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**RELEVANCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL READY RESERVE (IRR)
TO THE POST COLD WAR ARMY**

BY

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Relevance of the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR)
to the Post Cold War Army

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Medford, Massachusetts
1998

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ABSTRACT

The world is rapidly changing and greater demands are being placed on the United States as the world's only super power. These demands include new global challenges for America's Army that must continue to reevaluate itself for relevancy. The word "relevancy" is heard often and is used as a measuring stick to gauge how the Army will meet the challenges of today's uncertain global environment. Relevancy is a leadership issue for today, and in the future. Over the last several years, senior leader's sought to make the Army more relevant by undertaking such measures as reducing force structure and trimming the budget. The active and reserve components have worked to meet new standards to achieve increased relevance. Yet, there is still one corner of the Army's force that may have been left in the shadows and until recently, given little attention despite its significant role as a source of pretrained manpower; the IRR.

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The primary question is, "Is the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) relevant to our post cold war Army?" To begin to address the issue of relevance, we must recognize that the IRR's relevance to the Army is predicated upon its ability to provide pretrained individual manpower (PIM) to all components of the Army in the time of war or national emergency. As constituted at the time of this writing, it appears that the IRR is still structured to the Cold War scenario that required a larger replacement pool to meet initial manpower requirements for deploying units and casualty replacements.

As of late 1997, the IRR had not been realigned to meet the current National Military Strategy. Although both the active and reserve components have been structurally reduced to meet this strategy, little attention has been given to the constitution or relevancy of the IRR in the post cold war era. While it may be able to accomplish its mission as evidenced by Operation Desert Shield/Storm, an inquiry must be made into how relevant the IRR and its population are to the current strategy and whether realignment and stratification is necessary.

As the Army looks for efficiencies in an era of declining resources, attention must be given to the IRR to ensure that we do not maintain a much larger IRR than is required to meet contingency requirements.

The purposes of this research are:

- (1) to present a basic overview of the Army's IRR history, origins, composition and mission as a foundation of understanding;
- (2) to state its relevance to the current National Military Strategy in both the cold and post war eras;
- (3) address the question, "How does the IRR satisfy the Army's requirements for pre-trained individual manpower?";
- (4) to state the impact of personnel specialties which are excesses to requirements;

(5) to describe critical shortages and suggest methods to align the IRR to requirements.

(6) to propose an answer to the question "Is there a justification for changing the IRR and how is change to be determined?"

History, Origins, Composition and Mission

A basis for understanding the IRR and its relevancy begin here. World War II ended with the United States emerging as a world leader and the Soviet Union perceived by the allied nations as the new major threat to democracy. The United States was war weary which prompted a Congressional debate concerning the necessity for a large standing peacetime army. The American public and Congress were ready to quickly demobilize forces. They also came to the conclusion that, in the event of Soviet aggression, rapid mobilization of a ready reserve would be vital (Stuckey and Pistorius, 1984) (Payne, 1997). In the early 1950's many members of Congress were also veterans and some were reservists. Their concern for the Reserve Forces led them to provide influential support previously unavailable. The Armed Forces Reserve Act of 1952 was established to specifically define categories including the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) (Crossland and Currie, pg 100, 1997). Prior to that time, an Organized Reserve Corps existed through military districts. The IRR is also mentioned in 10 United States Code (U.S.C.), Section 70A, as early as August 10, 1956. By the 1970's and into the 1980's, the perceived threat of Soviet nuclear aggression continued and reliance on the reserve components increased. Prompted by the lessons learned from Korea and Vietnam, Congress enacted revisions to the Presidential Selected Reserve Call-Up authority that allowed mobilization of Selected Reservists. The number was initially limited to 50,000 in 1976 and in the 1980's was increased to 200,000 (Brinkershoff, et al, 1996). It is very evident that the relevance of the reserve components to the National Military Strategy and National Security Strategy would

continue. The IRR was no less important to the defense of America. In 1983, the Army announced that the Chief, Army Reserve would establish the Army Reserve Personnel Center to provide career management to IRR soldiers and soldiers in other reserve categories (Crossland & Currie, pg 229, 1997).

