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## SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO? THE POST-COLD WAR U.S. ARMY PERSONNEL DILEMMA *Charles R. Miller*

The U.S. Army of the 1990s is over-employed and under-resourced. Despite the absence of a major threat, soldiers have spent more nights away from home during the past eight years than in any previous era. The pace of deployments, mostly for support, stability, and peace operations, is wearing out soldiers and their equipment. At the same time, soldiers and their units are witnessing a degradation of their individual and collective combat skills as they play peacekeepers rather than warriors. The Army is working on its problems, but it will need the support of policy makers to achieve lasting effects. Policy makers must learn to “just say no” to questionable deployments or they risk losing the best and brightest young officers and not having a combat-proficient Army the next time they need one.

### INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the Cold War, the Army has undergone tremendous changes in response to the diminution of the Soviet threat against which the majority of training, strategy, and structure had been geared. The end of the Cold War was seen as no different from the end of nearly every other American war. The defense budget was cut, the force structure was downsized, and American forward-deployed forces began disengaging,

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*Charles R. Miller is a Master of International Affairs candidate at the School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University.*

though in a reduced manner compared to past conflicts. This drawdown, however, was to be different from those of past eras in one important way. Whereas drawdowns after World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam led to military force atrophy and unreadiness, this time the policy makers were determined not to repeat those mistakes. Referring to the inadequate, piecemeal force that was thrown together at the beginning of the Korean war, senior leaders used “No More Task Force Smiths,” as a rallying cry against the dangers of hollow forces that do not maintain combat proficiency during peacetime. Operational readiness assumed primacy as the supreme goal, not to be sacrificed on the altar of budget cuts.<sup>1</sup>

The senior officers of the Army during this era were nearly all Vietnam veterans who had seen the Army progress from its worst—the post-Vietnam 1970s drug-ridden, untrained, unmotivated draftee force—to its best—the late 1980s well-trained, highly motivated, and fully capable volunteer force. No one doubted that the Peace Dividend should be reaped. Only this time the conventional wisdom was that the United States should maintain a capable, albeit smaller, military that could overwhelm any enemy on the battlefield, thereby ending the tradition of a first battle defeat of American forces.

Since the end of the Gulf War, the drawdown has continued with the requisite reductions in troop strength and the painful rounds of base closings. The Army has maintained a keen war-fighting edge through intense home station training, deployments, and combat training center rotations. What the policy makers did not foresee, however, were the incremental demands that built up at a gradual rate—demands that have stretched a much-reduced force to an unsustainable level. These demands led to increased deployments and use of forces and a corresponding surge in personnel tempo (PERSTEMP), which is simply defined as the frequency and duration of individual soldiers’ deployments and training. High PERSTEMP resulting from the prolonged, unexpected use of soldiers has cumulative effects on readiness, morale, and quality of life.

It is without question that the Army of the end of the Cold War was a superb one. Its planners, executors, and logisticians displayed tremendous operational successes, first during the invasion of Panama and next during the Persian Gulf War. The challenge was to maintain the abilities of that Army, on a reduced scale, by using the lessons learned from those conflicts and by maintaining a core of competent, battle-tested veterans at both the officer and enlisted levels who could lead the Army into the twenty-first century.

This paper will argue that current U.S. foreign policy, in which U.S. armed forces intervene routinely in only nominally security-related missions, is damaging the core personnel structure of the Army due to overuse. This is driving many of the best and brightest young officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) from the ranks. Losing this leadership will in the short-term harm readiness, and in the long term hurt overall quality. The trend is not so deeply ingrained that it cannot be reversed. Once having demonstrated that there is indeed a problem with current policy, this paper will offer a policy prescription designed to maintain the United States' role in the world, eliminate overuse of troops, and augment the personnel structure.

