STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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PERSONNEL READINESS IN A FORCE PROJECTION ARMY

BY

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Personnel Readiness in a Force Projection Army

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

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ABSTRACT

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The personnel component of the U.S. Army's unit readiness report (USR) fails to provide the Army's senior leaders with the information they need to assess any unit's preparedness to deploy. The force projection strategy of the Army has been exercised thirty times in the past ten years. Yet, the personnel readiness report has changed little in that time. The "stop loss" remains the central assumption for calculating whether personnel are available to deploy although it has only been used once in the last thirty years. During the remaining twenty-nine deployments, units found as many as 40% of their soldiers were non-deployable, while their USR reported an average of 4% not available. Enormous unit effort was necessary to overcome the personnel shortages in these units. With a minor modification to the current USR personnel report, senior leaders can easily evaluate a unit's true condition to deploy to support a contingency operation.

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PERSONNEL READINESS IN A FORCE PROJECTION ARMY

> We will develop the capability to put combat force anywhere in the world in 96 hours after liftoff -- in brigade combat teams for both stability and support operations and for warfighting. We will build that capability into a momentum that generates a warfighting division on the ground in 120 hours and five divisions in 30 days.
>
> - CSA, GEN Shinseki's Army Vision, October 12, 1999.[1]

April 1999 found 1-10 Cavalry conducting routine homestation training after just completing a qualification gunnery for all its crews, a major Command Post Exercise for its staff, and an National Training Center rotation, all in the previous seven months. The commander was on leave when his operations officer called to say the unit was one of two being considered for deployment to Kuwait to replace a European unit pulled from the next INTRINSIC ACTION rotation due to operations in Kosovo. The deployment would begin in less than two weeks. The division and corps commanding generals wanted a brief on the deployment readiness of the unit immediately. At the time, the unit had approximately 3% of its personnel listed as non-deployable by Unit Readiness Report (USR) rules.[2] It had most of its crews qualified on the appropriate gunnery tables. The staff and subordinate troops were well trained for their tactical missions and the schedule did not include any major events in the near future. 1-10 Cav appeared to all as the perfect unit to deploy. The next day the commander had to report to his chain of command almost 40% of the unit as non-deployable. Well over half the crews were no longer qualified once the non-deployable personnel were analyzed. Worse, half of the platoon sergeants could not deploy due to Non-Commissioned Officers Education System (NCOES) schools. The corps commander realized from his experience with 1st Cavalry Division's (1CD) deployment to Bosnia, that there was no way to resolve a personnel shortage this large in the time allotted. He then reported to the Army staff our inability to deploy and the mechanized ready battalion from XVIII Corps deployed. Why was this a surprise for all involved from the squadron commander to the corps commander?

In the last twelve years, our Army has deployed forces to thirty-two small-scale contingencies (SSC) such as Bosnia, Somalia, Haiti, Kuwait, etc. This is more than the previous 60 years total.[3] Many of these deployments occurred with little to no notice to the unit participating, Bosnia being the one true exception where 1st Armored Division prepared for the mission for years prior to deploying. Meanwhile, the Army's method for reporting has not materially changed to reflect the post-Cold War realities of contingency deployments.[4] The Army's senior leadership has little visibility of any unit's true personnel readiness to deploy in support of anything less than a MTW. They are unable to assess the deployment readiness of any unit because the current USR personnel ratings (P ratings) are woefully inaccurate.

This paper will examine the personnel situation of a number of stateside units as they prepared to deploy to Bosnia and Kuwait. Thanks to information kindly provided by the RAND Corporation, data is available to analyze the personnel readiness condition of units as they prepared to deploy to Bosnia from

bases at Forts Hood, Riley, and Drum. The results will illustrate how poorly our current USR describes a unit's availability of personnel to deploy. Second, I will evaluate how these units attempted to overcome the problems internally and the potential negative consequences to other, non-deploying units. Lastly, I offer a simple addition to our current USR personnel report that should provide senior leaders with a tool to assess the true personnel readiness of any unit they plan to deploy, whether for a MTW or a SSC.

