



The American Military

A new debate in Washington began this spring over the state of the nation's defenses. Even as it urged approval of a new Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II) with Moscow, the Carter administration cited a continuing Soviet arms build-up that threatened to upset the global "strategic balance" in the mid-1980s. The President asked Congress for a modest increase in the Pentagon's budget for 1980, reversing his earlier pledges to cut military costs. The request marked the latest in a long series of shifts in U.S. concern about the nation's security. Here, historians Samuel F. Wells, Jr. and David MacIsaac trace the ups-and-downs of U.S. defense policy since the republic's early days; editor Peter Braestrup summarizes the 1979 defense debate; and sociologist Charles Moskos examines the strengths and weaknesses of the all-volunteer force.



A 'MINUTEMAN' TRADITION

by David MacIsaac and Samuel F. Wells, Jr.

In 1784, shortly after the end of the War for Independence, the Continental Congress agreed with Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts that "standing armies in time of peace are inconsistent with the principles of republican government." So saying, the Congress ordered the post-Revolutionary Army reduced to 80 caretakers (at Fort Pitt and West Point), banned any officers above the rank of captain, and asked the states for 700 militia to guard the western frontier.

Not long afterward, in *The Federalist*, James Madison wrote:

"The liberties of Rome provided the final victims to her

military triumphs; and the liberties of Europe, in so far as they have ever existed, have with few exceptions been the price of her military establishments. A standing force therefore is a dangerous, at the same time that it may be a necessary, provision."

Such antimilitary sentiments were reinforced by what Madison called the "happy security" afforded by America's geography: the broad oceans long made it possible for Americans to dismiss the notion of external threats to their existence. George Washington warned against "entangling alliances," and the preoccupations of the European states with "balance of power" strategies and politics seemed distant and reprehensible.

The new republic devoted its prime energies to the development of the North American continent. The rising business class saw the military professionals as economic parasites, removed from the competitive strivings of the market place; as time went on, reformers and intellectuals saw the military as alien to an egalitarian unregimented democracy. Then as later, Harvard's Samuel P. Huntington once observed, American political thinkers did not understand and were hostile to "the military function" in society.

The persistent amalgam of distrust, cost-consciousness, and isolationism helped sustain the amateur "Minuteman" tradition. Throughout the 19th century, Presidents and Congresses relied on a small regular force in peacetime, calling upon militia and volunteers to help the United States survive a second conflict with Britain (1812-15), triumph in an expansionist war

Lt. Col. David MacIsaac, USAF, 43, is a Wilson Center Fellow in the International Security Studies Program, where he is working on a book, The Air Force and Strategic Air Power: From Hiroshima to the "New Look." Born in Boston, he was graduated from Trinity College (1957), took his M.A. at Yale (1958), and his Ph.D. at Duke (1970). He was visiting professor of strategy at the Naval War College, 1975-76 and is the author of Strategic Bombing in World War II: The Story of the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey (1976).

Samuel F. Wells, Jr., 43, currently secretary of the International Security Studies Program at the Wilson Center and a former Fellow, taught in the History Department at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Born in South Carolina, he was graduated from the University of North Carolina in 1957 and took his M.A. (1961) and Ph.D. (1967) at Harvard. He has served as consultant to the Department of Defense on Soviet-American relations. He is the author of The Tenuous Entente: Anglo-American Strategy and Diplomacy, 1904-14 (forthcoming) and is working on a detailed study of the impact of the Korean War on U.S. strategic programs.

with Mexico (1846–48), and preserve the Union (1861–65). Not surprisingly, there was little systematic thought given to what kinds of military forces—or strategy—the nation’s foreign policy might someday require. Even after it gained Great Power status by defeating Spain in 1898 and acquiring the Philippines and Puerto Rico, the United States had no regular army of consequence; the Navy, while its battleships symbolized America’s new industrial might, was unprepared for any major role across the Atlantic or Pacific.

Over There

After the outbreak of World War I, the United States watched the European carnage from afar. Woodrow Wilson’s administration authorized the selling of munitions to France and England against Imperial Germany and Austria-Hungary but responded with only diplomatic protests to German submarine attacks and British blockading. Even as they started a naval build-up in 1916, President Wilson and Congress did little to ready the Army for possible conflict. Indeed, Wilson actively discouraged advance military planning. When he reluctantly concluded that only by joining the Allies could he protect U.S. interests and influence the peace settlement, Wilson asked Congress for a declaration of war.

Conscription, war production, and “meatless days” began. But mobilization took time. Not until early 1918, almost a year after declaring war, did the United States get significant numbers of fresh troops across the Atlantic to join the exhausted Allies. The Yanks arrived in force just in time to help stave off the German offensives of March 1918 and thus assure victory for the Western powers eight months later. Though tardy, the American effort was crucial—more than 2 million soldiers and enormous tonnages of supplies went overseas to help “make the world safe for democracy.”

Their brief but costly World War I experience did not convince Americans back home that their country should use its new power abroad to safeguard the peace. Instead, the draftees and volunteers were demobilized; the Senate rejected both the Versailles Treaty and membership in the League of Nations; and, in 1923, the last of the regular Army occupation troops returned home from the Rhineland. Postwar Europe was left to the Europeans—including Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini. Washington turned to “normalcy,” congressional attacks on the arms industry (“Merchants of Death”), attempts at Big Power naval limitation, low military budgets, and later, the over-

whelming trauma of the Great Depression.

Between 1936 and the outbreak of World War II in 1939, a handful of preparedness advocates began to sound the alarm over Nazi rearmament, Japanese aggression in China, and Italian and German intrusion in the Spanish Civil War. In response, the America First movement—a hodgepodge of Midwest populists, pacifists, New York socialists, and fiscal conservatives—appealed to widespread isolationist sentiment. With a modest ship-building revival underway by the late 1930s, the Navy secretly prepared *Plan Orange*, its plan to protect the Philippines and Hawaii against the resurgent Japanese Navy. The Army, always more vulnerable to the nation's political moods, had only 190,000 men and almost no modern equipment when the Nazis invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. In June 1940, a few days after Hitler's conquest of France, the House of Representatives passed the Selective Service Act reinstating conscription—by only two votes. And only then did Franklin D. Roosevelt feel he had enough public support to undertake serious rearmament.

To a far greater extent than Americans realized at the time, the second World War was much like the first. Victory came only when one of the two opposing coalitions eventually brought to bear its superiority in numbers—of men, ships, bullets, aircraft. Much of the technology was new—radar, the long-range bomber, the aircraft carrier, the German “V-2” missile, and, of course, the atomic bomb. But the decisive element, in the end, was the material and manpower superiority of the Allies.

After the victory in 1945, some things were forgotten: the early U.S. defeats; the importance of British resistance; the delays in arming and organizing U.S. forces; the preponderant role of Soviet armies in the two-front war against Germany; the serious weaknesses of the Axis powers.

Truman and the Bomb

But certain “lessons” were firmly implanted in the minds of many who led the war effort and of many who served. These were: (a) the need for military readiness in peacetime, especially in the new era of long-range bombers and atomic weaponry; (b) the desirability of countering threats to U.S. security overseas, rather than “in our own backyard”; and (c) the critical importance of technology and a strong industrial base. The war, in imparting these lessons, was to shape the world view of an entire generation of U.S. leaders, notably Harry S. Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, and Lyndon B. Johnson—and

their most influential advisers.

Neither President Truman nor his former colleagues in Congress at first understood the foreign policy implications of the wartime experience. A possible postwar economic depression was high on their list of worries, and so was voter reaction to wartime burdens. Demobilization proceeded rapidly. By June 1947, with little protest from any quarter, the nation's military manpower had dropped from more than 12 million to a little over one and a half million, including token occupation forces in Germany and Japan. To an aggressor, the United States suddenly posed no effective military threat, short of using its few existing atomic bombs.

Neither War nor Peace

But 1946 was not 1919. A new world had dawned for America, heralded by its rise to a position of relative strength unsurpassed in its history, by the survival of another great power—the Soviet Union (about which Americans knew little and distrusted much)—and by the emergence of new weapons promising an age of potential massive destruction. The dramatically altered international situation produced new attitudes in Washington toward military forces. Americans traditionally had divorced war and peace, allowing only limited roles for diplomats during war and for military men during peacetime. Now a postwar consensus developed that embraced the need for the United States to organize and use military power, even without actual combat, in the exercise of its new responsibilities as a world leader. America's long epoch of "free" security had come to an end.

The threat to America's interests posed by the Soviet Union proved difficult to define precisely. Joseph Stalin seemed far stronger than he was. The military could do little but attempt to prepare for the worst possible contingency, namely, overt Soviet aggression. Events in Eastern Europe, Iran, Turkey, and Czechoslovakia—followed quickly by the blockade of Berlin and the first Russian atomic explosion in 1949—had the effect of setting in concrete the policy of "containment," first spelled out in George Kennan's famous "Mr. X" article on "The Sources of Soviet Conduct" (*Foreign Affairs*, July 1947). While Kennan stressed economic means for containing Soviet "expansionism," Washington saw a military deterrent as more urgent.

Providing the necessary funds, however, raised again the troublesome question—intermittently on the nation's agenda from 1775 to 1979—of how much defense spending is enough.