### ACCELERATING TROOP DEPLOYMENTS

Mio Franceschi, a young staff sergeant Ranger instructor at Fort Benning, Georgia, sports six rows of decorations, a display normally only seen on general officers or very senior sergeants major. A closer examination of his service record shows that since 1991, he is a veteran of Desert Storm in Southwest Asia, Joint Task Force Bravo in Honduras, the Multi-National Forces and Observers peacekeeping mission in the Sinai, Operation Restore Hope in Somalia, and Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti.<sup>2</sup> A normal training cycle would dictate that he spend roughly three months per year away from his home station. During a 52-month period, however, Franceschi had been physically deployed away from his home station for 31 months, with the majority of the remaining time consumed by pre- or post-deployment activities or routine training. Although this soldier is an extreme example, a sizable majority of other troops in his unit have served in two or three of those missions or similar ones. While this level and quality of experience of veterans is exactly what the organization strives for in its young leaders, the question arises as to whether the organization can maintain its key young leaders with this pace of operations without eventually pushing them toward burnout (Cohen 1997, 6:2).

Before addressing the personnel ramifications, this paper will establish that the Army, regardless of what a casual observer might surmise, has increased the pace of deployments since the end of the Cold War. Between 1950 and 1989 the Army underwent 10 contingency deployments. These deployments covered the entire spectrum of the geostrategic environment, ranging from the domestic peace end, where soldiers provided civil support during and after the riots of the late 1960s in Detroit, Chicago, and Los Angeles, through the security assistance, peacekeeping, and non-combatant evacuation operations of Lebanon, the Sinai, and the Domini-

can Republic, respectively, all the way to the combat end in Panama, Grenada, Vietnam, and Korea. In addition to these contingencies, soldiers during the Cold War maintained combat readiness by participating in routine training at their home stations as well as in yearly scheduled deployment exercises to Germany and Korea. In comparison to that era, however, the Army has conducted contingency deployments 25 times since 1990, while also attempting to conduct normal training. Deployments during this time have been similar, also spanning the spectrum, although the majority was focused in the lower to middle range.

The Army has provided domestic support after hurricanes and riots, maintained peacekeeping in the Sinai, conducted humanitarian missions in Africa, restored democracy in Haiti, enforced peace in Bosnia, and fought a shooting war in Southwest Asia (West and Reimer 1997, 42). Although these recent deployments may not be easily compared to protracted hot wars like Vietnam and Korea, they nonetheless require a significant number of soldiers as well as the transportation and logistics capabilities needed to move them and their equipment. In 1989, there were 18 active army divisions and an active force of 769,700 as opposed to 1996 when there were 10 active Army divisions and 499,145 soldiers (DOD 1995, 27 and 1997, 17).

This structural drawdown of the number of soldiers as well as the equipment with which soldiers are deployed and sustained has placed a tremendous burden on a pool of soldiers and resources that is in a nearly continuous deployment cycle. As demands increased, soldiers faced virtual "alert fatigue" despite the absence of a major threat (Betts 1995, 75). The Army has provided the bulk of personnel for diverse missions over the past seven years, even while taking the brunt of force cuts. If one considers just five of the most noted operations, Just Cause (Panama), Desert Storm, Hurricane Andrew relief, Uphold Democracy (Haiti), and Joint Endeavor (Bosnia), the Army provided the vast majority of the forces involved (West and Reimer 1997, 2). Thus, as the most visible tool of U.S. foreign policy, soldiers will certainly continue to be a valuable asset in the post-Cold War period, for nothing makes as strong of a statement about U.S. intentions as "muddy boots on the ground."<sup>3</sup>

### **DECLINING REENLISTMENT AND RETENTION**

Given that the number and rate of Army deployments has increased since the end of the Cold War, the personnel question must be addressed in depth. At first glance, the personnel problem might seem to be an obvious one on which to find data, and plenty of sources do exist. Like most

statistics, however, the personnel numbers can be massaged to give different appearances depending on the purpose of the statistic. The result can be conflicting interpretations of the data. From the haze of selected numbers, however, it is becoming clear that high PERSTEMP causes retention challenges. The attention that PERSTEMP is receiving at the highest levels provides further evidence that the problem is indeed real and not imaginary.

Reenlistment among soldiers is one of the key indicators of the less tangible factors of morale and quality of life (Cohen 1997, 6:1). An examination of the published data from recent years shows a definite downward trend in both areas of reenlistment. The first area is first term reenlistment, which refers to those who have completed their initial service contract and must decide whether to continue past the initial two, three, or four years. The second area is career reenlistment, which refers to those who have served at least two terms and are facing their second, or multiple, reenlistment. The numbers for Army first term reenlistment, defined as the percentage of those eligible who reenlist, are shown in Figure 1, and the numbers for career reenlistment are given in Figure 2.

