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The Challenge of Meeting the Needs of Our Active and Reserve Military

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Executive Summary

The ability to provide the skilled military personnel necessary for modern warfighting is the most important single measure of US military capability. People cannot simply be paid for and produced, they have to be motivated and committed. They also have to be retained on a career basis. The history of modern war has also shown that technology is not a substitute for the ability of all ranks to adapt and deal with the unexpected. In case after case in the Gulf War, Afghan conflict, and Iraq War -- as in previous wars -- it was the ability of skilled military professional to work around the limits of weaponry, technology, and information systems that led to success.

The US experience in Iraq has, however, raised serious questions about the adequacy of the total pool of active and reserve US military personnel. For decades, US strategy has talked about how many wars US forces should be able to fight at or near the same time. In the process, the US has gone from 2.5 theater wars to two major regional contingencies. Now, according to the 2006 QDR, it is supposed to size its forces for two wars of undefined character, size, intensity, and duration that may include irregular long wars and conventional campaigns. There is a new emphasis on asymmetric warfare, but no indication that the US will need less military capability.

At some point, the US must go further and must honestly address its real requirements for active and reserve end strength. This is an issue that the Department of Defense has largely dodged by assuming that changes in the US force posture, changes in the mix of military personnel, and advances in technology and organization will allow the US to meet its needs with its existing military manpower pool.

Any discussion of military manpower must be prefaced with the fact that the men and women in uniform face fundamentally different burdens and risks. They face the burden of having to follow the career path set by the service, living with constant moves and relocations, and facing long deployments away from home and family. The risks they face can be measured in several different ways. The most obvious is the number of casualties. At the same time, it is the overall pattern of strain on the men and women in uniform that is the measure of US ability to recruit and retain the personnel it needs. Such strains are hard to measure, but the data available raise serious questions as to whether the US has a large enough pool of actives and reserves to implement its strategy in an era that mixes the risk of serious regional contingencies with “long wars” of attrition.

The Iraq War did more than create recruiting and retention problems. It showed that the pool of mission-capable active and reserve forces the US could draw upon when the war began forced it to overdeploy large elements of both its active and reserve forces. The US government may be able to violate its unwritten social contract under conditions where the military believes the war is so existential and threatening to the nation that personnel will make any sacrifice. Iraq, however, is clearly an optional conflict, and one in which military personnel are paying for major problems in our force structure.

Forced retention had to be mixed with multiple rotations. Stop-loss, which was originally envisaged to keep well-trained soldiers during this period of war, is now largely perceived as a means to keep troop levels high enough while recruitment numbers are down. Using stop-loss to keep military personnel on for longer than their eight-year commitment is a serious breach of faith in the promise made to a professional force.

The combination of the Total Force Concept and a force structure that emphasized battles against conventional military forces ensured that US deployment problems were much worse, and that

US forces were poorly structured to deal with different types of conflict. Critical units like intelligence, military police, combat, combat support, and combat service support forces were placed in the reserve component to be drawn upon as a "surge force." The Total Force Policy drew both the Guard and Reserves into the fight at high rates of deployment, but it was soon apparent that such a system could not be sustained over the longer-term. Rank-and-file personnel expressed their dissatisfaction with the model through attrition while recruiting numbers began to show muted enthusiasm for participation in both the Active and Reserve Components.

The Iraq War has forced the US to restructure the assignments and skills of the manpower pool in both the active and reserve components, and seek to create a much more flexible force structure that emphasized "modularity" and tailoring the deployed force to the mission, rather than conventional war fighting. The Department of Defense has had to make an urgent effort to restructure its force posture to make its forces more deployable, shift men and women into specialties needed for the wars the US now has to fight, and seek more lasting solutions to reducing the strain on both the active and reserve components likely to be called up in long wars.

There is a clear need to reorganize the nature and balance of the active and reserve forces, but this is a requirement that the Department of Defense has recognized without yet offering clear solutions. There is no present basis for determining how the DOD will ultimately adjust the active-reserve mix, although it is clear that major adjustments are needed. No service as yet seems to have comprehensively defined how its reserve forces should be structured, manned, and equipped. It is clear, however, that finding a new balance for the active and reserve components must be linked to more realistic budgetary planning and allocation, and clear perceptions of future threats.

The most serious issue is that whatever is done to reform and restructure the military manpower pool must provide *both the necessary quality and the necessary quantity*. The US must size and fund the key elements of its manpower pool accordingly. It must carry out force transformation in ways that make the burden of service acceptable in "non-existential wars." The active and reserve components must be large enough so that contingency planning and actual war fighting can realistically deploy forces in ways that honor the unwritten social contract that makes an all-volunteer force possible.

The Iraq War is a warning that the US needs enough military manpower to fight all of the kinds of wars it may face, and meet all of its strategic commitments. Planning on technology, the ability to predict the nature of future conflicts, and improvements in individual manpower quality is only meaningful if every element is fully implemented. If any element falls short, the only answer is more men and women in uniform, and at least one element -- US procurement plans -- cannot be implemented in anything like the way that current plans call for.

As a result, the greatest single uncertainty in current military manpower plans seems to be the idea that the US can solve its manpower problems with the same or smaller number of men and women in uniform. Increasing active and reserve end strength is not cheap. However, current plans may well rely too heavily on force restructuring to solve these problems without providing a realistic analysis of whether the total military manpower pool is adequate, and of the cost-benefits of increasing the manpower pool in the various active and reserve components. Policy seems to be designed around the thesis that force restructuring and rebalancing will work because they need to work if the US is to keep defense spending within anything approaching its current limits -- and pay for the technology that is being given higher priority than manpower quantity and quality.

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Introduction

Dollars are only one measure of overstretch, and of US ability to develop and sustain an effective strategy and force posture. Military manpower is another basic measure of the strains of the US force posture, and one that raises equally serious questions about the viability of US strategy, and whether the US has enough resources to avoid a critical degree of "overstretch."

The ability to provide the skilled military personnel necessary for modern warfighting is the most important single measure of US military capability. People cannot simply be paid for and produced, they have to be motivated and committed. They also have to be retained on a career basis. The history of modern war has also shown that technology is not a substitute for the ability of all ranks to adapt and deal with the unexpected. In case after case in the Gulf War, Afghan conflict, and Iraq War -- as in previous wars -- it was the ability of skilled military professional to work around the limits of weaponry, technology, and information systems that led to success.

Furthermore, the history of modern military technology is the history of pushing human skills to new limits, not reducing work burdens or training requirement. Each new weapon and system requires more advanced training, more experience to make use of its new capabilities, higher levels of maintenance, and more effort at system integration. The areas where workloads are reduced are offset by new tasks or personnel cuts that end in increasing the need for personnel quality.

Technology can be a powerful aid for "boots on the ground" and qualified personnel, but it is a miserable substitute for adequate numbers of trained soldiers. Machines cannot interface with allies, they cannot translate, they cannot develop human contacts and intelligence, and they cannot patrol the streets or discern between insurgents and terrorists and the normal population.

The US experience in Iraq has, however, raised serious questions about the adequacy of the total pool of active and reserve US military personnel. For decades, US strategy has talked about how many wars US forces should be able to fight at or near the same time. In the process, the US has gone from 2.5 theater wars to two major regional contingencies. Now, according to the 2006 QDR, it is supposed to size its forces for two wars of undefined character, size, intensity, and duration that may include irregular long wars and conventional campaigns. There is a new emphasis on asymmetric warfare, but no indication that the US will need less military capability.

The reality is, however, that for more than a half a century, the US has maintained a pool of military personnel and human skills suitable to fight one serious, enduring major regional or theater conflict. This was clear during Korea and Vietnam and throughout the Cold War. The US could not fight one major theater conflict without critically weakening its capability to fight a theater war in Europe. At the time of the Gulf War, in 1990-1991, the US had to deploy nearly 100% of its pool of many key categories of military forces and manpower.

The Iraq War has brought this gap between manpower and strategy to a head. It has become an unexpected war of attrition, and one that the US never designed its force posture to fight, Deploying peaks of far less than 200,000 men and women has put a major strain on the ability of the present US force structure and pool of military manpower to sustain even one major regional contingency. Moreover, the US has had to deploy and redeploy critical parts of its uniformed manpower to Iraq and Afghanistan in ways that have violated the implied "social contract" that led many men and women to join and stay in the all-volunteer force.

The military repercussions of these strains are all too apparent. An annual risk assessment conducted by Gen. Richard B. Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in 2005 reported that

if the United States were to engage in a new war, it would be at a higher risk of not defeating the enemy as quickly as it previously could.[1] Such short-term assessments, however, do not address emerging longer-term requirements. The US must find ways to restructure its force posture to reduce the strains new types of wars are putting on military manpower. It must find ways to reduce the overdeployment of part of its forces and viable incentives to recruit and retain an all-volunteer force structure for what may be an era of long wars. It must find a new balance between its active and reserve components, and simultaneously reorganize its manpower to provide new skills. Some of these changes are underway, but many are still at the conceptual stage or raise serious issues about practicality and affordability.

At some point, the US must go further and must honestly address its real requirements for active and reserve end strength. This is an issue that the Department of Defense has largely dodged by assuming that changes in the US force posture, changes in the mix of military personnel, and advances in technology and organization will allow the US to meet its needs with its existing military manpower pool.

The FY2007 budget calls for personnel cuts and not increases. While it does raise the amount of money programmed for military personnel by 4%, it puts a much higher emphasis on procurement (+8%) and readiness (operations and maintenance rises by 9.4%). The rise in spending for military personnel does little more than handle pay raises and previous increases in benefits. At the same time, the Iraq War has exposed a host of other problems in the way the US deals with military personnel, only some of which are as yet being addressed.

The Human Cost of War

Any discussion of military manpower must be prefaced with the fact that the men and women in uniform face fundamentally different burdens and risks. They face the burden of having to follow the career path set by the service, living with constant moves and relocations, and facing long deployments away from home and family. The risks they face can be measured in several different ways. The most obvious is the number of casualties. At the same time, it is the overall pattern of strain on the men and women in uniform that is the measure of US ability to recruit and retain the personnel it needs. Such strains are hard to measure, but the data available raise serious questions as to whether the US has a large enough pool of actives and reserves to implement its strategy in an era that mixes the risk of serious regional contingencies with "long wars" of attrition.

The most direct cost of war, and the highest level of sacrifice, is paid in human blood:

- Figure 1 shows total US casualties in Iraq from March 2003 to October 20. The data reveal how unpredictable the cycles in casualties have been, and the fact that the "war after the war" in Iraq has but far more strain on US manpower than did defeating Iraq's conventional forces and driving Saddam Hussein from power.
- Figure 2 shows overall casualty patterns as of September 20, 2005. The data lend further evidence that the war after the war has had a significant impact on US operations in terms of killed and wounded.
- Figure 3 shows trends in US casualties by month, March 2003 - October 2005. While emphasis is often placed in killed-in-action casualties, the data show the significant numbers of wounded in Iraq. Such casualties can also bear significantly on recruiting and retention scenarios.
- Figure 4 provides data on some of the follow-on effects of combat for troops returning from action. While not counted among the casualty figures, troops with returning home with emotional stress -- often leading to problems in personal/familial relationships -- can stand as a barrier to recruiting and retention efforts.

These sacrifices inevitably have a powerful impact on the relatively small percentage of men and women who now assume all of the risk in defending America's national security. As of January 2006, 2,236 US troops had been killed in Iraq. As of January 12, the DOD had placed the number of wounded in action at 16,420, with 7,625 – nearly half – shown as "wounded-did not return within 72 hours." These figures show the severity of injuries suffered in Iraq, where frequent IED and other attacks result in traumas that, in a past era, would have resulted in death.[2]

Figure 4 shows that warfighting places strains on men and women who serve in combat who are not killed and wounded. In some ways, these figures are a more important warning of the need to maintain a large enough pool of military personnel to avoid overdeployment than are the casualty data in Figures 1-3. There is no way to compare the stress placed on US soldiers in previous wars to the strains that exist today.

No serious effort was made in past wars to gather reliable data on stress and psychological impact on the overall pool of personnel deployed. There were certainly large-scale desertions and cases of what came to be called "shell shock" from the revolutionary war through the civil war. In World War I, World War II, and Korea, however, every effort was made to downplay and minimize such diagnosis, and such cases were overshadowed by the number killed in combat, the number who died of physical disease and other causes, and the number who were physically sick.

Psychological stress only became a major, high-profile issue in Vietnam. Morale, drug, and race problems were given far more attention, and the manpower pool was still based on a short-service national draft.

The Gulf War was the first conflict that exposed the psychological and physical problems that could characterize an all-volunteer force structure, but it was initially seen as a short-deployment war that would have little lasting psychological or physical impact. No real effort was made to conduct medical surveys of the entire pool of men and women involved, and -- like post traumatic stress disorder in Vietnam -- it took years for the US military to treat "Gulf War syndrome" as a serious problem. Even today, the data on "Gulf War syndrome" are so uncertain in terms of cause, nature, and effect that they flag a problem they cannot characterize or measure.

If nothing else, Figures 1-4 make it clear that "overstretch" involves far more than force numbers and defense spending. It is clear that wounds dominate the human cost of war in an era of extraordinary military medical services, and that even those who do not receive any physical injury pay a price that extends far beyond their time in theater. At the same time, it is important to note that it may be years, and take several future wars, to determine just how much stress direct and indirect psychological and physical problems put on US military manpower, and what kind of manpower pool and deployment cycles are sustainable in recruiting and retaining an all-volunteer force structure.

Figure 5 is a warning of just how different the present is from the past. The primary source of death in most of America's wars was disease not combat. While no clear data are available on non-combat deaths in many of America's earlier wars, diaries, contemporary news reports, and all historical sources agree that this was true from the revolutionary war through World War I. (The figures for World War I would show radically higher non-combat deaths if flu deaths during demobilization were counted.)

The counts of wounded sharply understate actual wounded through at least the Spanish-American War. Either no data are available, or only the very seriously wounded are counted.

Those who received treatment and returned to service are generally not counted until at least World War I, and some such wounds were not counted through at least the Vietnam conflict. It is clear from various histories, however, that the ratio of killed relative to combat wounded was far higher through the civil war than afterwards because of the lack of adequate medical treatment. The ratio of wounded to killed rose steadily as medical care improved, but has altered since Vietnam because of better protection and armor.

The burden or risk imposed by combat has also varied sharply in major wars. Almost all of America's early wars relied on volunteers. During the Civil War, and from World War I through Vietnam, the manpower pool was based largely on the draft -- or the threat of being drafted combined with patriotism and career interest. This makes it almost impossible to use most previous wars as a measure of the burden casualties place on an all-volunteer force.

The Gulf War was too short to provide a model of the burdens and risks that would emerge with the mix of "long wars," regional conflicts, and crisis-driven missions the US now projects for the future. The Iraq War will provide more useful data once sufficient time is available to measure its overall impact. It may well be the first war in which the US has reliable data on the longer-term psychological and physical costs -- or casualties -- of war. It still, however, may be an atypical data point.

The US faces the prospect of putting an all-volunteer force structure through one to two decades of repeated combat deployments that depend on high levels of retention in the face of both significant casualties and serious lasting psychological and physical aftereffects. It is easy to speculate about what this means in terms of its impact on the all-volunteer force structure and the men and women who serve in it, but psychobabble and sociological jargon will remain psychobabble and sociological jargon until far more data are available than are available today.

The Issue of Ethics and Morality

There are a number of different ways to reduce the burden and risk faced by the US military, but the following options still leave open the question of the ethics of relying on an all-volunteer force structure that pays a small number of Americans to take on the highest single burden and responsibility of citizenship.

Today, only 0.08 % of Americans serve in the military -- the lowest percentage of the population serving under arms in a century. This compares with just over 4% of the population serving in the military during Vietnam.[3] Moreover the percentage of veterans who bring military experience to American politics and the other elements of civil society continues to fall precipitously. Today's soldiers are certainly citizens, but most of today's citizens not only are not soldiers, they have little practical knowledge of just how different military life is and must be. If Vietnam presented the risk that Americans might become involved in the wrong war as a nation, Iraq presents the risk that Americans may pay for the sacrifices of other men's sons and daughters with less concern than if they were their own.

Yet, it is far from clear that there is a good alternative. In 2003, Senator Fritz Hollings and Congressman Charles Rangel introduced the Universal National Service Act, calling for the reinstitution of the draft. The bill would have reinstituted the procedures for registration, selection, and induction from the prior conscription act -- the Military Selective Service Act -- with the exception that the new bill called for all "persons" (to include women) to perform a period of military or civilian service to further national defense and homeland security, with the draft age set at between the ages of 18 and 26.

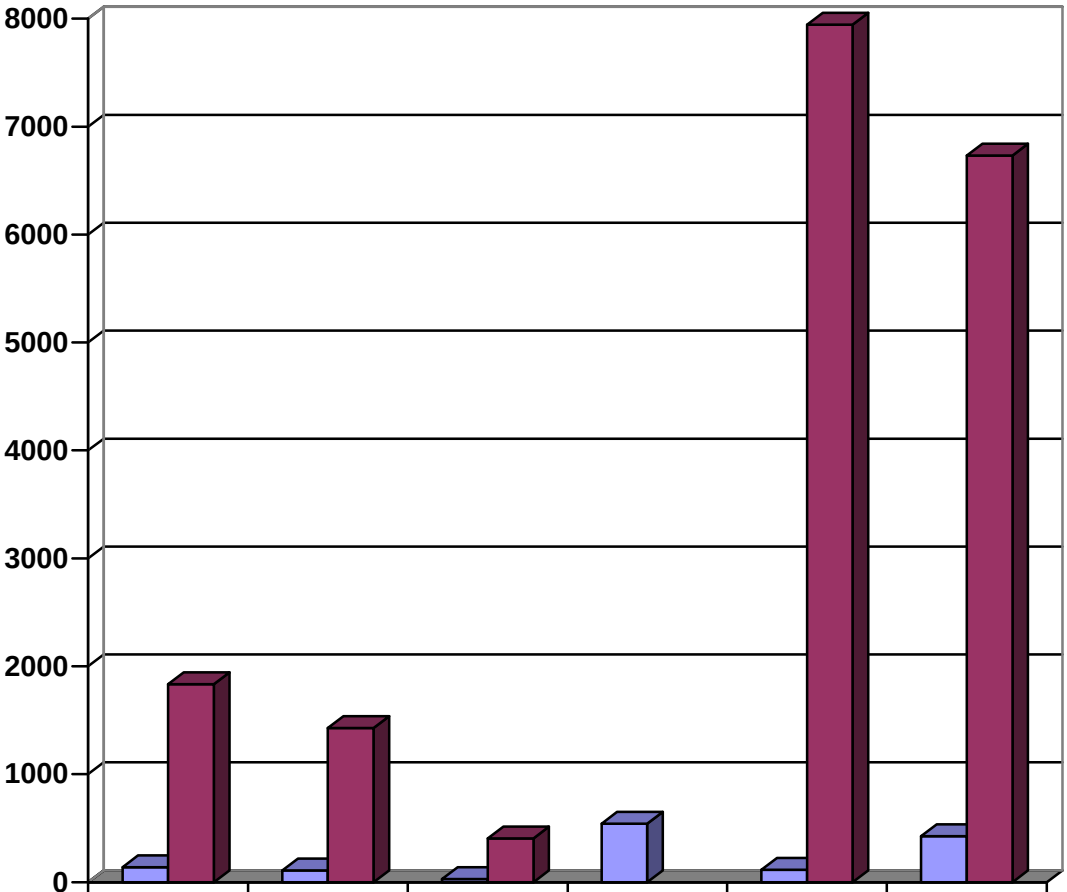
The problem is that no form of the draft seems to be an answer to today's military needs or the problem of sharing the burden of military service. Returning to the draft in an era of non-existential wars, where there is no apparent threat to the national existence of the US, would mean flooding a professional military with unwilling, inexperienced, short-service personnel.

Such draftees would have such a short "life cycle" in terms of skill levels and short tours of duty as to make them unsuitable for any demanding military task. They could not be true members of the kind of military team needed in modern warfighting, and diverting the truly professional military to train and command them would create a new burden that could offset much of their value even in less demanding roles.

Fixing the current system is not an answer to the deeper question of the ethics and morality of paying a small portion of citizens to take the highest burden of citizenship. The fact remains, however, that the US has long done this in law enforcement and emergency response, and simply may not have any practical alternative. A paid, all-volunteer force may not be ethically and morally desirable from a societal viewpoint, but it may well be functionally inevitable.

Figure 1

Total US Casualties in Iraq (Department of Defense Count as of October 20, 2005)

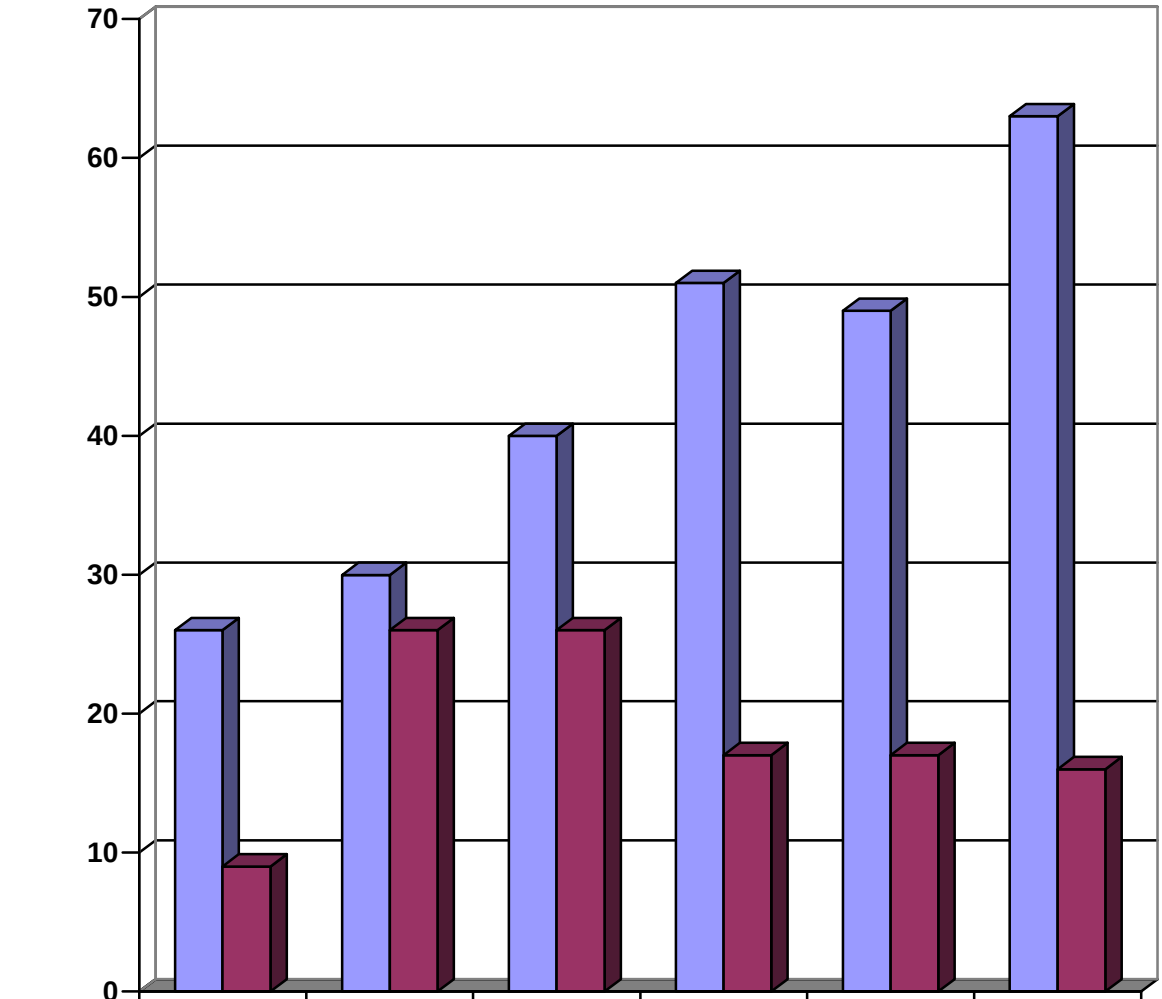


	Total Deaths	Killed in Action	Non-Hostile Deaths	Total Wounded	Wounded-Return to Duty	Wounded-Can't Return to Duty
Combat 19/3-30/4 03	139	109	30	542	116	426
1 May O3 Onwards	1833	1427	406		7945	6733

Source: Department of Defense --Defenselink. Wounded-Can't return to Duty is defined as a casualty serious enough so that the person involved cannot return to duty within 72 hours. Does not include over 8,000 American military who had to leave the theater because of injuries and disease, State Department and other government civilians, or US contract personnel. The totals also do not include 97 British soldiers and 101 other Coalition allied military killed in Iraq as of this date.