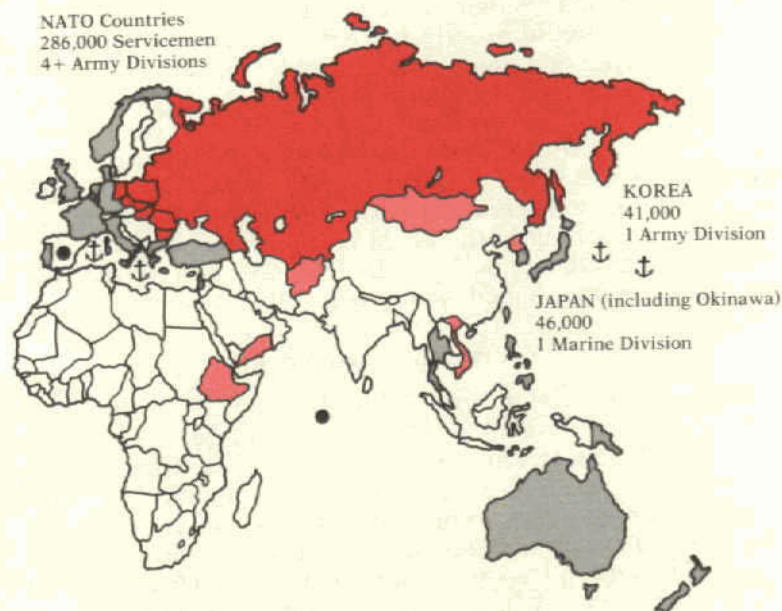
DEPLOYMENT OF U.S. FORCES, 1979



Portrayed above are the principal current deployments worldwide of U.S. military manpower, ground units, and forward Navy carrier forces. Air Force deployments are not shown. The general pattern has not changed since the mid-1950s, after the U.S. rearmed under the impetus of the Ko-

From the end of World War II to the outbreak of war in Korea, neither President Truman nor Congress felt the nation's economy could support a major increase in military outlays; instead, the President, like most Americans, tended to rely on the newly independent Air Force (primarily its Strategic Air Command) to deter or prevent all-out Soviet aggression. Despite the Navy's short-lived "revolt of the admirals," the Air Force got the lion's share of rigidly controlled defense budgets.

As the Cold War intensified, Congress reinstated the draft in 1948, but few were drafted. Cut and cut again, the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps were stretched thin around the world—from General Douglas MacArthur's understrength garrison in Japan



rean War. However, Communist China is no longer seen as an adversary; France is no longer in NATO; U.S. manpower in NATO is down from 434,000 in 1962; U.S. access to overseas bases has declined; the Soviets now have an "open ocean" Navy and are active in Africa.

to the token units under the new North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Germany. In 1949, to conserve its forces, the Defense Department brought home its occupation troops from South Korea.

Even as U.S. non-nuclear strength declined (and development began, after much internal debate, on the H-bomb), an *ad hoc* State-Defense study group, led by Paul H. Nitze, head of State's Policy Planning Staff, explored the nation's defense needs in light of the Soviets' newly-demonstrated atomic capability. The Soviets were seen as achieving an ability to attack the United States by 1954, making their superior ground strength count for more than ever before. Moscow could fight general or

limited wars, encourage subversion, rupture the Western alliance, undermine American will. In its report, NSC-68, the Nitze group told President Truman on April 7, 1950, that the United States should greatly increase its defense spending to right the balance and deter war.

Truman endorsed the idea in principle. But he was not willing to try to push an unreceptive Congress into accepting an expensive new military build-up. Nor was Truman quite ready to endorse Secretary of State Dean Acheson's conclusion that "what we must do is create situations of [allied] strength. . . . If we create that strength, then I think the whole situation in the world begins to change. . . ." The B-29 bomber and the Air Force, Truman apparently hoped, would be deterrence enough.

Korea and Rearmament

A few months later, on Sunday, June 25, 1950, the Soviet-equipped North Koreans invaded Syngman Rhee's Republic of Korea, and President Truman and his advisors felt there was no choice but to respond—without atomic bombs. With a United Nations mandate but no congressional declaration of war, Truman ordered General MacArthur to intervene first with air power, then with his troops from nearby Japan. Once again, the United States paid a high price for unpreparedness—in dead soldiers and lost ground. Many Americans saw the communist invasion as part of a worldwide Kremlin plan for aggression, with Western Europe and NATO as the next target. Truman himself likened the Korean invasion to Hitler's early moves in the 1930s; not to respond would be to repeat the West's failure before World War II to halt aggression at the outset.

The 1950–53 Korean War ended in a truce as a stalemate following MacArthur's victory over the North Koreans, Communist China's massive intervention, and bitter fighting. Truman fired MacArthur in 1951 after the latter broke with the President over his indecisive "limited war" policy—for a time, the frustrations of the seesaw war gave a certain resonance to MacArthur's charge that there was "no substitute for victory." But the independence of South Korea was preserved (at a cost of 34,000 U.S. dead alone), and the NATO governments, even as they worried over MacArthur, were heartened by proof that the United States would go to war, if necessary, to support an ally.

Korea was a shock to Congress and the country. Even though the cost and duration of the conflict soon made it extremely unpopular, its chief critics were not the Left, then in a subdued state, but the Right, who saw any willingness to forego

"victory" against communism as softheadedness or worse.

Yet, the North Korean attack provided the impetus for what amounted to American rearmament. Despite its origins in Northeast Asia, the war's principal enduring military results were a sizeable build-up of U.S. forces in Europe, a growing nuclear arsenal, and a heavily-reinforced Strategic Air Command with bases in Spain, Morocco, Okinawa, Britain, and Guam, all within striking distance of the Soviet Union. The Navy got a go-ahead on new ships; the Marine Corps deployed amphibious forces in the Mediterranean and the western Pacific.

All this was fostered by Dwight D. Eisenhower, the hero of victory in Europe in World War II, who won election in 1952 promising, as the Republicans put it, to solve the problems of "Korea, communism, and corruption." He surrounded himself with advisers like Treasury Secretary George Humphrey and Defense Secretary Charles Wilson, who felt strongly, in the wake of the Roosevelt-Truman era, that the greatest threat to the United States lay in excessive federal spending. At first, Eisenhower's authority in defense matters was unchallenged; he cut back on the costly conventional forces and, like Truman before Korea, put his primary faith in the nuclear deterrent ("more bang for a buck"), but he continued substantial shipments of military equipment to NATO allies, Taiwan, and South Korea.

Eisenhower's New Look

In military terms, the new approach placed heavy reliance on nuclear weapons, not only against Soviet attack on the United States but against overt aggression of any kind. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles christened this new strategy in a speech during January 1954 when he called for an ability to "respond instantly, by means, and at places of our choosing" to aggression launched anywhere in the world. What was needed was a "maximum deterrent at a bearable cost." The doctrine of "Massive Retaliation" had no sooner been announced than it came in for severe criticism by the new breed of "policy intellectuals" in the Pentagon-subsidized "think tanks" like RAND and in the universities. Economists, historians, and political scientists, the new strategists, began to examine and propose new concepts of defense, both nuclear and conventional.* The impracticality of invoking nuclear retaliation in less than mortal

*Among the best known: RAND's Bernard Brodie and Albert J. Wohlstetter; Harvard's Henry Kissinger (*Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, 1957); Chicago's Robert E. Osgood (*Limited War*, 1955).

crises became an immediate focus of their criticism; reflected in the press, if not in Congress, it led to increasingly fuzzy statements from the Eisenhower administration as to whether nuclear weapons would actually be used in every case of communist aggression.

The budget-conscious Eisenhower "New Look," concentrating on SAC and development of ballistic missiles for both the Air Force and Navy, involved substantial reductions in conventional forces, especially the Army. Despite direct appeals by the military to the President, Eisenhower enforced the cuts. Army Generals Maxwell Taylor, Matthew Ridgway, and James Gavin retired to write critiques, among which Taylor's *Uncertain Trumpet* (his name for massive retaliation) would wield decisive influence in the following administration. The military was poorly prepared even for those bloodless interventions that occurred during Eisenhower's tenure (notably in Lebanon and the Taiwan Straits); but the nation felt secure behind its ever-increasing nuclear shield.

JFK's 'Flexible Response'

The Russian launching of Sputnik in October 1957 was interpreted in the West as a Soviet lead in the development of a nuclear-armed ICBM force.* Eisenhower's hopes for a summit agreement with Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev on arms control were torpedoed by the downing of an American U-2 "spy plane" over Soviet territory. As the 1960 election campaign got underway, John F. Kennedy and the Democrats in Congress exploited fears of a nonexistent "missile gap." Once again, the question of "how much is enough for defense" surfaced in peacetime election politics. "More" was the Democrats' answer.

Kennedy assumed the Presidency determined to restore "vigor" to American policy abroad and to resist communist aggression wherever possible. He sought a more powerful nuclear deterrent plus a stronger conventional force. He wanted a "flexible response" to counter both Soviet conventional ground threats in Europe and Khrushchev's declared support for "wars of national liberation"—including one in South Vietnam. Discovering that there was no missile gap, he nonetheless initiated a massive increase in strategic nuclear forces toward a ceiling of 1,000 Minuteman and 54 Titan ICBMs and 41 nuclear submarines, each capable of carrying 16 Polaris missiles. Coming

*Actually, Sputnik was an experiment; The Soviets did not develop a "serious" ICBM capability until the late 1960s.

on top of a significant lead in strategic bombers, this missile buildup was based on the premise that it would give the United States a degree of nuclear superiority that the Soviet Union could not hope to match without unacceptable strains on its economy. The idea was also to create a nuclear force that would be sufficiently large, dispersed, and well protected to enable enough of it to survive a surprise Soviet attack and retaliate in kind.

All this cost money, but the "Berlin Wall crisis" of 1961 (when JFK partially mobilized U.S. reserves) helped convince Congress to go along with the administration's new effort, even as Kennedy sought agreement with Moscow on a partial ban on atomic testing. If the New Frontier faced difficulties in Congress on domestic spending, its military budgets had little trouble.

