



**STRATEGY  
RESEARCH  
PROJECT**

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**BASOPS –  
MISSING LINK TO THE READINESS EQUATION**

**BY**

**J. RANDALL ROBINSON**

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**BASOPS - Missing Link to the  
Readiness Equation**

by

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## ABSTRACT

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Currently, Base Operations (BASOPS) funding is grossly inadequate—providing insufficient resources to support installation quality of life (QOL) programs and services. This discrepancy is destroying our installation's infrastructure and having an adverse impact on QOL and ultimately readiness.

Recently, some senior military leaders have addressed Congress on readiness issues and priorities, specifically inadequate QOL. They must enter round two with a strategic plan that includes BASOPS as part of the readiness equation. If this is ignored, our installations' infrastructure will continue to deteriorate to a point beyond recovery, and our support programs and services will not meet the critical needs of our soldiers and their families.



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## **BASOPS - MISSING LINK TO THE READINESS EQUATION**

*The service's (Army) readiness and quality of life have suffered because of Defense Department budget cutbacks.<sup>1</sup>*

*Secretary of the Army Caldera*

Historically, the Army has shifted unit training dollars to cover Base Operations (BASOPS) funding shortfalls. Recent Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of the Army (DA) guidance have made it clear this long-standing practice is no longer accepted. However, in today's less than adequate funding environment one must "rob Peter to pay Paul." The Army's current practice of shifting money from BASOPS and infrastructure to maintain unit readiness is proving less than effective. Specifically, it has negatively impacted the quality of life of the Army's soldiers and their family members.

Quality of life is defined as "those things which contribute to a service member's and their family's standard of living and their satisfaction with life in the military."<sup>2</sup>

Congress and our senior military leaders are inadequately funding BASOPS and quality of life programs, a fact that is having an adverse impact on readiness. While it appears this critical issue has been identified and acted on by our senior leadership, the ship is still sinking fast—it must be brought afloat.

To maintain highly trained and ready forces to fight in an atmosphere of downsizing and shrinking budgets is a fierce challenge. Fourteen consecutive-years of declining defense budgets and more than a decade of drastic force structure reductions has taken its toll on our military's readiness. The Joint Chiefs of Staff are reported to want annual defense budgets increased between \$10 and \$15 billion, across the board, for several years. However, representative C.W. Bill Young (R-Fla), chairman of the House defense appropriations subcommittee, thinks \$5 billion is the most that can be managed.<sup>3</sup> That would do little more than keep up with inflation and leave our critical shortfalls unfunded.

Currently, our military leaders utilize several tools to assess readiness. The foundation of DOD's readiness assessment is the Status of Resources and Training System (SORTS). The Joint Monthly Readiness Review (JMRR) and Quarterly Congressional Readiness Reports further assist our leaders in conducting readiness assessments.

These tools are key mechanisms that ultimately assist in funding decisions. Funding goes to those "known" programs with the greatest need. Unfortunately, the current SORTS definitions and readiness indicators do not adequately reflect the myriad components that contribute to the overall military readiness equation. And, DOD's quarterly reports "provide only a vague

description of readiness problems and remedial actions; consequently, they are not effective as a congressional oversight tool."<sup>4</sup>

This paper will examine quality of life, the BASOPS environment, and military readiness. It will further show how the SORTS data structure is not adequately utilizing these critical factors as readiness indicators. More importantly, I will outline a DOD plan that will enable our military and congressional leaders to view readiness and associated needs as they should be: balanced across the services. Only then can they make informed decisions on how to allocate our scarce resources.

### **QUALITY OF LIFE**

People are the foundation of military readiness<sup>5</sup>  
*1995 Annual Defense Review*

Protecting the quality of life (QOL) of America's service members is not only the right thing to do, it is critical to preserving military readiness.<sup>6</sup>

*1996 Annual Defense Review*

The Department of Defense continues to promote military readiness by enhancing the quality of life of its service members.<sup>7</sup>

*1997 Annual Defense Review*

Given the above statements it is clear that quality of life is directly linked to readiness. The Department of Defense has attempted to improve quality of life by allocated funds to that

purpose but the sum has barely scratched the surface. This is because QOL is not part of the current readiness equation.

Readiness depends on attracting top quality people and retaining them after they have developed technical and leadership skills. This requires not only challenging and rewarding work, but also an appropriate quality of life.

Since the end of the Cold War our military services have experienced a substantial increase in workload. The blending of an increased operational pace, shrinking force structure, and declining budgets has forced our soldiers and their families to make great personal sacrifices. Our troops are much busier than ever. Over the last decade, the Army has been used in 29 substantial overseas deployments, compared with just 10 in the previous four decades.<sup>8</sup> Exacerbating this situation is the perception that health care, retirement, and compensation benefits are being reduced. Many service members feel the declining quality of life is one of the primary reasons recruiting and retention problems are on the rise.

