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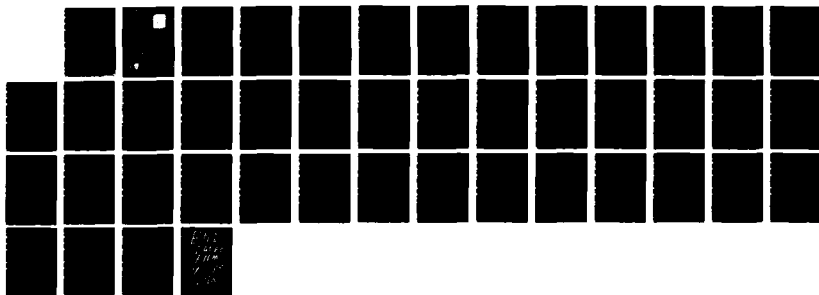
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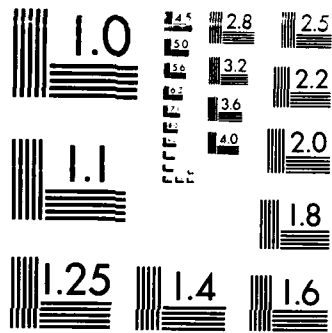
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CONGRESSIONAL - ARMY INTERFACE

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL CORDIS B. COLBURN, FA

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USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PAPER

CONGRESSIONAL - ARMY INTERFACE

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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ABSTRACT

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The Congress and the Army have been dependent upon each other since the early days of the American Revolution. Over the past several years, however, there has been a growing concern that the interface between the two institutions is tarnished thereby hurting the Army's ability to defend its program. This study will examine key points within the interface identifying those areas that impact upon the current unfavorable climate. The areas examined will include key players within the Congressional decision making process and their relationship with each other and the Army. Further, the study will examine certain aspects within the decision making process highlighting those areas where the Army can enhance its legislative presentation. Finally, based upon a review of the key players and significant activities associated with the Congressional decision making process, the study draws conclusions and offers recommendations on ways to improve the influence of the Army's legislative interface with Congress. (kR).

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INTRODUCTION

During the past several years there has been a growing concern over the effectiveness of the Army's relationship with Congress. This concern has manifested itself in numerous articles, both factually, as well as emotionally oriented. It has been professed through a sense of frustration which is often apparent in the present and future leadership of the Army. This frustration potentially breeds a growing climate of mistrust. This climate if unaltered will further erode the relationship between the Army and Congress. The existence of such a relationship is clearly detrimental to the Army and the Nation it serves.

To determine if the relationship between the Army and Congress is damaged, information was collected focusing on the interface between the two institutions. Information for the study was drawn from several sources. These sources included interviews with a wide spectrum of mid - to high - level professionals associated with Congress and the military. In general, the information, including the results of the interviews, indicates that the relationship between the Army and Congress can be improved. This paper will analyze some of the factors which have a negative impact on the Army's legislative program. The results of the analysis will identify challenges which can be addressed through specific programs designed to improve the relationship between two of America's oldest and most fundamental institutions.

-HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The relationship between Congress and the Army is one of the oldest in the American heritage. During the birth of our Nation the Army was totally and directly dependent upon the Continental Congress for legitimacy and resources. This association bred a legacy of mutual dependence between the uniformed force and the elected civilian leadership it defended. The relationship which was born during the Revolution was solidified into law as the Nation adopted its formal Constitution. In framing the Constitution, Congress jealously reserved the right to raise and resource the Armed Forces leaving the Chief Executive to act as Commander - in - Chief. Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution states;

"The Congress shall have Power to .. provide for the common defense, raise and support Armies, make rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces, exercise authority over the purchase and erection of Forts, Magazines, Arsenals, dock-Yards, and other needful Buildings." (1)

During the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, the Congress and the military dealt directly with each other in resource matters. As The United States entered the Twentieth Century, however, the complexities of the modern world overextended the existing process. By the Nineteen Sixties, Congressional leaders realized that the resource allocation system was out of control and needed reform.