Figure 2

Overall Casualty Patterns (MNSTC-I Estimate of Daily Killed and Wounded as of September 20, 2005)

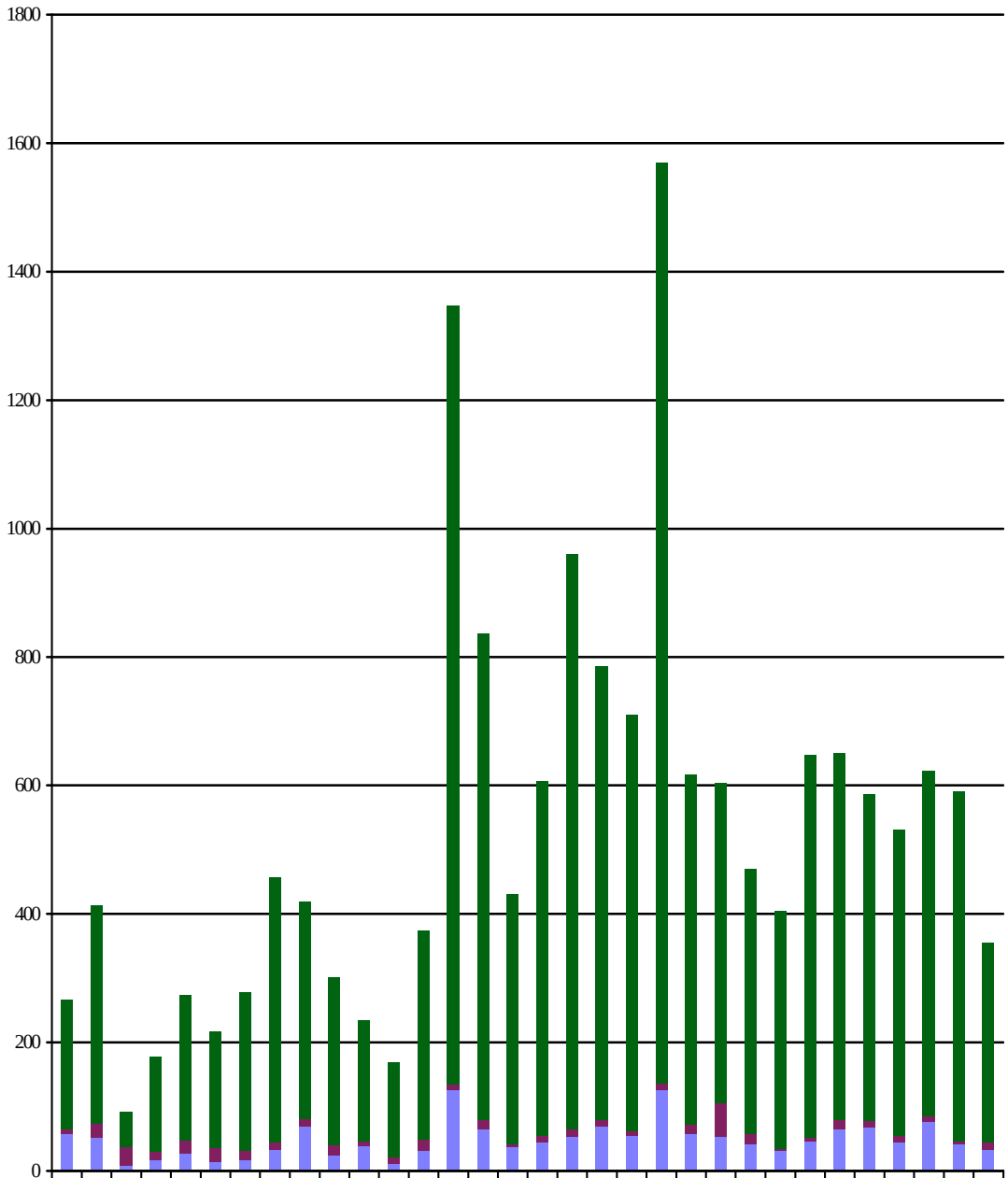


	Baseline 1 Jan 04 - 31 Mar 04	Pre-Soverignty 1 Apr 04- 28 Jun 04	Sovereignty 29 Jun 04 - 26 Nov 04	Election 27 Nov 04 - 11 Feb 05	Pre-Constitution 12 Feb 05 - 28	Referendum 29 August - 16 sep 05
Iraqi	26	30	40	51	49	63
Coalition	9	26	26	17	17	16

Source: Department of Defense --Defenselink.

Figure 3

Trends in Total US Casualties by Month: March 2003 – October 2005

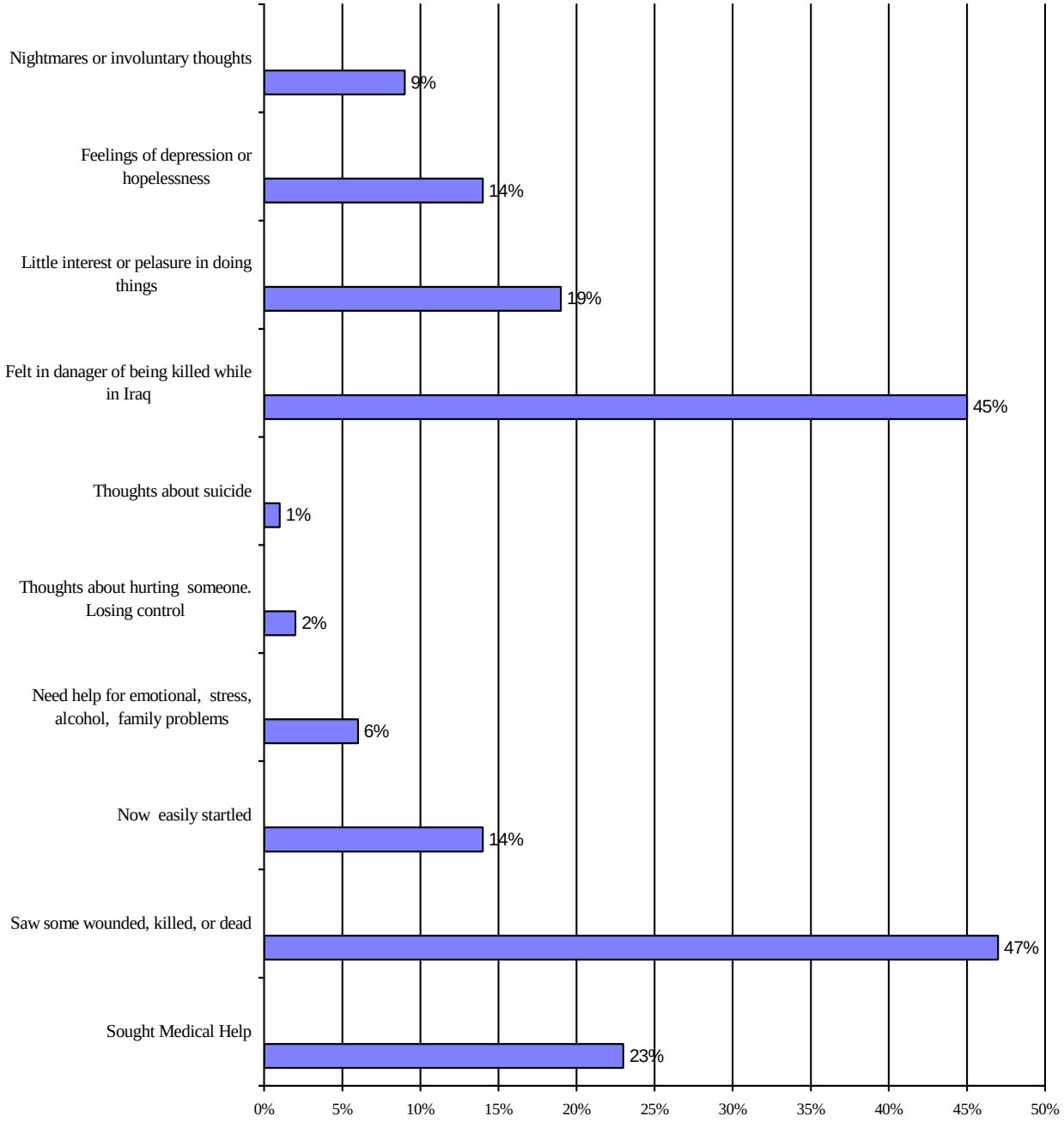


	-3 Mar	-3 Apr	-3 May	-3 Jun	-3 Jul	-3 Aug	-3 Sep	-3 Oct	-3 Nov	-3 Dec	-4 Jan	-4 Feb	-4 Mar	-4 Apr	-4 May	-4 Jun	-4 Jul	-4 Aug	-4 Sep	-4 Oct	-4 Nov	-4 Dec	-5 Jan	-5 Feb	-5 Mar	-5 Apr	-5 May	-5 Jun	-5 Jul	-5 Aug	-5 Sep	-5 Oct
WIA	202	340	55	147	226	181	247	413	337	261	189	148	324	121	757	389	552	895	706	648	143	544	498	413	370	595	571	508	477	537	544	311
Other Deaths	7	23	29	13	20	22	14	11	12	16	7	9	19	9	16	5	10	12	11	7	11	15	53	16	4	7	14	10	9	8	5	12
KIA	58	51	8	17	27	14	17	33	70	24	39	12	31	126	64	37	44	53	69	55	126	57	53	42	31	45	65	68	45	77	42	33

Source: Prepared by the Defense Manpower Data Center, Statistical Information Analysis Division.

Figure 4

The Impact of the Iraq War on Returning US Forces



Source: USA Today: October 19, 2005, pp. 1 and 11. Based on Department of Defense Post-Deployment Health Assessment survey of 193,131 personnel.

Figure 5

US Military Casualties in Major Wars

War/Conflict	Number Serving	Total Deaths		Battle Deaths		Other Deaths		Non-Mortal Wounds	
		Number	% of Those Serving	Number	% of Those Serving	Number	% of Those Serving	Number	% of Those Serving
Revolutionary: 1775-1783	184,000-250,000	4,435		4,435		NA		6,188	
War of 1812 1812-1815	286,730	2,260		2,260		NA		4,505	
Mexican War 1846-1848	78,718	13,283		1,733		11,550		4,152	
Civil War (Union) 1861-1865	2,213,363	364,511		140,414		224,097		281,881	
Spanish American Apr-Aug 1898	306,760	2,446		385		2,061		1,662	
World War I 1917-1918	4,734,991	116,516		53,402		63,114		204,002	
World War II 1941-1946	16,112,566	405,399		291,557		113,842		671,846	
Korean War 1950-1953	5,720,000	36,574		33,741		2,833		103,824	
Vietnam Conflict 1964-1972	8,744,000	58,209		47,424		10,785		153,303	
Persian Gulf War 1990-1991	2,225,000	382		147		235		467	

Note: Many data through the Spanish American War are uncertain. Does not include Confederate casualties. DOD estimates that 600,000 - 1,500,000 served in Confederate forces. Some 133,821 died (74,524 battle and 59,297 other. An additional 26,000-31,000 died in Union prisons). Source: Adapted from "Principal Wars in Which the US Participated: US Military Personnel Serving and Casualties," Department of Defense, Defenselink, "Casualties," February 2006

Human Strain on the Overall US Force Posture

Once again, strategists and force planners also need to remember that Iraq is only one measure of how adequate the US force posture is to deal with other kinds of stress imposed by actual warfighting. The US could find itself in a simultaneous conflict in Korea or over the Taiwan Straits, or in a broader war in the Middle East. Nevertheless, the Iraq War has imposed enough strain on US military manpower to provide a clear warning that the US may need both a different force posture and a larger pool of manpower.

It is equally important to note that many of the data currently available may be misleading or be very hard to interpret. The men and women already in the active and reserve forces, and with some military experience, generally have a very high sense of mission. While surveys of their attitudes sometimes produce a long list of complaints, they often reenlist out of loyalty to their country, their service, or their unit and immediate companions. As a result, wartime retention data can be misleading. Those serving may be much more willing to leave once "their war" is over.

Recruiting data, in contrast can produce the opposite reaction. Those unfamiliar with military service may decline to enlist during war, or enlist in the military services seen as having lower risks, but this trend may end with the conflict. Various bonuses and incentives have a major impact on both retention and recruiting, and such incentives have increased sharply over time. This issue is compounded by racial issues, and that fact the military has been seen as a more beneficial a career path for some minorities in peacetime.

The Iraq War's Impact on Recruiting

So far, the Iraq War has had more impact on recruiting than retention. Most recruiting occurs among young men and women with little military experience, and who are heavily influenced by their parents, mentors, and peers.

The fact that the war has become steadily more unpopular has had an inevitable impact. In April of 2003, a CNN/Gallup poll reported that 73% of the American public believed that the war in Iraq was worthwhile and 23% did not. Two years later in May 2005 only 41% believed it was worthwhile and 57% believed it was not.[4]

While the trend in public opinion was not consistent, and varied according to the course of the war and the quality of the Administration's case for it, the trends were not favorable to either the war or recruiting:

- A June 2005 Gallup poll reported that the American people had more confidence in the US military than any other institution -- this, however, did not appear to translate into support for the war or a willingness of civilians to enlist.[5]

- In a July 2005 Gallup poll, 36% of Americans interviewed said that the United States should not have gone to war in Iraq *and* that a timetable should be set for withdrawal. Only 30% believed that the US should have gone to war *and* the troops should remain in Iraq as long as they are needed.[6]

- A Washington Post-ABC News poll released in early March 2006 showed that a majority of Americans – 80% -- believed that the Sunni/Shiite fighting in Iraq would lead to a civil war. 52% of those surveyed said that they believed the US should start withdrawing troops immediately. The number of respondents saying that they felt the US was making progress fell to 49%, down from 65% three months before.[7]

- From January 18 through February 14 2006, preliminary work began gauging the sentiment of US troops toward the war. Soldiers were questioned for a Le Moyne College/Zogby poll as to their outlook on future

US troops levels in Iraq. The poll included 944 military respondents interviewed at several undisclosed locations throughout Iraq. Though the utility of the poll as a barometer for sentiment was uncertain at the time of its release, some of the results were as follows:

- 58% said their mission was clear; 42% said the US role was hazy.
- 72% of troops surveyed said that US troops should exit the country within the following year: 29% of members of various services believed the US should leave immediately, 22% responded that troops should leave in the next six months, and 21% said that troops should leave between six and 12 months. 23% responded that troops should remain "as long as they are needed."
- Only 30% said that they thought the DOD had failed to provide adequate troop protection, such as body armor, munitions, and uparmoring for Humvees.[8]

- A CBS poll conducted in March 2006, showed that Americans had become increasingly pessimistic about the current predicament in Iraq as well as the future of US involvement:
  - More than seven in 10 Americans said that there was currently a civil war in Iraq, while 13% said that a civil war was likely to break out in the future.
  - Just 15% said that the US was likely to succeed in Iraq, down from 21% in January 2006. Another 36% said that success was somewhat likely, down from 42% in January. 47% said that it was either not very or not at all likely that the US would achieve success -- up from 35% just two months prior.
  - Half of the respondents felt that the government was not giving US troops in Iraq enough resources and military equipment to succeed.[9]

- World Public Opinion conducted a poll of 851Americans on Iraq from March 1-6, 2006. The following were among the results:[10]
  - Just 31% of respondents said it was a "war of necessity, that is, it was necessary for the defense of the United States." 67% held the view that it was a "war of choice, that is, some US interests and values were at stake, but it was not necessary for the defense of the United States."
  - 68% favored beginning to draw down US troops in Iraq. But only 26% thought that all troops should be withdrawn within 6 months. The percentage favoring reductions was up sharply from December 2004, when just 48% favored them.
  - Asked to assess the current situation in Iraq, 64% said the situation was getting worse, while just 36% said it is getting better. Asked to rate how confident they were that "the US intervention in Iraq will succeed" on a 0-10 scale, 58% gave a low confidence rating (0-4), while just 28% give a high confidence rating (6-10). The mean score was 3.97. These assessments showed a marked downward trend. There was an 11-point increase in those saying that the situation was getting worse as compared to October 2004, when 53% saw the situation getting worse and 46% saw it getting better.

The broad trends in public opinion do not necessarily affect recruiting, which draws on a much smaller base of the population. It has been clear, however, that the Iraq War is a land war of attrition and one that does not promise a rapid end. It has also been a war where most casualties occur in the Army and Marine Corps. Potential recruits found joining the Army and Marine Corps increasingly risky.

Analyzing the Trends in Recruiting in Detail

If one looks at recruiting during the Iraq War, some of the data have been ambiguous, but the trends have scarcely been good. Army recruiting and retention had not yet become a problem in terms of sheer numbers, but the recruiting trends were largely negative through 2005.

The Army did get 94% of its needed first term reenlistments in 2004, and 96% of its mid-career retentions, but the figures were bad for several months in 2004 and continued to drop off through

2005. The first quarter of FY2006, however, began to show signs of revitalization. New recruiting measures coupled with bonus increases were among the reasons sited for what appeared to be a rebound in recruiting numbers, in particular for the Army National Guard. Figure 6 shows recruitment goals and achievements for active Army and Army Reserves from 1990 to 2004.

Figure 6

Army Recruiting Goals/Achievements 1990 to 2004

Year	Active Army		Army Reserve	
	Mission	Accessions	Mission	Accessions
1990	87,000	88,617	56,767	57,357
1991	78,241	78,241	52,500	51,369
1992	75,000	77,583	52,923	52,829
1993	76,900	77,563	42,600	43,088
1994	68,000	68,063	40,000	40,681
1995	63,000	62,967	40,000	40,186
1996	73,400	73,528	43,197	38,440
1997	82,000	82,087	40,000	39,353
1998	72,550	71,749	40,600	37,050
1999	74,500	68,210	45,584	35,035
2000	80,000	80,113	41,961	42,086
2001	75,800	75,855	34,910	35,530
2002	79,500	79,604	28,825	31,319
2003	73,800	74,132	26,400	27,365
2004	77,000	77,587*	21,200	21,278*

* FY 2004 data as of 27 September 2004. Source: US Army.

Trends in 2004

By late September of 2004, reservists made up about 40% of the 140,000 troops serving in Iraq**.** These troops included 5,600 IRR soldiers called up in early July. Meanwhile reservist deployments were growing longer and longer. As a result, training periods became pinched due to the need to quickly deploy.

At the same time, stop-loss had become a greater issue. While the practice had been employed, to varying degrees, throughout the military services since 2001, leadership in certain reserve forces had begun to complain that the practice had begun to negatively impact on recruiting to the RC**.** Because stop-loss keeps personnel from leaving active duty, these personnel cannot be recruited to the National Guard and Reserves. Personnel leaving the AC has been a traditionally strong pool of recruiting to the RC.

A target of 56,000 new recruits for the Army National Guard in FY2004 fell short by 5,000, marking the first missed goal for Army National Guard since 1994. The 2004 ARNG recruiting goal from the AC was 8,000, with only 3,000 obtained. In late September of 2004, ARNG spokesman Scott Woodham stated that there were 5,000 potential recruits lost to stop-loss. While it is not clear that the entire 5,000-man shortfall can be directly linked to stop-loss practices in the AC, evidence did suggested a correlation.

The Army increased the available signing bonuses three times in 2004, from $15,000 to $20,000. There were major new incentives in terms of Army pay. Key veteran special operations troops got reenlistment bonuses of up to $150,000 for five-year re-enlistments for certain personnel.[11] Military pay, however, was still approximately 5% below average private sector pay, according to the Military Officers Association of America, an Alexandria, Va., group made up of 370,000 active and retired military officers and surviving spouses.[12]

Trends in 2005

By early 2005, the strain of meeting recruiting requirements had led to increases in the number of recruiting personnel in both the AC and RC Army. The Army National Guard was adding 1,400 new recruiters to its existing 2,700, bringing its force to 4,100 -- a rise of 38%. Other incentives being offered by the Guard included the following:[13]

- $15,000 bonus for new Guard recruits who have served in the military, triple the previous figure.
- $15,000 bonus for Guard soldiers who would re-enlist for six years, also three times the previous amount.
- $10,000 bonus for recruits who had never served in the military, up from $6,000 and the largest to-date bonus the Guard had offered to such recruits.

Stop-loss remained an issue as well, in both the AC and RC, with flagging recruiting numbers into FY2005. As of mid-October, 7,845 AC Army soldiers were under stop-loss orders and 13,578 Guard members had been "stop-lossed."

By the summer of 2005, one-third of the US total presence in Iraq was from the Guard -- roughly 45,000 troops. 8,000 Guardsmen were in Afghanistan.[14]As of late June 2005, seven of the Army's 15 brigades deployed in Iraq or Afghanistan were National Guard brigades, and 50% of the Army's infantry, mechanized, and armored battalions were National Guard units.[15]

According to General Peter J. Schoomaker, in testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee on June 30, 2005, the Army was faced with having to recruit 165,000 new troops for active, Guard, and Reserve duty each year. This figure accounted for 30% of the American males

between the ages of 17 and 24. Furthermore, according to Schoomaker, only about 30% of males in that age group meet the military's standards for enlistment. [16] Strain to fill the ranks was not helped by the Army's end-strength expansion to 512,400. Similarly, the corresponding increase in the number of total junior officers presented difficulties in an environment where personnel were choosing to leave the service earlier than anticipated. Figure 7 details the active end strengths and mobilization numbers for 2005.

Figure 7

DOD and Services End Strengths for 2005

FY2005	Active	Mobilized *	Guard	Selected Reserve**	Civilian	TOTAL
TOTAL	1,415,600	210,252	456,800	404,100	680,466	2,923,966
DOD	-----	-----	-----	-----	106,000	106,000
Army	512,400	148,442	350,000	205,000	218,000	1,285,400
Navy	365,900	6,508	-----	83,400	193,466	642,766
Marines	178,000	9,717	-----	39,600	-----	217,600
Air Force	359,300	45,585	106,800	76,100	163,000	705,200

* FY2004 Supplemental for Guard & Reserve called to active duty, Non-Add, ** Does not include non-drilling Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) Source: Adapted from www.globalsecurity.org.

With a growing number of guard soldiers being deployed in both Afghanistan and Iraq, and 268 Guardsmen fatalities as of July 5, 2005 (as opposed to 97 Guardsmen fatalities during the Vietnam War), the Army's National Guard recruiting numbers were on the decline:[17]

- The National Guard only met 70% of its May 2005 mission, 86% of its June mission (missed its 5,032 target by 695 recruits)[18] and 76% of it's year-to-date mission.[19] 2004 marked the first year that the Army National Guard missed its mission goal since 1994.[20] Army Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum attributed past recruiting successes to word-of-mouth, adding that when "27% of [the] force [is] deployed overseas, they're not doing much word-of-mouth recruiting."[21]
- The Army Recruiting Command also reported that the Reserves met 82% of their May 2005 mission and 80% of the year-to-date mission.[22] The Army did, however, lower its accession goal by 1,350 earlier in the spring for the month of May. They did not lower their total goal of 80,000 accessions.
- In June, the Army Reserves exceeded their goal of 5,650 recruits by 507. The reserves were still approximately 2,350 below their total goal for FY2005.

These recruiting percentages, however, were only part of the story. If one looks at the recruiting base and the marginal cost of recruiting, the US had to make major changes to achieve these numbers. The Army, for example, had cut the average number of days by 50% between the time that recruits sign up to the time that they enter boot camp. The sped-up process allowed for a higher short-term intake, but failed to address the longer-term recruiting realities.

The chief of the Army Reserve and the chief of the National Guard Bureau both identified potential long-term consequences. The Chief of the Army Reserve wrote the Army Chief of Staff, saying, the Army Reserve was additionally in grave danger of being unable to meet their other operational requirements, including those in named op plans and CONUS emergencies.

The chief of the National Guard Bureau, Brig. Gen. Bill Libby expressed concerns that the National Guard would not be a ready for the next time it is needed, whether at home or abroad. Meanwhile, governors of various states were also voicing concern about the National Guard's ability to perform in the event of a natural disaster or attack on the homeland.

This was forcing major changes in the use of the Guard and Reserves. According to Secretary of the Army Francis Harvey, between 2005 and 2007, the Army would rely on the Reserve and Guard much less. He and General Schoomaker both said that they anticipated the current number of seven brigades in Iraq would be reduced to two during the next rotation (in the next two years). Harvey also predicted that the number of Guard units would be reduced to 11% of the force in Iraq, as opposed to 41% in 2005.[23] The Army said it would be able to do this as a result of restructuring the Army into modular units and the addition of at least 10 new active-duty brigades, bringing the total to at least 43.

Though the Marine Corps played a significant role in Iraq and Afghanistan, it had not struggled with recruiting to the extent that the Army had as of early 2005:

- In January 2005, the USMC met 97% of its recruitment goal, but slipped to 93.5% in February. In early May, the USMC reached 99% of its year-to-date target.
- The USMC saw a positive improvement at the end of May when it shipped 2,674 recruits, 73 above its target.
- The USMC shipping goal for the 2005 fiscal year was 39,150, which included 6,100 reserves. As of June, the Corps shipped a total of 20,735 recruits, 395 more recruits than required for year-to-date, or 102% of its accessions target for FY05.[24]

Even though its recruitment numbers did not drop as much as those of the Army, the Marine Corps had to invest more time and money in the recruitment process. According to Gen. Hagee, "a [Marine Corps] recruiter today spends about 12 hours for each individual recruited. Before 9/11, they were spending about four hours for each individual recruited."[25]

Although its end strength had not yet become a risk, the Air Force went from meeting 111% of its recruiting goal in 2004 to meeting only 82% of its goal in the first two months of 2005. The Air Guard and Reserves had become filled with aircrews that planned to leave, posing a serious threat to airlift and the service's "force enablers."

In order to deal with recruiting challenges, all of the services -- and the Army in particular -- had to take major new steps to provide further incentives:

- General Schoomaker testified in a hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee on June 30, 2005, that the armed forces had been exploring the possibility of providing home mortgage incentives up to $50,000. (USA Today reported that the Army had asked for cash bonuses of $40,000).[26]
- Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness David Chu proposed a bonus for critical skills retention for the Reserves, as well as a bonus for active duty soldiers willing to join the Reserves when he or she completes his active duty. He also suggested an increase in hardship duty pay.
- Along with these bonuses, soldiers were offered an opportunity to participate in either the Loan Repayment Program, which would pay back up to $65,000 worth of federal student loans for soldiers who enlisted for three or more years, or the Army College Fund, which provided soldiers with up to $70,000 for college if they had been selected to work in a "high-priority specialty."