Kennedy's Secretary of Defense, Robert S. McNamara, symbolized the "New Frontier" image of efficiency and toughness. A dynamo who regularly beat his military aides at squash, McNamara imposed new analytic criteria of cost effectiveness on the Pentagon bureaucracy. Theoretically neat, McNamara's concepts met with stiff resistance from the service chiefs who resented his intrusions into the domain of military expertise. Impervious to unquantifiable matters such as morale or esprit, the Secretary ranged high and low in his efforts to impose control. When he saw that the Air Force had adopted a plane originally designed for the Navy (the F-4 Phantom), he decided that the next generation of fighter aircraft should be similarly "joint-purpose." The variable-wing TFX fighter-bomber that he forced on the services resulted in the costly F-111A and F-111B, neither of which was in the end adopted by the Navy.

Confrontation over Cuba

Two Cuban crises further strained relations between the military and their civilian superiors. There was the fiasco of the Bay of Pigs in April 1961 where, equipped and trained by the CIA, 1,500 anti-communist Cubans came ashore in a futile effort to topple Fidel Castro's two-year-old regime; Kennedy and McNamara tended to blame the service chiefs and the CIA. Then came the 1962 Cuban missile crisis when the Soviets secretly emplaced medium-range missiles on Castro's island within range of most of the U.S. South. Once again the President expressed dismay over the attitudes of some of the service chiefs who seemed all too willing to risk Armageddon, insensitive to the nuances of finding a solution short of direct attack on Cuba. Subsequent critics have blamed the President himself for

raising the ante beyond reasonable proportions in the confrontation.

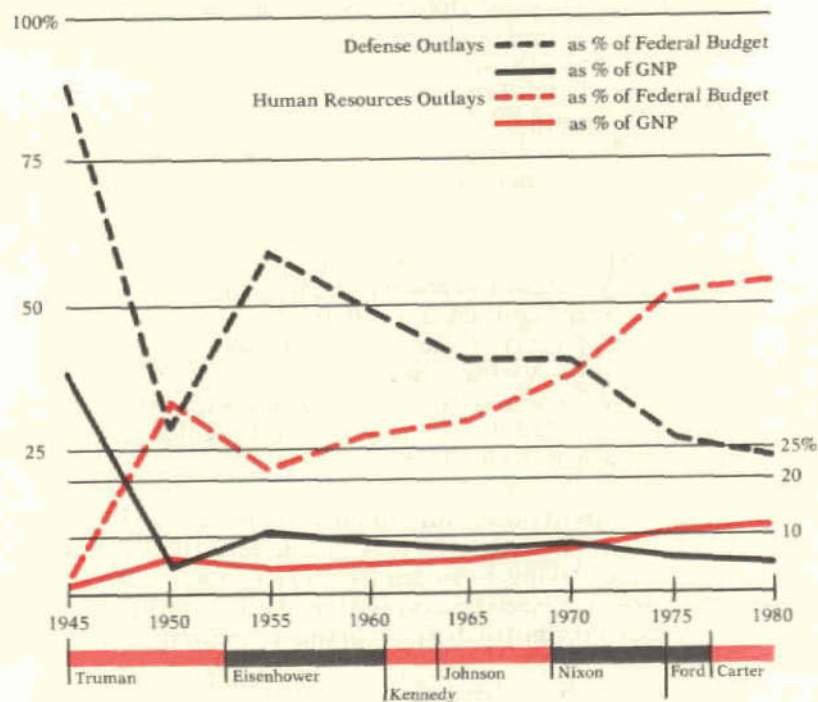
In the end, the incident revealed clearly to both sides the advantages of nuclear superiority, especially when combined with local air and naval hegemony. A U.S. blockade and the threat of further action against Cuba resulted in Khrushchev's decision to pull out the offending missiles—in return for Kennedy's promise not to invade Cuba. Chairman Khrushchev soon paid a heavy price for over-extending Soviet power; he was ousted in 1964. His successors in Moscow apparently decided to avoid further serious confrontations until they could eliminate the disparity in strategic forces between the United States and the Soviet Union; a steady Russian build-up soon began.

Johnson's Limited War

Within a year of Kennedy's untimely death, Lyndon Johnson had secured sweeping congressional authorization for offensive action in Vietnam through the August 1964 Tonkin Gulf Resolution. He won election that fall in his own right, partly on an apparent campaign pledge not to enlarge the Vietnam War. Largely untutored in foreign affairs, he relied heavily on Secretary McNamara, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, and other former Kennedy advisers. Vietnam was far away, yet Kennedy had sought to shore up the Saigon regime with aid and 16,000 "counter-insurgency" advisers. The nature of the conflict was complex. But American civilian officials believed their overwhelming technological and military superiority could ultimately deter the North Vietnamese from trying to take over South Vietnam.

Bombing began, little by little. Congress, having forfeited its authority after Tonkin Gulf, sat back, approved the sharply increased defense outlays, and hoped for the best. There was a grim consensus, in the press and on Capitol Hill, on the need to draw the line against Soviet- and Chinese-backed "wars of liberation," without bringing on World War III.

Reluctant to embark on a land war in Asia, the Joint Chiefs recommended drastic measures or none at all. For personal and symbolic reasons, the President wanted desperately to avoid losing Vietnam to the communists. But he wanted both "guns" and "butter." He was unwilling to pay the price of a full-scale effort by mobilizing the reserves, increasing taxes, and possibly risking his "Great Society" social programs in Congress. Temporizing, Johnson, McNamara, and their civilian advisers in 1965–68 approved step-by-step increases in ground and air operations

"GUNS VS. BUTTER" IN FEDERAL SPENDING, 1945-79

Source: Office of Management and Budget, 1979, Federal Government Finances

Since 1971, the federal government has been spending relatively less on "guns" than on "butter." In 1949, U.S. defense cost \$11.5 billion, or 30.3 percent of all federal outlays and 4.5 percent of the gross national product; spending for "human resources" (ranging from housing to education to welfare) was \$10.6 billion, or 27.3 percent of the federal budget and 4.1 percent of the GNP. Thirty years later, defense spending totals \$114.5 billion—23.2 percent of the federal budget and 5.0 percent of the GNP. About \$259 billion, or 52.5 percent of the federal budget and 11.3 percent of GNP, goes to human resources.

but rejected military urgings to carry the war to communist sanctuaries in North Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. In his incremental efforts to avoid defeat, Lyndon Johnson gravely misused his nation's military forces, prolonged the war, created inflationary pressures at home, soon divided his own party and the country, and assured the victory of Richard M. Nixon.

Nixon brought to office in 1969 the outline of a grand design, worked out with the help of his national security adviser, Henry Kissinger. Its goals were improved relations with the

Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China and an end to the costly U.S. military role in Southeast Asia. In Vietnam, "peace with honor," not "victory," was the goal. The administration pursued a dual strategy: continued (fruitless) negotiations with Hanoi and a build-up of Saigon's fragile forces ("Vietnamization") while slowly pulling out U.S. troops to appease domestic opinion.

Locking the Barn Door

After the Cambodian "incursion" of 1970 and strong bombing of the North in 1972, the United States ended its direct involvement in Vietnam in January 1973. Under the Paris peace accords, the Nixon administration gained a nominal cease-fire and the release of most of the POWs held by North Vietnam. That was all. South Vietnam was left with a superior Soviet-equipped enemy force on her territory and no realistic hope of U.S. support when Hanoi's victorious final drive began in 1975. It was the first war America had "lost."

During his first term, Nixon made significant progress toward reshaping great power alignments. He began the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks with the Russians in late 1969. He used a dramatic trip to Peking in February 1972 to re-establish relations with a longtime adversary; within three months, the new Sino-American cordiality helped bring the Soviet Union to agreement in the SALT I treaty.

Although the Nixon-Kissinger diplomacy radically changed the international environment, Pentagon decision-making began to return to pre-McNamara patterns. Even as he pressed Nixon and Kissinger for faster troop withdrawals from Vietnam, Defense Secretary Melvin Laird, a former U.S. Representative from Wisconsin, left the service chiefs to operate without interference in matters of detail.

The Democratic Congress asserted its authority by actively criticizing both the administration's policies in Vietnam and its proposals for defense spending. Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D.-Mont.) even urged withdrawal of U.S. troops from Europe. In November 1973, as the Watergate scandal grew, Congress passed, over Nixon's veto, the War Powers Act; it set a 90-day limit on hostilities initiated by the President without congressional approval and allowed any combat commitment to be terminated by a concurrent resolution of both Houses of Congress. Congress locked the barn door on Richard Nixon long after Harry Truman and Lyndon Johnson had rushed through it.

The 1972-74 Watergate scandals gradually pre-empted the

attention of the White House, Congress, and the media. The 1973 Arab-Israeli war and the attendant Arab oil boycott added the "energy crunch" to the agenda. The armed services shifted to a shrunken, all-volunteer force. Defense budgets dropped as low as 15 percent below the pre-Vietnam level, in real terms, and congressional liberals urged deeper cuts to "re-order national priorities."

Replacing the disgraced Nixon in August 1974, Gerald R. Ford suffered for the sins of his predecessors as he sought to restore public confidence that had been eroded by Vietnam and Watergate. In defense matters, the consensus on Capitol Hill was "no more Vietnams"—and no more CIA subsidies for the foes of a Soviet-backed faction in Angola's civil war. At the same time, Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger (1973–76), like Melvin Laird before him, had to cope with a major change in the "strategic balance"; in 1971, the Soviets surpassed the United States in numbers of strategic land-based and submarine-based missile launchers. And the Soviet build-up was continuing. Over a 30-year period since World War II, the United States posture had gone from atomic monopoly under Truman to nuclear superiority under Kennedy to nuclear "sufficiency" under Johnson to "essential equivalence" under Nixon—and was on the verge of what officials of a new administration would call "rough equivalence." It seemed to Ford that the post-Vietnam decline in U.S. military spending had to stop, and, finally, it did in 1976.