In 1974, Congress attempted to bring the system back into balance by enacting landmark legislation targeted at

changing the Congressional Budget Process. The thrust of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974, forced Congress to consider the total resource requirement as it related to revenues and the debt structure. Through consideration of the budget as a total package, Congress can prioritize expenditures thus creating a blue print for the resourcing of the Federal Government. (2)

In America, the military must compete equally with all other national priorities for resources. The competition for these resources centers around the Congress and the individuals who form and service that body. Since 1776, the number of claimants on our national resources has mushroomed with each holding a real and special need for funds. Each claimant is supported by an advocacy group with a fundamental stake in the level of funding received. It is the ultimate responsibility of Congress to resource these competing demands appropriately in concert with the established national priorities. It is within this process that the Army suffers in comparison to its sister services and other government agencies.

It is in the process of presenting and defending its programs that Capitol Hill observers fault the Army. There is a clear perception that not all of the Army's senior leadership is totally familiar with the importance or relationship of critical actors within the Congressional process. The Army is accused of being politically naive and

inconsistent, possessing an undefined direction, and lacking agreed upon priorities. Some Congressional staff members indicated that the Army, through its inability to operate effectively within the system, has developed a sympathy lobby of defense advocates. In contrast to these problems, these same staff members concede that the Army's legislative liaison staffs are consistently the most responsive, straightforward, and knowledgeable on Capitol Hill. (3)

KEY PLAYERS

In a major news magazine's recent cover story, it was stated that the successful American leader of the Twenty - First Century must possess four important qualities. One of the critical attributes for success was the ability to understand and deal in the political arena. (4) If the Army is to be successful in achieving its legislative goals and resourcing its programs, then Army leaders must be skilled and comfortable in working with Congress. The data collected from Congressional staff members indicates that some senior Army officials do not fully appreciate the importance of the key decision makers within Congress, nor understand their influence on policy and resourcing issues. (5) To gain insights into this area, it is necessary to examine the characteristics and the impact of certain key players on the Congressional decision making process.

-CONGRESSIONAL MEMBERS

To gain a clearer understanding of the Congressional decision making process, is necessary to examine the key players and the factors which motivate their actions. The Constitution specified that the people of the United States would be represented by a legislature composed of a House of Representatives elected every two years and a Senate elected every six years. This forum has grown into a body of 100 Senators, 435 Representatives, 4 Delegates and 1 Commissioner representing their constituencies at the National level. (6) The phrase "representing their constituencies" is key. The Congressional member is the voice which presents and defends the local electorate's desires on national issues. There is no question that a Congressman's first priority is re-election and there is nothing wrong with this motivation. This process is the basis of our republican form of government. An elected representative owes his or her job and allegiance to the electorate. As such, a member must be cognizant of the electorate's desires and needs at the national level. This desire to serve the electorate is known as political self-interest and it is the greatest factor influencing the decision making process. Mr. W. H. Helmerich III, the CEO of one of America's largest Holding Companies, captured the importance of self-interest best although somewhat cynically when he stated:

" Political self-interest so totally dominates every action in Washington that responsible choices become impossible. Short termed political posturing paralyzes any long term successful planning... Our elective process insures that foremost in the minds of anyone in Congress is re-election. Everyone serving there honestly believes that his or her continuation is to the Nation's best interest. It justifies compromising on every major issue so that no important constituency is offended. " (7)

The interests of the local constituencies are especially evident in Congressional budget activities. The outcome of the budget process is closely watched and reported with each member letting his supporters know what he or she has done for them. Items in the local press, such as an article appearing in The Harrisburg Patriot - News, apprise local residents of the dollar value and contracts awarded to area firms. The article reported that:

" Defense contracts for the BMY Company, a York-area division of Harco Corporation will yield over 94.8 million dollars in the coming year.... .. Congressmen throughout the central region helped assure the money would be there." (8)

The relationship between a member and his or her supporting constituency is paramount in all Congressional decisions. It is the constituency that facilitates the continued employment of every Congressional member, regardless of seniority, ideology, or reputation.

Given the importance of constituency support, there are times when it is difficult for officials to support certain issues. The Congressional member who may be an issue's greatest advocate is of little value if he or she can not be re-elected. There are times when the Army's greatest

advocate will not be able to support a particular program. This doesn't mean that the member has withdrawn his support for the Army. It does mean, however, that on this specific issue other competing interests have a higher priority.

Congress reaches decisions through a consensus process which maximizes winners and minimizes losers. A perfect Congressional decision has all parties winning something. Members avoid circumstances which require them to make a final decision. There is a prize for those that withdraw to wage their fight another day rather than risk everything in a winner - take - all contest. The consensus process is neither efficient nor economical but it is the framework within which Congressional decisions are made.

