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CIVILIAN RESEARCH PROJECT

# CIVIL AND MILITARY RELATIONS GAP AMERICA'S DISCONNECT WITH ITS MILITARY

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## **AMERICA'S DISCONNECT WITH ITS MILITARY**

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## ABSTRACT

Many scholars in the field of civilian and military relations focus on a gap between senior civilian and military leadership. In this paper, I will focus on that gap as it pertains to the American population and the disconnect that exists with the people who serve in our Armed Forces. Three significant factors are contributing to this disconnect; representation of the population in uniform, social and cultural gaps, and politics in military service. Narrowing the patterns we recruit affects the geographic and economic composition of our military members, distinguishing them from their civilian counterparts. From a cultural perspective, the norms of the military are often at odds with those of the younger generation, the very audience the military needs to target to maintain a viable force. Along with an unbalanced representation, the growing role of politics and the uniform has the potential to widen an already existing gap in the civil military relations in our nation. Closing the gap will require a reconsideration of the all-volunteer force, who and how we recruit, and how we are re-connecting our service members with society.

## INTRODUCTION

The United States all-volunteer military is the most professional and dedicated force in the world. Regarded by the American people as one of the nation's most trusted entities, the U.S. service member has been an icon of American resolve. Unfortunately, the connection or bond that the people of this nation treasure between them and their armed forces is in jeopardy. It is safe to say that the soldier is the most vital asset in the military's arsenal. Thus, it is imperative that a source to keep that inventory vibrant and current is readily available. Who is that supplier? It's the citizens of America. A growing separation between the American people and its military threatens not only the strength and reputation of this time-honored relationship, but also the ability to build and maintain the all-volunteer force. This divide manifests in three key areas. First, the geographic and economic recruitment and composition of the force. No longer do our service members accurately represent the country in a wide and equitable manner. Military service is a concept that is fading among our senior representation in government, with less than 19% of the current Congress having served.<sup>i</sup> Secondly, a social and cultural gap is contributing to the divide with the American people, as society manages and grows with social norms, the military works to adapt a culture that has historically been slow to change. Thirdly, the current political environment, one both heated and controversial, has the potential to impact civilian and military relations. The public viewpoints of both active and retired senior leaders has threatened the apolitical position the military has struggled to maintain, potentially impacting the public's perception of those in uniform.

How to close the gap? Is the all-volunteer force a concept that must be reexamined? How does the military reconnect with the very people it has sworn to serve and protect? This paper examines the factors that are contributing to the growing divide between America and its military and some ways in which the nation can close the gap in civilian and military relations.

## REPRESENTATION

America's military should be a healthy representation of the country as a whole. This representation should reflect the geographic culture and disparities of our separate states, thus providing a grounded representation of the American people. Geographic recruitment and dispersion of military installations plays a key role in connecting with the population. Recruitment is a critical component to both maintaining a combat ready force and to ensuring an accurate depiction of the population the military serves. However, historical recruitment data shows an unbalanced representation of our national footprint serving in the military. The Southeastern area of the U.S. has historically been the major contributor of recruits to military service. When looking at the target population of 18-24 year olds in the country, the top 5 states who provide the most service members are Georgia, Florida, Virginia, Alabama, and South Carolina.<sup>ii</sup> In contrast, the Northeast is and has been severely underrepresented in the ranks of our military. States like Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts provide some of the lowest recruitment numbers in the nation.<sup>iii</sup> There are several factors that contribute to these geographic disparities, several of which include propensity to serve, affiliation with the military or a military member, economic resources, and so on. Data also

indicates that geographic location within a state also impacts recruitment. Rural America is volunteering for service at much higher rate than those from major cities. Over 44 percent of our nation's recruits come from rural areas, though the majority of the nation lives in urban centers.<sup>iv</sup> The imbalance in representation across our nation in uniform is contributing to the disconnect between our military and the population it serves. The diversity of our nation is represented in the social and cultural norms that are associated with each of our unique states. The disproportion in states' representation in uniform reduces the overall diversity of the force, impacting not only the current force, but the future force. The disparity impacts personal connections made by military service, creating a trend of future service that will be too regionally focused. These demographic and geographic disparities impact the public's immediate knowledge and frequent interaction with their military service members.

