-conscious peoples, with a strong distaste and even contempt for non-Slavs and especially for non-whites. . . . Russians complain bitterly about the yellowing of their country’s population.²³

Within the Soviet Army, there is widespread discrimination against the *churka* (literally “a wood chip,” a term that refers to Asians as stupid, slow, and generally worthless), and against the *chernozhopy* (literally “black asses,” a word used to refer to Armenians, Georgians, and Azerbaidzhani as well as Asians). Though many other terms are used to refer pejoratively to race, minority groups also have their favorite terms to describe the Russians.²⁴ Quoting a former Soviet soldier, Wimbush and Alexiev provide further illustration of the dimensions of racism in the Soviet Army:

From the beginning we, the white people, considered ourselves somewhat higher and with more privileges than the churkas . . . that is why when it is necessary to do some unpleasant work, say, clean a toilet, a Kazakh would be sent and the Russians would make him do it. . . . It was the same at all levels. At a table in the military dining room, Russians

always take first turn. Kazakhs and Uzbeks always the last. First we will eat, then they.²⁵

Another former Soviet soldier observed that “soldiers and NCOs would insult Uzbeks and Tadzheks right in their faces by calling them chernozhopy (black asses) and kosoglazgi (slant eyes).”²⁶

Among the various nationalities that comprise the Soviet Union, race can be an extremely strong force for nationalism within the various separate nations, especially among the Russians and other Slavs. But the great diversity of races within the Soviet Union today is a major obstacle for a pan-Soviet nationalism.

Primary Loyalty of the Elite for the Soviet Union: Major problems exist here also, since the patterns of perceived trust among Soviet leaders generally follows that of race, language, and culture. Russians are encouraged to migrate to the minority republics and assume positions of key leadership in the government and economy. Within the Army, the leadership is overwhelmingly Slavic. Ukrainians are strongly represented within the NCO corps, and the officer corps is 95 percent Slavic and 80 percent Russian. Non-Slavs are discouraged from pursuing leadership careers.²⁷ A further worry from the Russian view is the declining Slavic birth rate and the increasing non-Slavic birth rate that promises to make the Slavs a minority in the not-distant future. Overall, it appears that the Soviet elite is divided on critical issues that affect the potential for Soviet nationalism. Rochells and Patton accurately describe this leadership division as

a subtle but steady tug-of-war within the system between the dominant Russian leaders who are seeking an internationalized Soviet Union and the determined ethnic minority (leaders) who are striving for increased autonomy. It appears at this point that the forces of national self-assertiveness have more momentum than the forces of integration.²⁸

Soviet People's Perception of the Soviet Union as a Unique and Viable Nation: In a country where almost one-half the population does not use the official language as its primary language and where the strongest loyalties are reserved for particular ethnic cultures, the overall perception of the uniqueness and viability of

the Soviet Union must be considerably less than that desired by the Soviet leadership. There are clearly problems of divided loyalties that must be faced by Soviet leadership. Soviet leaders have not forgotten the large number of defections of minority nationalities to the Germans during World War II, but find the process of shifting primary loyalties of national minorities from their own cultures to the Soviet state exceedingly difficult.

Potential for Nationalism in Israel

Population: Because Israel has a population of only 3.87 million surrounded by a hostile Arab population of about 300 million many observers have expressed concern for Israel's survival as a nation.

Territory: Not including the disputed, occupied territories, Israel consists of only 7,993 square miles. Much of this territory is arid and therefore not useful for agricultural or other purposes. Also important is the fact that key military terrain (such as the Golan Heights or the West Bank) is not now included within Israel's claimed boundaries. Occupation of this key terrain by opposing military forces could be a significant threat to Israel. Additionally, the people and state of Israel probably could not survive without the continuation of significant military and economic support from the United States.