The currency of the Congressional decision making process is votes. Votes are counted and sought by many different means. Although each Congressman's singular vote is important, his or her vote grows in significance through the member's ability to influence others. In pushing an issue within Congress, it is important not only to gather supporters, but to gather supporters who can assist in generating the votes required to win.

The Delegates to the Constitutional Convention possessed a wealth of military experience. In excess of seventy - five percent of the Founding Fathers fought in the Revolutionary War and were familiar with defense issues. The level of military experience in the 100th Congress, however, is far

less. Since 1972, the number of members who have military service has steadily, with one minor perturbation, decreased. Paralleling this decrease in military service is a decrease in the Congressional members' average age. (9) Further, the occupational background of the Congressional membership is becoming less representative of the general population. Statistics indicate that an increasing number of members are coming from professions which have minimal contact with the military. (10) This doesn't mean these individuals do not support defense or the Army. It does mean, however, that the majority of the members lack personal experience in military related matters.

There is one other, often repugnant factor which must be considered in dealings with Congress. Certain members of Congress, occasionally strike out against an Administration program, regardless of party affiliation. Such an outburst is often a ploy to keep a member's name or ideology before the local constituency or to increase the member's national stature. Author Tom Clancy illustrated this point in a recent article when he pointed out:

" As much as the political left claims to desire an effective military, it invariably shrinks from acknowledging that we might actually have one. Whipping -boys are hard to come by, especially the kind required by oath to respect public officials."
(11)

There are issues which are generated to make press headlines or television news. It can be expected that such issues,

projects, or programs and the officials representing them are going to be exposed to what many would call "cheap shots". The attacks must be taken seriously, however, as they can erode a program's long term support. In summary, Congressional members are primarily motivated by job related self - interest. They make decisions through the consensus process seeking the best possible compromise using their votes as currency. The majority of the Congressional members are young and have little military experience. Further, members of Congress will use individuals or issues for political self-interest. Although these factors are not universal, they are considerations which effect every member in our Congress. The organizational rules and norms that govern the behavior and ethics of Congress are not wrong, but they are different from those inculcated in the professional military. The key to success is in understanding and taking advantage of these factors when dealing with any Congressional issue.

-CONGRESSIONAL STAFF MEMBERS

In todays complex society, it would be impossible for a member of Congress to function as a representative of his constituency without assistance. In answer to this need, Congressional staffs and support agencies were created. Over the past thirty years the number of people serving the Congress has grown to a force of over 27,000 personnel. (12) Congressional staff members must be understood as they play a

vital role in the decision making process. Although there are several different types of Congressional Staff members engaged in several different activities, I will only address two major groups. These are the legislative aides on a Congressman's personal staff, and the professional committee staff members.

The term "personal staff member" refers to those individuals who work directly for each Congressional member. Personal staff members are fiercely loyal to their bosses upon whom they directly depend for their livelihood and reputation. As such, they consider their members' continued service in the Congress as their highest priority. As a group they have been described as "bright, energetic, and eager to do good." (13) They are well educated, young, often female, and rarely have any military experience. (14) Personal staff members are subdivided based upon their function and location. Approximately half of each member's staff work and live in the home district or state. Their major duties include constituent services, fund raising, following local issues and re-election activities. The remainder of the staff supports the member in Washington.

A portion of each member's Washington staff functions as legislative experts who track and deal specifically with major substantive issues. These issues usually parallel the member's committee and subcommittee assignments, although they often include an unrelated item which is of special

significance to his or her constituency. The growth of these legislative experts has in the words of a former staff member:

"multiplied the contact points for peddlers of influence.... and in some cases complicated the workings of Congress to the point where the institution has become ineffectual." (15)

Regardless of this charge, the legislative staff members have greatly expanded a Congressman's ability to follow more issues. Staff members stay current on major issues and advise their bosses on the specifics of key programs. They are without question, key points of influence and must be considered in any successful legislative strategy.

Professional committee staff members are significantly different from personal staffers. A committee staff member's loyalty is directly to the leadership of the committee he or she serves and to the Staff Director who is the pivotal personality in all committee staff relationships. Professional staff members are hired and respected for their expertise rather than for their political loyalties. This is in direct opposition to the personal staff member whose employment is based primarily upon loyalty to his Congressional member.

