

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**ARMY TRANSFORMATION: ITS LONG-TERM ABILITY TO SUPPORT THE
NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY**

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ABSTRACT

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Military power is an essential instrument of national power, often reserved for those crises in which other forms of national power have been ineffective in protecting national interests. The Bush Administration's effort to forge a new world order and fight global terrorism requires the utilization of the full range of national power in an era "more open, complex, diverse, interconnected and risky than ever before." The Cold War containment strategy is no longer effective in an environment of rogue nations, strong nationalistic sentiments, international criminal and terrorist organizations, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. After analysis of our national interests, security strategy, and expected roles of the Army, the Army must continue its transformation efforts to a modular force to counter these complex 21st century threats. It is often argued that the Army is personnel "centric", and is therefore susceptible to external influences that could fundamentally affect its efforts to transform itself. Culture constitutes one such key influence. This strategy research project (SRP) argues that the Army must address these cultural influences in order to maintain a force generation model that will ensure its role as a viable tool for the protection of our national interests.

ARMY TRANSFORMATION: ITS LONG-TERM ABILITY TO SUPPORT THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

Military power is an essential instrument of national power, often reserved for those crises in which other forms of national power have been ineffective in protecting national interests. The Bush Administration's effort to forge a new world order and fight global terrorism requires the utilization of the full range of national power in an era "more open, complex, diverse, interconnected and risky than ever before."¹ The Cold War containment strategy – relying upon a balance of military power, alliances, and nuclear deterrence – prevailed several decades until the collapse of the Soviet Union, leaving the United States with the strongest threat-based military force in the world. However, a containment strategy is not effective in an environment of rogue nations, strong nationalistic sentiments, international criminal and terrorist organizations, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.² The U.S. military must restructure to counter these complex 21st century threats. When the other principal instruments of national power fail to protect national interests, our leaders may consider a range of possible military engagements with an assortment of missions, each requiring a different configuration of military force. When the diplomatic, economic, and law enforcement options prove ineffective in securing national interests, military power – strong, flexible, and rapidly deployable – is essential to the successful achievement of the U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS). After analysis of our national interests, security strategy, and expected roles of the Army, the Army must continue its transformation efforts to a modular force.

It is often argued that the Army is more personnel "centric" than the Navy or Air Force, and is therefore more susceptible to external influences that could fundamentally affect its efforts to transform itself to meet requirements of our National Security Strategy. Culture constitutes one such key influence that will significantly impact the Army's ability to transform and sustain itself. This strategy research project (SRP) argues that the Army must address these cultural influences in order to maintain a force generation model that will ensure its role as a viable tool for the protection of our national interests.

National Interests in a Changing World

Identifying the national interests can be extremely difficult, but their identification is a critical initial step in developing an effective national security strategy. Fortunately for the Bush Administration, the fundamental national interests have not changed significantly over the last 20 years, reflecting the enduring values held by Americans.³ "The survival of the United States as a free and independent nation, with its fundamental values intact and its institutions and

people secure⁴ is a vital interest that can never be compromised. Recently President Bush proclaimed that “America’s vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one . . . [that] every man and woman on this earth has rights, and dignity, and matchless value . . . [and that] we have proclaimed the imperative of self-government, because no one is fit to be a master, and no one deserves to be a slave,”⁵ thereby identifying another important national interest of promoting self-governance. Promotion of free trade and free markets is also a vital interest as globalization has proven its “ability to lift whole societies out of poverty.”⁶ The 400% explosion of the global economy to \$47 trillion since 1975⁷ has fundamentally changed the interactions among nations and their citizens. All of these interests are bound together by the vital interest of democratic development, based on the recognition that “democratic governments are more likely to cooperate with each other against common threats and to encourage free and open trade and economic development – and less likely to wage war or abuse the rights of their people.”⁸ Although these national interests may not have changed over the last two decades, the global environment is constantly changing and requires a National Security Strategy capable of leveraging the various instruments of national power if the United States is to forge a new world order supportive of democratic development and free market trade.

This era is quite different from the Cold War past. Although the world was in danger of widespread destruction under the demonstrated capabilities of mutually assured destruction, the superpowers exhibited exceptional restraint in resolving disputes.⁹ Threats posed by nationalist movements, ethnic rivalries, religious extremism, terrorism, multi-national crime organizations, and information-age technologies are no longer subject to Cold War bi-polar control.¹⁰ The United Nations (UN) now faces increasing regional crises requiring peacemakers, peacekeepers, and humanitarian providers. The United States, the only remaining superpower, now finds itself deploying military forces throughout the world in an ever-increasing spectrum of operations. Furthermore, U.S. and UN forces currently deploy to rogue and failed states unwilling or unable to maintain an environment conducive to protecting human rights and international rule of law. “Malnutrition, illiteracy and poverty put dangerous pressures on democratic institutions as hungry, uneducated or poorly housed citizens are ripe for radicalization by movements of the left and the right.”¹¹ Our National Security Strategy has evolved to address this new dimension of conflict – dealing with non-state actors as well as emerging, rogue, and failed states.