In 1995 the Secretary of Defense formed a Quality of Life Task Force, chaired by former Secretary of the Army, John O. Marsh to conduct a comprehensive review of the programs constituting quality of life. This review identified three general categories:

- (1) compensation and benefits;

(2) housing;

(3) community and family support

As a result of this review, specific areas were identified within these categories that would make the most impact toward strengthening the quality of life for military personnel and their families. The Secretary targeted specific areas for "substantial improvement." See Table 1.

**Quality of Life Areas for Improvement**

<b>Areas for Improvement</b>	<b>BASOPS \$</b>
Basic Pay	NO
Bachelor Quarters	YES
Basic Allowance for Quarters	NO
Child Care	YES
Cost of Living Allowance in the United States	NO
Family Advocacy	YES
Family Housing	YES
Morale, Welfare, and Recreation	YES

Table 1

It is important to note DOD allocated \$7.7B of the Department's 1996 budget to meet the pay disparity and provide pay raises to military personnel at the full rate authorized by law through FY99. They also obligated \$2.7 billion to fund eight quality of life initiatives over a six-year period (Table 2).

### Quality of Life Initiatives

<b>Compensation and Benefits</b>	
New Living Allowance for High Cost Areas	Helps 30,000 service members and families
Increase Basic Allowance for Quarters	Benefits the 700,000 in off-base housing
<b>Housing</b>	
Family Housing	Maintains 10,000 on-base homes that would otherwise close due to lack of maintenance
Dormitory/Bachelor Quarters Improvement	Upgrades 5,000 bachelor quarter spaces
Private-sector Housing Ventures	Allocates money for innovative housing approaches
<b>Community and Family Support</b>	
Child Care	Increase capacity by 20% (38,000 spaces)
Family Advocacy	Increases resources for prevention and treatment of family violence
Improved Morale, Welfare, and Recreation	Achieves \$295 per capita comparability

Table 2

While \$2.7B is a large sum of money, its impact across all services is nearly non-measurable over a six-year period. Table 3 puts the actual housing impact (one of the Department's worst nightmares) into perspective—it doesn't go very far.

### Impact of Quality of Life Initiatives

Housing	Impact
Family Housing— Maintains 10,000 on-base homes that would otherwise close due to lack of maintenance	There are 10,000 homes on two Army installations—Fort Hood and Fort Bragg
Dormitory/Bachelor Quarters Improvement— Upgrades 5,000 bachelor quarter spaces	There are 18,000 bachelor quarter spaces at Fort Hood

Table 3

In all fairness, some previously budgeted BASOPS programs remained. For example, \$2.5 billion was budgeted from FY96 to FY01 to renovate and construct new barracks.<sup>9</sup> However, these programs too are grossly underfunded. While the majority of government owned housing is 33 years old, barracks are about 40 years old, with many much older.<sup>10</sup> The barracks challenge is

exacerbated by the rising expectations of our professional enlisted soldiers for adequate housing and the large gap between these expectations and the deteriorating barracks inventory. Assuming the current funding levels and procurement practices, DOD faces a 30 year timeline to solve this family housing problem, and even longer for barracks.

There is some hope for housing, however. In February 1996, President Clinton signed into law the Defense Authorization bill, which has provisions known as the Military Housing Privatization Initiative. This initiative provides the services with alternative authorities for construction and improvement of military housing (family and unaccompanied personnel). It provides a way to maximize use of limited appropriated funds, land, and existing facilities to encourage private sector investment. While this is a great start, these funds too are still inadequate to support the number of projects each service would like to initiate.

The FY99 defense-budget represents the 14<sup>th</sup> consecutive year of reduced defense spending.<sup>11</sup> This drastic decline has made it difficult to maintain our nation's high quality, all volunteer force. Although it is generally accepted that money does not solve all problems, a more realistic balance between budgets and needs would make sense.

In a letter addressed to President Clinton, the chairman and ranking (minority) member of the House National Security Committee (HNSC), supported by Republican and Democratic leaders, called for a significant increase in President Clinton's defense budget request for FY99. Further they urged for a renegotiation to the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 in order to provide additional money to the growing shortfalls facing our military services. They stated:

A wide-range of quality of life, readiness, and modernization shortfalls have developed that, if left unchecked, threaten the long-term viability of today's all volunteer force. Compelling our men and women in uniform to do 'more with less' risks a return to a hollow military and jeopardizes America's ability to effectively protect and promote its national interests around the world.....It is our collective judgment that, short of an unwise retrenchment and overhaul of U.S. national military strategy, fixing the nation's long-term defense program will require increased defense spending. Without additional defense resources to reverse the 14-year pattern of spending decline, the military services will be unable to stabilize their shrinking force structures, protect quality of life and readiness, and modernize rapidly aging equipment.<sup>12</sup>