THE PROBLEM

This paper will analyze data from 1-10 Cavalry's effort to deploy to Kuwait in the spring of 1999, RAND data on 1CD, 10th Mountain Division (10ID), and Fort Riley units as they prepared for deployment to Bosnia in 1998 and 1999, and an exhaustive survey of officers and sergeants conducted in 1999/2000 by the AWC Readiness Committee. Both 1CD and 10ID were preparing to deploy a full brigade of ground troops, a division headquarters, various separate battalions and supporting units. Fort Riley and 1-10 Cav were deploying a battalion-sized task force. Each of these units illustrate the enormous challenges commanders faced to solve their personnel available problems.

One must be impressed with the remarkable consistency in the personnel readiness situation of so many diverse units on three different installations. All were reporting between 3% and 4% of their personnel not available for deployments in the months preceding instructions to deploy.[5] Perhaps more surprising is the fact every unit discovered 35-40% of their soldiers were non-deployable, or not available in USR terms, upon notification.[6] What caused the tenfold increase in personnel not available?

The first assumption, and most critical, in the Army's current USR is the "stop-loss/stop-move". The Army's USR report is based on the assumption that every soldier in the unit, without current clearing papers, will remain with the unit for a deployment. This means all those soldiers pending Permanent Change of Station (PCS), Enlistment Termination (ETS), retirements, and NCOES schools would have their orders cancelled and deploy. Unfortunately, 'stop-loss/stop-move' has only been used once, for DESERT SHIELD, in the last 30 years! Yet, it is the fundamental assumption for developing our readiness reports!

RAND found much of the differential could be traced to this false assumption. As many as 15-20% or more of the 35+% non-deployable can be traced to soldiers pending ETS, PCS, retirement, or NCOES schools. Compounding the problem are local command policies as leaders attempt to resolve unit deployment needs with retention concerns. Figure 1, below, summarizes the data collected by RAND. I have included the actual number of leaders declared not available for the deployment due to NCOES schools to illustrate the loss of critical leaders not apparent in the percentage figure.[7]

NOT AVAILABLE FOR DEPLOYMENT

Unit	USR #/% Not Avail	% PCS/ETS Retirement	%Stabilized	%/ # NCOES Schools	**Total #/% Not Avail**
1CD*	1530/9%	19%	6%	<1%/63	**6012/35%**
Ft Riley	342/4%	21%	15%	<1%/30	**3535/40%**
10ID*	795/8%	20%	18%	<1/30	**3832/37%**

TABLE 1.

* 1CD had 854 soldiers deployed offpost for other non-SFOR missions when the data (July '98) was collected which accounted for 5% of its total not available. 10ID had 412 soldiers (or 4%) deployed when data was collected 9 mos prior to the deployment.

Soldiers pending PCS, ETS, and retirement made up most of the non-deployable statistics. This large number is a reflection of soldiers pending departure, for example those with PCS orders at the time of the deployment alert, during the deployment window. To determine which soldiers could deploy, of those pending departure, unit commanders had to know how long their soldiers were expected to remain in theater. Theater CINC's have different policies for individual soldiers deploying. For Bosnia, the Stabilization Force set a minimum time of 90 days for soldiers to remain in theater prior to return to their homestation in an effort to minimize turbulence in theater and maximize unit cohesion while engaged.[8] Meanwhile, the unit would remain deployed at least 179 days. 3d Army policy was for all soldiers to deploy to Kuwait with sufficient time to complete the entire deployment, at least 120 days.

Next, unit commanders had to determine how long to give a soldier to complete processing for ETS, retirement, schools, or PCS. Units have established local policies for providing soldiers the opportunity to transition from the unit. For example, III Corps policy is to provide 45 days to anyone clearing for PCS, ETS, or retirement reasons.[9] This equates to 135-day window in Europe and 165 days for Kuwait during which a soldier may not deploy if pending a PCS, ETS, or retirement. Without a Stop-Move, Personnel Command (PERSCOM) created 'fencing' as a technique for halting all further PCS movement from any unit with deployment orders.

