

FRANK BATTEN SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP AND PUBLIC POLICY

Citizens and Soldiers

Reexamining the All-Volunteer Force

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Executive Summary

I recommend that the Army increase the size of the National Guard to 48 brigade combat teams (BCTs) and reduce the size of the active duty force to 12 BCTs. This policy will cut Army operations and support spending by over \$30 billion. It will also alleviate the effects of the civil-military contact gap by spreading the Army throughout the country and allowing hundreds of thousands of soldiers to interact with civilians on a daily basis.

Definitions

- **BCT: Brigade Combat Team**
- **Peer Adversary: A nation of equal or nearly equal power with the United States. Usually refers to Russia or China**
- **Regional Power: A nation with the ability to project power or stage attacks against its neighbors. Usually refers to North Korea or Iran**
- **AVF: All-Volunteer Force. The strict use of volunteers in the US military since 1973**
- **Deployment-to-Dwell Ratio: For US military units, the ratio of time spent on deployment vs. time spent at the units' home base**

Background: American Military Policy before the All-Volunteer Force

In the last days of the 1972 presidential election, President Nixon announced his intention to end conscription into the United States military. By this point, the draft was inextricably associated with the war in Vietnam and despised by millions of Americans. Americans saw the draft as an unfair system which forced themselves or their loved ones to take part in an unjust or pointless war. Opposition to military service in general and military leaders' disappointment with the force that fought in Vietnam created an atmosphere ready for change.¹

Though few recognized it at the time, the institution of the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) signaled a departure from nearly two centuries of American defense policy. The early American republic founded its national security on the idea of citizen-soldiers. The Militia Act of 1792 required that all able-bodied white men enroll in the militia, which could then be called upon in time of war.² The nation still maintained a small, standing army to guard the frontier and US arsenals but it was totally unfit to fight a war.³ Throughout the 19th and early 20th century, the United States rapidly built up the Army and Navy in time of war, only to dismantle these forces as soon as peace was restored.⁴

This policy changed in the aftermath of WWII. The United States reduced the size of the vast fleets and armies that won the war, but not to the scale previously seen. The early stages of the Cold War created a sense of unease that made American leaders unwilling to fully demobilize.⁵ More importantly, America's newfound status as one of two superpowers led the United States to take on the task of defending its allies in Europe and Asia from Soviet aggression. In the past the US used its isolated position to withdraw and reduce the size of its military, but now America's first lines of defense were in Germany and Japan rather than on the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. As a result of its new security commitments, the United States maintained a peacetime draft for the first and only time in its history.⁶

Most Americans did not oppose the peacetime draft initially. The number of men conscripted was small and those who were put in uniform usually served an uneventful two years, with the exception of those sent to fight in Korea. Vietnam changed all that. Americans feared that they,

¹ Bacevich 1998

² Militia Act 1792

³ Wiegley 1973

⁴ Millett 2012

⁵ Millett 2012

⁶ Wiegley 1973

or a loved one, would be among those forced to fight in Vietnam and took to the streets and campuses in protest.⁷

The perceived unfairness of the draft amplified outrage against it. Deferments for college, marriage, physical and psychological disorders were more easily attained by wealthy Americans than by their poorer counterparts. Additionally, wealthy Americans who did enter the military often found safe, easy positions. Half of the Americans who served in Vietnam were draftees but 88% of infantryman and over half of those killed in action were conscripts.⁸

The inequity of the draft and the embarrassment of the outcome of the Vietnam War helped convince the American public that it was time for the draft to go. As a result, President Nixon created a commission under the leadership of former Secretary of Defense Thomas Gates. This commission, the Gates Commission, finally ended over thirty years of conscription in America in 1973.⁹

⁷ Bacevich 1998

⁸ Bacevich 1998

⁹ Bailey 2013

Problem Statement

The United States currently fills the ranks of its military exclusively through the All-Volunteer Force (AVF), a system that relies on volunteers willing to serve in the Armed Forces. This system is coming under closer scrutiny due to the rising cost of paying an all-volunteer force and the increasing divide between American veterans and civilians. Additionally, it is unclear that the AVF could provide the manpower necessary to win a conventional war against a peer adversary.

Literature Review

The Costs of the All-Volunteer Force

Despite the moral attacks against conscription being launched in the public sphere, the arguments presented to the Gates Commission in favor of ending the draft were, for the most part economic. The anti-draft lobby argued that the United States could raise a large, motivated fighting force by offering competitive wages to servicemen. The new volunteers would be more effective in and out of combat because they were there of their own accord. They would also be more likely to stay within the military for long periods of time, driving down training costs.¹⁰

For over twenty years, these arguments were widely accepted. However, at the end of the 20th century, observers began to argue that the cost of offering competitive wages in the free market was sending military personnel costs skyrocketing.¹¹ These arguments became louder and more numerous as the 21st century began and the United States embarked upon military expeditions in Afghanistan and Iraq. Today, the majority of observers argue that volunteer militaries, including the AVF, are almost certain to be more expensive than the conscript armies that preceded them.¹²

To sustain force numbers despite increased personnel costs, the Department of Defense adopted the Total Force Policy and Civilianization. The Total Force Policy enacted a greater dependence on the National Guard and Reserve components of each branch. By having these units available in time of war, the active duty force was able to reduce (or avoid growing) its numbers throughout the 1990s and 2000s. Civilianization is the process of turning over many non-combat roles from those in uniform to hired contractors. Many roles such as cooks, quartermasters, range control, and facilities maintenance which were once performed by soldiers are now carried out by defense contractors.¹³

