

# The Army and Society

Lieutenant Colonel Frederic J. Brown, US Army

*As Vietnam began to wind down, the US Army and its role in society was debated on several planes, not the least of which was the end of the draft in 1973 and the institution of the "All-Volunteer Force" concept. Then Lieutenant Colonel Frederic J. Brown Jr. assessed the debate from the perspective of a student at the National War College in this lead article for the March 1972 edition of Military Review.*

THESE ARE DIFFICULT days for the Military Establishment and particularly the Army. Faced with the need to readjust after a long enervating commitment to a complex, confusing and frustrating war in Vietnam, the Army is seemingly assailed from all sides. Public animosity exceeds that in the previous experience of any of those soldiers presently serving. The fiber of units is stretched by racial stress, drug excess and an environment of hyperactive inquiry if not hostile dissent. In the view of critical observers, the Army not only serves an increasingly questionable social purpose—the use of force in defending the Nation—but also is dysfunctional in that it constitutes a nonproductive, inefficient drain of resources which could be better used to meet pressing social problems.

Critical public sentiment often strikes a responsive chord in the Army. The assertion has been made, within the professional ranks, that the Army must become "meaningful" if it is to continue to exist. The proposition is most often stated to buttress arguments favoring the development of noncombat-related "socially productive" roles which will not only keep the Army active and committed to the mainstream of American life, but also, because of their utility to the Nation, will serve as added justification for the continued existence of the Army.

This proposition is wrong. The greatest current danger to the Army is the stimulus to overinvolvement in efforts to maintain social "relevance" rather than any isolation stimulated by underinvolvement. The evolving nature of the American society constitutes a reasonable guarantee that the problem for the military profession is not lack of social integration; the character of our

postindustrial society will insure that the necessary ties continue to be maintained, even in an all-volunteer force. The Army is already deeply committed to a broad range of social welfare programs. Further, there has been a trend of continually increasing involvement. Isolation is not the problem.

The real challenge to the Army today is to conduct responsible and necessary social welfare programs, while preserving those core values of the military which combine to produce units and men who willingly serve the national defense with "unlimited liability"—to and including the ultimate price. The danger is overcommitment to social welfare programs which can erode the core values and capabilities of unit readiness.

The concern is not that the Army exercises social responsibilities. Many are absolutely necessary for management of the Armed Forces or to perform an essential public service such as disaster assistance or civil defense planning. The problem is to subordinate in a responsible manner the aggregate of such efforts to the maintenance of adequate defense readiness.

## Historical Precedent

The Army is engaged today in a broad series of social programs developed over the years in response to general acceptance of an increasing governmental role in providing for the social welfare of individuals and in taking direct responsibility for many other important areas of public life. Current social programs in which the Army is involved have historical precedent in a general tradition of civic assistance provided over the years by the Army.

However, in the past, the Army neither saw itself, nor was it seen by others, as possessing enduring responsibilities to conduct programs to improve the lot of any particular individuals in society or to correct social ill, which plagued the Nation.

Since World War II, there has been increasing pressure to commit the Army to social programs involving improvement of the individual. Some programs were necessary for better management of the Armed Forces; others were intended to improve community relations by providing useful public services.

## Current Efforts

The rhetoric of leadership has led to the development of a broad set of social welfare programs, most of which are desirable for improvement of personnel management. Yet some programs directly affect the environment and life style of the individual citizen both in and out of military service. Major current efforts are: Domestic Action, Equal Opportunity (minority relations), General Education Development (education), Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Control, Project One Hundred Thousand and Project Transition.

- *Domestic Action.* This is a recent Department of Defense (DOD) “carrier” program for most externally oriented social welfare activities conducted by the military services under the guidance of a DOD Domestic Action Council. The program includes manpower efforts such as Project Referral, intended to assist in securing jobs for retirees; Project Value, designed to provide jobs in DOD for over 1,000 hardcore unemployed per year; and the Youth Employment Program, an effort to provide summer jobs for over 40,000 youths per year.

Military procurement is also channeled to minority small business enterprises. Physical resources (equipment, facilities, services and property) are made available on a reimbursable basis where possible. Over 275,000 disadvantaged youth were provided recreational, cultural, educational and training activities during the summer of 1969 in the community relations effort. Lastly, technical knowledge such as low-cost modular housing, aeromedical evacuation and environmental improvement is provided to civilian communities. The sixth element of the program is equal rights which continues longstanding efforts in minority relations.