Questions for Carter

Gerald Ford left to his successor a year later an uneasy new "strategic balance" with the Soviets, now active in Africa and Southeast Asia; the continuing arms limitation (SALT) talks with Moscow; and a tentative rapprochement with Peking. If antimilitary sentiment had receded in Congress, worries about inflation had not. And the increasing costs of modernizing the military—with cruise missiles, \$385,000 MXI tanks, \$8 million jet fighters, and \$1 billion nuclear submarines—made almost every new Pentagon weapons decision a matter of controversy.

There were other military issues awaiting the new Carter team: After Vietnam, was the United States prepared to intervene *anywhere* outside the NATO area, or was disengagement the better part of valor, as some Democrats suggested? In case of surprise attack, were there alternatives to massive retaliation against Soviet cities, such as focusing on Russian military targets (the "counterforce option")? Could the volunteer force

provide enough men to maintain U.S. readiness, or, in effect, was America again relying on the old "Minuteman" tradition to beef up its forces in time of war? Could diplomacy again be divorced from military power, as it was prior to 1945?

Most of these issues had their antecedents in past American experience. They were inflamed by the chronic tensions between the military's needs on one hand and the values of a liberal democracy on the other. The issues were not likely to fade away.



THE CHANGING OUTLOOK

by Peter Braestrup

Seeking the Presidency in 1976, Jimmy Carter ran on a platform calling for cuts in defense spending of \$5 to \$7 billion. He assailed the Pentagon's "swollen bureaucracy" and the cost overruns of defense contracts. To many, it seemed as if Jimmy Carter (Annapolis '46), with his talk of welfare reform and national health programs, had opted for more "butter" instead of more "guns," that he tilted, on matters of defense, toward his party's doves. Yet today, this pledge to reduce Pentagon spending seems to have gone the way of Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1932 pledge to slash federal outlays as a means of countering the Great Depression. New realities tend to crowd in on the man in the White House.

As President, Jimmy Carter ordered the gradual withdrawal of U.S. ground troops from South Korea, canceled the costly B-1 bomber project, and, last year, vetoed a fourth nuclear-powered aircraft carrier for the Navy. But a major problem became increasingly apparent to him in 1978: For all the energies and hopes he had committed to the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks, the Soviet Union was not relenting in its 15-year expansion of military power that, among other things, threatened to upset the Soviet-American strategic balance by the mid-1980s.

After considerable internal White House debate, the President decided last fall to propose to Congress a 3 percent real increase in defense spending—matching a commitment obtained by Carter from America's NATO allies. Most significantly, the increase was proposed in a fiscal 1980 overall federal budget of \$532 billion that was otherwise restrained to contain "the threat of accelerating inflation" in a time of economic uncertainty.

The post-Vietnam slide in real U.S. defense outlays had been arrested by the Ford administration and Congress in 1976, but last year defense spending was still below the pre-Vietnam level when inflation was taken into account. As Defense Secretary Harold Brown and Carter's other national security advisers saw it, there was no choice but to begin to counter Moscow's steady effort, notably in the field of land-based intercontinental ballistics missiles. Here, Soviet advances in ICBM warhead size, explosive power, and accuracy were seen as endangering the "survivability" of the American 1,000 Minuteman ICBMs in their fixed underground silos in the Western states.

Not to develop a new, hard-to-locate ICBM—the mobile MX missile or some variant—would risk the destruction of a major portion of the U.S. nuclear deterrent force in the event of a Soviet surprise first strike. As Harold Brown viewed it, the risk of such a Soviet attack might be small, but the consequences would be too enormous to contemplate without taking remedial action. Moreover, the very existence of such vulnerability would make the U.S. nuclear deterrent less credible, and hence less effective.

Matters of Perception

"It may be too late if we wait much longer," Brown told Congress as he presented the proposed \$125 billion defense budget in late January. Such talk has a surrealistic quality in an age when both Russia and America already have the power to destroy each other—and the rest of civilization—in a matter of minutes. Yet, to defense planners, perceptions of relative strength and advantage are important, especially when the prime purpose of U.S. military power is to deter the use of military power by the adversary. To the President and his Defense

Peter Braestrup, 49, is editor of The Wilson Quarterly and a former Wilson Center Fellow. Born in New York City, he graduated from Yale (1951), served as a Marine in Korea (1952), attended Harvard as a Nieman Fellow (1960), and, among other assignments, covered the military in Washington and Vietnam as a reporter for the New York Times and Washington Post.

Secretary, it seemed clear that the relative decline in U.S. military effort had to be corrected—not only to “redress the balance” with the Soviets but also to reassure allies in Europe and Asia that the United States, however chastened by the 1965–73 Vietnam trauma, was no longer demoralized by it.

Hawks vs. Doves

President Carter’s decision did not occur in a political vacuum. Since 1975, Soviet-Cuban activity in Africa and Moscow’s continuing arms build-up had convinced most Western leaders that the détente of 1972–73 and the SALT talks did not mean an end to Soviet-American competition. Opinion polls and congressional sentiment showed the erosion of the opposition to increased defense spending that had prevailed since the peak of the Vietnam War. Although liberal Democrats sharply criticized Carter’s exemption of defense from his general budget down-hold, their complaints were muted by the generalized “tax revolt” against added government spending seemingly embodied in the passage of Proposition 13 in California.

The strongest attacks on the Carter defense budget came from the “hawks.” Chief among them was Senator Henry Jackson (D.-Wash.), a critic of the impending SALT II treaty and the leading spokesman for those Democrats who contended that, if anything, the President was still too sanguine in his appraisal of Soviet military progress and too indecisive in responding to new troubles abroad. For his part, General David C. Jones, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, testified that the Carter budget provided “the lowest level [of security] the nation should risk” and hinted that he would welcome congressional increases to “preserve the U.S. power and influence upon which world stability depends.”

How much is enough? The senior military leaders, the Joint Chiefs, have generally wanted “more” as an added hedge against disaster. The civilian leadership has usually wanted “less,” worrying about the economy, congressional opposition, or competing claims on the federal budget. In early 1979, President Carter and Defense Secretary Brown were clearly not embarking on a rearmament effort of the magnitude seen in the Korean War period. Nor were they attempting to match the kind of peacetime build-up sought by Kennedy and McNamara in 1961–63 in a quest for nuclear superiority and a “flexible response” to perceived communist threats.

Rather, Carter and Brown, even as they acknowledged the Soviet advances, seemed to count on having enough time—and

CHANGES IN U.S. DEFENSE FORCES

	1964	1968	1978	1979	1980
<i>Strategic Forces:</i>					
Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs):					
Minuteman	600	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Titan II	108	54	54	54	54
Polaris-Poseidon Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs)	336	656	656	656	656
Strategic Bomber Squadrons	78	40	25	25	25
<i>General Purpose Forces:</i>					
Land Forces:					
Army Divisions	16	19	16	16	16
Marine Divisions	3	4	3	3	3
Tactical Air Forces:					
Air Force Wings	21	30	26	26	26
Navy Attack Wings (aboard carriers)	15	15	12	12	12
Marine Corps Wings	3	3	3	3	3
Naval Forces:					
Aircraft Carriers	24	23	13	13	13
Nuclear-Powered Attack Submarines	19	33	70	72	75
Other Warships	363	385	166	170	181
Amphibious Warships	133	157	64	65	63
<i>Airlift and Sealift Forces:</i>					
Strategic Airlift Squadrons:					
C-5A	0	0	4	4	4
C-141	0	14	13	13	13
Troopships, Cargo Ships and Tankers	100	130	48	48	48
Active Military Manpower (thousands)	2,685	3,547	2,061	2,050	2,050
Defense Outlays (in billions of 1972 dollars)	77	101	67	68	70

NOTES: The strategic bomber force now consists of 348 B-52s, armed with short-range nuclear attack missiles (SRAM) and, come 1981, with longer-range subsonic cruise missiles. The Polaris-Poseidon missiles are embarked aboard 41 nuclear-powered submarines—with the first new Trident missile submarine coming into service in 1981. The strength of Army divisions now varies between 14,000 and 17,000 men; Marine divisions have almost 16,000 men. Air Force, Navy, and Marine tactical wings vary in size between 60 and 72 combat aircraft; all told, the United States has some 2,700 tactical fighter and attack aircraft, including the Air Force's new F-15 and F-16 jets and the Navy's new F-14. Not until 1981 will the Air Force's 26 wings be fully equipped. Three of the Navy's aircraft carriers are nuclear-powered; its amphibious ships can carry one and a half Marine divisions. The long-range airlift force includes 234 C-141 transports and 70 C-5A's (plus 216 civil airliners available in emergencies).

Source: Department of Defense

HAROLD BROWN: THE SOVIET EFFORT

In his 1980 budget statement to Congress, Defense Secretary Harold Brown last January outlined his views of the Soviet military posture. Excerpts:

Most disturbing of all, the Soviets have undertaken a long-term military build-up that still continues. What lies behind this build-up is a subject for debate. There can be no doubt, however, about the fact of the build-up itself.

We have attempted to measure the scale of the Soviet effort in a number of different ways. All of them underline certain indisputable trends. Among the most significant:

— The steady growth of the Soviet defense effort. Over a period of more than 15 years, the growth rate has probably averaged in the vicinity of 3 percent a year in dollars, and between 4 and 5 percent a year in rubles. In other words, this growth has been at about the same rate as the growth in the overall Soviet economy.