Determining the Appropriate National Security Strategy

Societies in the 21st century are significantly different than their Cold War counterparts. The industrial and technological revolutions in the 20th century significantly changed the fabric of societies – changing where people lived, what types of professions they engaged in, the nature of commerce, how they communicated within the state, and their knowledge of other cultures. Furthermore, the end of the Cold War left a global leadership void and thereby opened opportunities for nationalist movements and disorder in several regions, including the Balkans and Africa.¹² Carl Von Clausewitz, a noted military theorist, stressed that “every age had its own kind of war, its own limiting conditions, and its own peculiar preconceptions.”¹³

In an increasingly interconnected global environment, U.S. strategy has a significant impact on our allies and developing countries. “The 20th century has taught us that security is indivisible. The safety, freedom and well-being of one people cannot be separated from the safety, freedom and well-being of all.”¹⁴ As the remaining superpower, the United States must develop the most effective strategy, avoiding the extremes of isolationism and superpower primacy. There are five “approaches” to consider for developing an appropriate NSS:

- *Isolationism*, the least ambitious strategy, has appealed to the populace in the past, especially during the early 20th century.¹⁵ Its supporters assert that the United States is “not responsible for, and cannot afford the costs of, maintaining world order.”¹⁶ The size and capabilities of the military force structure should thus be modest, developed around a defensive posture. Critics argue that by only directly addressing the vital interest of protection of “security, liberty, and property”¹⁷ can the United States disengage throughout the world. Now, more than ever, the United States has an interest in the global environment. The immediate risks of isolationism would include a decreased economic prosperity, since U.S. corporations would find it more difficult to engage in trade with other nations and multi-national corporations. The U.S. economy is interdependent on the economies of other trading partners through treaties and international organizations. Longer-term risks include the global deterioration of basic human rights and prospects of more conflict as some failing countries are unable to secure basic human rights of their citizens and transition to democratic governments due to a withdrawal of United States support. Likewise, global terrorists and transnational criminal organizations will find an environment ripe for exploitation. While it is not likely that the United States would no longer enjoy a free representative government, it is very possible that individual security and prosperity would suffer if the United States retreated to a strategy of isolationism. “American leadership and

engagement in the world are vital for our security, and the world is a safer place as a result.”¹⁸

- A second possibility, *collective engagement*, is a strategic acknowledgement that the United States cannot turn inward and that “no nation can build a safer, better world alone.”¹⁹ Through active cooperation with international organizations and alliances such as the United Nations, World Trade Organization, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and African Union, the United States can protect a wider range of national interests without a global military presence. Effective organizations and alliances foster norms of conduct by deterring would-be challengers through the certainty of collective retaliation.²⁰ However, skeptics argue that “international organizations have little if any power and therefore can do little to maintain or, particularly, restore peace,”²¹ in part because it is difficult to reach a political consensus on the application of national or coalition power. Furthermore, collective engagement requires “sacrifice of [national] power and control over the intervention”²² in exchange for a decrease in “human and economic resources”²³ required to sustain national powers – especially military power. Although helpful in the face of direct threats to national security, collective engagement could make it harder to protect human rights and economic national interests when it lacks international consensus.
- A *containment* strategy, loosely associated with collective engagement, supports international organizations and alliances for a narrowly defined role; it seemed to be successful in countering the expansion of the Soviet Union for the latter half of the 20th century. While there is some dispute whether containment actually caused the collapse of the Soviet Union, it is clear, following the Al Qaeda attacks of September 11th and attempts by terrorist groups to employ weapons of mass destruction that containment will not work against non-state actors or rogue and failed states, which can operate across borders and are not easily deterred. The United States cannot “remain idle while dangers gather.”²⁴ Similar to the strategy of isolationism, containment does not portend the loss of a free representative U.S. government. However, continued human rights abuses, the rise of totalitarian regimes, and direct threats to personal security pose a variety of risks. Although free trade under containment would result in greater prosperity than isolationism and collective engagement, failure to restore failed states would pose a threat to continued globalization. Relying on the reactive coercive powers inherent in containment will not achieve national interests. Indeed, the new global environment calls for a preemptive

national strategy buttressed with positive incentives for all nations to join the global community.

