

ETHICAL IMBALANCE: HOW THE U.S. ARMY OVERCAME ITS MANNING CRISIS

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL JIMMY L. MCCONICO
United States Army

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A:

Approved for Public Release.
Distribution is Unlimited.

USAWC CLASS OF 2009

This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.



U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050

The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle State Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 02-03-2009		2. REPORT TYPE Strategy Research Project		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Ethical Imbalance: How the U.S. Army Overcame its Manning Crisis				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Lieutenant Colonel Jimmy L. McConico				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Dr. Breena Coates Department of Command, Leadership, and Management (DCLM)				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College 122 Forbes Avenue Carlisle, PA 17013				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution A: Unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT The U.S. Army appears to be facing an ethical dilemma when it comes to manning these days. Ongoing military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have created one of the greatest manning challenges the U.S. Army has faced since it dropped conscription as a method of filling out its formations at the end of the Vietnam War. To meet this challenge, the Army has modified a number of its manning practices which seem to counter its own aspirations of maintaining a total quality and values-based force. In the rush to increase manning levels, the Army has stretched, almost to the breaking point, both ends of its manning strategy. On the recruiting end, the Army has lowered the standard to include more recruits who previously would have been considered unfit to serve, while on the retention end, it has created a culture that retains those whose behavior was once certain to get them thrown out. The Army's new approach to manning seems controversial at best and grossly unethical at worst. This issue underscores a widening gap between the values the Army espouses and the values upon which it acted to overcome its manning shortfalls.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Espoused Values, Enacted Values, Recruitment, Retention, Stop-Loss, Contemporary Operating Environment					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UNLIMITED	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 28	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	b. ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	c. THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code)

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

ETHICAL IMBALANCE: HOW THE U.S. ARMY OVERCAME ITS MANNING CRISIS

by

Lieutenant Colonel Jimmy L. McConico
United States Army

Dr. Breena Coates
Project Adviser

This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Lieutenant Colonel Jimmy L. McConico

TITLE: Ethical Imbalance: How the U.S. Army Overcame its Manning Crisis

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 2 March 2009 WORD COUNT: 5837 PAGES: 28

KEY TERMS: Espoused Values, Enacted Values, Recruitment, Retention, Stop-Loss, Contemporary Operating Environment

CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

The U.S. Army appears to be facing an ethical dilemma when it comes to manning these days. Ongoing military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have created one of the greatest manning challenges the U.S. Army has faced since it dropped conscription as a method of filling out its formations at the end of the Vietnam War. To meet this challenge, the Army has modified a number of its manning practices which seem to counter its own aspirations of maintaining a total quality and values-based force. In the rush to increase manning levels, the Army has stretched, almost to the breaking point, both ends of its manning strategy. On the recruiting end, the Army has lowered the standard to include more recruits who previously would have been considered unfit to serve, while on the retention end, it has created a culture that retains those whose behavior was once certain to get them thrown out. The Army's new approach to manning seems controversial at best and grossly unethical at worst. This issue underscores a widening gap between the values the Army espouses and the values upon which it acted to overcome its manning shortfalls.

ETHICAL IMBALANCE: HOW THE U.S. ARMY OVERCAME ITS MANNING CRISIS

The U.S. Army appears to be facing an ethical dilemma when it comes to manning these days. Ongoing military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have created one of the greatest manning challenges the U.S. Army has faced since it dropped conscription as a method of filling out its formations at the end of the Vietnam War. To meet this challenge, the Army has modified a number of its manning practices which seem to counter its own aspirations of maintaining a total quality and values-based force. In the rush to increase manning levels, the Army has stretched, almost to the breaking point, both ends of its manning strategy. On the recruiting end, the Army has lowered the standard to include more recruits who previously would have been considered unfit to serve, while on the retention end, it has created a culture that retains those whose behavior was once certain to get them thrown out. The Army's new approach to manning seems controversial at best and grossly unethical at worst. This underscores a widening gap between the values the Army espouses and the values upon which it acted to overcome its manning shortfalls. The impact of the Army's response to this dilemma could be on its standing as a professional service, the ensuing culture, and in the strategic risk soldiers of lesser quality may bring to the new contemporary operating environment. In today's highly complex and uncertain environment where everything a soldier does or fails to do sends a strategic message, the Army finds it useful to employ those least likely to succeed in that environment.¹ As a result, the Army could end up paying a heavy price for the shortcut approach it takes to solving its manning crisis.

This paper provides an analysis of the recent modifications the Army made to its manning practices in both recruiting and retention. First, it provides a review of the Army's espoused values followed by a review of the operational requirements that placed the enactment of those values at risk. The middle section, and focus of this paper, is an analysis of six initiatives the Army adopted to boost its personnel numbers. The final section of the paper presents the potential impact of those initiatives followed by some recommendations that might help ameliorate them.