These figures provide a vivid illustration of the depth of the issue. Both sets of data show a relatively constant rate during the Cold War. The downward spike expected at the conclusion of the Gulf War is also clearly visible in both charts in the 1992 column when the brunt of the drawdown began. At that time, many veterans, having completed their tours of duty in the Gulf War, left in droves for the civilian sector. Given the drawdown, one would have expected a couple of years of lower than normal rates, followed by a gradual upward-sloping curve, returning to more normal

**Figure 1** Reenlistments of First-Term Soldiers

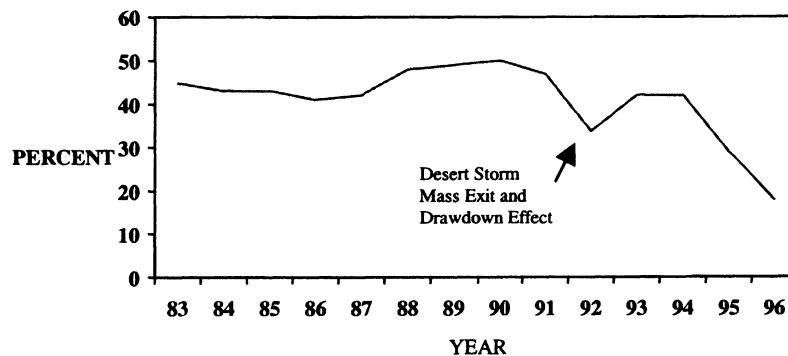
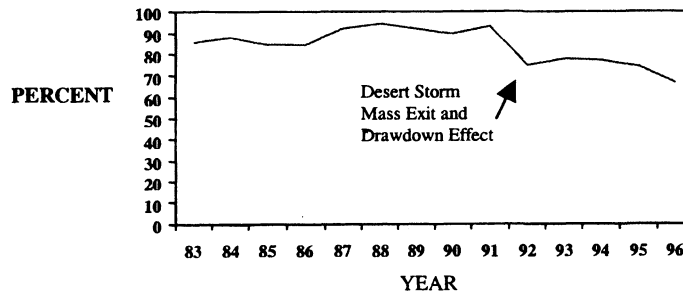


Figure 2 Reenlistments of Career Soldiers



Source: DOD 1995, 27 and 1997, 22.<sup>4</sup>

levels once the current force was shaped. Although basing a conclusion on data from 1996 alone is tenuous, the rates nonetheless indicate that even though the drawdown is over, a larger problem of a deflating rate exists. The effects of both the drawdown and the recently booming economy cannot be discounted. Indeed, the historically low rate of unemployment has certainly played a significant role. However, given the pace of deployments during this same time frame, one can conclude that even if the pace is not the primary factor, it plays, at least, an important role in the causal chain.

While the data is sometimes ambiguous, it is generally accepted that it does show problems in the personnel area. Three unnamed sources in the Pentagon have all stated that PERSTEMP is one of the major concerns, one stating that it is one of the “top three” concerns for the Secretary of Defense.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, an aide to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff stated that PERSTEMP is a “very hot issue indeed with Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff level attention and emphasis.”<sup>6</sup> The fact that the PERSTEMP issue is a matter of concern at the highest levels is indeed a strong indication that the problem is not a misperception and that it cannot be wished away.

### POLICY PRESCRIPTION

Given that the personnel structure of the Army is suffering from overuse, a policy prescription is in order. Any new policy must agree with the “shape, respond, prepare” tenets of operations as outlined in the 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review, and must simultaneously relieve soldiers of unnecessary deployments where no national interest is at stake (Hillen 1997, 243). The recommended policy prescription begins with the

“demand reduction” component and then addresses the “supply increase” component, which primarily concerns personnel incentives.