- The *selective engagement* strategy utilizes “carrots” and “sticks” to engage state and non-state actors. It has been the prevalent strategy, supported by administrations since the end of the Cold War, to create a favorable world order first promoted by the 1991 National Security Strategy and modified by the 2002 National Security Strategy advocacy of a balance of power favoring human freedom.²⁵ Selective engagement recognizes that the United States “has developed an extraordinarily wide range of international commitments, and . . . [has] important interests at stake in every world region.”²⁶ This strategy recognizes that U.S. economic prosperity relies heavily on globalization, and “inside the global market all interests have transnational implications.”²⁷ Critics argue that while the United States supports human rights, the United States is not consistent in applying the range of national power to protect human rights. These critics point out that the United States uses military power in some countries and uses only diplomatic power in other countries to further human rights.²⁸ But the United States uses national power only after thorough analysis to determine the level of threat to a national interest and the appropriateness of using the wide range of national power to counter a given threat – “the most important strategic question is the opportunity cost.”²⁹ A tailored strategy, designed to support national interests, has become the norm for states, regions, and non-state actors. The military force required for this strategy must be scalable and provide diverse capabilities. Selective engagement will have succeeded if a favorable world order and U.S. economic prosperity are sustained over the long run.
- *Primacy*, the antithesis of isolationism, assumes “only a preponderance of U.S. power ensures peace.”³⁰ As a grand strategy, primacy requires the uncontested supremacy of all forms of national power. Although the United States is the only remaining superpower with no near military competitor for the next few decades, economic power is bi-polar at best and steadily moving towards multi-polarity due to globalization. The United States recognizes the difficulty of seeking primacy and supports local and regional near-competitors by sharing economic, diplomatic, information, and financial power in an effort “to create a balance of power that favors human freedom.”³¹ Furthermore, while the United States has no near singular military competitor, coalitions could challenge the U.S. military primacy, and “shadowy networks of individuals can bring great chaos and suffering to our shores for less than

it costs to purchase a single tank.”³² The United States has finite economic, diplomatic, and military resources and thus must continue to work with allies and governmental organizations to achieve its national interests.³³ It is unreasonable to postulate that the United States can instantly achieve all of its national interests in view of the limited capability and resources available to wield the various forms of national power.

A proper strategy, eloquently expressed in the 2002 National Security Strategy, recognizes that “coping with the new global disorder calls for a more versatile strategy that was required for waging the Cold War.”³⁴ While such a strategy is based on selective engagement, it also recognizes some of the benefits of collective engagement. By working with allies and other governmental organizations, the United States can protect its national interests by taking a leadership role in promoting the expansion of “freedom, democracy, and free enterprise.”³⁵ Coalitions “of the willing” are preferred in protecting national interests over the long-term because “unilateral military intervention, even for humanitarian objectives, is viewed with suspicion.”³⁶ These coalitions can be of various sizes and can be sustained for different time periods as the United States engages Israel, the Palestinians, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Chile, Columbia, Philippines, Afghanistan and Iraq to “build a world of justice”³⁷ and engages Mexico, China, Japan, and the European Union to promote free trade. The issues, application of national power, and state partners will vary for each strategic situation. “We have our best chance since the rise of the nation-state in the 17th century to build a world where the great powers compete in peace instead of prepare for war.”³⁸

Implementation of this National Security Strategy will require a coordinated application of the various forms of national power: military, intelligence, diplomatic, legal enforcement, information, financial, and economic.³⁹ Although the United States can foster economic development, stem international crime, diffuse potential conflicts diplomatically, and respond to famines and other disasters by utilizing less intrusive forms of national power in an effort to promote national interests, the United States is capable of unilaterally applying military force when required under selective engagement. When other state actors recognize a similar threat to their own national interests, the United States can coordinate a more effective and efficient application of national powers. To identify the states most likely to require application of coercive national powers, the United States must start by determining the extent to which they have embraced democracy and globalization. “Democratic governments are more likely to cooperate with each other against common threats and to encourage free and open trade and economic development – and less likely to wage war or abuse the rights of their people.”⁴⁰

Accordingly, selective engagement requires “identifying the problem parts of the world and aggressively shrinking them.”⁴¹ If non-military forms of national power prove ineffective in adequately protecting U.S. vital national security interests, an appropriate, tailored military response is sometimes required.

Tailored Military Responses

Since the end of the Cold War, the world has witnessed a “dramatic increase in regional conflicts, civil wars, insurgencies, terrorist activities, weapons proliferation, and drug trafficking. Regional instabilities . . . [have required the United States] to unilaterally, multilaterally, or within the United Nations framework, employ military forces in a variety of hostile and non-hostile circumstances.”⁴² In the current global environment, the United States is now threatened less by conquering states than by failing ones.⁴³ The size and type of military force required for any crisis depends on the nature of the mission and the operational environment. It is strategically important to examine the range of missions and environments in order to determine the appropriate force structure to support the National Security Strategy by means of the selective engagement policy.

Humanitarian missions in established well-governed countries require varying degrees of logistical support of short duration in a permissive environment. The widespread destruction caused by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami resulted in an unprecedented U.S. response of purely humanitarian assets, followed by an intense UN response – which reduced the demand for U.S. military resources. Similarly, the 2005 Pakistan earthquake precipitated a rapid U.S. humanitarian response. In both cases, the United States provided food, water, shelter, and medical assistance; the U.S. response relied on the U.S. military – naval, land, and air assets for the tsunami and air assets for the earthquake – without a significant force protection requirement. In both cases, coordination efforts either remained under the control of the host nations or were quickly turned over to the United Nations.