According to Jeff Russell, Russell Consulting Group, Incorporated, espoused values are the core beliefs, principles and values that organizations declare as part of an official "creed" and that they claim to actively follow in the daily conduct of business.² Enacted values, however, reflect the actions and behaviors that organizations actually display. Enacted values may be quite different from espoused values because they are subjected to circumstantial influence. In other words, while espoused values can be reduced to a set of governing principles, enacted values may change based upon the demands of a particular situation. An ethical dilemma occurs when two values are in conflict with one another. This is the situation in which the U.S. Army found itself in 2004 as it responded to increased personnel demands brought about in part, by ongoing military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. While advocating the maintenance of a morally-straight and superior force, the Army began to actively recruit soldiers least likely to produce that moral superiority. Herein lies the issue and subject of this paper because, when faced with a manning shortage, the Army broke from the declared values it long espoused in order to solve its crisis.

Values have a secure place in the culture of professional organizations and all of the U.S. Military Services maintain some form of values-based principles around which their members are expected to rally. Values underlie essential cohesion and provide foundational reference points when addressing ethical situations.³ Given the violent nature of war where ethics and morality count for everything, it is small wonder that the Army places so much emphasis on values. Military business is inherently violent, involving both death and destruction, but paradoxically, good character and moral judgment are highly sought virtues among members of a military force. Army Chaplain, Major Robert Roetzel, while commenting on the Army's ethics, described values as a necessary ingredient for successful mission accomplishment and that soldiers have a moral obligation to accept greater risk than do non-combatants.⁴ A values-based force serves to ameliorate potentially negative consequences of military operations; therefore, values must be inculcated into every member of the force.⁵

This is most likely what former Army Chief of Staff, General Eric Shinseki had in mind when he issued to each individual soldier in 1999, a handy wallet-size card bearing the self-imposed values he wanted to permeate Army culture. So committed was the Army's chief to these espoused values, that he went on to mandate that all soldiers wear a smaller version of the same card on their identification tags. The Army's leadership manual published in 2006 codified these values and described them as traits that firmly bind all Army members into a fellowship dedicated to serving the nation and the Army.⁶ They remain unchanged from the original version published in 1999:

- Loyalty—Bear true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, your unit, and other soldiers.
- Duty—Fulfill your obligations.

- Respect—Treat people as they should be treated.
- Selfless Service—Put the welfare of the nation, the Army, and your subordinates before your own.
- Honor—Live up to all of the Army values.
- Integrity—Do what is right legally and morally.
- Personal Courage—Face fear, danger, or adversity (physical and moral).⁷

To help these values take root among its members, the Army enforces them through a number of embedding and reinforcing mechanisms. Embedding mechanisms enmesh assumptions into an organization about work priorities, an approach to discipline, or a commitment to standards while reinforcing mechanisms are designed to shape organizational culture.⁸ This was the purpose of an electronic message published in June 2008 stating that “drug use by Army personnel is inconsistent with Army values and standards of performance, discipline, and readiness...”⁹ The assumption planted in the minds of soldiers and leaders charged with enforcing the policy is that any infraction against this standard would draw severe consequences. Until the Global War on Terrorism began in 2001, one of the consequences was the immediate separation of soldiers identified as habitual substance abusers. This type of reinforcing mechanism once served as a demonstration of the Army’s resolve and commitment to its substance abuse standard. However, with two wars to support, the Army began to back away from the values it espoused in order to quickly increase its force structure.

According to the Army Posture Statement published in 2008, there are 591,000 soldiers on active duty including 518,000 currently assigned to the Active Component (which reflects authorized growth since 2004), 52,000 assigned to the Army National

Guard, and 21,000 assigned to the Army Reserve.¹⁰ The statement further reveals that 42 percent of [Army soldiers] are deployed or forward-stationed in 80 countries around the world and that almost 140,000 of these are deployed in direct support of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.¹¹ These numbers reflect an expanding Army after the realization that an Active Component end-strength of 482,000 at the start of the Global War on Terrorism, was much too small to meet all of the Army's current operational requirements.

The Army's manning challenges are manifested in other areas as well. In 2004, the Army's Chief of Staff announced that, as part of a transformation initiative, the Army would increase the number of its brigade combat teams (BCT) in the Active Component from 33 to 48.¹² Although the manning plan for these new BCTs includes the transfer of soldiers from other units in the Army, there remains a lingering challenge to fill vacancies in capabilities that are in exceptionally high demand such as military police and military intelligence skills.¹³

Military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan also revealed that many of the capabilities needed to support current military operations, such as units that handle long-term accountability and detention of enemy prisoners of war, reside not in the Active Component, but in the Reserves where the rules governing access to them are different from active duty units. For infrastructure security immediately following the events of September 11, 2001, many of these Reserve Component units were mobilized under a Partial Mobilization order of the President (bringing them onto active duty for up to 24 months), and for policy reasons, were temporarily not available to be remobilized to support subsequent military operations. Without access to certain

Reserve Component units, the Active Component had to reconfigure and carry the full burden of ongoing military operations. As a result, many active duty soldiers currently deploy to Iraq or Afghanistan every 10-12 months, a situation that led the current Army chief to describe the Army as being “out of balance.”¹⁴ This capability gap highlighted the fact that the Army was not sufficiently structured to meet current operational demands.