During the oversight hearings, the services identified more than \$58 billion in readiness, quality of life, and modernization shortfalls in the administration's FY99-03 five-year defense plan.<sup>13</sup> For some, the answer to the shortfalls and mismatches is rigorous Pentagon reform, including the highly publicized base closings. But, in reality these programs do not translate into solutions for our budget shortfalls. Despite

several years of National Performance Review initiated reforms, even if the most optimistic reform estimates materialize, they will fall far short of adequately addressing our critical underfunded requirements. For example, even if Congress were to put aside its legitimate concerns about the base realignment and closure (BRAC) process and support the Clinton administration's request to proceed with two additional base closure rounds in 2001 and 2005, under the most optimistic scenarios, there would be no savings until the latter part of the decade or beyond. Also, supplementary base closures would require additional funds in the five years following a BRAC decision for such items as environmental cleanup costs associated with additional base closings. In short, the prospect for true savings generated from the BRAC process for future near-term defense budgets is rather bleak. Today we are 10 years into the BRAC process and there is still legitimate debate on whether we have actually achieved "real" savings.<sup>14</sup>

The Department's reform initiatives should continue despite their inability to generate the largely over-calculated short-term savings. Although, one is simply beating a dead horse if they expect reforms, BRAC, and other initiatives to serve as the magic cure-all for the gloomy budget shortfalls facing our services. This is misleading, irresponsible, and draws much

needed attention away from our critical challenges of readiness and quality of life.

The only way to bring this sinking ship afloat is increase military spending over the long-term and ensure these precious resources are dispersed throughout the services utilizing a "balanced" approach.

One tool the Army uses to assess the status of Army installations is the Installation Status Report (ISR). The ISR is a three-part information system intended to provide installations, Major Commands (MACOM), and Department of the Army (DA) decision-makers with an objective assessment of the status of Army installations. It is broken into the three parts of Infrastructure, Environment, and Services. The ISR provides installation status in the form of C-ratings (C-1 being best and C-4 being worst) similar to those used in the Army's Unit Status Report (USR). In addition to quantity and quality assessments in the form of C-ratings, the ISR provides cost estimates for the facilities, environmental programs, and services, thereby providing decision makers with an all-encompassing BASOPS view of their installations. DA uses the ISR results to articulate to Congress the Army's BASOPS requirements.

If the ISR were adopted by all services it would provide a balanced status report of quality of life throughout the services. More importantly, it would provide the perfect tool

for our senior military leaders and Congress to assess our military's quality of life programs and services and make informed decisions on where our limited resources should go. Until this is done, we will continue to see an embedded parochialism amongst the services. All services utilize their own assessment tools, with their own standards. We need one standard across the services.

### **SUPPORTING READINESS AND QUALITY OF LIFE**

The Department of Defense is steward to 42,000 square miles of land and a physical plant valued at \$570 billion. In order for DOD to "manage this infrastructure effectively and economically requires engineering insight, business acumen, and sufficient resources."<sup>15</sup>

The ability of these facilities to support and enhance readiness depends on the condition of the Department's physical plant. Inadequate facilities impair readiness in two principle ways. First, deteriorated facilities are more likely to fail, and this can compromise the mission. This lesson was learned in Operation Desert Shield, when dilapidated rail lines and aircraft runways failed due to the deferral of much needed repairs. Second, inadequate and deteriorated facilities impair readiness by lowering the quality of life for our military soldiers and their families, reducing the efficiency of our

workers, and detracting from the retention of highly motivated and qualified personnel. Adequately maintained and properly equipped facilities help to motivate and improve performance. Good facilities are force multipliers; they enable and motivate our forces to improve productivity and enhance readiness without an increase in number. Quality of life enhances readiness--it cannot be excluded from the readiness equation.

### **THE ARMY INSTALLATION ENVIRONMENT**

While the majority of Army installations face diverse challenges, they all are stretched. Their infrastructure is deteriorating; their soldiers, families, and budgets are extended with a blistering operational pace.<sup>16</sup> Many soldiers are sharing these same thoughts with us as they choose to leave the Army. Retention is becoming a problem and will surely be one of our greatest challenges over the next several years. The key to meeting these challenges head on is to balance readiness by keeping focus on our people.

We will look at the current environment of one Army installation, Fort Hood, Texas, home of the III Corps. While the III Corps' units have maintained a remarkable state of operational readiness, consistent with their authorized level of organization, they are, however, stretched. Many innovative programs have been implemented at Fort Hood to compensate for

inadequate funding; and, the dollars generated from these innovations have been invested in quality of life programs. However, the well is now dry.

