

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

WE NEED MORE TROOPS – WHY AMERICA’S ARMY IS TOO SMALL

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ABSTRACT

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The Army is maintaining near force breaking operational tempo while conducting world wide operations in the War on Terror. Many critics believe the Army’s share of the Defense budget is the culprit. This project asserts that there are deeper issues. Americans inherited an aversion to large standing armies from our English forefathers that established a national trend of relying on militias in times of crisis. The second effect is the nation’s belief that war is an anomaly, not a recurring condition. This belief generates an expectation in the American people and Congress that a large “peace dividend” follows any conflict, resulting in a shift of fiscal resources from the military. The third cause is rooted in the American way of war. Decisive operations are rapid operations designed to quickly defeat an adversary while incurring minimal US casualties. Successful decisive operations do not require a large army; but they do require investment in highly technical systems that come at the expense of maintaining an adequate Army end strength needed for other than decisive operations. The end result is an Army that is insufficiently manned and trained for prolonged operations and those scenarios in which decisive operations are neither applicable nor effective.

WE NEED MORE TROOPS – WHY AMERICA’S ARMY IS TOO SMALL

“If you cut down 300,000 trees, you can do that pretty quick. But now grow 30,000 of them back. But there is an analogy there that is pretty apt. It takes time, as you know, to grow the quality soldier, quality leaders that we have.”¹ This is the response of General Peter Schoomaker to a question posed by Congressman Jo Ann Davis during testimony before the House Armed Services Committee regarding the Army’s ability to surge forces if required while conducting operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. More to the point, however, it highlights the problem facing the United States Army right now – an end strength insufficient to meet current and future operational requirements. It became very clear to many observers that the Army had been forced to cut “too many trees” when General Eric Shinseki stated his belief that it would require several hundred thousand soldiers to stabilize postwar Iraq.² Military leaders and civilian observers were stunned by the response from the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). Deputy Defense Secretary Paul D. Wolfowitz called Shinseki’s estimate “wildly off the mark” and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld also publicly refuted Shinseki’s judgment.³ The simple fact of the matter was, and remains, that Shinseki had to be wrong, at least from an OSD perspective, because the United States did not have a ground force capable of deploying several hundred thousand soldiers and sustaining operations for a protracted period of time.

There is little doubt that General Shinseki was correct in his estimate. President George W. Bush has recently reversed his position on increasing the size of America’s ground forces⁴ and General John P. Abizaid, Commanding General of the United States Central Command, recently testified before Congress that he believed “Shinseki was right” regarding initial troop levels.⁵ Recognition of the fact that the current size of the Army is insufficient is a good start to ensuring we have sufficient end strength for the present war – but simply authorizing a temporary end strength boost does not solve the real problem. This increase, as welcome as it is, is simply another example of manpower and budgetary augmentation in time of danger and cuts in troop strength and military spending when the danger has passed. This pattern has been a mainstay of American thought and action since before the Revolutionary War.

This paper asserts that three historical trends have created a conditioned response in the way America approaches the end of any conflict. This conditioned response results in a slashing of defense expenditures with the Army traditionally bearing the brunt of the cuts in manpower and defense dollars. The first trend has its roots, oddly enough, in the 1215 English document known as the Magna Carta. A British fear of standing armies has influenced American Army force structure until as recently as the late 21st century and has ingrained in

America a reliance on militia and short term volunteer forces to fight our wars. This aversion to large peacetime armies has led to the second trend, a cyclic pattern of rapid build-up in times of danger and equally rapid cuts in Army manpower and budget when hostilities are over. The third trend is the American use of military force that compliments an affinity for technological answers to manpower intensive problems and is often used as the justification for maintaining a small standing Army. These trends combine to create an American “way of war” that is based on the principle of decisive force and invariably results in a smaller Army. The American military that is prepared to conduct decisive operations is highly trained and offers many advantages when fighting a conventional force. It also, however, lacks “boots on the ground” staying power and places any policy or strategy at risk if the war turns into a protracted conflict.

From the Magna Carta to James Madison

American aversion to a large standing Army during periods of peace has its roots in the English development of individual rights and common law. English fear of a despotic monarch with a large professional army is based on years of internal domestic strife and conflict between the monarchy and Parliament. Documents limiting the power of a king to raise an army can be traced as far back as 1215 A.D. with the signing of the Magna Carta. This marks a point in time when English preference for militias over a professional army begins to emerge in written records. The Magna Carta codifies this in article 51:

As soon as peace is restored, we will banish from the kingdom all foreign born knights, crossbowmen, serjeants, and mercenary soldiers who have come with horses and arms to the kingdom's hurt.⁶

What had been established practice for centuries became law in 1689 when the English Bill of Rights forbid “raising and keeping a standing army within this kingdom in time of peace without consent of Parliament, and quartering soldiers contrary to law.”⁷ John Trenchard, an English writer and, later, a Member of Parliament, wrote in 1697 that “no Nation ever preserved its Liberty, that maintained an Army.”⁸ Trenchard’s works, specifically the *Cato’s Letters* series condemning corruption and extolling moral virtue in government, would greatly influence the ideology of the American founders 70 years later. England’s geography had always allowed her the luxury of limiting the size of the army, as long as she maintained a navy that could keep foreign armies from her shores. The security of the country was dependent upon a small professional army that was raised for specific duties and subjected to annual Parliamentary review to determine if continued service was required. This army, given England’s colonial empire, was used primarily for service abroad and usually stretched thin; the army was dependant upon augmentation by mercenary troops to accomplish assigned tasks.