### **Demand Reduction**

One way to address the PERSTEMP problem is through demand reduction, that is, limiting the number of deployments for American soldiers. To provide meaningful demand reduction while simultaneously providing optimal quality of life for its personnel, the U.S. Army should adopt a general policy that the average soldier in a combat arms unit will be deployed no more than three times per year away from his or her home post, for a total period of no more than six months. While uncertainty in the international arena could override this principle, the training base upon which it can be built is nonetheless valid. The demand on the average combat arms unit, as well as the demands on the often more overstressed combat service support units, can be decreased through the elimination of certain non-war operations, through an initiative to train regional peacekeepers either in the United States or the specific region, and through the conduct of short duration joint training deployments with foreign armies.

The Army has provided a significant number of soldiers to keep, make, and enforce peace over the past decades. While the senior leadership has stated that when the “interests at stake are primarily humanitarian in nature, the U.S. military is generally not the best means of addressing a crisis,” policy makers have nonetheless committed forces to humanitarian operations where the threat to U.S. security interests was minimal (Cohen 1997, 3:3). The Army responded well in nearly every case, displaying its excellent state of training and logistics abilities, and leaders at every level demonstrated the required flexibility to shift focus from war-fighting missions. Recent examples include Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia, none of which had any direct impact on the security of the United States and were primarily related to issues of “social, political, and economic conditions within borders” (Mandelbaum 1996, 17–18). Somalia began as a starvation relief mission that later changed with tragic consequences. But given that the structures necessary to alleviate long-term suffering are tremendous, a small force of a few thousand soldiers could not hope to give Somalia what it needed—a stable, democratic government.

In Haiti, under the rubric of relieving oppression, the United States talked a dictator out of office and reinstalled a legally elected leader, although critics have branded the operation a mere consequence of pressure from one U.S. interest group (Mandelbaum 1996, 21). The prospects for democracy in Haiti are still dubious, not because of the

Army, which performed its missions splendidly by all accounts, but because of that nation's historical experience and corruption, not to mention the level of poverty which a year-long embargo arguably made worse for ordinary citizens rather than those in power.

Finally, in Bosnia, given a dearth of European leadership, the United States committed its troops in accordance with the Dayton agreement which, for the time being, has stopped the war in the region. The premise that hostilities in the region could again lead to a world war is doubtful at best, given the vastly different political situation in Europe now as compared to 1914. Many observers believe that the war will flare up again once U.S. troops withdraw, leaving the United States in a position of either keeping a force permanently there, as in Korea, or leaving the region to its own devices.

In all of these missions, policy makers had good intentions. Due to the host nations' internal problems, however, the end results of these good intentions have not always been the ones desired. This has led to frustration and a decline in U.S. forces' combat training proficiency in exchange for what are, at best, marginal long-term foreign policy results.

Other peacekeeping missions have been successes. The best example is the Multinational Forces and Observer mission in the Sinai. Established in 1975 as a result of the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, the mission involves the Army sending one light infantry battalion for six months at a time to occupy defensive positions and deter any further confrontations. This rotation takes a combat-ready battalion from the Army for a period of six months and breaks it down into squad level units which observe the desert from pre-positioned fortifications. While this mission is prestigious and gives small unit leaders great opportunities for personal advancement, the negative effects are greater than just the detriments to collective training at higher levels in that battalion alone. For each battalion in the Sinai there is a second that has just finished the mission and must recover and retrain and a third that is getting ready to deploy to replace them.

A recent success story downplayed by active forces but advertised by the reserves was the completion of a Sinai mission by a predominantly reserve unit (Lane 1995, 33). This could set a good precedent for reserve use and free up active forces to pursue training, but it has a minor impact on the overall picture. A better policy would be to end the mission all together. While a politically sensitive idea, no one expects Egypt and Israel, the two biggest recipients of foreign aid from the United States, to fight each other again. The United States could use coercive economic measures tied to the aid if any threats arise. Furthermore, the United States could place infantry



on the ground within days should hostilities begin to grow. The possibility that a withdrawal of troops could have a destabilizing effect on the region could be minimized by shorter-term deployments to the region combined with joint training exercises with the currently involved parties.

Another area where American forces might be spared is in the drug interdiction realm. The United States currently uses its forces along the Mexican border in a passive role to observe the border and report suspicious activity to local law enforcement officials. Not only is this system inefficient given the piecemeal approach and difficult communications between agencies, but it also approaches the threshold of violating *posse comitatus*, the restriction against using armed forces for civilian law enforcement. The recent case of a Marine shooting a simple shepherd is but a precursor of worse things to come should the effort intensify. The flow of illicit drugs into the United States is a function of basic economics. As long as demand remains high, sellers will find a way to supply that demand, even if the United States were to put exponentially more troops along the southern land borders of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California.