On 17 April 1998, LTG Thomas A. Schwartz, III Corps and Fort Hood Commander addressed the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness with his personal readiness assessment.<sup>17</sup>

The basis for the examples below are extracted from LTG Schwartz's congressional testimony and from my observations and experiences as Fort Hood's Deputy Garrison Commander.

In 1996 LTG Schwartz had the foresight to anticipate the Department of Defense's funding "train wreck" that was inevitable. He gathered senior Corps' leadership to assess the operating environment and to develop a plan to meet the well-deserved needs of Fort Hood soldiers and their families in the near-term. The environment was fast paced--soldiers were burning out; nevertheless operational readiness was maintained.

Leadership realized readiness was much more than training--it was a balance of many interrelated components. "It includes training, equipping, maintaining, caring for, and deploying the force while retaining the ability to recruit and retain quality, professional soldiers and their families. They (we) knew quality of life was a major consideration for soldier retention."<sup>18</sup>

Based on the above definition, guidance was formulated to achieve appropriate levels of balanced readiness. Efforts were focused on reengineering logistics and developing new training strategies to generate short-term savings in OMA funding. These savings were directly applied to BASOPS/quality of life programs--programs that would reap the most return on investment. The question was asked: Where do our soldiers spend most of their time? The answer: Work (motorpools and unit HQs; barracks; dining facilities; barracks; fitness centers).

Results were nothing short of amazing. Significant efficiencies were gained from the logistics and training strategies--the majority from optimized logistics operations. Additional efficiencies came from maximizing training devices and simulators. For example, \$30 million in savings was realized in FY 97 and FY 98 by transporting tanks and infantry fighting vehicles to ranges on heavy equipment transports.<sup>19</sup> These types of cost saving initiatives and associated dollars enabled Fort Hood to reinvest in a better living and working environment in motorpools, barracks, dining facilities, gyms, and youth centers. The return on these investments was considerable. Soldiers spoke with their feet. After these initiatives were implemented 43% of the reenlisting midterm soldiers and their families chose Fort Hood as their next assignment in comparison with 24% a year earlier.<sup>20</sup>

While much was done through reengineering initiatives and the limited resources available, these positive steps could never make up for inadequate BASOPS funding. And, the savings generated by the many "process and reengineering" initiatives were exhausted.....the only thing left was to click the "do less better" notch one notch further.

Fort Hood's budget trend has been down.....FY96, \$741 million; FY97, \$657 million; FY98, \$618 million; FY99, \$590 million. BASOPS funding has historically represented approximately one-third of Fort Hood's total budget. This currently keeps the lights and heat on but does not adequately support the installation. This downward trend stretches training and severely impacts BASOPS. Fort Hood is funded at 76% of their BASOPS requirement--in FY99 it "needs an additional 8% to keep quality of life programs in line with soldier expectations. This translates to a shortfall of \$46M annually."<sup>21</sup> With Fort Hood's total book value of land and building improvements at \$1.483 billion, this shortfall barely allows for "band-aid" fixes. Table 4 portrays the complexity of Fort Hood's infrastructure.

**Fort Hood at a Glance**

<b>TOTAL ACRES</b>	214,356 acres	<b>MOTORPOOLS</b>	53
Maneuver Area	138,948 acres	<b>SIMULATION FACILITIES</b>	80
Grounds Improved	20,870 acres	<b>TRAINING RANGES</b>	
Grounds Unimproved Acreage	193,486 acres	Live Fire: (50)	
<b>ROADS (miles)</b>		Multiuse	12
Paved	405 miles	Machine Gun	4

Dirt	417 miles	Pistol	4
Railroad	9 miles	Demolition	4
<b>TOTAL BUILDINGS (sq ft)</b>	<b>27,443,426 sq ft</b>	Mortar	4
Offices, Motrpools, Warehouses, etc	4,838 buildings	Grenade Lancher	4
Enlisted Barracks	102 buildings	Rifle	2
<b>QUARTERS</b>		Record Fire	4
Guest Qtrs	75	MOUT Assault Courses	2
For Officers	341	Other	10
For Emlisted	55	<b>TRAINING FACILITIES</b>	
<b>FAMIY QUARTERS</b>		Classrooms	65
For Officers	634	VTC/Distance Learning Facilities	5
For Enlisted	5,148	<b>AIRFIELDS</b>	2
<b>UTILITIES</b>		<b>CHILD CARE CENTERS</b>	3
Gas	260 miles	<b>COMMISSARIES</b>	2
Electricity	872 miles	<b>POST EXCHANGES</b>	2
Water	398 miles	<b>RECREATION AREA</b>	2,000 acres
Sanitary	278 miles	Shoreline	4 miles

Table 4

Moreover, the limited and inadequate BASOPS funding is not a given. In 1998, the "Garrison" BASOPS budget was reduced \$26 million below FY97 levels. In the first quarter of FY98, it was reduced an additional \$9.6 million to cover unit training; in the second quarter it was reduced an additional \$4 million. This equated to an original FY98 budget of \$135.6 million being reduced to \$122 million. With \$50 million in civilian pay and \$56 million in installation contracts that left only \$16 million for installation programs and services.<sup>22</sup> Needless to say the impact was severe.