However, fencing is not without its problems. As 1-10 Cav discovered, PERSCOM cannot stop the automated process immediately and as many as two bi-weekly levy cycles will occur before the 'fence' is in effect. This means that if a unit the size of 10ID, which has a theoretical worst-case quarterly turnover rate of 10% when they are alerted to deploy, might lose another 150 of the 4200 deploying soldiers after the alert order (3.5%).[10]

Current policies do not allow a deploying unit to delete from levy those soldiers who receive PCS instructions, in an effort to minimize disruption to other units. This policy is understandable when seen in a larger context. For the Army, fencing means that other units must fill the PCS requirements normally filled by the deploying unit. For example, Forces Command (FORSCOM) reported 119,600 soldiers deployed OCONUS in support of various SSC operations during 1998.[11] Given an annual turnover rate of approximately 30%, some 35,880 assignments must shift to non-deploying units. This significantly raises the personnel turbulence in all non-deploying units.

Stabilization is the other major factor contributing to personnel not being available for SSC deployments. Units found 10-20% of the soldiers were unable to deploy due to Army and local stabilization policies. The Army's policy stabilizes a soldier previously deployed away from his unit in support of another SSC. These soldiers are not deployable for as little as a month or up to 12 months depending on how long they were deployed away from their units.[12] More importantly, every unit RAND studied attempted to protect soldiers returning from unaccompanied short tour areas, primarily Korea returnees. The number of soldiers protected by local stabilization policies for unaccompanied tours far exceeded those stabilized for SSC tours.

It is worth noting that the Army's presence in Korea has remained about the same throughout the period the rest of the Army reduced its strength to 480,000. Of this number, almost 30,000 soldiers are stationed in Korea on one-year tours. Approximately 15% of the Army's soldiers are in Korea, stabilized upon return for a year, or on orders to PCS to Korea – some 75,000 soldiers. While this unofficial stabilization policy is certainly laudable, its impact on a unit's ability to deploy is significant for unlike personnel stabilized under the Army policy, these soldiers are not reported on any USR and remain invisible to the Army's senior leaders until their unit is called upon to deploy.

The last category of concern is NCOES schools. This is a particularly frustrating challenge for the unit because the Army has a policy that allows a deferral for those specialists, sergeants, and staff sergeants scheduled for the Basic Non-commissioned Officer Course (BNCOC) or Primary Leadership Development Course (PLDC) if their unit is alerted for deployment.[13] However, RAND found few, if any, sergeants granted the waiver.[14] Additionally, there is no deferral available for staff sergeants and sergeants first class scheduled for Advanced Non-commissioned Officer Course (ANCOC).[15] The current USR requires stateside units to report soldiers available who are currently attending schools off-post, normally NCOES.[16] However, the reality is that every sergeant enrolled and scheduled for a NCOES class date during a proposed SSC deployment will not deploy. In comparison, there does not appear to be a problem getting officers delayed for their advanced courses when they are pending deployment. An example may illustrate the challenge for a unit.

In 1-10 Cav, five of the twelve platoon sergeants (41%) had school dates during the deployment window. All five were removed from the deployment roster and replaced by leaders from other units. The division found the challenge to replace them so difficult that it was not until a few weeks before the actual deployment that two of the platoon sergeants were identified and assigned to their units. They had

little time to train with their new platoons since they had to meet all the individual pre-deployment criteria first. Coincidentally, a number of the squadron's lieutenants and junior captains were due to PCS to their advanced courses as well and all were extended and rescheduled with a single email to their branch.

The other USR criteria changed little if any among the deploying unit. For example, those soldiers deployed to an off-post school are not expected to return to their units and, in fact, did not. In fact, a small number of soldiers listed in the USR as non-deployable may actually deploy. This may be because of their return from leave, or a medical board's decision to allow a P3 profile soldier to deploy. However, these numbers are very small and changed little from the unit's most recent USR.

Each post attacked the problem of non-deployables immediately upon realization of the issue. In almost every case the divisions and installations were able to reduce the shortfall by 10-20% internally. PERSCOM had to fill the remainder. However, there were costs to their efforts that should be understood by the Army's senior leaders.