Recruitment is not the only geographic impact to connecting with the American people. Stationing of active military installations also plays a key role. The Defense Base Closure and Base Realignment (BRAC) and other budgetary constraints have forced the closure of more than 350 military bases and installations since the end of the cold war, limiting public exposure to our service men and women.<sup>v</sup> This restructuring of military installations isolates our men and women in uniform, reducing the national military footprint and reducing the public's daily interactions with its armed forces. Today, almost half of 1.3 million active duty military members are permanently stationed in just 5 states- Georgia, Virginia, North Carolina, Texas, and California.<sup>vi</sup> The large "joint" bases like Fort Bragg, North Carolina have become fortress-like installations, housing more than 55,000 soldiers and over 74,000 family members.<sup>vii</sup> These posts are self-sufficient in many ways, containing services like



schools, healthcare, shopping and entertainment facilities. Soldiers can go for extended periods of time without having to ever exit. Since 9-11, public access to these massive installations has been severely limited. Access requires multiple forms of identification and potential vehicle searches, creating a sense of isolation for some of the population. Philip Carter, an Iraq veteran and director of Military, Veterans and Society Programs at the Center for a New American Security, believes “military bases are our most exclusive gated communities.” A sentiment that is shared by many.

Civilian and military interactions are typically intertwined directly surrounding our large military installations. For instance, more than 75% of the Fort Bragg population resides in the immediate community surrounding the post.<sup>viii</sup> Here, the local community is in tune with the daily life and often impacted by the hardships like combat deployments. A tragic event in places like Afghanistan or Iraq races through the town, all wondering if the loss was from their community. This emotional event brings together the military and the community in which they serve. However, just 60 miles north of this massive post, college towns like Chapel Hill are a world apart. Many have little to no interaction or knowledge of daily military life, other than occasionally seeing a service member in uniform in public places like an airport. Basic understandings of military life, like Retreat, an event that happens each day at 1700 across every U.S. military installation in the world, is often misunderstood. Jerstin Crosby, a former graduate student from the University of North Carolina, thought friends were playing a prank on him then they all stopped their vehicles in the middle of the road and exited to honor the lowering of the American Flag.<sup>ix</sup> The geographic recruitment and stationing of military personnel widens the growing divide between the American people and the force sworn to protect them.

A growing gap between senior civilian leadership and the military is also an area of concern.

One area that reflects this gap is the representation of veterans in Congress, the very body of authority that provides oversight to our armed forces. This lack of veteran experience could potentially impact significant issues for our military to include oversight, policy shaping, and veteran issues like healthcare and employment.

Prior military service is an achievement that has been on a steady decline among our nation's civilian leaders. At the start of the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress, only 101 members had any military service, reflecting only 18.7% of the membership. During the Vietnam era of the early 1970's, some 73% of the congress had served in one form or another in the military.<sup>x</sup> Even of those 101 or so veterans who serve in congress today, only 12 ever served on active duty.<sup>xi</sup> The 2016 presidential election also represented the growing trend seen in congress. None of the Democrat or Republican candidates running for President of the United States served a single day in the Armed Forces.<sup>xii</sup> So why is it critical that so few of our representatives have little to no military experience?

With more than half of this Nation's discretionary spending allocated to defense, having representatives who understand what soldiers actually need is vital. With spending exceeding more than \$600 billion, the defense budget is one area of oversight that veterans could potentially provide significant impact.<sup>xiii</sup> Many programs within this budget are less tied to national defense and more tied to lobbyists. The veterans of the oversight committees that manage this budget are more apt to understand the needs of the soldier on the ground and more prone to ask the tough questions.