The revelation of a force much too small prompted the Secretary of Defense to grant permission for the Army to increase its force structure by 74,000 (65,000 in the Active Component), initially to be completed by the end of Fiscal Year 2012 then slashed by two years to be completed by the end of Fiscal Year 2010.¹⁵ This increase in force structure alone, however, would have been insufficient to relieve some of the pressure had the Army not employed measures to reduce its attrition rate as well.

The Army’s rate of attrition usually hovers around five percent annually but since the start of the Global War on Terrorism, this number has increased significantly.¹⁶ Not only was the Army challenged by routine separations, but with two wars going on, it had to adapt to an increasing number of war casualties as well. By December 2008, the combined casualty count for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan totaled more than 4,800 soldiers killed in action and another 33,000 wounded in action.¹⁷ The impact was still more stress on the force due to a war that has lasted far longer than expected and a personnel replacement system that has not maintained pace with the rate of attrition.

Another thing affecting attrition is the Army’s continued separation of soldiers under the Defense Department’s “Don’t Ask- Don’t Tell” policy regarding gays in the military. Since the policy’s inception in 1993, commanders have involuntarily separated

more than 12,000 soldiers for disclosing their homosexual orientation.¹⁸ Since there is currently no concerted effort to revisit this issue, one of the things the Army did to offset its attrition rate was make it more difficult for lower-level commanders to separate soldiers for other reasons such as misconduct and poor performance. Faced with the need to provide quality personnel on one hand while trying to immediately fill personnel shortages on the other, the Army made some compromising decisions that squarely call into question its commitment to the values it espouses.

Recruiting Compromise

A total quality and values-based force begins at the front end of the manning process; therefore, attracting and maintaining quality recruits remain a goal of all of the Military Services. To this end, the Army emplaced strict screening mechanisms to ensure it accessed into its formations a fair share of the best and brightest young Americans. In fact, so tight were recruiting standards that in 2005, the Army missed its final fiscal year recruiting objective by more than 6,000 recruits.¹⁹ Since that time however, the Army has enjoyed tremendous recruiting success. While this represents a significant achievement, it did not come without major compromise and reflects the Army's attempt to solve its manning crisis by lowering the standard. The Army lowered its recruiting standard primarily in three areas: (1) in assessing into its ranks a larger percentage of recruits who have not earned a high school diploma; (2) by increasing the number of recruits who are cognitively-challenged; and (3), by waiving earlier prohibitions against recruits who possessed criminal records. Each of these is discussed further below.

High School Drop Outs. Among the first modifications the Army made to boost its manning levels was to lower the standard for accepting recruits without a high school diploma. While none of the Military Services require a high school diploma as a prerequisite for enlistment, all of them have emplaced limitations on the number of new recruits they will accept without one.²⁰ Prior to the manning crisis, the Army maintained a standard that required 90 percent of new recruits to have at least a high school diploma.²¹ This standard was based upon the results of various studies showing that those who finish high school were far more likely to perform better and complete their term of service without disciplinary problems.²² However, in a move that goes against the implications of these studies, the Army opened its doors to those who failed to complete high school even wider. By 2007 slightly more than 70 percent of new recruits joining the Army possessed a high school diploma, almost 20 percent fewer than the Army's original goal of 90 percent.²³

Consequences of the Army's lowering of this standard began to appear as early as March 2005 when 17.4 percent of all new Army recruits failed to make it through training, a full five percentage points higher than the Army's goal of 12 percent.²⁴ During the same period, 7.3 percent of new soldiers failed to complete the first three years with their unit, more than two percentage points higher than the Army's goal.²⁵ While the new standard expands the pool of individuals eligible to become soldiers, it also expands the likelihood that the Army will never reap the benefits it expected by recruiting and training these individuals in the first place.

More Category IV Soldiers. Contributing to the Army's recruiting success in recent years is its inclusion of more cognitively-challenged recruits. A cognitively-

challenged recruit is one who scores below average on the Army's standard aptitude test designed to measure trainability.²⁶ These individuals, known as Category IV (CAT IV) recruits, were once denied entry into the Army in large numbers. However, as the war in Iraq became more unpopular followed by a subsequent crisis in manning, the Army doubled the number of CAT IV recruits it would accept annually from two percent to four percent.²⁷ With an annual recruiting goal of 80,000 soldiers, this brings 3,200 new CAT IV soldiers into the Army each year, roughly a number equal in size to one brigade combat team. While the number of CAT IV recruits remains relatively small when compared to the entire Army population, they do have an impact on the Army. Fred Kaplan points to the costs associated with less adept and cognitively-challenged soldiers. One study, according to Kaplan, examined how many Patriot missiles various Army air-defense units had to fire in order to destroy ten targets.