— The general magnitude of the effort. We estimate that, on the average, it has accounted for somewhere between 11 and 13 percent of Soviet gross national product (GNP). Other analysts put the level of effort at 15 percent or higher.

— The size of the Soviet effort relative to that of the United States. We believe that when the two programs are measured in U.S. prices, the Soviet effort came to equal ours by about 1971, and now exceeds it by something like 25 to 45 percent (with retirement costs excluded on both sides), depending on whether the ruble or the dollar measure is used.

These trends are consistent with what we know about the growth and improvement in Soviet military capabilities. Military manpower has risen from about 3.4 million in 1964 to roughly 4.4 million in 1978—not counting armed border guards and internal security police. Strategic nuclear delivery vehicles [ICBMs, SLBMs, and heavy bombers] have risen from approximately 450 in 1964 to 2,500 in 1978. The ground forces have been expanded from 148 divisions in 1964 to over 170 divisions in 1978, and the Soviet tactical air forces have gone from about 3,500 to 4,500 first-line combat aircraft.

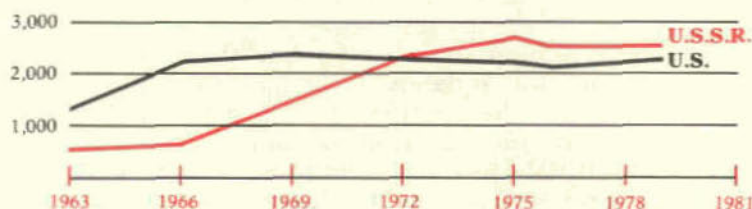
The seriousness with which the Soviets have undertaken—and give every sign of continuing—this effort is as impressive as its magnitude. One reflection of that seriousness is the emphasis in Soviet military doctrine on the achievement of balanced war-fighting capabilities in *both* nuclear and non-nuclear forces. Another has been the steadiness of purpose evident in the build-up. The

enough technological superiority—to restore the “strategic balance” without recourse to expensive crash programs. A SALT treaty with Moscow, Brown told Congress, would not end the arms race or lower its costs; but it would put certain constraints on total numbers of ICBMs and permit the Pentagon to develop new ways to make its land-based ICBM force less vulnerable to surprise attack.

Apparently, Carter and Brown were also banking on being

U.S.-U.S.S.R. STRATEGIC DELIVERY VEHICLES

(Bombers, Missile Launchers)



Source: Department of Defense

Soviets expanded their effort as our own grew in the 1960s. But, then, theirs *continued* to expand as ours began to decline [in the 1970s].

Whether the Soviet efforts in [the strategic nuclear] realm have been worth the cost remains problematic. The United States did not find its numerical nuclear superiority particularly useful or usable when it had it. The Soviets, of course, are different. Should they somehow obtain a perceived nuclear superiority, they might mistakenly try to use it for political advantage. But it seems doubtful that they would be any more comforted by nuclear equivalence than we were by nuclear superiority in the past.

Differences in force deployments, and in the contributions of allies, are part of what make U.S. and Soviet military capabilities so hard to compare. [For example], they must carry a burden with their Far Eastern deployments—a burden amounting to between 11 and 20 percent of their total defense effort—that we no longer find necessary to incur on anything like a comparable scale.

The Soviets must add a host of other difficulties. It would seem plausible that some portion of the Soviet force in Eastern Europe has at least one additional mission: the need to watch Soviet friends. As far as we can tell, the slowdown in [Soviet] economic growth has been sharper than the Soviet leadership had anticipated. Nonetheless, all of the evidence available to us on Soviet defense programs under way and planned suggests that the long-term trend in allocation of resources to defense is likely to continue into the 1980s.

able to avoid any sustained combat by United States' non-nuclear ("general purpose") forces in Europe or the Mideast for the next few years—until serious post-Vietnam weaknesses were corrected. The Navy, General Jones noted, was no longer big enough to cope with a two-ocean war; a NATO emergency would require all its efforts in the Atlantic. The readiness for combat of many Army and Marine units was a matter of dispute. All the services, Brown observed, were short on training, equipment

maintenance, stocks of ammunition. Thanks to its post-Vietnam reliance on volunteers, the armed services had shrunk since 1972 by 300,000 to just over 2 million people in uniform, the lowest level since before the Korean War; and the Carter administration made no proposals that would increase this active-duty strength, revive the draft, or provide what the Joint Chiefs considered adequate Army ready reserves.

Aside from its (inherited) no-draft policy, the Carter administration's approach was squarely in the mainstream of peacetime U.S. policy since the mid-1950s: (a) trying to maintain a strategic nuclear force (now a "triad" of bombers, missile-firing submarines, and ICBMs) as a deterrent to Soviet attack; (b) deploying most overseas ground and tactical air strength to Western Europe to support NATO; (c) sustaining a Navy strong enough to protect wartime supply lines to Europe and Japan; (d) keeping at home both back-up forces for NATO and Asia and a "fire brigade" of Marines and Army paratroopers for use in the Mideast or elsewhere; (e) deploying the Navy's Sixth Fleet (two carrier task forces, a Marine amphibious team) in the Mediterranean and the Seventh Fleet (of like size) in Far Eastern waters; (f) basing a Marine division in Okinawa plus air units in Japan's home islands as back-up forces for Asia.

President Carter, under heavy criticism from all sides in Congress and the military, stretched out his timetable for withdrawal of all U.S. ground troops from Korea.

The administration's heavy emphasis on Europe, its thinning out of forces committed to Asia, and its resistance to (costly) Navy ship-building have provoked congressional criticism. The volunteer force is a matter of debate. So is the rate of growth in defense outlays. Opinions differ on Soviet intentions. Yet the U.S. policy of global deterrence is generally accepted. Once again, the question in Congress is how much effort is now required, in fact, to sustain it.



THE ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE

By Charles Moskos

One enduring consequence of the Vietnam War and America's accompanying political trauma has been the abolition of the draft. Since the "peace with honor" of January 1973, the United States has tried what it has never tried before—to maintain a worldwide military deployment without conscripts.

This effort did not stem from a "military" decision aimed at improving the nation's future capabilities vis-à-vis the Soviet Union or its clients. Essentially, the decision was political: Washington's response to growing middle-class reaction to Selective Service and the past burdens of the war itself.

Despite the qualms of many analysts in and out of the military, the all-volunteer force was endorsed by both a Republican President and a Democratic Congress. The armed services, already grappling with the racial disputes, drug problems, and insubordination of the early 1970s, had no choice but to try to make it work.

After six years, sufficient time has elapsed to permit an initial appraisal of the all-volunteer experience, and in the Pentagon and in Congress, such appraisals are now underway. Most of the ensuing Washington debate—and the headlines—have been dominated by those who see only near-total success or near-total failure. My analysis indicates that, as yet, the all-volunteer force is neither.

It is important to remember that many of the "people problems" afflicting the military today cannot simply be blamed on the "all-volunteer" concept. They also stem from changes in American manners and mores, from prosperity, from confusion over America's world role, from a preoccupation with "rights" rather than "duties," from a decline in educational standards. Given the legacy of the late 1960s and early '70s, it is surprising that the services have done as well as they have.

Let's first look at *quantity*. The most obvious result of the end of the draft has been a sharp decline in the peacetime military force level:

¶ In 1964, just before the Vietnam build-up, the active duty strength of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines was about 2,600,000 men and women; about 191,000 or almost 25 percent

of all Army troops were draftees, and four of every ten volunteers for all services joined up because of draft pressure.

¶ In 1978, the active force stood at 2,069,000, with yet another cut (20,000) slated for 1979. In short, ending the draft has forced down Pentagon manpower, and, hence, to some degree, hurt U.S. military readiness, especially for nonnuclear war.

Lowered manpower goals have enabled the hard-working recruiters across the country to come close to their annual quotas (134,748 in 1978), albeit not without an occasional minor scandal over the enrollment of youths later found to be criminals or illiterates. High youth unemployment in the 1970s, especially among minorities, and the Pentagon's emphasis on enlisting more women have further eased the recruiters' task.

But, even in terms of quantity, inescapable constraints loom ahead. Last year, just over 2.1 million American males reached age 18. By 1985, there will be only 1.8 million 18-year-old males. Overall, by 1990, the number of males in the prime recruiting group, aged 18–24, will be 17 percent below the 1978 figure. Unless the armed forces are cut further, the Pentagon will still have to draw on this group for as many men as are now recruited. A rise in women enlistments and a decline in standards for male recruits are commonly proposed as ways to offset this impending shrinkage of the manpower pool. Yet, the demands of combat and an increasingly complex military technology impose constraints here, too.

Reviving ROTC

By and large, the four services have been able to attract enough new junior officers—the Army and Marine second lieutenants who lead rifle platoons and the Navy ensigns who stand deck watches. Except for physicians and certain technical specialties, there has been no *shortage* of newly-commissioned ensigns and second lieutenants in the all-volunteer era. (Retention of experienced pilots and officer-technicians, attracted by higher pay and easier working conditions in civilian life, is an-

Charles C. Moskos, Jr., 44, is professor of sociology at Northwestern University. Born in Chicago, he received his B.A. from Princeton University (1956) and Ph.D. from the University of California, Los Angeles (1963). He served as a draftee in the Army combat engineers during the late 1950s. He is the author of The Sociology of Political Independence (1967), The American Enlisted Man (1970), Peace Soldiers: The Sociology of a United Nations Force (1976), and Greek Americans (in press). He is also editor of Public Opinion and the Military Establishment (1971).

other matter.) During the 1948–73 era, the pressure of the draft helped sustain Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) enrollment on campuses and also prompted college graduates to volunteer for other officer candidate programs. Enrollment in ROTC, now the major source of junior officers for all services except the Marines, hit a low of 63,000 in 1974 and climbed to 86,000 in 1978.*

The Absent Middle Class

When it comes to *quality* of enlisted personnel being recruited under the current system, the debate grows stronger in and out of the Pentagon. Overall Defense Department statistics—those cited most frequently by Pentagon officials—mask important differences among the services.

