By Sean Paige

Under Seige

One reason our military's readiness is down: We won't let them train

As it prepares sailors, soldiers, and airmen to face enemies abroad, the U.S. military also finds itself under new pressure on the homefront. It's being told to close or curtail the use of training facilities the Pentagon says are vital to national security. From Puerto Rico to Farallon de Medinilla in the Pacific Ocean, and at numerous training sites in between, military men and women who should be practicing to go on the offensive are instead hunkered down, besieged by government regulators, national environmental organizations, and civilian citizen groups seeking to stop or severely restrict exercises they say are disturbing the peace, threatening endangered species, or polluting the air, land, and sea. The agitation that is closing the Vieques Island bombing range is only the tip of a very large iceberg that could endanger thousands of American fighting men and women come the next shooting war.

Base commanders and Pentagon brass have suffered these mounting complaints and complications in relative silence, trying to disarm critics by being good neighbors and fostering a stewardship ethic. But as isolated criticisms have taken on the character of an all-out assault, and with no hope of a truce in sight, some officers are beginning to speak out about what they euphemistically call "encroachment" problems, and warning that military readiness will tumble unless the new obstacles to training are cleared away.

The first ever hearings on encroachment issues were held by the military readiness subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee in March, and the House Armed Services Committee followed suit in May. Neither hearing generated the kind of media attention some experts believe the issue deserves. "Encroachment is often gradual and can go unnoticed, but its impact cumulatively erodes our ability to deploy combat-ready sailors and Marines," said Navy Vice Admiral James Amerault at the hearings. "Your Marines' success on the battlefield depends on having assured access to training ranges and installations on the land, sea, and in the air," added Marine Corps Major General Edward Hanlon, Jr., commander at Camp Pendleton. "However, our ability to train is being slowly eroded by encroachment on many fronts."

One aspect of the problem is the growing proximity of civilian communities to formerly remote military bases, and the growing intolerance of some citizens to noise, dust, and minor inconveniences that come with living near military activity. A larger part of the equation, however, is clearly ideological antipathy by uncompromising environmental groups. Some of the critics are obviously buoyed by the idea that in defending the interests of endangered species on military bases they're also helping to monkey-wrench the machinery of war.

Ground zero in the conflict is Vieques, a formerly obscure island off the eastern end of Puerto Rico that is the U.S. Atlantic Fleet's only live-fire training range. Vieques has been the subject of activist protests and national headlines since April 1999, when an errant bomb killed a civilian security guard working at the range. The death brought to a head years of simmering debate among Puerto Ricans about the island's status, and was seized on by headline-hunting politicians and environmentalists who claim the exercises are ruining the environment and threaten the health of the island's 9,000 inhabitants.

The Bush administration, in a move that shocked the Pentagon and raised the ire of some Republicans on Capitol Hill, suddenly surrendered to the protestors in June, announcing that the Navy will permanently halt training on the island in 2003. The *Washington Post* reported that politics played a part in the decision, as White House aides worried that the controversy threatened to undermine Hispanic support for the administration.

But the military is catching similar flak nearly everywhere it trains, and the result is dramatically altered military exercises not just on Vieques but at such storied institutions as Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, Fort Hood in Texas, and Camp Pendleton in California. At Lejeune, access to base beaches is severely restricted each year during turtle nesting season, making realistic amphibious landing exercises impossible. Because of the presence of the red-cockaded woodpecker, a protected bird, inland maneuvers face similar restrictions.

At Fort Hood, only 17 percent of the base's 185,000-acre training area remains unencumbered by one environmental restriction or another. Clean Water Act rules prohibit digging on nearly 70 percent of available training ground, meaning no breaking ground for foxholes or vehicle fighting positions. Clean

Sean Paige is the Warren Brookes Fellow at the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

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Not In My Back Yard Environmental controls, aesthetic complaints, and political objections are obstructing military training at scores of bases. Here, Marines conduct exercises on Vieques island, soon to be closed due to Puerto Rican and ecological protests.