The FY99 budget was no better. Three consecutive years of unspecified budget cuts exerted a heavy toll on BASOPS and quality of life. LTG Leporte, the current III Corps Commander relayed many of these inadequacies to the Commander, Forces

Command (FORSCOM). Dollars for essential programs and functions such as communications, infrastructure repair and maintenance, environmental, logistics sustainability, and soldier and family support and services have been stretched to unacceptable limits. With increased OPTEMPO and PERSTEMPO the stress placed on the garrison workforce increased as well. BASOPS and QOL funding is literally below the survival level.<sup>23</sup>

This is supported by a 20 August 1998 memorandum to the Army Chief of Staff from GEN David Bramlett, FORSCOM Commander, who wrote, "we can no longer train and sustain the force, stop infrastructure degradation, and provide our soldiers the programs critical to long-term readiness.....This threatens our ability to mobilize, deploy, fight, and win."<sup>24</sup>

### **ASSESSING READINESS**

In it's annual report the Department of Defense assessed the readiness issue and stated:

The diverse demands of the post-Cold War world require that the United States maintain highly capable forces prepared to rapidly respond to any contingency. Achieving this goal is one of the Department's (Department of Defense) most aggressive and ambitious undertakings. It is also the most important. Maintaining readiness and sustainability of U.S. forces is the number one priority of the Department of Defense.<sup>25</sup>

Keeping American forces ready to fight and support this goal requires an "appropriate force structure, modern equipment, maintenance and logistics support, and trained and motivated

personnel.”<sup>26</sup> A deficiency in any one of these elements can have an adverse impact on readiness. In managing readiness DOD acknowledges a balance must be maintained among these crucial elements to ensure our forces are capable to meet mission demands.<sup>27</sup>

The readiness equation involves five key building blocks.<sup>28</sup>

**READINESS = People + Equipment + Training  
+ Logistics + Financial Resources**

There should be no question that people have been and always will be the foundation to readiness, and financial resources are the common denominator to all elements of readiness. We have done a rather good job of maintaining our equipment, conducting training in support of wartime missions, and ensuring logistics needs are met. Ironically, we have not done a good job providing our people the quality of life programs and services they deserve.

Achieving and maintaining readiness goals in today's challenging political, fiscal, and operating environment is a tremendous undertaking. Additionally, monitoring and assessing current readiness are critical functions and among DOD's toughest tasks.

Defining "readiness" has been an arduous task. Everyone has their own definition; however, the Department of Defense's recognized measurement system has been the Status of Resources

and Training System (SORTS). This automated system functions as the central listing for more than 9,000 military units. Additionally, while less visible, the JMRR and Congressional Quarterly Readiness Reports provide insights on readiness levels and trends.

SORTS is the primary means commanders report their readiness to both service and joint headquarters. This readiness assessment tool assists decision-makers in monitoring near-term readiness and determining whether resources are appropriately allocated. By looking at recurring SORTS data, decision-makers can determine whether sufficient assets are allocated to personnel, equipment, supplies, or training.<sup>29</sup>

For some time the SORTS system has not accurately reflected readiness of units. The 1997 Annual Defense Report stated, "...the Department has undertaken a SORTS reform and enhancement process. Many parts of the SORTS system are antiquated."<sup>30</sup> While mentioned in the 1997 report, these problems were identified well before 1997.

Questions about the validity and thoroughness of this process have been raised for years. Various audit and oversight organizations have reported limitations to readiness reports. Congress has expressed concern regarding apparent inconsistencies between official readiness reports and the actual readiness of units in the field. Congress has also

expressed concern about DOD's lack of progress in integrating additional readiness indicators into official readiness reports.

The United States General Accounting Office (GAO) conducted a 1994 study and concluded current readiness indicators needed to be expanded for a more comprehensive readiness assessment.<sup>31</sup> It was further concluded that while DOD's readiness measuring system provides valuable data, SORTS data was not comprehensive and could not signal an impending change in readiness. The report stated SORTS did not provide information on several factors that, according to the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), were critical to a comprehensive readiness assessment. These factors are listed in Table 5.