This traditional prejudice against a standing army was naturally brought to the colonies. The American colonial preference for militias has this prejudice at its very foundation. Geography played the same role in America that it did in England, effectively serving as a buffer to most potential adversaries and reinforcing the belief that America did not need a large peacetime army. This isolation helped to create the movement of the same name. Isolationism became so predominant that it influenced American thought and politics well into the 21st century. Although Americans were adverse to the idea of standing armies, they were realistic enough to know that they needed to provide for a common defense. The earliest settlers at Jamestown had a military organization comprised of officers with a rotating militia type service requirement for each physically capable man. It is clear that military service was never too far from the collective minds of colonists as a 1632 directive issued by the Virginia Assembly requiring “every able bodied man to bring his musket to church so that he might exercise it following service” attests.⁹

American rejection of the Coercive Acts of 1774 threatened to push the colonies into armed rebellion. The Quartering Act was one of four actions taken by the British to punish the colonists for destroying the East India Company's tea during the Boston Tea Party. This particular act was unique in that it applied to each of the colonies, whereas the other “Intolerable Acts,” as the colonists called the Coercive Acts, applied solely to Massachusetts. These acts inflamed American public opinion towards England and served to reinforce the sentiment against a peacetime standing army. The need for a professional army was clear during times of conflict but the thought of serving in other than local militias was utterly foreign to most colonists. General George Washington despaired of ever having sufficient forces to win the American Revolution throughout the duration of the conflict. He constantly worked levies and cajoled the colonies to provide their militia contingents. He lived in fear that his army would simply evaporate as this excerpt from a letter to the Continental Congress in December 1780 attests.

This is a matter which cannot, in my opinion, be too soon communicated to the several States, with a pressing solicitation to take measures that will effectually fill up their Regiments in the course of the winter. From what I can learn, some are putting the matter upon the very precarious footing of voluntary enlistments, and others are substituting fines where the men demanded are not produced in the several districts. I am very much mistaken if by the first mode, any considerable number of Men are to be raised at this time of day, and, from the latitude given in the last, money will, in many instances, be paid down to excuse personal service. The last hope of the Enemy is built upon our inability to raise a new Army, and they are probably preparing to push us in our enfeebled state.¹⁰

General Washington eventually won the Revolutionary War with his mixed bag of Continentals, militia, and foreign troops but did not question for a minute the directive from Congress to disband the Army once peace was achieved. The congressional directive ordering Washington to disband the Continental Army came on September 24, 1783, a mere four days after the signing of the Treaty of Paris. Interestingly enough, British forces still remained in the city of New York in strength. Washington did leave some Continentals in place to keep an eye on New York but fully complied with the requirement to muster out his volunteers as soon as possible. After the war he proposed a force structure emphasizing the Navy, a large part time militia, and a very small regular Army.¹¹

The issue of maintaining a standing army became a significant one for the nascent country. The authors of *The Federalist Papers* argued for a small professional army regulated by the legislative branch; their opponents wanted no standing army at all. Both parties agreed that too large an army was detrimental to the security of liberty. James Madison, one of *The Federalist Paper* authors and eventual President of the United States, stressed that standing armies were a dangerous necessity. His first inaugural address states the dilemma and puts a focal point on the discussion that is the root of this paper's question – how large is too big?

to keep within the *requisite limits a standing military force*, always remembering that an *armed and trained militia is the firmest bulwark of republics*--that without standing armies their liberty can never be in danger, nor with large ones safe.¹²

The constitutions of several states contained provisions preferring militias to standing armies; the following excerpt representative of the others is from the Virginia Constitution of 1776:

That a well regulated militia, composed of the body of the people, trained to arms, is the proper, natural, and safe defense of a free state; that standing armies, in time of peace, should be avoided as dangerous to liberty; and that in all cases the military should be under strict subordination to, and governed by, the civil power.¹³

Five of the thirteen states ratifying the U.S. Constitution urged Congress to adopt a Bill of Rights that included, among its provisions, prohibitions against peacetime standing armies.¹⁴ The Bill of Rights that eventually emerged contained two related amendments. The second amendment emphasizes that it is a well regulated militia, not a standing army, that is necessary to the security of a free state while the third amendment protects Americans from forced or unlawful quartering of soldiers.¹⁵

The Troops and Treasure Roller Coaster

The manifestation of the traditional and regulatory concern over standing armies was realized by American policy that remained virtually unchanged for the next 200 years. This

policy was to maintain a very small peace time army and rapidly mobilize militia and untrained volunteers in times of grave danger. Once the danger had passed, the need for a large army had also passed and the force was quickly reduced. The American Civil War, fought primarily by volunteer regiments, saw the reduction in men under arms decrease from 1,034,064 volunteers on May 1, 1865, to 11,043 only 18 months later. These few remaining volunteers were virtually all mustered out of the service by October 1867.¹⁶ Similar experiences occurred prior to the Civil War following the War with Mexico and after it, during the Spanish American War. It appears that the U.S. Army had learned the hard lessons of rapidly mobilizing a large standing army following World War I. The War Department, fearing a massive demobilization that had, by now, become the norm for American arms, requested that Congress authorize a standing army of 600,000 men and the creation of a three month universal training system that would allow the rapid expansion of the Regular Army. Congress, with the overwhelming support of the American public, rejected this request out of hand, and ordered the Army to rapidly stand down its forces. The Army, in the course of nine months, discharged 3,250,000 soldiers, retaining only 19,000 officers and a little over 200,000 men in the Regular Army.¹⁷

Two beliefs became entrenched in the minds of most Americans by the end of World War I. The first was a belief that democracies are by their very nature, peace loving societies. It stands to reason that a free market economy would prefer peace to war since conflict interrupts business and trade. So to most Americans war was an anomaly; it was not the normal state of affairs regardless of what seemed to be occurring in Europe, and as a result of the European colonial powers, the rest of the world. The second belief was one of isolationism. Americans believed that they were close enough to establish free market trade with the rest of the world but isolated enough to stay out of their affairs. Isolationist tendencies kept the U.S. out of WW I until the aggressive tactics of the German government towards neutral countries forced America into the war. Both of these beliefs were instrumental in supporting the preexisting American tendency for a small professional army and it was this pattern of thought that immediately came back to the forefront of American international and domestic policy following the war. The drawdown of a very professional army and the decision of Congress not to join the League of Nations are but two examples of this phenomenon.