Today, as in past years, the IRR continues to be mandated by Title 10, United States Code (1996) which further provides for the composition of the IRR by stating that, "The Ready Reserve consists of units or Reserves, or both liable for active duty as provided in Sections 12301 and 12302" of the title. In addition, Title 10 United States Code (1996) identifies the location and defines the Individual Ready Reserve. It states that, "Within the Ready Reserve of each of the reserve components there is an Individual Ready Reserve. The Individual Ready Reserve consists of those members of the Ready Reserve who are not in the Selected Reserve or the inactive National Guard." The inactive National Guard is a state force and not part of the IRR which is a federal force. Those soldiers who are participating in the Selected Reserve are considered to be members of Troop Unit Programs (TPU), Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) and Individual Mobilization Augmentee (USAR). The active status of soldiers assigned to the IRR is important for the impact on promotions, activation and the potential to earn retirement points that later translate to pay. (Amodeo, 1997)

In simpler terms, the IRR consists of several groups of pre-trained individual manpower (PIM) or soldiers who possess a military occupational specialty and have performed service in the Active Army, or the Army National Guard or the Army Reserve. Members of the IRR meet military wartime training standards in the event of mobilization for war or national emergency (Hulet, 1997)

Composition, or strength, is a key factor in determining the relevance of the IRR. In fact, it may be the most important consideration with a little known twist. It has been previously stated that the source of the personnel strength is derived from

the three Army Components. The quantity of soldiers transferred to the IRR is only part of the story. The twist is that the quality of soldiers transferred into the IRR may return to serve the three components that placed them there in the first place (Gordon, 1997). "Nonqualified personnel transferred to the IRR impacts relevancy." (Conaway, 1997). The critical importance of composition becomes fully evident upon mobilization or when fillers are called to meet requirements. The strength rises and falls according to several factors that are inclusive of global changes, the National Military Strategy, force structure changes, attrition and more. For example, let's compare the cold war era composition to post cold war and note what happened during the transition. The total IRR aggregate strength in the closing years of the Cold War (later 1980's), was approximately 293,000 of which 47,000 (16%) were officers and 246,000 (84%) were enlisted soldiers (Hulet, 1997). Once the Active Army component began to drawdown its force structure in the early 1990's, many of the soldiers were transferred to the IRR. The result of the large influx of personnel at that time was a sharp peak in the IRR strength. In Fiscal Year 1993, the strength of the IRR reached approximately 438,000 which is the largest strength since 1980. The IRR's total strength has leveled during Fiscal Year 1997 to approximately 273,300 (Kohner, 1998). The majority of soldiers presently assigned to the IRR are combat support and combat service support. As we continue to reduce structure, closer attention should be paid to the quality of soldiers transferred to the IRR from the three components. Attention should also be given to increasing the quality of composition of the IRR by conducting a review of its personnel inventory. To further highlight the significance of the IRR as it relates to

America's Army and the Department of Defense, Figure 1 below depicts the FY 97 total strength of the Army's IRR in contrast to the other Services (Kohner, 1998).

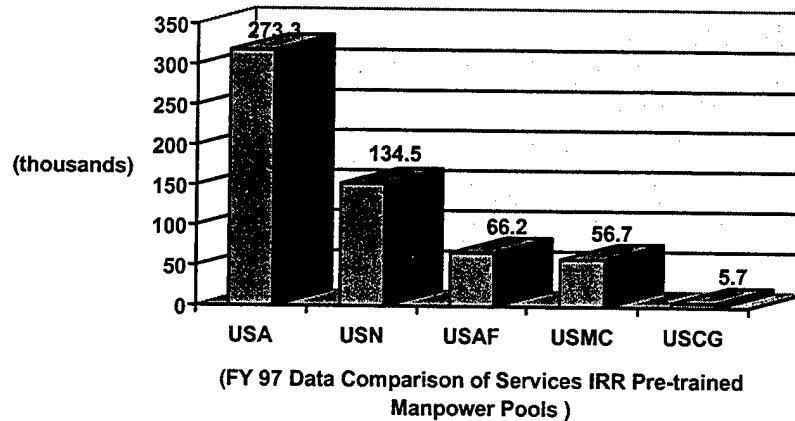


FIGURE 1

The glaring factor is that the Army has the largest IRR population that is indicative of its significance to the National Military Strategy, National Security Strategy and to the Army itself. This significance will continue to increase as we move to a new millennium and an uncertain global environment. Composition of the IRR is essential to mission accomplishment. To determine composition, one must know the IRR's mission?