Humanitarian missions in poorly established countries require global logistical and peacekeeping support of moderate duration. The 1989 Somalia humanitarian relief efforts required U.S. military peacekeeping support to create an environment conducive for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to provide humanitarian support. Other states also provided military support with varying rules of engagement. However, U.S. land, air, and sea components must be prepared for combat while providing protection for the NGOs. Without an established generally supported government to coordinate delivery of humanitarian support, military forces will be required for the duration of humanitarian relief.

Peace-making missions to halt genocide require global military support of significant duration. During the last decade, it became clear that “disputes between and among some Eastern European states and ethnic groups . . . [were] merely frozen in time by decades of Cold War.”⁴⁴ Whether in a dysfunctional state such as Yugoslavia or a failed state such as Rwanda, a UN mandate provides the legitimacy necessary to build a military alliance; however, the effectiveness of UN forces is problematic due to differing rules of engagement. With or without a UN mandate, the United States will make its own determination of appropriate responses and attempt to develop a coalition to effectively halt ongoing genocide. Diplomatic efforts were critical to garnering European military intervention in the Balkans before the United States contributed uncontested air power to further the effort. Rwanda presented a more complex situation: Following its military exit from Somalia, the United States was reluctant to intervene in Africa. However, U.S. military land and air components eventually engaged there in a low-intensity conflict. Additionally, as military forces from the African Union are trying to control the conflict in Sudan, logistics support will be required from NATO, the European Union, and the United States. Regardless of the threat to any vital national interest, the U.S. military’s contribution to humanitarian peace-making efforts, whether endorsed by the United Nations or not, will vary in size and duration.

Combat missions repelling aggressive states from invasions of U.S. allies requires all combat elements of military power, preferably as part of a larger UN-sanctioned coalition. Without an opposing superpower or formidable coalition, combat operations will be of relatively short duration once the combat elements are in place. If there is no effort to immediately remove the aggressor regime, as following the expulsion of Iraqi forces from Kuwait in 1991, the drawdown of military forces can be rapid. The size and mix of military force following the cessation of combat operations should be tailored to maintain peace; this mix may not always require land forces.

Combat missions in rogue states in which citizens support the operations will require a large coalition of the willing in the combat phase and a moderate coalition, possibly even with UN support, during the nation-building phase. The United States embraced and was embraced by Afghan tribal groups opposing the Taliban in 2001. The operation deep inland required resources uniquely held by the United States with modest support provided by coalition partners. The following nation-building phase, welcomed by the United Nations and Afghan citizens, required combat teams to track down and eliminate Al Qaeda and Taliban elements, along with a smaller coalition combat support element to assist in the creation of a representative government.

As we are learning today, combat missions in rogue nations with a significant insurgency will require a large coalition of the willing during both the combat and nation-building phases. While the initial combat operations might be short, building a representative government while fighting an insurgency could require commitment of a significant land force for more than a decade. The current Iraqi conflict validates the need for such a requirement. Although supported by a coalition of willing countries supporting the operation, the United States cannot rely on broad UN support. While a multi-lateral approach is desired, the United States must have the capability to act unilaterally if vital national interests are in jeopardy. Although Iraq is part of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), GWOT poses its own unique military challenges.

The Global War on Terror will be “fought on many fronts . . . over an extended period of time.”⁴⁵ All forms of national power will be brought to bear on terrorists – people who desire to destroy American values and threaten global stability – and the United States will enter into many unique relationships while terrorists are simultaneously engaged in many regions of the world. While intelligence support may be appropriate with some partners, others could need military logistics support or economic support. “Military resources alone . . . cannot cope with the combination of weapons of proliferation and nuclear stockpiles, ethnic and religious violence, the explosion of crime, health and environmental disasters, massive migration, and the demand for humanitarian intervention to halt genocide.”⁴⁶ When military power is employed, the type and size of force will be tailored to that specific mission.

The U.S. military components must design and implement the capability to efficiently and effectively support National Security Strategy policies in support of vital national interests at home and abroad. The Cold War strategy of containment required positioning a large and lethal threat based force against a known enemy – to thwart Soviet ships, tanks, and planes with our ships, tanks, and planes. The size and structure of the U.S. military (particularly that of the Army) required to carry out the diverse missions expected of it during this new era are significantly different.