Certain numbers suggested that the new incentives were having a positive impact on the retention scenario. Task Force Baghdad, for example, was exceeding fiscal year reenlistment goals. Buy early September, Task Force Baghdad saw 3,100 reenlistments versus a goal of

2,925, which encompassed the combination of all initial term, mid-career, and career soldier reenlistments. The soldiers earned a total payout of more than $23 million in tax-free bonuses for their continued service.[27]

Still, the prospect of serving in Iraq was widely considered a contributing factor to a 7,000-person recruiting shortfall in 2005, despite the additional recruiters and added incentives. According to a study by a Democratic advisory group, chaired by former Defense Secretary William Perry, as of January 2006, the Active duty component of the Army had a deficit of about 18,000 junior enlisted personnel. Overall, the study found that Army manpower had dropped during 2005, with strength of 492,000 personnel versus a goal of 502,000.[28]

The Army and other services also had to change their recruiting strategy, making massive increases in the number of recruiters as well as providing the aforementioned incentives. In early 2005, the Army was adding more than 800 active-duty recruiters to the current 5,201 -- a rise of 15% in a single year.[29] The Army had increased its total number of recruiters in the field by 3,000, raising the total number of recruiters to 12,000, and hired civilian recruiters as well.[30]

The Army assigned Iraq War veterans to work with recruiters to talk about their experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan. Some parts of the Army National Guard had to increase recruiter strength by 30%. According to Charles S. Abell, Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, many recruiters worked sixteen or more hours a day, seven days a week.[31] Perhaps partly as a result of Iraq War pressures, 37 Army recruiters had folded under the pressure and gone AWOL by late spring of 2005.[32] Army Secretary Harvey also suggested that the Army would target the approximately 1.1 million home-schooled Americans, increasing its advertising budget as a means of getting the word out more effectively.

By the end of 2005, the services faced significant recruiting problems, although most were able to meet or exceed their numerical goals through new incentives, and others benefited from being seen as lower-risk alternatives. The Army came up 8% short of its annual goal, its largest recruiting shortfall since 1979.[33] Secretary of the Army, Francis Harvey, faced the most difficult recruiting environment of all the military branches and has said that he believed the decreasing popularity of the war to be directly linked to the Army's recruiting troubles.[34]

It was also clear that joining the National Guard was no longer seen as a safe way of earning extra money with only a limited risk of military service. The Army National Guard fell below the level of any other service component, meeting only 80% of its recruiting goal. The Air National Guard, which also had a high deployment level missed its recruiting goal by 14%. By the end of 2005, overall recruiting results were mixed:[35]

- Army Active Component: Missed goal of 80,000 by 6,627 recruits, first full-year deficit since 1999.
- Army Reserves: met 84% of goal with 23,859 recruits
- Army National Guard: met 80% of goal with 50,219 recruits
- Marine Corps Active Component: met 100% of goal of 32,917 recruits
- Marine Corps Reserves: met 102% of goal
- Navy Active Component: met 100% of goal of 37,635 recruits
- Navy Reserves: met 88% of goal
- Air Force Active Component: met 102% of goal of 18,900 recruits

- Air Force Reserves: met 113% of recruiting goal
- Air National Guard: met 86% of goal

Trends in 2006

Fiscal Year 2006 saw positive developments in initial recruiting figures, particularly for the Army National Guard, which had experienced perhaps the worst recruiting scenario of the armed services. Coming off of a three-year slump, the ARNG began to bring in soldiers in greater numbers in 2006. On March 10, 2006, the Army Guard announced that it had signed up more than 26,000 soldiers in the first five months of FY2006, exceeding its target by 7% in its best performance in 13 years. The performance meant that the Guard was enlisting nearly as many troops as the AC, even though the Guard is a smaller force.

Army leadership had threatened to cut funding for the ARNG after the service met only 80% of its recruiting goals in 2005. In early January, the ARNG doubled its maximum bonus to $20,000 for recruits who had never served in the military.

The Guard also instituted a new program of recruiting. Expanded to 22 states in December 2005, the program designated 31,000 Guard members as "recruiting assistants," who were awarded $2,000 for every new person they recruited to the ranks. The program was meant to target people on a more personalized basis, as members sought to recruit friends and family into the service. Army leadership expected the Guard to meet its increased Congressionally mandated end strength of 350,000, with a goal of expanding the new recruiting program to 65,000 assistants. Meeting this goal would mean, in essence, that about one-fifth of the force would be recruiters.[36]

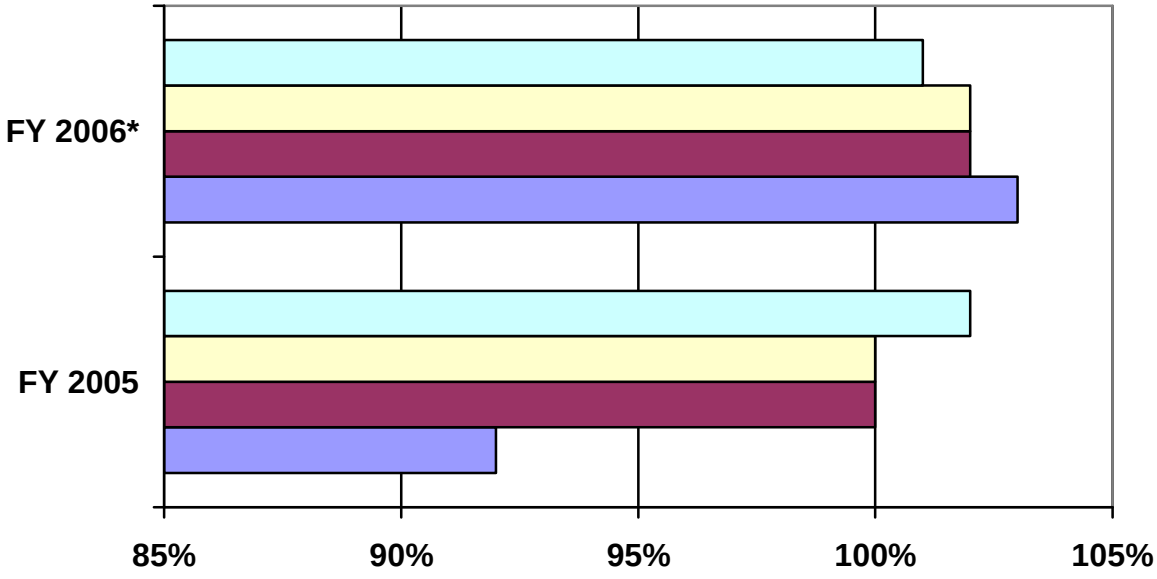
Meanwhile, by early 2006, the Navy was offering personnel bonuses of up to $125,000 for a commitment of five more years of service. The bonuses were in compliance with Congressional law setting a $25,000/year cap on such bonuses. Although the Navy did not have to enact stop-loss policies like other services, high operational tempo -- especially in aviation units -- created similar strains.

Figure 8-9 compare percentages of recruiting goals reached among AC and RC services for FY2005 and FY2006 (through February). Results were mixed, with the active Army seeing a boost in initial numbers, as well as positive results for the Army Reserve. The Army National Guard saw the most significant improvement -- in initial numbers versus FY 2005 totals -- while the Marine Corps Reserves, Air National Guard, and Navy Reserve continued to fall short of goals.

Figure 8

Percent of Recruiting Goals Reached AC/RC FY2005 & FY2006:

Active Forces



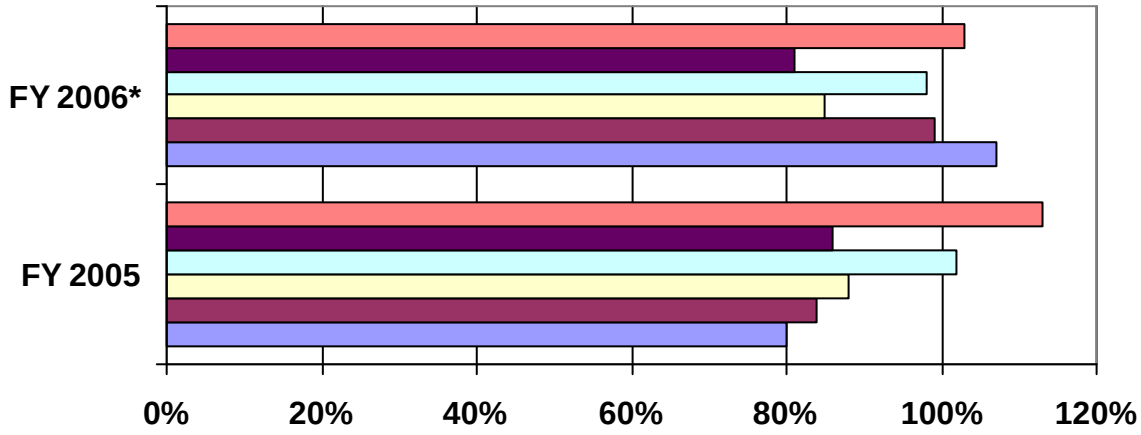
	FY 2005	FY 2006*
Air Force	102%	101%
Marines	100%	102%
Navy	100%	102%
Army	92%	103%

* Through February 2006. Source: Adapted from graphic in article: Ann Scott Tyson, "Army Guard Refilling Its Ranks," *The Washington Post*, March 12, 2006, p. A1; graphic on p. A6.

Figure 9

Percent of Recruiting Goals Reached AC/RC FY2005 & FY2006:

Reserve Forces



	FY 2005	FY 2006*
Air Force Reserve	113%	103%
Air National Guard	86%	81%
Marine Reserve	102%	98%
Navy Reserve	88%	85%
Army Reserve	84%	99%
Army National Guard	80%	107%

* Through February 2006. Source: Adapted from graphic in article: Ann Scott Tyson, "Army Guard Refilling Its Ranks," *The Washington Post*, March 12, 2006, p. A1; graphic on p. A6.

Recruiting Standards

Some accused the services of lowering their standards, sacrificing quality for quantity under the great pressure of the war. On the one hand, the Army reported in 2005 that it had been able to maintain the quality of its soldiers: 90% had high school diplomas; 73% scored between category I and IIIA on the Armed Series Vocational Aptitude Battery;[37] and 2% received a score in category IV, but these soldiers were the top 10% of this group.[38]

On the other hand, the number of high school dropouts recruited doubled to 9%, and the percentage of recruits with Category IV test results rose from 0.6% in 2004 to 1.8% during the first five months of FY2005. Only 60% had to be in the top aptitude category, as compared to the 73% the Army had in 2005. (Secretary of the Army Francis Harvey said in an interview with USA Today that 71% of recruits scored above 50% on the aptitude test).

Figure 10 provides details on USAREC test scores and high school diplomas among Army recruits from 1978 to 2005. The figure shows a steadily rising percentage of high school graduates joining the service, as well as falling levels of lowest-score USAREC accessions since 1978.

It was reported that the Army had begun to ease restrictions on recruiting high school dropouts. To face the problem of non-degree-holder would-be recruits, the Army instituted a GED course, allowing dropouts to enroll in the Army-sponsored program to assist them in getting their equivalency degree.

The issue of waivers also came to light by the end of 2005. Generally approved at the Pentagon, waivers allowed recruiters to sign up men and women who otherwise would be ineligible for service due to legal convictions, medical problems, or other reasons preventing them from meeting minimum standards. According to statistics provided to Salon.com by the office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, the Army said that 17% -- or 21,880 new soldiers -- were admitted under waivers in 2005. In fact, there was further evidence that the 17% figure was actually low, as the Army had included data from the Army Reserve and Army National Guard in determining it.

Furthermore, according to Salon.com, 37% of the Army's waivers (or about 8,000 solders) in 2005 were based on "moral grounds," essentially meaning criminal activity, ranging from minor infractions like traffic tickets to more serious infractions such as incidents of domestic abuse or narcotics. This represented a 32% increase of moral waivers issued compared to 2000, with concerns growing that units were becoming more and more likely to be manned by individuals with criminal backgrounds and increased penchants for undesirable behavior.[39] In FY2005, 15% of recruits in all required a waiver to be accepted for active-duty services, or about 11,000 people out of about 73,000 recruited.[40]

Issues of age and physical fitness also came to the fore as the services continued face recruiting challenges. The Army, for example, raised its maximum recruitment age from 25 to 39, at a time when much attention was being given to the dangers of an aging force, especially in the National Guard and Reserves.[41] According to a Pentagon spokesperson in March 2006, of the 157,000 troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, more than 1,700 were aged 55 or older. In all, 1,603 of these older troops came from the National Guard and Reserve.[42]

Likewise, the Army had also begun to loosen physical fitness standards for recruits by early 2006. With much of the "recruitable" young population increasingly overweight -- the US teen obesity rate jumped from 5% to 16% since 1976 -- the Army began offering physical fitness tests

to overweight recruits. As of February 20, 2006, more than 800 would-be recruits who surpassed the Army's body weight standards had passed conditioning tests and gone onto basic training. Relaxed rules allowed for recruits of any given height to weigh more for that height than was previously allowed, with male recruits simply needing to measure below 30% body fat.[43]

Figure 10

USAREC Quality Standards 1978 to 2005

The chart traces the history of US Army internal goals over the years.			
Time period	**High School Diploma Grads**	**Category I-IIIA**	**Category IV**
1978-1980	65%	30%	45%
1981-1982	85%	50%	25%
1983-1989	90%	60%	6%
1990-1997	95%	67%	2%
1998-1999	90%	67%	2%
2000-2001	90%	62.5%	2%
2002	90%	63.5%	2%
2003	90%	65%	2%
2004	92%	67%	1.5%
2005	90%	67%	2%

Congressionally mandated	**DOD mandated**	**DA mandated**
I-IIIA no statute	no less than 60%	no less than 67% w/floor of 65%
IV no more than 20%	no more than 4%	no more than 2%
HSDG no less than 65%	no less than 90%	no less than 90%

Source: US Army

The Iraq War's Impact on Retention

By the summer of 2005, retention among the services was high, with both AC and RC components showing good numbers. For June 2005, each active duty component met or exceeding its goals for retention. Meanwhile, the National Guard showed the following retention figures for the same month: Army National Guard retention was 105.9% of the cumulative goal of 23,647, and Air National Guard retention was 110% of its cumulative goal of 8,860. Losses in all reserve components in May 2005 were lower than projected.[44]

By the fall of 2005, retention numbers for the AC remained good across the services, with results beginning to come in mixed for reserve forces. All services exceeded retention goals for the month of October. The numbers for National Guard retention were as follows: For October, Army National Guard retention was 98% of the cumulative goal of 2,456, and Air National Guard retention was 110% of its cumulative goal of 986.[45]

As of March 2006, all of the active services were projected to meet their retention goals for the fiscal year. Retention numbers for the reserves, however, remained mixed into the New Year: For February, Army National Guard retention was 106% of the cumulative goal of 13,478, and Air National Guard retention was 95% of its cumulative goal of 4,046. The Army Guard was at 336,183 of an approved and funded end strength of 350,000, while the Air Guard was at 105,321 of an authorized 106,800.[46]

Meanwhile, another barometer of satisfaction with the service -- the desertion rate -- showed an overall positive trend by the end of 2005. Since the Iraq War began, at least 8,000 service personnel had deserted the armed forces. Since the fall of 2003, 4,387 Army soldiers, 3,454 Navy sailors, and 82 Air Force personnel deserted. The Marine Corps listed 1,455 Marines in desertion status as of September 2005. The by-service desertion numbers, however, showed an improvement since 9/11. The Army, Navy, and Air Force reported 7,978 desertions in 2001 versus 3,456 in 2005. The Marines, meanwhile, were at 1,603 desertions in 2001, 148 more than in 2005. Overall, desertions represented 0.24% of the US forces.[47]

Impact on the Recruiting and Retention Base

The Iraq War also had an impact on the overall base for recruiting and retention. Recruiting and keeping the men and women America needs is more than a "mechanical" problem in terms of paying enough to get enough people. In the process of creating an all-volunteer force structure, the US has also created an unwritten social contract with the men and women in the all-volunteer force. Patriotism is a very real motive, but those who join also join because of the contract that says the US will offer reasonable incentives relative to reasonable inconvenience and reasonable risk.

This social contract is reinforced by the fact that some elements of the recruiting base for the all-volunteer force have different motives and reactions from others.

- Minorities often join the military to find upward mobility in ways where our civil society still at least partially discriminates against them.
- Poorer Americans often join for college and career benefits.
- Retention and joining the National Guard and Reserves is shaped largely by prior military service.
- Some join the Guard because they believe they can supplement a limited income or purse key interests at acceptable levels of deployment and interference with their main career.

Maintaining the Officer Corps

There was evidence that recruiting and retention difficulties were also having an impact on maintenance of the officer corps. In 2005, applications for US service academies were down overall. Applications to West Point, the Naval Academy, and the Air Force Academy were down 9%, 20%, and 23%, respectively, for the year. The downtrend occurred as other four-year universities were seeing increases in applications. An official at West Point, however, said that the school was actually returning to its five- to 10-year average, after a spike in applications following September 11.[48]

Another point of concern in early 2006 was evidence of declining standards in officer promotion in the Army. In 2005, the Army promoted 97% of all eligible captains to the rank of major, according to Pentagon data. This was up from a historical average of 70% to 80%. Traditionally, the Army has used the step to major as a winnowing point, sifting lower-performing soldiers out of the military. That same year, the Army also promoted 86% of eligible majors to the rank of colonel, up from the historical average of 65% to 75%.[49]

The trend was viewed as a consequence of retention woes, as officers left the military, often after multiple deployments to Iraq. According to Army data, the portion of junior officers (lieutenants and captains) choosing to leave the service rose in 2005 to 8.6%, up from 6.3% in 2004. Meanwhile, the attrition rate for majors rose to 7% in 2005, up from 6.4%. The rate for lieutenant colonels was 13.7%, its highest rate in more than a decade.[50]

The potential hollowing of the middle manager corps was of particular concern to the Navy. Typically staffed at the 0-4 level, these positions include aviation department heads such as maintenance, safety, administration, or operations jobs. Typically, these jobs are not awarded until after a decade of service. Retention of lower-grade officers, therefore, was crucial to the maintenance of these core middle positions. As of late February 2006, however, there was evidence that the bonuses were having some positive effect: while extensions of initial contracts by Navy aviators had stood at about 40% since 1986, that figure had risen to about 50% since 9/11.[51]

The upshot has been fears that officer candidates who otherwise would not have made muster are being promoted due to the increased stress on manpower. The Army, however, explained the increased percentage of promotions in part as a consequence of the Army's move to create more combat units without expanding the overall force.

Recruitment of Minorities

Today's all-volunteer force structure is much more representative of American society in economic and racial terms than the combat forces the draft sent to Vietnam. In 1973, when the US instituted its all-volunteer force, 2.8% of military officers were African American. As of March 2002, 8.8% of all military officers were African American. The representation of other minorities -- Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Native Americans -- increased at an even faster rate over the same period. Also in 2002, minorities comprised 19% of the U.S. officer corps and 38.3% of total active duty enlisted soldiers.

The unpopularity of the war has, however, had a growing effect among groups that see peacetime military service as a method of upward mobility, particularly minority groups. Men and women who might have joined the services for college money or career training may perceive the war to be too risky. A CfK Custom Research Inc. August 2004 study conducted for

the Army stated that "in the past, barriers were about inconvenience or preference for another life choice. Now they have switched to something quite different: fear of death or injury."[52]

A July 2004 study of the influence parents have on their children's career decisions revealed that African American parents had a greater influence than Caucasian parents on their children's decision to join the military service. The study further showed that African American parents had less trust in the military.[53]

The percentage of African Americans recruited into the Army's active-duty demonstrates the war's impact on the recruitment of this minority group. In September 2001, African Americans made up 22.7% of the Army's recruits, whereas in 2003 the percentage dropped to 16.4 %, and throughout 2004 and the beginning of 2005 the trend continued. As of February 9, 2005, the percentage slipped to 13.9 %.[54] This trend may be attributable to what the August 2004 CfK report revealed -- that more "African Americans identify having to fight for a cause they don't support as a barrier to military service."[55]

By late 2005, enlistments of African-Americans had declined 40% since 2000. According to the Army Recruiting Command at Fort Knox, Kentucky in November 2005, the number of black enlistees had dropped from about one in five in 2000 to one in seven. African-American's have historically been a very important part of the all-volunteer force. Even with the recent downturn in enlistees, black made up 25% of all enlisted Army soldiers at the end of FY 2005, while making up just 13% of the general population.[56]

One reason sited for the decline in recruitment of blacks is the lessened relative dependency on military service for career opportunities. From 1980 to 2002, the percentage of blacks over the age of 25 with at least four years of college had doubled, from 7.9% to 17.2%, according to Digest of Education statistics.[57]

There was also evidence that attitudes toward the war in the black and Hispanic/Latino communities played a role in these recruiting difficulties. Two Pew Research Center surveys conducted in mid and late 2005 revealed disparities of opinion toward the war among the black, Hispanic, and white communities. A December survey showed that only 48% of blacks expected the US to succeed in Iraq versus 59% of whites.[58] On issues relating to the likelihood of success and positive outcomes and progress, Hispanics were generally more positive than blacks, and in some cases almost in line with white respondents. Meanwhile, black respondents were the most pessimistic nearly across the board. Figures 11-12 summarize the findings of the two Pew poles.

In December 2005, S. Douglas Smith, a spokesman for Army Recruiting Command, said that the Army had been focusing on recruiting more Hispanics and Asians as a result of the drop-off in enlistments of blacks. Hispanics accounted for 13.2% of active-duty recruits in 2005, up from 10.5% in 2001. Overall, Hispanics and Latinos make up 12.5% of the US population. Meanwhile, the percentage of Asian-American recruits increased from 2.6% in 2001 to 4.1% for 2005, about on par with the percent representation in the US population.[59]

Figure 11
Attitude Towards the Iraq War Effort

	Military Force Against Iraq		*Establishing a Stable Democracy*	
	Right Decision	**Wrong Decision**	**Succeed**	**Fail**
Race	%	%	%	%
White	54	41	64	29
Non-White	31	58	45	46
Black	21	72	41	51
Hispanic*	40	47	51	38

*The designation “Hispanic” is unrelated to the black-white categorization. Adapted from Pew Survey: “Support for Keeping Troops in Iraq Stabilizes, More Say Iraq War Hurts Fights Against Terrorism,” July 21, 2005.

Figure 12

Making Progress or Losing Ground in Iraq?

	Training Iraqi Forces so they can Replace US Troops		*Establishing Democracy in Iraq*		*Preventing Terrorists from Using Iraq as a Base for Attacks*	
	Making Progress	**Losing Ground**	**Making Progress**	**Losing Ground**	**Making Progress**	**Losing Ground**
Race	%	%	%	%	%	%
White	65	23	62	28	50	40
Non-White	46	40	43	46	43	47
Black	42	47	40	50	38	51
Hispanic*	61	27	53	34	53	40
	Defeating the Insurgents Militarily		*Preventing a Civil War between Religious and Ethnic Groups*		*Reducing the number of Civilian Casualties*	
	Making Progress	**Losing Ground**	**Making Progress**	**Losing Ground**	**Making Progress**	**Losing Ground**
Race	%	%	%	%	%	%
White	47	40	38	47	36	52
Non-White	37	46	31	59	30	60
Black	30	49	27	60	23	63
Hispanic*	41	44	31	55	33	60

*The designation "Hispanic" is unrelated to the black-white categorization. Source: Adapted from Pew Survey: "Modest Election Optimism, Positive Views of Iraqi Troop Training, Public Unmoved by Washington's Rhetoric on Iraq," December 14, 2005.

The Impact of the Family

There is a saying in the Army that, "you enlist the soldier, but you reenlist the family." The realities of life in the military, particularly during a period of high deployment, can have a taxing effect on the loved ones of those in military service, which can then impact on reenlistment rates. Families weighing in on recruits, likewise, can affect the decision of would-be recruits, thus dragging down new accessions as well. Lt. Gen. James Helmly, Chief of Army Reserve, spoke to this issue before the House Armed Services Committee in February 2005:[60]

> We have in each of our Army Reserve centers across the nation and the world either volunteer groups, staff augmented by full-time -- or in the region, full-time support. I make that one of our top priorities with commanders. Early in this conflict and in 2003 we sent out 300,000 seven-minute CDs, mailed to the home of every Army Reserve member, both selected Reserve and IRR, seeking to communicate with families and set proper expectations as opposed to, frankly, previously false expectations of no mobilization or little mobilization stress.

More generally, the Iraq War has shown the importance of the role parents and mentors play in influencing the recruiting base. The US military is a military where parents, wives, husbands, and children are all critical factors. Parents have to believe that enlistees face acceptable risks and burdens. A June 2005 Gallup poll reported that only 52% of Americans would support their child if he or she decided to enlist in the military, while 48% would go so far as to suggest another occupation. In 1999, 66% of Americans surveyed said they would support that decision, and only 29% said they would suggest an alternative.[61]

Families shape decisions as well -- particularly in a world where so large a portion of the military is married, and their partners have their own careers. In the case of reservists and the Guard, the other career is the real career -- the center around which their life is built.

In early June 2005, the Army released the following information on the impact the war was having on families:[62]

- In FY2002, 1.9% of married officers and 3.1% enlisted soldiers got divorced.
- In 2003, married officers saw an increase in the divorce rate to 3.3%; the rate dropped to 2.8% for married enlisted soldiers.
- In FY2004, the trend continued for officers, bringing the percentage to 6%, while the rate rose slightly to 3.5% for the enlisted soldiers. In the same year, 1.5% of officers in the Air Force, 1.7% in the USMC and 2.5% in the Navy got divorced.