Professional staffers are usually older, very well educated, possess extensive experience in their field, have numerous contacts throughout the government and private sector, have been in their positions a number of years, and maintain a greater sense of job security than their

counterparts on the personal staffs. They are experts on the programs they work and have often followed these program since their conception. They are the individuals who put "pen to paper " when bills are "marked" and, as such, have a great deal of informal power. Committee staff members are individuals who can seriously impact the success or failure of a program or project. In most cases, they are issue oriented and, although concerned with the politics of a particular program, base the majority of their judgements on the relative worth of an issue. (16)

The power of the professional staff member has increased with the growth of the subcommittee system. The proliferation of subcommittees has distributed power throughout more centers and made it more difficult to achieve a consensus. This reform has limited the control that powerful committee chairmen hold over functional issues. The diffusion of the power base has necessitated the consideration of more individual opinions in achieving a majority. (17) As such, the subcommittee, and its individual members have become more powerful in the decision making process. Simultaneously with this decentralized shift of power, the professional staff members who service the subcommittees and their membership have expanded in number and importance.

All of these changes have combined to give the professional staff member a power which often exceeds his or

her formal position. It is within the ranks of the professional staff member that one finds the greatest advocate and most recalcitrant critic, often embodied in the same person. As a group, Professional staffer members are often key to the success or failure of programs and must be deliberately courted when working issues within the system.

-LOBBYISTS

It is generally accepted in Washington D.C. that professional lobbyists play a major role in influencing the Congressional decision making process. The modern lobbyists are bright, aggressive, know the issues, and are often considered experts in their field. Defense lobbyists are usually well educated, middle - aged, and often prior service members or military retirees with experience in the Washington, D.C. arena. Many lobbyists have extensive backgrounds including experience in dealing with defense issues in Congress. (18)

The common denominator which underlies the operations of all successful lobbyists is the political self - interest of the Congressional members in their bids for re-election. Lobbyists can assist in a Congressman's re-election effort through two methods. They can either supply votes directly through a constituency organization or they can provide legal campaign contributions which a member can convert into votes. If a lobbyist can do both, then his or her congressional access and influence is greatly increased.

Defense lobbyists rely mainly on campaign contributions and support for access to members and their staffs. These lobbyists usually represent contractors who convert defense programs into local jobs through military related production or services. Although this activity may create a local constituency over time, such groups are not usually well organized nor recognized as the key voting bloc in tight elections. These lobbyists are highly important, however, as they can clearly articulate in economic and political terms, the impact and worth of a defense issue to a Congressman or Senator. (19) As such, defense lobbyists are often critical in helping the military achieve its desired goals. Therefore the activities and interests of the defense lobbyists should support and be coordinated with service programs.

There was general agreement amongst the interviewed defense contractors, Congressional staff members, and Army liaison personnel that the integration of lobbyist activities into the legislative strategy was an area where the Army was less effective than the other Services. In general, those interviewed gave the Air Force and Navy higher marks for including their primary contractors and support organizations in the services' legislative game plans. Further, there was a general consensus that the Army must work harder at recognizing the role played by defense lobbyists in the Congressional decision making process. (20)

There are a few lobbyist organizations which have

neither specific electorate support nor campaign funds. These organizations exist through their representation of a perceived constituency with a legitimate need. The Association of the United States Army (AUSA) falls into this category. AUSA is a large passive organization with no centralized constituency. Its purpose is to represent the soldiers on critical issues, working in areas where active duty personnel can not participate because of protocol or federal law. AUSA operates by identifying, researching, and publishing excellent papers or letters on critical Army issues which are transmitted to Congress. It is acknowledged that although these papers are excellent, few Congressional members have time to read them. The fact that these papers aren't widely read by Congressional members diminishes AUSA's influence as a lobbyist organization. (21) The Army needs the continued support of AUSA to assist it in critical areas where uniformed presence is inappropriate. AUSA, however, must take a more active role in marketing its opinions if it is to attract more Congressional attention.