Air Act rules prohibit the use of smoke, flares, chemical grenades, or any other pyrotechnic devices on about 25 percent of the available training area. From March through August, military vehicles are prohibited from straying from paved roads due to Endangered Species Act strictures. Use of camouflage netting and bivouac is prohibited on 74,000 acres set aside as habitat for two birds, the golden cheeked warbler and black capped vireo. Noise restrictions prohibit the firing of artillery or rocket launchers in some areas of the base.

At Pendleton, supposedly the U.S. Marine Corps' most complete amphibious training base, only about one mile of the facility's 17 miles of beach is available for exercises year round, due in part to endangered species restrictions. During one major exercise last March, the Thirteenth Marine Expeditionary Unit was limited to only 500 yards of beach because it was the breeding season of the endangered California least tern. Off-road maneuvering is also highly restricted, and digging is prohibited, severely limiting the ability of Marines to practice the construction of artillery and mortar firing positions.

The Army's Makua Military Reservation in Hawaii has been closed since 1998 because of environmental lawsuits concerning, among other things, the protection of a tree snail. Continued U.S. use of Farallon de Medinilla, a speck of coral near Guam that Seventh Fleet aviators use for bombing practice, is currently being challenged in court due to alleged violations of the International Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Submarine training at underwater sites near the Bahamas and off Hawaii faces limitations due to alleged conflicts with the Marine Mammal Protection Act. And Marine Corps training exercises at San Clemente Island, off the coast of California, are severely restricted due to the presence of the loggerhead shrike, an endangered bird, and a creature called the night lizard.

The presence of Sonoran pronghorn antelope on Arizona's Barry Goldwater Bombing Range has spurred protests, brought lawsuits, and could lead to closure of the facility. Protection for the Florida black bear and Florida scrub jay are two reasons why Green groups are opposing the Navy's continued use of the Pinecastle Bombing Range in Florida's Ocala National Forest. The beaches where Navy SEAL teams train at the Naval Amphibious Base, Coronado Island, California, shrink by 40 percent for seven months out of every year because of the presence of an endangered bird, the snowy plover. And opposition from environmentalists nearly derailed last year's $75 million expansion of the Army's National Training Center at Fort Irwin, in California's Mojave Desert, because it allegedly represented what one group called a "death warrant" for some desert tortoise.

Though its hands are full trying to balance the missions of warrior and game warden, the Pentagon faces another serious threat from one species that actually seems to be proliferating—the disgruntled American NIMBY. "Not In My Back Yard" complaints are on the rise from residential areas close to Camp Lejeune's Greater Sandy Run gunnery range, for instance, and the local county commission has demanded that the camp shut down the Combat Vehicle Crew Qualification Range in response to other complaints.

When live-fire training was curtailed on Vieques because of protests, Marine aviators turned for training to a bombing range in Pamlico Sound, near their air station at Cherry Point, North Carolina. But that raised a new round of protests—this time from local and state officials, as well as the National Park Service, which reportedly objected to military overflights of national seashores along the outer banks. Aircraft noise is reportedly also a growing source of contention at the Naval Air Station near Fallon, Nevada.

A recent proposal by the Navy to increase the number of practice sorties it flies over Fort Hunter Liggett, near California's Big Sur, encountered immediate protest from locals and mem-

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Ethnic Activism Hurts Pilots Al Sharpton, Mrs. Jesse Jackson, Robert Kennedy, Jr., and other protesters have demanded that the U.S. Navy's only east coast live-fire practice range be closed down. President Bush recently agreed.

bers of California's congressional delegation. Though Navy officials pulled out all the stops in making their case for the flights, it was to no avail. The 250 coastal property owners who showed up for a meeting this spring seemed universally opposed. "Our life is a life of prayer, silence, and solitude," said one Benedictine monk from a monastery at Big Sur. "This proposal intrudes on that a great deal."