- *Equal Opportunity.* Beginning with desegregation in 1948, the services have led the national effort in minority relations. Secretary Robert S. McNamara saw the services as “. . . a powerful fulcrum in removing the barriers to racial justice not merely in the military, but in the country at large.” Consistent with this phi-

losophy, the DOD open housing policy predated the comparable provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1968. In further extension of this activist social role, places of local entertainment practicing segregation have been placed off limits by the Secretary of the Army. Formal education in minority relations is being expanded for all service personnel. The level of involvement has increased each year.

- *General Education Development.* The military is the largest vocational training institution in the United States. The rate of turnover of personnel—an estimated 24 million veterans since 1940—and the physical plant required have resulted in a major and expanding national educational system within the services.

Prior to Vietnam, approximately 500,000 individuals left the military services annually for civilian life with an estimated 50 percent having received post-high school occupational and professional education and training. Such Army programs continue to increase dramatically. A \$22.6 million program in 1968 to increase high school, college and postgraduate qualifications of all enlisted and officer grades may expand to over \$40 million for 1973.

More recently, the Modern Volunteer Army Program envisages “. . . an educational system which provides each soldier the opportunity to acquire, on duty time, civilian-recognized skills or education” so that the soldiers will see the Army “. . . as an avenue and not as an alternative, to their personal and educational development.”<sup>1</sup> A policy of providing veteran benefits to insure that an individual did not suffer as a result of Government service has become a program of providing personal benefit through Government aid and assistance while serving and during duty hours—a new horizon of social responsibility for the Army.

- *Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Control.* Although too early to gauge the resource implications of this new program, the principle is clear: The military services are expected to provide professional rehabilitation for individuals discovered to be suffering from addiction during their period of national service. As is the case with educational programs, national service will, through rehabilitation, benefit the individual whether he acquired the disorder before or during service.

In its embryonic stages, the drug abuse program will require over 2,900 specialized personnel and over \$32 million of direct costs for Fiscal Year (FY) 1972, according to DOD FY 1973 budget hearings in October 1971. Unsupported estimates of true cost to include salaries of addicts, guards for facilities, and so forth range up to \$100 million per year for the Army. All that seems certain at this point is that the military has entered

into a new and uncharted area of social responsibility.

● *Project One Hundred Thousand.* This project was developed by Secretary McNamara to broaden the manpower base and to make the marginally productive civilian into a successful, competitive citizen. He saw the challenge as “a ghetto of the spirit. Chronic failures in school throughout their childhood, they were destined to a sense of defeat and decay in a skill-oriented nation that requires from its manpower pool an increasing index of competence, discipline and self-confidence: Many of these men, we decided, could be saved.”<sup>2</sup>

From 1 October 1966 to 30 September 1971, the Army has accepted over 200,000 of these individuals at an estimated annual cost for FY 1970 of under \$3 million.

● *Project Transition.* The objective of Project Transition is to assist the soldier to secure a job upon completion of service. Begun in 1968, the program consists of job counseling, vocational training, and job placement assistance. By 1970, 240,000 men had been counseled, and 69,000 trained at 55 installations in the United States. Due to the high veteran unemployment problem, a major expansion of Project Transition is now under way. The program is being enlarged in the United States and extended overseas to include Vietnam. Specific job training installations are now being established to provide 60 days of training for combat soldiers without civilian skills. Thus expanded, the program could cost some \$200 million per year.

Broad guidance is evident in the varying objectives, techniques and beneficiaries of these six programs. The range of variation is so broad as to preclude establishment of unequivocal general criteria for evaluation of the suitability of programs. Of these programs, two—Minority Relations and Drug Abuse—address problems which directly affect the military readiness of units, as well as being programs which demonstrate acceptance of Federal responsibility to state and local governments. Two other programs—General Education Development and *Project One Hundred Thousand*—improve individual skills for both service and postservice activity. A third—*Project Transition*—addresses only veteran activity.

Several of the Domestic Action and technical knowledge programs would cost very little and could make useful and necessary contributions to the improvement of life in the United States. Examples would be use of military posts to develop new techniques of low-cost housing construction, mass transit systems, or pollution abatement. Other programs merely serve to open military resources to ghetto or rural poor much as service children have been accommodated in the past—for example, scouting and club activities. Some programs

such as disaster relief are purely humanitarian. In the face of such diversity, program objective seems an inadequate criterion.