UNIT EFFORTS TO IMPROVE PERSONNEL READINESS

The most effective solution to solve the personnel shortage was to move personnel between units. While this seems an obvious and simple solution, it proved to have significant repercussions as well. Part of the challenge was the enormous size of the effort. For the posts deploying brigade-sized units, this meant moving nearly one thousand soldiers between units. Part of the problem was finding the MOS and grade match to fill the shortfalls, particularly in critical, low-density specialties. Lastly, there is the debilitating effect the personnel moves had on the remaining units not deploying. We have recently seen these effects in the declining readiness reporting of 10ID and 1ID as they deployed significant portions of their division's to Bosnia and Kosovo.

Table 2 provides a detailed analysis of the challenges in moving soldiers between units a few selected specialties within 10ID. 10ID was ordered to deploy one maneuver brigade, its aviation brigade, division headquarters, and selected separate units. Nearly one half of the division's strength did not deploy. The dominant specialty in the division is that of infantryman, 11B, which is compared against two low-density specialties – 77F fuel handler and 96B Intelligence Specialist. Note: these figures use 10ID's 92% target for fill of deploying units, not 100% of authorized!

MOS AVAILABILITY IN SELECTED MOSs

	Available in Deploying Units	Req'd	Available in Div	Left for Remaining Units
11B10	558	778	1175	397
11B NCO	196	364	396	**32**
77F10	33	52	55	**3**
77F NCO	12	18	**16**	**0**
96B10	10	18	**15**	**0**
96B NCO	15	26	**22**	**0**

TABLE 2.

The numbers above tell a powerful story.[17] Not only was 10ID unable to achieve the required strength in three of the four low-density specialties but, it must disable the remaining units within the division in every specialty, including its largest – infantrymen. Given that only one of its two maneuver brigades would deploy, the other brigade had 32 deployable sergeants and less than 400 deployable infantry soldiers left for three battalions. This is not enough to man one battalion, much less three. Unfortunately, the CSA wants to be able to deploy entire divisions quickly, not just one brigade out of a division! 10ID would have to reconstitute most of its remaining non-deploying brigade to achieve the CSAs intent.

Low-density critical specialties represent another difficult problem in deploying units. Often there is a shortage of selected skills across an entire division which makes it very difficult, if not impossible, to fill a deploying unit to strength. For example, in intelligence analysts (96B MOS in Figure 2 above) 10ID was unable to fill the deploying unit's to strength if they used every available soldier with that MOS. Many unit's attempt to solve this problem by assigning soldiers from its primary MOS, 11B infantrymen in this case, to fill critical shortages in low density skill positions. This solution has two problems – the lack of skill training of the replacements and the loss of the combat soldier from his platoon. However, this technique does not always work as some MOSs are so technical, such as turret mechanics, that no other soldier can replace them.

Currently there is no method to describe critical specialty shortages in our USR. A critical specialty might be defined as a soldier with highly technical skills essential to a unit's operation. In fact, these soldiers tend to disappear in the USR since it reports personnel strength with E1-O6 aggregated together.[18] This method of reporting tends to hide unavailable soldiers in critical low-density specialties among the far more numerous specialties of the organization. As an example, 1-10 Cav was authorized ten turret mechanics in among the nearly four hundred junior enlisted soldiers in the organization. Yet, the unit could not sustain its tank and Bradley fleet without most of these ten soldiers and could not train replacements due to the highly technical skills required of the MOS. Critical, low-density MOS shortages

require extraordinary effort, by the unit and the Army, to fill during deployments and should be visible to the Army's senior leaders when assessing a unit's readiness.

The Army instituted a stabilization policy a few years ago to respond to soldier complaints of repetitive overseas deployments when reassigned. The policy stabilizes a soldier one month for each month he was deployed.[19] Under this policy, soldiers returning from one year unaccompanied tours were to have one year stability at their new post before being eligible for an contingency deployment. RAND found that most units could not adhere to this policy when alerted. 10ID found that 90 soldiers were not available for their SFOR6 deployment due to one year post-Korea stabilization – something not recorded on any unit's USR.[20] 10IDs more difficult challenge was among the inbound soldiers needed to fill 10ID to its necessary strength. Of the 3000 inbound soldiers to Ft. Drum there were an estimated 1700 soldiers from Korea and other short tour areas.[21] The local commander did not want to deploy new soldiers recently returned from Korea to another hardship area. His only remaining choice was to move soldiers from other units on post and replace them with the soldiers from Korea, further exacerbating the turbulence in all of his units, deploying and non-deploying.

