

**The Professional Soldier**

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## Outline

Thesis: To avoid any more Task Force Smiths, the United States must maintain its present force of professional soldiers.

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- A. World War II
- B. Korean War
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### II. Political and economical effect on the professional soldier

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## The Professional Soldier

To avoid any more Task Force Smiths, the United States must maintain its present strength of professional soldiers. The reduction of personnel produced disastrous results at the beginning of every major conflict--beginning with World War Two. Political and economical factors, once again, are negatively affecting the professional soldier. To maintain a strong National Defense, the Army must maintain its present level of trained human resources. Our top level Military leadership must prove to politicians that we need a strong defense based on current levels of professional soldiers.

The United States maintained a constabulary force of about 150,000 personnel from 1919 until 1939 (1975: Hewes). The popular belief was that the country was secure because World War One (WW1) was the war to end all wars. After WW1, civilian and military leaders could not agree on what size military force to maintain. Our leaders did not realize the need for a larger force for quite some time; the hostilities in Europe and disagreements with Japan caused a build-up of forces.

United States leaders neglected to prepare the military against possible attack from Japan. Their major concern was Europe. When the attack on Pearl Harbor occurred our leaders recognized the need to change. Although the United States planned for war, the military did not prepare for war. A well trained standing military, led by professional soldiers, would have made a difference. The United States also lacked the ability to provide logistical support to the military at the beginning of World War Two. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor made the United States realize the error of a small, weak military force to defend America.

Well trained professional soldiers with the right equipment is what the United States needed to be effective during the Korean conflict. The Eighth Army Task Force (Task Force Smith) deployed to Korea to stop the communist attack. Lack of training and effective weaponry caused the task force to retreat almost from the start. The United States learned that to fight this type of War, it has to maintain a trained force of professional soldiers (1960: Turner and Challenger).

After the Korean conflict, the Army cut its forces again. The United States disregarded the lessons learned at the beginning of World War Two and Korea. By the end of the conflict in 1953, the Army had 1,533,000 soldiers. In 1961 reduced forces to 859,000. During the early 1960s the United States sent troops to South Vietnam to serve as advisors to the South Vietnam Army. As hostilities increased and our involvement became deeper, the United States realized that it needed a larger and better trained Army (1975: Hewes). During the conflict, public opinion turned against the military, and President Nixon withdrew our troops. The lack of professional leadership, and unit cohesion, made our soldiers less effective (Hackworth 212).

We again started a drawdown of forces, and our military readiness declined. David Cortwright pointed out in Soldiers in Revolt that the use of alcohol and drugs increased; racial tension was rampant in the barracks; and leadership was ineffective, or sometimes totally missing.

How soon we forgot times like Task Force Smith. Near the end of the last decade the political atmosphere on Capitol Hill led to the Gramm-Rudman Deficit-Reduction Act. Congress wanted the public to believe that reducing the force would eliminate the deficit problem, but Congress cannot resolve the deficit

problem by reducing the defense budget only. The United States spends less than 20 percent of the budget on defense. Senator Robert Byrd wants part of the money diverted to domestic programs (Maze, pg 10, 17 Feb 92).

Once again Congress went after the professional soldier. Representative Sam Nunn told The Honorable Mr. Cheney (Secretary of Defense) the defense budget is going to be the center of a bidding war (10 Feb. 1992: Maze 3). Members of Congress are eager to spend more to revive the sluggish economy and modest reductions will unlikely satisfy Congress (27 Jan. 1992: Maze 4). One writer said that our military payroll is the key ingredient to the five-year federal deficit-reduction and spending agreement (29 Apr. 1991: Maze 10).

Economic and political realities are making it harder for the military to <sup>provide</sup> fulfill <sup>the</sup> veteran benefit, educational, and exchange and commissary promises (29 Jul. 1991: Willis 8). Most congressional personnel on Capitol Hill are after the military payroll. Even veteran benefits did not fare well in the budget for 1991 (29 Oct. 1991: Maze 8). Senator John Glenn, Democrat from Ohio, says the drawdown may not go far enough (10 Feb. 1992: Maze 3).