Isolationism and a belief that war was a short term anomaly marked the period between the World Wars and left America woefully unprepared for the Second World War. Another massive mobilization and the reconfiguring of the American industrial capacity to provide material for American and allied armies contributed to the passing of the torch from the pre-war democratic world powers, Britain and France, to the United States after the war ended. The

international balance of power was remarkably different in the post war period than it was on the eve of the war. Traditional powers were weakened and exhausted, Germany and Japan were occupied countries, and the Austria-Hungary Empire was no more. The world was left with two powers, each of different ideological bent. The remaining countries for the most part quickly picked a side and by default, a patron, effectively creating a bi-polar world.

The creation of the United Nations gave the United States hope that a collective security arrangement would maintain world peace and prevent another world war. The American people believed that the five countries that defeated the Axis powers could continue to work to achieve security and that peace and prosperity would naturally follow. There was an understanding that the U.S. would have to maintain some forces to provide support for any UN military action but that the Army would be able to significantly decrease its end strength immediately following the war. The rapid downsizing trend continued. The Army, at a faster pace than it desired, was directed by Congress to decrease in size. The Army discharged 4,000,000 men, half of its force, by the end of 1945. It decreased in size by half again, discharging 2,000,000 men in the first six months of 1946. By June 1947, the Regular Army consisted of an all volunteer force of 684,000 ground troops and 306,000 airmen. The air component was already structuring for transition as a separate service, which upon enactment of the National Security Act of 1947 further reduced the Army end strength by one third.¹⁸

The United States found itself in a unique dilemma following World War II. It was not immediately involved in a traditional conflict, but it was clear that the country was in the center of a new type of war. The Cold War had begun. It was evident to the Truman Administration, and subsequent administrations to follow, that American military power must remain preeminent if peace was to be realized. America would no longer have the luxury of rapidly building an Army to fight its wars. The position of leadership and the global commitments and requirements proved that American forces would be required with very little notice anywhere in the world. This requirement became evident as the North Korean Army swept through South Korea in 1950 with little warning. The fact that the United States Army had been cut too fast and too far after WW II was made equally clear following the performance of Task Force Smith, the hastily formed, ill equipped, and poorly prepared ad hoc unit that was thrown in the path of the surging North Korean Army. This American force was defeated near Osan by a better equipped North Korean armor/infantry force.

The post Korean War downsizing saw a new twist in the familiar refrain of reducing army end strength and fiscal requirements. President Eisenhower, under domestic pressure to divert defense spending in an effort to stimulate the economy, developed a defense strategy called the

“New Look.” This policy emphasized containment of the Soviet threat by focusing U.S. defense strategy on the strategic delivery of nuclear weapons. It emphasized air power and strategic nuclear capability. The Air Force was the primary military beneficiary of this policy; the Navy and the Army took massive cuts in funding and end strength. The New Look contained risk; the emergence of strategic air power came at the expense of traditional conventional forces and the Army was hit the hardest. The strategy reduced American military policy options to waging a short and intense nuclear war if deterrence failed.¹⁹ The New Look military restructuring did allow Eisenhower to create the post conflict peace dividend the country had grown accustomed to while retaining some form of strategic strike capability. The United States and her allies had not matched the Soviet bloc conventional growth rates, preferring instead to invest money into the rebuilding of Western Europe and Japan while energizing domestic economies.²⁰

It soon became clear that Eisenhower’s New Look was an all or nothing gambit that became increasingly ineffective as Soviet nuclear and conventional capabilities grew. The New Look soon gave way to a policy of Flexible Response, which maintained the Air Forces’ strategic strike capability while increasing resources for limited conventional operations. This policy was implemented in Viet Nam with disastrous effects for U.S. national policy. There were neither large scale cuts in Army budget nor manpower following the American withdrawal from Viet Nam. The Soviet threat remained and, even though the risk of global nuclear war had lessened, the Cold War was still going strong. The Army focused its efforts on revising doctrine, reorganizing its units, and shifting its focus back to the defeat of the Soviet conventional threat.²¹

The New Look and Flexible Response had been an attempt to maintain military superiority without maintaining a huge standing army. These policies had mixed results. It could be easily argued that the policies prevented the course of action most dangerous to America, a nuclear exchange with the Soviet Union. It could also be argued, however, that these policies contributed to the trend of minimizing the Army when nothing really supported the belief that the Army had become outdated. Whatever the lesson learned, the days of massive downsizing were far from over for the Army. Congress returned to the more traditional trend of massive downsizing once it became evident the Cold War was drawing to a close and the threat of Soviet attack decreased. The Army, which had slowly built its end strength in anticipation of fighting and defeating a numerically superior Soviet Army, found itself in the budget manager’s crosshairs once more. The active Army, 780,000 strong in the late 80’s, found itself at an end strength of 480,000 a decade later.²²