The mission of the IRR is to support operational requirements of the National Military Strategy. Manpower from the IRR compliments the manpower needs of the Active Army, National Guard, and Army Reserve by reinforcing those units, particularly during early phases of mobilization. (Hulet, Q&A Paper, 1997)

Relevance; Then and Now

It is clear that during the cold war era one of the primary objectives of America's National Security was to, "Inhibit the expansion of Soviet control and military presence throughout the world. . ." and the military, through its readiness was a factor of deterrence to Soviet aggression. (Report of the Secretary of

Defense to Congress, page 25, FY 1986) In his Fiscal Year 1986 Report to Congress, the Secretary of Defense highlighted readiness by stating, ". . .one of our top priorities has been to build and maintain a combat-ready force -- one that is adequately manned and trained." (Report of the Secretary of Defense to Congress, FY 1986) Until the late 1980's, the U.S. needed a large standing army to include the reserve components in order to support the nation's security objectives. This large standing army encompassed the IRR at "a time when every soldier was regarded as a must have resource." (Hulet, 1997) In the event of hostilities between "threat forces" and the U.S. during the cold war, there was a very real possibility that the Army would require pre-trained reinforcements from the IRR. This requirement suggests the notion that the IRR's large pool of pre-trained manpower strongly justified its relevance to the Army in the cold war era. Today we should be asking, "What is the relevance of the IRR in the post cold war era?"

By contrast to the cold war era, today's National Military Strategy in the post cold war era is different. Today, our nation is more concerned about a ". . .number of uncertainties, including potentially serious threats to America's security." (National Military Strategy, 1997) The 1997 National Military Strategy further identifies these serious threats and states the strategy as follows:

"... regional dangers, asymmetric challenges, trans-national threats and wild cards. The National Military Strategy is based on the concepts of *shape*, *respond* and *prepare now*. It builds on the premise that the United States will remain globally engaged to *shape* the international environment and create conditions favorable to U.S. interests and global security. It emphasizes that our Armed Forces must *respond* to the full spectrum of crises in order to protect our national interests." (National Military Strategy, pg 1, 1997)

It further states that,

"... as we pursue shaping and responding activities, we must also take steps to prepare now for an uncertain future. . . Our forces must be able to seize and maintain the momentum of operations rapidly to meet multiple demands in an uncertain and complex strategic environment." (National Military Strategy, 1997)

Speaking at the November 17, 1997 Fletcher Conference in Boston, General Charles Krulack, Commandant of the U.S. Marines highlighted the change in strategy by stating that, "We can't just draw a line in the sand anymore." (Bergeson, 1997) Considering the current National Military strategy, the demands of an uncertain and complex strategic environment, the demands on our military structure are fully challenging and uncertain. In the event that pretrained manpower is required, the IRR may well be the Army's wild card. Thus, senior leaders should recognize that: 1) the Army's IRR represents a significant part of its own force; 2) its significance is relevant to the other Department of Defense Services; and, 3) there is an increasing probability that the IRR will be called to respond to the demands of an uncertain global environment.

The IRR's relevance is important. However, the most critical factor directly impacting relevancy rests in the population of the IRR.

Satisfying Requirements for Pre-trained Individual Manpower

Since the early 1990's, the Army, including its Reserve Forces, were restructured to meet the demands of an uncertain global environment and the National Military Strategy. While the active component is structured for combat, the National Guard assumed more combat and combat support roles. The Army Reserve was restructured to meet Army requirements for combat service support. All three components, with perhaps exception to the IRR today, are more closely aligned to the National Military Strategies of shape, prepare and respond. (National Military