The Equity of the All-Volunteer Force

When the All-Volunteer Force was first adopted, many were concerned that it would place the burden of national defense on the poor and on racial minorities, particularly African-Americans. Commentators feared that this would create a system like the draft in Vietnam that made poor and minority Americans far more likely to be killed in action.¹⁴ However, while African-Americans are overrepresented in the AVF, they do not suffer higher casualty rates than their

¹⁰ Bailey 2013

¹¹ Warner and Asch 1999

¹² Clever and Segal 2012

¹³ Carter et al. 2017

¹⁴ Carter et al. 2017

white, male counterparts. On the contrary, a study published in the American Economic Review found that white, upper-class Americans were more likely to be killed or wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan than minority, lower-class Americans. This is most likely because those who join the military in search of a steady job, find low-skill work away from combat-zones. Those who join out of patriotism or a search for a challenge, on the other hand, often join the infantry or special-forces and are more often in combat.¹⁵

There were also concerns that a professional force would become distant from the American populace at large and threaten civilian control of the military. These concerns have materialized in the form of the “warrior caste.”¹⁶ 80% of current enlistees have a family member who served in the military and the majority of Army recruits now come from the rural South, Midwest, and the Mountain states. This concentration of volunteers creates entire communities where almost no one has put on the uniform in decades.¹⁷

The large number of recruits drawn from the South and West may also contribute to the military’s growing association with the Republican Party. The National Network Exit Poll found that veterans voted Republican by 20 point margins in 2012 and 2014.¹⁸ The growing association between the Republican Party and the military could hamper a Democratic Administration’s ability to efficiently control the military, especially when combined with the lack of public concern with military affairs that results from the civil-military contact gap.

Many high ranking officials, including retired Lieutenant General Karl Eikenberry, are concerned that the American people have become distant spectators to the wars fought by the AVF. He argues that the AVF’s disconnect from large political constituencies dissuades political leaders from asking hard questions of the military and makes it easier for the president to send the US military into action without the consent of Congress.¹⁹

Amy Schafer argues that civil-military contact gap creates a harmful division between the increasingly separate military and civilian spheres of American society. This division deprives civilians of the knowledge and motivation necessary to engage in important discussions of military policy. Many civilians receive most of their information about the military from media sources that portray veterans as semi-superheroes, merciless killers, or blameless victims.²⁰

On the military side the sense of isolation, along with generally higher levels of education and physical fitness, has created a sense of elitism. A growing number of veterans believe their sacrifice, born by such a small portion of the American population, makes them superior to their

¹⁵ Carter 2017

¹⁶ Schafer and Kaplan 2017

¹⁷ Schafer and Kaplan 2017

¹⁸ Clement 2014

¹⁹ Eikenberry 2013

²⁰ Schafer 2017: 9-10

civilian counterparts. Together, these effects create a situation that, should it continue, threatens civilian oversight of the military.²¹

The Military Readiness of the All-Volunteer Force

The ultimate goal of the All-Volunteer Force is to provide the United States with enough military manpower to fight and win wars. However, the AVF has never faced the challenge of a costly, conventional war against a peer opponent. As a result it is unclear whether or not the AVF could provide enough manpower to defend the United States' interests in a worldwide crisis.

During the War on Terror, the US military, particularly the US Army was stretched thin. Many soldiers faced a series of deployments to combat areas with little time in between. The Army became exhausted, experienced record number of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and lost more soldiers to suicide than it did to enemy action. The military tried to expand during this period but was unable to find enough people fit for service and willing to fight in the Middle East. As a result, large enlistment bonuses were offered to entice reluctant recruits, further driving up personnel costs.²² The War on Terror was not a major war against a peer adversary, but the difficulties faced trying to man the AVF under the stress of a two-front war can offer insight into the AVF's ability to sustain major combat operations over long periods of time.

Additionally, Gates Commission advisors worried that an all-volunteer force would draw the least qualified in society, only those with no other place to go.²³ A military filled with the bottom rung of society would be ineffective in combat. While the quality of recruits dropped immediately following the implementation of the AVF, it steadily rose as the military regained the prestige it had lost in Vietnam. Today's military recruits are better educated and have better average scores on aptitude tests than do their civilian counterparts of comparable age and socio-economic status.²⁴

²¹ Barno and Bensahel 2015

²² Kitfield 2014

²³ Warner and Asch 1999

²⁴ Warner and Asch 1999

Evaluative Criteria

Military Readiness

The primary mission of the US military is to protect American sovereignty and defend American strategic interests abroad. Policy options must provide the United States with enough military manpower to carry out combat operations around the world. These operations can range from small counterinsurgency campaigns to global conflicts against peer adversaries. Policy options must also provide enough manpower to replace inevitable losses, particularly in a conflict with a peer opponent. The military readiness criterion is based on my assessment of each policy's ability to meet these requirements.

The military readiness criterion is based on an analysis of the Army's ability to fight and win several different conflict scenarios under each policy. These scenarios are: a counter-terrorism campaign, a major war against a peer adversary, a major war against a peer adversary and simultaneous conflict against a regional power, and two simultaneous major wars against peer adversaries. These scenarios were chosen because they reflect a realistic escalation of demand for US soldiers. Scenario 1 has a relatively low demand, while each following scenario builds on the demands of the previous one. Scenario 4 reflects the total mobilization the United States would be forced to undertake in the event of a war against two peer adversaries.