-ARMY LEGISLATIVE LIAISON

The Army's primary interface with Congress on all but Corps of Engineer matters is centered in two specific organizations. These are the Office of the Chief of Legislative Liaison under the Secretary of the Army and the Budget Liaison Division of the Central Budget Office under the office of the Assistant Secretary for Financial

Management. Although the ties between Congress and the Army predate the Revolutionary War, a formal liaison effort wasn't officially established until 1942 under the enlightened leadership of Army Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall. Originally the Office of Congressional Liaison was the Army's exclusive agent to Congress. The Appropriations Committees, however, felt they needed a special relationship with the Army personnel who dealt with appropriated funds. The House and Senate Appropriations Committees wrote their desires into Law in 1944, thus forcing the creation of a separate liaison section in what is now the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Financial Management. The legislative language specifically directed that a separate liaison organization be maintained to deal only with appropriations matters and have no direct linkage to the Office of Legislative Liaison.

The Congressionally mandated separation between the authorization and appropriations liaison efforts inherently causes problems. The loss of continuity between the two efforts is exacerbated by the large number of programs the Army deals with. The Appropriations Committees consistently fund defense at a lower level than the Armed Services Committees authorize. Further, because the members of each committee have their own agendas, the legislation produced contains issues that appear unrelated or even in direct conflict. Although the mandated separation causes duplication

and inefficiency, Congress, and specifically the Appropriations Committees, are very comfortable with the separation.

The Army's legislative liaison personnel are expected to be experts in the activities of Congress, understand its members, and seek out areas where interface is necessary and advantageous. Liaison officers, however, do not set Army policy, speak for the leadership, or lobby. The success of several Army programs, however, is largely dependent on the effectiveness of these liaison personnel. They are staff experts who facilitate frank and honest exchanges of information between two systems which are incompatible but rely on upon each other for support.

It is often implied that if the Army is not doing well on Capitol Hill, it is directly the fault of the liaison effort. Liaison staffs, however, are similar to any other organization in that they perform at a level commensurate with their resources and support. Professional staff members interviewed in connection with this study, generally agreed that of the agencies working with Congress, the Army liaison staff is excellent. (22)

To gain the individual experience and proficiency required to perform liaison duties effectively takes time. Because Congressional liaison activities are built on experience and trusted personal contacts, Congressional interface is a field in which longevity or repeated tours are

desirable. Unfortunately, such an assignment pattern may be detrimental to an officer's career under the new requirements of Title IV, of the Goldwater - Nichols Act. In many cases, the altered career pattern caused by extended service in legislative activities is responsible for some personnel retiring from Army liaison. The problem of career advancement for those who work with liaison activities must be addressed if the Army is to maintain its edge in this critical area.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THE ARMY ON CAPITOL HILL

Prior to summarizing the discussion of Congressional - Army relationships, certain aspects of the Congressional decision making process need to be highlighted. As with the discussion on key Congressional players, this overview is not designed to be all inclusive nor is it intended to be a road map of how a bill becomes law. It is designed to key on those parts of the system where the Army must focus to improve its image and effectiveness.

-THE ARMY BUDGET - WHAT THE ARMY DEFENDS

What is the Army Budget? The Army Budget is in reality an internal working document and has no formal place in the President's annual budget submission to Congress. The Army budget input is built through a sophisticated process anchored in the Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System and represents a grouping of Army specific programs. These

programs are translated into dollar requests and submitted through the Department of Defense for inclusion in the Administration's annual budget. The Army Budget as such, ceases to exist as an entity when it is submitted to DOD. Therefore, as the Army goes to Congress, it is in fact defending the Army specific programs of the President's Defense Budget.

The percentage of the President's Budget request for defense and subsequently for the Army, represents the Administration's view of national defense priorities expressed in monetary terms. The defense budget, including the Army's portion is broken into seven specific appropriation categories, with three additional appropriations for the Reserve Components. (23) It is at the individual functional appropriation level where the Army has the greatest legislative impact on the Congressional decision making process. Resourcing decisions within Congress are made on specific items or programs rather than on an aggregate. Thus the Army's focus in defending its programs must not be on the aggregate, but rather on the Army specific issues in each functional appropriation.

-FUNCTIONAL AREAS

Upon receipt of the President's Budget, Congress, with the exception of the Budget Committees, separates the document by functions. The functions are distributed to the authorizing committees who further divide them among their

subcommittees by major issues. The Army's focus during this process is on the Senate and House Armed Service Committees. It is the members of these committees who, over the years, have become experts and in some cases advocates of defense issues or policies.