Strategy, 1997) The fact that the IRR is not fully aligned, does not diminish its overall relevancy or importance. Realignment is an achievable management strategy that may be attained through processes such as the Mobilization Manpower Planning system or in short, MOBMAN. This system is the Total Army Personnel Command's central and authoritative source for mobilization manpower planning. When MOBMAN requirements are superimposed upon the IRR population, the match of population to requirements, shortfalls and surplus of personnel are revealed. MOBMAN results in improved population management and as a more relevant part of the Total Force. (Hulet, 1997) Additionally, once the MOBMAN process is completed, the IRR's streamlined source of pretrained manpower increases its relevancy to the National Military Strategy. The fact that the IRR is part of the total force suggests that the time is right to focus on the IRR's key role today and in the future. Considering a two Major Theatre of War (MTW) scenario and a reduced force structure, the IRR provides the Army's flexibility required to meet missions in an uncertain environment (Conaway, 1997). As the overall active force declines and statutory force structure limits continue, combat support and combat service support specialties within that force structure continue to decline. The result will be that obtaining a balanced force mix will be difficult (Gordon, 1997).

The IRR's ability to fill personnel gaps in active units and individual vacancies strongly attests to its role and its relevancy. Downsizing creates vacancies and more fillers are needed which validates the mission and relevancy of the IRR (Sackett, 1997). In addition, when strategists and planners consider the Army's tooth to tail ratio, the IRR's majority composition of combat service and combat service support further advances the notion of relevancy. The Army's emphasis on combat service support creates a greater need for truck drivers, linguists, medical personnel and other civilian related specialties. When required to support missions, vacancies that

call for civilian related skills may be required to be filled by civilian contractors or a source of expertise found in the civilian communities such as the IRR (Sackett, 1997).

Relevance and Degrees

The answer then, to the question of overall relevance of the IRR to the Army as it shapes, prepares and responds, is "yes" it is relevant. In addition to its relevance born from a basis in congressional mandates, the IRR's mission to provide PIM supports the notion that it is relevant to the National Military Strategy and America's Army. However, the Cold War scenario has expired and we must recall that the IRR still appears to be structured to a scenario that no longer exists. This condition raises these questions: 1) "Is relevancy a matter of degrees?", 2) What factors influence the degree of relevancy?" and, 3) "Is there justification for change--how do we change to improve relevancy?".

The answer to the first question is that relevancy seems to be a matter of degrees that are influenced by several factors. The author's research has highlighted the following key influences on the IRR's ability to achieve relevance in today's global situation:

- sources of manpower and composition
- funding
- training
- stratification

These influences cannot be discounted or ignored. As previously mentioned, the IRR depends on the three Army Components as the sources of its manpower. That means that untrained and unqualified soldiers transferred from any or all of the components remain a burden. Soldiers who will not meet standards in the active component, will not meet them in the IRR and

transferring them to the IRR compounds an Army problem (Sanford, 1997). The composition of the IRR's pretrained manpower pool is only as good as its sources. Soldiers are our life blood and unlike the cold war, every soldier is not a "must have resource." (Hulet, 1997)

Funding for training IRR soldiers is important to ensure overall relevance and personnel ready status within the IRR (Conaway, 1997). Funding the IRR's manpower pool that has civilian based competencies and a 30% annual turn over rate requires consistency from one year to the next (Amodeo, Mellor, 1997). These two factors point to the IRR's potential and relevancy. Civilian based competencies offers a pool of talent that may not be readily available from active duty sources. In contrast, the high personnel turnover rate of 30% sends the clear message that resourcing training cannot be an after thought or just a reserve component issue. This new era of global uncertainty calls for a different approach to maintaining world stability. Thus, the training needs of the manpower pool should be considered in light of global uncertainty and the degree of relevancy desired from the IRR. In the final analysis, those needs should determine training funding requirements. Soldiers who are not adequately funded for training are left to their own devices and may become detractors from the relevancy of the IRR. For example, medical personnel are required to participate in Continuing Health Education programs and conferences to maintain licensing. Budget constraints may preclude medical personnel from obtaining resourcing. When funding is lean and the requirement for personnel continues, soldiers are left to their own devices (Mellor, 1997). This means that IRR medical personnel who do not receive funding for professional licensing requirements must pay out of pocket. Coupled with a high turn over rate, the implication is that there is a constant and consistent need for dollars to maintain the mission of providing a pretrained manpower pool to the Army. Funding, or the lack of,

will continue to influence relevancy depending on stated priorities in the Army's resourcing process. Insufficient funding may result in inconsistent training and the readiness of the IRR is impacted. Given severe budget constraints, the competition for scarce training dollars is keen. Therefore, any IRR training funds must resource the most urgently required skills.