Scenario 1: a counter-terrorism campaign, reflects current US military operations in Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan. This level of conflict requires between three and six brigade combat teams at one time. Based on the US experience in Afghanistan and Iraq, this scenario could include decades of conflict with many more than six BCTs seeing action through rotational deployments. Casualties in this scenario are expected to be light and will not put a strain on recruitment.²⁵

Scenario 2: a major war against a peer adversary, is meant to reflect a war between the United States and Russia or China. This scenario requires at least 27 BCTs for the United States to prosecute the war. Since the active-duty force is currently 31 BCTs strong, this scenario, and all subsequent scenarios, would almost certainly require the mobilization of some National Guard BCTs.²⁶ Casualties in Scenario 2 are expected to be in the thousands²⁷ and will place significant strain on recruitment in order to replace losses.²⁸

Scenario 3: a major war against a peer adversary and simultaneous conflict against a regional power, reflects a war against either China or Russia and a regional power such as Iran or North

²⁵ Ochmanek 2016: 143

²⁶ Ochmanek 2016: 143

²⁷ Cooper and Schmitt 2018

²⁸ Congressional Budget Office 2006

Korea. This scenario requires at least 40 BCTs.²⁹ Casualties in Scenario 3 will also be high, at least 10,000 in the opening days.³⁰ This will place significant strain on recruitment as casualties mount.³¹ Heavy losses are also likely to influence Americans to avoid military service.³²

Scenario 4: two major wars against peer adversaries, represents a war between the United States and Russia and China. This scenario requires no fewer than 50 BCTs, the entirety of the US Army including the National Guard.³³ Based on US estimates for casualties in a smaller conflict with North Korea, casualties in this scenario are likely to be in the tens of thousands within months.³⁴

Cost

As US government healthcare and social-welfare costs continue to grow, the Department of Defense must make efficient use of allocated resources. Policy alternatives must provide the military with enough personnel to complete its mission in a cost-effective manner. Policy alternatives must also take into account the cost to the US economy of providing for any number of military personnel and their equipment. Additionally, if conscription is enacted, it presents a high opportunity cost for many individuals whose expected civilian wages would be higher than those they receive in uniform.

The costs given for each policy option are an estimation based on available open sources. For Policies 1 and 3, these are the operation and support costs for the Army under each policy. Operation and support costs are used because an analysis of personnel costs alone does not capture the effects that reduced or increased military personnel have on equipment usage and civilian contractors. Figure 1 shows the personnel and costs required to support Army BCTs. For Policy 2, the cost estimate is a combination of operation and support costs and the expected social costs and economic losses suffered as a result of conscription.

²⁹ Heritage Foundation 2016

³⁰ Cooper and Schmitt 2018

³¹ Congressional Budget Office 2006

³² CBO 2007 p.7

³³ Heritage Foundation 2016

³⁴ Cooper and Schmitt 2018

Figure #1: Brigade Combat Team per Unit Costs and Personnel									
Brigade Combat Team		Personnel				Costs (x \$1,000,000)			
BCT Type	# BCTs	Direct	Indirect	Overhead	Total	Direct	Indirect	Overhead	Total
Active Armor	9	4,200	9,090	4,160	17,450	500	840	1,280	2,620
Active Infantry	14	4,230	8,090	3,920	16,240	450	750	1,210	2,410
Active Stryker	7	4,440	8,590	4,150	17,180	500	790	1,280	2,570
Guard Armor	5	4,140	9,090	1,210	14,440	180	390	240	810
Guard Infantry	19	3,560	8,090	1,060	12,710	140	350	220	710
Guard Stryker	2	4,450	8,590	1,190	14,230	190	370	240	800

Equity

This criterion examines how well each alternative spreads the burden of national defense across states, socioeconomic groups, and individuals, as well as how effectively it integrates military personnel into the larger American society. A major concern with the AVF is the civil-military contact gap. This phenomenon, where military and civilian communities live to a great degree in isolation from each other, is considered harmful to American ideas of citizenship³⁵ and civilian control of the military.³⁶ Additionally, the warrior-caste, the large proportion of military members with direct family connections to the service, is widely seen as a side-effect of the AVF. This effect unevenly places the burden of military service on specific regions and demographics.

Political leaders whose constituencies are not invested in military operations are unlikely to make monitoring the military a priority. Veterans who perceive themselves as members of a society separate from the civilian populace are likely to see themselves as superior. For these reasons, policy alternatives must facilitate civil-military connections by increasing opportunities for interaction between civilians and military members and veterans. These connections can enable civilians and military members to interact with each other as equals, increasing their understanding of and appreciation for each other. Policies must also improve the distribution of military service among communities and families throughout the United States.

Feasibility

In order for a policy to be effective, it must first be adopted by lawmakers or Department of Defense officials. A partially effective policy that has the support of key policymakers does more good than a perfect policy that is never implemented. For this reason, feasibility is considered a criterion of equal importance with cost, equity, and military readiness. The feasibility rating is

³⁵ Schafer 2017

³⁶ Barno and Bensahel 2015

based upon the combination of political and organizational support or opposition that each policy would receive.

Political feasibility gauges congressional and public willingness to support a policy. Since the policies proposed in this paper would require congressional action, political feasibility is critical for their success. Congress is unlikely to support any policy against a supermajority of public opposition, therefore public opinion must also be counted as a factor for political feasibility.

