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As American society becomes more diverse and our Armed Forces aligns itself across the globe to posture in support of Great Power Competition, the role of race and race relations must be examined as we face new national security challenges. Diversity has always been a point of friction within the service and recently a renewed push to advance efforts to increase minority representation has made its way into the court of public opinion. Addressing the issue of diversity and inclusion in the United States Army has a direct impact on force readiness and its ability to fight and win our nation's wars. Growing demographic disparities across society and technological advances in the way America's armed forces postures against China and Russia expose a vital vulnerability in its military dominance. The role of race throughout U.S. military history highlights a key limitation in America's role as the leader of the free world and reinforces race as a fundamental aspect in securing our national interests. This study will examine historical references in which race relations contributed to American national security interests and offer recommendations for civilian and military leadership to account for the role that race has on U.S. national security policy.

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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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The Influence of Diversity in Securing American National Security Interests

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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AY 2020-21

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## Executive Summary

**Title:** Race and United States National Security: The Influence of Diversity in Securing American National Security Interests

**Author:** Major Timothy G. Russell, United States Army

**Thesis:** The men and women who serve in uniform represent the greatest asset to the United States of America, and the combination of the various backgrounds and diverse experiences of the force solidify its position as the greatest military in the world. As a result, civilian and military leaders must acknowledge the historical events in American history that plague our armed forces, recognize the strategic importance of diversity within the armed forces and consider the impacts that race and racial identity have on American national security issues.

**Discussion:** As American society becomes more diverse and our Armed Forces aligns itself across the globe to posture in support of great power competition, the role of race and race relations must be examined as we face new national security challenges. Diversity has always been a point of friction within the service and recently a renewed push to advance efforts to increase minority representation has made its way into the court of public opinion. Addressing the issue of diversity and inclusion in the United States Army has a direct impact on force readiness and its ability to fight and win our nation's wars. Growing demographic disparities across society and technological advances in the way America's armed forces postures against China and Russia expose a vital vulnerability in its military dominance. The role of race throughout U.S. military history highlights a key limitation in America's role as the leader of the free world and reinforces race as a fundamental aspect in securing our national interests. This study will examine historical references in which race relations contributed to American national security interests and offer recommendations for civilian and military leadership to account for the role that race has on U.S. national security policy.

**Conclusion:** The United States is currently struggling to maintain credibility in the presence of global issues of injustice, human rights, and democracy promotion even after nearly 244 years since the nations' founding. Progress abroad and more importantly domestically, will never be accomplished if acknowledgment of the threats that exist on the home front are not addressed. Proactive measures to recruit, retain and promote minority service members while simultaneously tackling the problems of racial and economic inequality will greatly increase America's ability to maintain military readiness and project power across the global stage without undermining the progress of United States' national security objectives. As we grapple with this historic moment in time, civilian policy makers and senior military officers must address race and extremism and the impact that these themes have on American national security, diplomatic relationships with coalition partners and the overall credibility of the American democratic ideal.

### Disclaimer

The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the individual student author and do not necessarily represent the views of either the marine corps command and staff college or any other governmental agency. References to this study should include the foregoing statement.

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## Preface

The United States Department of Defense is an institution within our government that has served as a beacon of hope for many Americans across the country. The department is comprised of directorates from the Department of the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps, each possessing their own culture, history, and norms that when pulled together makes the United States military the greatest fighting force across the globe. However, this dominant force did not always have the positive allure of equality and acceptance of diversity. Extensive history of racial inequality produced negative perceptions of minority service members throughout America's armed forces. This paper will focus on the United States Army and the service of African American men throughout various military conflicts in American history. To provide perspective for the framework of this paper, I will concentrate on race and race relations as the primary domestic factor in securing America's national security interests. These characterizations will provide the context required to address the role of race relations in the evolution of the United States' national security policies, and how it exposes a critical vulnerability in America's posture for great power competition.

I want to thank my wife, Kamesha, and our three daughters: Kamilah, Kamryn, and Kamari. Thank you very much for your patience and support during the numerous nights and weekends that I devoted to crafting this paper. You are all my foundation and the motivation I use to propel me to achieve the unthinkable. I love you all. Special thanks to Dr. Craig Hayden and Dr. Claire Metelits for their insight and mentorship on this paper. Additionally, I would like to thank the USMC Command and Staff administration and my Joint Force peers in Conference Group 2 for welcoming an Army officer with open arms and setting the standard for inclusion in the Joint Force.

## Introduction

The United States of America serves as the model of opportunity and promise for many people and countries across the modern world. Democratic values such as the guarantee of equality and inclusion for all citizens, irrespective of race, gender, or sexual preference is representative of the American way of life. These morals and principles of equality have not always been afforded to all who reside here, as history details a dark period of slavery and other injustices directed towards African Americans.<sup>1</sup> Racial disparity issues and the recent public mistreatment of certain demographics within American society has captivated the hearts of millions of citizens across the country. Graphic images of violence prompted many to voice their concerns about the unfair practices of police brutality often directed at people of color. The nationally televised protests that ensued forced civilian and senior military leadership to examine and identify systematic barriers that directly impact America's diverse and all-volunteer armed forces.

Sadly, the images that were broadcasted across the world represent a horrific reminder of the injustices of slavery and the brutality of the subsequent Jim Crow era in American history. America's armed forces are not immune to the social justice issues that plague civilians who live and work in communities across the country, yet they symbolize the concerns of equality and inclusion within military organizations.<sup>2</sup> Although minority service members have served in support of every conflict since the founding of this nation, many of the same inequalities in

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<sup>1</sup> Rep. Anthony Brown, interview by Bishop Garrison and Jason Dempsey. "A Conversation on Race in the Military." *CNAS Live*, podcast audio, September 23, 2020, <https://www.cnas.org/events/virtual-roundtable-a-conversation-on-race-in-the-military>.

<sup>2</sup> Rep. Anthony Brown, interview by Bishop Garrison and Jason Dempsey. "A Conversation on Race in the Military." *CNAS Live*, podcast audio, September 23, 2020, <https://www.cnas.org/events/virtual-roundtable-a-conversation-on-race-in-the-military>.

recruitment, retention, and advancement exist today as they did in the wake of the formal integration of the services in 1948.

The occurrence of white supremacy themes, racism, and other toxic beliefs that were legally accepted and permitted prior to and following desegregation characterize systematic obstacles that hinder the advancement of minority service members. The recruitment and retention of a significantly talented segment of American society suffers because of the existence of these counterproductive beliefs. Failure to confront these vitally important issues within the armed forces could lead to severe consequences for the United States military and American society.<sup>3</sup>

Unaddressed social justice issues and long-standing systematically racist barriers generates a serious matter of national security that cannot be tolerated or accepted in any branch of military service. In the current battle for dominance in great power competition adversaries will utilize the history of mistreatment and negative attitudes towards minorities to raise signs of dissent and disrupt the common goal of America's armed forces. Identifying and rewarding talented Americans with diverse backgrounds and experiences is the only way the United States military can successfully posture to defeat adversary forces in future multi-domain conflicts. It is vitally important that senior civilian and military leaders recognize this complex issue and develop the solutions that will correct these critically important problems.

The United States military's ability to maintain a lethal and ready force equipped to defeat adversary forces in great power competition will require acceptance of the importance of race relations and racial identity in securing American national security interests. Remediating the

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<sup>3</sup> Rep. Anthony Brown, interview by Bishop Garrison and Jason Dempsey. "A Conversation on Race in the Military." *CNAS Live*, podcast audio, September 23, 2020, <https://www.cnas.org/events/virtual-roundtable-a-conversation-on-race-in-the-military>.

institutional wrongs that existed during slavery and throughout the Jim Crow era must become a priority for senior civilian and military officials.

The men and women who serve in uniform represent the greatest asset to the United States of America, and the combination of the various backgrounds and diverse experiences of the force solidify its position as the greatest military in the world. As a result, civilian and military leaders must acknowledge the historical events in American history that plague our armed forces, recognize the strategic importance of diversity within the armed forces and consider the impacts that race and racial identity have on American national security issues.