Transforming the Army for a New Era

Calling upon the full range of national power and alliances in an era far more complex than that of the Cold War to promote democracy, human rights, and globalization,⁴⁷ the current U.S. National Security Strategy of selective engagement is the most appropriate strategy for the coming decades. Specifically, the Army faces a significant transformation challenge as it adapts to the new range of likely intensive land component missions. The large divisions stationed in Europe and South Korea were designed for the Cold War and were not as rapidly deployable as

smaller units, nor were they very adaptable or flexible during a time in which the number of operations other than war (OOTW) – peacemaking, peacekeeping, humanitarian, and disaster relief – exploded.⁴⁸ The Army of the future must be lethal, flexible, rapidly deployable, and able to conduct significant sustained operations. The new modular brigade combat team concept will allow the Army to provide a tailorable forward presence and rapidly deploy a fully operational unit appropriately sized for the proposed operation. “The Army intends to transform itself into a full spectrum force capable of demonstrating dominance at every point in the spectrum of operations.”⁴⁹

The U.S. Army transformation to a Modular Force presents unique personnel challenges fundamentally different from the other three significant force structure changes since the end of the Vietnam War. Adoption of the all-volunteer force resulted in a significantly smaller Active Force, complemented by more robust Reserve and Guard Forces.⁵⁰ The build-up during President Reagan’s administration presented recruiting challenges to man more ships, squadrons, and divisions required to defeat the Warsaw Pact. The subsequent fall of the Soviet Union, marking the end of the Cold War, resulted in a significantly smaller Active force – fewer ships, squadrons, and divisions – yet saw an increase in low-conflict operational requirements.⁵¹ While all of these eras presented recruiting, retention, and planning challenges to ensure that the resulting Army force could meet ever-changing future mission requirements, the current Army transformation effort is fundamentally different, with more significant strategic implications:

Unlike previous force-sizing constructs, the new construct explicitly calls for the force to be sized for defending the homeland, forward deterrence, warfighting missions, and the conduct of smaller-scale contingency operations. As a result, the construct should better account for force requirements driven by forward presence and rotational issues.⁵²

The Modular Force will be larger, more lethal, flexible, and rapidly deployable – the final product of a transformation from a “force designed for contingency operations in the post-cold War era to a force designed for continuous operations in a new era.”⁵³ The Army will provide forces to theater commanders so they can rely on a unit rotational model much closer to the Navy model than the current practice of permanently stationing units overseas. The objective is to implement an Active Force rotation cycle that schedules brigades for a two-year training period followed by a one-year deployment availability period. For the Reserve and Guard Forces, the rotation cycle calls for a one-year deployment availability period following a four- or five-year training period.⁵⁴ As the Modular Force adapts to its rapidly deployable role, the duration and frequency of a unit’s deployment from its home base is referred to as operations tempo (OPTEMPO) – the “rate of military actions and missions.”⁵⁵ Since the GWOT expected to last

more than a decade, and in view of the expanding missions for the military and the Army's transition from a forward-stationed force to a forward-deployed force, OPTEMPO is expected to remain high for the foreseeable future. As Active Force personnel spend more of their careers in the deployable Modular Force, it is important to explore what effect this change in military organizational climate will have on soldiers, as part of the Army culture, and their families, as part of the overall societal culture.

Service Culture, Transformation, and National Security Strategy

The Army culture stressing “honor and devotion to duty, unqualified service to the Nation and subordinating self to the greater good”⁵⁶ has appealed for many decades to soldiers as they have made career decisions. In contrast, society’s culture changes from generation to generation as “cohorts experience defining moments in history which shape their attitudes and perspectives.”⁵⁷ When larger cultural values are compatible within Army values, the influences on each other are minimal. But when larger cultural values conflict the values of soldiers and their families, they are forced to make difficult career decisions. So Army leaders must account for these cultural differences as they transform the Army into a Modular Force to support proposed U.S. National Security Strategies.⁵⁸

The fielded Modular Force will “bear little physical or operational resemblance to today’s Army”⁵⁹ and will have a profound effect on not only the military climate and culture, but also on the Army family culture. The future personnel assignment policies will improve family stability as Active Forces will be predictably able to remain in one location for longer periods of time. But soldiers and families will encounter increased unit OPTEMPO as the Army completes its transition from a forward-stationed force to a forward-deployed force. Deployments may support major wars, the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), regional conflicts, peacemaking, peacekeeping, humanitarian actions, disaster relief, military exercises, and similar operations. As the number of OOTW increased significantly during the 1990s, the Army endured a 100 percent increase in the percentage of the Army active duty enlisted force engaged in extended operations during a given month. In comparison, the Navy and Marine Corps – which already have a normal unit rotation cycle – experienced a significantly smaller increase.⁶⁰ Today, 155,000 of the 640,000 Active Force soldiers (24 percent) are deployed or forward-stationed in more than 120 countries.⁶¹ The Army culture will evolve to reflect this increased OPTEMPO, and it is essential to understand its compatibility with the demands on soldiers’ families.