So what does all of this mean? General George C. Marshall observed “I had no money and all of the time in the world,” referring to the pre-WW II Army, “and now I have got all of the money in the world and no time.”²³ This comment was made following the defeat of the American Army at Kasserine Pass and points to the dilemma created by rapidly demobilizing a trained and experienced Army following a war. Senior Army leaders have repeatedly found that there was not enough time to prepare for the pending fight when faced with the task of rapidly building armies in times of need. Conversely, when the leadership has the time to train an army there is neither the men nor the resources required to train. The result in the past has been poor performance in the initial stages of a war as this excerpt from the TF Smith history attests:

under heavy enemy fire, the poorly-trained American troops abandoned weapons and equipment in sometimes precipitous flight. Not all of them had received word of the withdrawal, and it was at this point that the Americans suffered most of their casualties.... In the battle approximately 150 American infantrymen were killed, wounded, or missing. All five officers and ten enlisted men of the forward observer liaison, machine gun and bazooka group were lost. North Korean casualties in the battle before Osan were approximately 42 dead and 85 wounded; four tanks had been destroyed or immobilized. The enemy advance was delayed perhaps seven hours.²⁴

The result may also be a force that is well trained and equipped but simply too small to carry out the missions assigned. It seems that this better describes today’s Army; an organization that is suffering from too drastic a cut following the last conflict and is subsequently too small to effectively meet all of its obligations.

General Schoomaker, in testimony to the House Armed Services Committee, calls this phenomenon of rapid mobilization and drawdown a “sine wave business of digging ourselves out of foxholes every time we have got a need for something.”²⁵ He then goes on to state that he is referring to the way “America has gone to war and gone to peace in its entire history” and ominously notes that “this world is not going to give us this kind of time” in the future.²⁶ A quick analysis of military spending as a percent of the GDP between the years 1940 and 2001 reflects the sine wave approach to which GEN Schoomaker refers (see table 1). The historical trend shows GDP expenditures for military spending increase during conflict. They immediately begin to decrease as soon as the war is over. The cumulative effect, however, shows a downward trend over the course of the chart. In other words, spending during conflict is rapidly approaching previous peacetime spending rates. The second table shows average expenditures during specific windows; for example, allocations during WWII (29.86%), Korea (11.97%), and the Cold War through Viet Nam (9.13%) reflect robust military spending. Expenditures during the interwar period between WW II and Korea (4.7%) and following the

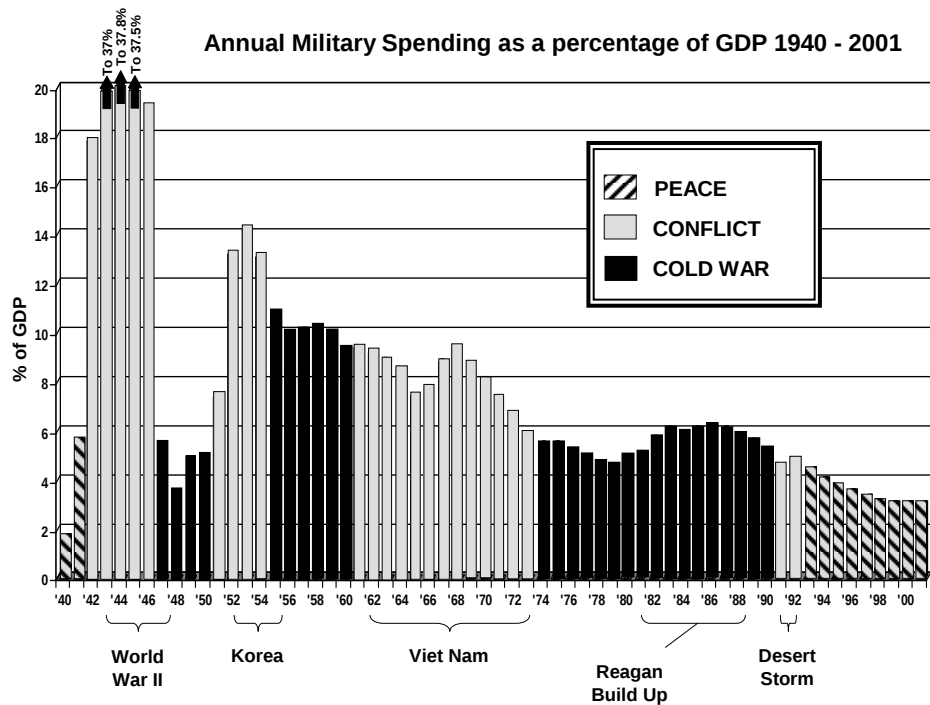


Table 1. Sine Wave Effect of Annual Military Expenditures, 1940-2001²⁷

American withdrawal from Viet Nam (5.17%) show significant decreases in the amount spent on the military until the Iranian Hostage crisis and the Reagan Build Up. Military spending immediately following Operation Desert Shield/Storm continually decreased until the time of the September 11 terrorist attacks, continuing to reflect the trend to cut spending during peacetime. The amount dedicated to military spending at the time of the 9/11 attacks was 3%, this figure had remained static since 1999 and represented the lowest percentage of GDP dedicated to military spending since 1940.

America has shed its fear of a large standing Army but the effects of this aversion to professional armies continue to manifest themselves through conditioned responses to cut military manpower and budget following a conflict. The belief has been that the Army can return to traditional peacetime norms because a small professional military has shown that it can fight and win with technology and overwhelming force. The result is that the country now stands down the military following a conflict - not because it is a threat to the security of a free state but because, in part, it has been so successful whenever called upon to perform its duty. If this is the case, what is the big deal? Why can't we continue to do business the way we have so successfully done in the past? The answer lies in the way we fight our wars.