In 2005, the Navy saw and improvement in the divorce rate, dropping from 3.7% to 2.9%. There was also a slight pullback in the Army divorce rate, with 3.3% of married soldiers getting divorced in 2005. The causes of divorce are hard to determine, but it is perhaps telling that the Army's divorce rate for 2000, before the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, was only 2.2%.[63]

These strains were particularly severe and unexpected in the case of the reserves. In July 2004, the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) released its "May 2004 Status of Forces Survey of Reserve Component Members: Leading Indicators." The survey questioned component members of various ranks regarding the realities affecting their stress levels, attitudes toward the service, etc. The leading indicator results from the May 2004 survey of Reserve Component members was intended to reflect the impact of military operations on members and their families. Issues addressed included: intentions to stay in the military, satisfaction with the military way of life, personal readiness, and unit readiness. The results of the survey showed that each had significantly declined since prior survey was taken.

For the same time period of the survey, days spent in a compensated status and nights away from home had increased, and roughly one-fourth of members indicated that time away had decreased their desire to stay in the military. Also, compared to the prior year, significantly fewer members reported that their spouse/significant other and family favored their participation in the National Guard/Reserve. Although members' reports of stress in their personal lives had not increased in the covered year, their reports of stress in their military lives had increased. The summary of the report further concluded that the impact of deployments had affected the Army National Guard and Army Reserve more than other components.[64]

The following figures show the levels of favorability of participation in the armed services among spouses and families of Guard and Reserve members between 2000-2004:

- Figure 13 shows spouse/significant other favorability of participation, by reserve component. The general trend was for spousal favorability to peak at about the same time as major combat operations in Iraq in May

2003, then tailor off significantly by the same time in 2004. Such lack of spousal favorability could represent a concern for reenlistment efforts.

- Figure 14 shows family favorability of participation, by reserve component. The data roughly track with spousal favorability numbers, revealing a possible source of recruiting difficulties for the time period following May 2003.
- Figure 15 shows supervisor favorability of service, broken down by service, between 2000 and 2004. As the figure shows, supervisor favorability across the services spiked during 2003, surrounding major combat operations in Iraq, but quickly tapered off again in 2004. The Army National Guard in particular saw supervisor favorability numbers drop nearly to pre-war levels shortly following the end of major combat operations.

Negative family attitudes toward the service continued into 2005. In November, a Department of Defense survey indicated that only 25% of parents would recommend military service to their children. In August 2003, that figure had been 42%. While the declining numbers could, as some suggested, be a result of distance from a 9/11 rallying point, others contended that the survey data suggested a more significant trend in recruiting.

Another study, carried out by GfK Custom Research, found that the biggest influences in candidates' decisions to join were mothers, named by 81% of respondents, followed by fathers, at 70%. In an effort to address declining parental encouragement to join the service in 2005, the Army and Marines began using grass-roots initiatives and multi-million dollar advertising campaigns to appeal directly to the parents of possible recruits.[65]

The Impact on Civilian Employment

Another concern that came to the fore with frequent and extended National Guard and Reserve deployments were the adverse effects on civilian employment scenarios for RC personnel. Extended deployments presented a problem that cut both ways: High RC usage left employers short of personnel, with laws precluding the hiring of new personnel while RC members were on active duty. Meanwhile, RC personnel who found themselves replaced while on active duty -- in breach of these laws -- often found the complexities and hassle of legal recourse overwhelming.

This set up a scenario that was unfavorable to both employers and employees. Employers were confronted with the reality that hiring members of the RC involved inherent risks -- and real consequences in the event of wartime mobilization. Super-ordinary mobilizations and deployments in turn added obvious stress to reserve force personnel in terms of their civilian lives and livelihoods.

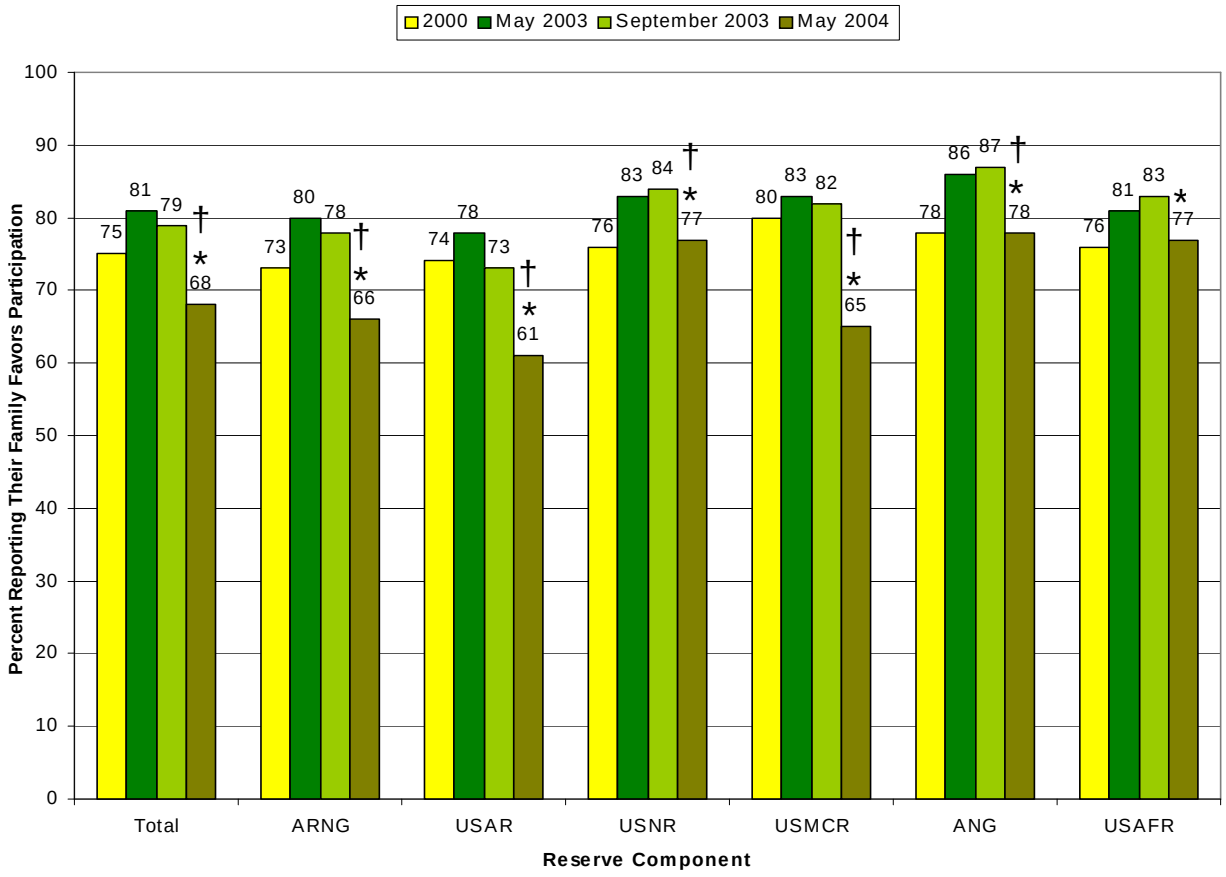
Figure 13

Spouse/Significant Other Favorability of Participation, by Reserve Component

† Significant difference from previous year, * Significant difference from last survey. Margins of error do not exceed +/-4%. Source: "May 2004 Status of Forces Survey of Reserve Component Members: Leading Indicators," Defense Manpower Data Center, Released July 26, 2004.

Figure 14

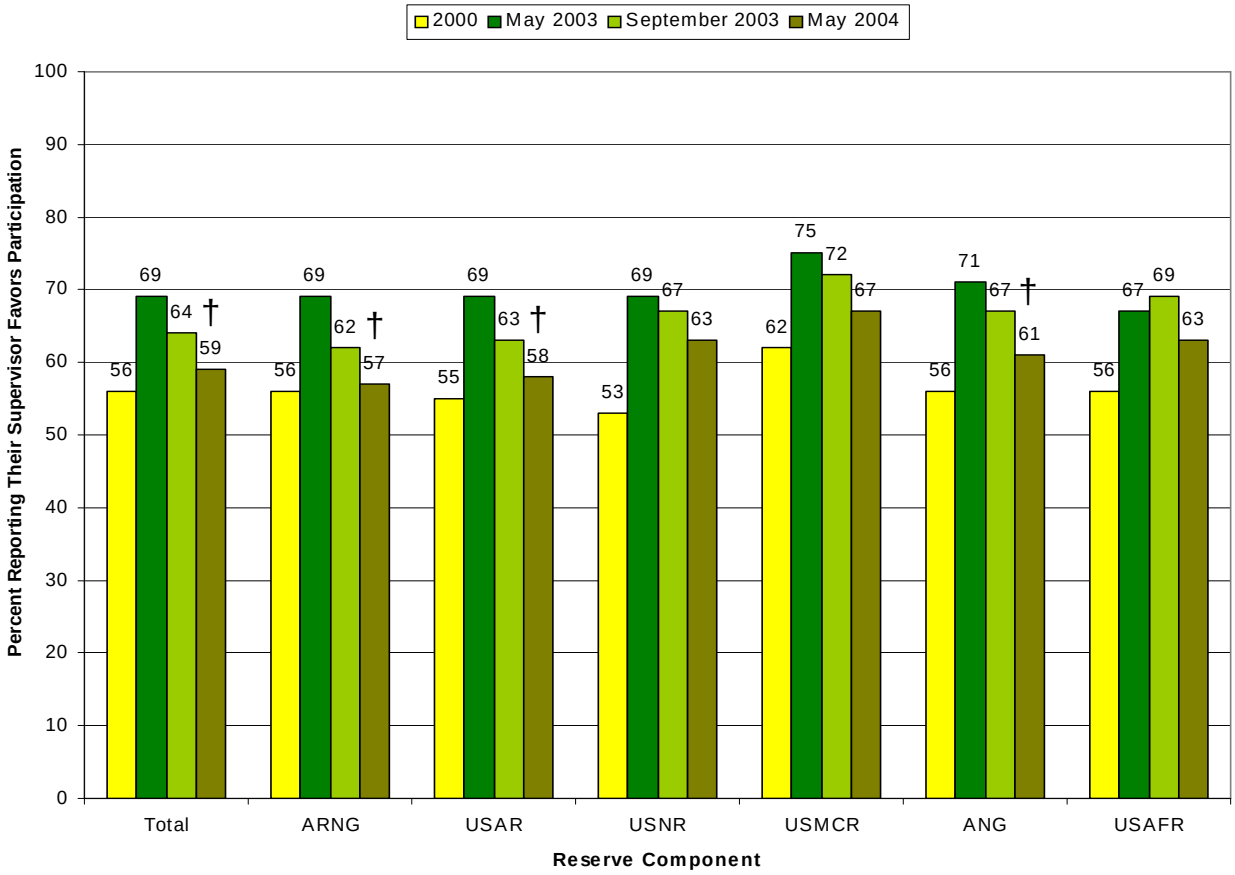
Family Favorability of Participation, by Reserve Component



† Significant difference from previous year, * Significant difference from last survey. Margins of error do not exceed +/-4%. Source: "May 2004 Status of Forces Survey of Reserve Component Members: Leading Indicators," Defense Manpower Data Center, Released July 26, 2004.

Figure 15

Supervisor Favorability of Participation, by Reserve Component



† Significant difference from previous year, * Significant difference from last survey, Margins of error do not exceed +/-4%. Source: May 2004 Status of Forces Survey of Reserve Component Members: Leading Indicators, Defense Manpower Data Center, Released July 26, 2004.

Over-Deployed Forces and the Unwritten Social Contract

The Iraq War did more than create recruiting and retention problems. It showed that the pool of mission-capable active and reserve forces the US could draw upon when the war began forced it to overdeploy large elements of both its active and reserve forces. The US government may be able to violate its unwritten social contract under conditions where the military believes the war is so existential and threatening to the nation that personnel will make any sacrifice. Iraq, however, is clearly an optional conflict, and one in which military personnel are paying for major problems in our force structure.

According to the Department of Defense, approximately one-third of all military personnel who had served since September 2001 had been on more than one tour as of spring 2005:[66]

- 37% of the Active Army manpower sent to Iraq and Afghanistan had been on more than one tour since September 2001. This was also true for 30% of the Army National Guard and 34% of the Army Reserves.
- 28% of active Marines and 12% of USMC Reserve had been on more than one tour since September 2001. As of June 2005, three infantry battalions and three rotary wing squadrons from the Marine Corps were in the middle of their third tour in Iraq. [67]
- 33% of active Air Force, 47% Air National Guard, and 49% of Air Force Reserves had also seen more than one tour of duty. (Largely due to airlift and refueling necessities).
- Over 80% of the Army Guard and 60% of Army Reserve units had been mobilized for most of the period authorized by then-current emergency mobilization orders.

By early 2006, usage had reached greater levels. A January 2006 report by the National Security Advisory Group, Chaired by William J. Perry, revealed the following data:[68]

- Nearly all of the available combat units in the US Army, Army National Guard and Marine Corps have been used in current operations.
- Every available combat brigade from the active duty Army has already been to Afghanistan or Iraq at least once for a 12-month tour. Many are now in their second or third tours of duty.
- Approximately 95% the Army National Guard's combat battalions and special operations units have been mobilized since 9/11. Short of full mobilization or a new Presidential declaration of national emergency, there is little available combat capacity remaining in the Army National Guard.
- The average length of tour for reservists has more than doubled, from 156 days in Desert Shield/Desert Storm to 342 days in OEIF/OIF.
- 60% of the Army Reserve, comprised primarily of support units, has been mobilized since 9/11. Only 16% of the Army Reserve remains eligible for mobilization to support operations in Iraq and Afghanistan under current authorities, but many of the remaining specialties are not in demand.
- Fielding the necessary combat support/combat service support units has proven particularly challenging for the Army. In the current rotation in Iraq, 20% of these units are being manned with soldiers that were removed from their original occupational specialties and rapidly retrained to fill empty billets in cobbled-together units.
- The Marine Corps is also under tremendous strain. All active duty Marine Corps units are being used on a "tight" rotation schedule of seven months deployed, less than a year home to reset, and then another seven months deployed – meaning that active duty Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs) are experiencing two operational deployments per cycle rather than the usual one per cycle. All of the Marine Corps Reserve's combat units have been mobilized.

In the case of the regular military, the initial service contract for active duty service members varied somewhat, but the volunteer still made an eight-year commitment to military service. A service member with a four-year contract, for example, was automatically be re-categorized into the reserves for that component for another four years once off active duty. Members either moved to the more combat-ready selected reserve or to the individual ready reserve, with a lower level of readiness and with separate legal mobilization procedures.

During the Cold War and for most of the decade that followed, the reserve, and in particular the IRR, was a low-tempo force, with both active and reserve US personnel largely on stand-by, waiting for the outbreak of World War III. Some have suggested that this bred a false impression that the reserves were, by design, an unused force. In any case, the Iraq War has forced a reevaluation of what it really meant to be a member of the US military reserve forces. The July 29, 2004 call-up of 5,600 IRR personnel to return to active duty made it clear that the Pentagon intended to make use of this pool of manpower.

Operations in Afghanistan and Iraq also had a massive impact on deployments of the National Guard. Under peacetime conditions, the National Guard serves its respective state and governor in Title 32 status. Duties include guarding critical assets, search and rescue, fire control, riot and emergency response, etc. During the decades following the Vietnam War, the National Guard had come to be considered by some as a peacetime/CONUS force. This perception among the rank and file, according to some, proved problematic with the outbreak of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Army and other services had put most of the personnel and units in the skill sets needed for Iraq -- such as military police and various intelligence capabilities -- in the reserve component. This ensured that the RC became a high OPTEMPO force.

The National Guard faced increased deployments of its combat brigades, which housed many of the warfighting assets and personnel. The National Guard had 34 combat brigades, and these accounted for roughly 40% of the total Army's combat brigades, with this number reflected in the breakdown of personnel in Iraq. The heavy use of these brigades -- including extended deployments and frequent redeployments -- not only affected recruiting into the National Guard, but showed that the Army could not fight counterinsurgency wars, or deal with large-scale nation building and stability operations, without repeatedly deploying them.

- Figure 16 provides data on the percentage of the force, by service, who had been subject to multiple deployments as of January 2005. The relative rate of redeployments by service provides information on one key element of "strain," and is useful when comparing relative recruiting/retention success or failures.

- Figure 17 illustrates the spikes in RC man-days for operations between 1986-2003. The figure contrasts strain in terms of man-days during peacetime versus periods of high OPTEMPO. The contrast has bearing on force planning constructs, especially in a future based on predictions of more constantly high operational tempo.

- Figure 18 plots increasing RC man-days against the corresponding declines in Congressional end-strengths from 1990-2004. As the figure shows, the beginning of the "global war on terror" in 2001 marked a sharp divergence in these two data points, after reaching somewhat of an equilibrium following the drawdown of the 1990s. The information in the figure has bearing on future force planning scenarios; Bush Administration plans of early 2006 did not call for increases in end strength, although the 2006 QDR and 2007 Defense Budget requests suggested continued sustained periods of high military engagement.

- Figure 19 compares the mobilization days for each of the reserve components between 1990-1996 to mob days from 1997-2003. Like man-day data, mob-day data gives further contrast of peacetime vs. high OPTEMPO usage, in this instance in the context of recent historical usage.

Increases in active and reserve deployments have been well within the letter of law and regulation, but have no modern historical precedents, raising serious questions about the degree to which the men and women now being deployed had any reason to expect such deployments as the result of a limited and "optional" war.

At the same time, stop-loss policies and multiple deployments cut across the active, reserves, and National Guard components in ways that raised further questions about a broken social contract. As Figure 16 illustrates, half of the services faced multiple deployments of at least 30% of personnel between September 2001 and January 2005.

Forced retention had to be mixed with multiple rotations. Stop-loss, which was originally envisaged to keep well-trained soldiers during this period of war, is now largely perceived as a means to keep troop levels high enough while recruitment numbers are down. Using stop-loss to keep military personnel on for longer than their eight-year commitment is a serious breach of faith in the promise made to a professional force.

The authority to issue stop-loss orders was granted by Congress during Vietnam, but was not used until the buildup to the Persian Gulf War in 1990 when Dick Cheney, then the secretary of defense, allowed the military services to bar most retirements and prolong enlistments indefinitely. A flurry of stop-loss orders was issued after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, intensifying as the nation prepared for war in Iraq. Some of the orders applied to soldiers, sailors, and airmen in specific skill categories -- military police, for example, and ordnance control specialists, were in particular demand in Iraq.[69]

The use of stop-loss orders was intended to serve a number of purposes:

- Keep manpower numbers at or above the Congressionally mandated limit,
- Retain certain skill sets that are deemed vital to a mission,
- Retain personnel with combat experience deemed necessary to the continued execution of a successful mission,
- Retain unit cohesion by keeping the same personnel together for extended periods of time rather than rotating individuals in and out of units on an ongoing basis (standard rotation patterns as of the beginning of the second Iraq war).

As of January 2006, the Army had forced about 50,000 soldiers to continue serving after their voluntary stints ended using stop-loss orders. Under the stop-loss policy, soldiers who would normally leave when their commitments expired had to remain in the Army, starting 90 days before their unit was scheduled to depart, through the end of their deployment and up to another 90 days after returning to their home base. This was meant to "capture" at least six months of additional service from both active and reserve military personnel who were set to exit the service. The affect of the policy, however, was resentment over a broken compact of service. There was also evidence that the policy served as a recruiting liability for the services.

Figure 16

Percent of Total on Multiple Deployments by Service

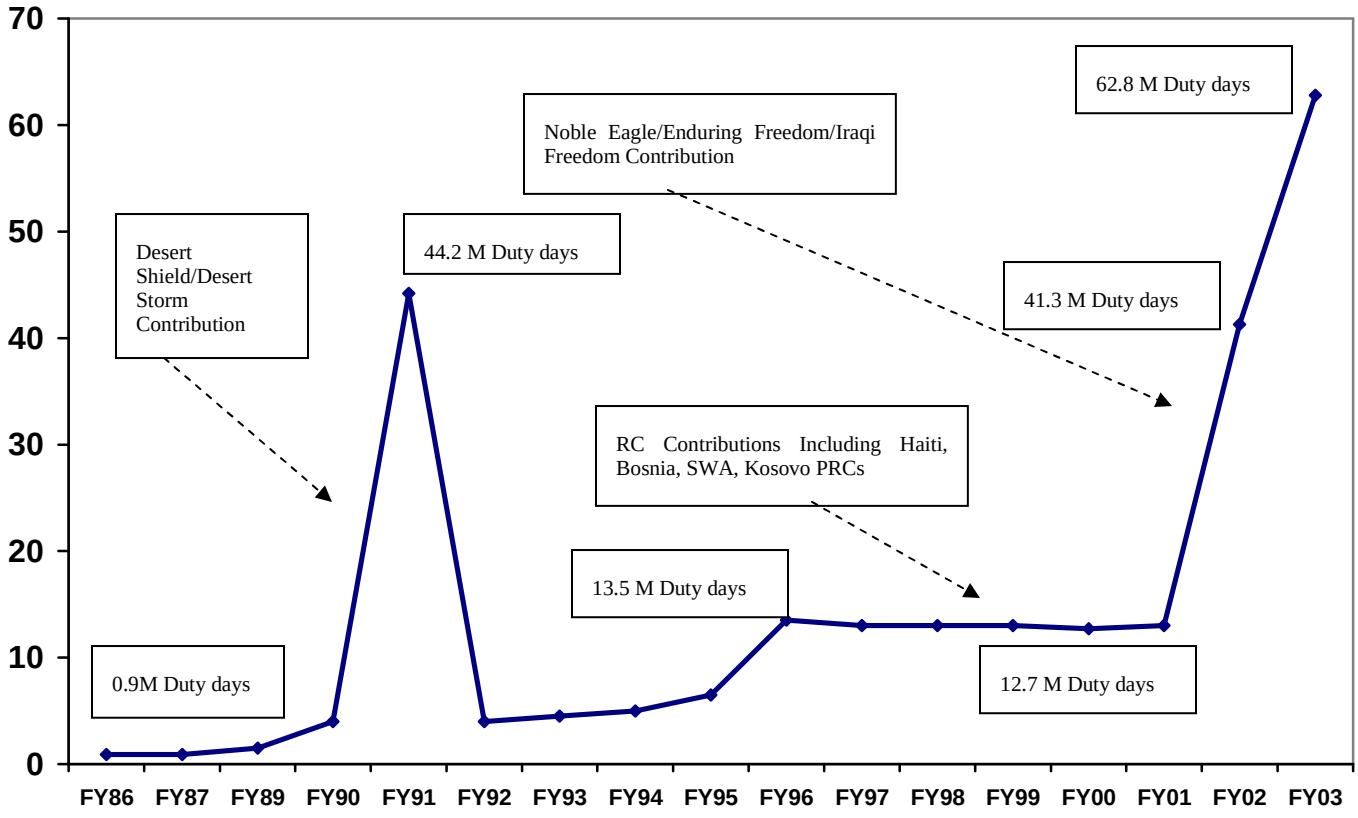
Service	Percentage of Total Deployed More than Once, Sept 2001 – Jan 2005
Army, Active	37%
Army, National Guard	30%
Army, Reserve	34%
Air Force, Active	33%
Air Force, National Guard	47%
Air Force, Reserve	49%
USMC, Active	28%
USMC, Reserve	12%
Navy, Active	26%
Navy, Reserve	21%
Coast Guard, Active	12%
Coast Guard, Reserve	1%

*Taken from: Washington Post, "Two Years Later, Iraq War Drains Military" by Ann Scott Tyson, March 19, 2005. Source: Department of Defense.

Figure 17

RC Man-Days FY1986-FY2003

(in millions)



Source: Adapted from a 2004 briefing to CSIS by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense.

Figure 18

Increasing RC Man-Days vs. Declining Total Personnel 1990-2004

Year	Congressionally Mandated Total RC End Strength	Total RC Man-Days	% Change in Total RC Man-Days from Base Year 1990
2004	2,263,630	72,000,000	3788.4%
2003	2,263,258	55,978,338	2923.2%
2002	2,260,058	25,355,968	1269.4%
2001	2,255,468	1,513,781	-18.2%
2000	2,258,730	1,013,465	-45.3%
1999	2,280,872	1,082,689	-41.5%
1998	2,326,638	813,467	-56.1%
1997	2,368,148	1,517,224	-18.1%
1996	2,424,384	1,981,549	7.0%
1995	2,514,939	1,100,220	-40.6%
1994	2,662,900	66,339	-96.4%
1993	2,889,580	512,095	-72.3%
1992	3,037,446	512,095	-72.3%
1991	3,312,036	38,978,350	2005.1%
1990	3,298,395	1,851,645	

* By 2004: 3788% increase in man-days from 1990 base vs. 23% decline in Total RC personnel. Source: Adapted from data provided by DMDC vs. Congressionally authorized RC end strengths.

