

DEOMI News Highlights

DEOMI News Highlights is a weekly compilation of published items and commentary with focus on equal opportunity, equal employment opportunity, diversity, culture and human relations issues. The DEOMI News Highlights is a management tool intended to serve the informational needs of equity professionals and senior DoD officials in the continuing assessment of defense policies, programs and actions. Further reproduction or redistribution for private use or gain is subject to original copyright restrictions.

Obama: ‘Don’t Ask’ Report Confirms Nation Is Ready for Change [*American Forces Press Service, U.S. Department of Defense, November 30, 2010*]

- President Barack Obama urged the Senate to act swiftly so the repeal of the ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ law can be signed
- The President has stated that the law “weakens our national security, diminishes our military readiness, and violates fundamental American principles of fairness and equality”
- A released report confirmed that more than two-thirds of military men, women, and their families are prepared to serve alongside openly gay and lesbian individuals
- President Obama asked the Senate to move quickly so that he can “ensure that Americans who are willing to risk their lives for their country are treated fairly and equally”

[Obama: ‘Don’t Ask’ Report Confirms Nation Is Ready for Change](#)

Diversity Part of Military Experience [*Dean Hager, Yuma Sun - Washington, November 10, 2010*]

- As Veterans Day was approached, the author took notice of the diversity experienced by military members while in uniform and how that impacts our communities and nation
- According to the National Center for Veterans Analysis, roughly 30 percent are categorized as women or minorities
- The author states that when his team was evacuated from a scary Kuwaiti situation, “no one cared that the helicopter pilot was Hispanic – she was a U.S. Marine”
- The experiences our veterans have had with diversity in the military transfer to the community
- “Regardless of where our family trees began, we all are Americans, first and foremost”

[Diversity Part of Military Experience](#)

NAACP Educational Summit to Look at Return of Segregation [*CNN Wires Staff, CNN U.S., November 29, 2010*]

- The oldest and largest civil rights organization is sounding the alarm on school re-segregation and investigating related policies
- NAACP leaders and grass-roots organizers are meeting at the first national NAACP summit on education in three years to discuss education reform
- Per the NAACP, over two-fifths of black students attend “extremely segregated schools” which is an increase from two-thirds in 1988

[NAACP Educational Summit to Look at Return of Segregation](#)

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Culture

Cultural IPB

The doctrinal gap



Photo by Sgt Mark Fayloga

Description:

We need to incorporate cultural IPB into our planning process.

Author:

[Maj Matthew R. Black](#)

Marine Corps Gazette, December 2010

Cultural understanding and cultural intelligence preparation of the battlespace (IPB) have developed greatly in the last decade; however, it is necessary for the Marine Corps to capitalize on these developments, particularly at the MEF level, by incorporating its cultural lessons learned into future operational planning. The MEF is the Marine Corps' primary expeditionary task force employed as a contingency or crises response for major combat operations in support of combatant commanders. Currently it is the commander's responsibility to assess and understand culture during operational planning and execution. This is insufficient since it is primarily the operational planning team that utilizes the planning process to develop the MEF's course of action (COA), and it may not have all of the assets required to identify all of the cultural requirements. Despite commander's planning guidance and the planning team's cultural understanding, the Marine Corps Planning Process needs to incorporate cultural differences in all aspects and stages of the planning process, particularly in full-spectrum operations. The primary goal should be to integrate the cultural environment into the planning of the operation and ensure that the MEF is capable of executing the cultural requirements. This requires specific considerations throughout the planning process and a continuous assessment of the cultural environment throughout the execution of the operation.

Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, like most of our past conflicts, has proven the importance of understanding culture and the impacts cultural differences play on operational success. The Marine Corps' role in Iraq was primarily to contain the country's western portion, Al Anbar Province. A surprising amount of success occurred in Al Anbar because the Marine Corps was successful at recognizing cultural differences and implementing cultural understanding into planning and execution. Now, all of the Services have followed the Marine Corps' example, and cultural understanding has resurfaced in multiple Service and joint publications. The Marine Corps' doctrine on planning needs further revision in order to ensure that our recent lessons learned are incorporated into the planning of future operations.

The Marine Corps can capitalize on its success and further the integration of cultural understanding into its planning and execution. At the MEF level, the G-2 (intelligence) is largely responsible for the cultural IPB, but there is no publication that covers a doctrinal format for cultural IPB that explains how to incorporate it into the rest of the planning process. Although multiple publications have been recently revised and include cultural considerations, no single

<http://www.mca-marines.org/gazette/article/cultural-ipb>

publication covers all areas of cultural considerations and their impacts during a conflict. The Marine Corps Planning Process needs to identify cultural differences and incorporate them into the planning process for each warfighting function. During planning, the key is to ensure that cultural differences are understood and incorporated across all lines of operations and functions.

The lines of operations in full-spectrum operations include combat operations, civil security operations, host-nation support, governance, economic development, and information operations. The amount of involvement by Multinational Forces-West in Iraqi governance and economic stability following conflict termination was a larger task than planned. By 2006 the Marine Corps heavily supported the Department of State and other organizations in stabilizing Iraq's government and economy. This gained experience should be used to revise the planning process and help incorporate the required cultural issues when planning for full-spectrum operations. It may also be necessary for other government organizations, such as the State Department's Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, to be involved in the early planning stages of an operation at the MEF level.

The Marine Corps Planning Process is a six-step process that includes mission analysis, COA development, COA wargaming, COA comparison and decision, orders development, and transition. Each staff section or warfighting function has various responsibilities throughout the planning process. As with most planning cycles, the IPB helps shape staff assessments and the COA. Culture covers a wide range and has the potential to impact an operation more than many of the traditional assessments of IPB. Therefore, cultural IPB is a continuous process that should be developed prior to traditional IPB and used to help develop the IPB process. The Marine Corps needs to develop a doctrinal method of incorporating a standard cultural IPB into IPB development.

Cultural IPB is the key to incorporating cultural differences into the operational plan. Identifying all of the cultural differences will allow a proper assessment of the population and its capabilities. It is also required in order to identify a population as a center of gravity. The Small Wars Manual and Field Manual 3-07.22, Counterinsurgency Operations, provide examples of how the population can be a center of gravity. Being able to target the population requires a thorough understanding of its culture. A planning team should be capable of identifying the key cultural aspects of the population in order to properly assess its capabilities during planning and continuously assess the cultural environment during execution. A detailed assessment of the population and its cultural aspects will allow proper identification of support requirements and shortfalls, proper wargaming to include branch plans for all lines of operation, and proper targeting development. Each warfighting function should be required to properly incorporate the cultural considerations into the plan in order to properly achieve the objective.