### **History of U.S. National Security**

#### ***What is National Security?***

The concept of national security has evolved and taken on various definitions and meanings to citizens and governments across the world. Early classifications of the concept of national security as defined in Joseph Romm's "Defining National Security: The Nonmilitary Aspects", conclude that "a nation has security when it does not have to sacrifice its legitimate interests to avoid war, and is able if challenged to maintain them by war."<sup>4</sup> This definition provides a limited and shortsighted view of national security focused merely on external threats to the safety and security of a sovereign nation. Later expansion in the study of national security has garnered revised interpretations of what is considered national security and how civilian and military professionals define this critical topic. According to Harold Brown, the 14<sup>th</sup> Secretary of Defense, "national security is the ability to preserve the nation's physical integrity and territory,

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<sup>4</sup> Joseph Romm. 1993. *Defining National Security: The Nonmilitary Aspects*. New York, NY: Council on Foreign Relations Press. pg.122

to maintain its economic relations with the rest of the world on reasonable terms; to preserve its nature, institution, and governance from disruption from outside; and to control its borders.”<sup>5</sup>

These definitions fail to provide a detailed description of what it means and how it was developed. National security itself contains two distinct and separate concepts that when viewed from the lens of the United States creates a complex and often convoluted set of ideas and focus areas. One concept that is noticeably missing from the previous definitions of national security is the role of domestic issues centered on race and identity and the implications these critical topics have on America’s national security goals. The previous definitions focus strictly on external threats to the homeland and do not encompass the idea of race as a domestic issue with national security implications, which in America is a critical aspect to securing its national security interests.

To fully understand the meaning of national security in America, one must separate and examine the two terms individually. Socially constructed norms regarding the influence of government, law, and regulations directed towards racial ideology and racial conflict have shaped the fabric of the American rhetoric of freedom and equality for all.<sup>6</sup> The issue of race relations and national security priorities possess distinctive parallels that intersect throughout the development of national security strategies and the establishment of defense priorities for the United States. These concepts emphasize an important aspect of United States national security policy that is mutually constitutive, whereas race shapes national security policy and national security policy shapes race relations in America.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Cynthia Watson. 2008. *U.S. National Security: A Reference Handbook*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO. pg. 281

<sup>6</sup> Laura Gomez. 2010. "Understanding Law and Race as Mutually Constitutive: An Invitation to Explore an Emerging Field." *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 6: Abstract.

<sup>7</sup> Shirin Sinnar, interview by Doyle Hodges. "Race and National Security." *Horns of a Dilemma*. Podcast audio. July 10, 2020. <https://warontherocks.com/2020/07/race-and-national-security/>.

First, the term national or nation refers to the idea of a nation-state and the common identity that is found within its borders.<sup>8</sup> In the United States, citizens mainly identify as being American, yet as a result of the diverse and multicultural population, there are seldom any other traits that link these various groups together beyond that single categorization. Historically, the role of race in defining American national identity is a complex and exclamatory recount of grave injustices and mistreatment of African Americans from slavery through the present day. From the founding of the nation, the United States was explicitly viewed as a nation of and for the white race, and not seen as the multi-racial and multicultural nation we experience today. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, wealthy patricians, lawmakers, and several presidents concluded that racial purity was required to sustain America's prominence as the leader of the free world. This idea catapulted white legislators of the time to enact policies that restricted freedoms for many non-white people of color across the United States.<sup>9</sup> These early accounts of documented legislation would cement the idea that the United States was founded upon the idealistic view of white supremacy and identity as a sovereign nation for white people.

In 1792, the Militia Act established federal standards for the organization of a military force that would effectively provide for the national defense of the United States. In passing this monumental legislation, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld established societal norms of prejudice and inequality directed towards African Americans thereby restricting service within the armed services to "free and able-bodied white male citizens".<sup>10</sup> In a separate ruling in 1896, over one hundred years after the Militia Act was passed, the Supreme Court established the "separate but equal" doctrine in the case of Plessy vs. Ferguson. This decision would shape generations of

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<sup>8</sup> Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/nation>.

<sup>9</sup> Adam Serwer. 2019. "White Nationalism's Deep American Roots." *The Atlantic*. pg. 3-4.

<sup>10</sup> United States Congress. 1792. *Annals of Congress, 2nd Congress, 1st Session*. May 8. Accessed March 02, 2021. <https://memory.loc.gov/>. pg. 1392

institutional and federal policy initiatives that reinforced negative perceptions of African American citizens of the time.<sup>11</sup>

The second aspect to defining the concept of national security is the term security. According to Merriam-Webster's dictionary, security is the state of being secure, freedom from danger, fear, or anxiety.<sup>12</sup> This concept of security from a nation-state perspective is often directed towards defending the United States against foreign nations or external sources while neglecting the reality that some threats originate from within the borders of the country. This view is often clouded by the thought that the nation-state is viewed as being responsible for providing security for a certain portion of its citizens and that the institutions designed to provide security are working in the best interests of all members of that nation. As previously mentioned, historical court rulings detailed who was to be considered a citizen of the United States, and as a result, who would be viewed as being a member of the protected segment of the American population. These rulings indicate a critically important aspect to defining what national security means and how it is applied in the United States. For many African Americans during this time, the nation-state and the laws enacted that discriminated against them were categorically the sources of daily insecurity.

### **Historical References of African American Contributions and Exclusion**

#### ***Revolutionary War***

Slavery and the institutions that allowed the practice to grow were integral in the foundation of the economic and social systems that shaped the origins of the United States. Dating back to the Revolutionary War, African American slaves fought in the hopes that their

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<sup>11</sup> Supreme Court of the United States. 1896. *Plessy vs. Ferguson 1896*. May 18. Accessed March 03, 2021. <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1850-1900/163us537>.

<sup>12</sup> Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/security>.

loyalty would grant them some resemblance of freedom at the war's conclusion.<sup>13</sup> These hopes quickly faded when the institution of slavery remained common practice across the newly formed nation, with all thirteen colonies practicing this mode of economic development. Contributions of African Americans during the war for independence presented an ironic set of conditions for this segment of the new American population. Black service members participated in and fought with distinction during the opening engagements of the war through the siege of Yorktown, with Crispus Attucks being recorded as the first free black man and American to give his life for freedom in March of 1770 during the Boston Massacre.<sup>14</sup> Despite African American's military contributions in securing freedom for America in its victory against Great Britain, the mistreatment and negative view of African Americans did not change. Slavery continued, and discrimination towards African Americans in the armed forces became law. In 1798, the secretary of war declared that "no Negro, Mulatto or Indian" would be allowed to enlist in the United States Military.<sup>15</sup> This decision was grounded in the fact that African Americans were not considered citizens of the United States.

### ***The War of 1812***

These policies faced significant challenges as America found itself in a second conflict with Great Britain during the War of 1812. Facing significant casualties and limited manpower, the United States government granted an exception to the 1798 rule and allowed free blacks to join in the fight and ultimately prevent defeat by British forces. To bypass federal legislation that restricted African Americans from serving in the United States military, General Andrew

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<sup>13</sup> American Battlefield Trust. n.d. *African Americans and the War for Independence*. Accessed March 1, 2021. <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles>.

<sup>14</sup> Crispus Attucks. 1996. *In Massachusetts Hall of Black Achievement*. Accessed March 7, 2021. <https://vc.bridgew.edu/hoba/25>.

<sup>15</sup> Melton McLaurin. 2007. *The Marines of Montford Point: America's First Black Marines*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press. pg. 1

Jackson led the Battalion of the Free Men of Color against the growing threat of British forces in the New Orleans campaign.<sup>16</sup> Without the assistance of the nearly five hundred black service members in this segregated unit, the outcome of that campaign may have been drastically different. Unfortunately for many of those who served to protect the growing ideal of freedom and equality, the reality of residing in a country committed to slavery and racist beliefs undermined the thought of equitable treatment for all. African American men were once again forbidden from service in the military and restricted from supporting the institutions that were responsible for providing the safety and security of the United States.

### ***The United States Civil War***

The refusal to support the inclusion of African Americans into the armed forces continued up to the initial onset of America's Civil War. Leadership at the War Department explicitly resisted the idea to include black troops in the fight against the southern states.<sup>17</sup> Contrary to popular beliefs at the time, military commanders insisted that the government utilize the forbidden source of untapped manpower to help combat the growing southern aggression.<sup>18</sup> Antislavery activists and free blacks petitioned President Abraham Lincoln to address and change the laws governing the inclusion of African Americans in the military on the sentiment that the Union required additional forces to secure victory against the Confederate states. In his 1863 Emancipation Proclamation, President Abraham Lincoln set the foundation for the inclusion of the United States Colored Troops, a segregated organization that would be separate

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<sup>16</sup> William Bowers, William M Hammond, and George L MacGarrigle. 1996. *Black Soldier, White Army: The 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in Korea*. United States Army Center of Military History pg. 3

<sup>17</sup> Lorenzo Greene. 1951. "The Negro in the War of 1812 and the Civil War." *Negro History Bulletin* (Association for the Study of African American Life and History) 14 (6): 133-138.