Policy making is also an area that veterans have played a critical role in our senior civilian government. The current unrest around the world, coupled with the lengthy commitments by U.S. troops in harm's way, veteran's opinions in congress are becoming more and more important. Recent vets from the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts currently serving were viewed by former President Obama as vital to how he will react to situations like Syria and ISIS.<sup>xiv</sup> According to Paul Rieckhoff, head of Iraq and Veterans of America, today's veterans in congress understand how easy it is to commit forces, how much harder it is to withdraw them, and even more importantly, the long-term effects on those that serve.<sup>xv</sup> For many of the current veterans serving in congress, the threat of another war like Iraq is at the forefront of every decision when it comes to committing U.S. forces abroad. Hawaiian representative Tulsi Gabbard is one of those veterans whose experience as a veteran is helping shape future policy, promising to not repeat history like "going into war without a clear strategy."<sup>xvi</sup> According to a study by Peter Feaver and Chris Gelpi, the U.S. initiates fewer military disputes when there are a greater number of veterans serving in congress.<sup>xvii</sup> Further studies also show that veterans in congress are more committed to see through tough legislation. Vets attend hearings 44% more than their non-vet counterparts, and intervene in policy issues 98% more often.<sup>xviii</sup>

Among the veterans in congress, there is a small and unique group that is working legislation that is often overshadowed by their peers. Today, there are four female veterans in congress, all of whom have served in combat, that bring a perspective and voice that have their peers listening. These representatives' views on key issues like sexual harassment, family leave, and selective service for women bring a legitimacy to these issues not seen before.<sup>xix</sup>

Veteran representation in congress has been on a steady decline since the end of WWII, and with that brings a greater disconnect between the people's representation and their military. The lack of veteran representation is impacting key elements of the governing body like defense oversight and policy shaping. As the longest war in our nation's history winds down and the reality of facing global threats continues, issues that impact those who have served and those who are currently serving are going to be paramount in our national discussions.

## SOCIAL AND CULTURAL GAPS

Social and cultural norms in the military are often at odds with those of American society. The result of these conflicting beliefs is a widening of the gap between the people in uniform and the people they serve. Some young recruits feel this disconnect very early in their careers. A study that followed Marine recruits through basic training found that these young men and women soon felt alienated from the communities they just left. They no longer viewed the public they just left in the same light, often viewing their old neighbors as unfit and undisciplined. Many avoided old friends or found they no longer had the same commonalities.<sup>xx</sup>

On the other side of the coin, the public perception of young recruits is also changing. This change is often driven by the source of knowledge or information from which the American people draw their conclusions. Hollywood is a major contributor to the American people's views of their military. Since the start of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, today's military has been both glorified and villainized on the big screen. In movies like "In the Valley of Elah," "Stop-Loss," and "The Hurt Locker,"

military members are portrayed as deserters or murderers who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder or are addicted to a combat environment that prevents them from readjusting to normal society.<sup>xxi</sup>

The shift in culture between society and the military is clearly depicted in those who serve today. Among Baby Boomers born before 1955, at least 75% had someone in their immediately family like a spouse, child, or sibling who served.<sup>xxii</sup> With about .05% of the population serving today, this direct link with the people and those in uniform is no longer there. With fewer and fewer close connections with our service members, the pool of recruits is growing shallower. However, the association with immediately family is still a strong recruitment tool for today's all volunteer force. Surveys show that close to 80% of those currently serving are from a household that an immediate relative served.<sup>xxiii</sup>

The pace in which the social and cultural norms change also affects the relationship between the armed forces and the people. The military is often slow to accept changes in social norms for fear of impacting the morals and discipline in uniform, and ultimately readiness of the force. Homosexuality is a clear example of how the cultural norms clashed between the public and those in uniform. It is without doubt that homosexuals have served in all branches of the armed forces since their inceptions, and in many cases, under the condition of anonymity. It wasn't until 1981 that the Department of Defense officially published a policy that addressed homosexuality in uniform, banning gay citizens from service.<sup>xxiv</sup> By the end of the 1980's, the implementation of this policy resulted in the discharge of over 17,000 men and women due to their sexual orientation.<sup>xxv</sup>

