

CAN WE AFFORD AN ALL-VOLUNTEER ARMY?

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America embarked on a new scheme for finding the manpower for our Armed Services in 1972. As the draft era closed, the concept of a volunteer force, patterned after the colonial era, was begun anew. The theme for the 1970's and 1980's called for a democratic process of appealing to our young men and women to step forward and serve their country without the pressure of being conscripted. With the Viet Nam era well behind us our government has sought to reduce the military to a manageable force and find the required numbers of soldiers, sailors and airmen by strong recruiting practices. This is a noble and just concept, but how well has it really

worked? During the past 5 years the Air Force, Army, Navy and Marine Corps have resorted to recruiting their manpower from the open marketplace. The results of seeking manpower from the open market has not been totally successful. The future looks even more uncertain. Therefore, I want to share my views, philosophy and plans on the issue of a Volunteer Army.

United States military strategy is founded upon a complex network of policies, practices and resources. Our major policy has been one of deterrence of warfare and promotion of detente with the Soviet Union. Great emphasis is being placed on the subject of reduction in nuclear armaments under SALT II. But what about the role of conventional warfare? In the great hue and cry over nuclear weapons, the

issue of tanks and foot soldiers seems to pale into limited significance. This viewpoint, however is not shared by the Soviet Union.

We only have to turn the pages of our daily newspapers to find Soviet advisors, Cuban soldiers and thousands of tons of conventional weapons flowing into Africa and other parts of the world. Conventional warfare is underway at this very moment in many parts of the world. While we went about our business today, a number of conventional wars are underway.

During the past few months we have riveted our attention on Panama. Much of the debate was appropriate to the importance of the treaty. However, our national future and real security are directly linked to our European and Asian alliances

and their affiliated linkage to the Middle East. We are very dependent upon Europe's future. This is why it is important to analyze the Soviet position in Europe. Since 1972, the Soviet Union has taken the following steps to strengthen its forces in Europe:

- Modernization of all Soviet tank forces including the addition of 8,000 sophisticated tanks bringing the total to 34,000 tanks.
- A 34 percent increase in aircraft and artillery.
- An addition of 130,000 fighting soldiers.

I am discussing Soviet conventional forces because it bears so heavily upon my introductory remarks regarding the United States Volunteer force, especially the U.S. Army.

President Carter has spoken out on the need to defend Europe, and he has established a policy of improving our NATO force strength and readiness. But much more has to

be done. My colleague on the Senate Armed Services Committee, Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia, and Congressman Robin Beard on the House Armed Services Committee, have documented problems in the U.S. Army.

Major conclusions of the Beard study include the following:

- In the event of wartime mobilization to support NATO forces, the Army would be deficient by at least 500,000 personnel within 60 days after the outbreak of hostilities. Active forces are 80,000 personnel short of wartime strength. The Individual Ready Reserve is badly depleted (fallen from 900,000 to 100,000) and is short of many critical skills.
- The Director of the current Selective Service system has stated that his organization has no idea where

to find American youths and it would take at least
3 months to reconstitute a draft process, and it
would be at least 7 months before sufficient personnel
could be inducted.

-- The U.S. Army is in an extremely weak position to meet
its commitment to NATO. NATO forces are counting on
a strong reserve force to furnish replacements, but
a strong reserve force does not exist.

The Volunteer Army was founded on the concept of a small
peacetime active duty force supplemented with a strong, and
highly "ready" reserve.

Many of you are familiar with the fundamental architectural
principal that a building is only as firm as its foundation.
Unfortunately the reserve forces which are the foundation of

our Army are becoming weaker each year, while the Soviets have enough surplus military power to deploy thousands of troops and hundreds of millions of rubles worth of modern equipment around the globe.

Mr. Brezhnev feels free within the same breath to talk of detente on one hand and then discuss Russia's freedom to continue military expansion on the other hand. With this type of double-minded philosophy, it is important for us to pay careful attention to lessons from military and political history. General Bernard Rogers, our present Army Chief of Staff, made a significant point concerning the historical attributes of the Soviet Union in his posture statement to the Congress this year, and I quote:

"What is sometimes overlooked is that the Warsaw Pact

has not been building only the capability to fight a short sharp war, one of limited duration. Far from it. If we look at Russian history, we find their military successes from Napoleon's day through World War II have derived from their staying power. If we look at current Pact capabilities, we find they have expanded their stockpiles of equipment and ammunition and have greatly improved logistic support. In short, we not only need to be able to meet an initial, intense attack, we must be able to keep the nuclear threshold high and to sustain our forces in combat for a prolonged period. That requires support units, many of which are in the Reserve Forces. It requires a manpower base to support mobilization and replace the early casualties we might expect. It requires adequate stocks of war reserve materiel. All of this should be backed

up by an industrial production base here at home that can be geared up in a hurry."

What is the Soviet strategy for conventional war in Europe? No one knows precisely except the military planners in the Kremlin, but a number of indications exist.