The members of the Armed Service Committees are senior to their Congressional colleagues in both age and tenure. These members tend to be fairly conservative, regardless of party affiliation, and most have vested defense interests in their home states or districts. With the exception of the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee, very few Congressional members sit on other major committees which deal with international policy. Finally, 56 percent of the members have military service with combat experience in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. (24) The Committees are serviced by two of the most experienced and professional staffs in the Congress.

Congress' annual consideration of defense issues commences with a series of formal posture hearings on the defense budget request. These hearings are traditionally initiated by the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff appearing as the key witnesses. They are followed in order by the Service Secretaries and Chiefs. The purpose of these hearings is to provide DOD and the Services a chance to present their strategies, plans, and programs with supporting rationale. These hearings allow the

military leadership to outline their fundamental programs and report on the success or shortfalls of previous actions.

Following the full committee hearing, the real work begins as the subcommittees consider their portions of the defense budget request. As the subcommittees wade through the huge volume of material on which they must comment, the staff members focus on programs or issues which are new, reflect major changes, or are having trouble. In the House of Representatives, the number of issues challenged usually far exceeds the number of issues challenged in the Senate. This is due in part to the number of House Members interested in a specific military issue in their district. Although the Senate does not address as many issues, it has a tendency to delve more deeply into specific programs. (25) The increased interest in specific items or issues has severely slowed the legislative process. The increased interest by individual members has also forced the Services to increase their legislative efforts as each issue raised, must be addressed. This legislative effort involves time and energy to educate individual members and their staff assistants. This process is key, however, as several independent issues can influence major programs through vote trading between rank and file committee members. (26)

To prepare committee members and their staffs to deal with specific programs and to provide general information on important issues, the Services stand ready to assist Congress

in any way that they can. Each Congressman's staff works diligently to prepare questions and explanations of germane issues which will be important during the Congressional session. To assist in this endeavor, the Services are often invited to brief or discuss a particular issue with a member, his staff, or a member of the professional committee staff. In addition, the Services aggressively seek out opportunities to focus on issues which are important to them. It is often within these closed forums that an issue is lost or won. In responding to these Congressional interests, it is key to;

- 1) show immediate interest at the highest level;
- 2) ensure consistency in the material presented;
- 3) ensure that the material provided represents the SERVICE position.

It is in these key areas that the research indicated the Army has some problems. These specific shortfalls will be highlighted individually in subsequent paragraphs.

THE ARMY ON THE CAPITOL HILL

Given the Congressional expectations pertaining to advice and information on military affairs, let us see how the Army meets that challenge.

-LEADERSHIP VISIBILITY

The Army is often criticized for being hesitant in providing high ranking officials to interact with key Congressional and staff members on critical military issues. A professional staff member candidly stated that when a

problem arises with an Air Force program, the area comes alive with Air Force Flag Officers carrying a multimedia briefing addressing the good points of the program in question. The Army on the other hand, will respond with a field grade officer who will honestly address the problem without fanfare or emotion. (27) The reluctance of senior Army officials to interact with Congress is partially perception and partially fact. Interviews with Congressional staff members and key Army liaison personnel revealed that the Army has certain senior officials who are very comfortable at dealing with legislative issues. (28) There are several cases where the direct involvement of a senior officer has turned a program around and made it a success (ie. The Chemical Demilitarization Program). Liaison personnel, however, also indicated that as a group, senior officers in the Army do not aggressively seek opportunities to interface with Congressional members or their key staff assistants. (29) Army spokesman such as COL. Graig Mac Nab from Army Public Affairs stated:

"I don't think we articulate ourselves very well to Congress. There is a great reluctance to play a political role. Perhaps it's the belief professional soldiers have that, deep down, it's inappropriate as the custodians of force to get involved with politics. Certainly it would appear that the other services are less reluctant, and I think we're somewhat jealous of that." (30)

Senior officials must aggressively look for more opportunities, including social events, to make their

presence recognized and exert their influence. Further, the Army must educate its future leaders in the basics of working within the established systems on both sides of the Potomac River. Representing the Army to Congress is an obligation of rank which must be recognized and stressed if the Army is to improve its image and influence on Capitol Hill.