Ending these missions would not only alleviate potential problems with military-civil relations, but would free up similar numbers of troops as the Sinai mission, roughly three to four battalions each year. The monetary impact, measured in several millions of dollars, may not appear significant in a \$260 billion budget. However, the rewards that units would reap by being able to focus on war-fighting skills and maintaining collective readiness would justify this approach. With the elimination of just these two missions, the United States could meet the first part of the policy prescription. Freed from dubious missions, these troops would be able to train and maintain operational readiness without undue burnout.

In line with John Hillen's "Superpowers Don't Do Windows" argument, the next danger lurks in regional peacekeeping, primarily in Europe, but also in other regions. Again, Bosnia is a prime case where there was no outside power capable of the organization and leadership required to remedy the situation. To minimize the need for U.S. involvement in such situations in the future, a peacekeeping academy should be established to bring foreign units to the United States for training so that they can return to a region and maintain peace without U.S. troops. A recent nascent example of this was an exercise at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) in Fort Polk, Louisiana, in which over 4,000 troops from three NATO and 14 Partnership for Peace countries, primarily from Eastern Europe and former Soviet republics, participated in a three-week peace-

keeping training mission, which stressed human rights, treatment of non-combatants, use of interpreters, and stability operations (Ide 1995, 17).

U.S. forces possess the expertise, planning ability, and budget to accomplish this type of mission. With only minimal expansion of the facilities at Fort Polk, training could be designed that would bring in foreign troops twice per year, train them in basic methods, and then conduct a practical exercise. JRTC would provide its standard take-home evaluations, and could even provide advisors for future actual use situations. The United States could afford to substantially, if not fully, subsidize this training center, using the same funds with which it would have deployed its own troops. Not only would this relieve pressure on U.S. troops and free them to concentrate on more combat-related tasks, it would help the U.S. military establish a much better rapport with foreign armies and regional coalitions. Of particular importance, of course, would be the former Soviet states, including Russia, given the disintegration which that region has experienced. Helping those countries to professionalize their militaries and provide their own regional peacekeepers would serve as a key factor in promoting stability and democratic values throughout that part of the world.

The final part of the policy prescription, in addition to the reduction of extraneous missions and the training of regional actors as peacekeepers, is for the United States to conduct regional exercises with various foreign armies. In this manner, the United States would maintain its position as military leader while simultaneously demonstrating to foreign governments that our troops are well-trained and highly mobile, and have lost none of their war-fighting edge. These deployments should be short, intense, and high profile. Using the media to highlight troop capabilities during each exercise, the United States could establish better relations in much the same manner as the peacekeeping academy.

The regional deployments should again focus on the former Soviet states and China, in effect maintaining close ties with those considered near peers. A good example is the recent exercise in Kazakhstan in which paratroopers from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, flew 7,700 miles in 19 hours to participate in a six-day training exercise for peacekeeping and humanitarian aid operations. Soldiers who had been on opposite sides during the Cold War participated together in such diverse training as "controlling hostile crowds, guarding airfields, manning vehicle checkpoints, and identifying mines" (82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne 1997, 55).

Missions of this type would serve many functions. On the humanitarian side, they would reinforce worldwide standards of behavior for

treatment of non-combatants and peacekeeping as well as letting soldiers and officers from various forces share personal and professional insights and build a greater bond and respect for each other. On the practical side, the exercises would test high level staffs and their planning ability as well as the logistics structure needed to support such long distance operations. Finally, on the political side, the United States would repeatedly show the readiness of its forces and their projection capability, sending the not-so-subtle hint, particularly to troubled regions, that if needed, our forces still possess unmatched capability, lethality, and technology.

By relieving troops of questionable missions and allowing them to train, and by providing regional powers the capabilities to police themselves, the demand reduction portion of the policy prescription would allow the United States to demonstrate its commitment to the world through short duration, high impact missions without getting caught up in long duration, small impact, social work missions. It would remain perfectly clear that our forces maintain a razor edge, and such a policy would not in any way represent a retreat from leadership that could again throw the world into chaos.