The Gramm-Rudman Act requires cuts in spending and growth, and it creates havoc between Congress and the Department of Defense. This can lead to an Army similar to the one during Task Force Smith. The Army Time's report, "Reducing the Deficit: Spending and Revenue Options," also says Federal Government could reduce spending by eliminating retired pay for reservists (9 Mar. 1992: Maze 3). The Congressional Budget Committee suggested the following: "Limit military pay raises, rent government quarters to soldiers and charge premiums for retiree medical care" (9 Mar. 1992: Maze 3).

Task Force Smith is closer to reality because Congress is contemplating the elimination of many professional soldiers from active-duty. As directed by Congress, the drawdown involves all grades, including general officer ranks (3 Dec. 1990: Tice 4). The Pentagon says it will have to fire up to 400,000 active-duty troops to meet the House budget plan (23 Mar 1992: Maze 8). Representative Aspin's proposal trims 200,000 more jobs and adds two years (1997) to the drawdown (9 Mar. 1992: Maze 4).

Congress forgot the results of previous drawdowns, and they continue to cut military personnel. To meet budget numbers agreed to in 1990, congressional economists said, "military spending might have to be cut another \$25 billion in 1994 and \$43 billion in 1995 (29 Jul. 1991: Maze 16).

Long range medical staffing plans follow advice from Congress. As a result of the reduction in the number of dentists assigned at Fort Bliss and throughout the Army, post dental activities will provide limited services to military spouses and family members (Daughters 1). As Congress looks at all angles to cut the defense budget, Task Force Smith takes on a realistic look. As required by the Gramm-Rudman Act, President Bush would have to issue a final order that could force even deeper cuts on personnel (15 Oct. 1990: Maze 4).

Another Task Force Smith can hurt the professional soldier and his family. Reducing medical personnel will cause soldiers and their families to go to civilian doctors. Congress should look for alternatives; they can reduce this problem by expanding the services covered through CHAMPUS. Dental insurance is also an alternative soldiers can use for their families.

Every day, force reduction and the deficit appears on the television news or in the newspaper. People are spending less because of the recession. The

professional soldier has to make some serious decisions about his career. Moving soldiers from Europe to the United States has some soldiers confused. Other active-duty soldiers see the reduction of National Guard and Reserves as bad for their own future. Soldiers interviewed on national television have stated that they don't understand the present situation. Some believe that Congress keeps cutting the force because television polls tell them the American public demands it.

Democrats are expecting it to make cutting the Defense Budget easier by reducing the active-duty payroll (Maze, 17 Feb 92, pg 4). Variable Separation Incentive (VSI) is worth about 2.4 times more than involuntary separation (23 Dec. 1991: Willis 4). Single Separation Bonus (SSB) is worth 1.5 times more than involuntary separation pay (23 Dec. 1991: Willis 4). Congressional concern is to line their political pockets with votes. "The Defense Budget must be cut to revitalize the economy," said Robert Byrd, D-West Virginia (Maze, pg 10, 17 Feb 92). It doesn't matter that the professional soldier's name appears in the Qualitative Management Program list. The professional soldier still did his duty during war. This time the professional soldiers went to war during Desert Storm. If this pace continues, the present Army can evolve into another Task Force Smith.

Unless politicians stop it now, present political and economic trends could very well result in another military disaster during possible future conflicts. The planned reduction of forces will hurt the training of the professional soldier. The Army must use realistic combat training as a means to train professional soldiers. Unit training programs must include total team effort with maximum "hands-on" training and practical applications (Haines Jr. 1).

During the late 1970s and early 1980s Army leaders began to realize the importance of a well trained force for the future. The previous Army Chief of Staff knew that the Army must maintain a well trained and ready force to meet ongoing commitments world-wide. He also believed that the Army must be ready for rapid action in unforeseeable contingencies (Vuono 1). Training prepares soldiers, leaders, and units to fight and win in combat (Vuono 53). Again emphasis on realistic training is paramount to the success of the professional soldier in possible future combat. The Army must maintain high standards of combat readiness through tough, realistic, multiecheloned, combined arms training. Without the right resources this is not possible.

Effective training must continue in the future. The Army must train to a high state of readiness to be able to perform its mission. To maintain a high state of readiness, the Army must increase the active duty force to alleviate the need to increase the reserves (Kupperman and Taylor 159). This reaffirms the need for a highly trained army of professional soldiers. To have effective training requires more, not fewer, soldiers.