-CONSISTENCY

There is a Capitol Hill story that asks the question; How long does it take the Army to change its mind? The answer: About as long as it takes to cross the Potomac River. (31) Although the story is an exaggeration, the Army has a reputation for being inconsistent in its legislative relationships. The Army's tendency to change its priorities has been documented by several Congressional reporters including James Kitfield who stated:

"Sources agree that the Army's inability to put its goals into a neat capsule with a steady prescription hurts its chances in a congressional atmosphere where thousands of issues compete for time and attention." (32)

Interviews with several Congressional staff members confirmed that the Army has a reputation for changing its priorities and programs on short notice. (33) There is clearly no absolute method to avoid occasional changes or priority shifts and they should be expected within any dynamic system. The real source of the problem, however, appears to be the Army's lack of a central theme such as the "Six Hundred Ship Navy". Several professional staff members observed that the

Army is the weakest Service in defining a central theme and relating its goals, objectives, and programs directly to it. Congressional staff members specifically cited programs such as Division 86, Corps 86, and the Army of Excellence, as programs which were difficult to follow or understand. Further, these staff members indicated that even in Army circles, clear and consistent definitions of these programs were sometimes difficult to find. (34)

The most cited example of this problem is the dichotomy between light and heavy forces advocates. The spirited discussions over the requirements for and the employment options of these forces is healthy as long as it is kept within the Army. It has however, on occasion, been carried into the Congress either inadvertently or by design when one interest group perceived an advantage could be gained.

Mr. James Kitfield, a Congressional reporter noted:

"The Army talked for the longest time about the need for a big, fast vehicle to fight along side the M 1 Tank. Now we hear them say, OK, now we need a new light division with light weapons. And Congress is still paying the bills for the heavy stuff. These major swings become very confusing." (35).

Although the other Services have major dichotomies, such as tactical verse strategic air or surface verses submarine warfare, they seem to keep their differences in - house and rarely carry these discussions to Congress. Mr. Kitfield quotes a House Armed Services Committee source as saying:

"The Air Force has its 40 or 45 tactical air wings as a well-articulated goal. The Navy wants its 600 ships. But the Army seems to lack the well-articulated goals

that the other Services have and that becomes a problem of perception on the Hill. It's especially a problem with how procurement requests are viewed, and that holds even more true when budgets are about to be cut." (36)

It is clear that the Army must develop and promote a central theme. More important, however, is the need for the leadership to insure that the entire Army addresses this theme and its supporting programs in a consistent manner.

-SERVICE SOLIDARITY

Total Army support for Army themes or programs should not be a major challenge, but interviews with staff members indicate that it is. In the decision making process, specific priorities are often dependent upon the environment or constituency represented. The top priority for units operating in the Pacific is obviously different from those operating in Europe. The same applies to Congress. The top priority for a Congressional member with a large urban electorate is clearly different than that of a member from a large rural district. The problem for the Army is how to present several diverse needs with some degree of cohesiveness. Why does this problem plague the Army and not the other Services?

The decision making processes in the Navy and the Air Force are designed to minimize the number of agencies with direct involvement in a specific program or issue. In the Navy, the proponent for a community speaks narrowly as to what is required for that community to accomplish its

mission. In the Air Force, each major command staffs its critical issues through a management board at the highest level with everybody having representation in reaching a corporate decision. Further, the Air Force has an executive communications system which ties Washington and the field commands together on a near real time basis. This communications link is used to keep all senior officials updated on Air Force legislative issues thereby minimizing inconsistency. In both the Navy and the Air Force, the departmental staffs, perceive their primary mission as acquiring resources for their respective service.

The mission of the Army staff however is not as focused. The Army decision process is fragmented involving several diverse systems and commands. Even when a decision is made, members indicated that it is not unusual to get three or four positions on the same issue from various sectors of the Army. (37) These opinions are usually presented in good faith. The officials providing the opinions are usually confident that they are helping the Army cause as they see it. There is often disagreement on how well a system or program is progressing or on how important it is to Army. The divergence of opinions expressed by various factions of the Army, causes legislators to question the real requirements for various Army activities or programs. Although this inconsistency is often unintended, it is still harmful to the programs involved and the Army as a whole. This

inconsistency gives the impression that the Army is incapable of running or coordinating its programs. Mr. James Kitfield best summarized the challenge when he stated: " The lack of a steady path definitely undermines the Army on the Hill ... I think the Army tries to do everything for everybody. Army members salute and say, Yessir, we'll get it done." (38) This " can do " attitude often promotes inconsistency as leaders accept suggestions or questions as missions. These leaders often attempt to pursue these missions even if they lack the resources or it is not in the Army's long term interest. It is this inconsistency more than anything else, that damages the Army's credibility with Congress.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this paper was to research several specific elements which influence the relationship between the Army and Congress. The study focused on specific groups and their relationship within the decision making process. Drawing upon the information presented, there are several general and specific conclusions which can be drawn about the Army's relationship with Congress.