### **Supply Increase**

A second, complementary way to address the PERSTEMP problem would be to increase the supply of personnel through a system of incentives. To ensure that the force of the future is more than adequate, policy makers must address the needs of the current force and provide reasons for bright young people to join and stay. The personnel incentive system would expand into many branches, all under the heading of quality of life: compensation, housing, health care, family support, retirement benefits, and education (Dickey 1997). A balanced approach in these areas would provide the basic support required for the highly-trained professional soldiers of the volunteer force who implement the country's policy.

Although each of the quality of life issues is important, only pay, health care, and retirements will be examined, as the others present less of an incentive for people to join and are better handled within the existing framework by commanders and staffs. Additionally, the education bonus for enlisting will gradually become less of a factor in recruiting due to the downsizing of the force. Although the Army will continue to recruit bright, young people, it will require 35 percent fewer soldiers while being able to select from a similar number of applicants as in the past. This will minimize the need in the future for the larger incentives offered in the days of the Cold War and the 18-division Army.

Compensation has always been a hot topic for the military, particularly given what has been perceived as the pay gap between civilians and the military. While the difference was almost eliminated in 1982 after a 14 percent boost, the gap has since widened and is currently estimated at 13 percent. The fact that a majority of soldiers come from poor backgrounds is no reason to let the disparity widen. No one expects another double digit increase, but given the apparent decline in other benefits of service, it is not unreasonable to maintain annual raises above the inflation rate, much like the three percent raise in base pay in fiscal year 1997 (West and Reimer 1997, 44).

Also in the quality of life arena is health care, which is in a state of flux. Many soldiers feel confused or mistreated by the system, which is in the difficult situation of preparing for massive wartime injuries while in reality treating normal patients consisting of soldiers, their family members, and retirees (CBO 1995, xi-xii). Nothing is more frustrating for a young soldier than to have his or her family members sit for hours waiting for routine care, yet as the current system is configured, that is likely to happen. The Army is revamping much of its health care under the new TRICARE plan, which is a managed care system designed to cut out-of-pocket health care expenses while giving soldiers some choice of doctors (West and Reimer 1995, 43). While the jury on TRICARE is still out, some critics believe that it is a mere band-aid for the larger structural problem and that health care will not improve significantly without radical structural change (CBO 1995, 28). Meanwhile, health care problems and concerns will not dissolve, and it must remain a priority to care for past, present, and future soldiers. The Army needs to devote more time and energy to this critical area and address the TRICARE concerns and the desire for radical change expressed by the Congressional Budget Office.

The discussion of health care concerns leads into the final area of quality of life analysis—retirement benefits. Many young soldiers are sold on the notion that they can join, serve twenty years, and retire at age 40 with full medical benefits, young enough to find another job. One would suspect that recruiters rarely highlight the fact that retirees are last in priority for medical care at Army facilities. The generation of Vietnam veterans will soon reach the age range in which demands on the health care system will jump, leading to more complaints. Even as the health care benefits for retirees appear to be eroding, so do the pay benefits. The retirement pay reforms enacted in the 1980s “have reduced the lifetime value of retired pay for newer service members by 26 percent” (West and Reimer 1997, 47). When combined with a staggering pace of deployments, questionable

medical care, and reduced pay for dirty and dangerous work, one can certainly expect service members to question the reenlistment option. Each of these areas requires further work. The Army has identified the problem at the senior leader level and will address each feature. As it continues to study the problem, however, it must ensure that pay raises do outpace inflation, that families are cared for, and that retirees are respected and helped for their loyal years of service to the nation.

Despite the negatives outlined here, the Army is still a motivated, capable, well- trained force, largely because of the vision of its senior leaders and the aptitude of its junior leaders. All is not bleak. Each year tens of thousands of young persons sign up for service for a variety of reasons. At the end of his or her tenure, whether for 2 years or 20, each soldier, with few exceptions, becomes a productive citizen. The Army has always been a way out for many disadvantaged members of society. As such, it has been a model for the rest of society as members are routinely given the opportunity for increased responsibility and promotion regardless of skin color, socio-economic status, or religion. Indeed, minorities are represented in the services in a greater proportion than in society, as illustrated by the fact that 42 percent of enlisted Army soldiers are minorities (DOD 1997, 20). While overall opportunities have decreased given the draw-down, the Army will remain an enormous engine for social progress. The key is to prevent further damage to its personnel structure and allow those seeking responsibility and leadership to do so without undue stress.