Military Spending as a Percent of GDP

PERIOD	GDP %	Increase/Decrease
Pre-WWII	3.65 ¹	--
WW II	29.86	 26.21
Inter-War	4.7	 25.16
Korea	11.97	 7.25
Cold War (incl. Viet Nam)	9.13	 2.84
Post Viet Nam to Iran Crisis	5.17 ²	 3.96
Reagan Build Up	5.93	 0.76
Bush Drawdown	4.75	 1.18
Clinton Drawdown	3.32 ³	 1.43

NOTES:

- 1 Military Spending as late as 1940 was only 1.7% of GDP
- 2 Spending decreased every year from 1973 until 1980 when the US Embassy hostages were seized by Iranian students. Spending in 1979 was 4.6%, the lowest amount since 1948.
- 3 Spending decreased every year following the end of the Reagan build-up except in 1992 (immediately following Operation Desert Shield/Storm. Military spending has remained at 3.0% for three years (99-01) at the time of the terrorist attacks on September 11.

Table 2. Military Spending as a Percentage of GDP²⁸

Decisive Force – The American Way of War

America's post 9/11 experiences demonstrate that the American military continues to embrace decisive force, the use of "overwhelming force to rapidly overcome any opponent in as short a time as possible, and with the least cost to us (U.S.) in terms of lives."²⁹ The purpose of military force is to reduce an enemy nation's capacity and will to resist. It is used in conjunction with other instruments of power and in support of American political objectives.

A review of American military experience sheds some light on why the United States fights the way it does. Historically, the conflicts considered to be most successful are those in which the United States military employed force decisively and overwhelmingly against enemy forces in wars of annihilation. Previous examples include the Union campaigns of Ulysses S. Grant in the American Civil War, the American Indian campaigns during America's westward expansion, and military and naval actions during the Spanish American War.³⁰

America drew significant lessons from World War I, a conflict that was reduced to a war of attrition when decisive victory could not be attained by either side. The introduction of American forces late in the conflict returned the war to one of maneuver, and ultimately to the surrender of a German Army faced with annihilation. World War II provided America with the validation that resounding technological advancements, a strong industrial capacity, and total war based on

the unconditional surrender of the nation's enemies was a successful recipe for American policy objectives.

This theory of annihilation warfare carried over into post-WW II American nuclear policy, albeit with a new twist. The ability to completely annihilate an enemy without entering into a traditional resource and manpower intensive conflict was attractive to U.S. policymakers.³¹ It also provided a great way to reduce the defense budget and use the surplus to the benefit of American industrial capability and the economy.

This policy was not without its problems. The most serious flaw in the nuclear strategy became apparent when the Soviet Union acquired a nuclear capability of its own. America's way of war suddenly transitioned from one of annihilation to one of containment, with the purpose of deterring Soviet aggression, with the implementation of NSC-68 in 1950. America was faced with a dilemma – mutual deterrence led to fighting limited and/or protracted wars. The unsuitability of an annihilation oriented force for limited means warfare fought to prevent escalation would soon be evident as the U.S. became embroiled in a series of limited objective wars – first in Korea and then, later, in Viet Nam. The results of these conflicts were unpalatable to the American government, the public, and the military.

The legacy of Viet Nam, in at least one respect, was the development of the Weinberger Doctrine. This policy was an attempt to prevent future military involvement in indecisive wars.³² The application of this doctrine in Panama during Operation Urgent Fury reinforced what the post Viet Nam era military leaders suspected all along – a military authorized to employ overwhelming force, unfettered by policymaker interference, and allowed to “win” was the proper, if not the only way, to employ the American military.³³ The Weinberger doctrine further evolved with Colin Powell's refinements, resulting in an overwhelming military victory in Operation Desert Storm.³⁴

Analysis of the historical trend establishes a discernable pattern. Successful use of decisive force equates to victories while regression to something other than clear cut guidelines for decisive employment of the military creates undesirable and un-winnable situations. The U.S. military experiences prior to 9/11 in Somalia and Haiti simply reinforce the belief that decisive force is the best way for America to fight wars. It is clear how American policy has come to rely upon the demonstrated successes of annihilation warfare given this analysis. The use of decisive force is preferred, especially when compared to the disaster protracted and limited war represents. Decisive force is also consistent with the theories of the great European strategists, specifically Clausewitz and Jomini, which form the basis of American doctrinal thought.

Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom demonstrate that American reliance on overwhelming use of military force to reduce the capability of a conventional force's ability to fight is alive and well. This remains the American way of war. Unfortunately, these experiences also show that the use of decisive force does not necessarily ensure the defeat of an enemy combatant's will to fight, as demonstrated by the continuing insurgencies in both theaters. This point argues that the use of conventional and symmetrical application of force creates certain vulnerabilities in U.S. strategy that can be exploited by potential enemies.

One way to deter American use of force is to attain nuclear weapons. This, theoretically at least, will force the U.S. to fight a limited war from fear of escalation.³⁵ This belief has merit. Fear of escalation with the Soviet Union and China influenced and constrained American strategy in both Korea and Viet Nam. This perception is present in the current policies of North Korea and Iran. These states are pursuing a nuclear capability in the belief that this may deter future American conventional operations against them.³⁶

A second way to defeat American strategy involves the use of all instruments of power (IOP) and targets the public's will to fight. Changing the will of the people in a democratic society ultimately impacts the policy decisions of the government.³⁷ The lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan, from an enemy's perspective are simple - involve the U.S. militarily in a near-unilateral action, use proxies to combat U.S. forces in an asymmetrical fight, and extend operations over a prolonged period of time. This allows engagement of American forces without catastrophic risk to the sponsoring state or trans-national group and it maximizes use of the information IOP through the media and Internet, sowing doubt in American minds that the war is necessary and weakening the nation's resolve.