There are multiple cultural differences that need different amounts of emphasis throughout the planning process. A basic example would be religion and customs. An important aspect of the U.S. campaign in Iraq is to convey a message to the Arab nation that Operation IRAQI FREEDOM is not a religiously motivated campaign. Cultural understanding of the Muslim religion helps to plan and execute our operation without offending the Muslim community. More detailed considerations include cultural attitudes, education, authority, and economy. Understanding these cultural differences allows us to build our relationship with the local populous, an all-important aspect to full-spectrum operations. The cultural end state for any operation should be that in which our political and military objectives are met without disrupting our international relationship and that the relationship between the host nation and United States has an opportunity to prosper.

<http://www.mca-marines.org/gazette/article/cultural-ipb>

Key cultural elements that directly affected security have also been reinforced in Iraq. The centers of authority and tribal relationships of Iraq quickly changed as the United States defeated Saddam's dictatorship. These are important considerations that should be wargamed in the planning stages in order to identify key branch plans or objectives. As an operational planning team, it is important to incorporate this into the enemy's capabilities. A well-executed plan for local authority and security could also have profound effects on the time frame and resources of the conflict resolution stages.

There are many considerations for cultural planning. It is very similar to information operations planning and encompasses a very broad spectrum of requirements and considerations. Cultural planning should begin at the earliest stages of planning and requires long-term development and extensive interagency coordination. Cultural training is also a consideration to be incorporated into the planning stages of an operation. The Marine Corps has greatly improved cultural training standards over the last decade. This increases the force's capabilities and allows planners to incorporate those capabilities into their plan. The Marine Corps needs to tie the cultural capabilities into an operation in the same manner it would for any other combined arms. The Marine Corps Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning develops cultural learning requirements for troops deploying. They also provide education and tools for planners to use when developing operational plans. This should be taken a step further by developing a standard doctrine for cultural understanding and incorporating it into the Marine Corps Planning Process.¹

Full-spectrum operations encompass a wide range of cultural considerations when developing an operational plan. Currently there is no specific doctrine for operational planning teams to properly incorporate cultural IPB into the warfighting functions, nor are planning teams provided the tools to properly integrate with postconflict organizations. Through proper cultural IPB, integrated liaisons, and incorporation of cultural considerations into all steps of the planning process, the operational plan will account for cultural friction and achieve the political or military objectives without disrupting the international relationship.

Diversity

<http://www.stripes.com/news/afghanistan-working-toward-some-semblance-of-gender-equality-1.124925>

Afghanistan working toward some semblance of gender equality

By Jon Rabihoff

Stars and Stripes, 9 November 2010

ROBAT, Afghanistan — In this remote Afghan village, the distance between the school and the compound of its most powerful resident is 100 yards, and thousands of years.

At the school, about 15 girls attend classes alongside dozens of boys thanks to the relative security of the area, which means the Taliban cannot act on its opposition to the education of females, a conviction that has led to the burning or bombing of hundreds of schools in recent years.

Down the road, at the home of the affable Sahib Jan — the local Afghan Highway Police commander and most respected village elder — the local women are kept out of sight of visiting U.S. soldiers, preparing a meal for men with whom they are not allowed to eat. Female soldiers are not even welcome to sit in on a meeting of the military contingent, Jan and his subordinates.

“To me, the girls and the boys are the same,” Jan said through an interpreter during the meeting. “We would like to provide an education for both of them,” although Jan would prefer that happen in separate schools, or separate classrooms. “They can become whatever they want to when they grow up.”

That said, when boys are born, “there is celebration,” he said. “When a daughter is born, we are not that happy.”

While Jan says the genders are equal, his views on what equal means are quite different from the Western way: “In our culture, men and women are not supposed to be together.”

That is just one example of the religious, moral and cultural differences that U.S. and coalition officials must accept as they continue their mission in Afghanistan — that no matter how much Western-style government, political and military influence they wield here, anything approaching equality for women is still generations away — if it happens at all.

“It saddens me to go to a culture and know, at this point in time, they’re not afforded the same rights,” said Army Spc. Tiffany Hall — a member of the Female Engagement Team for the 4th Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment’s Headquarters Troop.

Maybe one day we’ll get there, but I know that day is not today. We’re doing multiple things to help the community ... better its living situation and get out from under the Taliban foothold. Until we can help that aspect first, we can’t concentrate on getting the equal rights that we would want.

“We have to do one step at a time. It’s a process.”

Bags and bread

On a recent Saturday, a contingent of soldiers from the 4th Squadron’s K and Headquarters troops ventured from the base at Spin Boldak to Robat — a village of about 10,000 south of Kandahar in southern Afghanistan — for what they believed would be an unprecedented opportunity to spread goodwill in the area and get access to a number of the normally cloistered women of the community.

First stop was the sparsely appointed school, where soldiers and Afghan Highway Police officers handed out book bags to the dust-covered children. The soldiers answered questions from the students in a couple classrooms, the most interesting of which was why squadron chaplain Capt.

<http://www.stripes.com/news/afghanistan-working-toward-some-semblance-of-gender-equality-1.124925>

Joe Duwors shaves his head. When he confessed that he did not have much on the top of his head, a student suggested he still had enough on the sides to let it grow.

Duwors then started to explain through an interpreter that the U.S. military was there to support the government of Afghanistan, but cut his speech short when another soldier pointed out the children were no longer paying attention.

The soldiers then dropped off soccer and tennis balls with the school's headmaster, Fazal Rehman, who thanked the group and said, "Our children are so happy. They will be learning well."

Asked about the girls in the school, he said, "They come for an education. They want to learn. They want to write the future of Afghanistan."

The group then walked down the road to Jan's compound, where an offhand remark the week before had set the stage for an unusual cultural exchange. One of the soldiers commented on the flat bread that was served, prompting one of the villagers to invite the unit to bring its female soldiers back so the local women could teach them how to make bread, thus helping them land husbands.