And at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, near San Diego, safety worries and noise complaints about helicopters have led to lawsuits against the service by one area resident and the city of Del Mar. Several NIMBY groups, including Move Against Relocating Choppers Here (MARCH) and Residents Against Government Encroachment (RAGE) insist the helicopters are a nuisance and a danger. The Marines studied an array of alternative flight paths to and from the base as part of a 1999 settlement of lawsuits brought to block the transfer of helicopters to Miramar from closed bases. But the flight options selected by the Marines placated no one.

In fast-growing Beauford County, South Carolina the city of Beauford has actually annexed the nearby Marine Corps air station. This allowed the city to set land-use strictures within the facility, and also opened up farmlands adjoining the base for residential housing developments that are almost certain to serve as incubators for a new chorus of complaints. In October 1999, the governor of Massachusetts issued an executive order designating the Army's 15,000-acre Massachusetts Military Reservation as a wildlife refuge and water-protection area, which, pending approval by the state legislature, promises a serious test of will between the Pentagon and the state.

"Today, noise is the Air Force's number one concern when we try to modify or establish new [training] airspace," Air Force Major General Walter Buchanan, III told senators in March. "We often hear the 'Not In My Back Yard' philosophy. Some people say they want a strong defense as long as the Air Force flies somewhere else. However, if you look at a map of the United States, 'somewhere else' doesn't exist."

Clashes between training bases and nearby communities were almost unheard of in the past, when Americans seemed to understand that moving close to a base entailed less serenity and some occasional inconvenience. But tensions have escalated as cities envelope once-remote bases, and an understanding gap widens between the nation's civilian and military cultures. Meanwhile, the evolution of high tech "standoff" weaponry has greatly expanded the size of the modern battlefield, requiring more space in which to train rather than less.

The military services have tried to counter the encroachment threat by becoming better stewards of the lands they manage and by becoming better neighbors to the communities at their gates. Few would argue that the U.S. military has always been a conscientious caretaker of the outdoors, but today it can claim to be a solid environmental citizen, particularly given the inherently destructive nature of its mission.

The Pentagon pumps tens of millions of dollars directly into its endangered species programs today, and probably spends billions of dollars annually on environmental education, monitoring, compliance, and clean-up activities. A large environmental bureaucracy has metastasized within the Department of Defense, demanding the attention of thousands of military personnel and government contractors. The DoD has spent millions of dollars developing lead-free "green" munitions that will be lethal to human targets but pose no health risks to battlefield bunny rabbits. Annual awards are given out by the department highlighting stewardship programs, innovative environmental technologies, and other successes. Officials in the Pentagon now even talk with a straight face about "environmental security" issues.

In 1991, the Navy built a turtle hatchery on Vieques, which incubates eggs collected on daily sweeps of the beach during training exercises. Since then the Navy has hatched more than 17,000 hawksbill and leatherback turtles from the facility and returned them to the wild, contributing to a growth in turtle populations that—in spite of the exercises there—reportedly exceeds any other shoreline in Puerto Rico. North Carolina's Camp Lejeune also has a hatchery for turtle eggs, which biologists remove daily from beaches during training times.

Officials at Camp Lejeune also take pride in the fact that nesting clusters of red-cockaded woodpeckers on the base today number 53, up from 35 just three years ago—"an increase unmatched by any other land manager in eastern North Carolina," Hanlon recently boasted in his testimony. The birds have enjoyed a similar resurgence at the U.S. Army's Fort Jackson, South Carolina which also won a Department of Defense Environmental Security Award last year for its erosion-control projects and tree-planting activities.