The case for Army acceptance of increased social responsibilities rests upon five arguments:

- There are major national social welfare tasks to be accomplished.
- The Army is capable of assisting in their accomplishment through amelioration of social ills.
- Acceptance of social responsibilities by the military will assist in assuring the availability of resources with which to maintain operational readiness to fulfill conventional defense responsibilities.
- Social involvement will serve to disarm traditional critics of military programs.
- Social involvement will help to attract and retain quality personnel.

## Social Welfare Tasks

The first premise appears self-evident. There are major social welfare tasks to be undertaken. As income levels rise, education and communication create greater awareness of the need for action. This has been the pattern of the last decade.

The premise that the Army can undertake major new social responsibilities is more controversial. The Secretary of the Army has strongly supported current Army domestic action projects. In fact, after stating that the Army must maintain mission readiness, he called for major expansion: “We must do more, much more... . As long as we limit it to something that will help the soldier in his training mission; as long as we can accomplish our other goals without adding more men or dollars, I see no limitation ... domestic action has to become more and more important.”<sup>3</sup>

The activist case appears to rest on two premises: availability of sufficient quality personnel to carry out the programs within the service and presumed ability to institutionalize successful social action programs. The Army does possess extraordinarily capable and dedicated managers. Attracted to public service by the professional nature of military service, the officer and senior noncommissioned officer corps are precisely the action-oriented managers called for by John W. Gardner as he bemoans the “... chasm between the worlds of reflection and action” and calls for “... leaders who can move beyond their special fields to deal with problems of the total community.”<sup>4</sup> Quality alone will not solve the problem.

First-rate management talent is limited. There may not be sufficient topflight managerial capability within the Army to maintain ready combat capability while supporting complex social programs. With normal

distribution, most of the Army's social welfare projects would be administered by "average" officers and noncommissioned officers.

### Complex Programs

If a program is too complex or too innovative to be understood and honestly accepted by average men and women, it may fail despite the most optimistic prognostications of central authority. Racial attitude conditioning and establishment of the environment of discipline based upon mutual trust called for by the Modern Volunteer Army Program are current attempts to institutionalize sophisticated social programs. It is not certain that these programs can be implemented by "average" Army managers.

Requirements for quality personnel, sheer size and the bureaucratic nature of the Army combine to make social action programs difficult to run properly. The Army, as a bureaucracy, may be a blunt instrument incapable of institutionalizing the finesse required to deal with complex social problems at the Federal level. This inability is not unique to the Army; it is a characteristic of large organizations.

The third argument supporting increased social responsibilities is more conjectural. Increased social action may or may not justify the allocation of additional resources to the Army. It is conceivable that there could be major increases in program responsibility without a parallel increase in funds or personnel. For example, the real burden of expanded Project *Transition* training is borne by the unit which must support the project while continuing other missions.

Additionally, even if added resources were provided, they may not be suitable for improved defense readiness. Potential missions in the inner city would provide ill-suited justification for additional maneuver battalions configured and trained for combat operations.

### Disarm the Critics

The fourth premise is that increased social responsibilities would help in disarming the most voluble critics of the military—that is, the "liberal establishment" representing the latest in a tradition of liberal hostility toward, and suspicion of, military affairs. Presumably, by its efforts at social improvement, the Army would convince its arch critics that it performs a useful and necessary social function. This seems a problematical *non sequitur* at best. Gardner, John Kenneth Galbraith, Goldberg and others would appear more likely to insist that the resources be administered by another federal department.

In any event, Army activity in such areas would be subjected to intense critical review by a skeptical

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audience. There is scant prospect of changing a basic philosophical view of the nature of force in a democratic society by volunteering to accept, or willingly accepting, peacetime social responsibilities. By blurring the limits of its functional responsibilities as the possessor of legitimate force, the Army could well exacerbate the conventional criticism.