To be more effective in combat, Mazzar concludes that the Army must go from light size forces to medium size forces. Medium forces are a necessary component of the United States force structure. Light infantry divisions cannot take on enemy tank and mechanized units (Mazarr 112).

The Army needs medium, not light infantry units. This, of course, requires additional resources. Army exercises involving light infantry units confirm that light infantry, as currently deployed, could not stand up to a token armored force (Mazarr 83). The United States Army's solution is to augment the light infantry division. Again, this contradiction in philosophy proves that more

professional soldiers, not fewer is the answer to more realistic training. A light force with heavy units attached to it is no longer a light force (Mazarr 83). Once again, training is an integral part in any unit. With any combined operation, forces that do not train together, do not fight well together.

Even the General Accounting Office sees the negative impact the reduction of personnel has on training. The Army's position is that each soldier needs to gain sufficient training and experience to maintain his combat skills (U.S. GAO). To be effective, the Army also must conduct large scale training exercises, with units aggressing ~~against~~ each other in simulated, ~~but~~ realistic, combat environments.

Soldiers need to learn that combat is not a series of canned problems with a limited range of responses. Soldiers need to know that combat is a human experience. They also need to know that flexibility is one of the keys to survivability. The unexpected always happens in combat. The most sophisticated computer simulation cannot produce this unexpected combat phenomenon. The Army's training doctrine is leaning towards computer simulation to conduct training. To some, the replacement of soldiers by military machines appears attractive. One problem with that view is that computer programmers can't distinguish combatants from noncombatants (Barnaby 154). This distinction is necessary in any war.

Computer simulation does not provide training for everyone. Unit commanders get some training with computer simulation. Some commanders feel that computer simulations provided similar tactical concepts they faced in Desert Storm. This type of training saves money, but only few actually receive the training. The everyday soldier doesn't get any hands on training (Vogel 32).

The United States Army's management philosophy states that people are the most important resource. It also states that the Army consists of military professionals who loyally serve their nation (AR 5-1). The present drawdown plan clearly disregards the present Army philosophy. The United States Government began to plan a force reduction after Mikail Gorbachev announced his plan to reduce the size of the Soviet armed forces. On March 6, 1989, the Soviets proposed an arms control agreement (Epstein 1). The United States then decided it should reduce funding and resources to train the professional soldier. A professional staff member of the Appropriations Committee recently stated that this philosophy is an outdated way of downsizing the force. This is the Cold War system of adding or subtracting forces or funding based on what the Soviet Union was doing (Gamba 4A). The Cold War is over, but the world still is a troubled place. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is the predominant stabilizing influence in Europe. The United States is the key figure in Nato (16 Mar. 1992: Matthews 14). In recent history, NATO forces have participated in several conflicts. Iraq still poses a threat to the world. To this date the United Nations is still trying to get Iraq to destroy its nuclear industrial complexes. These complexes played a key role in Saddam Hussein's attempt to produce atomic weapons in the past (AP 1B). No one can predict the future, but monetary resources are a necessary tool for training. The Government must allocate enough resources to be successful in future armed conflicts.

Presently, the Army is making senior leaders retire earlier than planned. This will leave the army with fewer qualified soldiers to lead the troops in the next war. History shows that mavericks, whom peacetime leaders shunted aside, were the ones who could win wars. The Army needs to stop this wartime cycle

of lost opportunity and waste (Hackworth 822). Cutting the armed forces is a lot easier than rebuilding them. Drastic alterations to the Army's force structure are counterproductive. Frequent deactivations will exact a heavy toll in the efficiency of manpower utilization. Combat readiness and soldier morale also will suffer (Deagle 51).

Manpower surveys conducted in Europe by the Human Resources Organization showed the need for added personnel in some units. Under this study, the overall quality of training was significantly higher in augmented battalions than those of nonaugmented battalions. Major advantages resulted by adding new personnel to the platoon level. Direct supervision and availability of training were the major advantages of additional personnel at platoon level (Drucker 17). The studies concluded that the assignment of additional tank crewmen to armored units resulted in many improvements in unit performance (Drucker 64). America's lawmakers are taking the easy way out. They believe that a smaller, highly technical army is better than one that is both large and technical (Griffith 229).