The Air Force has consistently had the biggest share of high school graduates among new three-year recruits, perhaps because its enlisted contingent—of mechanics, technicians, and logistics types—is largely barred from combat roles (jet fighters are flown by officers). The Navy has onerous requirements—notably long tours of sea duty—but it has been able to increase its proportion of high school graduates and ranks second. The Marine Corps, with its esprit and a high ratio of combat troops, comes in third; the largest and least glamorous of the services, the Army, ranks fourth and last.

Since the end of the draft, an average of less than 60 percent of male Army entrants have possessed a high school diploma. In 1964, the last peacetime year before the Vietnam War, high school graduates accounted for 71 percent of Army draftees and 60 percent of Army volunteers. The decline in the educational levels of the all-volunteer Army must be contrasted with the overall *increase* in high school graduates among U.S. males aged 18 to 24 years—from 66 percent in 1964 to 76 percent in 1977. About 17 percent of the draftees in 1964 had some college; the corresponding figure has been around 5 percent for entrants in the all-volunteer Army.

Recruits with high school diplomas, Pentagon studies show, are not necessarily braver or more patriotic. But they tend to have far fewer discipline problems, higher motivation, and

*Bowing to student and faculty pressures during the Vietnam era, Yale, Harvard, and Stanford among others, jettisoned ROTC. New units were created at less renowned institutions, particularly in the South and Southwest. All told, 280 campuses had ROTC units in 1978—contrasted with more than 300 campuses and a much larger 230,000 student enrollment in the mid-1960s. As for West Point, Annapolis, and the Air Force Academy, the number of applicants has risen since 1973; each service academy is limited by law to a student body of 4,417.

**BLACKS AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL ARMED SERVICES
PERSONNEL: 1964-78**

	Army		Navy		Marine Corps		Air Force		All Services	
	Enlisted	Officer	Enlisted	Officer	Enlisted	Officer	Enlisted	Officer	Enlisted	Officer
1964	11.8	3.3	5.9	0.3	8.7	0.3	10.0	1.5	9.7	1.8
1974	21.3	4.5	8.4	1.3	18.1	2.5	14.2	2.2	15.7	2.8
1976	23.7	5.2	8.0	1.6	17.0	3.4	14.7	2.8	16.6	3.4
1978	29.0	7.0	9.0	2.0	19.0	4.0	15.0	4.0	19.0	4.0

Source: Department of Defense

greater adaptability to the demands of military training and the new technology. Even so, the Navy, in particular, finds that many of its high school graduates do not possess the reading ability required for shipboard tasks. The Army and the Navy have begun a series of remedial courses for enlisted men, with or without high school diplomas, designed to bring them up to eighth grade reading levels; roughly 25 percent of all Army recruits in 1977 read at sixth grade level or below.

The problem of "quality" should not be simply attributed, as it often is, to the increase in black enlistments. Racial minorities have done well in all the services.* The proportion of blacks has always been highest in the Army, a trend that has become more pronounced during the all-volunteer era. Blacks made up 34.9 percent of male Army recruits in fiscal year 1978 and 36.7 percent in the first quarter of fiscal year 1979. Although other minorities are less reliably tabulated, an overall figure of at least 6 percent, most of them Hispanic, is a conservative estimate. All told, four out of ten men now entering the Army's enlisted ranks are from these minority groups, which together account for only 18 percent of the nation's population.

Within Army enlisted ranks, as elsewhere in the services, the racial make-up varies by branch and career field; blacks tend to be concentrated in "low skill" fields, while whites are disproportionately found in technical specialties. For example, a 180-man Army rifle company or artillery battery may be made up of 50 percent blacks, 10 percent other minorities, with white officers and mostly black senior sergeants.

The educational level of blacks in America has lagged behind that of whites. But the decline in educational levels of new

*Blacks in 1978 accounted for 17 percent of the Army's sergeant majors and 22 percent of the master sergeants—the top two enlisted grades—although blacks only accounted for 12 percent of Army strength 15 years ago when most of today's noncoms first enlisted.

Army male recruits is not correlated with the increasing number of black soldiers. Indeed, since the end of the draft, the proportion of high school graduates among blacks entering the Army has *exceeded* that of whites, and this is a trend that is growing. In fact, today's Army is the only major arena in American society where black educational levels surpass those of whites, and by quite a significant margin.

What is happening is this: Whereas the black soldier is fairly representative of the black community, white recruits of recent years are coming from the least educated sectors of the white community. My stays with Army line units—infantry and armor—also leave the distinct impression that many of our enlisted white soldiers are coming from nonmetropolitan areas. I am struck by what I do *not* find in line units—urban and suburban white youths of middle-class origins. In other words, the all-volunteer Army is attracting not only a disproportionate number of minorities but also white youths who, if anything, are more uncharacteristic of the nation's broader social mix than are our minority soldiers.

Sports Cars and Stereos

One of the main premises of the 1970 Gates Commission—the blue-ribbon presidential panel that produced the rationale for the all-volunteer force—was that recruitment for the armed services should be guided by marketplace conditions and monetary inducements.

But moves to tie military pay to that of the civilian sector preceded the creation of the all-volunteer force. In 1967, soldier pay levels were formally linked to those of the Federal Civil Service and thus, indirectly, to the civilian labor market. In 1977, a Rand study concluded that *career* military personnel are now better paid than their civilian counterparts. A new recruit does pretty well too; a draftee got \$78 a month in 1964, but today's 18-year-old volunteer gets \$419 a month, plus free room and board and medical care.*

A visitor to an Army unit today can see clear signs of the young single GI's new buying power, starting with the sports

* Nevertheless, in order to fill the ranks, it has been found necessary to offer additional cash bonuses. In 1978, extra payments of up to \$2,000 were authorized for men willing to enlist in the ground combat arms—armor, infantry, artillery—for longer than normal two-year tours and who meet specified educational and aptitude standards. The Pentagon's reliance on cash inducements, however, may have accelerated the "erosion of benefits," such as access to military medical care for dependents, and the uncertainty over pensions that have corroded the morale of career officers and noncoms since the end of the draft.

cars in the base parking lot. Despite the introduction of fast-food items and more varied menus, fewer and fewer soldiers are eating their meals in the "dining facility" (mess hall). In Germany, the typical young unmarried soldier invests money in an inordinately expensive stereo system or saves up to fly commercially to the United States to take his 30-day leave back home. In the United States, increasing numbers of single soldiers rent apartments off base and maintain bunks in the barracks only for inspection purposes—a custom virtually unheard of in the draft Army. One result of the single soldier's new disposable income has been the decline of barracks life and unit esprit.

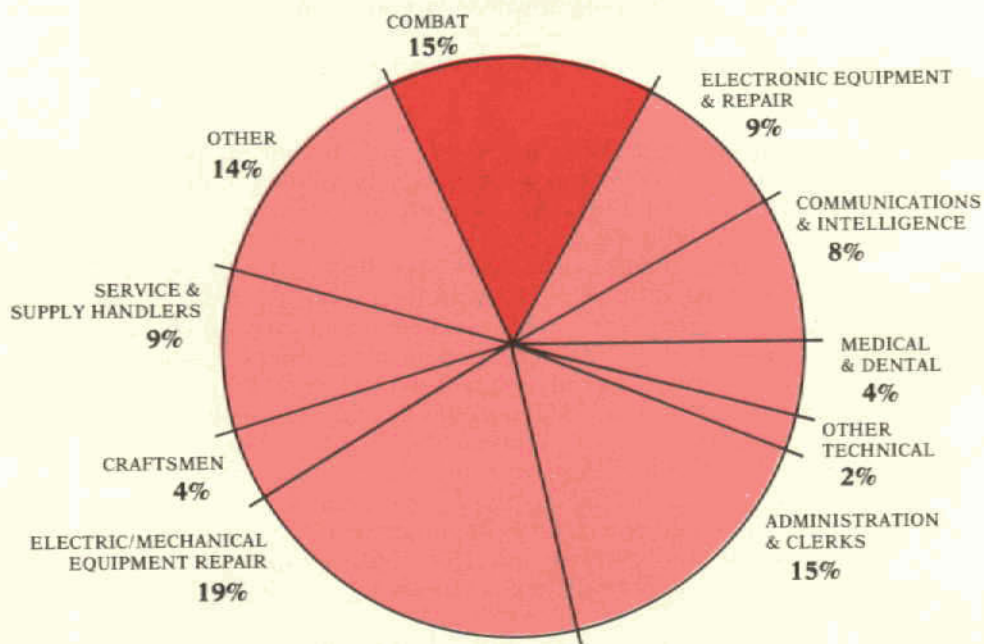
Finding Babysitters

When I visit Army units, it becomes clear that the racial violence in many Army outfits (and in the Navy and Marines, as well) of the early 1970s has largely receded, though one detects a latent Klan spirit among some white soldiers. Crime is a problem, partly because there is more to steal from today's better paid soldiers than there was from the 1964 draftee. Marijuana use is widespread, as it is among American youth generally. Hard drugs still worry commanders in a few units, yet outsiders may exaggerate the problem. Alcohol abuse throughout the ranks has become a command concern.