### Attract Quality Personnel

The fifth premise is that extensive social involvement will attract and retain quality personnel who might not otherwise serve in the Army. Underlying this premise is a belief that, to attract and retain, the Army should have an image as a compassionate, understanding organization accepting and developing the individual as a means of contributing to the resolution of pressing domestic problems. Inferentially, the social value of securing the Nation provides insufficient attraction. This view is evident in the Modern Volunteer Army master program which infers that the citizen's contribution to society comes after his period of military service: "... to fulfill his needs and those of the nation, the Army today must be an institution in which men grow ... and from which they emerge, having served as proud competent soldiers better prepared to contribute to our society."<sup>5</sup>

For the soldier, the basic contribution to society is his period of military service—a socially acceptable end in itself. This latter attitude appears to be shared by many young Americans. Current national sample opinion polls show the essential traditionalism of most young Americans. Performance of "socially relevant" responsibilities does not appear to motivate young Americans to service in the enlisted ranks as much as basic acceptance of patriotic service—the notion that somebody must defend the Nation. They expect reasonable income, personal improvement, and job satisfaction derived from being a serving participant in military preparedness.

The young college graduate officer may well expect a more active social role based upon the activist

environment on today's campus. The opportunity to contribute to the resolution of ecological or inner city problems may be necessary to retain quality officers, but such activism need not involve military units. One- to two-year sabbaticals permitting a limited number of officers to assist state or local governments would permit individual "activist" roles without committing unit resources.

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The myth of the necessity of "meaningful" social involvement throughout the Army may be more real to some of the educated leadership of the Army who are influenced daily by the values of the elite establishment—represented by *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*—than it is to the Army as an organization composed of average people, with traditional motivations, who stem from middle America.

## Reasons for Concern

Conversely, there are substantial reasons for Army concern about acceptance of extensive social action responsibilities. The case rests on four arguments:

- The Army exists to provide military security to the Nation, hence resources should be focused to this purpose.
- Challenged by external criticism and internal review, the Army today is ill-suited to address nonmilitary problems.
- Ongoing social welfare programs are difficult to manage, hence expansion of these programs would compound the problem.
- Domestic social action may stimulate overinvolvement by well-meaning nation-building experts.

The Army exists to provide military security to the Nation—resources should be devoted solely to this purpose. It is a basic proposition that the Army exists to defend the Nation. The Army must be skilled, tough and ready to perform its mission in defending the country, and it must be seen as such by the American people who have a right to expect that several billion dollars per year will produce the necessary units with fully capable fighting troops. If such resources also produce

some form of social benefit, so much the better, but the funds are appropriated to provide the basic military preparedness expected by Congress and the public.

Until recently, the Army has been assigned increased social welfare responsibilities during a period of increasing defense budgets. Today, the situation has changed; budgets are steadily declining in real and absolute terms.

## Congressional Acceptance

The major stimulus for allocation of national resources to the Army is, and must remain, basic congressional acceptance of the need for a reasonable level of general defense readiness roughly divided to meet the land, sea and air threats. It appears unlikely that social welfare projects could become a convincing rationale for allocation of additional military resources. More fundamentally, increased social welfare responsibilities could serve to dilute rather than create basic military readiness.

The problem is more basic than just diversion of resources. There is a possibility that assignment of social responsibilities to combat units may blur their role. Diminution or masking of this role could deprive the Army of the purpose, direction and pride which are the roots of combat capability. However, certain combat service support units—medical, transportation, communication and maintenance effectively might perform limited social roles which, by their similarity to wartime missions, could truly enhance combat readiness.

Challenged by external criticism, and internal review, the Army today is ill-suited to address nonmilitary problems. The Army is under serious attack—partially due to Vietnam and partially due to its role as a competitor for resources which might otherwise be available to civilian agencies, for social welfare. Seen as "lax and fat" by some responsible national spokesman such as Gardner,<sup>6</sup> the image becomes far more damaging when changed to that of some youths who view the Army "... as a wicked greedy aggressor conspiring with other vested interests to subvert the American dream."<sup>7</sup>

Disturbing as they are, views such as this will moderate as time and events moderate the current disillusionment caused by Vietnam. Far more serious is the widespread questioning by responsible decision makers. Capable and dedicated Americans are in profound disagreement about the nature of the threat to the United States and the size and composition its Defense Establishment should have.

The external debate has stimulated searching internal review of policies and practices. The Army is undergoing a serious "questioning of confidence" precipitated by Vietnam. There is a lurking sentiment within the

Army that the Nation could have been better served.