Today’s Army is made up mostly of families: Over 50 percent of first-term and 75 percent of second-term enlisted soldiers are married,⁶² and the junior officer force consists of a

“proportionally higher married population than ever before.”⁶³ The Army funds a range of services to assist families while soldiers are deployed, acknowledging that families have a significant influence in career decisions. To determine the level of commitment to the Army and their families, a recent study found that 75 percent of soldiers (E7 and below) ranked their family as being the most important influence in their lives, but only 11 percent ranked the Army first. Among the top two influences, 92 percent included their family while only 24 percent included the Army.⁶⁴ Furthermore, societal trends indicate that family emotional needs and expectations are increasing. Understanding these generational characteristics is crucial for identifying trends and forecasting future retention rates. The current generation of mid-grade soldiers – Xers – wants more balance between work and family than the generation of senior soldiers – Baby Boomers. Xers are less likely to sacrifice family relationships to satisfy workplace obligations. It is possible that their commitment to relationships stems from their upbringing: They have observed workaholic parents and noted the effects of single-parent homes.⁶⁵ Further complicating policy matters is the circumstance that a new generation of soldiers is being recruited and it is too early to understand how they approach the workplace.⁶⁶ Soldiers are increasingly forced to confront conflicting obligations between their families and the Army. Such situations “exceed the service member’s ability to adequately meet expectations; they can create conflict between the demands of both, and ultimately force the service member to choose.”⁶⁷ Fortunately, policy makers can consult several recent studies as they attempt to gain insight on the Army’s key issue: “the impact of sustained, protracted conflict . . . on the All-volunteer force.”⁶⁸

Studying the Link Between OPTEMPO, Families, and Retention

The structural changes of the Army ground forces is the “most significant and comprehensive effort to change [the] Army in a century.”⁶⁹ Accordingly, strategic leaders must consider long-term force sustainment implications as the Active Force transitions from being stationed overseas to being deployed overseas. Numerous studies by the Army, research companies, and media firms have indicated that the increase in OPTEMPO will have a significant impact on retention as the Army and family cultural values conflict. Armed with these studies, many public and military leaders acknowledge that a higher OPTEMPO leads to lower retention rates, a view supported by the 9th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation, which reports that private sector opportunities combined with the changing operational requirements creates a retention challenge for the all-volunteer force.⁷⁰

The Army's Sample Survey of Military Personnel, conducted at least annually by the U.S. Army Research Institute, collects information regarding career and attrition trends. Although reported officer and enlisted attrition plans have not fluctuated significantly over the last ten years (18-23% for officers and 39-47% for enlisted), the 2003 and 2004 surveys excluded soldiers who were currently deployed to OEF/OIF, who recently redeployed, or who were preparing to deploy – over 40% of the survey pool.⁷¹ The 40% of the Army excluded from the survey is important in forecasting actual attrition rates because the “amount of time separated from family” has been the primary reason for officers planning to leave the Army before retirement for 17 of the last 18 surveys.⁷² The last three released surveys have shown significant increases in the percentage of officers and enlisted citing family separation as their primary reason for separating from the Army. For officers, “amount of time separated from family” rose steady from 14.7% in the Spring 2002 survey to 30.2% in the most recently released Fall 2004 survey. Job enjoyment and pay followed, cited by 9.7% and 7% respectively. For enlisted soldiers, “amount of time separated from family” rose steadily from 11.4% in the Spring 2001 survey to 18.4% in the Fall 2004 survey – surpassing both pay and quality of Army life, for the first time in 2003, at 14% and 11.4% respectively.⁷³ Although the 2003 and 2004 surveys excluded 40% of the Army pool, the surveys began tracking the attrition intentions of soldiers who have been deployed in support of OEF/OIF. While there were no significant differences between deployed and undeployed junior officers, deployed junior enlisted and junior NCOs were significantly more inclined to separate from the Army following their current obligation than their undeployed counterparts.⁷⁴ Preliminary indications from the Fall 2005 survey indicate that company grade officer attrition intentions are rising. Although it is not clear yet what effect the current OPTEMPO is having on company grade officer career intentions, it is evident that the current OPTEMPO is having a negative effect on career intentions of junior enlisted and junior NCOs. Furthermore, more soldiers are recognizing the strain between family and Army expectations as evidenced by the increasing percentage of soldiers citing “amount of time separated from family” as their primary reason for contemplating separation.

The RAND Corporation conducted a study on the effects of deployments on retention during the 1990s. Amid the explosion of OOTW, they found that infrequent short deployments actually increase retention of service members with less than 10 years of service. Deployments seemed to bring a sense of purpose; however, multiple deployments resulted in a lower retention rates when compared to undeployed soldiers, and multiple combat deployments decreased retention rates even more.⁷⁵ A related study by the Army Office of Economic and

Manpower Analysis found that when deployments exceed seven months, soldiers are less likely to reenlist,⁷⁶ a finding that seems to be intuitively supported by the RAND study, Navy experience, and more recent surveys. While the Navy and Marine Corps routinely deploy for six months, the Army is expecting to deploy units for twelve-month periods under the transformation plan. The Army currently deploys units for twelve-month periods to Iraq and Afghanistan. Another recent media survey of more than 1,000 Army spouses living near deployment-stricken Army posts revealed that over 75 percent believed that “the Army is likely to encounter retention problems as soldiers and their families tire of the post-9/11 pace and leave the service.”⁷⁷ Expectations of recurring twelve-month deployments for Army Active forces will put enormous strains on family relationships and produce detrimental effects on long-term retention.

