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It appears as if United States (US) Air Force General John Ralston is on track to be the next military commander of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Two years ago, this same general found his path barred to becoming the next Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS)--the premier military officer in the US--due to what was termed inappropriate sexual behavior. This behavior was said to entail engaging in a heterosexual, consensual affair with a civilian intelligence official while separated from, but still married to, his wife. Allegedly, this affair continued or recommenced when the general and his wife were reunited and was a significant factor in the marriage's ultimate breakup. (The general has since remarried.)

Should the sexual affair have mattered then? Should it matter now? Are new standards of propriety being applied? Is the NATO job more a reflection of habituation to tired old sins or ones that are still grievous?

Sex--behavior, orientation, identity, and other aspects--can matter in judging suitability for any job position. However, there needs to be a linkage between sex and components of the job. At times, items of sexual history can suggest job-related flaws in character, impulsiveness or compulsiveness that can translate into job performance deficits, or vulnerability to job-related coercion. When a job includes the responsibility to portray and reinforce a specific image and role of ethical and moral rectitude--to set a standard of personal behavior for others--violations of an organization's and/or a society's rules are germane. Sexual aspects also can be linked with a job so as to increase a candidate's suitability. In making these and other determinations, any type of sexual aspect--from monogamous relations with one's spouse to choice of reading material--may be relevant and add to or detract from suitability.

Returning to the general, if it has been determined that there are no linkages or positive linkages, then the NATO position may be appropriate. If an "all is forgiven" or a "we no longer care" approach has been taken to negative linkages, the wrong decision is being made. If there are negative linkages overshadowed by positive ones, or by other aspects of predicted job performance, then again the right decision is being made.

The "one size fits all approach" that demands all people be equally treated for the same sexual behavior regardless of context and circumstances is hurtful for an armed forces and the political security it is sworn to uphold. So is a cavalier attitude to discount sex and to attack those who seriously assess its job relevance as prudish and puritans on an ideological witch-hunt or in the throes of sexual repression. The correct approach is much more complex--as are human beings and life itself. (See A straight word on sex for the United States Armed Forces. (June 20, 1997). IBPP, 2(8); Counts, D.A., & Counts, D.R. (1991). "People who act like dogs: Adultery and deviance in a Melanesian community. *Anthropologica*, 33, 99-110; Henneberger, M., & Becker, E. (August 4, 1999). Denied Pentagon's top post, a U.S. General gets NATO's. *The New York Times*, p. A1; A13; Sex and the military: Implications of the exotic as erotic. (February 6, 1998). IBPP, 4(5); Sexual misconduct and personnel management. (August 15, 1997). IBPP. 3(3); Thornhill, N.W. (1991). An evolutionary analysis of rules regulating human inbreeding and marriage. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 14, 247-293.) (Keywords: Military, Sex.)