Units with CAT I personnel had to fire 20 missiles while those in CAT IV had to fire 24 missiles. In other words, Category IV units chewed up 20 percent more hardware than Category I units and since Patriot missiles cost about \$2 million each, they also chewed up \$8 million of the defense budget.²⁸

Ironically, the Army has long highlighted resourcefulness as one of the virtues it values in its personnel. This provides yet another example of the Army's attempt to solve the problem by engaging in activity that has become the subject of ridicule and hypocrisy.

Recruits with Criminal Records. The final area to be discussed in recruiting has to do with providing waivers to include recruits with previous criminal convictions. According to the Department of Defense's qualification standards for enlistment, persons entering the Armed Forces of the United States should be of good moral character.²⁹ The underlying purpose for this standard is to minimize the entrance of persons who are likely to become disciplinary cases, security risks, or who disrupt good

order, morale, and discipline.³⁰ It is designed to disqualify persons in a number of undesired categories, including those convicted of felonies and those with a significant history of other criminal activity.³¹ However, like many military standards, this one is subjected to being overridden by waivers. According to an *Army Times* report published in February 2007, waivers to the criminal activity standard increased across the Department of Defense by 38 percent since the Global War on Terrorism began in 2001.³²

While crime in the Army is not new, there does appear to be a correlation between the Army's lowering of the recruiting standard in this area and an upswing in crime in recent years, especially in sexual assaults. According to the Army's Criminal Investigations Command, sexual assaults in the Army increased by 35 percent between 2004 and 2007.³³ In an effort to break this trend, the Army Chief of Staff recently met with 80 high-ranking generals for a mandatory, weeklong summit devoted to combating the crime.³⁴

The Army's insatiable appetite for new recruits has caught the attention of current and former gang members as well. A well known fact is that the Military Services have become a temporary repository for some of America's most rebellious young adults. The number of criminal cases in the Army involving confirmed gang members quadrupled between 2003 and 2006.³⁵ The Federal Bureau of Investigations and the El Paso Police Department identified over 40 military-affiliated gang members stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas whose activities include drug distribution, robberies, and homicide, both on and off the installation.³⁶ What's even more disturbing is how some of these gang members gained entry into the military.

A National Gang Intelligence Center assessment published in January 2007 found that some gang members entered the military with the full knowledge of their recruiters. For instance, a Latin King [gang] member was allegedly recruited into the Army at a Brooklyn New York courthouse while awaiting trial for assaulting a police officer and was advised by the recruiter to conceal his gang affiliation.³⁷ This underscores the pressure on recruiters to support the Army's expanding appetite for soldiers and exacerbates a widening gap between the Army's espoused values and its enacted values. Even the courts have taken notice of the Army's developing reputation of accepting whoever is available:

US criminal courts have allowed gang members to enter the service as an alternative to incarceration. Several incidences wherein gang members have been recruited into the armed services while facing criminal charges or on probation or parole have been documented. In many instances, a gang member facing criminal charges may be provided the option to join the military or serve a jail sentence.³⁸

Though the object of this arrangement has mutual benefits, adding a soldier while illuminating the rehabilitative capabilities of the Services, the Army should be careful to ensure that this does not present a larger problem in the end. When judges give convicts the option of joining the Army instead of going to jail, that does not serve the Army well because it goes against both the culture and the professional image the Army has sought to define for itself.

Retention Compromise

In November 2002, an electronic message went out across the Army announcing the Chief of Staff's disappointment with the rate of attrition: "unit attrition continues to be above the Chief of Staff of the Army's guidance of five percent....leaders at all levels must continually provide every opportunity for rehabilitation to soldiers who falter...."³⁹

This enabling message about keeping more of the soldiers already on Army rosters placed unit commanders across the Army in an ethical dilemma and began a new culture of retention. In addition to this subtle message, the Army also took a number of objective steps to reduce its attrition rate including elevating the separation authority for soldiers whose performance or conduct could lead to their involuntary separation, modifying its qualitative management program to extend the length of time soldiers who fail to get promoted to the next higher rank can remain in the Army, and through its continued use of the “Stop-Loss” policy. Each of these is discussed further below.

Elevation of the Separation Authority. In May 2005, the Army published a second electronic message addressing unit attrition. This one however, was in response to an amazing paradox: while the Army’s recruiting command worked diligently to bring more soldiers in, battalion-level commanders, now faced with more criminals and poor performing soldiers, worked equally hard to throw them out. This led the Army to strip battalion commanders of their authority to separate soldiers for certain behaviors and reassign that authority to commanders higher up the chain of command.⁴⁰ For example, prior to the manning crisis, the Army espoused little tolerance for substance abusers in its formations and willingly permitted battalion commanders to throw them out. As a result of the manning crisis however, substance abuse became one of the offenses for which battalion commanders no longer possessed separation authority. The tacit message communicated by this change was that the Army’s former position on substance abuse was no longer as bivalent as it was once made out to be.