A Common and Unique History: One of the strongest traditions among the Jewish people is their common and unique history. One thousand years of national independence, followed by the 2,000-year Diaspora after the Jews were exiled from Babylon, produced a strong Jewish identity and a latent desire to return to their "promised land." "Next year in Jerusalem" became a rallying cry among Jews wherever they were found throughout the world. For thousands of years, the fragmented Jewish "nation" grouped around their spiritual leaders, the rabbis, and the *Talmud* to preserve their common beliefs. It was not until after the Dreyfus case in France, however, that the modern Zionist movement began and that Jews started returning to the "promised land" with a reawakened spirit of nationalism. When World War II, with its great disruption of peoples worldwide and Nazi persecution of the Jews, provided a major impetus for

Jewish immigration to Palestine, Jews from around the world acted out their centuries-old dream of returning to the "promised land." From wherever the new arrivals came, they already had in mind a belief in their common and unique history. It was a major factor in promoting a strong feeling of nationalism in the newly formed state of Israel.

A Common and Unique Culture: Today, approximately 50 percent of Israeli citizens are native-born, or sabras.²⁹ Because the remaining 50 percent have come from almost all the separate Jewish groups represented in the Diaspora, the effects on Israeli culture have been significant. Most of the newcomers were Sephardic Jews from the Middle East and North Africa, whose cultures varied from sophisticated and well-educated Egyptian Jews to cave-dwellers from the Atlas Mountains. The largest group not from northern Africa came from Iraq. Others arrived from Turkey, India, Syria, Lebanon, and other scattered locations. Their one common denominator was unfamiliarity with Western institutions, especially with concepts of democratic government.³⁰

The Ashkenazi, or western Jews, came mostly from Europe. The largest group emigrated from Poland, but sizeable numbers also arrived from Romania, the USSR, Germany, and Austria; lesser numbers migrated from most other European states.

Though the broad and general myths and beliefs about Judaism form a basis for consensus among all Israelis, the disparate cultural values of the immediate past heritage of the newcomers remain a significant source of conflict. Likewise, the effects on Israel's potential for nationalism are mixed. There is a strong consensus on a common but historical heritage that is worth defending, but the immediate problems of conducting the internal problems of state in a group with such diverse cultural backgrounds cause continuing but controlled conflict.

A Common and Unique Language: Language also has a mixed effect on Israel's potential for nationalism. Spoken by most Israelis, Hebrew is the most widely-used language in Israel. Arabic is also a national language, spoken by many Sephardic Jews. English is taught in the schools and widely understood. Yiddish is frequently used by many Ashkenazic Jews. Many other

languages, representing the many countries from which Israeli citizens migrated, are heard. While many different languages are spoken in Israel, communication among most Israelis is possible because of a common ability in Hebrew or another language. The fact that almost all males serve in the Defense Forces significantly promotes Hebrew as a common and unique language—a potent force for nationalism.

A Common and Unique Religion and Race: Judaism is the predominant faith, but there are also sizable Muslim and Christian communities with a smaller number of Druzes. The greatest religious conflict, however, appears to be within the predominant Jewish community between Orthodox and other, more secular Jews. The root of the problem appears to be conflict between the very strict religious laws that emerged during the Diaspora, which allowed the Jews to survive as a unique people, and the distinctly different secular requirements of running a nation-state. When the Army was first formed, many in the Orthodox community demanded that two armies exist, one that would observe the religious laws and another that took a more lax position.³¹ Compromise and the threat of Arab invasion have produced an army that has substantial religious law written into its regulations yet not to the degree that essential defense measures are ignored. Again it appears that the Army, through necessity, is an instrument of religious integration, making Judaism an even more powerful influence for Israeli nationalism.

Primary Loyalty of the Elite for the Nation: While the Israeli system of government is a parliamentary democracy with parties in opposition to the government in power, there is a broad and powerful consensus on the rules governing the uses and purposes of power.³² Foremost is the defense and survival of Israel. All internal cleavages one would expect to find in the extremely heterogeneous Israeli population and political parties are subordinated to this one objective. The overriding priority given by all members of the Israeli elite to the defense of Israel, no matter what their background or the constituency represented, is a major promoter of both Israeli nationalism and cohesion in the Israeli Defense Forces.

Israeli People's Awareness of Israel as a Unique and Viable Nation: The people of few other nations than Israel demonstrate

in their day-to-day actions the awareness of their nation and the dangers that it faces. Historically, the perception of an imminent and significant threat has usually caused heightened nationalism. Because of their long struggle and tragic history, the Jewish people are even more sensitive to outside threat. With the formation of the state of Israel, a concrete entity came into being that has served since as the object of overwhelming loyalty.