**Factors Important to a Comprehensive  
Readiness Assessment**

New Factors	Existing SORTS Factors
Morale	Personnel
Exercises	Equipment
OPTEMPO	Training
Leadership	Location
Time	
Operations	
C3	
Mobility	

Table 5

Numerous military commands were reportedly monitoring additional indicators to supplement data currently reported. To identify these indicators the GAO visited more than 40 active and reserve service commands, selected defense civilian

agencies, the Joint Staff, and three unified commands. They found the commands were monitoring literally hundreds of indicators in addition to SORTS. To refine and rank these indicators they had the commands rate them in three areas:

- (1) the importance of the indicator for assessing readiness;
- (2) the quality of information the indicator provides;
- (3) the degree of value the indicator has as an early warning of a potential change in readiness.

While the outcome of this specific work was not complete for the April 1994 report, GAO sent the report to respective services for review shortly thereafter. They further recommended DOD study and consider 26 extra factors for future SORTS reporting.

DOD contracted the Logistics Management Institute (LMI) to review these indicators, and found 19 of the 26 could help OSD monitor critical aspects of readiness.<sup>32</sup> Although the GAO and LMI studies concluded a broad range of readiness indicators was needed, they left open how DOD could best integrate the additional measures into its readiness reporting. See Table 6.

**Indicators Identified in the 1994 LMI study**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Value</b>
Personnel Strength	Individual personnel value	Medium
	Historical and projected personnel trends	High
Personnel Turbulence	Recruit quality	High
	Borrowed manpower	Medium

	Personnel stability	Medium
Personnel-Other	Personnel Morale	High
	Medical and dental readiness	Medium
	Recruiting shortfalls	High
Training	Unit readiness and proficiency	Medium
	Operational Tempo	High
	Funding	High
	Commitments and deployment	High
Logistics-equipment Fill	Deployed equipment	Medium
	Equipment availability	Medium
	Not mission capable	Medium
	Age of equipment on hand	High
	Condition of non-pacing items	Medium
Logistics-equipment maintenance	Maintenance back-log	High
Logistics--supply	Availability of ordnance and spares	Medium

Table 6

However, Joint Staff officials stated they had no plans to add these as additional SORTS indicators. Fortunately, nearly four years after GAO's findings and recommendations, DOD finally issued an implementation plan to incorporate these additional indicators into the quarterly congressional reports. This was effective October 1998. Unfortunately, these indicators were not incorporated into the SORTS system as additional readiness indicators.

Various DOD readiness officials did not feel these indicators belonged in SORTS. They felt some of the indicators measure readiness at an aggregate rather than the unit level. For example, historical and projected personnel trends, recruiting status, and equipment maintenance backlogs measure readiness on an aggregated rather than unit-level basis. Data on these indicators is available at higher level commands and

not from the unit level.....These officials said they could obtain this information at the headquarters level. And, some of these indicators are used to prepare readiness briefings for the Joint Monthly Readiness Review and Senior Readiness Oversight Council. They further emphasized that while SORTS is the foundation to assess readiness, it is not the only source of data used.

This decision, in my opinion, was not strategically sound. Questions will continue to be raised on the validity of readiness data. Future reports will surely arrive at the same conclusion--additional indicators are needed. More importantly, while services do utilize other data in addition to SORTS, they rely most heavily on SORTS for their readiness assessments at both the joint and strategic levels.<sup>33</sup>

The Joint Monthly Readiness Review (JMRR) represents progress towards an improved readiness measurement process. The review goes beyond the traditional unit perspective that was previously the focus during readiness assessments. Most importantly, the review has added procedures to track and address reported deficiencies. While current readiness deficiencies generally require long-term, programmatic solutions, the JMRR seeks mitigating actions that can be instituted within 2 years. Since the majority of BASOPS and QOL remedies go into the long-term, the JMRR is not the forum for

long-term QOL issues. These remedies should be addressed in the other two forums.<sup>34</sup>

DOD's quarterly reports have only provided a vague description of readiness issues. While they identify readiness problems, they do not fulfill the legislative reporting requirements because they lack specific detail on the problems and planned remedial actions. This report should specifically describe:

- (1) each readiness problem and deficiency identified;
- (2) planned remedial actions;
- (3) the key indicators and other relevant information related to each identified problem and deficiency.<sup>35</sup>

The GAO reports DOD's quarterly reports do not fulfill congressional requirements to specifically describe identified readiness deficiencies and to provide readiness indicators and other pertinent information. Without such detail, the reports only provide Congress a vague picture of DOD's readiness problems. For example, one report identified that Army personnel readiness was a problem, but did not provide data to back up this claim. Additionally, the report did not elaborate on how this deficiency affected readiness. GAO recommended DOD enhance their reports by providing:

- (1) supporting data on key readiness deficiencies;
- (2) specific information on planned remedial actions.<sup>36</sup>

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) published a September 1997 study titled: Paying for Military Readiness and Upkeep: Trends in Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Spending. The study used SORTS data as a readiness indicator and concluded:

indicators of training readiness have not changed in relation to average spending for those personnel assigned to operational units....Those long-term trends suggest little linkage between the resources expended and the readiness level achieved. In particular, one would presume.....higher spending should result in improved readiness and vice versa. That has not proved to be the case, however.<sup>37</sup>

This slammed those who justified increases in OMA spending for improved or maintained readiness levels. However, this conclusion was not sound.