Organizational feasibility measures support and opposition to a policy from leaders within the Department of Defense, both in and out of uniform. Though civil and military officials ultimately answer to political leadership, they have a great deal of control over the speed and thoroughness of policy implementation. Senior leadership, in particular the service chiefs, also hold strong influence over public opinion and can lend their voices to policy debates in Congress and within the Executive Branch. Marine Corps leaders' opposition to women's service in the infantry and their success in fostering a public debate of the topic stands as an example of this concern.³⁷

³⁷ Kheel 2016

Policy Alternatives

Figure #2: Summary Matrix		Policy		
Criterion		Maintain AVF	Draft	National Guard
Military Readiness	Counter-Terror	Very High	High	Very High
	Major War	High	High	High
	Major and Regional War	Moderate	High	Moderate
	Two Major Wars	Low	High	Low
Cost Estimate		\$108.3 Billion	\$150 billion	\$67 Billion
Equity		Low	High	Moderate
Feasibility		High	Low	Moderate

1. Maintain the All-Volunteer Force as it Exists

The United States can continue its reliance on the All-Volunteer Force in its current form. If US military operations do not increase in scale or intensity, the AVF will provide enough manpower to sustain the nation's security.³⁸ However, the AVF may not be able to provide enough military manpower to fight a long war against North Korea or Russia, both of which are a realistic possibility in the future.^{39 40} Additionally, personnel costs, particularly healthcare costs, will most likely continue to rise, limiting the amount of defense spending that can be spent elsewhere and potentially leading to a heavier tax-burden.⁴¹ The civil-military divide that currently exists will also continue unabated.⁴² Maintaining the current AVF is highly feasible because most legislators support the policy and few military leaders support a return to the draft.⁴³

Military Readiness

The AVF as it exists today is entirely capable of conducting a counter-terrorism campaign, Scenario 1, indefinitely.⁴⁴ 30 active component brigade combat teams provide more than enough manpower to keep six BCTs constantly deployed around the world while maintaining a 1:4 ratio

³⁸ Warner and Asch 1999

³⁹ Judson 2016

⁴⁰ Choi 2018

⁴¹ Carter 2017

⁴² Eikenberry 2013

⁴³ Barno and Bensahel 2016

⁴⁴ Ochmanek 2016

of deployed/non-deployed units. This ratio falls well within Department of Defense goals of 1:2 deployment/dwell ratio.⁴⁵

However, it is not clear that the AVF can maintain counter-terror operations indefinitely and simultaneously prepare for a major war against a peer adversary, as described in Scenario 2. Units that deploy on counter-terror operations every five years are likely to spend the majority of their training time preparing for that mission. This reduces the amount of time available for training in preparation for conventional warfare. In 2016, Army Chief of Staff General Mark Milley said that the Army was at “high risk” of being unprepared to fight a conventional conflict despite having “sufficient capacity and capability and readiness to fight counterinsurgency and counterterrorism.”⁴⁶ That said, without the strains of constant counter-terror operations, the current AVF provides enough manpower to stand a reasonable chance of prevailing in a single war against a peer adversary.

In Scenario 3, the current AVF will be stretched thin. With the addition of BCTs from the National Guard, the Army can prosecute a war against a peer adversary and a regional power for a short period of time.⁴⁷ Casualties will mount quickly though, and recruiters will likely struggle to produce enough soldiers to fill the ranks. To maintain unit strength, the Army will probably reduce physical standards and begin issuing enlistment waivers, as it did in 2008.⁴⁸ Though the United States can, most likely, avoid defeat, it is unlikely that it will win a decisive victory against a peer adversary and a regional power with the current AVF Army.⁴⁹

In Scenario 4, a simultaneous war against two peer adversaries, the current AVF will face serious difficulties.⁵⁰ To stand any chance of victory, the Army will need to mobilize all National Guard and Reserve formations for the duration of the conflict. This will still leave the Army stretched dangerously thin. The few formations initially held in reserve will likely be forced into the frontline to fill gaps created by shattered units. In the short term, American forces may be required to give up ground in Europe or Asia to concentrate forces in the other theatre. Ultimately, it seems unlikely that, given many young Americans’ existing reluctance to join the military, the Army will find enough volunteers to replace its losses when weekly casualties are in the thousands.⁵¹

⁴⁵ Tice 2016

⁴⁶ Judson 2016

⁴⁷ Ochmanek 2016

⁴⁸ Spencer 2015

⁴⁹ Heritage Foundation 2017

⁵⁰ Heritage Foundation 2017

⁵¹ CBO 2007

Cost

In 2018, the All-Volunteer Force cost \$60.9 billion in personnel costs and \$47.4 billion in operations and maintenance costs, totaling \$108.3 billion.⁵² These numbers will probably continue to increase in the future. Department of Defense personnel costs increased by 46 percent from 2000 to 2014, largely as a result of increasing healthcare costs. As the largest branch of the military, the Army is particularly vulnerable to personnel costs, which reduce the amount of funding available for other critical expenses such as Operations and Maintenance, and Acquisitions.⁵³

Equity

The All-Volunteer Force fosters inequity by concentrating military service in specific families and regions of the country. The phenomenon is sometimes called “the warrior caste.”⁵⁴ It also facilitates the civil-military contact gap. This system prevents large parts of the civilian population from having any serious or sustained interaction with military personnel. The warrior caste and the civil-military contact gap remove public incentives to learn about and discuss military affairs. Without public concern about military operations, legislators are unlikely to seriously challenge military actions by the President.⁵⁵

Feasibility

Since it is the currently enacted policy, maintaining the All-Volunteer Force is very feasible. While a growing number of experts are beginning to criticize the AVF, an overwhelming number of lawmakers support maintaining it.⁵⁶ Public opinion is also strongly in favor of keeping the AVF as it is, particularly since a commonly mentioned alternative is the draft.⁵⁷

⁵² Blakely 2017

⁵³ Arthur and Frisk 2014: 4

⁵⁴ Schafer 2017

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Kitfield 2014

⁵⁷ Gallup 2007

2. Reinstitute the Draft

When the United States needed to raise large levels of manpower for war in the past, this was done through a lottery draft. All males of military age were registered but only a random selection was called into service.⁵⁸ Reinstating such a draft allows the United States to increase military manpower without increasing compensation to compete with the civilian market.⁵⁹ It also allows the United States to quickly mobilize large numbers of military personnel. This modern draft needs to limit deferments to eliminate the civil-military contact gap and promote equity. It should also register women for conscription so as to prevent discrimination against women in the armed forces and increase the pool of available manpower.⁶⁰ This policy also gives the option of quickly calling more men into service, by selecting more draft numbers, if the United States enters a large-scale war.⁶¹ However, this policy faces serious obstacles in Congress and within the military hierarchy. It is unlikely to be implemented without a major catalyst, such as a major attack on the American homeland.⁶²