So members of the Female Engagement Team and a few other volunteers disappeared through a gate and out of sight of the men, hoping to learn a little about breadmaking, and as much as possible about the local culture as seen through the shrouded eyes of about a dozen of the village women.

Referring to the cooking lesson, 2nd Lt. Randy Wintermantel, one of the volunteers, said, "It is a kind of Susie Homemaker for me, but hey — if that's how it gets done, why not?"

"That part is probably the hardest for me. You're a female soldier and you expect to do the same thing the guys do. But, you have to understand that's the culture here."

Female Engagement Teams have been started all over Afghanistan in recent months, to reach out to women who are forbidden to interact with male soldiers.

"There's a whole lot of needs for them that maybe we're not heeding because we've never been able to interact with them," Wintermantel said.

„A lot of laughing“

Hall said communication was awkward at first, but things loosened up when the female soldiers tried to follow directions on how to spread dough on a very large pan.

"There was a lot of laughing as we attempted to do it without making holes ... and there were a lot of holes," she said.

After teaching the soldiers how to prepare vegetables, the Afghan women retired briefly to prepare the meat for the meal. The women then sat down to eat with the female soldiers in one part of the compound, and children carried plates of food to the men in another area.

The local women were most interested in which soldiers were married and had children, Hall said. They also asked whether the soldiers knew how to fire their weapons.

Hall said the women told her that transportation to hospitals is an issue for the village residents, because the closest facilities are about 25 miles away, in Spin Boldak or Kandahar. Dental care, she was told, is virtually nowhere to be found.

Eventually, the younger women and girls brought out henna supplies and painted tattoos on the hands of some of the soldiers.

<http://www.stripes.com/news/afghanistan-working-toward-some-semblance-of-gender-equality-1.124925>

“It was really heartwarming to see that they would reach out to us and try to introduce us to some of their culture,” Hall said. “The fact that they see us both as a soldier and a wife someday ... it was really touching.”

On the other side of compound, the male soldiers told Jan what they could bring his men in the way of supplies for the winter, but they urged him to get some of what he needed from the applicable Afghan government agencies.

Jan said, “I control the whole area with the people helping me,” including the “very, very hard-working women” of the village who cook and raise the children.

“I think the job of an Afghan woman is harder than the job of an Afghan man,” he said.

Diversity and the Myth of White Privilege

America still owes a debt to its black citizens, but government programs to help all 'people of color' are unfair. They should end.

By **JAMES WEBB**

Wall Street Journal : Opinion, Online, 22 JULY 2010

The NAACP believes the tea party is racist. The tea party believes the NAACP is racist. And Pat Buchanan got into trouble recently by pointing out that if Elena Kagan is confirmed to the Supreme Court, there will not be a single Protestant Justice, although Protestants make up half the U.S. population and dominated the court for generations.

Forty years ago, as the United States experienced the civil rights movement, the supposed monolith of White Anglo-Saxon Protestant dominance served as the whipping post for almost every debate about power and status in America. After a full generation of such debate, WASP elites have fallen by the wayside and a plethora of government-enforced diversity policies have marginalized many white workers. The time has come to cease the false arguments and allow every American the benefit of a fair chance at the future.

I have dedicated my political career to bringing fairness to America's economic system and to our work force, regardless of what people look like or where they may worship. Unfortunately, present-day diversity programs work against that notion, having expanded so far beyond their original purpose that they now favor anyone who does not happen to be white.

In an odd historical twist that all Americans see but few can understand, many programs allow recently arrived immigrants to move ahead of similarly situated whites whose families have been in the country for generations. These programs have damaged racial harmony. And the more they have grown, the less they have actually helped African-Americans, the intended beneficiaries of affirmative action as it was originally conceived.

How so?

Lyndon Johnson's initial program for affirmative action was based on the 13th Amendment and on the Civil Rights Act of 1866, which authorized the federal government to take actions in order to eliminate "the badges of slavery." Affirmative action was designed to recognize the uniquely difficult journey of African-Americans. This policy was justifiable and understandable, even to those who came from white cultural groups that had also suffered in socio-economic terms from the Civil War and its aftermath.

The injustices endured by black Americans at the hands of their own government have no parallel in our history, not only during the period of slavery but also in the Jim Crow era that followed. But the extrapolation of this logic to all "people of color"—especially since 1965, when new immigration laws dramatically altered the demographic makeup of the U.S.—moved affirmative action away from remediation and toward discrimination, this time against whites. It has also lessened the focus on assisting African-Americans, who despite a veneer of successful people at the very top still experience high rates of poverty, drug abuse, incarceration and family breakup.

Those who came to this country in recent decades from Asia, Latin America and Africa did not suffer discrimination from our government, and in fact have frequently been the beneficiaries of special government programs. The same cannot be said of many hard-working white Americans, including those whose roots in America go back more than 200 years.

Contrary to assumptions in the law, white America is hardly a monolith. And the journey of white American cultures is so diverse (yes) that one strains to find the logic that could lump them together for the purpose of public policy.

The clearest example of today's misguided policies comes from examining the history of the American South.

The old South was a three-tiered society, with blacks and hard-put whites both dominated by white elites who manipulated racial tensions in order to retain power. At the height of slavery, in 1860, less than 5% of whites in the South owned slaves. The eminent black historian John Hope Franklin wrote that "fully three-fourths of the white people in the South had neither slaves nor an immediate economic interest in the maintenance of slavery."

The Civil War devastated the South, in human and economic terms. And from post-Civil War Reconstruction to the beginning of World War II, the region was a ravaged place, affecting black and white alike.

In 1938, President Franklin Roosevelt created a national commission to study what he termed "the long and ironic history of the despoiling of this truly American section." At that time, most industries in the South were owned by companies outside the region. Of the South's 1.8 million sharecroppers, 1.2 million were white (a mirror of the population, which was 71% white). The illiteracy rate was five times that of the North-Central states and more than twice that of New England and the Middle Atlantic (despite the waves of European immigrants then flowing to those regions). The total endowments of all the colleges and universities in the South were less than the endowments of Harvard and Yale alone. The average schoolchild in the South had \$25 a year spent on his or her education, compared to \$141 for children in New York.