By the early 90's, public pressure was mounting against this policy. Universities began to push back on military related activities on campuses, like recruiting and ROTC. Newly elected President Bill Clinton along with Senator Sam Nunn (D-GA), chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee, came to an agreement on a policy that would later be known as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."<sup>xxvi</sup> Under this new policy, military personnel would no longer be asked their sexual orientation or be removed from service for being gay. Senior military leaders pushed back, like then Chairman of the Joints Chief of Staff, General Colin Powell. Powell supported to keep the current ban in place stating, "homosexuality is a problem for us."<sup>xxvii</sup> This ban on gays in the military was a cultural issue that was often compared to desegregation; an issue the military also struggled with. GEN Powell pushed back on this comparison, arguing race is a "benign characteristic."<sup>xxviii</sup> The divide between the civilian leadership and senior military leaders on gay service members would continue for years to come, all the while the civilian population's viewpoint on equality for homosexuals was becoming a social norm.

On September 20, 2011, President Obama repealed the policy of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," allowing for the first time in our nation's history, the ability for homosexuals to openly serve in the military.<sup>xxix</sup> It took 18 years for senior military leaders like Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to accept the cultural change the American people were already openly championing. ADM Mullen, breaking with many of his peers by offering personal opinions on matters, offered he could no longer support a policy that "forces young men and women to lie about who they are in order to defend their fellow citizens."<sup>xxx</sup> So why did it take so long for the senior military leaders to accept this cultural change? For many, the belief that open homosexuality would impact recruitment, retention,

and readiness drove their decisions on the issue. A 2012 study by the Palm Center, conducted by nine scholars, several of which performed duties as professors at military academies, found that the repeal of open homosexuality in uniform has had “no overall negative impacts” on readiness, to include key issues like retention and recruitment.<sup>xxxix</sup> One could argue that the only impact this repeal has had is the narrowing of the culture divide that exists between the military and the American public.

The cultural and social divide in our military isn’t one that is limited to sexual orientation, but also to gender. The role of women in the military is a cultural issue that continues to challenge both civilian and military leaders alike. Women’s role in America’s military service can be traced back to the Revolution. Their presence in uniform has continually grown over the years. From 1973 to 2010, active duty enlisted women grew from 42,000 to 167,000.<sup>xxxix</sup> However, it wouldn’t be until 2016 that women would be accepted into traditional combat roles that were formally closed based on gender. For many, the argument has been that women are disadvantaged from their male counterparts due to their exclusion from combat roles; roles that have propelled their male peers through successful careers. Several European countries have recognized the importance of inclusion of women in uniform. Countries like Denmark in 1978, Norway in 1984, and Sweden in 1989 have all admitted women into all combat related positions.<sup>xxxix</sup>

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan helped shape the debate in the U.S. when it comes to women in combat. The non-linear battlefield placed women on the front lines of combat in these very publicized conflicts. However, even with the increased presence of women in direct combat operations, the U.S. continued to exclude women from many combat related jobs. This exclusion was helping shape

a culture in the military where women were looked at as less than equal to their male peers. In 2012, four enlisted female service members filed suit against Department of Defense, claiming the policy against women in certain combat jobs was unconstitutional, and that it was a detriment to the advancement of women the military.<sup>xxxiv</sup> The debate would continue on for almost four more years, and not all those involved would support a change. Some senior leaders and advisors throughout the Department of Defense were opposed to the opening of all combat jobs to women. Dr. William Gregor of the U.S. Army's School of Advanced Military Studies was one of those who opposed the idea of fully integrating women into all military roles. He concluded that "The services, especially the Army, have expanded the military occupational specialties (MOS) open to women purely as a part of the social concern for equality and have only paid lip service to combat readiness."<sup>xxxv</sup> In spite of sentiments like this, that are not commonplace, but do occur, women have continued to gain positions of authority in our military. In 2008, Army General Ann Dunwoody became the first 4-star general and female commander of the U.S. Army Material Command.<sup>xxxvi</sup> Eight years later, the military would select its first female combatant commander, Air Force General Lori Robinson, who commands U.S Northern Command.<sup>xxxvii</sup> Women continue to gain significant positions of authority in the Armed Forces, however, public opinion on the subject continues to waver. A survey conducted by the Washington Post in October of 2016 probed U.S. voter's support of women in combat roles. A Mechanical Turk survey, using scenarios with and without women in combat, showed those surveyed were less likely to support combat operations where women were integrated.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