Figure 19
RC Mobilization Days by Component, 1990-2003

Total Reserve Component Mobilization Days 1990 to 1996

Component	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
ARNG	261,705	10,754,360	175,930	0	29,048	591,300	797,160
USAR	452,965	12,934,140	292,730	0	31,573	395,660	1,139,165
USNR	190,895	2,782,030	2,920	0	0	76,285	37,230
USMCR	261,705	6,067,395	20,075	0	0	475	5,074
ANG	123,370	1,709,295	2,555	0	5,718	24,090	2,920
USAFR	531,440	4,545,345	17,885	0	0	0	0
USCGR	29,565	185,785	0	0	0	12,410	0
TOTAL RC MOB	**1,851,645**	**38,978,350**	**512,095**	**0**	**66,339**	**1,100,220**	**1,981,549**

Total Reserve Component Mobilization Days 1997 to 2003

Component	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
ARNG	584,691	308,699	235,977	512,498	1,012,103	8,754,642	19,687,766
USAR	885,292	427,757	201,216	313,704	207,354	3,073,639	15,488,983
USNR	32,400	44,010	210,060	106,924	178,110	2,414,607	3,480,844
USMCR	0	20,266	21,013	35,092	18,301	1,007,110	4,722,005
ANG	14,841	11,925	314,979	31,187	31,685	4,963,270	5,534,016
USAFR	0	810	99,280	14,060	13,807	4,452,700	6,223,324
USCGR	0	0	164	0	52,421	690,000	841,400
TOTAL RC MOB	**1,517,224**	**813,467**	**1,082,689**	**1,013,465**	**1,513,781**	**25,355,968**	**55,978,338**

Source: Defense Manpower Data Center

Rebalancing Actives and Reserves

At the outset of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the all-volunteer force had been structured under a Total Force Policy that ensured the United States could not engage in operations without mobilizing its military reserve component (RC). The primary "social" document underpinning Total Force Policy -- itself an outcome of the Vietnam War, and a reaction to the draft -- is known as the "Abrams Doctrine," named for General Creighton Abrams. In theory, it was designed to ensure that the US would only go to war with a full national commitment and would then have to draw on enough reserves to ensure there would be a suitable political debate over going to war, which would presumably preclude the tensions and political dissent that had occurred in Vietnam.

In practice, the result of the Total Force Policy was very different. Limited military engagements after Vietnam did not force the services to call up the reserves. The call-up for the Gulf War involved substantial reserve duty for a war that was the subject of intense Congressional debate before the fighting, but which was very popular once it began, involved only short periods of duty, and resulted in very low casualties.

If the Gulf War revealed anything about the Total Force Policy, it was that the insistence on integrating the active and reserve component had made the Army and other services over-dependent on the reserve components for power projection, and seriously delayed the ability to move combat-ready forces into the theater. It also created a political situation where the Congress responded to the demands of local Guard and reserve constituencies by constantly increasing their funding and giving them political priority. As a result, the Army largely gave up on its post Gulf War attempts to reduce dependence on the reserve component; it realized it simply could not win the political struggle.

The end result was that the US began the Iraq War with a force posture better tuned to the Cold War, conventional combat, and the political heritage of Vietnam than the kind of new requirements that had emerged in the Iraq War and which were set forth in QDR 2006. The US force structure had the wrong balance of active and reserve components to sustain combat in long, level-level wars. It had also assigned missions to the reserves that were critical for the counterinsurgency, stability operations, and nation-building missions it faced in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The Iraq War and the Total Force Policy

Ironically, insisting on high RC involvement in the total force needed to go to war did nothing to force the kind of a national dialog some of its supporters had hoped would take place before the US went to war. The problems in the AC-RC mix only began to have a major political impact after operations in Afghanistan and Iraq were well underway. It did nothing to forge a prewar consensus.

The combination of the Total Force Concept and a force structure that emphasized battles against conventional military forces did ensure that US deployment problems were much worse and that US forces were poorly structured to deal with different types of conflict. Critical units like intelligence, military police, combat, combat support, and combat service support forces were placed in the RC to be drawn upon as a "surge force." Moreover, the Air Force had made much of its airlift dependent on the reserves and National Guard -- a dependency that worked in short

wars but not in long ones. These, however, were precisely the counterinsurgency and nation building capabilities the US needed in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere.

These elements of the reserves were now needed on a sustained, rather than a "surge" basis. Speaking at a hearing of the Personnel Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee in February 2005, Gen. Richard Cody, Vice Chief of Staff, Department of the Army, addressed the balance of assets as follows:[70]

> …we went from six month rotations in Afghanistan to nine months and then 12 months, so we could balance this force and at the same time do the transformation…what's happened is for the sourcing of OIF II we've had some spot shortages in some of our high demand low density combat support, combat service support in either the National Guard or in the Reserves or in the Active force Some that come to light are the engineers, transportation, quartermaster, as well as MPs. And what we did was we started, one, going to cross leveling. We went back to the joint staff and we got some joint solutions, like capabilities inside either our other services, and we also went and looked at extending the 12 months boots on the ground to include six months of post-mobilization training so that we could bring units on and get them fully trained up, because some of these units in the Guard and Reserve were at a lower level of manning or equipping.

Reshaping the AC-RC Mix to Deal with the Iraq War

Each reserve component has had a unique -- if not particularly well defined or thoroughly codified -- role in the defense of the nation, and the high deployment levels of every component of the "Total Force" during operations in Iraq and Afghanistan forced military planners reevaluate the roles that the various components had come to play, and what would be the best use for the future.

The Total Force Policy had indeed drawn both the Guard and Reserves into the fight at high rates of deployment, but it was soon apparent that such a system could not be sustained over the longer-term. Rank-and-file personnel expressed their dissatisfaction with the model through attrition while recruiting numbers began to show muted enthusiasm for participation in both the Active and Reserve Components.

The increased use of the RC in Iraq raised concerns about the balance maintained between the AC and RC. Until 2005, the "180-day rule" ensured that all reservists who were mobilized for more than 179 days had to be counted against active duty statistics. In an environment of high mobilization and re-deployments of the RC, however this began to rub up against the concurrent need to adhere to Congressionally mandated end-strengths.

It was reported that the Army was using methods to circumvent this restriction: issuing the same person multiple back-to-back active duty tours of less than 180 each; using more than one reservist to complete a single task – one who starts the task and another to pick up at the 180-day point; couching a single requirement as several different requirements and using the same individual to complete each phase of the task, under a different set of orders for each.

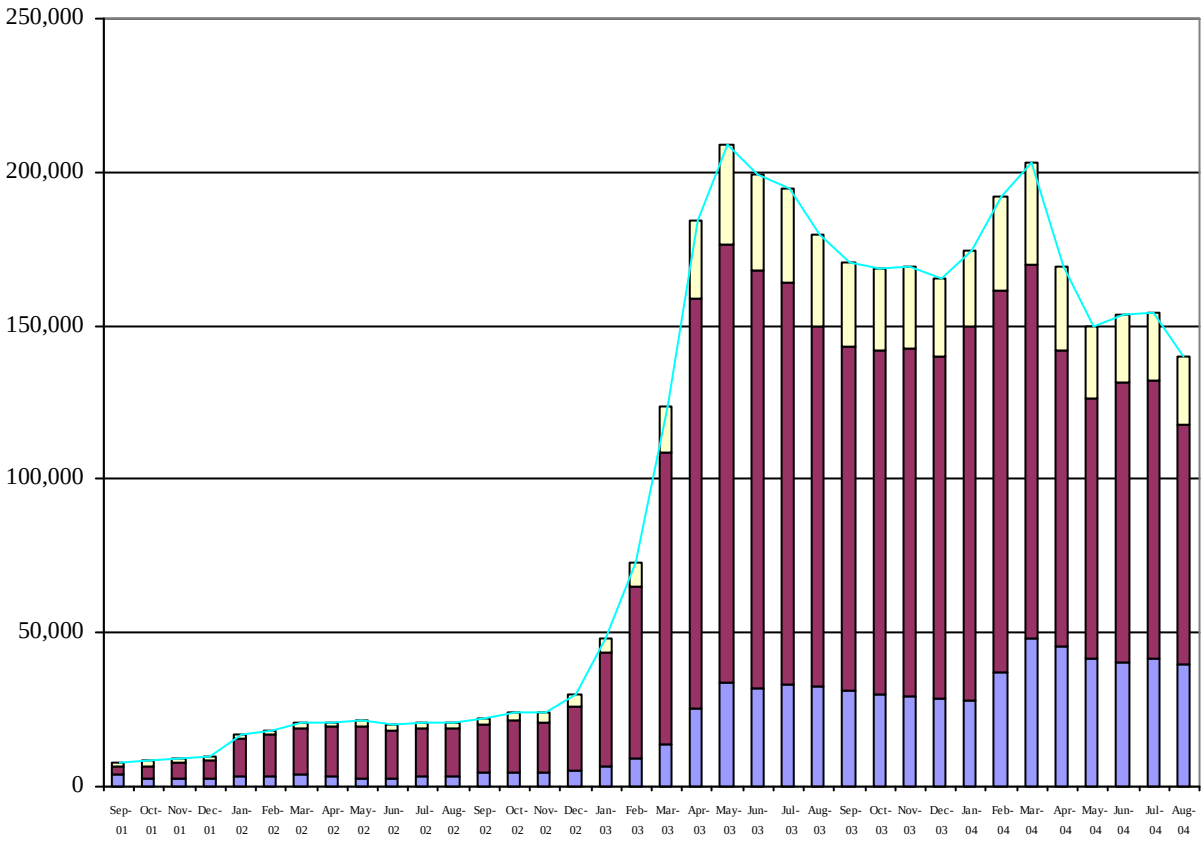
Figures 20-24 show the relative increases in deployments among the various services' active and reserve components from September 2001 – August 2004:

- Figure 20 shows Army deployments from September 2001 – August 2004. The chart is broken down by AC and RC service. The light blue line across the top indicates deployments of total Army (AC/RC).
- Figure 21 shows Air Force deployments from September 2001 – August 2004. The chart is broken down by AC and RC service. The light blue line across the top indicates deployments of total Air Force (AC/RC).
- Figure 22 shows Marine Corps deployments from September 2001 – August 2004. The chart is broken down by AC and RC service. The light blue line across the top indicates deployments of total Marine Corps (AC/RC).

- Figure 23 shows Navy deployments from September 2001 – August 2004. The chart is broken down by AC and RC service. The light blue line across the top indicates deployments of total Navy (AC/RC).
- Figure 24 shows Coast Guard deployments from September 2001 – August 2004. The chart is broken down by AC and RC service. The light blue line across the top indicates deployments of total Coast Guard (AC/RC).

Figure 20

Army AC and RC Deployments September 2001 – August 2004

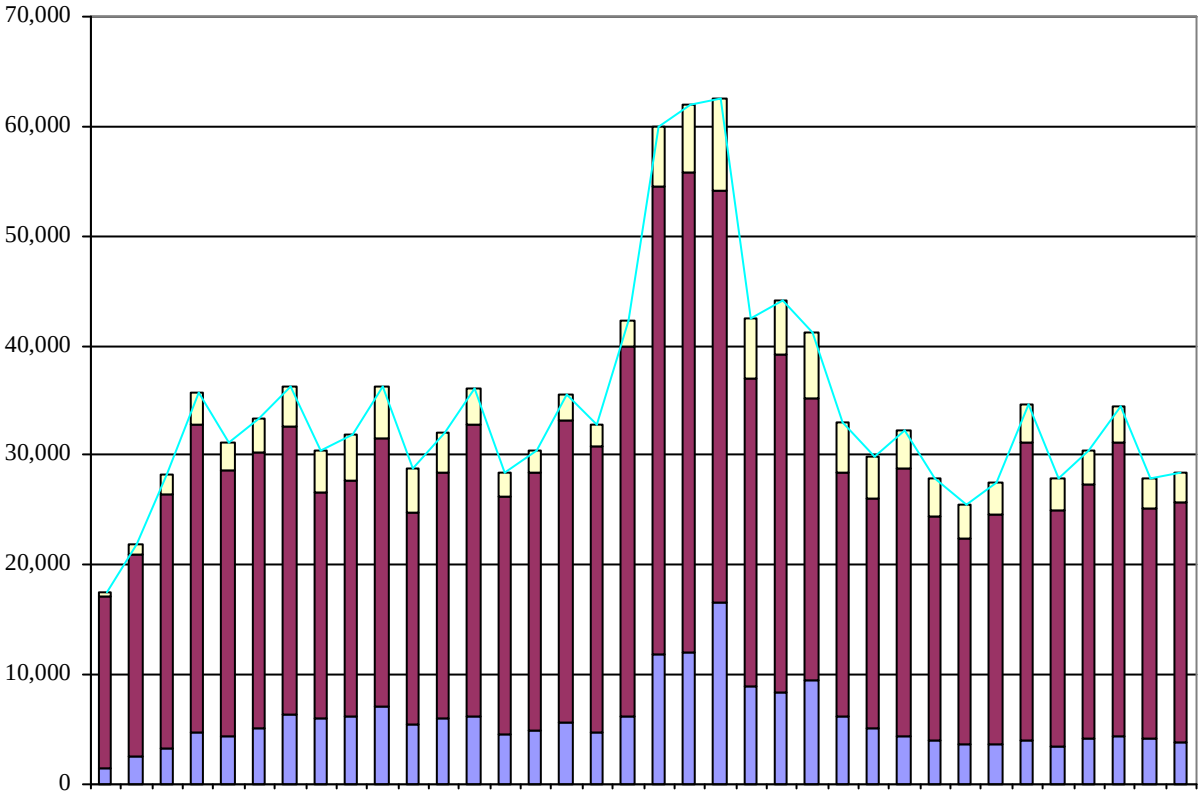


	Sep-01	Oct-01	Nov-01	Dec-01	Jan-02	Feb-02	Mar-02	Apr-02	May-02	Jun-02	Jul-02	Aug-02	Sep-02	Oct-02	Nov-02	Dec-02	Jan-03	Feb-03	Mar-03	Apr-03	May-03	Jun-03	Jul-03	Aug-03	Sep-03	Oct-03	Nov-03	Dec-03	Jan-04	Feb-04	Mar-04	Apr-04	May-04	Jun-04	Jul-04	Aug-04
Army Reserves	1,18	1,67	1,58	993	1,08	1,46	1,67	1,82	1,96	1,98	2,06	2,44	2,34	2,57	3,04	3,85	4,74	7,52	14,8	25,5	32,1	30,9	30,5	29,7	27,3	27,1	26,7	25,6	24,8	30,5	33,1	27,5	23,4	22,2	22,1	22,0
Active Army	3,12	3,90	5,27	5,92	12,7	13,6	15,2	16,2	16,8	15,3	15,2	15,5	15,7	16,8	16,5	20,6	36,6	56,2	95,2	133,	142,	136,	131,	117,	112,	111,	113,	111,	121,	124,	121,	96,5	85,0	91,0	90,2	78,4
Army National Guard	3,64	2,86	2,54	2,57	2,99	3,08	3,87	3,09	2,64	2,82	3,33	3,04	4,29	4,71	4,51	5,12	6,66	8,98	13,3	25,1	33,6	32,1	33,0	32,4	30,9	29,9	29,0	28,4	27,9	36,9	48,4	45,3	41,3	40,3	41,9	39,6
Total Army	7,96	8,44	9,41	9,48	16,8	18,2	20,7	21,1	21,4	20,1	20,6	21,0	22,3	24,1	24,1	29,6	48,0	72,7	123,	184,	208,	199,	194,	179,	170,	168,	169,	165,	174,	192,	202,	169,	149,	153,	154,	140,

*A deployment of a member occurring at any time during a month is counted in that month's total. Source: Defense Manpower Data Center.

Figure 21

Air Force AC and RC Deployments September 2001 – August 2004

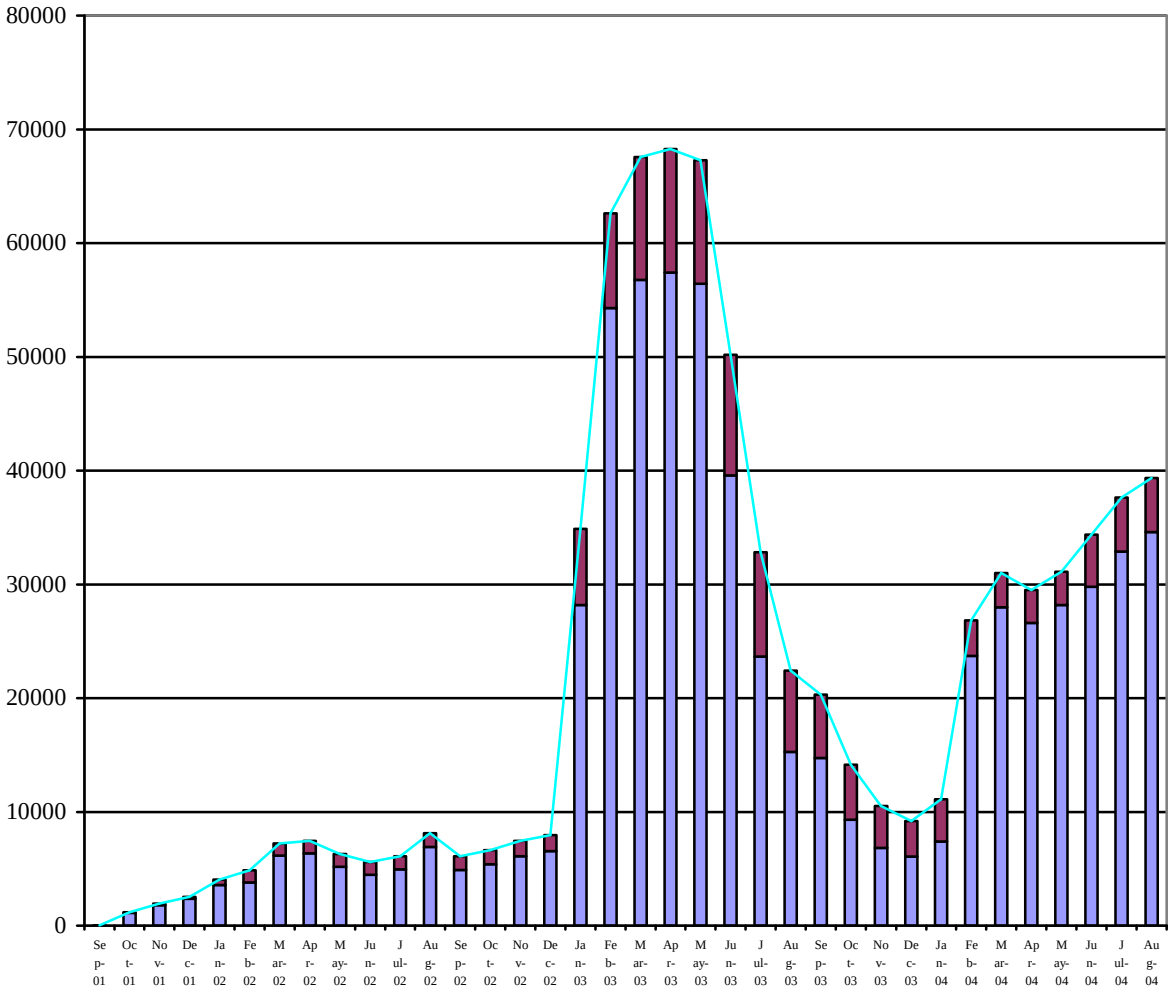


	Sep-01	Oct-01	Nov-01	Dec-01	Jan-02	Feb-02	Mar-02	Apr-02	May-02	Jun-02	Jul-02	Aug-02	Sep-02	Oct-02	Nov-02	Dec-02	Jan-03	Feb-03	Mar-03	Apr-03	May-03	Jun-03	Jul-03	Aug-03	Sep-03	Oct-03	Nov-03	Dec-03	Jan-04	Feb-04	Mar-04	Apr-04	May-04	Jun-04	Jul-04	Aug-04
Air Force Reserves	497	897	1,776	2,953	2,540	3,085	3,659	3,830	4,204	4,677	4,043	3,556	3,232	2,248	1,985	2,355	1,927	2,363	5,548	6,153	8,338	5,477	5,011	6,087	4,504	3,736	3,484	3,564	3,024	2,961	3,486	2,875	3,115	3,378	2,702	2,732
Active Air Force	15,52	18,51	23,18	28,03	24,35	25,11	26,22	20,57	21,42	24,47	19,28	22,43	26,54	21,66	23,57	27,54	26,07	33,82	42,68	43,69	37,56	28,14	30,65	25,69	22,14	21,05	24,34	20,34	18,86	20,98	27,22	21,50	23,05	26,71	20,98	21,97
Air Guard	1,524	2,479	3,299	4,825	4,354	5,148	6,376	6,070	6,196	7,071	5,449	6,093	6,273	4,493	4,932	5,693	4,779	6,164	11,77	12,07	16,57	8,911	8,469	9,410	6,269	5,103	4,373	4,051	3,642	3,622	3,947	3,457	4,211	4,418	4,238	3,817
Total Air Force	17,55	21,88	28,25	35,81	31,24	33,34	36,25	30,47	31,82	36,21	28,77	32,08	36,05	28,40	30,49	35,59	32,77	42,35	60,00	61,92	62,47	42,53	44,13	41,18	32,92	29,89	32,20	27,96	25,53	27,56	34,65	27,83	30,38	34,50	27,92	28,52

*A deployment of a member occurring at any time during a month is counted in that month's total. Source: Defense Manpower Data Center.

Figure 22

Marine Corps AC and RC Deployments September 2001 – August 2004

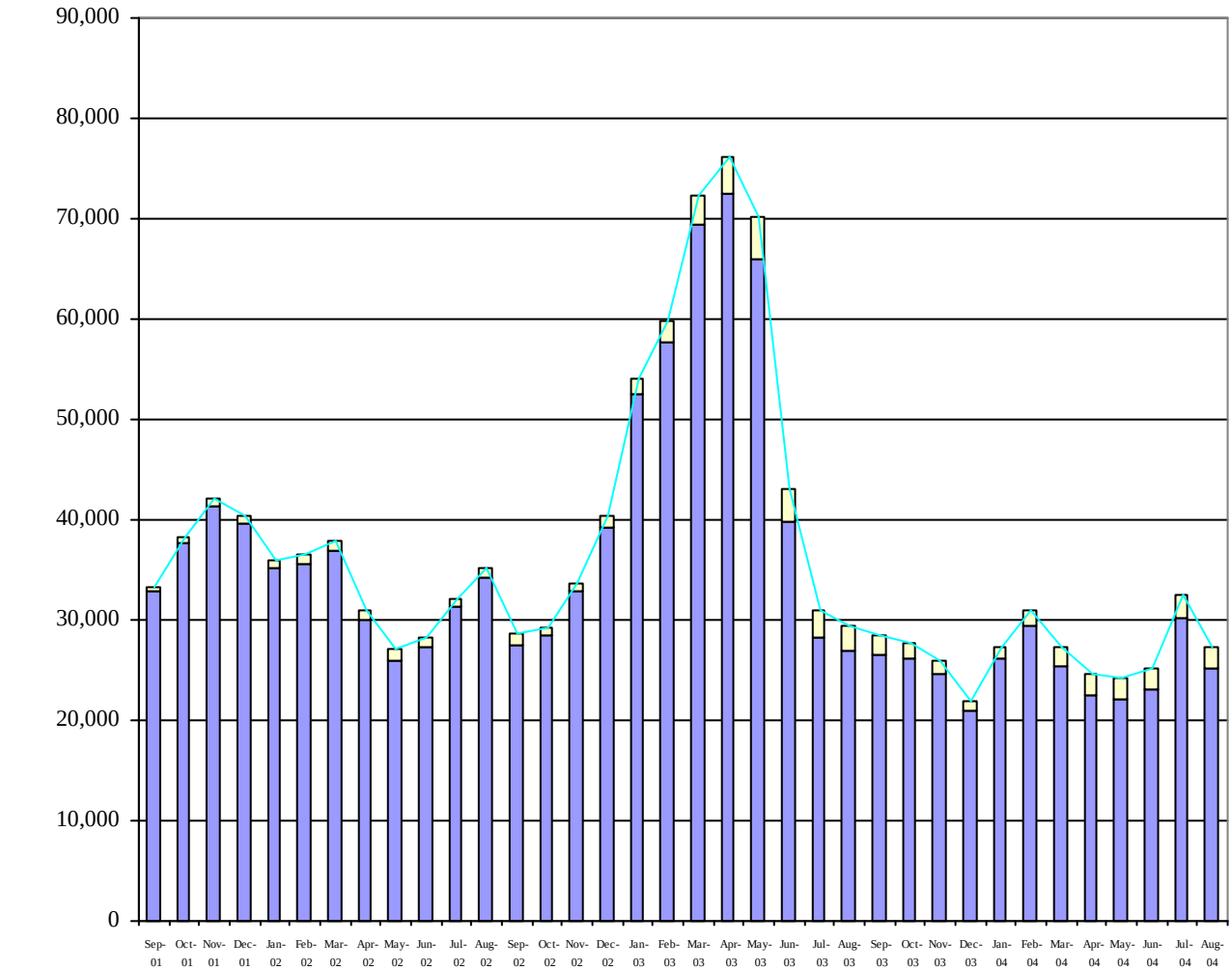


	Sep-01	Oct-01	Nov-01	Dec-01	Jan-02	Feb-02	Mar-02	Apr-02	May-02	Jun-02	Jul-02	Aug-02	Sep-02	Oct-02	Nov-02	Dec-02	Jan-03	Feb-03	Mar-03	Apr-03	May-03	Jun-03	Jul-03	Aug-03	Sep-03	Oct-03	Nov-03	Dec-03	Jan-04	Feb-04	Mar-04	Apr-04	May-04	Jun-04	Jul-04	Aug-04		
Marine Corps Reserve	7	55	137	179	477	1,05	1,07	1,08	1,10	1,14	1,15	1,21	1,22	1,24	1,35	1,40	6,69	8,31	10,7	10,8	10,8	10,5	9,18	7,13	5,56	4,83	3,67	3,09	3,71	3,12	3,02	2,90	2,91	4,58	4,75	4,75		
Active Marine Corps	16	1,13	1,79	2,35	3,57	3,80	6,16	6,36	5,18	4,46	4,94	6,90	4,88	5,39	6,09	6,55	28,1	54,2	56,7	57,4	56,4	39,5	23,6	15,2	14,7	9,32	6,83	6,08	7,39	23,7	27,9	26,6	28,1	29,7	32,8	34,5		
Total Marine Corps	23	1,19	1,93	2,53	4,04	4,86	7,23	7,44	6,29	5,61	6,10	8,11	6,11	6,64	7,45	7,95	34,8	62,6	67,5	68,2	67,2	50,1	32,8	22,4	20,3	14,1	10,5	9,18	11,1	26,8	31,0	29,5	31,1	34,3	37,6	39,3		

*A deployment of a member occurring at any time during a month is counted in that month's total. Source: Defense Manpower Data Center.