Military Readiness

Conscript armies are usually slower to mobilize and less effective in combat than all-volunteer forces. A mixed force of conscripts and volunteers is typically less motivated than an all-volunteer force.⁶³ Conscripts are also unlikely to reenlist in the military, driving turnover rates up and decreasing the number of experienced personnel.⁶⁴ For these reasons, a drafted Army will not perform as well in a counter-terror campaign as an AVF, despite providing a surplus amount of manpower. However, a drafted Army is still capable of carrying out a counter-terror campaign, in part because the number of required soldiers is so low, that conscripts may not need to be deployed.⁶⁵

In a war against a single peer adversary, such as Scenario 2, a conscript army will be relatively effective. Since a large number of soldiers is more important in a large-scale, conventional conflict, conscript forces can use their quantitative strength to make up for qualitative shortcomings. Additionally, since America's peer rivals, Russia and China, both use conscripts in their armies, America does not necessarily concede its qualitative edge by reinstituting a draft.

This strength is even more important in Scenarios 3 and 4, where the United States must confront powerful adversaries on multiple fronts. A draft Army allows the United States to determine the

⁵⁸ Bacevich 1999

⁵⁹ Clever and Segal 2012

⁶⁰ Gustavsen 2013

⁶¹ Barno and Bensahel 2016

⁶² Galston 2012

⁶³ Horowitz, Simpson, and Stam 2011

⁶⁴ Chapman 2002

⁶⁵ CBO 2007

number of soldiers needed for a conflict and mobilize that number without the restrictions of the market.⁶⁶ It also allows the United States to maintain unit strength despite heavy casualties. Many young Americans are uninterested in, or incapable of, serving in the military. The Department of Defense estimates that only 29 percent of young Americans are physically and mentally fit for service.⁶⁷ A draft Army allows the United States to harness its limited pool of military manpower allowing the Army to absorb casualties and remain engaged longer than an AVF could.

Cost

The initial costs of a drafted force are likely to be higher than the costs of an AVF since Congress is unlikely to actually decrease military compensation. Though the military will not need to increase wages to remain competitive with the civilian market, Congress may elect to do so anyways. It may take years for the Army to see savings as a result of a draft, if they ever materialize at all.

Conscripts are often less motivated than volunteers, so soldier productivity is expected to decrease. This may lead to higher equipment costs, as a result of poor maintenance. Productivity may drop so low that the Army needs to recruit more soldiers than it would have with the AVF. Additionally, many conscripts may not last long in the Army. 25-30% of soldiers today leave after their first enlistment. This number will likely increase if a draft is instated. Since it costs approximately \$22,300 to train a soldier, the Army faces large training costs that may not be balanced by eventual savings on personnel expenses.⁶⁸

There are also economic costs associated with the draft. People who make less in the military than they would in the civilian world are effectively taxed during their military service. Others may make more money in the Army but have such an aversion to military service that they still face a loss of welfare as a result of their time in uniform. According to Dr. Walter Oi's calculations, the annual economic loss the US would suffer as a result of the draft is \$40,712,760,000.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Barno and Bensahel 2016

⁶⁷ Connolly 2016

⁶⁸ Carter, et al. 2017: 16

⁶⁹ Oi 1967

Equity

This policy does very well in the equity criterion since it gives every fit American an equal chance of being called upon for military service. This reduces the effects of the warrior caste by infusing the Army with large numbers of soldiers without a family connection to the service. This policy also helps eliminate the civil-military contact gap by forcing citizens who never would have considered joining the military to serve. These veterans, and their loved ones, will now be incentivized to pay attention to military operations when they may not have been so before.⁷⁰

Feasibility

For the time being, a return to the draft is a political impossibility. As shown by Representative Rangel's attempt to reinstate the draft, there is no political stomach for conscription in the United States.⁷¹ More recently, a Gallup poll found 80% of Americans opposed to the draft.⁷²

⁷⁰ Barno and Bensahel 2016

⁷¹ Kitfield 2014

⁷² Gallup 2007

3. Increase Reliance on the National Guard

This policy proposes restructuring the US Army into a Total Force of 12 active duty BCTs and 48 National Guard BCTs. For most of its history, the United States relied upon a small standing Army backed by part-time soldiers for national defense. The National Guard forces provide a large body of servicemen and servicewomen with basic military training that can be called upon for service in peace and war. National Guard soldiers consume a small fraction of the costs of active-duty soldiers and can be called upon after a relatively short mobilization period. This policy offers a great deal of flexibility in implementation. The Army should reduce the active-duty military to a small, rapid-response force that, in the event of a major conflict, will be reinforced by the National Guard. This strategy reflects the Abrams Doctrine, General Creighton Abrams' intention that the nation would be unable to fight without calling on the National Guard and Reserves.⁷³ This policy focuses on the Army National Guard because, unlike the Army Reserve, the Army National Guard contains brigade combat teams. Additionally, the state affiliation and the National Guard Bureau give the National Guard more support in Congress, improving the policy's feasibility.⁷⁴

Military Readiness

This policy will maintain an active duty Army large enough to handle most counter-insurgency operations. The active duty force should retain 12 BCTs to handle a continuous counter-terror campaign and maintain American military presence abroad. 12 BCTs can meet the minimum deployed strength in Scenario 1 and still maintain a 3:1 dwell/deployment ratio, meeting Pentagon guidelines.⁷⁵ If more forces are deemed necessary, the National Guard can provide additional combat power. Periodically deploying National Guard units encourages soldiers to take their training seriously and creates cadres of experienced leaders within National Guard units.