The debate on women in combat has also manifested in the issue of Selective Service, or the Draft. Though the U.S. hasn't used a draft since 1973, it still requires all males at the age of 18 to register for the Selective Service. The argument to exclude women from this obligation has centered around their role in combat, or their perceived lack of role in combat. The change in policy by the Obama administration, opening all combat roles to women, counters that argument. Yet, the debate about women and the draft continues among our legislatures in this nation. In December of 2016, President Obama publically supported the requirement for women to participate in the Selective Service, the first President to endorse a draft registration of any kind since Jimmy Carter.<sup>xxxix</sup> This idea is not shared among those law makers who could affect such a change. Many, like Senator Ted Cruz, adamantly oppose such a change, with Cruz stating, "it is immoral to draft women."<sup>xl</sup> This debate will most likely continue into the foreseeable future, impacting public opinion on the role of women in today's military.

The future of initiatives like women in direct combat positions is potentially in question. Some skeptics believe the Trump administration will bring a different viewpoint than the present. The current Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs, General Joseph Dunford, opposed women in combat while serving as the Commandant of the Marine Corps.<sup>xli</sup> Will his position change once again under a new Commander-in-Chief? Since congress passed no new laws that govern women in combat, the current scenario could easily be reversed by the new President, or even circumnavigated by a new Defense Secretary.<sup>xlii</sup> Time will tell, as the new administration lays out their agenda. The one thing that everyone can agree on is the important role that women play in our armed forces. However, a significant divide still exists in the role women should play in front line combat positions.



## POLITICS AND MILITARY SERVICE

Politics in our nation is a topic that has recently dominated the media and dinner table conversations alike. It is also an area that potentially has impacted the gap in civil military relations. Neutrality and non-partisanship are a foundation of the core military values under which the military serves. However, the military is not immune to the influence or lure of partisan politics. One of the most studied theorists among modern militaries, Carl von Clausewitz, believes that the military and politics go hand and hand. More importantly, that war was merely a means to achieve a political goal.<sup>xliii</sup> Though the military may be the tool to achieve a political end state, participation in politics can be problematic. The renowned political scientist Samuel Huntington argues that one of the most vital aspects of a modern liberal military is to have complete civilian control. Some argue that the practice of politics by those in uniform threatens Huntington's concept. He believes that in order to achieve total civilian control, two things must exist; a professional and a "politically sterile and neutral" force.<sup>xliv</sup> Is the modern U.S. military force political sterile and neutral? Bruce Ackerman, a law professor at Yale, believes the public dissent of the Obama administration as highlighted in a Rolling Stone article "symbolizes an accelerated partisan ship of the Officer Corps."<sup>xlv</sup> Most of the data collected on the party composition of the force is conflicting at best. An Army Times survey done in 2010 attempts to refute the common believe that most of the military is Republican. The survey showed that since a 2004 study, those who identified as Republican shifted from 60% to 41%, while those who identified as independent almost doubled to 32%.<sup>xlvi</sup> A pew survey from 2010 showed post 9/11 veteran's political identity almost reverse that of the people they serve, with 36% Republican and 21% Democrat as

compared to their civilian counterparts at 23% Republican and 34% Democrat. No matter the data, politics serves as another divide between the identity of the service member and the American people.<sup>xlvii</sup>