The Korea and SSC stabilization policies created enormous challenges for every unit RAND studied. Unit leaders had to weigh the morale, retention, and family concerns against their desire to meet mission goals when deciding whether to waive the stabilization. Additionally, III Corps has a local policy that no soldier will deploy to an SSC in his first 60 days after PCS.[22]

Another hidden cost of moving so many leaders and soldiers between units may be safety. The best example of this may be an incident at Ft Hood as 1CD conducted pre-deployment gunnery training. In a now-famous incident, the mechanized task force shot and destroyed one of the Army's initial issue Apache Longbow aircraft while using a refuel point (FARP) on the adjacent training complex. The crew engaged the aircraft well off its intended gun-target line during night firing. What has not been commonly acknowledged was the fact the commander of the vehicle was a recent arrivals to the unit in an effort to overcome a shortage of fifty NCOs in that unit.[23] He had not had time to train for Bradley gunnery, nor had the leadership time to determine his level of experience on the system and the range. While this anecdotal evidence is not conclusive, it is illustrative of the challenges inherent in any unit when it attempts to absorb so many new leaders and soldiers while preparing to deploy.

THE CURRENT UNIT READINESS REPORTING (USR) METHOD

Army tactical units report their readiness for a major theater war using AR 220-1, dated 1 September 1997 with numerous changes, as their guide. This regulation defines the criteria for reporting for all tactical units in the Army into two major categories – those assigned (or attached) and those available. The unit declares a personnel readiness rating, or P rating, based on the results of these two calculations.[24]

A unit commander determines the unit's authorized strength by comparing the number of soldiers actually assigned, or attached, to the unit to what it is authorized. The commander calculates the percentage of personnel assigned given his authorized strength. The percent personnel assigned reflects the unit's aggregate personnel fill and often ranges from 80% to over 100% in any given month. The method used by the current USR for determining the number of personnel assigned or attached to a unit is generally straightforward and accurate. Next, the commander must calculate how many of his assigned soldiers can actually deploy to war.

For personnel availability reporting, the basic philosophy inherent in the regulation is the "stop-loss/stop-move" assumption. Fundamentally, this means that unit commander's assume the Army will freeze departures from their unit if we should go to war. Soldiers scheduled for leave, PCS, ETS, retirement, and TDY schools would have their leaves, or orders, cancelled and remain with the unit assigned. Therefore, when a unit commander calculates those soldiers not available, he includes only those soldiers who are already deployed, hospitalized, dead, AWOL, in jail (or about to be), physically unable to perform their duties, pregnant, physically on leave, off post due to a school, or within 10 days of retirement, PCS, or ETS.[25]

Availability is measured as a percentage of soldiers not able to deploy with the unit when compared to the unit's authorized strength. The result is to subtract the number of soldiers unable to deploy from the assigned strength to get a picture of the unit's true personnel preparedness. Therefore, for example, a unit may be 95% strength in personnel assigned and have 4% not available for deployment. This gives the unit an overall aggregate strength of 91% for deployment purposes. Of note, units are remarkably consistent when reporting availability, generally 3-4% of the unit's strength unless they have soldiers participating in SSC deployments already.[26]

In our current USR, the calculation of assigned strength is normally the driver for calculating overall personnel readiness because it is the larger number. This was because many of our FORSCOM unit's were manned at less than 90% strength, or P2 using the personnel readiness standards.[27] For example, a unit with an assigned strength of 85% would normally have only 3 or 4% not available. Therefore, the assigned calculation tended to determine overall personnel readiness.

General Shinseki's recent policy to fill all our combat divisions and cavalry regiments to 100% strength will improve the percent assigned consistency throughout the Army.[28] Rather than a wide variation among various combat units, all will be in the top-most readiness band - P1, or near 100% of their authorized strength. Therefore, our current USR should report that most units' are well above 90% in personnel strength, assigned and available, after the policy goes into effect.