<sup>18</sup> William Bowers, William M Hammond, and George L MacGarrigle. 1996. *Black Soldier, White Army: The 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in Korea*. United States Army Center of Military History. pg. 4

from the regular Army but fights alongside the Union forces.<sup>19</sup> These soldiers and the volunteers of the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Infantry Regiment fought valorously and would be credited by President Lincoln in helping to secure the final victory for the Union Army.<sup>20</sup> Ironically, the nearly 186,000 African Americans who served in segregated Union Army units fully understood that they fought to destroy the institution of slavery and held hopes that a victory would bring changes to the treatment and liberties of African Americans across the new America.<sup>21</sup>

### ***The Beginnings of Modern National Security***

The idea of national security and the onset of America's presentation on the global stage was on full display before and throughout the United States' victory in World War II. During this turbulent period in American and world history, political scientists such as Pendleton Herring began popularizing the phrase national security within government circles. Herring is credited as being the central intellectual architect of the National Security Act of 1947. This monumental legislation would reorganize the War Department into the Department of Defense, create the National Security Council, Central Intelligence Agency, and many other national security institutions that we recognize today.<sup>22</sup> What is critically important to consider during this period in American history, is the idea that the United States as a nation was no longer protected by the safety of the oceans, and adversary forces possessed the technology and desire to strike within the borders of the United States. Additionally, America's fear of the rise in authoritarian regimes and the spread of communist views required the government to address these concerns in structuring intelligence and military capabilities. These factors led to the enduring establishment

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<sup>19</sup> Thomas Bostick. 2021. *Black History Is American History*. February 23. Accessed March 4, 2021. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/thomasbostick>.

<sup>20</sup> William Bowers, William M Hammond, and George L MacGarrigle. 1996. *Black Soldier, White Army: The 24th Infantry Regiment in Korea*. United States Army Center of Military History. pg. 5

<sup>21</sup> Melton McLaurin. 2007. *The Marines of Montford Point: America's First Black Marines*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press. pg. 3

<sup>22</sup> Matt Schudel. 2004. *Political Intellectual Pendleton Herring, 100*. August 20. Accessed March 5, 2021. <https://www-proquest-com.lomc.idm.oclc.org/newspapers/political-intellectual-pendleton-herring>.

of those fundamental national security institutions, which consequently provided the framework for domestic peacetime intelligence collection in response to the growing support of communist themes among American citizens.

One major conclusion that is not clearly outlined in the legislation of the National Security Act of 1947 was the notion that the United States government may need to deviate from established laws and regulations if the concern of communist rhetoric within the United States involved the protection of national security interests. These institutions and the intelligence collection agencies that were involved were never designed to focus solely on issues of external national defense, rather their design concerned an additional focus of national survival against mounting domestic threats of those sympathetic to communist ideals. Acknowledgment of the multi-focused intent of this act underscores a critically important impact to America's national security interests. The institutions that were created often targeted and suppressed outspoken African American civil rights activists. This led to a general mistrust of government institutions, increased the divisions between the races and created additional barriers that prevented cohesion and inclusion within the military.

The newly created defense department was not immune to the issue of race and identity as it related to the military focus on the defense of the homeland. Units segregated by race remained the law of the land, and the fight for equality and inclusion within the armed forces became a major concern for senior military officers and political leaders of the time. Following the conclusion of World War II, the military services reduced force strengths and adopted global responsibilities to assist in preventing the revival of fascism and reconstruct the infrastructure and economy of former enemies in Germany, Korea, and Japan.<sup>23</sup> Military and civilian leaders

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<sup>23</sup> William Bowers, William M Hammond, and George L MacGarrigle. 1996. *Black Soldier, White Army: The 24th Infantry Regiment in Korea*. United States Army Center of Military History. pg. xi

assumed that a forward approach to defense would be required to reduce the spread of communism and that the occupation of bases in these locations would be required to effectively provide for the national security of the United States.

The military posture and allocation of resources during this period in American history sparked the beginning of a decades-long ideological conflict with the Soviet Union. The Cold War as it is known emphasized and made public a strategic vulnerability in the way America organized its military forces. Before the Korean War, no leaders within the United States government or uniformed military were willing to confront political opposition to maintaining segregated units within America's armed forces.<sup>24</sup> The decision to maintain segregation within the armed forces as previously mentioned was rooted in the social standards of white Americans of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This issue became magnified as America faced a looming conflict with North Korea, with a reduced force structure that legally restricted the availability of additional manpower. Military commanders realized this critical vulnerability and concluded that success could only be accomplished if segregation could be removed from the laws governing America's military establishment. These leaders inferred that given the growing threat of Soviet aggression and increased hostilities with North Korea, failure to utilize all available manpower in the modern armed forces could lead to catastrophic outcomes for the safety and security of the nation.

Integration of the armed services did not arrive at a time in American history when all citizens were viewed as equals. President Harry S. Truman believed in "democratic idealism", favoring legal equality as opposed to social equality for African Americans throughout the

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<sup>24</sup> William Bowers, William M Hammond, and George L MacGarrigle. 1996. *Black Soldier, White Army: The 24th Infantry Regiment in Korea*. United States Army Center of Military History. pg. xiii

country.<sup>25</sup> In his quest to abolish segregation in the armed forces, President Truman faced substantial hurdles and opposition from the American constituency. As America faced mounting casualties during the Korean War, combat commanders unanimously favored allowing minorities to join the ranks of front-line units as it was deemed essential to the success of every unit involved in this particular conflict.<sup>26</sup> The racially segregated Army that existed before the start of the Korean War dramatically damaged the morale and sense of self-worth for many African American service members who served bravely in World War I and World War II. These veterans fought to defeat authoritarian regimes on behalf of the same country that supported and reinforced domestically centered themes of prejudice and unequal treatment towards African Americans.

Despite these major concerns and under the inhumane treatment of Jim Crow laws, thousands of African Americans joined the United States military in hopes of increased freedom and equality and served to one day reap the benefits of America they so proudly fought for. Pressure to end segregation in the military did not come without controversy. In 1945 Lt. Gen Alvan Gillem led a panel to develop policy initiatives that would change the trajectory of the armed forces and transform the United States military into the modern age. His recommendations included incorporating black enlisted service members into formerly all-white organizations and expanding previously restricted military combat arms occupations to African American soldiers.<sup>27</sup> These groundbreaking initiatives would seek to provide the United States military the manpower to address security-related issues abroad, in addition to embracing the fundamental ethics of diversity and inclusion within the ranks of the armed forces.

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<sup>25</sup> Richard Dalfiume. 1969. "Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces: Fighting on Two Fronts, 1939-1953." *The American Historical Review* (University of Missouri Press) viii, 252.

<sup>26</sup> Donald Carter. 2015. *The U.S. Army Before Vietnam 1953-1965*. Washington D.C.: Center of Military History.

<sup>27</sup> William Bowers, William M Hammond, and George L MacGarrigle. 1996. *Black Soldier, White Army: The 24th Infantry Regiment in Korea*. United States Army Center of Military History. pg. 33

Facing significant opposition on one side and mounting pressure from influential African American activists to remove laws segregating the armed forces, President Truman needed to galvanize supporters in the wake of his re-election bid. Divided within his party, President Truman campaigned on policies that sought to secure voting rights for black Americans, and finally put an end to the segregation of the United States military. With overwhelming support from the growing African American constituency, President Truman issued his monumental Executive Order 9981 in July of 1948.<sup>28</sup> This order set in motion long awaited desegregation efforts of America's armed forces proclaiming:

It is hereby declared to be the policy of the President that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin. This policy shall be put into effect as rapidly as possible, having due regard to the time required to effectuate any necessary changes without impairing efficiency or morale.<sup>29</sup>

**Figure 1: Integration of the Armed Forces Following Executive Order 9981<sup>30</sup>**

Month	Allocations		Received		Percentage Received	
	White*	Negro	White*	Negro	White*	Negro
May 1952	8,780	1,200	7,699	1,198	88	100
June	12,855	1,615	11,193	1,633	87	101
July	21,325	1,900	16,739	1,822	79	96

*Figure 1: Integration of the Armed Forces Following Executive Order 9981*

### ***Institutional Resistance to Change***

As America grappled with instituting policies to rectify years of unequal treatment towards African Americans, the military faced a complex set of problems that would have

<sup>28</sup> Harry Truman. 1948. "Executive Order 9981: Desegregation of the Armed Forces (1948)." *Ourdocuments.gov*. The White House. July 26. Accessed March 9, 2021. <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc>.