Public participation in politics by retired senior military officers was emphasized during the most recent Presidential campaign. The two most celebrated endorsements by retired senior leaders was by retired Marine General John Allen and retired Army Lieutenant General Michael Flynn, both speaking at their candidate's respective national conventions.<sup>xlviii</sup> The endorsement or participation of retired military leaders is not a new phenomenon. Our nation has had many former senior military leaders go on to serve as President to include, George Washington, Andrew Jackson, Ulysses Grant, and Dwight Eisenhower to name a few.<sup>xlix</sup> I believe the recent outpour by civilians and military leaders alike is due to the competitiveness and controversies of recent elections. The candidates collected the names and endorsements of retired military leaders like trophies, with Clinton collecting more than 95 and Trump more than 88.<sup>i</sup> The concern, especially from other senior military leaders, is that participation in such heated partisan politics will impact the relationship between the people and its military. Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs retired General Martin Dempsey has been the most vocal on this issue. He believes the foundation of our relationship with both elected officials and the American people is founded in trust, and stated, "if we begin to become part of partisan politics, inevitably, that trust will break down with some segment of society."<sup>ii</sup>

Mistrust between civilian leadership and military leaders, as a result of politics, is not a new issue. Some believe that President Lyndon Johnson purposely delayed the re-deployment of Army

General William Westmorland from Vietnam due to Westmorland's potential presidential bid.<sup>lii</sup> More recently, senior military leaders have publically challenged the President's decisions on the current and future strategies in places like Iraq and Afghanistan. Politics and military service can conflict, and is a story that is often covered by the media. Former International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Commander General Stanley McChrystal was fired following media reports that depicted disparaging comments by McChrystal's staff toward the current administration.<sup>liii</sup> Public disagreements were not limited to just McChrystal. By 2013, President Obama had gone through 5 separate ISAF Commanders, many removed over their dissent with the President's vision in Afghanistan.<sup>liv</sup> Former Army Chief of Staff General Ray Odierno, while conducting an interview on Fox News, publically criticized the President's withdrawal of American troops from Iraq, suggesting that if the U.S. had maintained a posture in Iraq, ISIS would not have thrived in major portions of Iraq or Syria.<sup>lv</sup> In both cases, the perception most likely inferred by the American people is that politics and the military go hand in hand. The American people don't differentiate between a retired general or an active general, they both represent the armed forces alike. Even our media introduces these former senior leaders by their rank, leading those viewers to believe these individuals still speak for the force they once actively represented. In part, they are correct. As retired General Dempsey has said, "generals and admirals are generals and admirals for life."<sup>lvi</sup> The current Chairman, Marine General Joseph Dunford hasn't publically addressed his retired peers' actions on politics. However, he believes that the active force has no business being involved with partisan politics. He believes that the military cannot afford to be viewed as a special interest group; that the commitment is to the American people and the oath that is

taken is sworn to defend the Constitution, not individuals or political parties.<sup>lvii</sup> Partisan politics is not going away anytime soon. Senior civilian and military leaders alike must continue to work to ensure the armed forces are not viewed by the people they're sworn to defend as politically biased in a way that may erode the trust so vital to the nation's success.

## CLOSING THE GAP

The divide that exists between our military and the people it serves continues to grow. As a nation, we must look at potential ways to close that gap, rebuilding a healthy knowledge and relationship that is so crucial to our country's success. An area that should be considered is the all-volunteer force. Since the end of our nation's last draft in 1973, the armed forces of the United States has been one comprised entirely of volunteers. This concept has proven relatively successful, in both maintaining an adequate size and capable force. However, the burden of military security in our country has fallen on the shoulders of a small population; less than 1% of our citizens bear this burden. In 1970, then President Richard Nixon, acting on a campaign promise to end conscription, directed a commission to study the impact of an all-volunteer force. The Gates Commission, though it eventually recommended the adoption of a volunteer force, identified several major issues, the first being the potential isolation of our force from society.<sup>lviii</sup> This issue is one that many in the civil military studies believe has come to fruition. The alternative to our current force structure is a draft. The modern model for such a draft is the selective service. Some senior military leaders, like Lieutenant General (Ret.) David Barno argue selective service is the only societal link that the vast majority of the people have

with its military.<sup>lix</sup> The attitude that it's acceptable to only send those to war who volunteered for military service supports a concept of basically "outsourcing" the responsibility of war to some of the groups I identified earlier; the children of service members and young Americans predominately from the southeastern and Western territories of the nation.<sup>lx</sup>