It is a simple yet fundamental truth that the mission of the Army is to control the land and people who inhabit it. The Army, as an institution, concerns and derives its strength from people—the challenge of the diversity of man—as compared with the attractions of machines, sea or air, which are the lifeblood of the other military services. Due to its intimate relationship with people, the Army must believe that it is accepted as a necessary, if not always popular, profession. This atmosphere of acceptance is lacking in many quarters.

### Traditional Capabilities

Today, as in the past, the key to external acceptance and internal satisfaction is proud, capable, confident units prepared to perform traditional missions. The reestablishment of traditional capabilities must take precedence over initiation of beneficial and useful career-attracting programs such as on-duty educational opportunities for the soldier serving in operational units. Until there are fully manned, truly trained and maintained units, hours devoted to on-duty education must detract from the development of honest mission readiness. Particularly at a time of concerned introspection, those tasks which divert resources from unit readiness and job satisfaction within the small unit should be avoided.

Current social welfare programs are difficult to manage. Expansion could compound the problem. Current social welfare programs have been difficult for the military to manage. The normal diversity of situations and requirements faced by the Army, combined with the temporary but vexing problems of Vietnam—such as personnel instability—have required that local commanders manage many social programs.

In many cases, however, local authorities have neither the knowledge nor the resources to deal with complex social phenomena. Conditioning racial attitudes, applying techniques of outpatient drug rehabilitation, and skill training of the marginally productive are examples of challenging problems which strain the limits of current social knowledge, but which essentially are problems that local military commanders have been forced to solve.

### Expanded Activities

In many cases, local commanders have had to address these expanded responsibilities with neither a lessening of existing responsibilities nor an increase in resources. Most commanders are understandably cautious about releasing men from military training to attend civilian skill training or expanded educational programs unless there is an explicit change in directed

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missions or priorities. Yet acceptance of such responsibilities has seldom provided a persuasive rationale for a reduced level of unit readiness. The time and effort is often “out of the hide” of already-taxed commanders and units. Under these conditions, expanded personnel activities can become a disturbing stimulant for a hypocrisy of “statistical” performance.

Lastly, the local commander is the cutting edge, innovating at the local level social change which was proposed at the theoretical level. To the average American, the innovator is not Secretary McNamara or Secretary Melvin R. Laird. It is the Army.

Adam Yarmolinsky has observed: “The establishment has assumed a certain responsibility for stimulating social change and has ceased to be contented solely with maintaining the status quo of the society it serves.”<sup>8</sup>

He is correct—but the burden is not borne by the “establishment” which comes and goes from public service. It is borne by the average captain and sergeant in the Army year after year.

Domestic social action may stimulate overinvolvement by well-meaning nation-building experts. Another effect of Vietnam has been to make many within the military profession wary of civic action responsibilities. One of the real issues of involvement in Vietnam was the process of overcoming institutional reluctance to commit the Army to the resolution of problems that were primarily social, economic and political. The jump from Special Forces to Regular Army participation in civic action, nation-building, and counterinsurgency was significant. It symbolized the acceptance of social and economic action as a conventional primary Army responsibility. For myriad reasons, the transition was done poorly.

Dismayed by the Vietnam experience in social endeavors, many officers do not want to permit a similar experience in the United States. The Army has thousands of capable advocates who have invested a decade of service in counterinsurgency. Doctrines of nation-building forged in Vietnam are often assumed

to be transferable and applicable to improvement of domestic poverty conditions.

To some, domestic social action projects will at last permit the Nation to gain full value from the special capabilities developed for Vietnam. These advocates see increased social involvement in the United States as a way to maintain the capability and thus the readiness for some future contingency, while simultaneously serving to alleviate the conditions of the ghetto or rural poor. This rationale was evident in a recent study of Army personnel policies for the mid-1970s: *A deeper Army involvement will improve our understanding of the causes of insurgency and the means needed for countering them.*<sup>9</sup>

A more indirect and disturbing assumption of domestic education and security responsibilities is also inferred in the same document: *The Army social action role is thoroughly anchored in doctrine which dictates that rear areas must be kept secure so as not to divert or weaken the effort at the front.*<sup>10</sup>

## Allocation of Resources

Another vexing but oft-forgotten aspect of domestic action is the problem of allocation of resources at the local level. While Army motives may be humanitarian and pure, the allocation of resources is a function of political power. Politics is the process of resolving conflicting values and wants. When the Army provides resources to any civilian community, it becomes enmeshed in political processes. It cannot escape a role of direct or indirect influence. For example, are resources to be distributed through Republicans or Democrats? The Army can be placed in a difficult, untenable position.