<sup>29</sup> Kristy Kamarck. 2019. *Diversity, Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity in the Armed Services: Background and Issues for Congress*. CRS Report, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service. pg. 14

<sup>30</sup> Historical Division Headquarters. 1956. *Integration of Negro and White Troops in the U.S. Army, Europe 1952-1954 (8-3.1 CK 2)*. Manuscript, US Army Center of Military History. pg. 24

strategic level impact for generations to come. Acknowledging that society and the institutions that develop policy had substantial influence on military leaders, the path to integration in the military faced tremendous roadblocks for African American service members. Several military leaders were not convinced that the inclusion of African Americans would increase the effectiveness of military units and were not confident in their ability to protect America's national security interests.

In 1925, the United States Army War College (USAWC) led a study to examine the "Employment of Negro Man Power in War" drawing several conclusions that would shape Army policies and influence countless leaders throughout future conflicts.<sup>31</sup> In this study USAWC commandant, Major General Hanson Ely vividly conveys general perceptions of African American service member's capacity to serve:

The psychology of the negro, based on heredity derived from mediocre African ancestors, cultivated by several generations of slavery, followed by about three generations of evolution from slavery in the anomalous state of legal without actual equality with the white, is one from which we cannot expect to draw leadership material.<sup>32</sup>

These sentiments were not isolated to leadership within the Army, yet they represented the cultural and societal attitudes of American history that shaped the armed forces. Years later in 1941, during a meeting with senior officials of the Navy, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Major General Thomas Holcomb proclaimed that African Americans were not welcomed in any organization that he led. He was quoted as saying:

If it were a question of having a Marine Corps of 5,000 whites or 250,000 Negroes, I would rather have the whites.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> MG Hanson Ely. 1925. *Employment of Negro Man Power in War*. Memorandum for the Chief of Staff, Army War College, USAHEC: Army War College, pg. 2

<sup>32</sup> MG Hanson Ely. 1925. *Employment of Negro Man Power in War*. Memorandum for the Chief of Staff, Army War College, USAHEC: Army War College, pg. 15

<sup>33</sup> Bernard Nalty. 1995. *The Right to Fight: African-American Marines in World War II*. Washington, D.C.: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps. pg. 2

These pervasive opinions combined with societies negative perception of African Americans led to the adaptation of several policies and practices that placed minority service members at an extreme disadvantage. These beliefs were not unique to these leaders, yet they represented common feelings among white senior and subordinate officers of the time. Toxic beliefs such as these cultivated throughout the service with many leaders who subscribed to these ideas advancing to senior level positions that would shape racial integration policy for generations to come.

The issue that is raised and further complicates this strategically important topic is the introduction of institutionally bigoted and racist policies that hinder complete integration and inclusion and fails to exploit diversity as a successful tool in achieving America's national security objectives. Systematically racist perceptions of African Americans throughout history relegated blacks to support roles within the armed forces.

### **Role of Race in Meeting Current U.S. National Security Initiatives**

As evidenced by the previous examples of the contributions of African Americans to secure the national security interests of the United States, the relationship between race and national security is not a new phenomenon. Contrary to popular beliefs, recent issues concerning race relations in America has magnified the role of race as a factor in America's ability to project the democratic idealistic views that it portrays across the globe. Combating extremist terrorist organizations, vehemently opposed to the rise of communist governments and authoritarian regimes, the United States has continuously fought in support of equality and improved human rights conditions across the globe. These principles lay in stark opposition to the pain and suffering that has been endured by many Americans as a result of discrimination and racial subjugation. The domestic issues that have plagued American communities for

decades have not gone unnoticed by American adversaries. In the age of great power competition, the introduction of the cyber and information domains has raised the threat of domestic issues influencing our national security objectives to an extremely critical level.

### ***Changing Dynamic of the U.S. Population***

The link between race and national security has reached a crucial point in American history. As the demographics of American society shift, the nation's armed forces will depend heavily upon those who were once relegated to positions of inferiority. According to the 2020 Brookings Institute report on census data, nearly 40% of the population under the age of 16 is identified as a racial or ethnic minority.<sup>34</sup> Figure 2 This data coincides with recent unanticipated declines in the nation's white population, thus relying on minorities to generate overall population growth.<sup>35</sup> These facts further highlight an important factor in America's ability to secure future national security objectives. The large, mostly white baby boomer generation is currently being replaced with the resemblance of a more diverse, multicultural nation. Failure to address this growing change will place the success of securing national security interests at an extreme risk.

In order to meet the challenges of future conflict, the United States military must maintain readiness and continue to attract the best and brightest of America's younger generation. Doing so will require senior civilian and military leadership to realize that the changing nature of the population, necessitates a renewed focus on recruitment and retention within the armed forces. As current service members departing and integrate back into society, the armed forces will need to secure an uninterrupted flow of new recruits. To avoid this

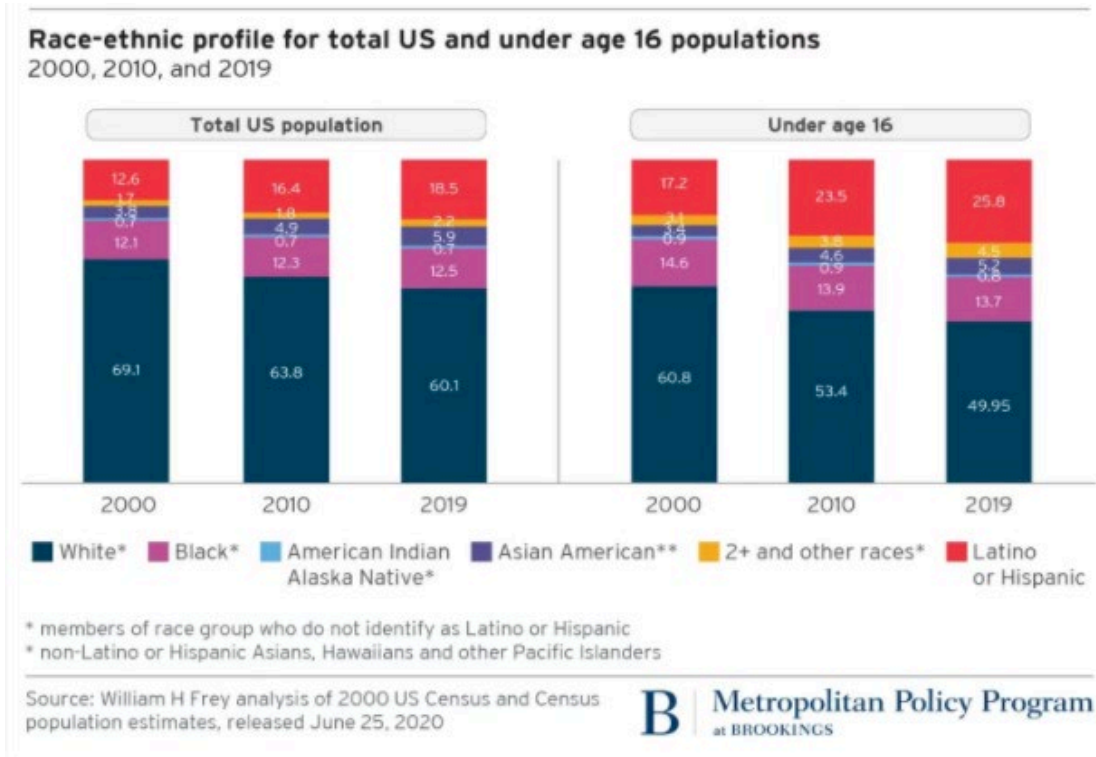
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<sup>34</sup> William Frey. 2020. *The Nation is Diversifying Even Faster Than Predicted, According to New Census Data*. July 1. Accessed March 9, 2021. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/>.