In Scenarios 2, 3, and 4 the active duty force acts as a vanguard, quickly deploying to the battlefield to assist American allies in the region while National Guard units are mobilized. The National Guard will mobilize at least enough BCTs to bring the number of Total Force BCTs to the minimum for each scenario plus 6, enabling the United States to establish a strong front line and maintain an operational reserve. The exact number of National Guard BCTs mobilized is dependent on the size of the active duty force.

National Guard soldiers proved their worth in Iraq and Afghanistan when they were called upon, time and again, to fight beside their active duty comrades as equals.⁷⁶ In 2005, over half the

⁷³ Eikenberry 2013

⁷⁴ Freedburg 2013

⁷⁵ Tice 2016

⁷⁶ Barno 2014

BCTs in Iraq were Army National Guard formations⁷⁷ and experts generally agree that the part-time soldiers showed a level of competence comparable to their active duty counterparts.⁷⁸ In 2015, the National Commission on the Future of the Army found that National Guard BCTs could be deployed with as little as 50 days training, enabling them to reach the front in time to reinforce the small active duty forces already there.⁷⁹

Under this policy the National Guard remains an all-volunteer force. Like the current force, it is limited in how much it can expand due to the lack of willing recruits.⁸⁰ It is unclear whether or not many Americans consider the National Guard a more attractive option than the active duty Army. Additionally, once the National Guard is mobilized in time of war, many Americans will see little difference between the two if joining either means certain deployment.

Cost

The Congressional Budget Office estimated in 2016 that National Guard Brigade Combat Teams had annual operation and support costs between 1/4 and 1/3 of their active duty equals.⁸¹ These costs include both personnel and operation and maintenance costs. Based on the CBO's estimates, Policy 3 has a cost of \$66.97 billion. The details for this calculation are given in Figure 2.

Figure #3: Total Army Costs and Personnel Under Policy #3									
Brigade Combat Team		Personnel				Costs (x \$1,000,000)			
BCT Type	# BCTs	Direct	Indirect	Overhead	Total	Direct	Indirect	Overhead	Total
Active Armor	2	8,400	18,180	8,320	34,900	1,020	1,714	2,611	5,345
Active Infantry	8	33,840	64,720	31,360	129,920	3,672	6,120	9,874	19,666
Active Stryker	2	8,880	17,180	8,300	34,360	1,020	1,612	2,611	5,243
Guard Armor	12	49,680	109,080	14,520	173,280	2,203	4,774	2,938	9,914
Guard Infantry	28	99,680	226,520	29,680	355,880	3,998	9,996	6,283	20,278
Guard Stryker	8	35,600	68,720	9,520	113,840	1,550	3,019	1,958	6,528
Total Active	12	51,120	100,080	47,980	199,180	5,712	9,445	15,096	30,253
Total Guard	48	184,960	404,320	53,720	643,000	7,752	17,789	11,179	36,720
Total Army	60	236,080	504,400	101,700	842,180	13,464	27,234	26,275	66,973

⁷⁷ Dunn 2016

⁷⁸ Barno 2014

⁷⁹ NCFA 2015

⁸⁰ Spencer 2015

⁸¹ CBO 2016: 124

Equity

Increasing the size of the Army National Guard can help alleviate the civil-military contact gap in several ways. First, National Guard units are not concentrated on bases that form their own communities but spread throughout the United States. National Guard armories create a tangible presence in an area and are often utilized as community centers. Second, National Guard soldiers spend most of their time outside of uniform, interacting with civilians rather than soldiers. Finally, the state orientation of the National Guard makes it necessary for recruiters to operate in each state. A California National Guardsman cannot easily be recruited from Montana.

Feasibility

The National Guard has successfully avoided major funding cuts and limitations of its role in the past thanks in part to its strong support among Congress.⁸² The clear connection to a local constituency incentivizes members of Congress to defend and support locally administered military units over federally administered ones. This, along with the National Guard's low annual costs, makes increasing the National Guard's role in the Army a real possibility.

Military leadership will certainly resist a drastically reduced active duty force. Active duty Army leaders often propose major cuts to the National Guard and Reserve during periods of sequestration in order to preserve active duty capabilities.⁸³ Congress can overrule military leaders, but it may be wise to reduce the size of the active duty force in stages for logistical and political reasons.

⁸² Freedburg 2013

⁸³ Freedburg 2013

Data and Methods

The findings of this paper are based entirely upon open source information. During my research, I made use of the online resources available through the University of Virginia's library, such as JSTOR and generally available academic sources found through Google Scholar. I also used reliable news and magazine articles about military budgets, congressional reports on relevant topics, and reports produced by national security think-tanks. Some of the most important sources of articles and reports were the RAND Corporation, the Heritage Foundation, Defense News, The National Interest, and War on the Rocks.

Military Readiness

The military readiness rating for each policy is based primarily on a 2017 assessment of US military strength by the Heritage Foundation⁸⁴ and on a 2017 report by the RAND Corporation.⁸⁵ These documents assessed current US Army strength and capabilities with Army strength in previous conflicts and with the strength of potential adversaries. I interpreted these studies in light of my own, somewhat extensive, study of military history.