These studies support emerging beliefs that increasing numbers of soldiers are leaving the military because they, and their families, are dissatisfied with military life, specifically the operations tempo that keeps them deployed in operational or training environments for extended periods. Soldiers are thus forced to make a choice between loyalty to the institution or to their family. In the end, the military loses with either the soldier “departing the Service or providing a lesser degree of commitment to mission accomplishment.”⁷⁸ It is clear that leaders must “find ways to directly involve spouses in career decisions and discussions since these are joint decisions with both partners essentially having veto power.”⁷⁹ But it is less clear how to structure the deployment schedule and other family support services to reduce the conflict between family and Army obligations. Environmental scanning will enable strategic leaders to analyze the personnel environment in a “broad, detailed, and open-ended” manner.⁸⁰

Addressing the Struggle Between Army and Family Commitments

Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Pace made it clear that the War on Terrorism is a “long war and we must plan and adapt accordingly.”⁸¹ Along with considering the fundamental change in providing forces to the regional combatant commanders under the Modular Force unit rotational structure, Army leaders must address the increasing struggle between Army and family commitments. Accounting for the cultural context, including personal and family values influencing retention decisions, strategic leaders can better scan the future when developing long-term force sustainment solutions.⁸² There are a few options available to positively affect the growing percentage of soldiers citing “amount of time separated from family” as their primary reason for deciding to separate from the Army. While it is unreasonable to expect OPTEMPO to decline sufficiently in the coming era to satisfy family requirements, “the first step is to establish a metric and then work towards reducing it to acceptable levels.”⁸³ Leaders must explore a

range of options for the Active Force to adequately balance Army and family commitments: Improve family stability, streamline field training, re-evaluate exercise requirements, review deployment requirements, establish equitable force generation deployment models, provide incentives for completing tours in the Modular Force, and increase opportunities for non-deployable assignments.

The transition to the Modular Force is designed to increase the assignment lengths at given locations and increase the predictability of deployments. Both benefits address some of the current issues affecting military spouses and dependents. Spouses are better able to pursue a career instead of switching jobs every 2-3 years, children are able to attend school with the same classmates longer, and the family can assume greater roles in local civic groups as soldiers are able to stay in the same unit for multiple tours or transfer to a similar unit at the same base. Furthermore, predictable deployment schedules will significantly reduce the family disruption associated with short-notice deployments. While these benefits will reduce family issues, they alone will not result in the retention rates required to sustain Army force rotation requirements.

Field training, exercises, and deployments not only affect unit readiness, they also result in frequent family separations. Often, the separations associated with this training are necessary to ensure units are capable of carrying out future missions. However, the Army must continuously assess and validate readiness requirements to ensure that resources are efficiently spent.⁸⁴ When it is determined that specific training activities no longer enhance unit readiness or that peacetime deployments can be shortened, the Army can reduce OPTEMPO to a more acceptable level, thereby supporting the soldiers' family commitments.

Twelve-month deployments are sometimes required to satisfy combatant commander requirements. However, opportunities will exist for units to deploy for shorter periods during their twelve-month availability period and striving to remain below the seven-month deployment threshold identified by the Army Office of Economic and Manpower analysis will lessen family stresses. Furthermore, eliminating back-to-back twelve-month deployments for specific units is an excellent way for Army leaders to make a positive impact on family separation issues with minimal effort.

Monetary and promotion incentives for completing tours in the Modular Force will be attractive to many soldiers and their families, while providing flexibility for families that may need a two year Support Force tour to address a transient family issue. The Navy currently successfully offers such incentives for Sailors to complete tours aboard ships: Sailors receive an incentive of \$70-730 per month, depending on the number of years aboard ships, and they

know that sea-duty is a requirement for being competitive at promotion boards. As the Army completes its transformation to the Modular Force, it is important to develop an incentive program sustainable over the long-term and embraced by the Army culture.