<sup>35</sup> William Frey. 2020. *The Nation is Diversifying Even Faster Than Predicted, According to New Census Data*. July 1. Accessed March 9, 2021. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/>.

potential readiness issue, the military services must develop and promote leaders who are reflective of the forces they lead, in addition to the population they protect.<sup>36</sup>

**Figure 2: Race-ethnic Profile for Total US and Under Age 16 Populations**



*Figure 2: Race-ethnic Profile for Total US and Under Age 16 Populations*<sup>37</sup>

### ***Recruiting the Next Generation of the Armed Forces***

The U.S. Army’s ability to sustain force levels across the globe is directly correlated to its ability to attract and recruit qualified individuals for military service. To meet the challenges of recruiting the best talent, the Army must explore alternative solutions to improve recruiting station productivity, resource allocation in different market segments, and consider adjustments to recruiter selection policies. Addressing the concern of recruiting station productivity is paramount in achieving the goal of maintaining a lethal and ready force that is representative of

<sup>36</sup> Military Leadership Diversity Commission. 2011. "From Representation to Inclusion: Diversity Leadership for the 21st Century Military." Final Report, Arlington, VA. pg. 14

<sup>37</sup> William Frey. 2020. *The Nation is Diversifying Even Faster Than Predicted, According to New Census Data*. July 1. Accessed March 9, 2021. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/>.

the nation they serve.<sup>38</sup> Recruitment programs must be tailored to the varied mix of market demographics, economic conditions within that specific locality, and other external factors that impact America's range of urban and rural communities.<sup>39</sup> Army recruitment efforts must not simply target talent seeking to join solely in the spirit of patriotism and must identify the motivating factors for the pool of applicants in that specific geographic area. Targeted approaches that address the desire to change one's economic status, access to reliable health care, and the desire to become a respected member of the society may seek to offer a stronger appeal to the minority talent residing in certain areas within our society.

Minority officer recruitment into combat arms branches continues to plague the quest to diversify the Army's senior leadership. Many observers link the path to senior leadership in the Army beginning with the traditional combat arms specialties, whereas these leaders are charged with managing large formations of multiple different job classifications. The trend that is noted, is that minority officers do not select these branches upon commissioning, thus creating a smaller talent pool to groom and grow minority senior leadership.<sup>40</sup> African American cadets statistically do not select combat arms branches as a career path, and if they do, they seldom remain in these branches throughout their careers. The problem that remains is that the Army has limited African American commanders at the battalion level to groom and grow any significant number of minority senior leaders.<sup>41</sup> The U.S. Army has recognized this issue for decades and as a result, developed a wide variety of organizations and task forces to address this complex set of issues. Despite their tireless work and over one hundred years of research and data collection,

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<sup>38</sup> National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service. 2020. *Inspired to Serve*. Final Report, Washington, D.C.: National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service pg. 4

<sup>39</sup> Beth Asch. 2019. *Navigating Current and Emerging Army Recruiting Challenges*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

<sup>40</sup> Charles Allen. 2014. "Senior Leader Diversity: What Does the Army Value?" *Army Times*, March 31: 36-37.

<sup>41</sup> Hise Gibson, and Daniel White. 2020. "The Strategic Problem the Army Doesn't Seem to Care About: African Americans Aren't Branching Combat Arms." *Modern War Institute at West Point*, July 14: 1-9.

the underrepresentation of African American senior leaders remains a strategic challenge in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>42</sup>

### ***Retention of a Diverse Fighting Force***

U.S. Army promotion rates among African American officers have indicated a significant problem in terms of disparity and inequality compared to those of their White counterparts. Various studies have revealed that African American officers consistently sustain lower promotion rates and increased attrition rates compared to those of their contemporaries. Focusing on innovative retention policies and initiatives is vital to maintaining published manning levels and has a direct impact on the readiness levels of the United States Army. In 2011, the Military Leadership Diversity Commission found that African American officers' promotion rates were substantially lower than those of the average grade-specific rates for each service branch, thus confirming that the critical point in an officer's career is the promotion from senior company-grade to field grade officer level.<sup>43</sup> This data supports the notion that the promotion and retention of African American officers struggle beyond the company level as lower promotion rates among minority's compound and impact future promotion and retention rates.<sup>44</sup>

The connection between the recruitment, retention, and continued promotion of minorities in the military and the United States population is directly related to America's ability to face future national security challenges. Today's multicultural, multiethnic force has the potential to inculcate pride and a sense of service back into the communities and populations

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<sup>42</sup> Okera Anyabwile. 2020. *Meritocracy or Hypocrisy: The Legacy of Institutionalized Racism in Combat Arms*. Strategic Research Project, Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College.

<sup>43</sup> J.N. Baldwin. 1996. "The Promotion Record of the United States Army: Glass Ceilings in the Officer Corps." *Public Administration Review* 199-206.

<sup>44</sup> J.B. Stewart, and J.M. Firestone. 1992. "Looking for a Few Good Men: Predicting Patterns of Retention, Promotion, and Accession of Minority and Women Officers." *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 435-458.

they represent. These forces can only gain that sense of pride through inclusion and greater trust in the leadership that they follow.<sup>45</sup> Underrepresented groups in the military can aspire to become leaders within the given organization, but the realization is difficult to visualize if there remains significantly low representation of minorities in senior level positions. These same service members have the potential to inspire America's growing diverse population to consider military service in their futures. Failure to acknowledge this strategically important aspect of diversity and inclusiveness among senior military leadership has the possibility to lead to an alienated and disinterested recruiting pool. The lack of minority senior leadership within the armed forces presents strategically complex issues that require comprehensive and deliberate efforts by senior civilian and defense department officials.<sup>46</sup>

To meet the demands of great power competition, the United States must address longstanding social and cultural norms that enable the military to recruit and maintain a diverse talent pool of military service members. Developing solutions to these issues is paramount in achieving an armed force that is representative of the country they serve and will ensure America retains dominance in future multi-domain operations. America's armed forces are not immune to the impacts of unconscious bias and institutional racism within the evaluations and assignment selections of minority officers. Dispelling and addressing trends of aristocracy within the force compared to the perceived meritocracy of leadership at the senior levels of our military is vitally important to reducing preconceived notions regarding advancement within the United States military. Acknowledgment that substantial roadblocks exist in the advancement and retention of quality minority talent will ensure that America is postured to address the

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<sup>45</sup> Military Leadership Diversity Commission. 2011. "From Representation to Inclusion: Diversity Leadership for the 21st Century Military." Final Report, Arlington, VA. pg. 15

<sup>46</sup> Hise Gibson, and Daniel White. 2020. "The Strategic Problem the Army Doesn't Seem to Care About: African Americans Aren't Branching Combat Arms." *Modern War Institute at West Point*, July 14: 1-9.

external threats that are represented by adversaries such as China and Russia. The perceived notion that the United States Army is an institution that is meritocratic in its practices has direct implications on the recruitment and retention of the qualified and diverse pool of service members.

### ***Diversity as a Force Multiplier***

Recently, the United States as a country as begun to have difficult public discussions about diversity and the blending of cultures and people which uniquely defines the American experience. This American experience has been tested and strained but has not been broken. The armed forces must continue to listen and understand the perspectives and acknowledge that the diversity and inclusion that is the military, will also serve as the force multiplier it must utilize to make the force better and enable success in future military operations. Review of diversity statistics at the senior levels within the armed forces indicate that America may not be utilizing the systems of diversity as a force multiplier to its maximum potential. Expanding the reliance upon cultural and multiethnic backgrounds and experiences can dramatically improve America's ability to address security concerns abroad.<sup>47</sup> Selecting the right individual, with the requisite experiences has potential to influence the course of future engagements below, during or after armed conflict.

Recognizing that America's armed forces are representative of society is vitally important in examining the relationship between the military and the civilian society they serve. Civilian legislative leaders not only represent the populations from the communities in which the military recruits, but they are also responsible for overseeing the implementation of national

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<sup>47</sup> Military Leadership Diversity Commission. 2011. "From Representation to Inclusion: Diversity Leadership for the 21st Century Military." Final Report, Arlington, VA. pg. 16

security policy.<sup>48</sup> The benefits of recruiting and maintaining a diverse and multicultural military force ensures that the military is safeguarding America's national values and that its actions securing national security is in the best interest of American society.<sup>49</sup> Demographics data collected from 2010 to 2019 suggests that America's military service branches are becoming more diverse and gradually becoming representative of the communities across the country.<sup>50</sup><sup>Figure 3</sup> As America confronts the growing threats within great power competition, employing all available assets will become strategically important for the nation to remain competitive in an increased uncertain and dynamically changing operational environment.