While the assigned soldiers percentage comes very close to reporting ground truth to the Army's senior leaders because this number does not change by any appreciable amount whether deploying to war, to fight fires, or to a contingency. The personnel available percentage has not been so consistent during our numerous SSC deployments. The dramatic rise in personnel declared not available for SSC

deployments remains invisible in the current USR and will not accurately describe a unit's preparedness to deploy even after the CSA's new personnel policy takes effect.

The Army War College was asked by the Chief of Staff (CSA) to "study the major deficiencies associated with the current readiness reporting system."[29] As part of their research, the panel surveyed nearly a thousand officers and non-commissioned officers at the war college, command and general staff college and sergeants-major academy. An overwhelming majority of the respondents, 96%, felt strongly that deployability of personnel was a critical element of the USR and had to be accurately measured.[30] The report further concludes that there is no standard measurement for determining deployability since each theater and contingency has somewhat different rules, conclusions very similar to this study.[31] What becomes obvious is the need to modify the Army's USR to include a report on the unit's readiness to deploy, whether to a contingency or war.

ALTERNATIVE REPORTING METHODS/POLICIES CHANGES

Today's USR provides a valid assessment of a combat unit's ability to deploy into a MTW if the basic 'Stop-Loss,Stop-Move' assumption is valid. However, that assumption is not valid in nearly every other current conflict or crisis the U.S. Army faces today. I recommend adding one additional calculation to the personnel available report, one that does not assume a Stop-Loss is in effect. This calculation would depict the unit's current personnel deployment readiness for the next six months, or the normal time a unit might be expected to deploy to support an SSC. It would give the senior leaders a tool to calculate exactly what the unit requires for personnel before making a deployment decision.

In the SSC component of the USR, the unit would report all assigned and available personnel as it does today. However, it would also calculate all of its projected losses to retirements, PCS, NCOES schools and ETS in the next 180 days. The choice of 180 days is based on the maximum period most units can expect to deploy given the Army's recently policy regarding SSC tour lengths.[32] The SSC USR would consider any soldier with a PCS, ETS, retirement or off-post NCOES school as non-deployable for SSC purposes. Now, lets look at an explanation of the considerations for declaring a soldier not available for a SSC deployment.

Re-enlisting soldiers may be considered available in some cases. Only soldiers indicating an interest in re-enlisting for present duty assignment options would be considered eligible for SSC deployments. Those re-enlisting for options requiring school, or PCS, would not deploy with the unit in nearly every case and should be considered not available. Additionally, those soldiers unsure of their reenlistment plans would be considered not available if their PCS date was within the next six months.

Soldiers eligible for retirement are available for deployments. Only after the soldier submits his retirement request, it is approved, and his retirement date is within the next six months would he be considered unavailable.

Any soldier with instructions to PCS within the next 180 days would not be available for an SSC deployment. Overseas soldiers with a rotation date in the next 180 days, even if he has yet to receive his PCS instructions, would be not available.

Soldiers scheduled for attendance to any NCOES school would be calculated as a non-deployable soldier if the class date is within the next 180 days. While commanders may request one deferral of their soldiers from NCOES, it is a DA decision and historically unlikely.

The goal of this added calculation to the current USR is to provide senior leaders a tool to determine any unit's preparedness to deploy across the spectrum of conflict. The difference in the personnel assigned, available for MTW, and available for SSC represents the range of challenges the unit must overcome in order to deploy. If there are no changes to current Army personnel policies one might find a USR report such as this one. A given unit is 99% strength after the CSA's manning policy goes into effect. It has 3% of its personnel not available for MTW deployments. Another 28% are unavailable for SSC deployments. Therefore, the unit's MTW P-rating would be P1 with a strength of 96%, and P3 for SSC with a strength of 71%. The Army's senior leaders could expect the unit to require minimal additional personnel to meet its wartime missions, but the same unit would require significant assistance if it were to deploy to a small scale contingency. Further, the Army's senior leaders would realize that it will take time and resources to fill this unit to proper strength before it deploys.