The Heritage Foundation's 2017 Index of US Military Strength recommended that the Army field 50 active brigade combat teams. They calculate that this would require an active-duty Army of approximately 580,000 soldiers. The authors based their conclusion on US troop commitments to Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq.⁸⁶ This data was useful since it provided a baseline of how much Army combat power was required for conflicts in the past. This allowed me to draw conclusions about how many soldiers would be necessary in a conflict with a peer adversary. However, this document did not acknowledge Army National Guard units that were deployed in both the Korean War and the War in Iraq. I believe this led them to overestimate the number of brigade combat teams necessary for the Army to complete its mission. As there are 28 brigade combat teams in the Army National Guard⁸⁷, this drastically reduces the number of active brigade combat teams necessary to prevail against a peer adversary.

The RAND Corporation report assessed current US military capabilities against predicted requirements to defeat China, Russia, North Korea, Iran, and ISIL. The authors developed four conflict scenarios as benchmarks for US capabilities which I used as the basic benchmark for my own assessment. These scenarios were a counter-terror campaign against ISIL and al-Qaeda, a major war against a peer adversary such as China or Russia, a major war and a simultaneous war

⁸⁴ Heritage Foundation 2017

⁸⁵ Ochmanek et al. 2017

⁸⁶ Heritage Foundation 2017

⁸⁷ Dunn 2016

against a regional enemy like North Korea or Iran, and two simultaneous major wars against China and Russia.⁸⁸ The authors estimate that the US Army could fight Russia and China simultaneously with 31 BCTs. They also estimate that the Army could fight either Russia or China and either North Korea or Iran with only 30 BCTs.⁸⁹ While this report was very useful when creating my benchmarks to measure military readiness, I believe the authors' estimate for the number of BCTs required to fight more than one major war was too small.

My chief source of information on the all-volunteer force's ability to maintain unit strength in time of war was a 2006 report by the Congressional Budget Office. I chose this report for the level of detail it provided on recruiting trends and because 2005 was one of the deadliest years since 2001 for the United States military.⁹⁰ This report provided the Army's recruiting goals for 2005 and the number of soldiers actually recruited that year.⁹¹ I used this report to inform my estimation of how casualties affected Americans' willingness to enlist and soldiers' willingness to remain in service. My analysis of American willingness to enlist was also informed by other assessments of the AVF which drew attention to the difficulty of recruiting in times of high economic output as well as in time of war.⁹² In addition, I reviewed many news and defense articles which described the Army's difficulty finding enough soldiers to fill the ranks as it expanded.^{93 94 95}

My estimates of required Army strength are based on my own assessment of military history and strategy, along with analysis of Russian and Chinese capabilities. The estimates from RAND and the Heritage Foundation serve as lower and upper bounds respectively for the number of BCTs required to successfully fight Russia and China simultaneously. I chose to use the RAND report's four conflict scenarios because I believe they provide a useful range of desired American military strength, from the minimal requirements of a counter-terror campaign to an all-out war against America's strongest rivals. I emphasize the two major war scenario in this paper because, if the US were to engage either Russia or China, the other may seek to take advantage of the situation and move while the United States is distracted. This scenario appears more likely in light of recent joint Russo-Chinese training operations.⁹⁶ My casualty estimates are based on a wargame conducted by the US military in February 2018. This wargame predicted 10,000 US military casualties in the first days of a war with North Korea.⁹⁷

⁸⁸ Ochmanek et al. 2017

⁸⁹ Ochmanek et al. 2017: 143

⁹⁰ icasualties.org 2017

⁹¹ Congressional Budget Office 2017

⁹² Warner and Asch 1999

⁹³ Woody 2017

⁹⁴ Brook 2017

⁹⁵ Barno and Bensahel 2017

⁹⁶ Chan 2017

⁹⁷ Cooper and Schmitt, 2018

Cost

My cost estimates for the policy options were based on information found in the Eleventh Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation (EQRMC), a report by the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessment (CSBA), a 2016 report by the Congressional Budget Office, and Dr. Walter Oi's work calculating the economic cost of the draft. The reports by the CSBA, CBO, and the EQRMC, provided information used to estimate the direct costs of keeping different number of soldiers in uniform. Dr. Oi's work was used to calculate the economic costs of instituting conscription.

The EQRMC, conducted in 2012, provided information on the Real Military Compensation (RMC) of enlisted personnel and officers in comparison to the average wage of civilians with similar education levels and years of work experience.⁹⁸ I used this data to estimate the ability of the all-volunteer force to draw large numbers of recruits in a crisis. This data was also useful when calculating the economic cost of conscription, particularly since Dr. Oi's work was done in the 1960s.

The Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessment provided detailed information about the 2018 Department of Defense Budget Request. This information included the Army's personnel budget request and the requested end strength levels for the active and reserve components. I used this information to understand personnel budget trends and to calculate my estimate of per-soldier costs for both active and reserve members. This assessment also provided the cost value for Policy 1.

Dr. Oi's work calculated the economic costs of conscription for those drafted and for the nation at large. He served as the senior staff economist on the Gates Commission, and his work helped convince the Commission to recommend the institution of the all-volunteer force.⁹⁹ As a result, I read and considered his work carefully. Dr. Oi calculated the economic cost of the draft to be \$5,364,000,000 in 1967, equal to \$40,712,760,000 in 2018 dollars. However, military pay was substantially lower compared to average civilian wages in 1967. This leads me to believe that the economic costs of a draft today would be significantly less than Dr. Oi's estimation.

The Congressional Budget Office's 2016 primer on US military force structure provided detailed information about the number of soldiers in the active-duty, Reserve, and National Guard. This included information on how many soldiers in each component were assigned to combat, support, and overhead units. The primer also detailed how many soldiers are in a heavy, Stryker, and infantry brigade combat team, and the per-unit costs associated with each BCT.¹⁰⁰ The personnel numbers and costs for BCTs found in the primer are available in Figure 1.