Generations of such deficiencies do not disappear overnight, and they affect the momentum of a culture. In 1974, a National Opinion Research Center (NORC) study of white ethnic groups showed that white Baptists nationwide averaged only 10.7 years of education, a level almost identical to blacks' average of 10.6 years, and well below that of most other white groups. A recent NORC Social Survey of white adults born after World War II showed that in the years 1980-2000, only 18.4% of white Baptists and 21.8% of Irish Protestants—the principal ethnic group that settled the South—had obtained college degrees, compared to a national average of 30.1%, a Jewish average of 73.3%, and an average among those of Chinese and Indian descent of 61.9%.

Policy makers ignored such disparities within America's white cultures when, in advancing minority diversity programs, they treated whites as a fungible monolith. Also lost on these policy makers were the differences in economic and educational attainment among nonwhite cultures. Thus nonwhite groups received special consideration in a wide variety of areas including business startups, academic admissions, job promotions and lucrative government contracts.

Where should we go from here? Beyond our continuing obligation to assist those African-Americans still in need, government-directed diversity programs should end.

Nondiscrimination laws should be applied equally among all citizens, including those who happen to be white. The need for inclusiveness in our society is undeniable and irreversible, both in our markets and in our communities. Our government should be in the business of enabling opportunity for all, not in picking winners. It can do so by ensuring that artificial distinctions such as race do not determine outcomes.

Memo to my fellow politicians: Drop the Procrustean policies and allow harmony to invade the public mindset. Fairness will happen, and bitterness will fade away.

Mr. Webb, a Democrat, is a U.S. senator from Virginia.

Diversity part of military experience

BY DEAN HAGER

Yuma Sun, November 10, 2010 6:30 PM

Today, we Yumans, along with all other American citizens, will honor veterans with ceremonies, parades and patriotic music on Veterans Day. Schools locally and around the nation will welcome vets into their classrooms to introduce students to personal stories reflecting their fear, camaraderie, joy and sacrifice experienced in service to our country.

One aspect of being in a uniformed service sometimes overlooked amid the cable TV war movies and political speeches is the personal growth experienced by young soldiers, sailors, etc., as they experience different cultures, races and religions while in uniform.

Upon return to civilian world, many times it is that gruff old veteran that is first to volunteer to help others in the community because of the cultural diversity he/she experienced during military service.

I can personally testify that when my team was evacuated from a scary situation on Kuwaiti desert sands, no one cared that the helicopter pilot was Hispanic — she was a U.S. Marine.

We veterans statistically are a diverse group. According to the National Center for Veterans Analysis of the current 2.6 million veterans, approximately 30 percent are women or minorities: 11 percent African-American, 8 percent women, 5 percent Hispanic and 6 percent Native American/Asian/other.

Did you know that one of the founders of the American Legion, Hamilton Fish, was a black man who commanded the first all-black U.S. combat unit shipped overseas in World War I (The Harlem Hellfighters)? Many veteran organizations were also in the forefront of combating gender bias, admitting women before they obtained the national right to vote.

Our uniformed services also have a history of being thrust periodically into the cultural limelight, sometimes begrudgingly. The 1960s and 1970s saw the final reversal of Democrat President Wilson's racial segregation of the armed forces. Women made significant strides in obtaining combat roles during the 1980s and 1990s.

And, if we are to believe our current president, this decade will acknowledge the right of gays to serve without administrative repercussion.

So, before you hit the sand dunes, attend a parade or light up the grill, take a moment and reflect on the impact our veterans have made not only in defense of our nation but also their impact in unifying our diverse community — recognizing, regardless of where our family trees began, we all are Americans, first and foremost.

Dean Hager is a retired captain in the U.S. Navy Reserve who lives in Yuma.

<http://blogs.jta.org/philanthropy/article/2010/11/30/2741944/state-department-award-770000-to-promote-diverse-israeli-citizenship>

State Department award \$770,000 to promote diverse Israeli citizenship

By [Jacob Berkman](#) ·

JTA (Global News Service of the Jewish People) November 30, 2010

The State Department has given \$770,000 in grants to Merchavim, an Israeli NGO working on diversity in Israel and shared citizenship for all legal citizens of the country.

The majority of the grant, some \$750,000, will go to expand an existing collaboration between Merchavim and the American nonprofit behind Sesame Street, the Sesame Workshop, to continue to produce Israel's version of the show, Rechov Sumum, which features Israelis of all stripes – from Jew to Arab. The grant will help develop user-generated content in Hebrew and Arabic for use by 1,200 kindergarten teachers of a number of ethnic and religious backgrounds.

Another \$20,000 will go to help Merchavim develop a training manual for its Kulanana initiative. Kulanana is a consortium of NGO, government, business and philanthropic partners who are trying to build inclusive Israeli society by targeting primarily the 16-29 year-old demographic across the country's five deepest divides: Jews and Arabs, immigrant and veteran Israelis, rich and poor and internal divides within the Jewish and Arab communities. Kulanana is trying to promote initiatives along three major themes – citizenship, diversity and fairness.

Here's the release from Merchavim:

TEL AVIV, ISRAEL. The U.S. Department of State has awarded two grants, totaling \$770,000, to Merchavim, The Institute for the Advancement of Shared Citizenship in Israel, an NGO that works to help all of Israel's 7.6 million citizens become more comfortable with the diversity that characterizes Israeli society. The new funds will be used to significantly expand an existing project of Merchavim and to help launch a new strategic initiative, titled Kulanana. Together, these efforts will target young citizens from kindergarten through their twenties, where inter-group attitudes are most negative and the opportunities for change are greatest.

An award of \$750,000 was made to Merchavim for its collaborative project with Sesame Workshop – the non-profit educational organization that produces Rechov Sumsum, Israel's "Sesame Street" – and HOP! – Israel's leading children's television company. The initiative is co-funded by – and run in full cooperation with – Israel's Ministry of Education. Approximately 1,200 kindergarten teachers – Jewish and Arab, secular and religious – will be trained jointly to use a new generation of specially-produced Hebrew and Arabic outreach tools for kindergarten, family and community. Thirty-six thousand children and their families will benefit directly, while hundreds of thousands more will participate in the program through television broadcasts and the internet, featuring professionally-edited, user-generated content from kindergartens and families of all backgrounds from across Israel.

"The Merchavim project is helping community members cross the lines of race, religion and class," said the U.S. Embassy Tel Aviv Spokesperson. "Bringing citizens from diverse economic, religious and ethnic backgrounds to work together and support each other provides an environment for tolerance and peace."