Personnel Specialty Excesses to Requirements

Personnel specialty excesses to requirements may, at first glance, seem unnecessary and spur IRR managers to contemplate reductions. However, this is an area where expeditious trimming now may not be well serving in the future. The reason caution is prudent, is that the excesses are impacted by an approximate 30% annual turn over in the IRR force. That, coupled with an anticipated future decline in overall IRR strength, is reason to approach the issue with caution particularly in the enlisted ranks. The period of growth for the IRR's enlisted ranks ended upon completion of the Army's overall force reduction. As enlisted soldiers reach the expiration of their terms of service, part of the excess enlisted population will be discharged and others will replace soldiers currently needed in the event of mobilization. The reality is that the ratio of some excess skills that we currently have in the IRR may well diminish in the future. (Hulet, EXSUM, 1997) (Hulet, E-mail, 1998)

Critical Shortages and Alignment

The last factor affecting the IRR's relevance is stratification. This is the management process by which US ARPERSCOM divides the pre-trained individual manpower into logical groups with regard to the National Military Strategy or to a given scenario. The process determines if a soldier is needed for a scenario and/or if the soldier is a mobilization

asset. The stratification process impacts the IRR's realignment and personnel management; two key functions of quantifying relevancy. In past years, stratification of the IRR population has not been a high priority within the Army. However, with changes and uncertainties in the global post cold war era and to America's National Military Strategy, frequent stratification of the IRR population must now be a priority. Additionally, when one considers the approximate 30% annual turn over rate of the IRR population (Amodeo, 1997), the importance of frequent stratification is amplified. It is further highlighted by the fact that IRR soldiers are located in civilian communities nation wide and must be readily accessible. Locator and personnel records must be up-to-date and records management is, in part, dependent on each soldier's providing notification of address changes. Many soldiers comply with requirements to provide address changes while others do not. Over time the process of maintaining accurate records becomes increasingly more difficult unless frequent stratification is achieved. The enormous process of maintaining accurate records could be more easily managed with proper automation. In addition, the stratification process facilitates elimination of soldiers who fail to provide accurate locator data and maintain their training readiness. Recent efforts by the Army's Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel and the Reserve Components to initiate IRR stratification procedures, revealed 7,700 critical shortages exists when the Mobilization Manpower Planning System (MOBMAN mentioned previously) requirements for a two Major Theater War (MTW) scenerio are compared with the available IRR and Retired Reserve populations (Hulet, Executive Summary, Nov 1997). Some examples of the quantities and types of shortages from a total of 31 reported specialties are charted below (Hulet, 1997):

OFFICERS	WARRANT OFFICERS	ENLISTED
202 Orthopedic Surgeons	193 OH 58 Pilots	642 Laundry & Bath Specialists
239 Physician Assistants	58 Special Forces Technicians	1048 Cargo Specialists
235 Nurse Anesthetists	44 C-12 Pilots	1002 Practical Nurses

(Figure 2, IRR Critical Shortages)

Consider the serious implications of the above figures in a time of call-up or mobilization. Senior leaders, planners and strategists should consider the impact of these shortages in our unpredictable global environment. If these types of occupation specialties are not available in the Reserve Components and they not available in the Active Component, the solution may not be easily discerned. One possible solution to offsetting warrant officer shortages is to offer aircraft transitions to IRR aviation warrants and increase Warrant Officer Candidate School attendance. Another solution to the overall issue of balancing mobilization shortfalls is to allow overstrength in the critical military occupation specialties in the Selected Reserve and retraining IRR soldiers.

The reported shortages were most likely unknown prior to the recent initiation of the stratification process. Assuming this is true, there is a clear justification for leaders to increase the frequency for the process. Additionally, there may be an enlarging justification for changing the way the IRR population is managed based upon global changes, locator problems, known personnel shortages and the need to ensure the readiness of the pre-trained manpower pool. Again, the issue of relevancy today and tomorrow to the National Military Strategy is central.