Syrian and Iranian support of Hizbollah, Hamas, and purportedly the insurgency in Iraq are examples of state on state combat operations via use of proxy.³⁸ Iranian support of Al Sadr's Mahdi Army is another example. In other words, our enemies have learned to avoid decisive engagement, which compels us to fight on their terms – not ours. Conflict avoidance by these countries provides them with the means to avoid direct confrontation with the American military while directly challenging U.S. policy and influence in the region.³⁹ Iran also uses Diplomatic and Economic IOPs to combat U.S. policy in the region. Lucrative deals with China and Russia involving natural resources allow Iran to avoid stifling international sanctions and prevent multi-lateral consensus for American policy in organizations like the United Nations.⁴⁰

The use of decisive force remains the American way of war and it continues to be the best way for America to obtain its military objectives. Vulnerabilities do exist, however, and future American use of military force must incorporate ways to minimize these vulnerabilities.

Understanding ways potential enemies can target U.S. application of decisive force will go a long way to ensuring successful implementation of U.S. policy.

The End Result

Strategy focused on the use of decisive force delivered by an increasingly technologically capable force has created a military that is uniquely qualified to fight in this manner. The American military is trained, manned, and equipped to deliver conventional victories quickly and without significant loss of life. It is not, however, well suited for protracted forms of conflict that are asymmetric in nature. It takes a large ground component to provide security, rebuild infrastructure, to get schools running, utilities working, and hospitals functioning. It requires a ground force to prevent sectarian violence and to train a host nation soldier to do these jobs. It can not be done with aircraft, unmanned robotic sensors, or with technologically superior, but numerically strapped forces. It also takes time and the will of the American people to finish the job once it is started.

There is little doubt that the Army is stretched thin. The Army had roughly 484,000 troops on active duty on 9/11.⁴¹ Congress, recognizing the strain Army operational forces were experiencing approved a 30,000 soldier increase. The Army had grown to approximately 495,000 Soldiers on Active Duty by mid July 2003 but had 370,000 Soldiers deployed.⁴²

Interestingly enough, there has been recognition that the Army was too small for quite some time. Retired General Gordon Sullivan, Chief of Staff during the massive post Cold War draw down, argued against cutting the force too much. He did not want to see the force go below 500,000 and believed 560,000 was a more appropriate end strength.⁴³ General Shinseki testified before the House Armed Services Committee in July 2001 that “given today’s mission profile the Army is too small for the mission load it is carrying, under-resourced for the size that it is” and, somewhat ominously, that “the end strength we have today does not satisfy the mission load...that we can foresee coming.”⁴⁴ This mission load was heavy and would soon prove to grow heavier. The Army and Marine Corps took part in 17 deployments between 1982 and 1990. This was considered a murderous operational tempo (OPTEMPO) at the time but it pales in comparison to the deployment rate between 1990 and 2002 when the number of deployments jumped to 149.⁴⁵

So it should have come as no surprise when GEN Shinseki testified that we would need several hundred thousand soldiers to stabilize Iraq. This type of manpower requirement had been “staunchly opposed” by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld because of the cost associated with a large standing army; the Secretary preferred transformation to smaller units

“that would rely less on manpower and more on technology.”⁴⁶ Agreeing with General Shinseki at this point would not only repudiate everything he had been advocating, it would also consume the money earmarked for transformation and quite possibly require cuts in other service expenditures.

The math is relatively simple, mission requirements and end strength drive current U.S. Army and Marine Corps deployment: to dwell times ratio.⁴⁷ Both services maintain a unit replacement system involving whole scale organizational “swap outs” once a unit has met its deployment obligation. The mission drives the deployment requirement while the availability of forces drives the “dwell” time between deployments. Dwell time is critical to the services because it allows units time to reset, regenerate, and retrain forces. The Secretary of the Army’s deployment/dwell time goal is 3:1 for active Army forces, 6:1 for National Guard, and 4:1 or 5:1 for Reserve units.⁴⁸ Current Army end strengths allow a 1:1 deployment/dwell time.⁴⁹ The current Army OPTEMPO requires 640,000 to 650,000 Soldiers on active duty at any given time.⁵⁰ This OPTEMPO places a huge strain on the force and has remained virtually constant for the duration of the war in spite of Army attempts to generate more combat power through internal reorganization.⁵¹ Meanwhile, the availability pool of forces available for deployment is getting smaller. Reserve forces are increasingly meeting their statutory limits for redeployment and are unavailable to Army planners. Active units, under no such regulatory limits will have to stay deployed longer with less dwell time between deployments if the requirement for current force levels in Iraq and Afghanistan remains the same. It is only a matter of time before the Army runs out of forces to deploy while maintaining a 1:1 dwell time for units.

So, what does right look like when talking about Army end strength? The current end strength requirement should be tied to desired dwell time between deployments and the ability to respond militarily in other potential operational theaters. Also at issue is the timing of the decision to add to the Army end strength. General Schoomaker estimates it will take a decade to add 100,000.⁵² Anthony Cordesman, the current Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, believes it will take 5-10 years to achieve the levels he believes the Army and Marines desire.⁵³ It also takes money; the Congressional Budget Office estimates it will cost 2.6 billion dollars the first year and 4 billion annually after that to increase the Army by 40,000 Soldiers.⁵⁴ The President has recently acknowledged what many believe has been obvious for quite some time and Congress has already moved to increase the current Army end strength with budget funding in the FY 07 National Defense Authorization Bill.⁵⁵ This authorization increases the Army active duty strength to 512,400, but the question remains, is this enough?