The scope of this paper does not allow for a detailed analysis of a number of personnel issues related to SSC deployments in a peacetime Army. However, some policies require a thorough review of their impact on the Army's ability to perform across the full spectrum of conflict. Research for this paper indicates review of the following:

NCOES removes critically important leaders from the unit at the point it must perform in difficult SSC environments. Current policies make it exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to retain these leaders in the unit if scheduled for a school. While the school seats are important, they should not take priority over a six-month contingency deployment if we truly wish to dominate across the spectrum of conflict.

Critical, low density MOSs should be reported separately in the USR. My definition of a critical MOS is one that requires technical skills beyond mere on-the-job training of another soldier and essential to the unit's fulfilling its primary function. Their impact on the unit far exceeds their numbers. These essential soldiers are often invisible in our current USR because we aggregate them into the entire unit population. Yet, it is imperative to quickly identify these shortages and fill them early in a unit's pre-deployment preparation. Their inclusion as a separate line in the USR should provide leaders the visibility needed to respond quickly once a unit is alerted for deployment.

Lastly, all local and theater policies related to deployability should be reviewed by the Department of the Army and Joint Staff. Differences in deployment rules between theaters can be relatively significant, such as Europe and CENTCOMs different minimum length for tours. Local commander's efforts to improve retention and soldier and family well being have created a number of policies regarding soldier deployability. Few, if any, of the local policies are reported in the Army's USR. For example, the

Army allows a soldier ten days to clear for a PCS or ETS and reports them not available in the USR. III Corps' policy to stabilize a soldier 60 days before PCS in order to clear is not reported in the USR.

CONCLUSIONS

GEN Schwartz accurately described our force projection challenge when he reported nearly 120,000 active duty soldiers from FORSCOM deployed to support various operations as individuals, or as part of units, in a single year. Given the enormous increase in unit deployments in the last ten years, it is not surprising so many of our senior sergeants, majors, and lieutenant colonels responded so strongly to the war college survey regarding our lack of a method to report personnel deployability. The Army's current USR reports an average of 3 to 4% not available for deployment, but units actually find 30 to 40% unable to deploy once alerted for a SSC. It is intuitive that a unit that loses 30% of its soldiers between alert and actual deployment will suffer significant degradation in unit cohesion and training proficiency. Yet, our current readiness report ignores this fact.

If the Army is serious in its effort to meet General Shinseki's intent to deploy a division within 120 hours of alert and five divisions within a month, we must understand our unit personnel challenges at the highest level. Our current personnel reporting system hides many of our personnel difficulties and should be revised to allow the Army's senior leaders to determine a unit's true condition to deploy.

The SSC USR would accurately describe a unit's true personnel situation while adding a minimum of new procedures to the current USR. The information in the SSC USR will provide leaders a tool to calculate the precise personnel needs of any unit being considered for a deployment. Given the force projection strategy of today's Army, the SSC USR should prove to be a far more useful readiness assessment tool.

ENDNOTES

[1] Eric K. Shinseki, "The Army Vision: Soldiers on Point for the Nation...Persuasive in Peace, Invinvible in War," available from http://www.hqda.army.mil/ocsa/vision.htm; Internet; accessed 19 March 2000.

[2] Joseph A. Moore, All data related to 1-10 Cavalry Squadron are from the author's notes and data collected while serving as the squadron commander from June '97 to June '99. During this period, the squadron was alerted for a deployment (o/a 1 May '99) to Kuwait to replace a USAREUR unit when it was removed from the deployment due to the conflict in Kosovo. The squadron began its deployment to Kuwait in early August '99.

[3] Louis Caldera and General Dennis J. Reimer, A Statement on the Posture of the U.S. Army Fiscal Year 2000, Posture Statement presented to 106th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Staff, U.S. Department of the Army), viii.

[4] Army War College Readiness Committee, Readiness Reporting in the U.S. Army, (Carlisle, PA.: Army War College, 21 January 2000), 18.

[5] RAND Study AB-284-A, Deployability in Peacetime: Interim Results, (Arroyo, CA.: RAND Corporation, March 1999), ix.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid, 17.

[8] Ibid, 7.