TABLE 8
Potential for Nationalism

<i>Element</i>	<i>North Vietnam</i>	<i>United States</i>	<i>Soviet Union</i>	<i>Israel</i>
A large enough population	++	++	++	+
Sufficient territory	++	++	++	+
A common and unique history	++	++	+	++
A common culture and language	++	+	--	+
A common religion	-	+	-	++
A common race	+	-	--	+
Nation is primary loyalty of elite	+	+	+	++
Degree of population aware of and loyal to nation	++	++	+	++

Legend: Strong ++
+
-
Weak --

Additional Characteristics that Support Cohesion in Vietnam

Other cultural characteristics than those already noted provided strong links between Vietnamese society and the North Vietnamese Army. While the effects of indoctrination (communism) and socialization (nationalism) are very difficult to measure, it is apparent from examining thousands of interviews of North

Vietnamese soldiers that, although both factors had some influence, Vietnamese nationalism was the more significant factor in the NVA soldier's motivation. North Vietnamese soldiers, whether POW or defector, usually displayed a belief that the system represented by North Vietnam was best. They believed that the people would benefit much more from a system imposed by the North Vietnamese. Almost always they felt a need to protect the system against imperialists, as an interview with an NVA private makes clear:

The Americans were like the French before. The French came here because, according to them, the Vietnamese people were stupid and needed their help. Actually they came here to rule over the Vietnamese people. Now the Americans aren't much different than the French.³³

Considerable evidence suggests that the rank-and-file Vietnamese soldier did not have strong political beliefs in spite of significant indoctrination designed to create good communist soldiers. Consider the following questions and answers from an NVA soldier:

Question: Did you have to learn about Marxism-Leninism when you joined the Party?

Answer: I did but very few [concepts] . . . I learned only the rules.

Question: What are the books you were required to read?

Answer: None, but they recommended that you read Marxist books. However, you are free to read or not. . . .

Question: What do you know about Marxism?

Answer: A little bit. Marx taught that he will bring peace and prosperity, a peaceful and equalitarian world. Everyone equal. To each according to his needs from each according to his abilities.

Question: What are the ways to get to that brave new world? Did they teach you that?

Answer: They taught me to believe in Marxism-Leninism. Then there would be a general rise toward communism. First socialism

then communism. What people ought to follow is the materialism of the ideology. What a peasant should do, a city-dweller should do, a worker should do.

Question: Do you think it is Vietnamese?

Answer: This is very difficult to say. As for me I think there are many points that (are) not compatible with Vietnamese society.³⁴

Instead, a strong case can be made that major secondary attachments, centered around Vietnamese cultural values such as nationalism and peasant socialization (such as group orientation, concept of face, and romance and honor of the soldier's life in Vietnamese culture), contained a high degree of latent patriotism.³⁵ The NVA used such attachments to create what has been referred to as a strong professional army. Douglas Pike notes:

Americans and others often assumed that the NFL [National Liberation Front] army members were fanatics. Because they performed well in combat, it was argued they were highly motivated, which meant dedication to an ideological cause. Thus the search for the essence of this belief. It proved elusive largely because it did not exist. The best of the military units—the Main Force units—were highly effective because they were professionals . . . what impelled them was not ideology so much as professional competence, much like the U.S. Marines or the French Foreign Legionnaire. . . . Their mystique should be attributed chiefly to a unit esprit de corps that stemmed from the consensus that each man in the unit was a superior and vastly experienced professional.³⁶

Even Pike, who probably minimizes the effects of indoctrination more than most observers, suggests that it had some effect, especially on the NVA leadership. A small-unit leader's comment makes the point:

I lived in the resistance for eight years, and eight or nine years in the DRV, in a socialist world. It is not a political book which influenced me and formed my political ideas. I think that they grew in me from day to day. Each day a small quantity of socialist ideas entered me.³⁷

The NVA offered no special programs or privileges to reward and motivate its soldiers. Instead, NVA leaders worked almost entirely through the small groups—the three-men military cells—to control individual soldiers through the internalization of strong

group norms. In this process, the acceptance by the NVA soldier of broad cultural and ideological norms as guiding precepts controlling behavior in the small unit depended largely upon the effectiveness of a unit's immediate leadership. It seemed that "an intermediate stage of personal identification" with leaders was required for these secondary norms to become operative in the small NVA unit.³⁸

Additional Characteristics that Support Cohesion in the United States Army

American societal characteristics beyond those required for nationalism provide additional sources of motivation to the American soldier. These sources of motivation are usually based on a soldier's vague but often firmly held belief that the system that put him in the Army and that he is "defending" is probably the best political and social system possible. Usually, these beliefs are the result of political socialization or civil education.