Special Forces are out today conducting imaginative civic action operations in the poverty-stricken communities of the mountainous areas of North Carolina. The danger of unfortunate involvement is real.

The major and abiding determinant of the proper level and nature of social responsibilities of the Army is the basic relationship of the military profession to the social and political system it exists to defend. This relationship is dynamic—highly dependent upon the perceived needs of the society as a whole and defense requirements placed on the Army.

## American Society Changing

One of the more mundane truisms today is acknowledgment that American society is changing at a rapid, if not accelerating, pace. Various descriptions of the change have been advanced, and the more adventurous of the theoreticians have attempted to chart the future—Daniel Bell's postindustrial state, Herman

Kahn's sensate society, Zbigniew Brzezinski's technetronic age—the third revolution, Charles Reich's consciousness III, and the accelerating change of Alvin Toffler's future shock.

Each attempts to chart the dimensions of major change under way in American society, including our sense of values. Each work overwhelms with statistics of change, but is understandably vague about probable institutional responsibilities and relationships in the future. Perhaps the frankest admission of uncertainty comes from Gardner: "We're like a man driving eighty miles per hour in a fog that permits him to see only thirty feet ahead."<sup>11</sup>

The potential impact of such rapid change may be more pronounced for the military than it is for the rest of society. It jars the conservative bias of the military profession and erodes the traditional isolation which has served to preserve the professional ethic. During such a period of change, the challenge to the Army is to modify its policies and procedures to accommodate change, while retaining that essence of order and discipline which enables a unit to succeed in battle. The Army has often met this challenge; but, in the past, change was effected behind the protective barrier of isolation. Samuel P. Huntington has noted that the military profession is: "... probably unique among significant social institutions in the United States in the extent to which it was created independent of American society."<sup>12</sup>

## Effects of Change

Change in the past was accomplished at a relatively leisurely pace. The Army had ample time to adjust to the new values stimulated by the Industrial Revolution as it dropped from public view in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Today, the military appears to be no longer permitted the luxury of such self-paced isolated change. One effect of the "technetronic age" has been to place the Army squarely in the center of the arena of rapid change. The effects of these changes upon the Army's relationship with American society are manifested in numerous ways:

National concern for the welfare of the individual has focused critical attention on the military justice system. Military justice has become a subject of critical public attention to the extent of severely restricting the authority of the commander.

The mass communications media have maintained an unblinking eye on military activities. Gripping and grousing by disgruntled servicemen consequently have become nationally advertised dissent.

National concern for equal opportunity for minorities has encouraged creation of racial organizations within

and existing apart from the military chain of command.

The scourge of drug abuse has tied the military unit inexorably closer to the local community. Drug abuse can be met only through the closest coordination of policy and activity between adjacent military and civilian communities.

### Civilian Isolation

The problem of the moment does not appear to be military isolation from the civilian community. It is precisely the reverse. Given the apparent tendency of man in the postindustrial state toward increased social involvement and concern, the danger to national security and the military profession is that the unique characteristics and capabilities of the profession may become eroded beyond repair by overimmersion in such a rapidly changing value system.

The Army must seek ways to promote the gradual adjustment to new American postindustrial values which will retain good order and discipline.

The path and rate of institutional change will be difficult to determine. There are numerous detours along the way. Two pitfalls are: a search for national acceptance by redirecting readiness resources to social welfare purposes; and presenting the false image of an institution actively supporting natural social welfare activities in order to gain the transitory support of the "liberal establishment."

Others may suggest such paths in the honest belief that the only way to maintain an Army in the future will be to deliberately blur its functional role in an array of increased general social welfare responsibilities. Such sentiment reflects the implicit fear that an army which retains its traditional image and structure is not supportable in the postindustrial America."

### Flexible Posture

Yarmolinsky argues that, if the Army is to survive, it must "assume a lower and more flexible posture." To Yarmolinsky, such a posture would cause a desirable and necessary erosion of military values: "As the military character of the military establishment becomes less distinctive, absolutist perceptions may be replaced by more realistic ones. The military may come to be regarded as any other part of government."<sup>13</sup>

The military character of the Military Establishment is precisely what has been found to be essential to develop the order and discipline necessary to successful performance in war.