The military has taken a leading role in efforts to eradicate the brown tree snake in Guam, an invasive species that has wiped out almost all the native birds on the island. Officials at Fort Carson, Colorado have been working since 1981 with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to improve habitat for the greenback cutthroat trout in the Arkansas River, and even had a broodstock pond constructed for rearing the young fish. On San Clemente Island, California the Navy spends $2.5 million annually for the protection of 42 endangered loggerhead shrike, and keeps 64 of the birds in a captive breeding population. And the population of snowy plovers is growing so rapidly at the SEAL training areas at Coronado Island that officials there reportedly worry that their "success" will lead to even more of the beach being closed to training during nesting season.

The Navy has spent $18 million to study whether active sonar

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Large portions of bases are being cordoned off as protected habitat for creatures ranging from fairy shrimp to horned lizards.

and underwater charges are bothering marine mammals, and has created artificial reefs off Oahu, Hawaii for fish. After a mother and calf West Indian manatee were killed in a collision, the Navy's submarine base at Kings Bay, Georgia outfitted tug boats and other vessels with special propeller guards, and has established no-entry zones in areas the animals are known to frequent. And the Navy has allowed marine biologists to use its once top secret Sound Surveillance System, a string of underwater receivers used during the Cold War to track Soviet subs, to conduct whale research.

The military sometimes goes to what might seem extreme lengths to be seen as good stewards. At Arizona's Barry Goldwater range, exhaustive research has been conducted into the habits of the flat-tailed horned lizard, including when during the day the creatures prefer to lie out on paved roadways, so traffic can be stopped during those times. Military personnel are also present on the range during bombing sorties to wave off planes if pronghorn antelope stray into the vicinity.

Before launching training flights over one Gulf of Mexico bombing range, officials at Florida's Eglin Air Force Base first consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure that gulf sturgeon tagged for research purposes aren't swimming in the range's vicinity. At Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, the service has spent more than $1 million to construct and monitor dozens of shallow mud puddles—scientists call them "vernal pools"—that are habitat for the fairy shrimp, a tiny, supposedly endangered creature that has tied development in knots all across Southern California.

Self-interest and self-preservation have as much to do with such actions as ecological altruism, of course. The Marine Corps and other services accept that aiding endangered species issues is essential—even if it means turning part of a base into a *de facto* nature sanctuary—lest lawsuits or government regulators shut down an entire facility and bring training there to a grinding halt. Camp Pendleton, which since 1994 has seen its number of on-base endangered species rise from ten to 17, was not long ago in peril of losing use of well over half of its 125,000 acres to "critical habitat" designations for endangered species. That's because the Endangered Species Act not only requires the protection of threatened animals, but also preservation of their favorite sites. But the Corps worked cooperatively with the Fish and Wildlife Service to develop a natural resource management plan for the base, thereby avoiding the critical-habitat designation. Environmentalists at the Natural Resources Defense Council consider the compromise a cave-in, and have sued the government to force the effective closure of approximately 70,000 acres of the base. At nearby Air Station Miramar, host to ten endangered species, "critical habitat" designations by Fish and Wildlife also threatened to close nearly two-thirds of the facility, with a potentially devastating impact on operations. The base dodged a bullet when USFW determined the designation was not justified, but that decision has also been challenged in court by the NRDC.

The possibility that the Barry Goldwater range in Arizona might be designated as critical habitat for Sonoran pronghorn antelope could "seriously limit" Air Force use of the range, Major General Buchanan told the Senate. The Navy's representative at the hearing, Vice Admiral Amerault, expressed concern not only over the permanent closure of Vieques, but about the serious impact on readiness if environmentalists also succeed in curtailing the military's use of San Clemente Island and Farallon de Medinilla.

"The [three] ranges are the only U.S.-owned locations on the East and West Coast where both naval surface fire support and air-to-ground training operations can be conducted using live ordnance," Amerault reminded senators. Without use of Farallon de Medinilla, the air wing of the U.S. Seventh Fleet would degrade to "unready" combat status within just six months, according to Amerault. And if the suit filed last December succeeds in blocking use of the atoll, the admiral expressed fear that environmental groups will bring similar suits against every other naval training facility where migratory birds are found.