## CONCLUSION

The Quadrennial Defense Review defines the fundamentals of military power today and in the future as “quality people, ready forces, and superior organization, doctrine, and technology” (Cohen 1997, 2). The first component of the definition, and the one that drives the other two, is paramount. Without good soldiers there will not be ready forces, and without good soldiers it matters not how well the force is organized, how superior the doctrine, nor how great the technology. Because “the most essential element of combat power is competent and confident leadership” (U.S. Army Infantry School 1992, 1), the Army cannot afford to damage its core personnel structure over time through over-commitment of forces. Yet, this is precisely what is happening at present. The suggested policy will alleviate pressure on those who need it most, the soldiers who volunteer to serve their country.

In the long-run, the nation may be able to survive with many fewer soldiers given the technological advances which will occur. Direct action

infantrymen, who will see manpower-intensive urban combat and respond to asymmetrical threats, will, however, always be required (Weiner 1997, A25). Indeed, as technology and the revolution in military affairs indicate, quality people who can maintain the warrior spirit even if no longer in direct action roles will be even more important in the future as they strive to keep pace with the complexity of operations found in the developing command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C<sup>4</sup>ISR) structure (Cohen 1996, 49). The “fog of war” will never become completely transparent using technology. It will become much clearer, however, as forces progress to the point where a future infantry squad has the lethality of a current company (Future of Warfare 1997, 22). But until that day is reached, the Army must take care of its people and groom the junior officers and NCOs who will implement those advances so that they are not destroyed in the process.

The Army currently has the talented cadre of veterans at the junior officer and NCO level needed to take it forward to its twenty-first century goals. Although battle-tested and dedicated, these young leaders are not machines. They have families and needs, and cannot remain healthy physically or emotionally if the current pace of deployments continues. America cannot afford to drive these leaders from the service. While it may be fashionable to believe in a democratic peace or the end of history, the Army cannot afford to be so optimistic, nor should the country want it to be, given that there has yet to be an unbloodied generation of Americans. The end of the Cold War was not a tragic event; indeed, it has relieved millions of the yoke of oppression. Nevertheless, policy makers must be careful not to misread it as an excuse to downsize forces while simultaneously increasing questionable demands that may drive out the best and brightest. Should the current trend continue, America could pay a price in blood in the future that, with a little common sense, it could pay with a small amount of resources and attention now.

### Notes

I would like to thank Richard Betts and David Petraeus for many helpful comments and edits. This paper is solely my opinion and does not represent the official views of either the U.S. Army or the Department of Defense.

<sup>1</sup>From a speech by then Chief of Staff of the Army General Gordon R. Sullivan to the U.S. Army Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia in December 1995 which the author attended. On his farewell tour of Army installations General Sullivan continually stressed the importance of operational readiness.

<sup>2</sup>Staff Sergeant Mio Franceschi is a Ranger Instructor in Company A, 4<sup>th</sup> Ranger Training Battalion, Fort Benning, Georgia. Interview conducted in the fall of 1996.

<sup>3</sup>See Philip Shenon, "Army Official Creates Furor Calling Marines 'Extremists,'" *The New York Times* 14 November 1997: A30. The remark "muddy boots on the ground" is common throughout the Army, but is attributed most recently to Sara Lister, former Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, and highlights some of the ongoing organizational culture rivalry between the Army and the Marines.

<sup>4</sup>The data for 1996 is courtesy of a telephone interview with Mrs. Adriana Lipman, of the U.S. Organization Chart Service, Inc. in La Jolla, CA, and will be published in the DOD *1998 Fact Book* in January 1998.

<sup>5</sup>From briefings received on a non-attribution basis during a Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs International Security Policy field trip to Washington, D.C., 3 November 1997.

<sup>6</sup>From Colonel David Petraeus in an e-mail message sent to the author in November 1997.

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