The Army's elevation of the separation authority for soldiers who engaged in misconduct or whose performance consistently fell below the standard sent a clear message to commanders charged with enforcing discipline and maintaining the standard. Many lower-level commanders saw this as an implied task to handle violations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice less severely than they did previously.⁴¹ As a result, separation as punishment for certain offenses gave way to more use of written admonishments and other forms of non-judicial punishment. The most devastating impact of this decision, however, could be on Army culture where lower-level commanders, convinced that their decisions to weed out poor quality personnel will not be supported at higher levels, do too little to enforce discipline and allow certain offenses to go unpunished.

Modification of the Qualitative Management Program. The Army's recent decision to change its qualitative management program provides further evidence of desperation. The Qualitative Management Program, known throughout the Army as Retention Control Points (RCP), was designed to force soldiers out of the Army if they failed to get promoted to the next higher rank by the time they reach a predetermined number of years in service. An *Army Times* news report published in December 2008 noted that the new RCP for soldiers in the ranks of private through private first class jumped from three years to eight years.⁴² While this keeps more soldiers in the Army, it also adds to imbalance because these soldiers, a few years ago, would have certainly been separated. A policy of "up or out" serves as a method to identify those who are genuinely committed to the Army and its goals as opposed to those who are merely compliant. In the end, moving the RCP from three years to eight means the Army may

be adding five years of complacency, half-hearted commitment, and mediocre service to its operations.

Stop-Loss. “Stop-Loss” is yet another tool the Services use to retain more of what they already have. Though legal, the military’s Stop-Loss policy remains one of the most controversial subjects in the U.S. Armed Services. Although Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, has encouraged all of the Services to avoid using Stop-Loss as a method of retention, the Army remains the only Service still doing so.⁴³ Since 2001, more than 120,000 soldiers have been caught in the Army’s Stop-Loss net.⁴⁴ These individuals were legally coerced into remaining in the Army and are expected to remain just as loyal as they would have been, had they not been coerced. This is why Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts, referred to the policy as a “backdoor draft.”⁴⁵ Others have also pointed out the Army’s apparent hypocrisy through its use of coercion because such a manning strategy goes against the notion of an all-volunteer force.

The problem with the Stop-Loss policy is not that it retains individuals in the Services beyond the dates for which they were originally contracted; it is the constant buzz of controversy surrounding the matter. On its face, it seems unethical. Even Secretary of Defense Gates referred to the policy as an issue that troubles him.⁴⁶ When a Military Service resorts to use of the Stop-Loss policy, that Service is using a legal option available only to itself as a countermeasure to trump the attempts of individuals seeking to end their relationship with the military. The ensuing impression is one where yet another heavily resourced and bureaucratic institution has engaged in legal maneuvering designed to take advantage of individuals.

Impact of the Compromise

In its desperation to quickly acquire personnel, the Army created a noticeable gap between its espoused values and its enacted values. Though well on its way to solving its manning problem, the Army may be creating new ones in the process. The choices the Army made not only call into question its commitment to the values it espouses, but also makes one wonder if this leaves the Army postured for success in the future. We can expect to see the consequences of these decisions in three areas: (1) in the Army's ethical standing as a profession; (2) in the Army's performance in the new contemporary operating environment; and (3), in future Army culture resulting from the enacted values it used to solve its manning crisis.

The Army as a Professional Institution. In an article published in *The Future of the Army Profession*, James Burk defines a profession as a relatively "high status" occupation whose members apply abstract knowledge to solve problems in a particular field of endeavor.⁴⁷ To elucidate, Burk argues that an organization can declare itself a profession once it demonstrates mastery of abstract or unique knowledge, gains control of a jurisdiction in which expert knowledge is applied, and after it has prevailed over cultural biases about the legitimacy of that knowledge compared to others.⁴⁸ Since its creation in 1775, the U.S. Army has evolved into a self-governing body that clearly qualifies as a profession. In operations from the Revolutionary War in the 18th Century to current operations in the 21st Century, the Army has exceeded the expectations of its clientele—the American people. However, the Army periodically experiences a tremendous amount of criticism that jeopardizes its standing as a profession and solicits a plethora of reviews from its clients. It was this sort of negative attention focused on

the U.S. Armed Forces that led to the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 where Congress completely overhauled the way the U.S. Military does business.⁴⁹

James Burk reminds us in his article that a true profession is one of autonomy and that autonomy, conferred by the clients served by the profession, is based entirely upon a trust relationship between client and profession.⁵⁰ Unfortunately, this is where the Army comes up short. While the Army's status as a professional institution remains secure for now, there is growing evidence that some of its clients are beginning to lose confidence in the Army's ability to govern itself. Representative Marty Meehan of Massachusetts sought to overturn the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy regarding gays serving in the military.⁵¹ Congresswoman Betty Sutton of Ohio, along with Senator Frank Lautenberg of New Jersey, championed the effort to compensate soldiers caught in the "Stop-Loss" net.⁵² These are only a few examples where members of Congress have encroached upon the Services because they disagreed with some of their practices. Ostensibly, the more controversial the subject, the more likely it is to attract not only negative attention and publicity, but severe scrutiny from Congress as well.