<http://blogs.jta.org/philanthropy/article/2010/11/30/2741944/state-department-award-770000-to-promote-diverse-israeli-citizenship>

“These grants are an important recognition of the importance of our work, providing strategic catalysts for its expansion and sustainability,” said Mike Prashker, founder and director of Merchavim, who is leading both initiatives.

A \$20,000 grant was also made to Kulanana to develop a training manual. Kulanana, a consortium of NGO, government, business and philanthropic partners, is an ambitious new society-building initiative targeted primarily at the 16-29 year-old demographic. The initiative will address the five deepest divides in Israeli society today: between Jews and Arabs; among Jews; between immigrant and veteran Israelis; among Arabs; and between rich and poor. To combat these divides, Kulanana will work closely with government, business and philanthropy to promote the initiative’s three major themes – citizenship, diversity and fairness. Informed by Merchavim’s consensual “shared citizenship” approach developed over the past twelve years, major programming will include media outreach, volunteerism, educational and government-relations projects, all complemented by a sustained media campaign using traditional and new platforms, such as social networking.

Merchavim (“spaces” in Hebrew) was founded in 1998 to develop and disseminate the concept of Israeli “shared citizenship”, in order to shape a more cohesive and successful society. Its mission is to help all of Israel’s citizens live together better by learning about each other, valuing diversity, developing a shared civic awareness and cooperating to make their classrooms and communities fairer and more cohesive. By training and equipping Israel’s teachers with high-quality Hebrew and Arabic-language teaching resources from kindergarten through high-school, Merchavim – in cooperation with Israel’s Ministry of Education – aims to help transform the educational system into one that more effectively teaches young Israelis about their fellow citizens and makes them increasingly appreciative of the diversity that characterizes modern-day Israel.

For more information, go to: <http://www.machon-merchavim.org.il>

Human Relations

A small slice of justice

Editorial

Washington Post, November 29, 2010

AFRICAN AMERICANS and Native Americans, the most persecuted and exploited groups in this nation's history, are on the verge of securing a small slice of justice.

Last week, the Senate approved a settlement that would provide \$1.15 billion to compensate black farmers who were denied U.S. government loans and assistance because of their race. Lawmakers also approved a \$3.4 billion payout to thousands of Native American landowners who, with their forebears, have been cheated out of oil and gas royalties since the late 19th century. The House, which passed earlier versions of the deals, should enthusiastically and quickly embrace these final settlements.

A federal judge must approve the settlements and determine that they are fair before any of the plaintiffs receives a penny. This process is likely to take at least six months, but it is a blink of an eye compared with the decades some plaintiffs have already waited.

In 1999, the government settled a class action brought by black farmers only to find that bureaucratic foul-ups left tens of thousands of farmers out of the money. Congress passed a well-intentioned fix in 2008, but it was flawed also; that made necessary the \$1.25 billion settlement this year between the farmers and the Obama administration. The Senate amended the deal to require lawyers for the black farmers to oversee what is likely to be a lengthy and intricate distribution process, and it reduced the amount to be paid to \$1.15 billion.

Late last year, Native Americans entered into a \$3.4 billion settlement agreement with the administration after an unusually contentious and complex 14-year court battle. The Senate also tinkered with the terms of this settlement, which now includes \$1.5 billion for payments to individuals and roughly \$1.9 billion for the government to buy heavily subdivided plots owned by individuals that will be turned over to the pertinent Indian tribes.

Between \$50 million and \$100 million in legal fees is likely to be paid out in each settlement. It is an astronomical sum that gives pause in large part because no individual client will collect anywhere near that much. But the settlement should not be scuttled because of this. The lawyers in the Native American case, for example, have put in two decades of work without being paid and are slated to receive a contingency fee of only 3 percent - far less than what is usually awarded. These types of cases would probably never move forward unless advocates had some reason to believe they would recoup their investments in time and money. The federal judge overseeing the case has discretion to ensure that lawyers are compensated fairly but not excessively.

Their mission: rescue vets from the streets

A nonprofit sends a crew out to feed, befriend and console soldiers and sometimes talk them into housing. The group also runs a crisis hotline and bushwhacks through bureaucratic jungles for weary vets.

By Steve Lopez

Los Angeles Times November 28, 2010

Out near LAX, a dozen military veterans man a war room, strategizing day and night. Their mission is to bring other vets in off the ledge, to gather them up from the streets and shake the dust off them.

With a budget of just half a million dollars a year, the team of "wild cowboys" is intent on saving lives, says the general of the nonprofit National Veterans Foundation -- an Alabama-raised, Lebanese Catholic Vietnam vet named Floyd "Shad" Meshad.

Meshad used to have a big job at the West L.A. Veterans Affairs complex, but he's a guy with no patience for bureaucracy, so he had to get out, way back in the 1980s, and start his own thing.

His outfit runs a crisis hotline and bushwhacks through bureaucratic jungles for weary vets. Twice a week, his crew heads out to Venice, Hollywood and skid row in a big white van stocked with provisions, fishing for soldiers sleeping on cold pavement and in damp ivy beds. They feed them, befriend them, console them and sometimes talk them into housing.

"I'm going through a lot of depression," Vietnam vet Vince Sylvester recently told Meshad's platoon at a park in Hollywood, saying he still hasn't gotten over the loss of a combat buddy who died "in my arms."

Sylvester said he was shot in both legs in Vietnam and had been homeless for three years until getting an apartment three months ago. He won't go to the VA unless he has to, Sylvester said. It's too much of a runaround.

On Hollywood Boulevard, Vietnam vet Rex Baker leaned on a cane as he panhandled. He said he'd been homeless for four years, but wouldn't dream of going to the VA and standing in line for services.

Meshad and his staff get this all the time. For a lot of soldiers, going to the VA is less appealing than going back to boot camp, even after they finally admit they need help.

It's not that the VA doesn't have good people doing great work, Meshad said, and he applauds the vow by agency chief Eric Shinseki to bring all homeless veterans in from the cold in five years.

The problem, as Meshad sees it, is that the VA is too big, too bureaucratic and too overwhelmed. And we haven't yet hit the anticipated wave of banged-up vets coming off multiple combat deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Five years to end homelessness?

"They couldn't do it in 40 years," said Meshad, even if there weren't a national hunger for smaller government. Calls to his office have surged in recent months, Meshad said, with 63% of them coming from vets who served in either Iraq or Afghanistan.