The Army Times recently published an article asking this very question.⁵⁶ General Sullivan and Senator Chris Dodd believe the final end strength should be 560,000. Senator John McCain and retired Brigadier General David Grange believe it should be closer to 600,000. Frederick Kagan, a historian and noted author on defense related issues, thinks the end strength should be 750,000. A 2003 Army Requirements Study found that the appropriate end strength for current and projected requirements should be 535,000. There is no consensus but it appears that General Schoomaker's desires are commensurate with the results of the Requirements Study. Recent articles report that the Army Chief of Staff would like the current active duty strength of 507,000 increased by an additional 20,000 to 30,000.⁵⁷

The issue, quite possibly, will become moot given historical predilections for decisive victories and peace dividends. This force will be expensive to maintain. The U.S. will likely attempt to avoid protracted conflict in the future and will increasingly look to achieve military ends through decisive force. Congress will reduce funding and force another round of Army end strength cuts. Over time force structure manning will be driven by dollars available, not requirements to be prepared to fight another protracted counterinsurgency. It's probable we will see the sine wave method of force manning go into effect once more.

America must change its conditioned response to cutting forces and diverting military spending to other areas. The desire of the Executive and Legislative branches of government to return discretionary defense dollars in the form of peace dividends is understandable – but America's adversaries will not always fight a conventional and symmetrical fight. Decisive force may continue to be the American way of war but if U.S. strategists intend military force to be an instrument of policy, the ability to be flexible in the use of that force mandates the increase in end strength of the Army. More significantly, it demands a realization that drawing down the Army to an end strength that negates successful accomplishment of assigned and prospective missions, or cutting the budget so that the same effect is realized, is detrimental to American national security. A force geared to conduct decisive force operations can defeat capability but is not necessarily prepared to defeat the will of an enemy prepared to conduct protracted warfare. This requires a force that can conduct decisive force operations but is also trained to conduct counterinsurgency operations and is equipped and *manned* to execute these operations for the long haul. The trick, it seems, is to solve Madison's dilemma of creating an Army that is neither too small, nor too large. The difference today is that the cost of getting this wrong could be devastating and the question remains one of whether the world will let us wait to build our Army in the future.

Endnotes

¹ U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee, *Hearings on the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2006 and Oversight of Previously Authorized Programs on the Budget Request from the U.S. Army*, 109th Cong., 1st sess., 9 February 2005.

² Thomas E. Ricks and Ann Scott Tyson, "Abizaid Says Withdrawal Would Mean More Unrest," *The Washington Post*, 16 November 2006, Eric Schmitt, "Pentagon Contradicts General on Iraq Occupation Force's Size," *New York Times*. Late Edition, 28 February 2003, sec A. p.1., and Joe Bell, "America Must Increase Size of Military" Opinion Editorials, 23 December 2006 available at http://www.opinioneditorials.com/guestcontributors/jbell_20061223.html); internet accessed 31 December 2006.

³ Schmitt.

⁴ President Bush states that he "plans to expand the overall size of the 'stressed' U.S. armed forces to meet the challenges of a long-term global struggle against terrorists." Peter Baker, "U.S. Not Winning War in Iraq, Bush Says for 1st Time," *The Washington Post*, 20 December 2006 available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-yn/content/article/2006/12/20/AR2006122000268.html>; internet accessed 20 December 2006.

⁵ U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee. *Hearing on the Current Situation and Military Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan*, 109th Cong., 2d sess., 15 November 2006.

⁶ William F. Swindler, *Magna Carta: Legend and Legacy* (New York, The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1965), 334. It is interesting to note that the English nobles specifically mention crossbowmen in this article. The reason, according to the author cited is that the nobles opposing the king either did not have crossbowmen themselves or did not have an adequate defense for them. Either way, this is a very early example of arms limitation talks. The Magna Carta may also be accessed at <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/medieval/magframe.htm>.

⁷ English Bill of Rights 1689. *An Act Declaring the Rights and Liberties of the Subject and Settling the Succession of the Crown*, available at http://www.constitution.org/eng/eng_bor.htm; accessed 30 December 2006

⁸ John Trenchard with Walter Moyle, "An Argument Shewing, that a Standing Army is inconsistent with a Free Government, and absolutely destructive to the Constitution of the English Monarchy" London, 1697, available at <http://www.potowmack.org/trench.html>; accessed 2 January 2007.

⁹ Shy, John, "A New Look at the Colonial Militia", U.S. Army War College, Selected Readings, AY 2007 ASAP Strategic Art Module, 481.

¹⁰ This excerpt is drawn from The Papers of George Washington collection in the Library of Congress, George Washington, "Letter to the Continental Congress," 15 December 1780, available at [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mgw:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(gw200524\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mgw:@field(DOCID+@lit(gw200524))); internet accessed 29 December 2006.

¹¹ Maurice Matloff, ed., *American Military History*, (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1985), 101-03.

¹² James Madison, "The First Inaugural Address of James Madison," speech. Washington, D.C., 4 March 1809, available at <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/president/inaug/madison1.htm>; accessed 30 December 2006.

¹³ *Virginia Constitution*, article 1, sec. 13 (1776), available at <http://legis.state.va.us/laws/search/constitution.htm#1S13>; accessed 30 December 2006.

¹⁴ Neil H. Cogan, *The Complete Bill of Rights*, (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1997), 181-83

¹⁵ U.S. Constitution, 2d Amendment and 3rd Amendment, available at http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/bill_of_rights_transcript.html; accessed 30 December 2006.

¹⁶ Matloff, 282.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 405-06. Two versions of this book have been used in this paper. The printed hard bound version is the primary source throughout the paper. Some content and specific information has been drawn from the online version and is referenced specifically when information comes solely from the online source. For example, the information pertaining to the War Department request for a 600,000 man standing army was drawn from the online version; it is not in the printed edition. The data pertaining to the demobilization is in both editions. The online version is available at the Center of Military History web site, <http://www.army.mil/cmhp-g/books/amh/amh-toc.htm>.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 530-31.