DOD considers OMA spending one of the major departments for funding readiness.<sup>38</sup> OMA spending supports training, supply, and equipment maintenance for military units as well as the administrative and facilities infrastructure of military bases. That being said, isn't it ironic for the status of BASOPS facilities, programs, and services not to be included in the SORTS review as a readiness indicator? It is not visible as a readiness factor at the DOD level. Since OMA spending makes up 37 percent of the total defense budget<sup>39</sup>, it is the one of the prime targets of the administration's reform efforts--which equates to one of the prime targets for budget reductions. Remember, OMA spending is the chief source of support for the

infrastructure and DOD considers it one of the major components of readiness. Further, no one can logically repudiate enhanced quality of life will improve morale. How then can quality of life not be part of the readiness equation?

### **STRATEGY FOR NEW READINESS EQUATION**

DOD has yet to develop a comprehensive readiness system reflective of today's operational realities. Fortunately, the Department is required to develop and implement a new readiness reporting system by 15 January 2000. Furthermore, the Secretary of Defense must report these measurements and the services' ability to execute their wartime missions to Congress on a monthly basis.<sup>40</sup>

We have looked at readiness in detail, to include its flaws, and can safely say it is a function of many variables. While the GAO and CBO have identified people (our soldiers) and morale as important indicators, accurate measures have not been added to the SORTS system or reported in the Quarterly Congressional Readiness Updates to reflect these variables. The most important being status of BASOPS for our soldiers and family members. Granted, many will argue SORTS is strictly intended to assess unit readiness and its ability to execute its wartime mission--not provide the status of the units BASOPS support facilities, programs and services. However, these are

the same people who will argue these inadequate programs affect unit readiness.

SORTS should include the status of a unit's BASOPS facilities, programs, and services, as an annex. The status of these BASOPS indicators will be in the Army's ISR format, completed by the installation commander. Likewise, a service BASOPS overview must be included in the Quarterly Congressional Readiness Reports. This must be done in order for our senior military leaders and congress to see the entire, true, unbiased DOD picture laid on the table. Only then can they make truly legitimate and informed decisions on where our scarce resources need to go.

***READINESS = People + Equipment + Training  
+ Logistics + Financial Resources  
+ BASOPS***

In addition to these modifications, the President and Congress must increase defense spending. This critical need has been stressed repeatedly by DOD and the Chairman of the House National Service Committee. The culmination of 14 years of drastic cuts has taken its toll on our readiness. At a minimum, \$10M-\$15 billion is required annually. This should not be difficult considering President Clinton's recently announced \$77 billion budget surplus for FY99. With the current status of our military readiness, to include grossly inadequate BASOPS

support, how can the Clinton administration decrease military spending, bluster about a budget surplus, and keep a straight face? Additionally, the American people should have not problem supporting this if presented properly. As the National Security Committee Chairman, Floyd D. Spence stated:

As long as they remain unaware or unconvinced, Americans are much more likely to be focused on the potential benefits of a tax cut, debt reduction, or increased Social Security spending than they will be in the widening gap between this nation's military strategy and the forces and resources necessary to implement it. Perhaps now, with the voices of the president and the joint chiefs of staff somewhat belatedly joining the chorus, the American people will take notice.

I believe the American public will take notice and conclude our great soldiers deserve the same quality of life they are sworn to defend.

### **CONCLUSION**

Balanced readiness will sustain our armed forces, keeping them trained and ready, while enabling our commanders and leaders to focus on our most important asset—our people. It is our great soldiers that make this country's Army great. And, it is our soldiers who will keep the Army great. We must give our soldiers the respect and support that they deserve.

With drastic military budget cuts, this is no easy task. We must give our military and civilian leaders the correct

information to make informed and difficult but rational decisions on appropriate readiness funding. This requires adding BASOPS readiness indicators to SORTS reporting and the Quarterly Congressional Readiness Report. Also, the military must receive more funding to recover from the quality of life death spiral.