Michelle Wildy, chief of community care at the West L.A. VA, said her staff works hard to reach out to vets with physical and mental problems, including the homeless. But that gets complicated.

Typically, a returning soldier wants to get on with life instead of going to the VA, Wildy said. Many don't want to be labeled with the stigma of a mental health impairment, fearing it might get in the

<http://articles.latimes.com/2010/nov/27/local/la-mew-1128-lopezcolumn>

way of finding a job. With others, it takes "months before they begin to fall apart," said Wildy, so the wave will be coming soon.

When vets do fall apart, Meshad said, they don't want pamphlets and forms. They complain about long waits just to see someone who might be able to refer them to a doctor sometime in February or March. So Meshad rescues those he can, cutting red tape and calling in chits, trying to convince soldiers the VA can help and teaching them how to play the game.

"I play my cards," said Meshad, who has learned how to speed up a medical appointment or demand a bed for someone in need.

Meshad went to the gym for a workout recently and met an employee named Wendell Guillermo, a 25-year-old, two-tour, Purple Heart Iraq war vet who couldn't sleep more than 45 minutes at a time. In his recurring nightmare, a suicide bomber is trying to kill him. Guillermo had a VA doctor, but he wasn't getting any better.

Meshad hired Guillermo on the spot. That's the kind of guy he wants working for him -- someone who knows what other vets are up against. And when Guillermo begins to unravel, Meshad calls on his own counseling experience to help call him back.

Guillermo was so impressed with Meshad's abilities, he brought in a buddy just back after four combat tours, a 28-year-old guy named Freddy Cordova. Cordova was an angry, amped-up soldier with nerves rubbed raw. Meshad didn't just help calm him.

He hired him.

"It took me six months to get in to see a psychiatrist," Cordova said of his frustrations at the VA. And even then, the doctor told him he didn't have post-traumatic stress disorder, a diagnosis that isn't always easy to come by no matter how many "kill or capture" missions you've been on.

Santa Monica Mayor Bobby Shriver told me the city has identified 22 severely impaired veterans living on its streets. "We have tried to get the VA to come in and look at these people, and by and large we have failed," he said.

It took Shriver and other public officials six years to have one of three abandoned VA buildings opened up this summer as a shelter to temporarily house such vets.

Six years.

I'd like to hear Sen. Dianne Feinstein and Rep. Henry Waxman, who jointly announced the opening of that facility, explain why it takes so long to do the obvious, and whether it will take a total of 18 years to open all three buildings, even as more vets set up camp under palm trees.

And even as Shad Meshad and his wild cowboys charge out onto the domestic battlefield, bringing the troops in one at a time.

Miscellaneous

After Decade Of War, Impact Of Combat Stress Becomes Clearer

By Gretel C. Kovach

San Diego Union-Tribune November 28, 2010 Pg. 1

A young soldier who returned from Iraq drives across the country to visit a buddy at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. The patient's legs have been blown off by a rocket-propelled grenade.

"Help me end this," the wounded soldier pleads.

You've got to be tough, his friend, James, replied. "It's our job to look out for each other."

James has all his limbs, but he too is injured by the war and fighting for his life. His battle is post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD.

Guilt, fear and rage wake him with night terrors, isolate him from his wife, drive him to drink and, finally, to cram the barrel of a gun into his mouth.

James is just a character played by San Diego actor Ryan O'Nan in "The Dry Land," an acclaimed movie that premiered this year at the Sundance Film Festival. But his suffering has been a real-life drama played out in military homes across America during nearly a decade at war.

As disturbing as the material can be, such films are one sign that awareness about PTSD and other forms of mental anguish suffered by today's combat veterans is at a peak.

Among recent developments:

*The Navy opened its first short-term residential treatment program this month for active-duty Marines and sailors with PTSD. The facility, at the Point Loma Naval Base and run by the San Diego Naval Medical Center, is called Overcoming Adversity and Stress Injury Support, or OASIS.

*On Veterans Day, HBO premiered "Wartorn: 1861-2010." The documentary about PTSD prompted a Pentagon roundtable discussion of the issues.

*Maj. Gen. David Blackledge, commander of Army civil affairs and psychological operations, has been speaking publicly about his own battle with PTSD, breaking what is often a wall of silence among military brass when it comes to their personal challenges in the aftermath of war.

"The Dry Land" builds to a troubling but ultimately hopeful crescendo, when James' loved ones refuse to give up on him or allow him to destroy himself. It is a difficult but important film to watch, according to Freedom Is Not Free, a nonprofit organization in San Diego County that assists the families of wounded or killed service members.

The group hosted a benefit screening this month in Oceanside to draw attention to the struggles of military families and the often tough adjustment that troops face after returning home from war.

"They need to be aware of what the military is going through, to help support them, to do what they can to help military families get through this," said Cathy Pratt, the wife of a Marine colonel stationed at Camp Pendleton and development director for Freedom Is Not Free.

As many as one in five veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars grapple with PTSD, according to the National Center for PTSD, which is run by the Department of Veterans Affairs. A 2008 Rand Corp. study put the number of such veterans who have developed PTSD or depression as high as 300,000.

More than 45,000 U.S. service members have been wounded or killed in those two wars, according

<http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/2010/nov/27/after-decade-of-war-impact-of-combat-stress/>

to Pentagon data. The emotional toll of those losses will continue for years to come.

“It’s been our longest war ever, and so many of them are willing to go back time and time again, because they don’t want to let their buddies down. So they don’t always get a break,” Pratt said.

Some troops, she said, “they go away, they come back, they have PTSD and they deploy again before they fully recover. It just snowballs.”

An earlier screening of “The Dry Land” at the National Heritage Museum in Washington, D.C., was attended by Army Chief of Staff Gen. George Casey, among other soldiers and their families.

O’Nan, the lead actor, said during his visit to Oceanside that he hopes the film will spark communication.

“There are all these systems in place to help,” he said, but they don’t work unless service members are open to them. “If these guys are talking about it, sharing these experiences, that’s the only way to heal.”

The Navy offers outpatient therapy for Marines and sailors dealing with combat stress-related issues. Those who become a danger to themselves or others can be forced into locked treatment facilities.