-CONCLUSIONS

1) The major motivating factor for all Congressional members is political self-interest related to their re-election.

2) The Army must improve its image with Congress, if it hopes to successfully influence the Congressional

decision making process.

3) The Army leadership must become more comfortable and aggressive in dealing with Congress.

4) Over sixty percent of the Congressional members and an even higher percentage of the staff personnel have little personal military experience.

5) The Army leadership must understand and appreciate the relationships between Congressional members and the various individuals who serve them. These relationships become more critical as members are forced to increasingly rely on the personal and professional staff members as well as on outside experts for advice and information.

6) The Army lacks a degree of consistency and continuity in its legislative program.

7) The Army's liaison effort has an excellent reputation on Capitol Hill.

-RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based upon the information provided and the conclusions drawn from several related factors.

1) The Army must work harder at presenting and defending its legislative package to Congress in a clear and consistent fashion. The Army's program with its supporting objectives must be clearly articulated, abided by, and most importantly supported throughout the Army regardless of the effect on an individual command.

2) The Army leadership must improve their understanding of Congress and how to influence the Congressional decision making process. Army leaders must gain more practical experience in dealing with Congress and must become more aggressive in sharing their expertise and opinions on Army related matters. The Army must improve its technique in passing messages to Congress through the many official and unofficial sources that exist on Capitol Hill. Finally, the Army must work harder to orchestrate all of the available resources to obtain the desired result.

3) The Army must seek opportunities to educate Congressman and staff members on Army issues. The Army must include every avenue available, to include lobbyists, in assisting in this educational process.

4) The Army must study and assess its legislative game plan with the same exactness it exhibits in its resource programming. Every issue must be carefully evaluated to identify who will gain or loose from a given decision. Once the winning and loosing constituencies are identified, strategies must be designed to deal with these groups in reaching the Army's desired objective.

5) The Army should adopt a communications system which facilitates the rapid exchange of Congressional related data at the highest levels. A congressional information communications net would greatly assist in helping the Army speak with one voice on critical issues. A study of the

system the Air Forces uses may be a logical beginning in this area.

6) The Army should seek to exempt officers servicing in legislative liaison positions from the joint tour requirements of Title IV of Goldwater - Nichols Act. Legislative liaison requirements have become so key that they often mean the difference between success or failure of critical programs. As such, liaison positions should be filled with officers who have developed expertise in the field through extended or repeated tours.

7) The Army must insure that once a corporate decision is reached, it is consistently articulated and supported by all members of the Army team. Although this problem may be solved in several ways, there must be a renewed emphasis on using many voices to tell the single Army story.

8) The realignment of liaison duties should be studied to ensure that the fullest value is being gained from the resources available. The flow of information between the liaison teams who work the Authorization and Appropriation Committees must be improved and standardized. Although such efforts must be closely scrutinized to ensure that Congressional intent is not violated, a more cohesive legislative strategy may be possible through a closer exchange of information.

SUMMARY

The United States was founded upon the principle that people have the right to governmental self-determination. The interdependence between the Army and the Congress which was forged on the Revolutionary War battlefields and solidified into law by the Constitution, established the beginnings of a relationship which is as necessary today as it was over two centuries ago. It is a relationship dynamic in nature and fundamental to our American society. To ensure that this relationship is as productive as possible, the Army leadership must continually examine its interface with Congress.

Army leadership must ensure that they are: responding to Congressional intent and questions promptly; being consistent in legislative policies and requirements; and presenting a cohesive program to Congress. Current and future leaders of the Army must understand Congress and its decision making process including all of the formal and informal channels available. It is through an improved understanding of the Congressional decision making process that the Army leadership will have more influence on key Congressional decisions. Further, through an increased understanding of each others needs, the leadership of both Congress and the Army will strengthen the relationship between the two bodies. The product of this improved relationship will be a better Army and a stronger America.

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