This is embarrassing to all who are genuinely committed to the values of a professional military service and exacerbates an Army service culture already in an identity crisis. Unlike the U.S. Air Force which attracts the technically-oriented young American, or the U.S. Marine Corps which attracts those seeking to express masculinity and brute strength, the Army lacks any noticeable "cool factors" with which young Americans might want to identify. The idea of "dumbing-down" the Army by including more cognitively-challenged recruits add to the perception of an Army accepting what's left after the other Services have taken first picks. The values-based all volunteer force

the Army espouses to be can only be developed through the genuine commitment of those who volunteer, not by those enticed by bonuses or coerced through a Stop-Loss policy. These actions only contribute to the likelihood that the U.S. Congress and others will continue to call into question the decisions being made at the highest levels of the Army.

The New Contemporary Operating Environment (COE). Military personnel are engaged in multiple operations across the globe. These operations span from counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan to peacekeeping operations in Kosovo. Additionally, military personnel are stationed in more than 80 countries around the world protecting America's interests and conveying America's strategic messages.⁵³ Today's soldiers consistently demonstrate efficiency in performing conventional military tasks such as closing with, and destroying the enemy. However, in the new strategic environment, success is measured not by a "body count" as was the case during the Vietnam War, but rather in the ability to secure a long term peace. Therefore, it is vital that today's military personnel comprehend the nature of the contemporary operating environment.

Army Field Manual 3-0, published in February 2008, describes the new operating environment as one that is vague, uncertain, complex and extremely ambiguous. The manual further describes the type of soldiers required for success in that environment:

Today's dangerous and complex security environment requires soldiers who are men and women of character. Their character and countenance represent the foundation of a values-based, trained, and ready Army. Soldiers train to perform tasks while operating alone or in groups.⁵⁴

Ongoing counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan illustrate that strategy is implemented at ever increasing lower echelons. In a world influenced by a

media that operates 24 hours per day, seven days per week, strategic messages are being communicated by individual soldiers rather than by well educated senior leaders. By increasing the number of undesirable soldiers in its formations, the Army increases its chances of having to counterbalance more strategic blunders like the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse scandal. Five years after Abu Ghraib, the United States continues to commit its resources to undoing the strategic damage caused by a few in that incident.

Impact on Future Army Culture. The final and perhaps most devastating impact of the Army's manning decisions could take years to materialize. It's the impact on future Army culture and its ability to attract new members. Peter Senge warns in his book, *The Fifth Discipline*, that today's problems come from yesterday's solutions.⁵⁵ What Senge had in mind was a view on systems thinking where each part of a particular system has an impact on other parts of the same system. Systems thinking, according to Senge, is a discipline for seeing wholes; it is a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things; for seeing patterns of change.⁵⁶

The consequences of the Army's manning decisions could show up in a new culture where less is expected of soldiers allowed to enter the Army and to remain in the Army, due to concessions. Exacerbating the problem is the possibility that lower-level commanders might choose not to enforce discipline appropriate for the situation for fear of being overruled by higher-level commanders. Ironically, an increase in the number of undesirable soldiers means there will likely be a corresponding increase in situations that require disciplinary actions. The morally-straight and professional image the Army worked so hard to establish for itself could give way to an image of tolerant rehabilitation instead. Given the inherent difficulties of recruiting new members, due in part by the

perceived culture and reputation of the Army, this is an image the Army cannot afford to maintain.

The Way Ahead

To its credit, the Army has started a number of new initiatives to ameliorate some of the risks associated with bringing in more recruits who were once considered unqualified to serve. For example, at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, the Army recently began its own preparatory school where soldiers can earn their high school equivalency before entering basic training.⁵⁷ The Army has also incorporated more values training in its training curriculum for new recruits and recently began mandating annual ethics training for all soldiers.

The Army can avoid having to resort to such controversial methods in the future by restructuring itself now to create a more robust Active Component. The manning crisis was created in part, by an Active Component structure that left out certain unique capabilities needed to support enduring operations. For example, the Army has a number of units designed specifically to handle long-term detention of enemy prisoners of war; however, they are all assigned to the Reserve Component. The Army should transfer some of these units into the Active Component to ensure future operational requirements are adequately sourced without having to rely on mobilization of the Reserves.

Another thing the Army must do is protect its reputation as a professional institution in order to attract the nation's best people. The current recruiting challenges could be based upon a lingering perception that the Army sits on the bottom tier of the Military Services when it comes to prestige.⁵⁸ The inclusion of more undesirable

soldiers does not help. If the Army is to turn this around, it must get back to standards and ensure more congruence between its espoused and enacted values.