At the same hearing, Army Major General Van Antwerp warned that "while we have been successful at managing endangered species, some of these actions have come at the expense of training capabilities." He expressed "great concern" that the forced closure by the EPA of firing ranges at the Massachusetts Military Reservation set a precedent that could severely affect military readiness if followed elsewhere. "The potential impact of further administrative cease-fire orders cannot be measured," said Van Antwerp, who suggested that the EPA shut down the facility without a basis in sound science.

For his part, Major General Hanlon of the Marines told senators that the service "cannot be expected to shoulder a disproportionate share of environmental protection and still meet our readiness requirements." As a result of environmental restrictions that lessen the realism of military exercises, "we are training a generation of Marines who will have less experience in the intricacies of combat operations," he added. "Many of today's junior leaders may initially face the full challenges of combat not during training, but during conflict," the Camp Pendleton commander warned.

Hanlon asked that members of Congress "consider the unique nature of military activities when developing or reauthorizing these [environmental] laws." One top congressional staffer involved in the issue suggests that "the key thing we need is genuine balance and some legal middle ground, where you build in enough flexibility to allow the military to do the things it needs to do to do its job." This will require reform of the Endangered Species Act and other environmental laws. But unless some kind of détente can be struck between military bases and encroaching civilian communities, the alternative is an endless series of legal battles and public relations skirmishes, and an ever-constricting horizon within which U.S. troops can train for their critical and dangerous service to the nation.

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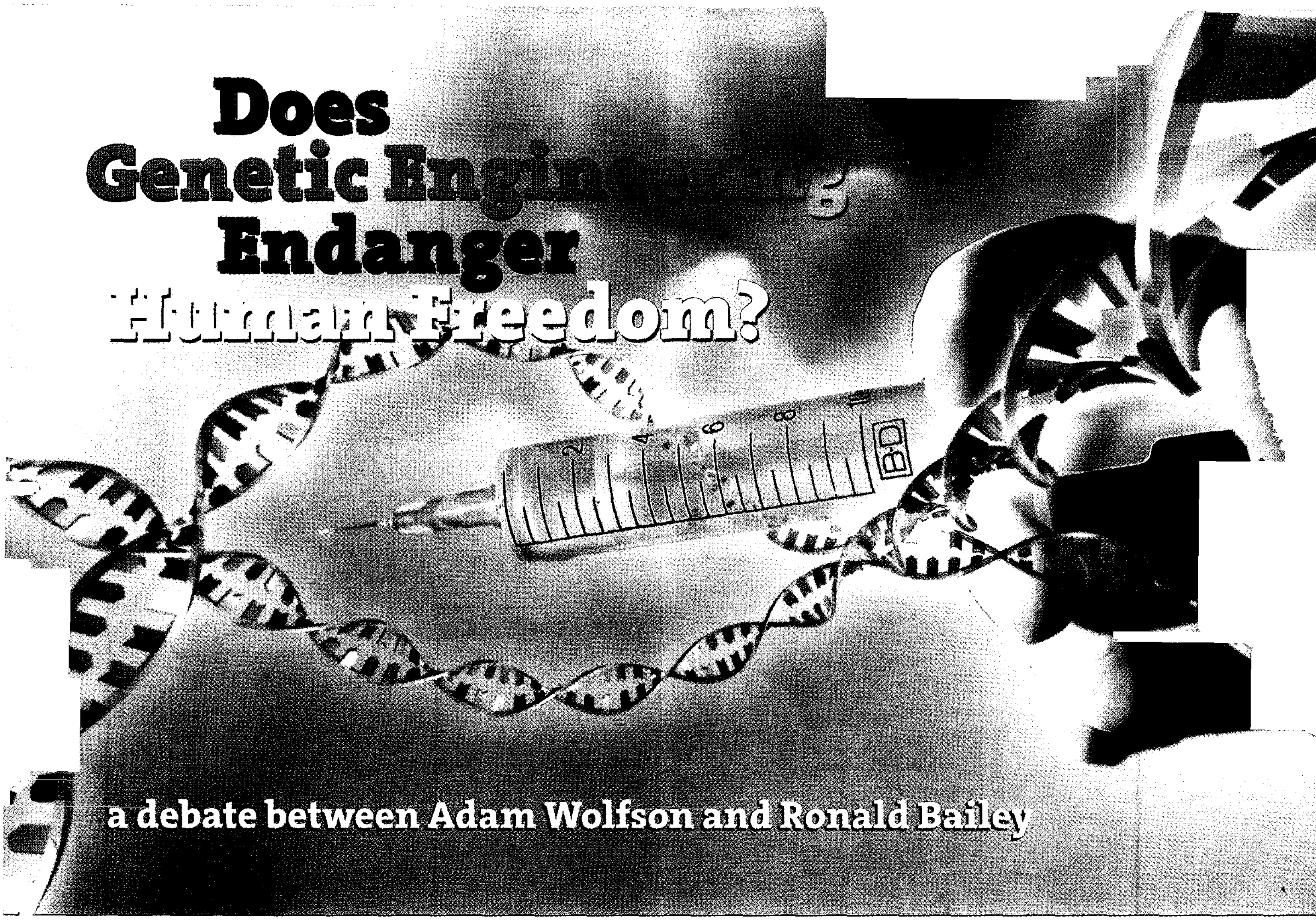