Because there is no program for indoctrination of political beliefs and values in the US Army, American soldiers have traditionally gained these beliefs and values through exposure to the principal political traditions of American society. This process has been achieved primarily through observation, schooling, and participation; it results in what Charles Moskos calls "latent ideology"—attitudes and sentiments generally supportive of the system that have concrete effects on cohesion and combat motivation.³⁹

One suspects that beliefs dependent upon a "latent ideology" were present within the US Army during earlier wars and that they supplemented the leadership and primary group cohesion that motivated American soldiers. Moskos found such a set of beliefs, dependent upon a "latent ideology," in the US Army in Vietnam.⁴⁰ In another study, he noted:

The latent ideology observed among soldiers in Vietnam consisted of anti-ideology (a skepticism of ideological appeals), Americanism (a belief that the United States was the best country in the world, along with an antipathy toward Vietnamese), materialism (a high valuation of the physical standard of living in America), and manly honor.⁴¹

Since Vietnam and the advent of the All-Volunteer Army, many knowledgeable observers believe that the "latent ideology" that contributed to the motivation of American soldiers in past wars has been weakened.

First, in Moskos' terms the All-Volunteer Army's shift toward an occupational model is also a shift away from a professional army. The occupational model emphasizes the economic variables of the labor market over notions of patriotism and over the obligation of citizens to make sacrifices and serve their country. Compounding this shift away from the citizen soldier is an increasing unrepresentation of overall American society among the soldiers manning the All-Volunteer Army. Although this condition will abate somewhat in times of economic hardship—the trend will be "saw-toothed"—many observers expect the trend toward unrepresentation to continue. With it will come an increasing unrepresentativeness of broad American ideological values among members of the volunteer Army. Survey data also indicate that this trend is accompanied by "a growing sense of disaffection from the military system, and a tendency to view military life in more occupational terms."⁴²

The All-Volunteer Army soldier's knowledge of the American political system and affairs of state upon which patriotic values could be based appears to be almost nonexistent except for a basic awareness of the Presidency. Moskos again:

Cognitive knowledge of the American governmental system, history, and foreign policy is extremely low. Left to themselves, the soldiers will rarely discuss any military or strategic issues, much less political concerns. What little political awareness exists seems to focus on the person and office of the President.⁴³

A recent survey of high school and college students in the Los Angeles area revealed an alarming lack of knowledge about this country's recent history and its heritage.⁴⁴ A journalism major at the University of Southern California, for example, had no idea when World War II was fought. She thought that it occurred sometime during this century and thought Pearl Harbor involved dropping the atom bomb on Japan. None of the students questioned knew when World War II, World War I, or the Civil War was fought. Toronto was thought to be in Italy and Washington,

DC, in Washington State. Other students were “amazed there was a whole array of countries around Russia which were controlled by Russia (‘There are? Why doesn’t Reagan make them stop?’).” The lack of political freedom in the Warsaw Pact countries was news to one “valley” girl—“What a burnt idea,” she said. The survey exposed many such shortcomings—the belief that NATO runs the space shuttle and so on.⁴⁵ When compared to the deep knowledge of world and of Soviet history that students in the USSR have and the “patriotic” values that such civic education engenders, one cannot but wonder about the resolve of future American generations to protect and defend US society.

When soldiers are asked directly what they would be willing to fight for overseas, American interests rank extremely low in the priorities:

First, defense of the American homeland (and rescue of endangered American civilians abroad) is nearly universally supported. There is, however, a marked drop in levels of commitment to fighting an overseas war in defense of an ally. Second, all plausible scenarios of overseas war—defense of Germany, Korea, or Israel, intervention in the Middle East to protect oil installations—are grouped in the same category of much lower commitment. American soldiers, that is, display a dichotomous rather than scaled viewpoint on their willingness to be sent into combat situations.⁴⁶

Based on similar assessments, many observers are concerned about the decline of “latent ideology,” which in past wars sustained American soldiers. In brief, they believe that “the All-Volunteer Army is overrecruiting from those youth segments least likely to have developed predispositions toward civic consciousness.”⁴⁷

Accompanying this unrepresentativeness or relative lack of traditional ideological values is an uncertain stance by the contemporary American elite. Instead, as described earlier in this chapter, the soldier is presented with a conflicting set of leadership views about what American basic goals and policies ought to be worldwide.