Public support for a future draft is sparse at best. A 2011 Pew survey shows that 74% of American public surveyed oppose the draft.<sup>lxi</sup> Opposition to selective service or the draft presents a coherent argument. One of the major issues presented, and one that also impacts the all-volunteer force, is the available pool of candidates. Today's youth in our nation are severely lacking when it comes to meeting the basic standards for military service. Some estimates show that about only 30% of the targeted population, those in age from 17-24, meet the basic standards.<sup>lxii</sup> For many, things like obesity, mental health, drugs, and criminal offenses eliminate them from available service. Other arguments include that a draft would violate a citizen's right to free will, interfere with educational goals, and put lives at risk. One of the most common arguments voiced is that a draft would compromise the quality of service, an argument that is often draped in the controversy that surrounded the Vietnam War.<sup>lxiii</sup> However, history has proven this argument to be short sided. The U.S. has successfully executed drafts in order to raise large forces in 1917, 1941, and 1953, which, in all cases proved the quality of drafted soldier on the battlefield.<sup>lxiv</sup>

The concept of compulsory service or conscription is not one that is foreign to the world. More than 64 countries throughout the globe still use conscription to sustain a national force.<sup>lxv</sup> The idea of compulsory service is one that is shared by retired senior military leaders like General Stanley

McChrystal. While speaking at the 2012 Aspen Ideas Festival, McChrystal argued that the lack of such a concept means “few see firsthand the effects of war has on those who fight.”<sup>lxvi</sup> Other arguments for compulsory service include connecting civilians with its military, increased awareness in foreign policy, lessen the chance of congressional circumnavigation, potential ability to unite different cultures and class of citizens with the common experience of military service, increased public support in the event of war, potential for future civilian leaders to truly understand the cost of war, and a reduction in mental health issues on our force.<sup>lxvii</sup> Looking at the mental health issue, current stats show a significant increase in mental health issues from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Some attribute this to fact that without a draft, the current volunteer force was forced to deploy multiple times, with often short periods between each rotation, increasing the mental burden on these limited number of soldiers.<sup>lxviii</sup> The all-volunteer force has also increased the civilian leadership’s propensity to commit military action across the globe. Since the end of WWII to the inception of the all-volunteer force, the U.S. deployed its military overseas just 19 times, as compared to 1973-2013 where the all-volunteer force has been committed overseas more than 144 times.<sup>lxix</sup> Another argument depicting the value of a draft is the need to produce a much larger force than what is maintained by the volunteer force. Former Secretary of the Defense Robert Gates acknowledges the fact that predicting the next war is almost impossible, and that the U.S. must be ready to produce a very large military to fight big wars.<sup>lxx</sup> A draft would also allow the U.S. to tap into expertise that the current force struggles to either recruit or retain. Expertise like cyber security is definitively stronger in places like the Silicon Valley. The ability to tap into this talent could be a decisive advantage in the next war.

Arguments continue today as to the validity of the draft in our nation's future. Programs like the selective service are one of the only true ties that all (currently male) citizens have to their military. No matter where you stand on this argument, one fact remains constant; the role of defending our nation is a responsibility for all, not just a select few. The all-volunteer force only re-enforces the mentality of divide between the people and its military and deepens the lack of knowledge and responsibility that goes with protecting the American people.

The concept of patriotism or nationalism is often an area of study when looking at the connection between the troops and the people. After all, it can be argued that these sentiments are what shaped the country we live in today. We, as a nation, were born from the Revolutionary War, held together by a Civil War, and became a superpower because of a World War.<sup>lxxi</sup> Our nation's anthem, the "Star Spangled Banner," was composed as an inspired writer witnessed the heroic acts of American Soldiers fighting at Fort Henry in the War of 1812.<sup>lxxii</sup> The idea of patriotism has been one that has historically connected all American's under a single belief, and helped support the concept of service to a nation, especially that of military service. Every four years, the country is reminded that each and every citizen has a civic duty to vote, as we look to elect our next President. In that same light, should the military strive to capitalize on the concept of civic duty to recruit? Are the racial and social divides in our country so strong today that the concept of duty, patriotism, or nationalism are too weak to support such a concept? Recent studies on military recruitment show the path to success is paved in intrinsic beliefs of service like patriotism and duty to nation.<sup>lxxiii</sup> A Pentagon survey following the events on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 showed an 8% increase in young men's propensity to potentially serve, with