Does Genetic Engineering Endanger Human Freedom?

a debate between Adam Wolfson and Ronald Bailey

Adam Wolfson:

In *The Republic*, Socrates suggests, tongue firmly in cheek, that rulers should be bred scientifically, just as dogs, cocks, and horses are. The proposal was meant to be ludicrous. Yet today we are seriously debating whether a good way of making a horse is also a good way of making a man.

The taboo against manipulation of the human species through genetics, in place since the Nazi genocide, is breaking down. Even conservative publications like *National Review* and the *Wall Street Journal* have run articles defending aspects of the new eugenics.

There are many reasons for this breakdown, the most benign of which are the rapid advances in genetic science. The mapping of the human genome last year and numerous other breakthroughs promise exciting new medical treatments.These are obviously good things. I know of no one who wishes to halt such advances as long as they are pursued responsibly. Instead, the debate centers around something deeper: the thoroughgoing genetic transformation of man.

Harvard professor E. O. Wilson has claimed that within even the next several decades, we will enter an era of "volitional evolution," in which it will be possible to alter human intelligence and the very core of human nature itself—our basic drives and emotions. (Wilson opposes doing any such thing and argues for correcting only clear-cut genetic defects.)

It is in the ethics of such futuristic eugenics that the tensions between liberal civilization and genetic engineering are most clearly visible. Thus when I use the terms "genetic engineering" and "eugenics," I am referring to the genetic transformation of man, not to the medical treatment of disease. In what follows, I will draw on arguments first made by C.S. Lewis, Hans Jonas, and Leon Kass.

Liberals argue that scientists should be free to pursue their research without prohibition or restriction. The philosopher Ronald Dworkin, for example, argues that the principle of individualism "forbids...hobbling the scientists and doctors who volunteer to lead" the eugenic effort.

Yet freedom of inquiry in the context of genetic engineering is no simple matter. The genetic engineer attempting to improve the species asks for more than freedom of thought: He is directly intervening in our society's future. Remember, his discoveries come about only through experiments—on human beings. The end he seeks is alteration of the human condition. In both his methods and his goals, the genetic engineer's investigations intimately involve him in society, politics, and the private lives of individuals. His freedom, therefore, cannot be absolute.

Consider cloning. Many animal clones suffer from severe abnormalities: fatty livers and oversized placentas; monstrously enlarged navels and various head deformities; defective

Adam Wolfson is executive editor of The Public Interest.

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