¹⁹ Matloff, 622 (online version).

²⁰ Bacevich, 325.

²¹ The Army actually increased divisional flags to 18 during this period but inevitable manpower cuts following the withdrawal from Viet Nam created the "Round Out" division, meaning that an active Army division would deploy with two active duty brigades and one reserve forces brigade. This theoretically provides a framework for rapid expansion of the active force. Matloff, 692 (online version).

²² Matthew Cox and Sean Naylor, "The Push for a Bigger Army." *Army Times*, 23 October 2006, p. 14.

²³ U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee, *Hearings on the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2006 and Oversight of Previously Authorized Programs on the Budget Request from the U.S. Army*, 109th Cong., 1st sess., 9 February 2005.

²⁴ See the Task Force Smith fact sheet for an excellent synopsis of the task force and its operations near Osan. This fact sheet can be found at the DoD Commemoration of the 50th

Anniversary of the Korean War web site available at <http://korea50.army.mil/history/factsheets/tfsmith.shtml>; accessed 9 January 2007.

²⁵ U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee, *Hearings on the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2006 and Oversight of Previously Authorized Programs on the Budget Request from the U.S. Army*, 109th Cong., 1st sess., 9 February 2005.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ "U.S. Military Spending as a Percentage of GDP, 1940—2003," *Relative Size of US Military Spending*, available at <http://www.truthandpolitics.org/military-relative-size.php>; accessed 1 January 2007.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ F. G. Hoffman, *Decisive Force: the New American Way of War* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1996), 100-01.

³⁰ Russel F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1977), 142-53. Weigley provides an excellent discussion of the development of American attrition warfare during the period of the American Civil War and subsequent Indian Wars.

³¹ For more information on the thought process behind the decisions to embrace nuclear weapons as the cornerstone of national security policy see Andrew C. Bacevich's and Lawrence F. Kaplan's case study on President Eisenhower's struggle with the Army Chief of Staff over the course and direction of the U.S. security policy, Bacevich, Andrew, and Kaplan, Lawrence. "Generals versus the President: Eisenhower and the Army, 1953-1955", U.S. Army War College, Selected Readings, AY 2007 Strategic Leadership Course, 320-47.

³² Hoffman, 47.

³³ Ibid., 66.

³⁴ Ibid., 104.

³⁵ For more on this comment see Thomas Mahnken's article, "America's Next War" in *The Washington Quarterly*, summer 1993.

³⁶ Derek Delbert Smith writes that "the U.S. will become more reluctant to fight for non-vital matters under the shadow of catastrophic damage", see his book *Deterring America: Rogue States and the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, (Cambridge: University Press, 2006), 6, for more information.

³⁷ A recent example of this is the train bombings in Spain which had an immediate impact on the national elections and rapidly led to a change in policy and withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq. The 2006 mid-term election in the United States is another.

³⁸ The United States Department of State, "Background information on Foreign Terrorist Organizations" <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/rpt/fto/2801.htm/> accessed 19 November 2006. This State Department website states that Hizbollah receives external aid from Iran and Syria and that Hamas receives aid from Iran and other moderate Arab states.

³⁹ Use of the informational instrument of power is evidenced by the recent filming of insurgent sniper attacks in Iraq (and the subsequent decision to air these clips by U.S. media) and by the recent Al Jazeera decision to broadcast in English.

⁴⁰ Lionel Beehner, "The Impact of North Korea's Nuclear Test on Iran Crisis" available at <http://www.cfr.org/publication/11712/> accessed 19 November 2006. Beehner, in a background article on the Council of Foreign Relations web site, states that China "has lucrative oil and natural gas deals with Iran and does not want to jeopardize economic ties to Tehran".

⁴¹ Bell.

⁴² Frederick Kagan, "An Army of Lots More Than One." *The Weekly Standard*, 7 July 2003 available at <http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/002/849ienyw.asp>; accessed 31 December 2006.

⁴³ Cox, 14.

⁴⁴ Bell.

⁴⁵ Ibid. The author is citing House Armed Services Committee Chair Congressman Duncan Hunter's 2002 report to the President, "The Case for Rebuilding U.S. Armed Forces".

⁴⁶ Anne Plummer Flaherty, The Associated Press, "Enlarging Military Poses Challenge," *The Washington Post*, 20 December 2006 available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-yn/content/article/2006/12/20/AR2006122000268.html>.

⁴⁷ GEN Hagee testimony to the House Armed Services Committee. U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee, 108th Cong., 2d sess., 17 November 2004.

⁴⁸ U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee, *Hearings on the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2006 and Oversight of Previously Authorized Programs on the Budget Request from the U.S. Army*, 109th Cong., 1st sess., 9 February 2005.

⁴⁹ Ibid. The example General Hagee used in his testimony to the House Armed Services Committee was that Marine would participate in a seven month deployment, return for seven months and then redeploy again. In the army the rate is 12 months deployed and 12 months in dwell time.

⁵⁰ U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee, 108th Cong., 2d sess., 17 November 2004.

⁵¹ Retired General Wesley Clark testimony to House Armed Services Committee, U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee, 109th

Cong., 1st sess., 6 April 05 and General John Abizaid testimony to Senate Armed Services Committee; U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee. *Hearing on the Current Situation and Military Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan*, 109th Cong., 2d sess., 15 November 2006.

⁵² Cox, 14

⁵³ Flaherty.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ United States Senate Committee on Armed Services Press Release, "Senate and House Complete Conference on John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007" 29 September 2006, available at <http://armed-services.senate.gov/press/Conference%2007%20Press%20Release.pdf>.

⁵⁶ Cox, 14-5.

⁵⁷ Flaherty.