Figure 23

Navy AC and RC Deployments September 2001 – August 2004

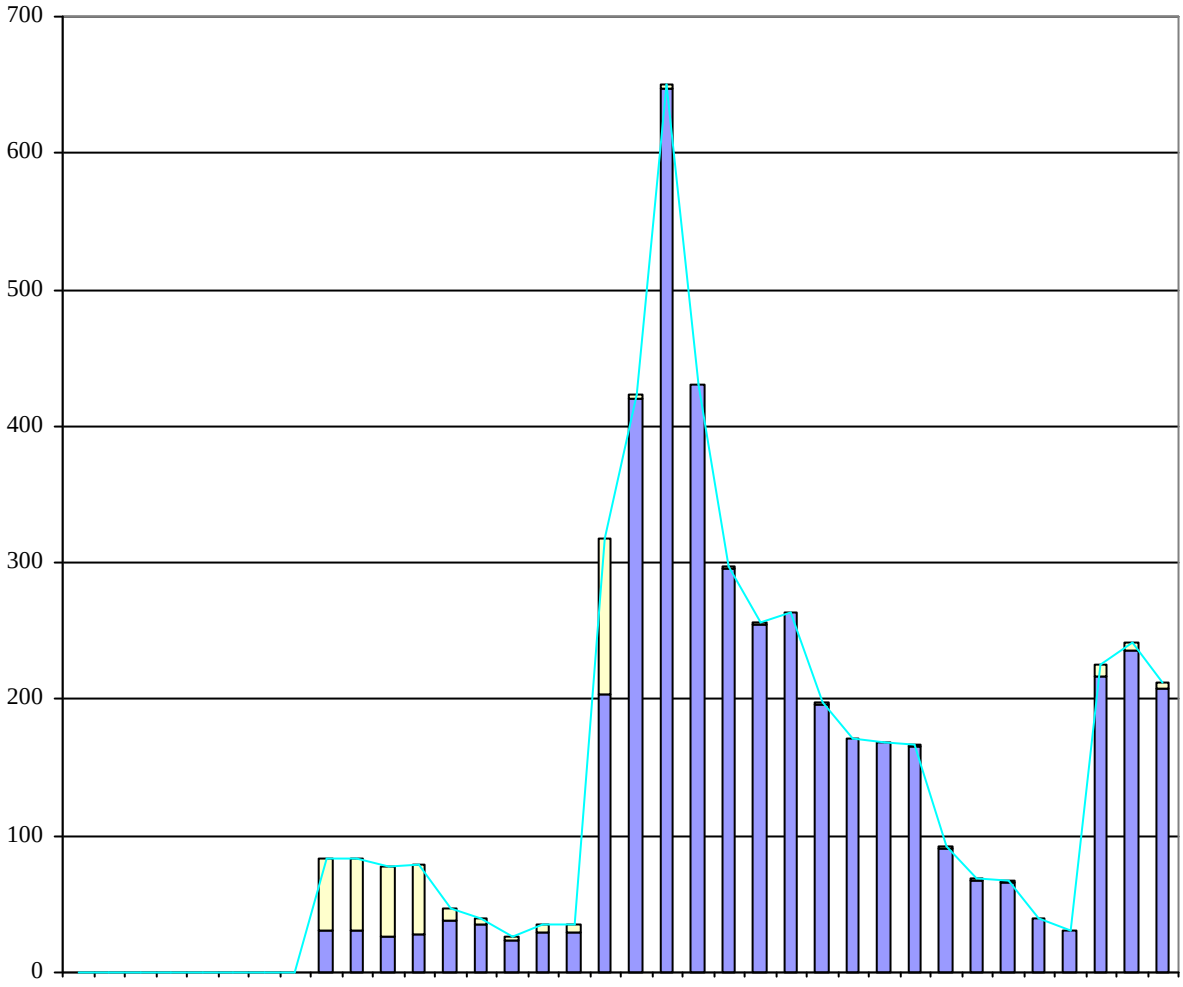


	Sep-01	Oct-01	Nov-01	Dec-01	Jan-02	Feb-02	Mar-02	Apr-02	May-02	Jun-02	Jul-02	Aug-02	Sep-02	Oct-02	Nov-02	Dec-02	Jan-03	Feb-03	Mar-03	Apr-03	May-03	Jun-03	Jul-03	Aug-03	Sep-03	Oct-03	Nov-03	Dec-03	Jan-04	Feb-04	Mar-04	Apr-04	May-04	Jun-04	Jul-04	Aug-04
Navy Reserves	252	641	772	625	775	879	1,003	1,063	1,010	952	854	957	1,028	732	775	1,230	1,623	2,161	2,908	3,667	4,240	3,335	2,625	2,489	1,767	1,407	1,236	976	1,112	1,534	1,989	2,097	2,164	2,092	2,154	2,242
Active Navy	32,93	37,72	41,30	39,71	35,19	35,59	36,92	29,93	26,02	27,40	31,25	34,31	27,53	28,49	32,90	39,19	52,49	57,70	69,37	72,53	65,94	39,83	28,30	27,01	26,60	26,21	24,67	20,93	26,13	29,42	25,29	22,53	22,07	23,12	30,27	25,10
Total Navy	33,19	38,36	42,07	40,33	35,96	36,47	37,92	31,00	27,03	28,35	32,11	35,27	28,56	29,22	33,67	40,42	54,11	59,86	72,27	76,20	70,18	43,17	30,92	29,50	28,37	27,62	25,90	21,91	27,24	30,96	27,28	24,63	24,24	25,22	32,42	27,34

*A deployment of a member occurring at any time during a month is counted in that month's total. Source: Defense Manpower Data Center.

Figure 24

Coast Guard AC and RC Deployments September 2001 – August 2004



	Sep-01	Oct-01	Nov-01	Dec-01	Jan-02	Feb-02	Mar-02	Apr-02	May-02	Jun-02	Jul-02	Aug-02	Sep-02	Oct-02	Nov-02	Dec-02	Jan-03	Feb-03	Mar-03	Apr-03	May-03	Jun-03	Jul-03	Aug-03	Sep-03	Oct-03	Nov-03	Dec-03	Jan-04	Feb-04	Mar-04	Apr-04	May-04	Jun-04	Jul-04	Aug-04
Coast Guard Reserves	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	52	52	51	51	9	5	3	6	6	114	2	2	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	9	6	5
Active Coast Guard	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	31	26	28	38	35	24	29	29	204	421	648	430	296	255	263	196	171	168	165	91	68	66	39	31	217	236	208
Total Coast Guard	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	83	83	77	79	47	40	27	35	35	318	423	650	430	297	256	264	197	171	169	167	92	69	67	40	31	226	242	213

*A deployment of a member occurring at any time during a month is counted in that month's total. Source: Defense Manpower Data Center.

The Debate Over the Future AC-RC Mix

The growing need to reduce the operational distinction between RC and AC personnel in Iraq led to new legislation in the 2005 Defense Authorization Act, which eliminated the 180-day rule. The act also sought to bring the RC in line with the AC in other ways, particularly bringing RC benefits more in line with those of the AC. The act generally doubled or tripled RC bonuses and increased RC monthly rates under the Montgomery GI bill. Yet some argued that bringing compensation closer to par with the AC would only help to codify the over-use of the RC.

Indeed, the legislation did little more than legalize the problem. The strain on the reserves triggered a much broader debate over whether a new force planning concept should be developed that would return the RC to its traditional role as a reserve force that is only called up in a major conflict, or whether the US should create a Total Force Concept or "operational RC." At the same time, it raised the issue of whether the problem was finding the right mix of AC and RC components or whether the total pool of men and women in both components was simply too small to carry out the wars and other missions the US might have to fight in the future.

The decision, so far, has been to try to rebalance the AC-RC mix largely within the limits of the present total pool of personnel in both components, and even to seek manpower cuts in the process to allow funds to be shifted to procurement. The US Army and QDR 2006 proposed to deal with this aspect of America's force transformation problems by increasing the number of active military personnel in warfighting roles without increasing end strength, and by restructuring and "rebalancing" the active and reserve components of the military.

Politics present another kind of problem. The merits of the case are one thing. The political clout of the National Guard Bureau and various state and local reserve groups is another. While shifting these assets might reduce future strain on the RC, many in the higher echelons of the National Guard and Reserves did not want to see their forces stripped of high-demand/low asset capabilities. One concern is that a loss of critical warfighting assets in the RC would mean a corresponding decrease in funding and equipment deliveries. Because the RC has historically been under-equipped relative to the AC, and equipped with older equipment passed on from the active force, senior officers in the National Guard and Reserves lobbied hard to maintain the RC's relevance in the warfight. In this sense, rebalancing inevitably became a turf battle as well as a debate over what America's future force posture should be.

The Personnel Impact of Force Restructuring and Modularity

The Iraq War has also forced the US to restructure the assignments and skills of the manpower pool in both the active and reserve components, and seek to create a much more flexible force structure that emphasized "modularity" and tailoring the deployed force to the mission, rather than conventional war fighting. The Department of Defense has had to make an urgent effort to restructure its force posture to make its forces more deployable, shift men and women into specialties needed for the wars the US now had to fight, and seek more lasting solutions to reducing the strain on both the active and reserve components likely to be called up in long wars. It forced the Department of Defense to make a force-wide effort to correct the outdated personnel force structure that had evolved during the Cold War.

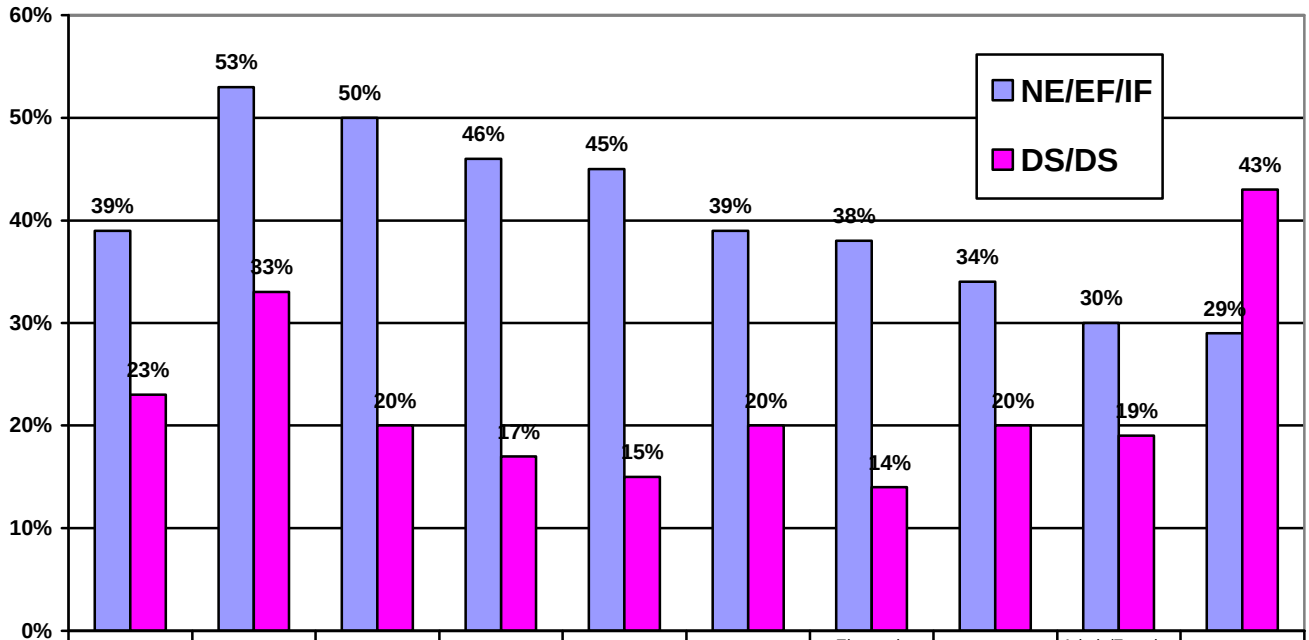
Personnel had to be moved out of low-demand specialties and unit types, and redirected to increase personnel in more high-demand units. At the same time, the US sought to emphasize the kind of forces and skills that could provide a more agile force capable of fighting non-linear combatants on multiple fronts, dealing with sustained counterinsurgency campaigns, providing

for stability and national building operations, and dealing with the problems of homeland defense.

As has been discussed earlier, this shift inevitably further complicated the problem of rebalancing the active and reserve components. As Figure 25 shows, the Iraq War forced massive increases in the level of deployment by key specialties relative to the Gulf War. The level of combat deployment in the combat, intelligence, engineering, and electronics elements of the reserves more than doubled. Major further increases took place in the deployment of logistics, maintenance, and technical personnel.

Figure 25

RC Inventory Use by Skill, as Percent of Total: First and Second Iraq Wars



	Total RC	Logistics/Svc	Combat Arms	Intelligence	Civ Eng/Utilities	Maintenance	Electronic Repair	Technical/Misc	Admin/Functional Support	Health Care
NE/EF/IF	39%	53%	50%	46%	45%	39%	38%	34%	30%	29%
DS/DS	23%	33%	20%	17%	15%	20%	14%	20%	19%	43%

Note: NE = Operation Noble Eagle, EF = Operation Enduring Freedom, IF = Operation Iraqi Freedom; NE/EF/IF Total RC percentage reflects: [Total # of mobilized RC members (343,020)]/[SelRes strength (869,003) as of Mar 04]; DS/DS Total RC percentage reflects: [Total # of mobilized RC members (267,330)]/[SelRes strength (1,166,427) as pf Sep 91]; Occupational Categories exclude trainees/students/undesignated specialties. Source: Adapted from DOD briefing to CSIS, "The Reserve Components: Use of -- and Stress on -- the Force (as of March 31, 2004)," June 7, 2004.

The Broad Outline of "Modularity"

The DOD's solutions to providing these capabilities are still evolving and it is far from clear that the solutions now underway will have a lasting impact. As of early January 2006, however, the DOD sought to undertake policy, organizational, and personnel changes between 2004 and 2009 that would create new "high demand" units and stabilize the force, providing more predictability for service members and their families. In accordance with the effort to create a more agile force,

better suited to address what planners believed to be the new paradigm of warfare, the basic goals of the overall effort were:[71]

- Enhance early responsiveness

  Structure forces to reduce the need for involuntary mobilization during early stages of a rapid response operation

- Resolve stressed career fields

  Structure forces to limit involuntary mobilization to reasonable and sustainable rates

- Employ innovative personnel management practices

  Enhance volunteerism

  Provide range of participation opportunities

  Capitalize locally on reservists civilian skills (e.g., "reachback")

  Improve mobilization process

  Provide predictable periods of service

The end result was meant to provide a force not only more capable of tackling asymmetric enemies and carrying out multiple operations and peacekeeping/S&R missions, but also a force more friendly to the citizen soldier, with an eye to reducing stress on personnel. In rebalancing the forces, the primary initiatives meant to help reduce stress on the force included:

- Continuum of Service: meant to provide individual service members greater flexibility in service. Between the extremes of "downtime" and OPTEMPO is a pool of individuals who may participate at varying levels of service throughout a career. The initiative was meant to reduce the sharp divide between active (365 days/year) and reserve (39 days/year), with greater flexibility of participation for each. As of mid-2006, this model was not yet an operational reality.

- Reachback: Employing advanced technologies to allow more operations to take place from CONUS, rather than deploying to theater.

- Increased use of civilians: Tap timely critical skill sets already available in the civilian population rather than keeping these skill sets (such as specialized IT) employed in the force at all times. Sought to save money on certain skill sets as well as free up personnel for other roles, such as combat, CS, and CSS. As of early 2006, procedures and directives to hire greater percentages of civilians were largely ineffective.

- Improvements in mobilization processes: Mobilization remained largely dependant upon unit readiness, which varied greatly from unit to unit. DOD lacked proper readiness tracking. Issues with continuity of healthcare for reservists and their families, as well as service inequities in implementing pay and compensation policies were also cited as issues in the mobilization process.[72]

It is important to note that none of these concepts involved increasing active and reserve end strength. They depend on reorganization, rebalancing, and the deployment of new military technologies. They also placed heavy emphasis on the idea that Iraq and Afghanistan would be the model for determining the need for military personnel in future wars. The FY2007 budget request and QDR 2006 established a DOD goal to stabilize the Army's end strength at 482,400 Active and 533,000 Reservists, and the Marine Corps' end strength at 175,000 Active and 39,000 Reservists by FY 2011.This represented a reduction across the board of personnel for these service from their 2006 levels:

- Active Army: 522,400

- Active Marines: 178,000

- Army RC: 555,000 (205,000 Army Reservist and 350,000 Army National Guard)
- Marine Corps Reserves: 39,600

The Restructuring of the US Army Personnel Structure and Its "Modular Force"

So far, the Army is the only service where it is clear how these concepts are intended to be put into practice. The Army virtually had to lead in the effort to implement such concepts. The Army Reserve and National Guard contained more than two-thirds of the Army's psychological operations units, chemical units, and hospital and medical groups. The Army Reserve and National Guard also contained more than 95% of the Army's civil affairs units, internment brigades, JAGs, training and exercise divisions, and railway units.[73]

As a result, the Army developed force transformation plans that called for moving much of its high-demand, low-density personnel and assets needed for counterinsurgency and "long wars" into the active component to reduce the strain on the reserves, give the US more rapid deployment capability without calling up the reserves, and provide more personnel in key specialties. The Army rushed changes in the specialties of more than 100,000 soldiers by early 2005. Its goal was to produce a 50% increase in infantry capabilities, and increases in critical specialties such as Special Forces (SOF), MP, MI, civil affairs, etc. As of early 2005, the Army claimed to have already converted more than 34,000 spaces.[74] The scale of this shift is illustrated by the Army unit restructuring plan for 2004-2009 shown in Figure 26.

These shifts in military personnel were tied to a "modular force" plan built upon the Army's belief that modular units would be better equipped to conduct "full-spectrum" operations on multiple fronts, as seen in Iraq and Afghanistan. Its 10-division active force was to be transformed into a brigade-level unit of action (UA) force by 2007.

Modularity was also sought as a means of facilitating "jointness," as the new modular units were to be more flexible and adaptive by design. Communications, liaisons, and logistics capacities were to be built into each smaller modular brigade, with the aim being greater autonomy, thereby supporting an enhanced ability to conduct joint multinational missions. An entire echelon of command was likewise being phased out above the brigade headquarters, moving from three levels to two. Several layers of logistics headquarters were also to be removed to increase responsiveness and improve joint logistics integration.[75]

The Army's 2005 Posture Statement claimed that modularity would furthermore increase the number of *total* brigades from 48 to 77, with 10 active brigades (three and a third divisions, in previous terms), by the end of 2006.[76] The initial estimates of the needed number of such units of action typically ranged between 40 and 48.

The 2006 QDR stated that the DOD would create modular brigades in all three Army components: 117 in the regular Army (42 Brigade Combat Teams [BCTs] and 75 support brigades); 106 in the Army National Guard (28 BCTs and 78 support brigades); and 58 support brigades in the US Army Reserve. According the report, this would equate to "a 46% increase in readily available combat power and a better balance between combat and support forces."[77]

The 2007 Defense Budget made provisions for the conversion of the Army force from 48 regular combat brigades to 70 modular Brigade Combat Teams at an estimated cost of $40 billion during FY2007-FY2011. Plans called for the number of Active Army BCTs to increase from 33 to 42, and for National Guard BCTs to increase from 15 to 28 by FY 2011. These numbers had a higher figure for National Guard BCTs than the Army originally planned, reflecting pressure on the Army and DOD from Congress and lobbyists for the Guard.

The Army's goal was that each new modular BCT, which would include about 3,000-4,000 personnel, would have at least the same combat capability as a brigade under the previous division-base force, which ranged between 3,000-5,000 personnel. Although smaller in size, the new modular brigades were planned to be as capable as their predecessors due to different equipment, such as advanced communications and surveillance equipment, and a different mix of personnel and support assets.[78]

At a press briefing on January 25, 2006, Donald Rumsfeld said that as a result of the reforms, "some 75% of the Army's brigade structure should always be ready, in the event of a crisis, and more capacity in modules that are more flexible and more applicable to the new century."[79] The aims of this "modularization" of the force included:[80]

- At least a 30% increase in the combat power of the active component of the force
- An increase in the rotational pool of ready units by at least 50%
- Creation of a deployable joint-capable headquarters
- Force design upon which the future network centric developments [Future Combat System] can be readily applied
- Reduced stress on the force through a more predictable deployment cycle:
  - — One year deployed and two years at home station for the active component
  - — One year deployed and four years at home station for the Reserve Force
  - — One year deployed and five years at home station for the National Guard Force
  - — Reduced mobilization times for the reserve component as a whole

Figure 26

Army Restructuring of Units: FY2004-FY2009

Decrease	Increase
36 – Filed Artillery Units	149 – Military Police Units
10 – Air Defense Units	16 – Transportation Units
11 – Engineer Units	9 – Petroleum/Water Distribution Units
19 – Armor Units	8 – Civil Affairs Units
65 – Logistics Units	4 – Psychological Operations Units
	11 – Biological Detection Units

Source: Department of the Army briefing to the media on "Building Army Capabilities," February 17, 2004. Adapted from graph in Andrew Feickert's U.S. Army's Modular Redesign: Issues for Congress, Congressional Research Service, Updated May 20, 2005, p. 18.

Progress in 2004

In terms of actual progress, the Army reacted quickly under the pressure of wartime need. Two divisions were fully converted by year-end 2004, and the Congressional Research Service summarized overall progress in 2004 as follows:[81]

> In FY2004, the Army began converting three of its ten active duty divisions into modular forces. Two of these divisions -- the 3rd Infantry Division from Ft. Stewart, Georgia and the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) from Ft. Campbell, Kentucky -- were totally converted in FY2004 and their respective division headquarters were converted into UE x's - headquarters units which are designed to command up to six UAs as well as Supporting Units of Action. The 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) from Ft. Drum, New York also began its modular conversion in FY2004 by adding a third UA brigade combat team as well as converting its division headquarters to a UE x structure. A fourth UA is scheduled to be added to the 10th Mountain Division in FY2005 and will be stationed at Ft. Polk, Louisiana at the Joint Readiness Training Center. Also in 2004, the Army's third Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) will be stood up as part of Hawaii-based the 25th Infantry Division (Light).
>
> In March 2005, the converted 3rd Infantry Division was sent back to Iraq for a year-long deployment. The 3rd Infantry Division led the U.S. assault on Baghdad in March of 2003 under the Army's traditional three brigade, division design and experts suggest that the current deployment of the reconfigured 3rd Infantry Division will yield a significant amount of valuable information which could help with ongoing and future modular conversions. The 101st Airborne Division, which also converted in FY2004, is slated to return to Iraq for the second time in late summer or early fall of 2005.

Progress in 2005

Gains were more modest in 2005, although the following conversions were planned:[82]

> In addition to the creation of the 10th Mountain Division's fourth UA in 2005, a number of other conversions are planned to occur this year. The 4th Infantry Division at Ft. Hood, Texas is scheduled to begin its modularization, with the division headquarters converting to a UE x. The 1st Corps headquarters, stationed at Ft. Lewis, Washington is planned to be downgraded and converted to a UE x in 2005 and it has been reported that the Army is attempting to station the former 1st Corps headquarters at Camp Zama, Japan.
>
> In FY2005, the 25th Infantry Division plans to stand up its fourth UA, with an airborne capability for forced entry operations, at Ft. Richardson, Alaska, and the 4th Infantry Division plans to add a fourth UA at Ft. Hood. Also in 2005, the 172nd Separate Infantry Brigade stationed at Ft. Richardson, Alaska is scheduled to convert to the Army's third SBCT.

The 3rd Infantry Division had somewhat mixed success. The division immediately had to be augmented with battalions borrowed from other units, fueling debate about the practice of stripping one "maneuver" battalion from each brigade as part of conversion to modularity.[83] Some argued that Iraq could not be considered the standard test case for modular forces, as future operations were likely to take place in higher security environments. Still others argued that the warfare represented in Iraq was precisely the environment around which modularity was structured, and thus the need to augment the 3rd Infantry Division marked early evidence of weakness in the model.

Growing concerns also emerged over the ability to equip the modular force. A March 2005 GAO report cast serious doubt on the progress made:[84]

> …modular brigade combat teams require significant increases in the levels of equipment, particularly command, control, and communications equipment; wheeled vehicles; and artillery and mortars. Examples of command, control, and communications equipment that are key enablers for the modular brigade combat teams include advanced radios, Joint Network Node systems, ground sensors such as the Long-Range Advanced Scout Surveillance System, and Blue Force Tracker, among others. This critical equipment makes possible the joint network communications, information superiority, and logistical operations over a large, dispersed battlespace in which modular forces are being designed to effectively operate. Although the Army has some of this equipment on hand, the levels being fielded to brigade combat teams are well below the levels tested by the Training and Doctrine Command.
>
> …it is not clear yet how the Army plans to bring brigades that have already undergone modular conversion up to Training and Doctrine Command tested levels of personnel and equipment following their deployments. For example, the design requires a division with four modular brigade combat teams to have

> approximately 28 tactical unmanned aerial vehicle systems. These systems provide surveillance and reconnaissance for soldiers on the battlefield and enable them to more safely carry out their missions. However, because of current shortages, the 3rd Infantry Division and the 101st Airborne Division are only authorized to have 4 systems, and at the time of our visits, the 3rd Infantry Division had 1 and the 101st Airborne had none on hand. The Army requested funding for only 13 of these systems in the fiscal year 2005 supplemental appropriation request to the Congress; thus, it remains unclear as to when the 3rd Infantry Division or the 101st Airborne Divisions will receive their full complement of tactical unmanned aerial vehicle systems. Also, the Army may continue to provide other divisions undergoing conversion with limited quantities that fall short of the design requirement.