The Army must view with caution the understandable pressures for acceptance of greater general social welfare responsibilities. The current Department of Defense and Army action policy is excellent. It is

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basically conservative of Army resources today due to the unknowns of Vietnam withdrawal and the reduced defense budget.

Unfortunately, the policy may be fragile after Vietnam is resolved. For example, it is subject to substantial erosion if the Army aspires to increased social welfare responsibilities in an attempt to "be liked" and thereby attract volunteers. Further, the guidance may be sufficiently broad to permit well-intentioned erosion by those within and above the Army who believe it necessary to stimulate additional convergence between the Army, and society at large.

Several actions or policy guidelines could serve to reinforce the conservatism of present policy:

- To display the range and costs of involvement, aggregate and publicize the current level of Army participation in social welfare programs. Where possible, include both dollar and personnel costs with particular reference to the impact on the tactical unit.

- Programs which directly, substantially contribute to the tactical readiness, morale, good order, and discipline or combat, combat support, and combat service support units should be encouraged and increased. Examples of programs which could be increased are those to reduce racial and drug abuse problems in all units, off-duty educational and training improvement programs for soldiers and social infrastructure assistance to the civilian community such as aeromedical evacuation or engineer construction projects which are unequivocal, direct applications of wartime combat service support skills.

- Evaluate ongoing or proposed programs on the basis of their impact on the readiness for combat tactical units.

- Programs which serve to reduce directly the combat readiness of units should be reduced to the

essential minimum. Examples of such programs are Project *Transition*—which could be accomplished by the Veterans Administration after the individual is no longer expected to be militarily ready—and Project *One Hundred Thousand*—which could be replaced with non-military pretraining before an individual is expected to be prepared to accept national defense responsibilities.

Decisions on personnel programs with uncertain impact upon unit readiness should be decentralized to the local commander with decision guidance to plan, budget and conduct projects which he believes will contribute to improved unit readiness. Projects impacting on civilian communities would be encouraged after detailed coordination and approval by the local political, business and labor leadership. Examples of projects for decentralized leadership could be Special Forces operations, social action-oriented adventure training or community relations projects such as summer camps. Other, more extensive programs could be undertaken by the Reserve establishment.

This guidance would permit continuation, if not expansion, of a wide range of current projects—which are shown to be demonstrably neutral politically, useful socially and not detrimental to unit readiness. The Army policy theme must be willing acceptance of socially

useful tasks insofar as they contribute to the building of proud, capable units—as perceived by the local commander responsible for unit readiness.

Complex major programs centrally administered and publicized such as race training and drug rehabilitation must be aggressively supported; they genuinely increase unit readiness. Decentralization of other projects to the local commander who is directly and immediately responsible will continue the essential preeminence of traditional roles and responsibilities of the Army. At that level, maintenance of the capability to fight is an instinctive response.

Policies such as these would reflect necessary positive acceptance of responsibility to meet and solve challenging social issues yet preserve the unique nature of the profession. These policies and programs would be strictly subordinated to maintenance of combat readiness. However unpopular or “reactionary” these policies might be, the Army must persevere: “*Upon the soldiers, the defenders of order rests a heavy responsibility. The greatest service they can render is to remain true to themselves, to serve with silence and courage in the military way. If they abjure the military spirit, they destroy themselves first and their nation ultimately.*”<sup>14</sup> **MR**

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## NOTES

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2. (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office [GPO], September 1971), 17.
3. Robert S. McNamara, *The Essence of Security: Reflection in Office* (Scranton, PA: Harper & Row Publishers, 1968), 131.
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5. John W. Gardner, *The Recovery of Confidence* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1970), 93ff.
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7. Gardner, 154.

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9. *Ibid.*, 1-22.
10. US Department of the Army, Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, *Army 75: Personnel Concept*, vol. 2, draft (Washington, DC: GPO, 1968), 1-25.
11. *Ibid.*, 1-22.
12. Gardner, 84.
13. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957), 233. Yarmolinsky, 406.
14. Huntington, 466.

*Lieutenant General Frederic J. Brown, US Army, Retired, works in simulation training at the Institute for Defense Analysis, Alexandria, Virginia. He served as chief of armor; US Army Armor Center, Fort Knox, Kentucky, from 1983 to 1986 and as commander, 4th US Army, Fort Sheridan, Illinois, from 1986 until he retired from the Army in 1989. This article, written when he was a student at the National War College.*