desire to serve the nation as the primary motivator.<sup>lxxiv</sup> However, the emotional desire to serve following the 9-11 attacks has steadily decreased over the years. As we look to “motivate” or increase the inclination to serve, we often look to those who served, or who currently serve to inform and educate our citizens on the value of service.

Through programs like ROTC and JROTC, the military has an opportunity to connect to a target population or a future target population needed to fill our ranks in uniform. Today, there are 275 ROTC programs at the college level and 1,600 JROTC programs at the high school level. Though these numbers may seem impressive, there is significant room for growth. According to the U.S. Department of Education, there are over 3000 4-year colleges or universities and over 26,000 public and private high schools, indicating that we are only scraping the surface when it comes to reaching the American public by this medium.<sup>lxxv</sup> By expanding these programs nationwide, we look to resolve several of the issues in the current divide between the military and its citizens. Using the educational institutions across the nation potentially allows for a more dispersed representation in uniform. These schools help fill the gap in “military presence” that is exasperated by military stationing and initiatives like BRAC. Expanding ROTC and JROTC also allows the military to spread the ideals of patriotism and service to nation, giving those American’s with little to no first-hand knowledge on the value of service a venue for information.

Presence in the community is also a key concept that will help close the gap between the those in uniform and the citizens. The military needs to be seen more by the average citizen. Service members need to come out from behind the walls and fences that secure our installations and interact with the

people they serve. This can be accomplished in several ways. We need to first take advantage of our National Guard and Reserve Soldiers who already exist in our communities across the country, especially in those areas that show low tendency for service or recruitment. We need to demonstrate, in very public forums like football games, state and county fairs, and parades, the awesome capabilities and equipment our country possesses. These type of events often have a minor military presence, but not in the full capacity which is possible. Create impressive displays with some of the most powerful equipment such as tanks and helicopters . . . allowing young Americans to crawl around on them and feel the power of the military in their own hands. Make available military exercise demonstrations throughout the nation, inspiring those in the audience to be a part of this professional military. Utilize the active force for displays like beach landings, air assaults, and other simulated war games. There are risks that come with such events. We have seen such events turn tragic, like the in-flight collision of two helicopters during a public display at FT Campbell, KY in 1996, an event that still impacts public displays of Army Aviation today. We need to accept the risks that come with these type of displays through thorough mitigation techniques and solid leadership. There is no better way to re-connect the American people with its soldiers than through direct interaction. The military needs to get out across this nation and not just talk about the value of service, but demonstrate it through a direct access and hands-on approach.

## CONCLUSION

The connection between the American people and its military is an aspect of civil military affairs that requires more attention. The future strength of the all-volunteer force relies on this connection. The disparity in representation of those in uniform is a clear example of how the military no longer truly represents American society as a whole. This gap in representation places the burden of securing a nation on the backs of a few, when it's clearly a civic duty that should be shared by all. A debate over the draft and selective service continues. However, this concept may be the only true connection that remains between the American people as a mass and its military. Closing the gap between the citizens and its soldiers is vital to our nation's interests. Increasing the penchant to serve should not only be a military interest, but a national interest. This country was born on the abstract concept of patriotism. So how do we stoke up and capitalize on the people's sense of nationalism to support the defense of a nation? Many of the current programs like ROTC and JROTC are tackling this effort. However, significant room exists to expand these programs in order to reach a much broader audience. It is crucial to continue outreach in the areas that have historically displayed low predisposition for service through avenues such as public education and interaction. In order to ensure the strongest possible inventory of our country's best who are willing to serve and protect the rights of all Americans for generations to come, the gap between civilians and military in this great nation must be bridged.

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