It takes a long time for a soldier to develop into a well trained professional. Noncommissioned officers provide the skills and experience necessary to train new soldiers. New soldiers need to develop the skills necessary to operate and maintain new sophisticated equipment. They also need to develop the skills required to lead soldiers in combat. It takes a decade for a military novice to gain the training and experiences possessed by a noncommissioned officer (Taylor 74).

A soldier doesn't have to be an academic genius to be a commander. 30 percent of the cadets who graduated from West Point between 1970 and 1980 left

the military after six years. Given this trend, Army leaders of the future could come from Officer Candidate Schools (OCS) and Reserve Officer Training Corp (ROTC) instead of West Point. These two sources do not have the historical and academic prestige of West Point. The Army could look into its ranks for combat leaders of the future (Hackworth 823).

The all professional Army of today should not be the target of quick economic fixes. With increasing frequency, the Army's human resources are easiest to cut. The success of the military establishment, and the survival of the United States could very well depend on maintaining these resources (Griffith 269).

In 1990 many aspects of the evolving international environment produced hope. Particularly, the unification of Germany played a key role in the peace process. The accelerated release of Soviet control over the Warsaw Pact nations and the less threatening tone of the Soviet military produced more hope for peace.

At the end of the Cold War our leaders made little effort to look at the United States military capabilities considering new world politics. Instead, this gave Congress the opportunity to use the military to solve the federal deficit problem. United States leaders made this choice without regard to the increased risk of military conflict in the evolving international environment. Reckless military drawdowns in the past resulted on <sup>usage</sup> an unprepared military force.

Mindful of the pressing need to reduce the large federal deficit, the United States is focusing more on the opportunity presented by reduced superpower

confrontation than the challenges and risks inherent in the evolving international environment (Vuono 1). Instead of the clear, predominantly Soviet led threat, the United States now faces multiple challenges in the form of a still potent former Soviet capability. It also faces continuing regional instability and the proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and missile technology among many developing nations. Aggressive, well-armed regional powers also present a problem (Vuono 7). The United States must maintain a well trained 4-corp, 20 division force to meet its national security strategy (Vuono 19).

The rapid speed of political change does not match the military realm according to retired General Donn Starry, an executive of a major Corporation. The former Soviet 8th Guards and the 20th Combined Arms Armies swapped their older T-64 tanks for T-80 models. These units are stronger today than they have ever been before (Donnelly 16). The cessation of Soviet states has given Russia a defensive buffer zone from Western military attacks.

Congress increasingly calls for less equipment and fewer professional soldiers. The Secretary of Defense continues to reject Congress' proposal. He contends that the base force is the minimum needed to deal with regional contingencies while defending the United States' interest.

Countries such as Iraq still pose a threat to peace. Iraq could cause the United States to intervene militarily (10 Feb. 1992: Matthews 4). America must not let the Persian Gulf victory change the focus from the real threat. Economics, not a change in ideology, dictated rapid political changes. America provided billions to Iraq for agricultural and economic aid; but later the United States realized much of this money went for military improvement.

The perceived threat from the former Soviet Union has disappeared. The Los Angeles Times reported on 27 March 1992 that the United States is planning to give Russia more aid (AP 1). This package will include \$12 billion for the International Monetary Fund, \$620 million in direct United States aid, and \$1 billion of United States contributions to help stabilize the ruble. President Bush is also under pressure to strengthen United States aid to former Soviet states that are trying to carry out democratic reforms. Unless the administration presents a convincing strategic rationale, the bidding war for cutting defense may start. They should not repeat the mistake of cutting the defense budget too much (10 Feb. 1992: Maze 3).

<sup>15-10</sup>  
The most important resource the Army possesses, the professional soldier, must remain at its present level. It is a real irony that the victory the United States declared in the Cold War means the loss of 2 million jobs. Professional soldiers will lose their jobs, not because they failed, but because they won the Cold War (10 Feb. 1992: Maze 5).