These new multi-domain challenges require full integration of the force, and complete utilization of all the experiences and capabilities at the disposal of senior military leaders. There is value in leveraging the unique capabilities of the myriad of skills that encompass today's fighting forces. Recognizing the importance of demographic diversity leads to improved cognitive, structural diversity thus arming America's military with a lethal ready force capable of integrating into the nation's global coalition of warfighting and peacekeeping missions. Senior military leaders must prioritize these themes in order to effectively maneuver the force to exploit the advantages of the variety of human attributes that the changing culture of the force represents. Failure to realize and implement the characteristics of the diverse and multicultural force will lead to full assimilation in thinking, and severely limits America's ability to solve the complex problems that will arise in future conflict.

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<sup>48</sup> Kristy Kamarck. 2019. *Diversity, Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity in the Armed Services: Background and Issues for Congress*. CRS Report, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service. pg. 5

<sup>49</sup> Kristy Kamarck. 2019. *Diversity, Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity in the Armed Services: Background and Issues for Congress*. CRS Report, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service. pg. 5

<sup>50</sup> Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense. 2019. *2019 Demographics: Profile of the Military Community*. Final Report, Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense (DoD). pg. 29

**Figure 3: Number of Active-Duty Service members in Racial Minority Groups by Service Branch: 2010-2019**

Service Branch	2010		2015		2019	
	Enlisted	Officers	Enlisted	Officers	Enlisted	Officers
Army	145,346	26,017	135,316	25,124	130,729	24,705
Navy	112,282	10,053	113,507	11,387	114,375	12,629
Marine Corps	39,238	4,118	33,646	3,974	33,002	4,350
Air Force	74,977	13,099	72,528	12,081	80,042	13,932
<b>Subtotal DoD</b>	<b>371,843</b>	<b>53,287</b>	<b>354,997</b>	<b>52,566</b>	<b>358,148</b>	<b>55,616</b>
<b>Total DoD</b>	<b>425,130</b>		<b>407,563</b>		<b>413,764</b>	

Note: Race/Ethnicity trend exhibits do not include the years 2000 and 2005 due to a change in race category definitions by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).  
Source: DMDC Active Duty Military Personnel Master File (September 2010, 2015, 2019)

*Figure 3: Active-Duty Service members in Racial Minority Groups*  
*"Compared to 2010, the number of Active-Duty enlisted members in racial minority groups has increased in the Air Force and Navy, while the number of Active-Duty officers has increased across all Service branches except the Army." <sup>51</sup>*

### **Defeating Group Think**

During the past 20 years of sustained conflict against transnational terrorist organizations, America’s military were extremely effective at rebuilding infrastructure and creating the rule of law throughout Iraq and Afghanistan. The leaders involved performed exceptionally well in these areas, but seldom did these leaders have the familiarities and backgrounds that relate to the experiences of the indigenous inhabitants. Commanders who have similar backgrounds and education, often developed similar recommendations and decisions resulting in a failure to empower the host-nations to retain control in an effort to relieve the United States armed forces following kinetic combat operations.<sup>52</sup> This example highlights a critical aspect to the

<sup>51</sup> Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense. 2019. *2019 Demographics: Profile of the Military Community*. Final Report, Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense (DoD). pg. 29

<sup>52</sup> Capt. Lakyra Pharms. 2021. "The Tea Boiled Over." *Marine Corps Gazette*, January: 2. pg. 2

importance of race as a national security focus point. Culturally diverse teams provide the benefit of acknowledging and delivering intangible insight into the will and reactions of adversary forces and host nation citizens. The benefits of diversity within the force cannot be ignored when the aims and goals of published national security policy hang in the balance.

Traditional problem-solving systems and practices may not develop into suitable solutions as America postures in support of its efforts against great power adversaries such as Russia and China. Conventional wisdom and doctrinal problem-solving techniques developed and instituted by the majority white military senior leaders limit critical thinking and often do not maximize the limitless talents within military formations. According to business insider Abu Amin, who correlates the benefits of diversity in the workplace to the production of increased efficiency, *super-additivity* translates to the whole is greater than its parts.<sup>53</sup> The greater whole is representative of the diverse groups and organizations within the armed forces and the idea that they have a greater propensity to capture the limits and creative potential of change and innovation.<sup>54</sup> Discouraging group think is a difficult task to accomplish due to institutional professional military education systems, but the inclusion of a cognitively and culturally diverse people within military organizations is likely to produce improved results.

Utilizing the full potential of all military leaders, regardless of race, gender or ethnicity provides the United States with an unparalleled advantage over future adversary forces. The ability to process extremely large volumes of information and develop multiple different executable recommendations is a weapon that no other nation can compete with. This weapon can only be effective when the force is diverse, and the culture within seeks and accepts the input

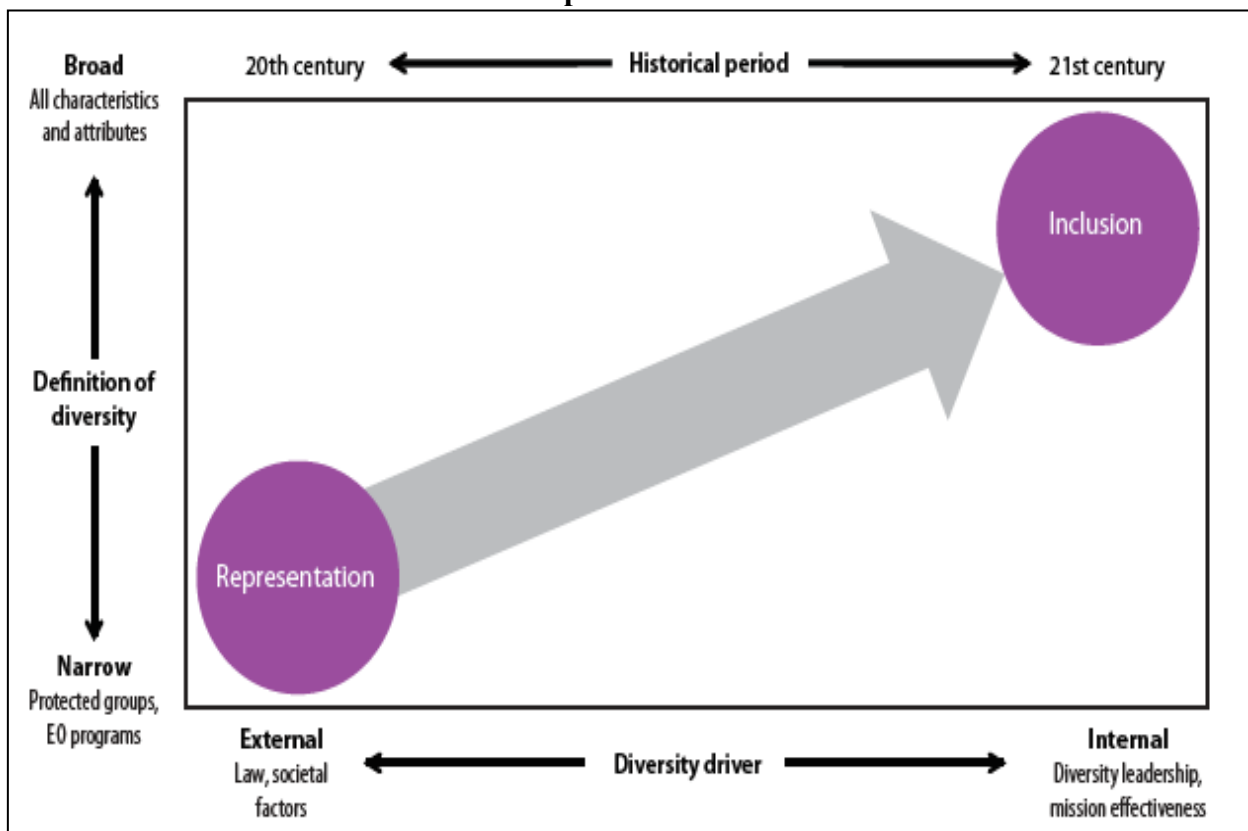
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<sup>53</sup> Abu Amin. 2021. *Superadditivity: Why Diversity Works*. January 24. Accessed February 3, 2021. <https://abuamin.substack.com/p/superadditivity-why-diversity-works>.