Finally, the shift towards the All-Volunteer Army was based on the Gates Commission assumption “that military compensation should as much as possible be in cash, rather than in kind or

deferred (thereby allowing for a more efficient operation of the marketplace).”⁴⁸ This meant that special programs to provide soldiers with privileges such as shopping and gasoline exchanges, privileges that were truly part of the military community and that offered significant advantages in prices, were gutted and made into businesses that are only marginally competitive with civilian enterprises. Other programs that rewarded faithful service and that promoted cohesion, such as the GI Bill, were also discontinued. According to current assumptions, these were no longer needed motivators because “if end strength targets are met in the AVF, notions of citizenship obligation and social representativeness are incidental concerns.”⁴⁹

Additional Characteristics that Support Cohesion in the Soviet Army

In addition to those characteristics that promote nationalism, other cultural characteristics support cohesion in the Soviet Army. Possibly the most significant is the socialization process that promotes the “militarization” of Soviet society. This begins in the second grade during which each child is taught nuclear war survival. In grade schools, the “military supervisor” has a large impact on school activities.⁵⁰ In 1962, the law on military training was strengthened through an organization called the All-Union Voluntary Society for Assistance to the Army, Air Force, and Navy (DOSAAF). Military training was initiated in all secondary schools and vocational institutions. Hedrick Smith—author of *The Russians*—describes DOSAAF:

It combines the functions of 4-H Clubs, Boy Scouts, the YMCA, Civil Defense, the American Legion and National Guard with branches at farms, factories, institutes and in city neighborhoods all over the Soviet Union. It is a vast operation . . . with membership of 65 million. The organization gives courses in military history and tactics, develops civil defense facilities, teaches youngsters to drive and maintain all kinds of vehicles, to operate and maintain radios and electrical equipment, to make and design aircraft models, to make parachute jumps, to shoot and to learn professions which have military importance.⁵¹

After graduation at the age of 18, the Soviet male expects to enter the military for two years. If he is college material, he either attends a military school (of which there are about 140) or a civilian institution where his military training continues and he becomes a reserve officer.⁵² Each year the active Soviet military discharges almost 2 million men into the reserves where skills are maintained to make available a ready reserve numbering over 25 million.⁵³ Even though the romanticism and manly honor formerly associated with the soldier's life has probably dissipated, the Soviet male expects to be involved with the military indefinitely. As one observer puts it:

Throughout his adult life, the omnipresence of the military will strike him as normal, to be expected. He does not see the military as a thing apart but as something of which he is a part.⁵⁴

In spite of racial conflict and other sources of significant dissatisfaction there does not appear to be a discernible desire to change the systems. In fact, many observers state that both Soviet soldiers and citizens believe that their political system is the best for the Soviet people. There is also an often and strongly expressed need to protect and defend the system, both militarily and verbally.

Ideological indoctrination and socialization produce a strong "latent" patriotism; they are credited with the Soviet soldier's pro-system outlook. While the Soviet soldier is exposed to an extremely intense and comprehensive program of indoctrination, the results are difficult to measure. Political apathy appears to be widespread;⁵⁵ however, contributions to an underlying "latent" pro-Soviet attitude may be reinforced. This might be especially true when indoctrination stresses themes such as a "love for the motherland," "hate the enemy," and "the cruelty of American imperialism in Vietnam" instead of basic Marxist-Leninist principles.