Conclusion

Senior Army executives have sought to shape Army culture for as long as the Army has existed and over the years, “violations of the heart” were perceived as increasingly more vile and offensive. This is why it seems so ironic that the Army recently relaxed its manning practices to allow for the inclusion of more individuals who, for character flaws alone, were once denied entry. While the full impact of the Army’s manning decisions remains to be seen, there is emerging evidence that these decisions are having a negative affect on the Army. The upswing in crime, the resources committed to replacing recruits who fail to make it through training, and the replacement of soldiers who fail to make it through their first term of enlistment, all provide evidence that the recent changes may not be in the best interest of the Army.

While supporting two wars in addition to other enduring operational requirements, the Army stretched itself almost to a breaking point. The subsequent expansion of the Army was based upon a manning strategy that valued quantity over quality. While throwing homosexuals out, the Army began to bring gang members and high school drop outs in. Additionally, while espousing to remain a professional values-based force, the Army changed its own rules in a way that makes it appear less than professional. Organizations accomplish their tasks through people; therefore, it is people in whom the Army should most heavily invest. That means sticking to the values that attracted so many in the past. This is especially true if the United States is not only to win the Global War on Terrorism, but secure the long term peace as well.

Endnotes

¹ James N. Mattis and Frank Hoffman, "Future Warfare: The Rise of Hybrid Wars," *Proceedings*, November 2005, U.S. Army War College Selected Readings, Academic Year 2009, *Theater Strategy and Campaigning*, Vol. I, (Carlisle Barracks, 2008), 4-25.

² Jeff Russell, *Understanding and Changing Your Organizational Behavior: Tools for Practice*, (Madison, WI: Russell Consulting Group, Incorporated, 2006), 7, http://www.mkemarketplace.com/shrm/content/Understanding_and_Changing_Your_Culture.pdf (accessed February 20, 2009).

³ Robert Roetzel, "Toward the Army's Ethical System," in *Leadership: Organizational Perspectives*, (Fort Leavenworth: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2001), L2-12.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., L2-16.

⁶ U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Leadership: Competent, Confident, and Agile*, Field Manual 6-22 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, October 12, 2006), 4-2.

⁷ Ibid., 4-2, 4-3.

⁸ Stephen J. Gerrass, Leonard Wong, and Charles D. Allen, "Organizational Culture: Applying a hybrid model to the U.S. Army," U.S. Army War College Selected Readings, Academic Year 2009, *Strategic Leadership*, (Carlisle Barracks, 2008), 242.

⁹ U.S. Department of the Army, *Drug Testing During Deployments*, ALARACT 141/2008, (Washington, D.C: U.S. Department of the Army, June 4, 2008).

¹⁰ Pete Geren and George W. Casey, *America's Army: The Strength of the Nation*, A Statement on the Posture of the United States Army, Fiscal Year 2008, Posture Statement presented to the 110th Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, 2008), 4.

¹¹ Ibid., 4.

¹² Anonymous, "Brigade Unit of Action," Global Security, February 6, 2006, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/army/bua.htm>, (accessed September 28, 2008).

¹³ Jimmy McConico. Based upon personal observations and intuition of Lieutenant Colonel Jimmy L. McConico who has served as the Military Police Organizational Integrator, Headquarters, U.S. Army Forces Command from June 2002 to December 2004. In this capacity, he was the primary manager for the Army's operational Military Police units stationed in the Continental United States with responsibilities for sourcing military police units against the Army's global operational requirements.

¹⁴ Geren and Casey, *America's Army: The Strength of our Nation*, 6.

¹⁵ Anonymous, "Army Leaders Plan to Add 74,000 Soldiers by 2010," *The Washington Post*, (October 10, 2007): A8 in ProQuest (accessed October 21, 2008).

¹⁶ U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Unit Attrition Management*, ALARACT Message 122, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, November 13, 2002), 1.

¹⁷ Anonymous Editor, "Around the Army," *Army Times*, December 1, 2008, 9.

¹⁸ Anonymous, "Service Members Legal Defense Network; Army's Continued Use of 'Stop Loss' Policy Reveals Failure of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell,'" *Defense and Aerospace Week*, (November 12, 2008): 71, in ProQuest (accessed November 12, 2008).

¹⁹ Douglas Holtz-Eakin, *The Impact of Recruiting and Retention on Future Army End Strength: An Interim Report*, (Washington, DC: Congressional Budget Office, November 30, 2005), 8.

²⁰ U.S. Department of Defense, *Qualification Standards for Enlistment, Appointment, and Induction*, Department of Defense Directive 1304.26 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, September 30, 2005), 7.

²¹ Josh White, "Army Off Target on Recruits," *The Washington Post*, January 23, 2008, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/22/AR2008012203326.html>, (accessed November 14, 2008).

²² Bryan Bender, "Army Misses Diploma Goal for Recruits," *The Early Bird*, October 20, 2008, <http://ebird.osd.mil/ebfiles/e20081020635216.html>, (accessed October 27, 2008).