Determining Change

Is there a justification for changing the IRR and how is change to be determined? There are three options: 1) accept the IRR as is, 2) change it and, 3) leave it out. However, the discussion to this point should lead one to the notion that maintaining the status quo (no change) is hardly a viable option to achieve maximum relevancy. Change (alignment) must be a factor in managing the IRR's pre-trained manpower pool. Unlike the drawdown of forces, the IRR should be subjected to stratification and realignment. These latter two processes are not a reduction in the IRR's strength and are required annually. America's Army is increasing its reliance on the immediate availability of soldiers in the IRR that calls for an examination of that force initiated by the Office of the Deputy Chief, Personnel to ensure a match between the soldiers and genuine Army requirements. Changes to the IRR force are governed by policies and regulations that give leader's authority to accomplish the task. Some examples are:

- 10 U.S.C. Subsection 10149, Ready Reserve: Continuous Screening (Requires continuous screening of the Ready Reserve to ensure availability for mobilization). (Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Reserve Affairs, 1997)
- Department of Defense Directive 1200.7, subject: Screening the Ready Reserve, April 6, 1984 (Requires identification of "key positions" in federal agencies that cannot be vacated during times of mobilization or national emergency. The directive will be updated to delete federal judge positions as "key positions"). (Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Reserve Affairs, 1997)
- Army Regulation 135-133, Ready Reserve Screening, Qualification Records System and Change of Address Reports.

Possessing the authority for changing the IRR is only a part of the formula for successful management. The other part involves a methodology for effecting changes in the population. The following nine measures for determining change were recently initiated ODCSPER and USARPERSCOM. Changes should be determined by:

- comparing military requirements with the IRR population (by grade and primary skill identified by MOBMAN)
 - identifying IRR soldiers who currently meet requirements
 - examining shortfalls in requirements
 - comparing soldiers not currently meeting requirements against shortfalls
 - tailoring, stratify the force, and separating excess soldiers
 - address remaining shortfalls, if any
 - train and manage the force
- (Amodeo, 1997)

As a result of these steps to determine realignment, IRR leaders will be able:

- to identify required IRR soldiers for projected mobilization
- to identify soldiers in the IRR by grade and primary skill who are excess to mobilization requirements
- to identify skills by grade for which there are shortages in IRR strength.
- to carefully review records of soldier's who are potential excesses and determine if they possess secondary skills that may be useful to requirements and offset shortages.
- to separate soldiers who do not meet requirements and cannot offset shortages. (Hulet, 1997) (Amodeo, 1997)

Accomplishing this annual task is a monumental requirement that will significantly increase the viability and relevancy of the

IRR population. Leaders who are in tune with the benefits and the advances of current technologies and automation will quickly understand that managing the IRR can be better accomplished with these tools. The utilization of technology combined with the proper resources, creates a means of accomplishing changes so that the IRR is better tailored to meet the global demands of an uncertain environment. By whatever means possible, the bottom line is that the IRR's pre-trained manpower pool must be maintained to assure its full relevancy.

Conclusion

The need for a flexible response in a uncertain strategic global environment, the IRR's existence mandated by congressional law and the fact that the IRR is the Army's source of pre-trained manpower, are all factors that attest to its relevance in the post cold war era. While resourcing, training, and technology are important tools that further enhance the relevancy of the IRR, the key to maintaining relevancy rests with the senior leaders of *all three Army components and the leaders above the Army level*. Leaders should view their role as one that incorporates the following recommended strategies:

- understanding the IRR's value and relevance to the current National Military Strategy.
- reviewing policies and procedures to ensure they are consistent with desired standards.
- lending priority to maintaining the manpower pool on a regularly scheduled basis (the author recommends annual stratification of the population based on the high turn over rate).
- providing leadership emphasis to the lowest levels of all three components to ensure that soldiers who are unmotivated, untrained and/or disqualified are processed out of the Army rather than being transferred to the IRR.

- providing proper and consistent resources, training opportunities, technology and incentives for soldiers that will enhance the relevancy of the IRR well into the future.

Taken seriously, these strategies implemented by senior leaders will send a vote of confidence and a message to those who manage the IRR on a daily basis. They must know that the IRR is important (relevant) to America's Army and that it must be ready to meet the demands of the post cold war era. It also sends a strong message to IRR members about their significance and the role they play in supporting the National Military Strategy. The IRR's role is changing and more each day, it becomes the Army's global "wild card". The question for additional research is, how relevant do leaders want this wild card to be today and into the future?

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