[9] III Corps Command Policy # AG-99-02 – "Personnel Deployment Criteria", 7 July 1999, <http://www.hood-pao.army.mil/cmd_info/Policy%20Letters/AG-99-02.htm>; Internet; accessed 19 March 2000. Based on this policy, a soldier going to an OCONUS SSC must have 90 days in theater and 45 days to out-process, or a total of 135 days until the actual PCS, ETS, retirement or school. In the case of CENTCOM, soldiers were to deploy for full 120 day period or 165 days. Anyone with a PCS, etc date less than 135 days from deployment (165 days for CENTCOM) could not deploy.

[10] Thomas Schwartz, "The Power of FORSCOM is the Power of People", The Army Green Book, 1999-2000, 49, no. 10 (1999): 58. GEN Schwartz states that FORSCOM averages approximately 30% annual turnover rate. On a quarterly basis turnover rates are usually 5-10% depending on if the quarter includes the popular summer PCS months.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Department of the Army, Unit Readiness Reporting, Army Regulation 220-1, change 5.(Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 1 Sept 97 and effective 15 Sept 98): 1. The soldier is stabilized one month for each month deployed during a recognized SSC, in CONUS or OCONUS. This means he is not to participate in any other SSC type deployment while stabilized. The first general officer in his chain of command may waive the stabilization.

[13] Department of the Army, "Advanced Noncommissioned Officer course Selection and Attendance Policy", 1 February 2000, available from < www.perscom.army.mil/epncoes/ancoc1.htm>; Internet; accessed 19 March 2000. The policy for waivers of conditional promotions and deferrals from schools is clear for PLDC and ANCOC. It remains unclear if a conditional SSG can continue beyond 12 months without graduating BNCOC, even if deployed.

[14] RAND, 11-21. RAND found 30-60 sergeants continued on to NCOES schools in every deploying unit they studied.

[15] Department of the Army, Procedural Changes to AR 600-8-19, Enlisted Promotions and Reductions, MILPO Message 98-164, (Washington, D.C.: Commander, PERSCOM, Department of the Army, 1 June 1999): 1.

[16] AR 220-1, 62.

[17] Rand, 23-27. RAND conducted a detailed analysis of 10ID personnel problems as it attempted to meet its manpower shortfalls from other unit's in the division. Similar data is not available for the other units at this level of detail.

[18] AR 220-1, 11. The USR has a separate entry for senior grade defined as E5 through E9, warrant and commissioned officers. Enlisted soldiers (E1-E4) are part of the unit's aggregate strength (E1-O6) report. There is no effort to identify selected MOSs as critical to any unit's mission.

[19] AR 220-1, change 5. Unit's report those soldiers stabilized under a separate cover to ODCSOPS IAW para 4-10 or AR 220-1.

[20] Rand, 17.

[21] Ibid, 16.

[22] III Corps Command Policy # AG-99-02 – Personnel Deployment Criteria, 7 July 1999, http://www.hood-pao.army.mil/cmd_info/Policy%20Letters/AG-99-02.htm; Internet. Accessed 19 March 2000.

[23] Robert Brown, interview by author, September 1998. LTC Brown was the task force commander. He felt he did not have time to adequately integrate the new junior leaders into his organization nor had he time to assess their true MOS skill level. In this case, he placed a SFC who had been on staff in previous unit into a platoon sergeant position requiring him to man the commander's station of the M2 Bradley.

[24] AR 220-1, 10.

[25] AR 220-1, 12. AR 220-1 is the source of the list for not available personnel. While it never states the "Stop-Loss" assumption, the list indicates the intent for a unit to deploy all soldiers not actually clearing the unit as no reference is made to soldiers pending retirement, PCS, or ETS.

[26] RAND, 17.

[27] AR 220-1, 11. P ratings are P1:90-100%, P2:80-89%, P3: 70-79%, P4: 69% and below when based on available personnel.

[28] Eric K. Shinseki, "The Army's Manning Initiative", 8 November 1999. Available from <http://www.army.hqda.mil/ocsa/991108.htm>; Internet. Accessed 19 March 2000.

[29] AWC Readiness Report, i.

[30] Ibid, 40.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Jack Siemieniec, "Army Standardizes some Deployment Lengths". 7 March 2000; available from www.dtic.mil/armylink/news/mar2000/a20000306employpolicies.html; Internet; accessed 19 March 2000.

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