Progress in 2006

Plans for 2006 and beyond provide considerable detail on the desired completion of the modularization process for active forces, and the goal for the Army's restructuring of its 10 active divisions to be completed for FY2007:[85]

> In FY2006, the Army plans to convert three division headquarters -- the Ft. Hood, Texas-based, 1st Cavalry Division, the 25th Infantry Division (Light), and the 82nd Airborne Division from Ft. Bragg, North Carolina -- to the UE x structure. These divisions' current brigades are scheduled to convert to UAs during this time period. The 1st Cavalry Division and the 82nd Airborne Division are scheduled to build a fourth UA, respectively and the 25th Infantry Division (Light) will build two additional UAs. The 1st Cavalry Division's fourth UA is planned to be stationed at Ft. Bliss, Texas. The 25th Infantry's third UA will be stationed at Ft. Benning, Georgia and the fourth UA at Ft. Riley, Kansas. In addition, the 173rd Airborne Brigade stationed in Vincenza, Italy is scheduled to add about 2,000 soldiers and become a UA and the Army plans to activate its fourth SBCT at Ft. Lewis, Washington, when the 2nd Cavalry Regiment -- the former opposing forces at the Army's Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) -- converts to a SBCT.
>
> According to the 2005 Army Modernization Plan dated February 2005, the Army will decide in FY2006 whether or not to add five additional UA brigade combat teams (BCTS) to the Active component, eventually resulting in 48 Active component UA BCTs. According to sources, the Army has already decided this year not to add the additional five UA BCTs in FY2007 due to anticipated personnel and funding shortages. In addition, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports that the Army is currently considering adding an additional combat battalion to the UAs that could have further personnel and equipment implications for the Army's modularization efforts.
>
> In FY2007, the Army plans to convert the headquarters of the Korea-based 2nd Infantry Division to the UE x structure as well as the headquarters of the Germany-based 1st Armored Division and the 1st Infantry Division. If the Army does decide to add five additional UAs in FY2007, two are scheduled to be stood up in the 2nd Infantry Division, one each in the 1st Armored and 1st Infantry Division, and an additional non-aligned infantry UA would also be created. Also in FY2007, the Army's fifth SBCT is scheduled to be activated under the 25th Infantry Division (Light).
>
> The Army's modernization and campaign plans call for the modularization of the Active Army to be completed by the end of FY2007 but it is not unreasonable to assume that modularization activities will extend beyond 2007. Some suggest that personnel, equipment, and budget demands, as well as modifications to UAs based on experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan could extend the Army's modularization window beyond 2007.

The National Guard and Reserves

The efforts to convert the National Guard and Reserves have lagged behind the active Army. Conversion in the reserve component was planned to take place on its own timetable, roughly concurrent with conversion in the AC. Part of the lag in conversion of the RC may, however, have been attributable to the RC's need to realign its support units in accordance with new modular designs for the active force. The Army's 2005 Modernization Plan called for the following conversions for the National Guard between 2006-2010, shown below in Figure 27.

Figure 27

Army National Guard Modular Conversions, FY2006-2010

Fiscal Year	UE x Conversions	UA BCT Conversions
2006	2	6
2007	2	6
2008	2	7*
2009	1	6
2010	0	6
Total	**7**	**31**

* This total includes a National Guard Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT). Source: Andrew Feickert, U.S. Army's Modular Redesign: Issues for Congress, Congressional Research Service, Updated May 20, 2005, p. 5.

Alternative Views of Modularity

The Army's modularity plans have faced challenges which go beyond affordability and whether they can do the job with existing or less manpower. One such debate is whether the Army's new plans provide the proper mix of warfighting manpower in the field or devote too many men and women to headquarters and other overhead roles. As of early 2006, the Army's plans lowered the number of personnel per brigade, while they increased headquarters and "overhead" personnel in order to facilitate jointness.

A series of eight reports provided to the Pentagon by the Institute for Defense Analysis (IDA) at the end of 2005 found that the Army's plan to reorganize forces into brigade combat teams would reduce net fighting capabilities rather than strengthen it. In order to increase the overall number of brigades without increasing the overall manpower of the service, the IDA studies indicated the Army would have to strip each brigade of one "maneuver" battalion, composed of infantry troops or heavy arms. This would bring the number of such battalions to two per brigade, down from the traditional three, in part because each brigade will also have a reconnaissance battalion for support.

At the same time, each brigade headquarters was planned to grow from less than 100 personnel to 250, a change meant to enhance joint capabilities. The argument for the change was essentially that because each brigade would be redesigned to enable jointness, the brigades would operate effectively as units that could be "plugged into" a larger force structure. Overall, however, the move would mean a net loss of in the neighborhood of 40 maneuver battalions.

The IDA report contended that the essence of land power was resident in the maneuver battalions that occupy terrain, control populations, and fight battles. According to the report, the Army plan would reduce the number of these battalions to 20% below the number available in 2003, while increasing BCT headquarters by 11.5%. The report further suggested that the Army's effort was not properly informed by input from global combatant commanders. According to IDA, the needs of these commanders in the field would be better served by the traditional three maneuver

battalions, and perhaps even better served by the addition of a fourth, rather than reduction to two.[86]

A second concern was the reliance on new, increased, and enhanced technologies as part of the modularization package. Modularity calls for technology to make up for, in part, what is lost in manpower at the brigade level. Plans called for new technologies and IT personnel operating in the joint structure to streamline combat operations. Concerns arose, however, as to the synchronization of modularizing combat personnel structures with the procurement of new technology and IT personnel, as well as training timeframes. Some remained unconvinced that new technologies could be brought online quick enough to mitigate the structural changes in combat personnel.

Continuum of Service and Reachback

The continuum of service model sought to create various "pools" of manpower skill sets, based upon unique individual skill sets. Under this model, skilled individuals -- those with IT, language, medical, and other skills that can see high demand at times of "surge" -- would participate on a standby basis, and would be available as volunteers for short periods of time in or in emergency situations to perform certain needed tasks. Possible problems that arise out of this model include the issue of guaranteed availability.

Questions were raised as to whether these individuals could be recruited into the service under contracts that would guarantee their participation during "emergency" scenarios. Should mandatory circumstances of participation be prescribed, the appeal of the volunteer aspect of the model, it was argued, could be undermined. Likewise, the issue of employer support for participation, even on a voluntary basis, had to be considered.

One idea that has been floated for the execution of the continuum of service model -- but was not part of any force planning construct as of early 2006 -- was to engage the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) in a different manner than in the past. The IRR had traditionally been designed to be activated after the other reserve forces. However, the Army developed a program called the Arab-America Linguist Program amidst operations in Iraq, which used the IRR to bring native Arabic speakers into the Army to meet the growing requirements for translation services. This represented a small but not insignificant initial effort to engage the IRR in a new manner.

Likewise, the push to reliance on "reachback" capabilities also drew criticism. Reachback capabilities had been developing since the first Gulf War, and enable senior civilian and military personnel, physically present in CENTCOM or even in CONUS, to take an active role in military strikes in theater. Some argued, however, that the process could potentially lead to a gridlocking of operations as senior personnel attempt to micromanage operations.

A 2005 RAND report suggested that this is precisely what happened during the 2001 air campaign in Afghanistan. The report argued that expanded global connectivity increasingly enabled senior leadership to become involved in the finest detail of force deployment, thereby morphing reachback into "reach-forward" as rear headquarters sought information from US CENTCOM's forward-deployed Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC), and then used that information to try to influence events from the rear. While political considerations were important in the campaign, the report argues, and while senior input was justified in helping to preclude collateral damage, ultimately the level of involvement led to gridlock.

The report also said, however, that the air campaign over Iraq did not face these issues to the same extent. Far fewer delays in targeting approvals were encountered, and only rarely did the

CAOC have to seek such approvals from a higher authority. Moreover, in contrast to Operation Enduring Freedom, the report indicated that the air component had total control over the daily target list. The conclusion reached was that in Afghanistan, "centralized execution worked in spite of itself," but a "larger war demanding 1,000 or more combat sorties a day could not handle it."[87]

Shifts in Manpower Quality and New Training Burdens

Looking more broadly at the problem of overstretch, the Army's modularity plans also illustrate additional challenges to the Army and the other services in solving their present manpower problems. The Army's plans and those of all the other services depend on making existing personnel more effective and efficient, rather than on addressing the issue of whether the manpower pool is adequate.

The Army's plans called for its modular brigades to be staffed with fewer personnel *per brigade* than the traditional division base-force, although the new brigades do have planned increases in personnel for certain specialties, such as military intelligence, military police, etc. The cost and funding of the increased capabilities in these specialties also remained a key uncertainty. Army plans called for the addition of 2,800 military intelligence specialists by the end of FY2005, with an additional 6,200 needed by FY2010, but the FY2007 budget submission assumed this could be funded within the levels close to the previous force cost.

The Army's personnel plans also depended on the assumption that an increased reliance on high technology and "full-spectrum interoperability" would lead to increased effectiveness on the part of the men and women actually in the field. This meant that many of the personnel in the new modular brigades would require different and increased levels of training over the previous structure. The need for additional training will be further increased by the QDR2006 call for major new area and language skills, and the expansion of special forces.

More broadly, the QDR called for major increases in the level of training and capability. As QDR2006 recognized, asymmetric warfare, counterinsurgency, stability operations, and nation-building also require human skills that cannot be provided by technology. As a result, the FY2007 budget requested $760 million during FY2007-FY2011 to provide US forces with the "language and cultural skills appropriate to the areas and missions in which they will be employed in the 21st Century."[88]

The long wars the US must fight in the future require new human capabilities for a wide range of missions ranging from counterterrorism to dealing with the threat of proliferation and weapons of mass destruction:[89]

- Human intelligence; language and cultural awareness
- Persistent surveillance over wide areas; fusion of time-sensitive intelligence with operations
- Capabilities to locate, tag, and track terrorists in all domains, and prompt global strikes to rapidly attack fleeting enemy targets
- SOF to conduct direct action, foreign internal defense, counterterrorist operations and unconventional warfare
- Multipurpose forces to train, equip, and advise indigenous forces; conduct irregular warfare; and support security, stability, transition, and reconstruction (SSTR) operations
- Riverine warfare capabilities

- Authorities to develop the capacity of nations to participate effectively in disrupting and defeating terrorist networks
- Persistent surveillance over wide areas
- Special operations forces to locate, characterize and secure WMD
- Locate, tag and track WMD; detect fissile materials at stand-off ranges
- Interdiction capabilities to stop air, maritime, and ground shipments of WMD, their delivery systems, and related materials
- Joint command and control tailored for the WMD elimination mission
- Capabilities and specialized teams to render safe and secure WMD
- Capability to deploy, sustain, protect, and support SOF in hostile environments

The 2006 QDR also placed emphasis on the need for expanded joint training. Toward this end, the QDR held that the DOD would:[90]

- Develop a Joint Training Strategy to address new mission areas, gaps, and continuous training transformation
- Revise its Training Transformation Plan to incorporate irregular warfare, complex stabilization operations, combating WMD and information operations
- Expand the Training Transformation Business Model to consolidate joint training, prioritize new and emerging missions, and exploit virtual and constructive technologies.

Another issue raised in the QDR was proposed increases in language and cultural skills, as the report stressed the need for more personnel proficient in languages such as Farsi, Arabic, and Chinese. The Department expressed the need for a level of cultural intelligence about the Middle East and Asia comparable to that developed about the Soviet Union during the Cold War. To this end, the QDR stated that the DOD would:[91]

- Increase funding for the Army's pilot linguist program to recruit and train native and heritage speakers to serve as translators in the Active and Reserve Components.
- Require language training for Service Academy and Reserve Officer Training Corps scholarship students, and expand immersion programs, semester abroad study opportunities and inter-academy foreign exchanges.
- Increase military special pay for foreign language proficiency.
- Increase National Security Education Program (NSEP) grants to American elementary, secondary and post-secondary education programs to expand non-European language instruction.
- Establish a Civilian Linguist Reserve Corps, composed of approximately 1,000 people, as an on-call cadre of high-proficiency, civilian language professionals to support the Department's evolving operational needs.
- Modify tactical and operational plans to improve language and regional training prior to deployments and develop country and language familiarization packages and operationally focused language instruction modules for deploying forces.

The QDR's allusion to the Cold War, however, highlights the reality that efforts are being made to create analogous capabilities with far less manpower. The problem with such concepts is trying to provide new capabilities without providing more end strength. They present a serious danger that such concepts will end in calling for "super soldiers," rather than practical and

affordable improvements in military manpower. There are only so many skill sets any given mix of men and women can develop and sustain, and an all-volunteer force structure cannot be based on a force in which every man and woman is above average. It certainly is desirable for soldiers to be more than warfighters, to be "joint" in every respect, and to be paragons of the information age. Whether it is practical is a totally different issue.

The QDR calls for capabilities that virtually must involve much longer training cycles to work, and this means that men and women must be deployed in ways that make such training possible. It is not clear how the Army and Marine Corps can provide both the forces needed for the increased OPTEMPO required for missions in Iraq and Afghanistan and free up enough personnel for training. Redeployments and stop-loss policies kept personnel in theater for extended periods, reducing the available time for training.

The FY2007 budget called for a 33% expansion of Special Operations Forces (SOF), and a 33% increase in Psychological and Civil Affairs Personnel to support the SOF and the Army's modular force. Finding and retaining linguists and cultural experts, however, was easier to call for than to implement, particularly if there is no immediate mission requirement for such personnel, or new missions emerge in other regions and areas. The FY2007 budget also called for a new Marine Corps Special Operations Component to conduct special reconnaissance and other missions. It further established an SOF Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron and increased the number of SEAL teams.

The total cost of this effort is projected at $28.7 billion for FY2007-FY2011, but these do not seem to be incremental funds, and this means the services must somehow pay for such changes while at the same time meeting existing manpower costs. It also may be harder to make a 33% increase in SOF forces than the other new manpower specialties. SOF forces are extremely difficult to create and set extraordinary standards. The rise in private security forces with far higher pay levels since the beginning of the Iraq War has also made them equally difficult to retain. It simply is not clear that such increases are practical without lowering standards.

More Civilians?

It also is not convincing that the problems in military manpower can be solved by more efforts to convert military slots to civilian ones. The Department of Defense has become steadily more dependent on civilian manpower since the end of the Cold War, although this is disguised when only career Department of Defense civilian employees are counted. The main increase has occurred in defense-related workers in industry and contractors.

These military-to-civilian conversions have had two fundamental goals:

- Cost savings on the relative expense of contractors/civilians vice uniformed military personnel for certain functions
- Freeing up money to invest in warfighting capabilities, and freeing up uniformed personnel to perform warfighting roles

Because career civilians have also been cut, however, such conversions have meant growing reliance on contract civilians. At least in some cases, this approach seems to have been based on political ideology and/or dubious analysis of cost savings with limited regard to actual performance, than on real-world life cycle costs and efficiency, and the risks that emerge from cutting total military end strength.

Historical Military-to-Civilian Efforts

Since 1954, DOD Directive 1100.4 has required the services to staff positions with civilian personnel unless the services deem a position military essential for one or more reasons, including combat readiness, legal requirements, training, security, rotation, and discipline. The DOD has, however, given implementing guidance that has provided local commanders with wide latitude in justifying the use of military personnel in their staffing requests.[92]

Several key developments have shaped this military-to-civilian conversion effort:

- Since 1966, Circular Number A-76 has instructed that the Federal Government shall rely on commercially available sources to provide commercial products and services. The idea is that competition enhances quality, economy, and productivity.
- In the 1970s, the services claimed to have replaced nearly 48,000 military personnel in support positions with 40,000 civilian employees. However, the services did not maintain accurate records to substantiate these claims.[93]
- In 1991, the DOD instructed its components to identify essential services provided by contractors (to deployed forces) and develop plans to ensure the continuation of those services should contractors become unavailable. However, a 2003 GAO report found that DOD components had not conducted the directed reviews to identify those contracts providing essential services.[94]
    - In 1994, GAO released a report recommending the Secretary of Defense study opportunities to convert certain support positions to civilian status. At that time, a DOD Manpower Requirements Report indicated that more than 245,000 military personnel throughout the services and defense agencies were serving in non-combat program areas: service management headquarters, training and personnel, research and development, central logistics, and support activities. The GAO report further suggested that many other job categories generally do not require knowledge or experience gained through military service: finance, administration, data processing, and personnel.[95]
- A 1997 BENS report placed blame on Congress for some of the sloth in outsourcing:
    - Current law stipulates that the Secretary of Defense identify core logistics functions which then cannot be outsourced unless Congress is notified. This could theoretically slow conversions of military personnel in the logistics space, although it is not certain how this would have a dramatic impact.
    - The report cites services contracted out already: 9% of health services, 12% of education and training, 47% of data processing, and fully 96% of base maintenance is contracted out.[96]
- A 1999 BENS Report estimated that roughly 300,000 DOD civilians perform jobs with direct private sector equivalents. The report predicts that the largest number of transitions would take place in the area of maintenance/repair, base services, and health care.[97]
- In 1998, the 105th Congress passed the FAIR Act (PL 105-270), which required that by June 30 of each year, federal agencies must submit annual lists of jobs that are potential candidates for outsourcing. Jobs must be classified either as: (1) inherently governmental, (2) commercial, or (3) commercial exempt.
    - Act extends, *inter alia*, to military departments named in section 102 of title 5, United States Code (Army, Navy, Air Force).
    - The Act only applies to activities performed by Federal civilian employees. Military members are not "employees," since they are not appointed to the civil service.[98]
    - Not inherent in the expression "inherently government function," per the terms of the Act, are:
        - gathering information for or providing advice, opinions, recommendations, or ideas to Federal Government officials; or

- any function that is primarily ministerial and internal in nature (such as building security, mail operations, operation of cafeterias, housekeeping, facilities operations and maintenance, warehouse operations, motor vehicle fleet management operations, or other routine electrical or mechanical services)

- OMB released first round of job lists on October 1, 2000. They showed 258,000 employees at 26 agencies, including DOD, who qualified for conversion consideration. According the OMB, approximately 75% of those jobs could be outsourced.[99]
- In March 2001, OMB directed federal agencies to compete 5% of all federal jobs considered commercial in nature by October 2002, and 10% of all federal jobs considered commercial in nature by October 2003.[100]

Military-to-Civilian Conversions Since Afghanistan and Iraq

Iraq and Afghanistan have raised serious questions about some of the civilian-to-military conversions that have resulted from these actions. As of late 2005, there were an estimated 30,000 civilian contractors working directly with the Pentagon in Iraq, and these figures often understated foreign hires and did not include aid-related workers who often provided some military support functions. Typical duties included:

- Logistics
- Security
- Drug eradication
- Administrative
- Weapons systems support
- Linguistics
- Equipment Maintenance
- Communications
- Fuel and material transport
- Medical
- Mail

Many of these personnel played critical roles and sometimes at considerable personal risk. They were, however, extremely costly, they could not be sent into harm's way in the same way as military personnel, and serious questions did arise in some cases about corruption, mismanagement, and overspending. More generally, the question arose as to whether the US had converted so many military positions that it did not have a large enough pool to provide reasonable deployment levels to be able to convert or reassign personnel in an emergency or to perform support functions in high-risk areas at reasonable cost and with reasonable levels of force protection.

None of these issues have eased the effort to keep converting military positions to civilian ones. In 2002, the Secretary of the Army, Thomas White, announced a new initiative called the "The Third Wave" to outsource approximately 214,000 jobs in the Army (affecting up to 160,000 civilians and up to 60,000 uniformed military personnel). The Third Wave differs from the first and second waves because it includes base operation activities, including logistics, training, information management, and public works.[101]

In April 2004, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness introduced a process for managing conversions of military positions to civilian or contractor positions. Specifically, this process was designed to (1) measure the services' progress in achieving military-to-civilian conversion goals, (2) determine which skill sets would receive additional military positions subsequent to conversions, and (3) identify and track the number of civilian or contractor positions added as a result of conversions.

In the FY2005 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L.108-375), Congress directed that DOD provide new accountability on the reporting of the size and scope of the service contractor workforce. The DOD Inspector General was required to report to Congress by February 1, 2005 on whether DOD has a sufficient number of employees to conduct public-private competitions.[102] Meanwhile, the FY2005 Defense Budget called for conversion of 10,700 military jobs to civilian positions. The budget included $572 million to cover the costs of converting or eliminating the positions.

In December 2003 OSD set a goal of converting 20,700 military positions to civilian or contractor positions -- 10,000 in 2004 and 10,700 in 2005. The GAO reported, however, that only 3,400 positions were converted in 2004, or 34% of the original goal. The services had a goal to convert 15,900 positions in 2005, but some service officials said that a lack of funding and the time it takes to properly train and hire replacements were likely to cause the DOD to fail to meet its goal.[103]

The GAO report also noted that DOD did not have a comprehensive plan to oversee military-to-civilian conversions, and that it lacked data-driven metrics to assess whether or not such conversions were fulfilling the goal of providing more active military personnel for combat roles. The GAO report made the following recommendations to the Secretary of Defense regarding military personnel levels and military-to-civilian conversions:[104]

- Establish an OSD-led, systematic approach to assess the levels of active military personnel needed to execute the defense strategy as part of the next quadrennial review and report its analysis and conclusions to the Congress.
- Develop a plan to manage and evaluate DOD's initiatives to assign a greater portion of active military personnel to warfighting duties.

In responding to the GAO report, the DOD announced that it generally agreed with the report's recommendations and that the DOD was currently taking steps via the *QDR* process to address the problems. The DOD response also announced initiatives underway to track and manage military-to-civilian conversions and other programs aimed at reducing the stress on forces.[105] However, a number of major issues still remained:

- Latitude in services' guidance instruction allow local commanders to choose service members over civilians.
- Local commanders have little guarantee that converted positions will be funded, due to civilian salaries coming from non-guaranteed pools of money that also pay for fuel, etc.
- Some commanders believe that civilian contractors who do not train with the unit are disruptive upon deployment.
- DOD cannot guarantee that service provided by contractors would be provided during a hostile situation or situation of unfavorable OPTEMPO.
- Ongoing military drawdown in the late-'90s sometimes cited as a reason for not converting more than what was Congressionally mandated until drawdown was complete.
- Using private contractors for CS and CSS runs into the problem of model sustainability. Private sector companies need constant demand/supply scenario to maintain operability.

According to a 2005 GAO Report, senior OSD officials stated that about 300,000 military personnel were performing functions that civilians could perform or that could be contracted out to a commercial source. However, OSD and some service officials acknowledged this estimate was based on a 1997 study that used a methodology which overstated the actual number of military personnel in positions suitable for civilian or contractor performance. Since that time, a comprehensive review of commercial-type positions completed in 2003 identified only about 44,000 military positions as suitable for conversion to civilian or contractor positions.[106]

In short, the Iraq War has raised serious questions about possible over-dependence on contract employees, and the willingness of even career civilians to take on necessary tasks in a war zone. The Department seems to have almost deliberately avoided providing detailed figures on just how dependent the US military forces in Iraq are on civilian support, the total cost of such support, and the areas where it has not been able to get reliable civilian services because of risk, cost, or lack of specialized expertise. It has also failed to address such issues as the need for reliance on civilian contract security personnel, the impact of large-scale contracting on retention in the US military, and the problems that result from the lack of legal accountability and control over such personnel.

The Role of Contractors

Contractors provide logistics, combat support (CS), and combat service support (CSS) functions. Contracted support can include traditional goods and services support as well as interpreter, communications, infrastructure, and other non-logistic-related functions.

In the initial stages of an operation, supplies and services provided by local contractors improve response time and free strategic airlift and sealift for other priorities. Contractor support drawn from in-theater resources can augment existing support capabilities to provide a new source for critically needed supplies and services, thereby reducing dependence on the continental United States (CONUS) based support system. When military force caps are imposed on an operation, contractor support can give the commander the flexibility of increasing his combat power by substituting combat units for military support units. This force-multiplier effect permits the combatant commander to have sufficient support in the theater, while strengthening the joint force's fighting capability. At the conclusion of operations, contractors can also facilitate early redeployment of military personnel.

The debate over the use of contractors over full-time personnel for various duties centered on two possibilities: contractors filling warfighting, CS, or CSS roles on the battlefield, and contractors used to "backfill" non-combat roles. The appeal of contractors as backfill was seen in the move to convert non-combat roles to combat, CS, and CSS roles during rebalancing.

Concerns arose over the use of contractors on the battlefield. From a mission success perspective, worries existed that contractors in security or support positions would be less beholden to the chain of command than military personnel serving similar roles. Army Field Manual 100-10-2 provides the following guidance on contractor command and control:[107]

> Command and control with an AO will be executed by the military Chain-of-Command, which begins with the Theater Commander and extends to the lowest level of command responsible for personnel safety and mission accomplishment. For contractor personnel, command and control is dependent upon the terms and conditions of the contract. The Contracting Officer (KO) or the KO's designated representative(s) is the appointed liaison for monitoring contractor performance requirements and will ensure that contractors move materiel and personnel in accordance with the combatant commander's plan.