When asked about the pressures of being the British Prime Minister and having to make difficult decisions, Lord Salisbury replied:

The need to make fateful decisions and take drastic steps was not the most onerous task. What I found more difficult was the need to think carefully beforehand. It was not the bold action that bedeviled me but rather, the tough intellectual gymnastics of forging conceptual order out of confusion, deciphering complex problems, weighing the issues and alternatives deliberately, then making reasoned choices that balance many competing concerns.<sup>41</sup>

BASOPS issues and funding must be included in the readiness equation and given the attention they deserve. Giving our leaders the right information will enable them to view readiness and balance the many competing concerns. Readiness is the foundation that keeps our country free. Our soldiers are the blue print to that foundation. They are most deserving.

Words: 6,460



## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>2</sup> 1995 Annual Defense Review, chapter 5.
- <sup>3</sup> "Defense Budget Crunch," The Los Angeles Times, 18 September 1999.
- <sup>4</sup> GAO Report to Congress, Military Readiness—Reports to Congress Provide Few Details on Deficiencies and Solutions, March 1998, p.4.
- <sup>5</sup> 1995 Annual Defense Review, chapter 5.
- <sup>6</sup> 1996 Annual Defense Review, chapter 5.
- <sup>7</sup> 1997 Annual Defense Review, chapter 5.
- <sup>8</sup> Graham, Bradley; Pianin, Eric, "Military Readiness, Morale Show Strain; Budgets Contract; Deployments Expand", Washington Post, August 13, 1998, P. A1.
- <sup>9</sup> ibid, chapter 5.
- <sup>10</sup> ibid, chapter 16.
- <sup>11</sup> Williams, Robert A. "Readiness, Modernization Garner Short-term Respite," National Defense, December 1998, p. 14.
- <sup>12</sup> Prina, Edgar, "Doing More and More with Less and Less," Sea Power, June 1998, p. 21-22.
- <sup>13</sup> ibid, p. 25.
- <sup>14</sup> Spence, Floyd, "Is the Military Drawdown Endangering U.S. National Security?," Insight on News, pp. 24-25.
- <sup>15</sup> 1996 Annual Defense Review, chapter 16.
- <sup>16</sup> Spence, Floyd, "FY99 National Defense Authorization Act", The Officer, November 1998, pp. 30-31.
- <sup>17</sup> Statement by LTG Thomas A. Schwartz Before the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness, First Session 105<sup>th</sup> Congress, 17 April 1997.
- <sup>18</sup> ibid, p. 7.
- <sup>19</sup> "Fort Hood 1998 Organizational Self-Assessment," p.37.
- <sup>20</sup> ibid, p. 10.
- <sup>21</sup> ibid, p. 8.
- <sup>22</sup> Fort Hood Garrison Budget Brief to the III Corps Chief of Staff, 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter FY 98.
- <sup>23</sup> Memorandum for FORSCOM Commander, 22 December 1998, subject: III Corps and Fort Hood Commander's Statement - FY99 Operations and Maintenance Army (OMA) Funding Guidance.
- <sup>24</sup> Landay, Jonathan S., "Signs of Erosion in U.S. Military Readiness Memo to Army Chief of Staff warns that long-term Ability to Defend is Under Threat", Christian Science Monitor, September 16, 1998. p.1.
- <sup>25</sup> 1997 Annual Defense Report, Chapter 4, "Readiness", p. 25.
- <sup>26</sup> ibid, p. 26.

<sup>27</sup> ibid, p. 25.

<sup>28</sup> Sherbo, Andy, "Operation & Maintenance Funding and the Art of Readiness," Air Force Comptroller, April 1, 1998, pp. 10-11.

<sup>29</sup> 1997 Annual Defense Report, Chapter 4, "Readiness", p. 28.

<sup>30</sup> ibid, p. 25.

<sup>31</sup> Testimony of Neal P. Curtain, GAO, before the Subcommittee on Readiness, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, April 21, 1994.

<sup>32</sup> Testimony of Mark E. Gebicke, GAO, before the Subcommittee on Readiness, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, March 18, 1994.

<sup>33</sup> GAO Report to Congress, Military Readiness—Reports to Congress Provide Few Details on Deficiencies and Solutions, March 1998, p.27.

<sup>34</sup> ibid, pp.28-31.

<sup>35</sup> ibid, p.3.

<sup>36</sup> ibid, p.8.

<sup>37</sup> Congressional Budget Office (CBO) study, titled Paying for Military Readiness and Upkeep: Trends in Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Spending, September 1997, p. xvi.

<sup>38</sup> ibid, p. xi.

<sup>39</sup> ibid, p. xi.

<sup>40</sup> Spence, Floyd, FY99 National Defense Authorization Act, "The Officer," November 1998, p. 31.

<sup>41</sup> Kugler, Richard L., Toward a Dangerous World: U.S. National Security Strategy of the Coming Turbulence, RAND, 1995.

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