Noncoms find it harder to enforce discipline than before; and if the anarchy of the early '70s has abated, the new enlistee is often quick to assert his "rights" if he feels put upon. The day when many enlisted men were better educated than their sergeants has gone, to the dismay, surprisingly enough, of many senior noncoms. A visitor is struck by the old sergeants' fond memories of the university graduates who served under them.

One unanticipated consequence of the shift to an all-volunteer force—and higher pay—has been a marked increase in marriage among the junior enlisted ranks. In 1977, the proportion of married personnel in the pay grade E-4—the average junior enlisted rank—was 46.7 percent, a figure almost double that of 1964. Today just about every major military base in the United States from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to Camp Pendleton, California, is ringed by trailer camps or shoddy apartment complexes where many of the young marrieds live an existence close to the poverty line, a condition that exacerbates what are often already unstable family lives. In West Germany, for lack of on-base housing, young Army couples live "on the economy" where they face cultural isolation, as well as financial distress as the U.S. dollar declines.

JOB DISTRIBUTION OF U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL



Source: Department of Defense, 1977

Oddly enough, the sharp increase in the number of young enlisted marrieds—a growing number of whom are service couples—runs directly counter to the national trend toward later marriage. And combat readiness suffers. Too often, one hears stories of infants being deposited in the orderly room (“Can’t find a babysitter”!) when an Army unit is placed on alert. In West Germany alone, the U.S. military must evacuate 160,000 wives and children in the event of Soviet attack.*

Life has never been easy for the young recruit—even under the softened regimen of the post-Vietnam era. In basic training, he still has to rise before dawn, respond to orders, test himself physically, get along with a host of new comrades in barracks. And, after basic training, there is often a letdown.

Here occurs one source of enlisted discontent that had no counterpart in the peacetime draft era. This is “post-entry disillusionment.” The draftee’s expectations were never high, hence

*By contrast, in South Korea, Army troops serve 13-month tours without dependents.

he was not unpleasantly surprised; indeed, he often—at least in hindsight—found the Army not so bad on its own terms. In all-volunteer recruitment, however, a consistent theme has been the stress—out of necessity, to be sure—on what the service can do for the recruit in the way of training in skills transferable to civilian jobs.

Although the advocates of the all-volunteer concept do not emphasize it, the irreconcilable dilemma is that many military assignments—mostly, but not exclusively, in the ground combat arms and aboard ship—do not and cannot have direct transferability to civilian occupations.

Post-entry disillusionment relates directly to the extremely high rate of attrition in the all-volunteer force. Since 1973, more than *one in three* recruits have failed to complete their initial enlistments: they were discharged for disciplinary reasons, personality disorders, or job inaptitude. Attrition rates are even higher in the Army and Marine combat units and in heavy labor categories, such as boiler tenders aboard Navy ships.

Moreover, the *desertion* rate in the all-volunteer force is twice as high as that in the pre-Vietnam period—17.8 per thousand enlisted personnel in 1977 compared to 7.9 percent in 1964. What makes the current desertion figures especially troublesome, of course, is that they occur on top of the high attrition rates.

These unsettling statistics lead us to the clear relationship between socioeconomic background and soldierly performance. High school graduates and those with some college are more

EDUCATIONAL LEVELS OF ARMY MALE RECRUITS: 1964–78

	Some College	High School Graduate	Non-High School Graduate
1964 Draftees	17.2%	54.1%	28.7%
1964 Enlistees	13.9	46.2	39.9
1975	5.7	48.6	45.7
1976	4.1	51.5	44.4
1977	5.1	51.1	43.8
1978	3.8	66.2	34.8

19- TO 20-YEAR-OLD MALES IN U.S.: 1977

28.9%	47.5%	23.6%
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Source: Department of the Army statistics on non-prior-service entrants. Civilian data from U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, 1978.

than twice as likely to complete their enlistments successfully. The evidence is also clear, contrary to conventional wisdom, that high aptitude, better-educated soldiers do better across the board—in “low skill” jobs as well as in “high skill” jobs. The shortage of such quality manpower has hit hardest at the combat arms and the crews of Navy warships, where “low aptitude” recruits tend to be assigned.

Thus the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps, increasingly dependent on more complex weaponry and communications gear, are bedeviled by problems of manpower quality even as the Pentagon faces overall problems of quantity when the manpower pool shrinks during the 1980s. This spring, even the Air Force, for the first time began to have trouble recruiting qualified youths.

Buying Alternatives

What to do? Influential specialists in Congress, including Senator Sam Nunn (D.-Ga.), see little prospect for a competent U.S. military force in the 1980s without recourse to some sort of compulsory national service. Barring a manifest new Soviet threat, most Congressmen and Carter Administration officials see no chance of a return to a peacetime draft. Adverse public opinion is one key reason.* And there are other questions. If Selective Service is revived, who should serve, when not all are needed?

Yet, most internal Pentagon proposals for better “manpower utilization” in the all-volunteer force have not addressed the central question: getting more able young men into the services, particularly into the ground combat arms or onto warships. Neither lowering physical/mental standards for men, nor even greater emphasis on remedial programs and “human relations,” nor increasing the number of women, nor greater reliance on civilian personnel fit the imperatives of combat readiness in tank, artillery, and infantry units or on Navy warships.

As I see it, the difficulties in the all-volunteer force do not originate in the death of conscription or in the efforts of service recruiters. The *crucial flaw* has been an informal redefinition since 1971 by Congress, the executive branch, and many “policy intellectuals” of military service as a function of “supply and demand variables,” as a “job” to be filled through “market in-

*A March 1977 Gallup poll showed 54 percent of respondents opposed to a return of the draft and 36 percent in favor. The Selective Service system is in “deep stand-by”; proposals to revive registration of young men have been made in Congress, but no such pre-emergency plans have been urged by the White House.

centives." In effect, starting with the Nixon Administration, we have sought to "buy" an alternative to the draft.

This Pentagon emphasis on individual cash compensation and material self-interest has helped move the U.S. military away from professionalism and institutional loyalty and esprit—the intangibles that also sustain Americans in uniform—toward an organizational mentality more and more resembling that of any civilian occupation. At its extreme, this mentality turns service people into "employees"—with the recent talk of military unionization as a natural by-product.

A New GI Bill?

Even at the recruiting level, inducements based mainly on economic incentives will be increasingly inadequate to provide the services with quality manpower. Studies show that high pay motivates low-aptitude youths—high school dropouts, those with poor grades—to join while having little attraction for more qualified youths.

Happily, proposals are being made to get the Pentagon away from simple cash inducements and to attract better-qualified young men. My own suggestion, advanced in congressional testimony last summer, was that the services offer potential recruits the option of a two-year enlistment (the old draft obligation) to be restricted to candidates for the combat arms, heavy labor jobs aboard ship, and other hard-duty fields.

The *quid pro quo* for such an assignment would be generous education benefits—along the lines of the GI bill for World War II veterans.* It would amount to four years in college in exchange for two years in the combat arms. The conditions of service would be honest and unambiguous, eliminating the "post-entry disillusionment" syndrome. Moreover, the recruit would be obligated to serve part-time in the reserves after discharge from active duty, thereby alleviating a major post-Vietnam gap in our defense posture.†

There is some evidence that a sufficient number of middle-class and upwardly mobile American youths would find such service a welcome brief diversion from the world of school or work. The added costs of this "New GI Bill" would be offset by reduced costs of attrition, by the elimination of current cash

*The World War II veteran got up to \$500 a year for tuition and \$75 a month subsistence—enough in 1945–50 to cover most costs of even a Harvard education. Subsequent "GI bills" have been far less generous.

†In 1978, the Army's "selected reserve," which includes National Guard units slated for early deployment in case of war in Europe, was more than 20 percent under strength.

WOMEN FILL THE GAP

No other nation has made so strong an effort to use women in the military. Since 1973, the U.S. Defense Department has doubled the number of female soldiers, airmen, marines, and sailors—with 132,000 (or 6 percent of the total enlisted force) planned for this year. By 1984, the projected figure is 208,000, or 12 percent of all the services' enlisted personnel; 17 percent of the Air Force will be women.

Feminist agitation has had some effect, notably in opening up West Point, Annapolis, and the Air Force Academy to female cadets in 1976 and in enabling women to serve aboard Navy support vessels. But the major impetus has been the Pentagon's recognition of an unpleasant reality: Under the present all-volunteer system, not enough "able and available" American males can be recruited to fill the services' ranks, even with today's higher pay and reduced manpower goals.

Although barred from front-line combat units and warships, service women now fly helicopters, command Army posts, serve aboard Navy repair ships, drive Marine bulldozers, stand watch at Air Force Titan II missile sites, and train with the 82nd Airborne Division. Such assignments, small in number, make headlines. Surveys show that most enlisted women prefer—and get—"traditional" jobs in medical and administrative fields. Almost all women recruits are high school graduates; they rank well below male enlistees in drug abuse, alcoholism, and AWOL rates.

Last year, the Pentagon asked Congress to lift the ban on women serving in combat units. But debate persists within the military over how many women can be utilized without hurting operational readiness. The Army, in particular, with 57,000 enlisted women, many of them already in truck companies and other combat support units, has run into problems. Field commanders now must cope with a 15 percent pregnancy rate among enlisted women, unwed mothers, demands for Army-provided child care, and what one 1978 Army study called the "creeping advance of sex fraternization" between male officers and enlisted women. Such burdens have revived field officers' complaints that the Army risks becoming a "social welfare agency." Women are needed, according to Defense Secretary Harold Brown, but "the key issue is to maintain the combat effectiveness of the armed forces."

bonuses for combat arms enlistees, and, most likely, by fewer dependents' allowances for junior enlisted men.