Concerns over reliability were not limited to battlefield scenarios, however, as there were also fears that contracted personnel could not be relied upon to deploy to dangerous missions to begin with, barring a legal obligation to deploy. DOD Instruction 3020.41, dated October 3, 2005, was meant to serve as a comprehensive source of DOD policy and procedures concerning DOD contractor personnel authorized to accompany US Armed Forces. It addressed the issue of contractor deployment reliability as such:[108]

Planning for continuation of essential contractor services during contingency operations includes:

- Determining all services provided overseas by defense contractors that must continue during a contingency operation. Contracts shall obligate defense contractors to ensure the continuity of essential contractor services during a contingency operation.
- Developing contractor contingency plans for those tasks identified as essential contractor services to provide reasonable assurance of continuation during crisis conditions.
- Ensuring the Secretaries of the Military Departments and Combatant Commanders plan for effective retention or replacement of contingency contractor personnel who are performing essential contractor services in contingency operations. For situations where the cognizant DOD Component Commander has a reasonable doubt about the continuation of essential services by the incumbent contractor during crisis situations, the commander shall prepare a contingency plan for obtaining the essential services from alternative sources (military, DOD civilian, HN, or contractor(s)). This shall include situations where the commander has concerns the contractor cannot or will no longer fulfill the terms of the contract because the threat level, duration of hostilities, or other factors specified in the contract have changed significantly, or because U.S. laws, international or HN support agreements, or SOFAs have changed in a manner that affect contract arrangements, or due to political or cultural reasons.
- Encouraging contingency contractor personnel performing essential contractor services overseas to remain in theater.

Guidance, however, on how to "encourage" contractor personnel to continue performing essential services in a hostile or otherwise unpalatable environment remained unclear. The task of developing contingency plans to ensure the continuation of essential contracted services and to ensure the proper deployment, visibility, security, accountability, and redeployment was left to the geographic combatant commanders, as per DOD Instruction 3020.41.

Likewise, the undefined status of contractors on the battle field made disciplinary recourse unclear, and left their status vague under international conventions defining the terms and rules of war, and the treatment and rights of enemy combatants. DOD Instruction 3020.41 addressed the status issue as well:[109]

> Contingency contractor personnel remain subject to U.S. laws and regulations. For example, contingency contractor personnel fulfilling contracts with the U.S. Armed Forces may be subject to prosecution under Federal law, including but not limited to the Military Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Act (MEJA), 18 U.S.C. 3261 (reference (k)), which extends U.S. Federal criminal jurisdiction to certain DOD contingency contractor personnel, for certain offenses committed outside U.S. territory. For such cases, the DOD regulations to be followed to comply with MEJA are contained in DOD Instruction 5525.11 (reference (l)). Pursuant to the War Crimes Act, 18 U.S.C. 2441 (reference (m)), Federal criminal jurisdiction also extends to conduct that is determined to constitute a violation of the law of war when committed by a civilian national of the United States. In addition, when there is a formal declaration of war by Congress, DOD contingency contractor personnel may be subject to prosecution under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) (reference (n)). Other laws may allow prosecution of offenses by contingency contractor personnel, such as 18 U.S.C. 7(9) (reference (o)), which may provide for prosecution of U.S. nationals who commit offenses on military facilities in foreign countries. Immediate consultation with the servicing legal office and the contracting officer is required in all cases of suspected criminal conduct by contingency contractor personnel.

This guidance leaves unclear the status of many contractor types in battlefield scenarios, with the status of contractors on the battle field in the absence of a declared war arising as a particular concern. Army Regulation 715-9, in fact, stipulates that under certain circumstances, contractors may be unable to perform their intended duties due to ill-defined legal status:[110]

> In an area of operations where an international agreement authorizes the presence of US forces (stationing agreement) or regulates their status (SOFA), the status of contractors and their employees, under local law, must also be established by international agreement. Contract provisions or military regulations denoting the contractor as "part of the force" will not suffice to establish such status. When relevant agreements do not address the issue of status for contractors and their employees, the contractor may be unable to perform.

A second fear was the cost many felt would be inherent in securing the services of private-sector personnel for us in the battle space. There were concerns that these persons would require compensation above that required by military personnel. However, others argued that such front-end compensation costs would be balanced by the lack of DOD obligation to pay other benefits -- such as health, education, child care, etc -- for these personnel.

Advocates of increased contractor use, however, cited contractors as a quick way to gain access to certain mission-critical low-density high-demand skill sets, particularly in the technology space. Use of contractors would furthermore help to ease strain on the National Guard and Reserves by providing the CS/CSS that the RC would otherwise provide. Guidance on the DOD relationship with contractors accompanying armed forces on missions abroad stipulates that "Hospitalization will be limited to stabilization and short-term medical treatment with an emphasis on return to duty or placement in the patient movement system…All costs associated with the treatment and transportation of contingency contractor personnel to the selected civilian facility are reimbursable to the Government and shall be the responsibility of the contingency contractor personnel, their employer, or their health insurance provider." Primary medical and dental care will furthermore not be provided to the contractor unless specifically authorized otherwise in the given contract. [111]

The Dollar Cost of Maintaining the Force

The FY2007 budget gives priority to procurement and operations and maintenance over military personnel. It also calls for cuts in end strength rather than increases. Even so, military personnel are projected to cost $110.8 billion in FY2007, a 4% increase over FY2006, and 25.2% of the total defense budget less supplementals. This compares with just short of 26% in FY2006, and -- as a rough rule of thumb -- military personnel have recently cost about 25% of total defense spending.[112]

Such figures do illustrate just how costly it is to increase end-strength, but they also disguise an important impact of the Iraq War. The US has only been able to keep recruiting and retention as high as it has been by making major increases in salaries and benefits. The strain on the force in terms of over-deployments, stop-loss, forced retention, the perception of a broken social compact, and uneven political support for the war at home have all had a major impact.

As the previous analysis has shown, recruiting has become more difficult since the beginning of the Iraq War, with the services struggling to meet their goals, or missing them entirely. Retaining those already in the service has become became more challenging as well, and such retention has become steadily more important. Even in peacetime, failing to retain military personnel means losing the benefits of a significant investment in training in experience for the services. Military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have given the force additional in-theater warfighting experience which is lost if the men and women involved are not retained. These troops come

home with skills and experience that is crucial to fighting the new forms of warfare around which the DOD is now structuring its force.

Paying More for the Same Men and Women

By themselves, short-term solutions like stop-loss and forced retention may keep personnel for a while but have counterproductive long-term consequences. As a result, the DOD has had to pay more to get the recruits it needs and to acquire skilled personnel.

The US Government Budget for FY2007 introduced increases in pay and allowances for current service members, in addition to increased funding for the recruitment and pay of certain high-demand personnel. The budget increased military base pay by 2.2% over FY2006. This particular annual increase is limited, but pay has increased by an average of 29% since 2001.

The FY2007 budget further provided for $263 million in expanded pay increases for certain warrant officers and mid-grade and senior enlisted personnel with high-demand skills and experience. An additional $1.9 billion was allotted for retention bonuses and incentives. This increase is only one more step in a long series of major bonuses and incentives since 2001. Between 2001 and 2005, the DOD provided pay raises of more than 21%. Some service members saw more than that.[113]

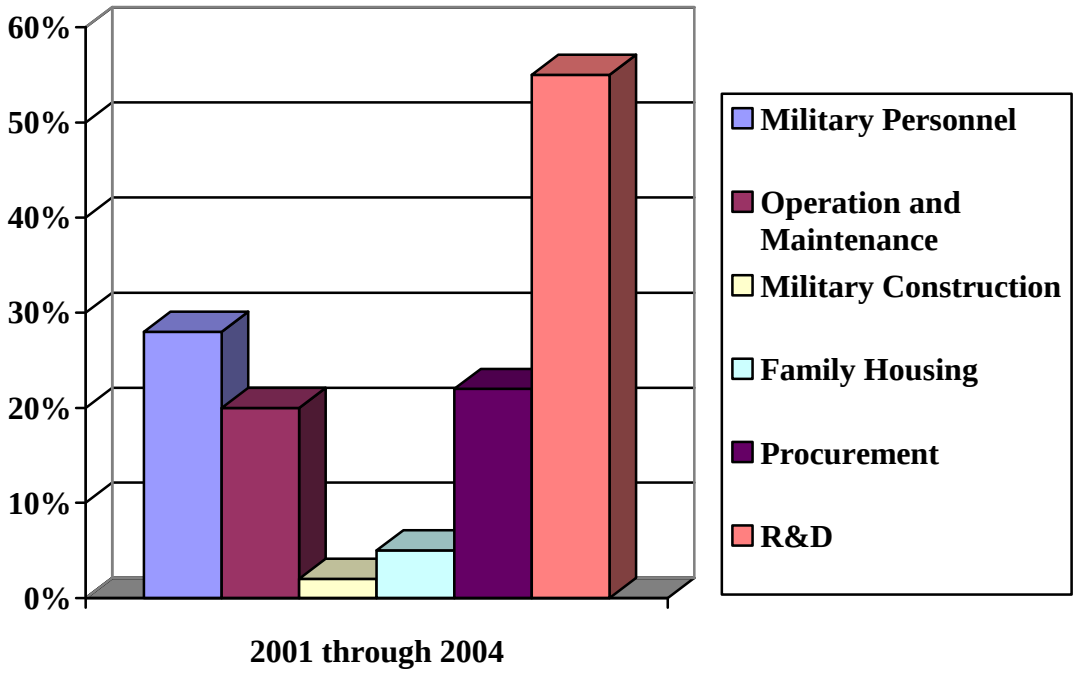
The budget also provided for an increase of 5.9% in basic housing allowances for active duty military members, and provided for $1.3 billion to increase the basic housing allowance for off-base family housing. In addition, the budget provided for $1.5 billion for the construction of 48 new barracks projects for enlisted personnel, $68 million for eight new child development centers, and $77 million for four dependent education school projects.

- Figure 28 shows the relative percent increases in major DOD funding areas. As the figure shows, spending on military personnel saw the second-largest outlay of DOD funds, after research and development costs. Other costs directly related to personnel, such as family housing, were also significant in assessing personnel costs to DOD.

- Figure 29 provides a broader view of DOD Spending from 2001 – 2005. Of the discretionary budget authority spending listed, military personnel represented the second largest percent increase during this time period -- not including “revolving funds and other” expenses -- at 28%.

Figure 28

Increases in Major DOD Funding Areas



Source: Adapted from the Office of Management and Budget website: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2005/defense.html. Margin of error in adaptation +/-2 percentage points.

Figure 29

Department of Defense Spending 2001 – 2005

(in millions of dollars)

	Actual			Estimate	
	2001	**2003**		**2004**	**2005**
SPENDING					
Discretionary Budget Authority:					
Military Personnel	76,373	93,932		97,932	104,812
Operation and Maintenance	107,450	125,290		127,626	140,636
Procurement	61,672	74,677		75,321	74,904
Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation	41,109	57,337		64,331	68,942
Military Construction	5,405	6,505		5,452	5,288
Family Housing	3,622	4,179		3,805	4,173
Revolving Funds and Other (with rescissions and transfers)	1,169	3,340		792	2,962
Subtotal	296,800	365,260		375,259	401,717
Emergency and Non-emergency Supplementals *#	10,009	72,235		66,109	—
Total, Discretionary budget authority ^	306,809	437,495		441,368	401,717
Discretionary Outlays	287,222	339,270		377,711	403,453
Emergency and Non-emergency Supplementals #	4,527	48,831		56,396	25,477
Total, Discretionary outlays	291,749	388,101		434,107	428,930

* 2003 supplemental funding does not reflect all transfers to other agencies, # 2004 includes CPA administrative costs, ^ For comparability, the 2001 data reflect transfers related to the creation of the Department of Homeland Security. Source: Office of Management and Budget, 2005 Website report on DOD trends since 2001, available: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2005/defense.html

The Military Entitlements Cost Squeeze: Health Care

Pay, however, is only one part of the story. Increases in pay mean later increases in pensions, and there has been a major increase in the cost of military entitlements, particularly in the case of health care.

One aspect is a change in the nature of combat. Higher survival does to some extent mean higher medical costs. Compared to the Vietnam War, when about 12% of all wounded soldiers sustained a brain injury, in Iraq, 22% of the wounded had serious head wounds, according to data as of late January 2006. However, the wounded in Iraq have a much greater chance surviving their injuries. In World War II, 30% of all injured troops died, compared to 24% in Vietnam. In Iraq, just 9% of the injured lost their lives. Improvements in body and vehicle armor, as well as advancements in battlefield medicine were credited with the increased survival rates, among some 16,500 US soldiers and Marines injured in Iraq to date, according to ABC News.[114] Of the 17,000 wounded in Iraq as of March 2006, more than 380 were amputees whose lives were spared by body armor protecting their torsos, but whose long-term medical expenses were expected to be significant given the nature of their injuries.[115]

As a result, more and more personnel have required expensive medical treatment after returning from theater. With the prevalence of blast trauma wounds, long-term care for amputees and brain injury patients became an issue, as well as caring for troops who returned home with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, a psychological condition often requiring long-term therapeutic care for proper treatment. As of early spring 2006, nearly 150,000 veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan had shown up on the doorsteps of Veterans Affairs health centers since 2001. About a third of them -- 46,000 -- were seen for mental health issues. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) was the fastest-growing disability among VA clients at this time, with cases up 80% in five years. Of the 46,000 veterans seen for mental health issues, 20,638 had received a possible diagnosis for PTSD that required follow-up monitoring.[116]

Associated conditions also included alcohol and drug abuse, as well as increased aggressive behaviors, all of which were found to be impacting negatively on soldiers' re-acclimation to society and family, and which often required long-term care solutions to properly treat.

The key factor driving such costs, however, is that the military health care program has become key tool in the recruitment and retention arsenal. Providing the DOD's extensive TRICARE benefits for service personnel and their families has proved to greatly increase the attractiveness of the military as an employer with good health benefits, and provides an incentive to make the military a career.

The services and Congress have come to rely upon health care as a carrot in recruiting personnel to a life in the military. The end result, however, is that annual health care cost had doubled for the military between 2000 and 2005, amounting to $38 billion during that five-year period, or one dollar of every $12 the Pentagon spent. Projections called for a price tag of $64 billion by 2015, or 12% of the defense budget, up from $19 billion in 2001, or 4.5% of the defense budget.

The steady increases in the scale and cost of such benefits reached the point where they were projected to cost $39 billion in FY2007, or 35% of the $110.8 billion allocated to military personnel, and 9% of the total $439.3 billion regular budget. They were projected to total $211 billion from FY2007 to FY2011. According to a Department of Defense slide presentation, released alongside the Government Budget, this would mean a rise by 31% from FY 2005 – FY

2011. Figure 30 depicts historical and projected health care expenditures on military personnel from FY2005 to FY2011.

These costs have not been ones the DOD's can predict or control, and the rise in the cost of the medical entitlement benefits for veterans have presented the same problems. By the summer of 2005, FY2005 (ending September 30) estimates for the number of new enrollees seeking health benefits from Veterans Affairs ran at 103,000. The number was an upward revision from a previous estimate of 23,553, which Veterans Affairs Secretary R. James Nicholson said was based upon outdated assumptions from 2002. The revision came as the Bush Administration said that it had underestimated the number of personnel returning from Iraq and Afghanistan seeking medical treatment from the Department of Veterans Affairs. The administration also warned that health care programs would be short at least $2.6 billion in 2006 unless Congress approved additional funds.[117]

On February 6, 2006, Jim Nicholson announced that President Bush would be seeking $80.6 billion for the Department of Veterans Affairs under the FY2007 Budget plan. This was to represent an increase of $8.8 billion, or 12.2%, above the budget for 2006, including $38.5 billion in discretionary spending, mostly for health care. The budget called for an increase of $3.5 billion for health care alone, more than 11% over FY2006. The additional funding was meant to provide for an estimated 5.3 million patients, including over 100,000 veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Specific services requests included:[118]

- A total investment of almost $3.2 billion in mental health services, which is $339 million above the FY2006 level.
- Requests $1.4 billion for prosthetics and sensory aids, a $160 million increase over FY2006.
- Funding for non-institutional long-term care would increase by nearly 10% over FY2006, with a total investment of $535 million in the President's proposed budget.

At the time the budget was introduced, veterans who were deployed to combat zones were entitled to two years of eligibility for VA health care services following their separation from active duty service, even if they were not immediately otherwise eligible to enroll in VA. This, however, begged the issue of long-term care, which had become an increasing concern due to the nature of injuries being sustained, particularly in Iraq.

As of early 2006, about 9 million current or former military personnel were eligible for TRICARE coverage. Of those, advocacy groups claimed that about a third were retirees under age 65 and their families. TRICARE premiums had not been readjusted since 1995, and some officials saw a readjustment in order as part of the effort to reduce overall costs to the system. The Bush Administration sought to curb some of the rising expenses associated with military health care by proposing increases to the annual cost of coverage under TRICARE Prime, the military's most generous health plan. Annual costs would rise from $230 to $700 for single retired officers younger than 65, and from $460 to $1,400 for married retirees younger than 65. There were to be no increases in TRICARE premiums paid by active duty families or retirees over 65. The full increases, under this plan, were to be in effect by 2008.[119]

Part of the logic in the new plan was to discourage retired military personnel with second careers from remaining on TRICARE rather than joining the health insurance plans offered by their current employers. Often, TRICARE represented a cheaper or more comprehensive option to the employee, while the option of TRICARE was attractive to employers seeking to avoid the obligation of insuring employees who had alternative means of acquiring health care services.

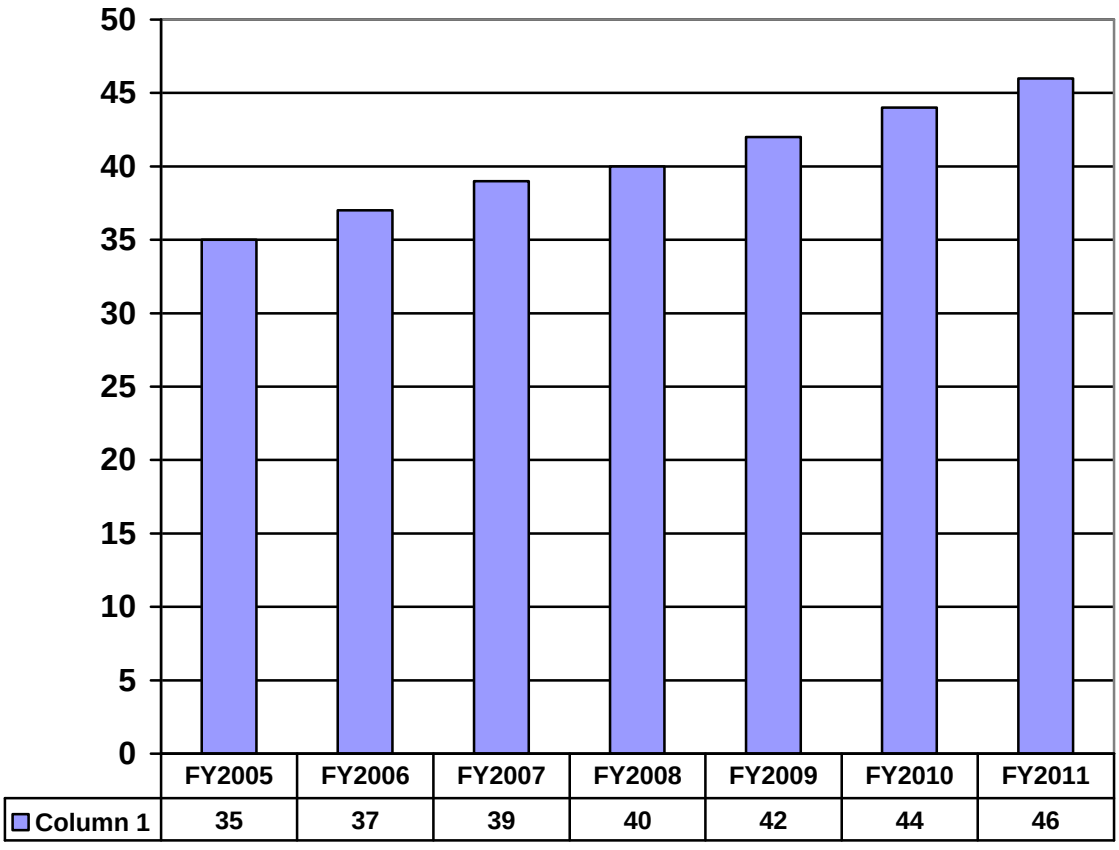
Critics of the plan, however, argued that the Pentagon was overestimating the number of retirees who would enroll opt out of TRICARE once the fee increases took effect.[120]

According to William Winkendwerder, Jr., Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Benefits, health costs had doubled in the five years leading up to March 2006, and were projected to grow to 12% of the estimated defense budget for 2015 at the current rate. Some believed that re-adjusting the annual cost to beneficiaries was a necessary step to help curb these future costs, similar to rate increases faced by civil service retirees covered by the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program. As of March 2006, however, legislative efforts were underway to strip the Pentagon of its authority to raise health care enrollment fees with Congressional approval.[121]

Figure 30

Health Care Expenditures on Military Personnel

FY 2005 – FY 2011



Source: Adapted from a chart in DOD Briefing: "FY 2007 Department of Defense Budget," released alongside FY 2007 US Government Budget, February 6, 2006, p. 14.

Military Manpower in a Climate of Uncertainty

The preceding analysis does not have any clear punch line or lead to any clear set of policy recommendations. US military manpower plans are in flux, many of the details are still uncertain, and many efforts are already underway that could have significant benefits *if* they work as planned. Success, however, depends on finding the right mix of at least five major sets of actions:

- First, transform US active and reserve forces to minimize the burden of rotations and service on part of the force, and create a pool of more deployable units tailored to today's missions rather than the Cold War.
- Second, reexamine contingency plans to make deployment cycles acceptable to the active and reserve military -- if necessary paying the cost of rises in end strength -- and to explicitly make the need to maintain acceptable deployment rates and cycles part of all war planning.
- Third, restructure the National Guard and Reserves to eliminate the total force concept of integrating active and reserve forces, and break out reserve duty into a clearly defined mix where most of the reserves are not needed for more than short deployments in limited wars, and men and women must volunteer for units that may have longer and more frequent service, and are paid accordingly.
- Fourth, have clear pay and incentive plans for longer and more frequent deployments that make a formal commitment to the US military that they will receive suitable pay and privileges if the US government must violate the unwritten social contract that is a key part of the all-volunteer force structure.
- Fifth, reorganize both the US military personnel system and the US force structure to create a new mix of skills better suited to asymmetric warfare, stability operations, counterterrorism and counterinsurgency, nation building, homeland defense, and the other post Cold War needs of the 21st Century.

If one looks at the results of the Department of Defense's efforts in these areas to date, they raise a number of serious issues. These issues include the cost of recruiting and retaining military personnel in an era of long wars. They include finding the right way to restructure military skills and forces to reduce the strain of repeated or forced deployments. At the same time, they include dealing with the risk of shaping the training and organization of military personnel around the present conflict -- "planning for the last war." The types of units currently in high demand for stability and counterinsurgency operations in Iraq, and to some extent Afghanistan, may not be as much of a paradigm for the future as QDR2006 and most current military service plans estimate. The US needs to carefully examine whether the future threat environment warrants shifting the US force structure in this way.

There is a clear need to reorganize the nature and balance of the active and reserve forces, but this is a requirement that the Department of Defense has recognized without yet offering clear solutions. There is no present basis for determining how the DOD will ultimately adjust the AC-RC mix, although it is clear that major adjustments are needed. No service as yet seems to have comprehensively defined how its reserve forces should be structured, manned, and equipped.[122] It is clear, however, that finding a new balance for the AC and RC components must be linked to more realistic budgetary planning and allocation, and clear perceptions of future threats.

The most serious issue is that whatever is done to reform and restructure the military manpower pool must provide *both the necessary quality and the necessary quantity*. The US must size and fund the key elements of its manpower pool accordingly. It must carry out force transformation in ways that make the burden of service acceptable in "non-existential wars." The AC and RC components must be large enough so that contingency planning and actual war fighting can realistically deploy forces in ways that honor the unwritten social contract that makes an all-volunteer force possible.

The Iraq War is a warning that the US needs enough military manpower to fight all of the kinds of wars it may face, and meet all of its strategic commitments. Planning on technology, the ability to predict the nature of future conflicts, and improvements in individual manpower quality is only meaningful if every element is fully implemented. If any element falls short, the only answer is more men and women in uniform, and at least one element -- US procurement plans -- cannot be implemented in anything like the way that current plans call for.

As a result, the greatest single uncertainty in current military manpower plans seems to be the idea that the US can solve its manpower problems with the same or smaller number of men and women in uniform. Increasing active and reserve end strength is not cheap. However, current plans may well rely too heavily on force restructuring to solve these problems without providing a realistic analysis of whether the total military manpower pool is adequate, and of the cost-benefits of increasing the manpower pool in the various AC and RC components. Policy seems to be designed around the thesis that force restructuring and rebalancing will work because they need to work if the US is to keep defense spending within anything approaching its current limits -- and pay for the technology that is being given higher priority than manpower quantity and quality.

Expensive as it may be, raising end-strength does seem to be an important alternative, and one that may well have a higher priority than emphasizing investment in "transformational" weapons and technology. It is not an alternative to the needed other reforms and qualitative improvements in military manpower, but it may well be a necessary supplement. It certainly is an option that needs far more explicit tradeoff analysis, with far less ideological emphasis on technology, outsourcing, and "super soldiers."

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