<sup>54</sup> Abu Amin. 2021. *Superadditivity: Why Diversity Works*. January 24. Accessed February 3, 2021. <https://abuamin.substack.com/p/superadditivity-why-diversity-works>.

of the multicultural diverse force that fills its ranks. In doing so, senior military leaders capitalize off of the increased cohesion and overall effectiveness of the services' warfighting capabilities that promote America's national security interests.<sup>55</sup> Modernization, enhanced problem-solving techniques, and improved decision-making are generated when the range of perspectives and experiences are pulled from diverse groups of service members and leaders. <sup>Figure 4</sup>

**Figure 4: 21st-Century Inclusion Builds on the Foundation of 20th-Century Representation<sup>56</sup>**



*Figure 4: 21st-Century Inclusion Builds on Representation*

<sup>55</sup> Kristy Kamarck. 2019. *Diversity, Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity in the Armed Services: Background and Issues for Congress*. CRS Report, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service. pg. 2

<sup>56</sup> Military Leadership Diversity Commission. 2011. "From Representation to Inclusion: Diversity Leadership for the 21st Century Military." Final Report, Arlington, VA. pg. 14

## Conclusion

### *Racial Tensions as a Threat Weapon System*

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union identified racism in America as the greatest vulnerability in America's quest to rid the world of communism and impose democracy through authoritarian regimes. Soviet leaders portrayed propaganda highlighting segregation and civil unrest as a justification of the hypocrisy of the American messaging throughout the world.<sup>57</sup> Soviet state-sponsored antagonists instituted a strategy that sought to pit Americans against one another while degrading confidence in American democratic principles, institutions, and due process.<sup>58</sup> They seek to defeat the United States from within using institutional racism and dissent to ignite and fuel internal tensions across America.<sup>Figure 5</sup> Their campaign to influence disruption, increase misinformation with regards to the racial injustices of American society centered upon the understanding that attempts to defeat the United States through non-conventional means outweighed the limitations to facing the United States and its Allies in a head-to-head military conflict. Reduced economic support and a military force that struggled to rapidly innovate forced Soviet officials to develop a pernicious strategy designed to polarize destructive events and reduce confidence in the common American identity.

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<sup>57</sup> Sherrilyn Ifill. 2018. "It's time to face the facts: Racism is a National Security Issue." *The Washington Post*. December 18. Accessed October 15, 2020. <https://www.washingtonpost.com>.

<sup>58</sup> Shirin Sinnar, interview by Doyle Hodges. "Race and National Security." *Horns of a Dilemma*. Podcast audio. July 10, 2020. <https://warontherocks.com/2020/07/race-and-national-security/>.

### Figure 5: Soviet State-Sponsored Cold War Propaganda<sup>59</sup>



Figure 5: Soviet State-Sponsored Propaganda

Global media coverage of the racially charged events surrounding the murder of George Floyd ignited massive protests and public concern for the fair and equal treatment of minorities across America. American adversaries in the fight for great power competition were not excluded from providing state-sponsored opinions related to the aftermath of the civil unrest that evolved following the tragic incident. Chinese and Iranian government media outlets criticized the United States' handling of the situation and sought to discredit criticism of human rights allegations against each country.<sup>60</sup> Chinese editorials blasted the United States over the clear demonstration of American double standards and the public deteriorating political landscape. These officials highlighted America hypocrisy as its civilian officials threaten economic sanctions in response to actions within Hong Cong.<sup>61</sup> Russian controlled media sources focused

<sup>59</sup> William Aceves. 2019. "Virtual Hatred: How Russia Tried to Start a Race War in the United States." *Michigan Journal of Race and Law* (University of Michigan Law School Scholarship Repository) 24: 176-250.

<sup>60</sup> Ken Dilanian, Ken. 2020. *China, Russia and Iran Using State Media to Attack U.S. over George Floyd Killing*. June 3. Accessed March 5, 2021.

<sup>61</sup> Ken Dilanian, Ken. 2020. *China, Russia and Iran Using State Media to Attack U.S. over George Floyd Killing*. June 3. Accessed March 5, 2021.

primarily on the ensuing protests and exploited the opportunity to actively stoke and promote violence between American citizens.

As one of the leading adversary forces in great power competition, Russian state-controlled media outlets continued their asymmetric attacks to stroke and fan the flames of division within the American borders just as they did during the Cold War period. During the 2016 U.S. presidential election, hundreds of phony social media accounts were created by Russian operatives who coordinated a dedicated social media propaganda strategy designed to manipulate the American public along racial issues and further disrupt the current democratic political process. United States intelligence agencies identified a significant number of social media accounts that were linked to Russian government outlets with the intent to leverage digital tools to spread misinformation, misrepresentations and lies to shape American public perceptions and weaken their trust in government institutions.<sup>62</sup> Many of these social media posts denounced groups such as *Black Lives Matter* movement while others condemned White nationalist groups.<sup>63</sup> These operatives utilized fake accounts populating misleading and inaccurate information which were viewed by millions of American citizens. This example clearly indicates that American adversaries are completely aware of the role of race and race relations within American society, and that they are capable of manipulating the cultural issues into a non-lethal weapon against America's armed forces.

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<sup>62</sup> Christina Nemr, and William Gangware. 2019. *Weapons of Mass Distraction: Foreign State-Sponsored Disinformation in the Digital Age*. Washington, D.C.: Park Advisors. pg. 2

<sup>63</sup> William Aceves. 2019. "Virtual Hatred: How Russia Tried to Start a Race War in the United States." *Michigan Journal of Race and Law* 1-75. pg. 2

**Figure 6: 2016 Russian Misinformation Propaganda<sup>64</sup>**



*Figure 6: Russian Misinformation Propaganda*

### ***Implications***

History proves that in the current battle for global dominance in the face of great power competition, American adversaries seek to identify and exploit the vulnerabilities of the United States military. Race and domestic racial injustices have already been identified by adversaries as a means to divide the American people and create dissent along racial and ethnic lines. Previous military conflicts served as the catalyst for change within the United States as government officials shifted their positions concerning the laws that legally segregated people of color from the white majority population.<sup>65</sup> The United States government could no longer project themes of equality and inclusion abroad while subjugating African Americans within the country to discrimination and bigotry. Military efforts during this period assisted in easing the passage of

<sup>64</sup> Dan Keating, Kevin Schaul, and Leslie Shapiro. 2017. *The Facebook ads Russians targeted at different groups*. November 1. Accessed March 23, 2021. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2017/business/russian-ads-facebook-targeting/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.eec213460940](https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2017/business/russian-ads-facebook-targeting/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.eec213460940).

<sup>65</sup> Sherrilyn Ifill. 2018. "It's time to face the facts: Racism is a National Security Issue." *The Washington Post*. December 18. Accessed October 15, 2020. <https://www.washingtonpost.com>.

monumental civil rights legislation of the 1950s and 1960s that spearheaded the demands of equality and justice for all citizens.<sup>66</sup>

The accomplishments and advancements in societal norms of that time has not been forgotten or discredited, but the path to complete reconciliation and inclusion is not complete. The failure to ensure the preservation of equal justice for all minorities foreshadows critical implications and severe vulnerabilities for the safety and security of American national security initiatives. Examination of domestic issues concerning race and ethnicity cannot be separated from the desire to secure American national interests.<sup>67</sup> Race relations in America encompass one of the most essential aspects to national security as America's populations continues to develop into a more diverse multicultural nation. Statistics indicate that the United States population is gradually increasing along racial and ethnic demographics, yet senior military leadership remains predominantly all white, while the force they lead becomes diverse.<sup>68</sup> Underrepresentation of minorities at the senior levels of the United States military can be linked to historical challenges in the appeal of combat arms specialties among African American military officers.<sup>69</sup> Studies indicate that minority cadets prefer combat service support branches over combat roles due to either institutional structural barriers or perceptual notions regarding the presence of racism, and civilian market compatibility.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Sherrilyn Ifill. 2018. "It's time to face the facts: Racism is a National Security Issue." *The Washington Post*. December 18. Accessed October 15, 2020. <https://www.washingtonpost.com>.

<sup>67</sup> Sinnar, Shirin. 2020. "Rethinking National Security." *Indiana Law Journal*. [ij.law.indiana.edu/rethinking-national-security/](http://ij.law.indiana.edu/rethinking-national-security/).

<sup>68</sup> Tom Brook. 2020. *Where are the Black Officers? US Army Shows Diversity in its Ranks but Few Promotions to the Top*. September 1. Accessed March 8, 2021. <https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/politics/2020/09/01/military-diversity-army-shows-few-black-officers-top-leadership/3377371001/>.