There are other grounds for encouraging such enlistments. The distinctive quality of the enlisted experience in modern American history has been the mixing of the social classes,

stereotyped in virtually every Hollywood movie about GIs at war. This began to diminish during the Vietnam conflict as the college-educated avoided service; it is rapidly disappearing in the all-volunteer Army.

To criticize a prosperous society that, in effect, excuses its privileged members from serving in the ranks is not to insist that the make-up of the enlisted force be perfectly "representative," an exact core sample of America's rich and not-so-rich, whites and nonwhites, Christians and Jews. The military should continue to be in the forefront of racial integration among both leaders and followers, as it has been since the early 1950s; that the military, as a profession or as a "step-up," attracts blacks is to its credit. But it is equally important that the participation of more middle-class youths in the enlisted ranks be considered a measure of our representative democracy and our dedication to equality of sacrifice. It is surprising that, given the extensive 1978 discussion of financial relief for families with children in college, no public figure has thought to tie such student aid to any service obligation, civilian or military, on the part of the youths who benefit.

Beyond the immediate problems of the all-volunteer force, there are nagging long-term questions. As it is now run, the all-volunteer force effectively excludes participation by most of those who will be America's future leaders, whether in government, the mass media, or, most notably, in the intellectual and academic communities. What effect will the evolution of a generation of political leaders who lack any firsthand experience have on future defense policy? Will military service gradually become viewed by the well-off as a solution for those with no other options?

In the final analysis, reliance on the market system is not the way to recruit or sustain an all-volunteer force, nor is it the way to strengthen the armed services for increasingly complex and demanding tasks on behalf of the larger society, in a time of world tensions and uncertainty.



BACKGROUND BOOKS

THE AMERICAN MILITARY

Perhaps the best long view of the U.S. military is **The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy** (Macmillan, 1973, cloth; Ind. Univ., 1977, paper). Russell Weigley describes the military-political ups and downs of American history from the Battle of Bunker Hill to the battles in Vietnam. Some of Weigley's assertions are debatable, notably his thesis that, as its resources grew, the U.S. military usually came to favor an "annihilative" strategy against any foe. (In fact, the Joint Chiefs went along with a presidential "limited war" policy in Korea, as in Indochina.) Nowhere, he concludes, "does the use of combat offer much promise for the United States today."

Depicting **The Impact of War on American Life** (Holt, 1971), editor Keith L. Nelson serves up a piquant anthology of cartoons, polemics, and commentaries since 1900 dealing with pacifism, preparedness, and the military's influence—with a heavy focus on the Cold War era.

Good unofficial histories of the individual services (in contrast to good histories of U.S. wars) are rare. Weigley's scholarly **History of the United States Army** (Macmillan, 1967) is one of them. Most recent, and more popular in style, is J. Robert Moskin's **The U.S. Marine Corps Story** (McGraw-Hill, 1975), which describes not only the Marines' battles overseas—from the Bahamas expedition (1776) to Vietnam and the costly 1975 *Mayaguez* affair—but also their difficulties at home, notably with proposals after World War II and after Vietnam to abolish the Corps or re-

duce its size.

Two generals' biographies that illuminate the ethos of military life as well as the rigors of wartime command are Forrest C. Pogue's **George C. Marshall: Education of a General, 1880–1939** (Viking, 1963), which describes the early career and slow promotion of the imposing soldier who later shaped and led the U.S. Army in World War II, and William Manchester's breezy **American Caesar: Douglas MacArthur, 1880–1964** (Little, Brown, 1978). Manchester depicts the imperious general's days at West Point, as well as later triumphs and failures.

Good generals depend on good troops. **The American Soldier: Vol. 1 Adjustment During Army Life; Vol. 2. Combat and its Aftermath** (Princeton, 1949, cloth; Military Aff. Aero, 1977, paper) is an ambitious effort by sociologist Samuel A. Stouffer, et al., to analyze extensive surveys of enlisted men before and during combat in World War II. The authors find the wartime GI a "civilian in uniform," highly resistant to the Old Army's caste system. Group esprit rather than ideology has motivated Americans in battle. **Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command in Future War** (Washington: The *Infantry Journal*, 1947; Peter Smith reprint, 1978) is combat historian S. L. A. Marshall's vivid exegesis of lessons learned from postbattle interviews in World War II. Among his findings: Americans fight better when they cheer and shout; only one out of four riflemen in close combat actually fired his weapon at the foe.

On a more abstract level, Samuel P. Huntington's **The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil Military Relations** (Harvard, 1957) traces the evolution of the modern officer corps since the early 19th century as a body of professionals with "expertise, responsibility, and corporateness." He sees necessary tensions between military values (duty, honor, country) and those of a liberal democratic society.

Far more detailed, and philosophically at odds with Huntington, is sociologist Morris Janowitz's pioneering study, **The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait** (Free Press, 1960, cloth; rev. ed., 1971, paper). Janowitz traces the changing social origins of the U.S. officer corps (less Southern, less aristocratic); the increasing stresses on family life (with a high divorce rate in the Strategic Air Command); the new focus on "managerial" styles; the increasing collaboration between soldiers and civilian leaders after World War II. No longer, observes Janowitz, are the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps isolated from the larger society in peacetime; he favors more interaction.

During the late 1960s and early '70s, the military was blamed by academics and pundits for America's failures in Indochina and the heavy burdens of the Soviet-American arms race. In 1970, sociologist Charles Moskos, no supporter of the war, was moved to observe, "Anti-militarism has become the anti-Semitism of the intellectual community."

Indeed, the "warfare state," the "military-industrial complex," and the "selling of the Pentagon" were widely assailed in books and the news media. ROTC programs were eliminated at top universities, and West Point was flayed for being in-

sufficiently humanistic.

A dispassionate analysis is Adam Yarmolinsky's **The Military Establishment: Its Impact on American Society** (Harper, 1970). Yarmolinsky, a former aide to Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara and sometime Harvard law professor, provides a lucid Big Picture. He finds that the military, since 1940, has become more "civilianized" under the pressures of politics, technology, and involvement in foreign policy. Yet, a homogeneous "military-industrial complex" is a myth. Rival service chiefs, rival contractors, and Congressmen from affected localities vie for the defense budget dollar. Military contracts are vital to a few large but low-profit aerospace firms (e.g., Lockheed, General Dynamics) and regional shipyards, but they count for little at General Motors, AT&T, and the nation's other leading corporations.

Especially since the early 1960s, the power over the armed services held by Secretaries of Defense and their civilian aides has vastly increased (with mixed results). And, in the end, Yarmolinsky observes, "the military is at any time no more powerful than the President of the United States—the commander in chief of the armed forces—is prepared to allow it to be."

At presidential order, the United States has intervened militarily in many places besides Vietnam since World War II: Korea, Lebanon, the Taiwan Straits, Laos, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Cambodia. Have the generals always been the most eager to intervene?

No, says Richard K. Betts of Brookings as he examines the advisory role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and lesser military men since 1945 in **Soldiers, Statesmen and Cold War**

Crises (Harvard, 1977). Each service chief's views were shaped in part by his own service's organization and doctrine. But by and large, the military were no *more* eager to intervene in crises overseas than were the President's top civilian advisers. Sometimes they were *less* eager, as in the case of Laos in 1961. Once U.S. troops were in battle, however, the military tended to urge more forceful policies than did the civilians, as in Vietnam after 1965. For better or worse, "military advice," writes Betts, "has been most persuasive [to Presidents] as a veto of the use of force and least potent when it favored force."

Books on nuclear strategy, arms control, and national politico-military policy abound, often with recipes for better performance (see "Strategic Arms Control," Background Books, *WQ*, Autumn 1977). Many seem written with an eye on the day's headlines; the author's arguments and assumptions are soon made stale by events.

This weakness also afflicts most recent books on the draft, the all-volunteer force, and the post-Vietnam army. **Unionizing the Armed Forces** (Univ. of Pa., 1977, cloth & paper), edited by Ezra S. Krendel and Bernard Samoff, is a compendium of essays on what was once Topic A but seems to have faded. In **Women and the Military** (Brookings, 1977, cloth & paper), Martin Binkin and Shirley J. Bach,

an Air Force officer, suggest that women could fill one-third of all Army enlisted positions and 94 percent of Air Force jobs but concede the need for more studies first. **Chance and Circumstance: The Draft, the War, and the Vietnam Generation** (Knopf, 1978) is a useful, partly anecdotal critique of the Vietnam draft, its inequities, and its evaders by Lawrence M. Bachir and William A. Strauss. **The Report of the President's Commission on an All-Volunteer Force** (Government Printing Office, 1970) lays out the original Nixon rationale for ending the draft; many of its assumptions have proved optimistic. Richard A. Gabriel and Paul L. Savage assail Army careerism and bureaucracy in **Crisis in Command** (Hill and Wang, 1978) and contend that the all-volunteer force will not improve matters.

Sam C. Sarkesian's **The Professional Army Officer in a Changing Society** (Nelson-Hall, 1974) tends to view the military in a broader context. Much remains the same, even after Vietnam. Anti-Pentagon polemics have abated. Yet American society has changed, he says, and the military profession must adapt to a new environment, without sacrificing its competence and esprit: "All the reorganizations, concerns for weapons technology, and changing strategic posture that may be necessary . . . are meaningless if the [military profession] does not have solid support from the society at large."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Advice on books for this essay came from Samuel F. Wells, Jr., Charles Moskos, David MacIsaac, and researchers at the Defense Department, the Army War College, and the Brookings Institution.