First, the Soviets learned the advantages of numerical superiority combined with superior weapons during World War II. Marshall Zhukov, Commander of Soviet forces in World War II, utilized the very concept of blitzkrieg against the German forces at famous battles such as Stalingrad and Kursk. Soviet force structure today is based on the principles of massive assault using combined armor, artillery, and air support.

Secondly, the Soviets have designed, developed, and issued two complete generations of new tanks, artillery and other weapons while

we still depend upon major items of equipment that are 15 years old. We once had a major technological advantage in our sophisticated weapons, this advantage has been lost as the Soviets now are deploying attack helicopters, infrared tracking systems, laser guided weapons and other sophisticated, highly lethal weapons. These new Soviet weapons have capabilities equal to or greater than U.S. systems that are still on the drawing boards or just being produced.

So today in Europe, our active duty forces face a numerically superior well equipped Soviet and Warsaw pact force.

Many in the United States today would argue that the age of land Armies is past. These statements are reminiscent of forecasts made when the tank was introduced in WWI. Yet it is still the combat soldier who must secure the battlefield

and wrest from his opponent the return of soil, township and flag. The Soviets appreciate this from their own experience, they paid the price in WWII with 25 million citizens and soldiers killed or injured.

Today the Soviets control the bulk of their former enemies' land holdings and rule autocratically over Eastern Europe. I think we should be thoughtful in our examination of recent Soviet military history. There are those in America today who place their hopes upon a military uprising among the Warsaw pact nations should a war break out between Russia and NATO. I place no confidence in such elusive dreams. If we are to place confidence in anything it must be in American arms and those of our allies.

You may ask the question, "Why should we be concerned

about Europe?" Without regard to the important moral or ethical issues, I want to point out that our future as a nation is inexorably linked to Europe. If Europe were to fall under Soviet Dominance, the United States as we know it today will decline in 18 to 24 months. Why? Lets examine some of the major factors.

The first consideration is trade. The U.S. economy is linked closely to European consumption of our products and the import of European goods into the U.S. Forty percent of our world trade balance comes from Europe, Europe's economy is linked to U.S. production.

Second, we must consider geopolitics. The European landmass is the dominant geographic zone in the western world. Should Europe be dominated by an unfriendly foreign power, the

Mediterranean Sea, Turkey and North Africa will be closed to U.S. interests. Since the U.S. imports half its oil needs plus over 147 critical materials (20 critical metals needed by our industries), we are dependent on a friendly Europe to stabilize the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf. Hitler understood this very well. The Nazis planned to systematically close out America from Europe by dominating the continent. I want to remind you that these plans by Hitler were made in an era when we had a surplus of oil. Today we could have our entire economy badly wrecked by the loss of Europe and the eventual decline of the Middle East.

Third, the democratic states in Europe are tied to us by treaties of mutual defense and we are honor bound to assist our allies.

This now brings me back to the main issue of voluntary recruitment. Since the Army has experienced a sharp decline in the qualifications of its personnel and the quantity of its manpower and since our mobilization capability is weak, I think it is time to re-evaluate the concept of volunteerism.

It is no longer a question of whether the Army reserve forces will be deployed but when they will be deployed and in what strength. Many of the Active duty Divisions such as the 5th, 7th, 24th and 25th include Army National Guard Brigades as a part of their permanent force structure. Army force planning calls for 43 percent of our total Army force to consist of reserves. The total Army's tactical support includes 63 percent from the reserves and more significantly more than half of the Army deploying forces come from the

reserves. Of the total 24 Divisions; 8 are Army National Guard Units and 16 are Active units. Our Reserves are the foundation of the Army.

Yet despite our plans to use Reserve forces, the personnel strength levels of Reserves have declined significantly for the past 5 years. To repeat my previous point: we are 180,000 personnel short of our wartime needs for the Guard and Reserves. Losses of personnel have exceeded gains in the past 5 years despite major recruiting efforts by Reserve Commanders. When the draft ended, the major stimulant for reserve recruiting disappeared and the shortfall in personnel continues to grow. If the Army had not been successful in reenlisting people with previous service, the picture would be even graver. Not enough young men and women are voluntarily joining the reserve

forces.

During the next few months, my staff will be preparing a comprehensive study of the reserve forces to determine what can be done. These important military issues must be resolved now. We do not want to project the image of weakness.

I think it is time to alert you as members of the American public to the message that the present volunteer force is failing and may be a costly, dangerous experiment that should be abandoned. We cannot afford the luxury of waiting for disaster to strike. I, for one, support a review of the means by which we obtain our military manpower, and my intentions are to begin a process for reform. Whether this change involves the use of new incentives in recruiting or a return of the draft, it is too important an issue to leave to chance.

To quote the Commander in Chief of the first Continental

Army, General George Washington:

"To be prepared for war is one of the most
effectual means of preserving peace."¹

¹First Annual Address (to both Houses of Congress) January 8, 1790.