<sup>69</sup> Nelson Lim. 2009. *Officer Classification and the Future Diversity Among Senior Military Leaders: A Case Study of the Army ROTC*. Case Study, Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. pg. xii

<sup>70</sup> Margaret Harrell. 1999. *Barriers to Minority Participation in Special Operations Forces*. Case Study, Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. pg. xv

**Figure 7: Race and Ethnic Representation in the Active Component<sup>71</sup>**

As of May 2018

Rank and Grade	White	Black	Asian	American Indian/ Alaskan Native	Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	Multi/ Unknown	Hispanic *
General/Flag Officer (O-7 and above)	87.5%	8.1%	1.8%	none	0.3%	2.4%	2.1%
Officer (all)	77.3%	8.1%	5.2%	10.1%	0.5%	8.2%	7.6%
Warrant Officer	69.0%	16.0%	3.1%	0.8%	0.6%	10.4%	11.6%
Senior Enlisted (E-7 and above)	63.1%	19.1%	3.8%	1.3%	1.2%	11.5%	14.3%
Enlisted (all)	67.4%	18.5%	4.3%	1.3%	1.3%	7.3%	17.5%
<b>Total Active Duty</b>	<b>69.1%</b>	<b>16.8%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>7.5%</b>	<b>15.8%</b>
<b>U.S. Resident Population (age 18-64)</b>	<b>76.2%</b>	<b>13.7%</b>	<b>6.3%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>17.9%</b>

*Figure 7: Race and Ethnic Representation*

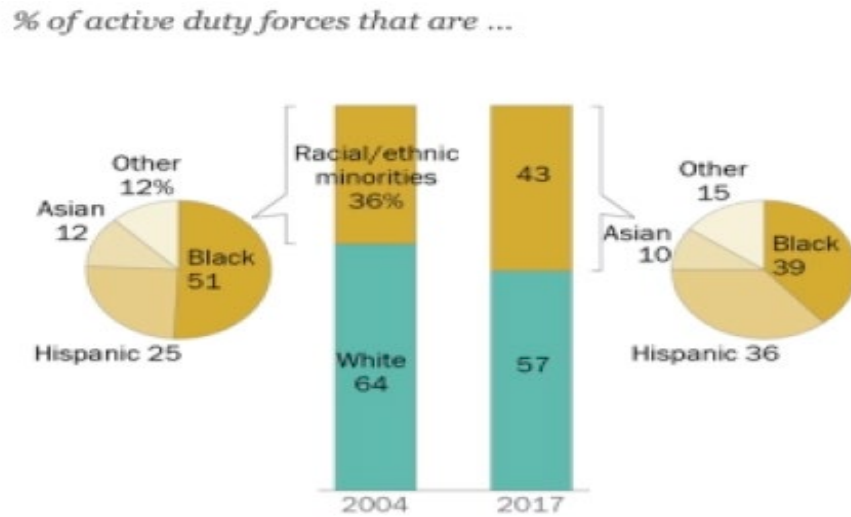
Leveraging diversity within the military establishment in an effort to decrease the divide in the civil-military relationship presents an additional asset in the arsenal of influencing and securing national security interests. In his report on the impact of diversity on the civil-military relationship, Charles Evans describes the trinity between civilian leadership, civil society, and military service members as essential aspects to achieving success within the civil-military framework of American democracy.<sup>72</sup> The United States military and senior civilian officials cannot neglect the influence of the all-volunteer force which recruits from civilian society and retains influence over elected civilian leadership. The democratic population is civically charged with holding elected official accountable, as they oversee implementation of national security

<sup>71</sup> Officer and Enlisted figures are as reported by the Defense Manpower Data Center, May 2018. Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Age, Race and Hispanic Origin for the United States, States, and Counties: April 1, 2010, to July 1, 2017, U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Release Date: July 1, 2017.

<sup>72</sup> Evans, Charles. 2013. *Impact of Diversity on the Civil-Military Relationship*. Thesis, Fort Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies: United States Army Command and General Staff College. pg. 11

policies and hold military leaders accountable.<sup>73</sup> Advocates for increased minority representation among senior military leadership suggests that a representative military force is more likely to uphold national values and retain loyalty to the country that provided them an opportunity for success.<sup>74</sup>

**Figure 8: Demographic Shifts in today’s military show growing representation of racial and ethnic minorities<sup>75</sup>**



*Figure 8: Demographic Shifts in the U.S. Military*

### ***Readdressing Race and National Security***

The intent of this paper was to address the major issues concerning the extremely difficult and often uncomfortable topic of race and racial discrimination and its influence on American national security objectives. Major change within the military establishment must begin at the leadership levels within the Department of Defense, Congress, and elected public officials who actively support improving diversity and acknowledge the vulnerability that remains if

<sup>73</sup> Kristy Kamarck. 2019. *Diversity, Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity in the Armed Services: Background and Issues for Congress*. CRS Report, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service. pg. 5

<sup>74</sup> Armor, David. 1996. "Race and Gender in the U.S. Military." *Armed Forces & Society* 23 (1): pg. 8

<sup>75</sup> Center, Pew Research. 2019. *Demographic shifts in today’s military show growing representation of racial and ethnic minorities*. September 10. Accessed March 21, 2021. [https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/09/10/the-changing-profile-of-the-u-s-military/ft\\_19-09-10\\_veteransdemographics\\_demographic-shifts-todays-military-show-growing-representation-racial-ethnic-minorities/](https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/09/10/the-changing-profile-of-the-u-s-military/ft_19-09-10_veteransdemographics_demographic-shifts-todays-military-show-growing-representation-racial-ethnic-minorities/).

strategically focused initiatives aren't developed to address the growing minority representation in American society.<sup>76</sup> Transforming diversity management teams and tracking systems into an actionable dedicated and synchronized strategic plan will ensure America's military is ready to face the challenges of the future multidomain operational environment.

Generating public support to exercise the various instruments of national power cannot be achieved without a whole of government approach where American military expertise can be leveraged as a deterrence, while diplomatic means serve as the primary source of influence on the global stage.<sup>77</sup> For much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century national security centered upon the foundation of military security and the ability of a nation to protect its national interests through force.

Evolving perceptions of national security suggest that domestic agendas and racially motivated incidents of injustice have elevated to become one of the central aspects that encompass human security themes related to American national security.<sup>78</sup> Careful consideration for the role of domestic threats and institutional racism on the execution of national security objectives indicate critical vulnerabilities within American society and military formations across the country. The United States can no longer represent the beacon of freedom and equality as the world witness's racial injustices administered at the hands of government institutions towards people and communities of color.<sup>79</sup>

The United States is currently struggling to maintain credibility in the presence of global issues of injustice, human rights and democracy promotion even after nearly 244 years since the

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<sup>76</sup> Irving Smith III. 2010. *Why Black Officers Still Fail*. Thesis, Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College. pg. 19

<sup>77</sup> Kim Holmes. 2014. *What is National Security?* October 7. Accessed March 8, 2021. <https://www.heritage.org/military-strength-topical-essays/2015-essays/what-national-security>.

<sup>78</sup> Kim Holmes. 2014. *What is National Security?* October 7. Accessed March 8, 2021. <https://www.heritage.org/military-strength-topical-essays/2015-essays/what-national-security>.

<sup>79</sup> Garrison, Bishop, and Jon Wolfsthal. 2020. *An Appeal to the National Security Community to Fight Racial Injustice*. June 2. Accessed October 20, 2020. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/02/race-relations-police-violence-national-security-community/>.

nations' founding.<sup>80</sup> Progress abroad and more importantly domestically, will never be accomplished if acknowledgment of the threats that exist on the home front are not addressed. Proactive measures to recruit, retain and promote minority servicemembers while simultaneously tackling the problems of racial and economic inequality will greatly increase America's ability to maintain military readiness and project power across the global stage without undermining the progress of United States' national security objectives. As we grapple with this historic moment in time, civilian policy makers and senior military officers must address race and extremism and the impact that these themes have on American national security, diplomatic relationships with coalition partners and the overall credibility of the American democratic ideal.

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<sup>80</sup> Garrison, Bishop, and Jon Wolfsthal. 2020. *An Appeal to the National Security Community to Fight Racial Injustice*. June 2. Accessed October 20, 2020. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/02/race-relations-police-violence-national-security-community/>.

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