The launch of the OASIS center in San Diego, a voluntary live-in program where active-duty troops spend as much as 12 weeks in intensive treatment for combat-related mental health symptoms, is designed to fill the gap between those extremes of care.

“We are here to provide a more intensive structure for people who really struggled with other treatments,” said Lt. Cmdr. Paul Sargent, a psychiatrist at the center who helped design the program, which accepts referrals through military health providers.

The OASIS center offers an array of services, including intensive psychotherapy, yoga and other relaxation strategies, anger-management sessions, substance-abuse treatment, exercise and community outings.

Five patients are currently enrolled, and the number is expected to rise to 20 by next summer.

Building camaraderie and overcoming the tendency to isolate oneself is an important aspect of the program. “These relationships are very healing,” Sargent said. “I find the patients are more helpful to each other than anybody else, and that is the way it should be.”

The effects of PTSD likely will ripple “not just across a lifetime, but across generations,” he said.

Sargent hopes to see greater collaboration in the treatment of these invisible wounds among the Pentagon, the Department of Veterans Affairs, civilian entities and the public at large.

“This is not just a military problem,” he said. “This is something we need to look at as a group to embrace and to heal, involving every aspect of our society in every way we can.”

DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL



Department of Defense General Counsel Jeh C. Johnson and U.S. Army Gen. Carter Ham conduct a press briefing at the Pentagon discussing the public release of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" Comprehensive Working Group report on Nov. 30, 2010. *DOD photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Chad J. McNeeley*

TOP STORY



Obama: Report Shows Nation Is Ready for Change

WASHINGTON, Nov. 30, 2010 – In a statement issued today, President Barack Obama urged the Senate to act swiftly so he can sign the repeal of the so-called —Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law this year, citing the Defense Department's report as proof that the nation —can transition to a new policy in a responsible manner." ...

"Today's report confirms that a strong majority of our military men and women and their families—more than two thirds—are prepared to serve alongside Americans who are openly gay and lesbian." Story

- **Report of the Comprehensive Review of the Issues Associated with a Repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"**
- **Support Plan for Implementation.**

MORE REPORTS

- **WESTAT Survey Report:** Support to the DOD Comprehensive Review Working Group Analyzing the Impact of Repealing —Doit Ask, Don't Tell"
 - **Volume 1:** Findings From the Surveys
 - **Volume 1:** Appendices A - AL
 - **Volume 2:** Findings from the Qualitative Research Tasks
- **RAND Report 2010:** Sexual Orientation and the U.S. Military Personnel Policy.
An Update of RAND's 1993 Study

MORE STORIES



Gates, Mullen Endorse Working Group's Report

WASHINGTON, Nov. 30, 2010 – Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates urged the Senate to repeal the so-called —Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law this year. ...

—I'm determined to see that if the law is repealed," he said, —the changes are implemented in such a way as to minimize any negative impact on the morale, cohesion and effectiveness of combat units that are deployed, or about to deploy to the front lines." [Story](#) | [Audio Podcast](#) | [Video](#) | [Transcript](#)



Chairman Supports Working Group's Report

WASHINGTON, Nov. 30, 2010 – The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff today fully endorsed the report of the working group that assessed the impact of a possible repeal of the law that bans gay men and women from serving openly in the military. During a Pentagon news conference, Navy Adm. Mike Mullen called the working group's recommendations —solid, defensible conclusions." [Story](#) | [Video](#) | [Transcript](#)

Repeal of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' Offers Few Risks, Report Finds

WASHINGTON, Nov. 30, 2010 – The risks associated with overturning law and policies to allow gays to serve openly in the military are low, if defense officials and military leaders allow the proper amount of time to train troops on the change, according to the co-chairmen of the Pentagon working group. [Story](#) | [Transcript](#)

Defense Officials Release 'Don't Ask' Repeal Implementation Plan

WASHINGTON, Nov. 30, 2010 – Defense Department officials today released an 87-page plan, structured much like a military operations order, laying out the Comprehensive Review Working Group's recommendations for implementing a possible repeal of the so-called —Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law. [Story](#)

NAACP educational summit to look at return of segregation

CNN Wires Staff

November 29, 2010

(CNN) -- The nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization wants to sound the alarm on school resegregation, and is hoping a national educational summit will bring attention to what its members consider a huge problem, according to a news release from the NAACP.

The organization will meet for three days later this week in North Carolina, where the Department of Justice is planning to investigate policies relating to resegregation, the statement says.

Leaders from the group will be joined by grass-roots organizers from across the country from Thursday through Saturday for the first national NAACP summit on education in three years, the statement says.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss comprehensive education reform with an urgent focus on resegregation in the nation's school districts, the NAACP said.

According to the organization, over two-fifths of black students attend "extremely segregated schools," up from less than one-third in 1988, which the NAACP considers the height of desegregation.

The summit was named in honor of Daisy Bates, former president of the Arkansas State Conference of the NAACP and advisor to the Little Rock Nine, the statement said. Those nine students desegregated Little Rock Central High School in 1957.

NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous is to deliver the keynote address on the first day of the summit, which will be held in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Obama to freeze federal pay for 2 years

By Stephen Dinan

Washington Times, 29 November 2010

President [Obama](#) called for a two-year federal civilian worker pay freeze Monday, fighting back against a sentiment that government workers have done better than private-sector workers during the economic slump.

The pay freeze would affect fiscal 2011, which began Oct. 1, and fiscal 2012, and over the course of 10 years would result in \$60 billion in lower federal spending, officials said.

"This is a difficult decision. Federal workers are hard-working and dedicated," said [Jeffrey Zients](#), deputy director of the [White House's Office of Management and Budget](#). "Today the president is clearly asking them to make a sacrifice. We believe it's the first of many difficult steps ahead."

[White House](#) officials said the move follows the president's previous steps to freeze [White House](#) salaries and later to extend that freeze to all top political appointees. The freeze would not apply to those serving in the military.

The move needs congressional approval. Congress is already two months late on completing the fiscal 2011 spending bills, and that's left an opening for [Mr. Obama](#) to propose freezing this year's pay.

USA Today reported earlier this month that the number of federal workers earning more than \$150,000 rose more than tenfold between 2005 and 2010, and has doubled in the two years since [Mr. Obama](#) took office. [Mr. Obama](#)'s independent commission on the deficit, due to report its findings Dec. 1, also has called for a federal pay freeze in its initial blueprint for slashing federal debt and deficit levels.