Military leaders must use all means available to focus lawmakers on the threat the nation still faces. Our leaders must develop a convincing strategy based on the real issues. According to the the secretary of the defense, the present level of professional soldiers is essential for our national security. Much of the country's leadership focuses on special interests, not the plight of the professional soldier. Representative George Mitchell proposed a defense cut of \$100 billion to pay for a variety of domestic programs (10 Feb. 1992: Maze 14). Other politicians are also proposing similar cuts. Senator Robert Byrd claims that the United States is a superpower whose credit cards are no longer any good (2 Mar. 1992: Maze 4). Even Representative Les Aspin joined the fight against the

professional soldier. Recently, he said that the Gramm-Rudman Act's aim is to teach the military leaders that Congress, not the Pentagon, has the final word on the defense budget (Matthews 10).

Previous mistakes made during military drawdowns are happening again. The political and economic atmosphere has influenced political leaders to use the military as a bargaining chip for their future careers. The future of the professional soldier and the freedom of the Nation are no longer their concern (Matthews 10).

Military leaders must maintain the present level of professional soldiers under its current doctrine. Political pressure should not influence the military leadership in downgrading the quantity or quality of the present force. Defense Secretary, The Honorable Mr. Dick Cheney, is still holding the line with admonition about the risk of larger defense cuts. General Gordon Sullivan, Army Chief of Staff, testified before Representative Aspin's committee on 26 February 1992. In this committee General Sullivan stated that a force of fewer than 12 active divisions would "about break the Army." The Army cannot conduct a two-front war with less than 12 divisions. General Sullivan also testified that the Army will run the risk of not having a decisive victory in a large scale conflict. Representative Aspin's proposal wants the Army to reduce its professional soldier force down to less than nine divisions. General Sullivan contends that this reduction will cause a lot of risk. The entire chain of command supports the fact the defense department must maintain the present number of professional soldiers. President Bush also agrees with this position (Matthews 10).

Some House Representatives want savings from the defense budget to pay for programs in their own district. They hope that the money will vitalize the stagnation of the United States economy (9 Mar. 1992: Maze 4). Pentagon spokesperson, Pete Williams, said that Representative Aspin's plans toward the military are "merely political." This is an effort to come up with a number that is lower than the Pentagon's. Representative Aspin does not propose details about the defense cuts. He merely calls for additional cuts without specific guidance (Maze 4).

Pentagon comptroller Sean O'Keefe warned in 1989 that across-the-board cuts would return the armed forces to the situation the country faced in the late 1970's. During this time the lack of funds kept the equipment unused and unrepaired (Koch 10). Since the enactment of the Gramm-Rudman act, lawmakers view the military and the defense budget as a means to serve their own political interest. Warnings from military leadership fell on deaf ears then, and it falls on deaf ears now.

Of course, politicians are analyzing the effects the drawdown could have on their own districts. The "peace dividend" from the defense budget is not as attractive when it affects their constituents employment. Secretary of Defense, The Honorable Mr. Dick Cheney, and General Colin Powell, defended President Bush's plans on defense. They argued against further reductions. During the hearings before several congressional committees, Senator James Sasser complained about the Defense Department leadership. He found it discouraging that the Pentagon's officials do not plan to reduce the budget any further. According to the Honorable Mr. Dick Cheney and General Powell, the military still

needs as much equipment and personnel in the post-Soviet world as it did in the past (17 Feb. 1992: Maze 10).

The threat still exists. Political power struggles must not influence the military leadership to give up the fight to maintain a professional and well equipped force. The United States should maintain the level of readiness it enjoyed at the beginning of the 1990s. History points out the need for a strong military. Well trained professional soldiers are the key to protecting national interests. The nation must have at least 780,000 professional service members to be able to defend itself and the sovereignty of its allies around the world (General Powell, McNeil/Leher Newshour, 27 Apr 92).

The Cold War is over, but instability around the world still prevails. The United States and the World, now more than ever, need a professional force that can deter or defuse any military conflict around the world. History will not repeat itself if the professional force remains at current levels, well trained, and properly equipped.

The political atmosphere and the economic factors that surround the nation should not detract from the need for a sound national defense plan. The United States must realize armed conflicts still are possible around the world. If the government does not realize this possibility, a small and weak force will produce catastrophic results in an armed conflict. Professional soldiers are the key to a better future for the United States.

A close look at history shows that the United States must maintain the present number of professional soldiers to prevent catastrophic results in future armed conflicts.

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