This last option of increasing the opportunity for non-deployable assignments is probably the most difficult. As the Army Active Force divests itself of many support related positions to civilians and contractors, the opportunity for soldiers to accept non-deployable tours is reduced. In the end, the appropriate Active Force level must meet the Modular Force requirements, but as well provide Support Force billets critical to the development of both officer and enlisted leadership, while meeting any additional requirements to ensure adequate future retention levels. The Modular Force requirement relies on determining base requirements for the Active, Reserve, and Guard Forces. Furthermore, determining which billets are critical to the development of senior leaders is more complex, since “the functional imperatives of the profession require that its commissioned leaders have the mental agility to recognize problems and then draw on a rich body of knowledge to formulate appropriate diagnoses and treatments.”⁶⁵ The final estimate is probably the most elusive – determining the total number of Support Force billets required to maintain an acceptable deployment/garrison ratio⁶⁶ to achieve the required retention rate. If additional Support Force billets are required, then leaders must determine which billets provide and/or enhance competencies needed in the Modular Force. While leaders cope with political and fiscal constraints, they must determine what is sustainable and then influence the political and fiscal environment accordingly.

Validating training requirements, reviewing deployment lengths, spreading out the deployment OPTEMPO throughout the Modular Force, providing incentives to serve in the Modular Force, and increasing the opportunity for non-deployable assignments are some options available to address the growing conflict between Army and family commitments. Leaders must continuously scan the future to ensure that current policies are capable of sustaining the Modular Force into the coming decades.

Conclusion

The emergence of rogue nations, nationalistic sentiments of oppressed segments of countries, international criminal and terrorist organizations, and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction all require a national security strategy capable guiding the vast national power of the United States and leveraging the national power of other states against the root causes of conflict and human suffering. “Patterns of conflict are changing in an era when nation states no longer have a monopoly over super violence. ...Over the next 25 years, it is expected that the

lines between lawlessness, crime, disorder, terrorism and war will become blurred, challenging governments to the limits in terms of managing and containing threats.¹⁸⁷ The current U.S. National Security Strategy of selective engagement is an appropriate strategy for wielding the various sources of national power during the 21st century as governments continue to “undergo dramatic restructuring, accompanied by a wide array of economic, technical, societal, religious, cultural, and physical alterations.”¹⁸⁸ Although military power is usually the last resort, it is essential that the Army carefully transform to the Modular Force concept.

As outlined in this SRP, the Modular Force will significantly change the Army's organizational culture. However, family and generational cultures also affect the ability of the Army to sustain the Modular Force. Our leaders must account for these cultural influences on soldiers' willingness to serve in the Modular Force. Failure to completely account for cultural issues and make appropriate accommodations will manifest itself in the coming decades through unacceptable retention levels of mid- and senior-grade personnel, recruiting shortfalls of married personnel, and a decline in the overall quality of experience and education of senior leaders. The results of lower retention and an eroded Army profession will make it impossible to sustain the force projection capabilities touted by transformation leaders. Although leaders tend to “reduce much of the Army's transformation to its technological dimension,”¹⁸⁹ the proposed fundamental change in employment of Active Forces towards the Modular Force without acknowledging the changing family culture could undermine the Army's future force projection capabilities.

Fortunately, there is still time during this transition to a Modular Force to devise appropriate policy. A combination of requirement validation, long-term incentives, and force structure modifications can bring OPTEMPO to acceptable levels for soldiers and their families. Resulting improvement in family harmony will increase retention, soldier productivity, and Army force projection capabilities.

Endnotes

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²⁰ R. Craig Nation, "Contrasting Images of U.S. Grand Strategy," in *U.S. Army War College National Security Policy and Strategy Course Selected Readings Volume 1* (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, 2005), 46.

²¹ Posen and Ross, 36.

²² Martha Finnemore, "Constructing Norms of Humanitarian Intervention," in *Conflict After the Cold War*, 2nd ed., ed. Richard K. Betts (New York: Longman Publishers, 2002), 201.

²³ United Nations, "Charter of the United Nations," in *U.S. Army War College National Security Policy and Strategy Course Selected Readings Volume 1* (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, 2005), 137.

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²⁵ *Ibid.*, Forward.

²⁶ Nation, "Contrasting Images of U.S. Grand Strategy," 44.

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²⁸ Posen and Ross, 19.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

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³² *Ibid.*

³³ George H. W. Bush.

³⁴ Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Dilemmas of the New Global Disorder," in *U.S. Army War College National Security Policy and Strategy Course Selected Readings Volume 4* (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, 2005), 408.

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⁴⁸ Bruce R. Nardulli and Thomas L. McNaugher, "The Army: Toward the Objective Force," in *Transforming America's Military*, ed. Hans Binnendijk (Washington D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2002), 104.

⁴⁹ Charles B. Breslin, *A Comparison of Officer Perceptions of Army Culture* (Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 2000), 61.

⁵⁰ Although many of DoD terms used to describe future categories of manpower are intuitive, they should nonetheless be tentatively identified. The Active force is comprised of active duty personnel, the Reserve force is comprised of the Reserve element (whether activated or not), and the Guard force includes National Guard personnel (whether activated or not). Furthermore, the Modular Force consists of the Active, Reserve, and Guard forces in deployable units, and the Support Force consists of the Active and Civilian forces in non-deployable units.

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