⁹⁸ Eleventh Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation 2012

⁹⁹ Meckling 1990

¹⁰⁰ Congressional Budget Office 2016

I used the information in the CBO's primer to calculate my estimate for the cost of Policy 3. I decided to use this information because I the CBO is a reliable source and because the unit costs in this primer included the total annual operation and support costs for the forces analyzed. I acknowledge that the information is somewhat dated, however, I believe that the operation and support costs for Army units has not changed enough since July 2016 to drastically alter my cost estimate.

Equity

I used a variety of sources to understand the civil-military contact gap and the effects a disconnected military can have on a society. Amy Schafer's work for the Center for a New American Security provided useful data on Americans' willingness to serve in, and their perceptions of the military.¹⁰¹ *War on the Rocks* writers David Barno and Nora Bensahel produced several articles discussing how the civil-military contact gap removes a major incentive for Americans to pay attention to, and hold elected officials accountable for, foreign affairs.¹⁰² They also wrote about how a military that sees itself as separate from, and superior to, the civilian populace is dangerous for a democratic society.¹⁰³ I based my equity estimation on the analysis of these experts and on my own assessment of the policies. I used their assessment and recommendations to inform my judgment of how successful each policy would be at creating a military force that more accurately reflects American diversity and integrates military members as part of wider American society.

Feasibility

My feasibility estimation is a combination of two sub-estimations: political feasibility and organizational feasibility. Political feasibility is based on congressional support for measures to replace or significantly alter the All-Volunteer Force and public support for policies like the draft. Organizational feasibility is based on military leaders' statements in favor of, or in opposition to, the current All-Volunteer Force, conscription, and increased reliance on the National Guard.

For political feasibility, I based my estimate primarily on a series of Gallup polls on Military and National Defense and congressional attempts to alter the AVF, primarily by Representative Charles Rangel (D-NY).¹⁰⁴ These sources helped me estimate the feasibility of Policy 2: Reinstating the Draft. I was unable to find any polls on expanding the Army National Guard.

¹⁰¹ Schafer 2017

¹⁰² Barno and Bensahel 2017

¹⁰³ Barno and Bensahel 2018

¹⁰⁴ Asher and Mills 2004

However, some sources did state that Congress has, in the past, been very supportive of the National Guard, in part because of its affiliation with individual states and, therefore, clear constituencies.¹⁰⁵

I based my estimate of organizational feasibility on the level of support for each policy I observed among military leaders and national security experts. Defense analysis and news articles were important sources for this estimate. This information helped me understand the level of support, or opposition, that key national security leaders, particularly the service chiefs, would lend to any policy during the inevitable public debate on the issue.

¹⁰⁵ Freedburg 2014

Recommendation, Assessment, and Implementation

I recommend Policy #3: Increase Reliance on the National Guard.

I recommend Policy #3 because it provides a military readiness comparable to that of the All-Volunteer Force. Policy #3 is significantly cheaper than both Policy #1 and Policy #2. Increasing the role of the National Guard reduces the effects of the civil-military gap and it has moderate feasibility.

While Policy #3 did not rate as high on military readiness or equity as did Policy #2, I eliminated reinstating the draft early on as an option because it simply is not feasible. Despite a revived discussion of the topic,¹⁰⁶ American political and military leaders are, as a whole, not interested in reinstating conscription.¹⁰⁷ Additionally, I realized that the monetary savings from conscription are extremely uncertain.¹⁰⁸ My own analysis is that reinstating conscription would increase Army personnel, operation and maintenance costs for at least a decade.

I chose Policy #3 over Policy #1 because increasing the role of the National Guard will significantly reduce the Army's annual operation and support cost. I also believe it will reduce the effects of the civil-military contact gap and the warrior caste.¹⁰⁹ National Guard units, stationed in towns throughout the United States, offer a unique opportunity for citizens to interact with soldiers in a way that doesn't normally occur on active duty bases.¹¹⁰ I personally participated in several local engagement operations with the Oklahoma and Virginia National Guard. Some of the citizens I interacted with later enlisted.

I also believe that an Army made up primarily of National Guard units is capable of defending the United States. The National Guard gained a great deal of combat experience in Iraq and Afghanistan and proved itself capable of performing in combat.¹¹¹ My own experience in two National Guard IBCTs shows that most National Guard noncommissioned officers are combat veterans and that many National Guard soldiers expect and wish to be deployed. They take their service seriously, and are willing to go through additional annual training to prepare themselves for combat.

This policy can be implemented by lobbying budget hawks in Congress who want to see federal spending cut. Additionally, political leaders who favor a strong military should be reminded that the policy actually increases size of the Army by four BCTs. President Trump may be convinced

¹⁰⁶ Barno and Bensahel 2017

¹⁰⁷ Kheel 2016

¹⁰⁸ Schafer 2017: 9

¹⁰⁹ Ibid

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Barno 2014

to back the policy if he can be convinced that reducing the size of the active duty Army will encourage NATO members to increase their own defense spending.

I suggest this policy be implemented gradually. It would be foolish to deactivate almost twenty active brigade combat teams overnight. A gradual reduction in the size of the active duty force will provide soldiers time to find another career if they are not able to reenlist or recommission. It will also allow time for the Army to go through the Base Realignment and Closure process, something which is certain to cause concern among members of Congress.

Increasing the role of the Army National Guard will drastically reduce operations and support costs, allowing the Army to invest in research and acquisitions. At the same time, this policy will maintain America's national security. Finally, it will help reconnect civilians with an Army that has been growing distant and reinvigorate the ideal of the American citizen-soldier.

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