Other interrelated reasons are probably more responsible for the Soviet soldier's basic satisfaction with the system and his willingness to defend it.⁵⁶ First, until very recently, economic conditions and the standard of living in the Soviet Union have increased substantially each nonwar year since the Revolution in 1917. Since World War II, Soviet economic growth has been

impressive by any standard. By comparison with previous conditions, the current situation satisfies the Soviet people. Second, since World War II, the Soviet Army has become an immensely respected and popular institution in the Soviet Union. John Erickson notes:

Wherever one goes in the USSR, one's attention is invariably drawn to massive memorials of the 1941-45 war and the victory over fascist Germany. Everywhere the armed forces are in evidence and everywhere they receive official praise and glory.⁵⁷

The great love of the motherland expressed by the Russian *rodina*, an extremely emotional word for most Russians, also connotes good feelings toward the Army that defends it. According to Hedrick Smith, what makes World War II (and indirectly the Army) so valuable as a propaganda theme is the blurring of patriotism and politics:

[World War II] enables them to fuzz the line between patriotic pride in the national military victory over the Nazis and political commitment to the Soviet system. In the propaganda of the Great Patriotic War, patriotism and politics are thus fused.⁵⁸

Another cultural characteristic of significant importance in understanding the Soviet soldier's acceptance of the Army and the great legitimacy he gives to it is the desire of the Soviet people for firm control and autocratic leadership. Erickson and Feuchtwanger make the point:

In the main, the Russian people have accepted, and still accept, dictatorship without too much complaint because it has been an effective form of government in dealing with those problems which the people themselves have considered important. A citizen of the USSR today accepts autocratic interest, interference, and direction in all spheres of life and throughout every stage of his development.⁵⁹

An authoritative mind set is a central part of the Soviet citizen's political culture: as Smith observes, "Brezhnev and the simple person both think that might is right."⁶⁰ Nowhere in Soviet culture are there notions that characterize the values of Western democracies. Andrei Amalrik, the dissident Soviet historian, wrote:

The idea of self-government, of equality before the law and of personal freedom—and the responsibility that goes with these—are almost completely incomprehensible to the Russian people.⁶¹

Finally, the Soviet cultural characteristic that clearly puts the individual and his needs second to the group or collective is a significant factor that promotes cohesion in the Soviet Army.⁶² Soviet military texts extensively describe methods for using the power of the collective to control the attitudes and behavior of Soviet soldiers.⁶³ Criticism and self-criticism sessions before the Collective of the small unit are among the most powerful means the Army has for controlling behavior.⁶⁴

Additional Characteristics that Support Cohesion in the Israeli Army

The Israeli soldier has a strong belief that his particular system is best. A 1968 survey among Israeli soldiers disclosed this strong cultural value and related it to the Israeli Army and its purpose. No soldier surveyed thought the Israeli Army was less effective than any other army; “98 percent thought that the Israeli Army was in some or in many ways better than other armies, while 2 percent thought it was better in every respect.”⁶⁵

The confidence expressed in the capabilities of the Israeli Army and its purposes is not the result of indoctrination or an extensive educational program directed at the Israeli soldier. Rather, it appears to be the result of a very strong “latent ideology”:

The average conscript is rather contemptuous of patriotic propaganda of the “fight for your homeland” type, and disdainfully calls it “Zionist” stuff. Says a platoon commander in a discussion on motivation: “The moment I talk to the new conscripts about the homeland I strike a landmine. So I keep quiet. Instead I try to make soldiers out of them. I give them hell from morning to sunset. They begin to curse me, curse the army, curse the state. Then they begin to curse together, and become a truly cohesive group, a unit, a fighting unit.”⁶⁶

Behind this rejection of political indoctrination, however, is an extremely strong “latent ideology” with 90 percent of the conscripts and reservists questioned stating that they felt a strong

need to protect Israel. Most also said they would have joined the Army even if it had not been required.⁶⁷

TABLE 9

Additional Cultural Characteristics that Promote Cohesion

<i>Element</i>	<i>Army</i>			
	<i>North Vietnamese</i>	<i>United States</i>	<i>Soviet</i>	<i>Israeli</i>
Soldiers' belief their political system is best through socialization or indoctrination	++	++	+	++
Evidence offered for superiority of system, e.g., material well being	++	++	++	++
A felt need to protect the system through anti-actions, e.g., anti-communism, anti-capitalism.	++	++	++	++
Broad cultural norms and values internalized and controlling soldier's behavior	++	-	+	++
Romanticism and manly honor associated with the soldier's life	+	+	+	++
Special privileges and programs for soldiers by society	-	+	++	+
Special programs to reward and reintegrate soldier after service	-	+	++	+

Legend: Strong ++
 +
 -
 Weak --