The [White House](#) said Monday's decision was not based on those salary levels and was made because of the overall budget situation. Federal deficits have topped \$1.2 trillion for the past two years, and the government's debt is nearing \$14 trillion.

Joseph Weber contributed to this report.

Misconduct

2 Bragg soldiers charged in stabbing of spc.

The Associated Press

Army Times, Dec 1, 2010 11:55:58 EST

FORT BRAGG, N.C. — The Army has charged two Fort Bragg soldiers in connection with the stabbing death of a fellow paratrooper in Iraq in July.

Army spokeswoman Maj. Virginia McCabe said Wednesday Spc. Nicholas Bailey and Spc. Tyler Cain have been charged in connection with the death of Spc. Morganne McBeth. All were deployed with the 82nd Airborne Division.

The 19-year-old McBeth was a combat medic at Al Asad Air Base. She died from a stab wound to the chest on July 2.

McCabe says Bailey is charged with involuntary manslaughter and Cain with conspiring to obstruct justice by giving false statements.

McCabe says the two soldiers had a military attorney present when the charges were presented. They face an Article 32 hearing, which is similar to a grand jury.

Racism

Indians question Colo. firm's motives in vote case

**By Ben Neary, Associated Press
Miami Herald, 2 December 2010**

WIND RIVER INDIAN RESERVATION, Wyo. -- A law firm bankrolled in part by powerful, conservative Western families faces accusations that it is anti-American Indian for seeking to overturn a federal voting rights victory by Indians in Wyoming.

At issue is a case involving five Indian plaintiffs who won a court ruling that said at-large elections for commissioners in Fremont County violated the Voting Rights Act by diluting the Native American vote. The tribal members prefer a district system that would virtually guarantee the election of an Indian commissioner.

But they have run into some deep-pocketed opposition.

The Mountain States Legal Foundation of Lakewood, Colo., has represented Fremont County pro bono since 2005 in the case.

Federal tax records show that the organization's supporters in recent years have included foundations controlled by the Coors brewing family in Colorado and Philip F. Anschutz, a reclusive Denver billionaire with extensive holdings in railroads, energy and communications.

Plaintiff Patricia Bergie of the Eastern Shoshone Tribal Council accuses Mountain States of "trying to make sure that our voice isn't heard, and trying to make sure that we don't have any weight in the county."

But Diemer True, a former Mountain States director, Casper oilman and a former Republican National Committee member, said the firm seeks only a level playing field and is "very concerned about equal rights, not minority rights."

Aside from its work in Voting Rights Act cases, Mountain States commonly sides with private landowners against the federal government in property disputes. It frequently fights federal proposals to protect more animals through the Endangered Species Act.

Mountain States also has won landmark U.S. Supreme Court victories curtailing the use of affirmative action in awarding government contracts and setting limits on how government agencies can consider race in laying off employees.

Mountain States' contract with Fremont County specified that it would challenge the constitutionality of a section of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 - a landmark of the civil rights movement - that prohibits discrimination by race, color or language. Mountain States argued the section didn't apply to Fremont County because the federal government hadn't previously found voting discrimination there.

U.S. District Judge Alan B. Johnson in Cheyenne rejected Mountain States' constitutional challenge in 2007. He said the firm failed to disclose that other federal courts had rejected similar minority voting rights arguments it made in cases in Montana and Colorado.

In April, Johnson ruled for the plaintiffs on the rest of the case. He ordered Fremont County to establish five commission districts, including one centered on the reservation that would virtually guarantee the election of an Indian commissioner.

Fremont County then proposed a single voting district for Indians, with at-large voting for the rest of the county. Johnson rejected the hybrid plan this summer, saying it would perpetuate isolation of Indians. The county appealed in September to the U.S. 10th Circuit Court of Appeals in

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2010/12/02/1953311/indians-question-colo-firms-motives.html>

Denver, arguing for its hybrid plan - even though the Indians argue that Wyoming state law forbids such schemes.

The county is represented by Mountain States without charge, but the Wyoming Local Government Liability Pool has paid out more than \$200,000 to cover other costs. The liability pool voted in late October not to cover any of the county's appeal. The pool could also be on the hook for more than \$880,000 to cover plaintiffs' legal fees.

Some prominent people have passed through Mountain States' doors. Gale Norton worked at Mountain States before she went on to serve as attorney general of Colorado and then as interior secretary under President George W. Bush. James Watt served as director of the law firm before serving as interior secretary under President Ronald Reagan.

One lawyer who litigated against the firm in another case says it appears motivated by deeply conservative political philosophy.

"If you look at the way things were in the 1950s ... the communities out there that were white communities kind of did what they wanted to do," said Jack Trope, executive director of the Association on American Indian Affairs in Rockville, Md. "That's the kind of world they want to go back to."

Efforts to reach spokespeople for comment at the Castle Rock Foundation - connected to the Coors family - and the Anschutz Foundation were unsuccessful. Repeated attempts to reach principals of Mountain States for comment on the case also failed.

First-term Fremont County Commissioner Keja Whiteman, a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, cast the lone vote against the appeal. "I'm skeptical when any legal organization routinely comes to the aid of local governments to fight Indian people," Whiteman said.

Fremont County had pointed to Whiteman's election as proof the lawsuit is without merit, though Johnson noted in April that Whiteman is the only American Indian ever to be elected to the county commission.

In that ruling, Johnson cited a long history of discrimination against Indians in Fremont County, from the first contacts with white settlers to the present day.

Fremont County holds most of the Wind River Indian Reservation, home to the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribes.

At more than 2.5 million acres, Fremont County is larger than Delaware but home to only about 39,000 people, of whom more than 20 percent are American Indians. Some 13.5 percent of county residents live below the poverty level, compared with 9.5 percent for the state, according to 2009 U.S. Census figures.

Bergie, who serves on the Montana-Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council, said Mountain States is known in tribal circles as "Indian fighters." But Douglas Thompson, the commission chairman, disputed the characterization - and said he believes race relations in Fremont County have deteriorated since Johnson's ruling.

"There's a lot of really well-meaning people who don't harbor racist views, or their decisions aren't driven by race," Thompson said. "And when the judge says that the racism in Fremont County is undeniable and palpable, that's a pretty vicious indictment of our citizens. And it's not true."