²³ White, "Army Off Target on Recruits,"

²⁴ Greg Jaffe, "To Fill Ranks, Army Acts to Retain Even Problem Enlistees," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 3, 2005, http://online.wsj.com/public/article/0,,SB111776400852250138-rYue9OsHO9i0IaNz4uApoo5WJ80_20060603,00.html?mod=tff_main_tff_top#MEMO (accessed February 9, 2009).

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Anonymous, "Military Recruiting 2007: Army Misses Benchmarks by Greater Margin," *National Priorities Project*, <http://www.nationalpriorities.org/militaryrecruiting2007>, (accessed February 18, 2009).

²⁷ Fred Kaplan, "GI Schmo: How low can the Army go?," *Slate*, January 9, 2006, <http://www.slate.com/id/2133908/>, (accessed December 11, 2008).

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ U.S. Department of Defense, *Qualification Standards for Enlistment, Appointment, and Induction*, 9.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Rick Maze, "Rise in Moral Waivers Troubles Lawmaker," *Army Times*, February 20, 2007, <http://www.armytimes.com/news/2007/02/apWaivedRecruits070213/>, (accessed February 9, 2009).

³³ U.S. Army Criminal Investigations Division Command Quarterly Review and Analysis brief to the Commanding General for 2d Quarter, Fiscal Year 2008, obtained by Jimmy L. McConico, October 15, 2008.

³⁴ Yochi J. Dreazen, "Currents—Crime: Rate of Sexual Assault in Army prompts an Effort at Prevention," *The Wall Street Journal (Eastern Edition)*, October 3, 2008: A17, in ProQuest (accessed October 21, 2008).

³⁵ National Gang Intelligence Center, "Gang- Related activity in the US Armed Forces Increasing," January 12, 2007, http://militarytimes.com/static/projects/pages/ngic_gangs.pdf, (accessed January 20, 2008).

³⁶ Ibid., 5.

³⁷ Ibid., 8.

³⁸ Ibid., 7.

³⁹ U.S. Department of the Army, Army Unit Attrition Management, 1.

⁴⁰ Jaffe, "To Fill Ranks, Army Acts to Retain Even Problem Enlistees," 3.

⁴¹ Jimmy L. McConico. Based upon personal observations and intuition of Lieutenant Colonel Jimmy L. McConico who has served more than 21 years in the U.S. Army and recently completed a two year tour as a battalion commander with the Army's Criminal Investigations Division Command.

⁴² Bill Tice, "'Up or out' rules eased," *Army Times*, December 1, 2008, 10.

⁴³ Rick Maze, "Ordered stop-loss payouts still undelivered," *Army Times*, December 8, 2008.

⁴⁴ Anonymous, "Rep. Sutton Leads Successful Effort to Compensate Soldiers Affected by Stop-Loss," *U.S. Federal News Service, Including U.S. State News*, July 30, 2008: in ProQuest (accessed November 12, 2008).

⁴⁵ John White, "Soldiers Facing Extended Tours: Critics of Army Policy Liken It to a Draft," *The Washington Post*, June 3, 2004, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A10961-2004Jun2.html>, (accessed January 20, 2009).

⁴⁶ Julian E. Barnes, "Army 'Stop Loss' orders up dramatically over last year; The jump coincides with the extension of combat tours," *Los Angeles Times*, May 9, 2008: in ProQuest (accessed November 12, 2009).

⁴⁷ Don M. Snider and Lloyd W. Matthews, *The Future of the Army Profession*, (Boston Burr Ridge, IL: McGraw-Hill, 2005), 41.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 43-44

⁴⁹ Clark A. Murdock, "Goldwater-Nichols Scorecard," in *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: Defense Reform for a New Strategic Era* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies), 14.

⁵⁰ Snyder, and Matthews, *The Future of the Army Profession*, 44

⁵¹ Victor Lee, "Legislation Would Allow Open Homosexuals in Military," *The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission*, March 6, 2007, <http://erlc.com/article/legislation-would-allow-open-homosexuals-in-military/>, (accessed January 20, 2009).

⁵² Erin Donar, Representative Sutton Issues Statement on Army's Continued Use of Stop Loss, *U.S. Federal News Service*, October 27, 2008: in ProQuest (accessed November 12, 2008).

⁵³ Geren and Casey, *America's Army: The Strength of our Nation*, 4.

⁵⁴ U.S. Department of the Army, *Operations*, Field Manual 3-0 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, February 2008), 1-19.

⁵⁵ Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Science of the Learning Organization* (New York, NY: Double Day Currency, 1990), 57

⁵⁶ Ibid., 68

⁵⁷ Bryan Bender, "Army misses Diploma Goal for Recruits," *The Early Bird*, October 20, 2008, <http://ebird.osd.mil/ebfiles/e20081020635216.html> (accessed October 27, 2008).

⁵⁸ Jimmy L. McConico. Based upon personal observations, experiences, and intuition of Lieutenant Colonel Jimmy L. McConico who has more than 21 years of experience with the U.S. Army. Lieutenant Colonel McConico has spoken on multiple occasions at schools and community groups across America where he's made an informal assessment of the perception of the Armed Forces among America's young people.