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Shaping U.S. Ground Forces for the Future: *Getting Expansion Right*

By Michèle A. Flournoy and Tammy S. Schultz



Center for a
New American
Security



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Finally, the Armed Forces are a national treasure that requires wise stewardship for the good of the men and women who serve, as well as for the health and security of our nation. This is just the first of a series of reports that CNAS will produce on the Future of the U.S. Military

Cover Image

U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Labrosse leads his squad during a cordon and search for weapons caches and insurgents in Old Baqubah, Iraq, on April 2, 2007. Labrosse is from the 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division.

DoD Photo by Staff Sgt. Stacy L. Pearsall, U.S. Air Force. (Released)

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"The key issue is not just how big the force should be, but also what kinds of capabilities the United States will need to meet future challenges."

America's ground forces—the U.S. Army, Marine Corps, and Special Operations Forces (SOF)—are under severe strain. Sustaining high troop levels in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other operations overseas has required a tempo of repeated deployments that has taken a substantial toll on Army, Marine Corps, and SOF readiness—that is, their ability to deploy and conduct their assigned missions effectively:

- Nearly every non-deployed combat brigade in the active Army is not ready to complete their assigned wartime missions.
- The Army National Guard has only half of the equipment it needs.
- Compressed training time has left Marine Corps units unready to respond to other contingencies should they arise.
- Many active duty soldiers and Marines are on their third or fourth tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan, and a number of National Guard units have been recalled for a second tour of duty.
- Eighty-five percent of SOF forces are deployed to Central Command's area of responsibility, with little available for operations elsewhere.

Amidst growing concern and deepening debate over the strains on U.S. ground forces, President Bush reversed long-standing administration policy and submitted to Congress a proposal to expand U.S. ground forces by 101,211 personnel, or nearly 8 percent. This is a significant and welcome departure from policies that insisted ground force levels were adequate for any contingency despite unprecedented strain in recent years. The added cost for these end strength increases from 2007 through 2013 is estimated to be \$108 billion, with an additional \$14 billion per year thereafter. The administration proposal, if fully implemented, would represent a sizeable increase in personnel spending.

Expansion is an Opportunity to Shape U.S. Ground Forces for the Future

The force we build today is the force that will safeguard our national security tomorrow. As disturbing and compelling as current strains on the force may be, they cannot serve as a sound basis for force expansion. Any proposed expansion must be based on an assessment of the *future* security environment and the types of demands it will likely place on U.S. forces.

Determining whether and how to grow Army, Marine Corps, and Special Operations Forces is a matter of deciding how best to balance risk across a range of competing national security and defense priorities. The key issue is not just how big the force should be, but also what kinds of capabilities the United States will need to meet future challenges. In fact, getting the shape of the force—the mix of capabilities—right is likely to be most important, particularly in a future that is likely dominated by missions that will require capabilities that are often in short supply in today's military.

Looking to the future, the United States can anticipate facing a broad range of challenges which, taken together, will put a premium on the U.S. military's ability to excel in a number of missions that have been largely de-emphasized since the Vietnam War. Though U.S. ground forces have made some adjustments to meet challenges in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, it is not certain that they will preserve and build on the best of these adaptations and capabilities. What is required is a more fundamental shift in orientation, from a force that has been optimized to fight large, conventional wars to a future force that is truly "full spectrum"—with greater capacity for irregular operations while retaining the ability to prevail in high-end warfighting against conventional or WMD-armed foes. The increased focus on irregular warfare also requires a rigorous debate on how to develop and leverage the "comparative advantage" of other instruments of national power, not simply the military.

Meeting the full spectrum of future challenges will require growth in U.S. ground forces. More importantly, it will require substantial change in U.S. ground forces' orientation, training, and mix of capabilities to be better prepared to deal with the demands of irregular operations. Expansion provides an invaluable opportunity to pursue innovative approaches to enhancing U.S. capabilities for the future, such as establishing an Army Corps of Advisors and Military Advisory and Assistance Groups.

The Administration's Plans Need to be Refined

Opportunities to dramatically strengthen the armed services do not occur often, and when they do, they must be seized. The emerging bipartisan consensus to increase U.S. ground forces presents the chance to reshape them for a future that looks very different from the past for which they

were built. While there are a number of laudable changes in the administration's proposals, the Army, Marine Corps, and U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) are at risk of missing this opportunity. Current expansion proposals are focused primarily on reducing the strains driven by operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. They do not appear to take adequate account of how tomorrow's demands may differ from today's. Absent are the sorts of organizational innovations that would signal that a more fundamental shift is afoot.

Both the Army and the Marine Corps should revisit their growth plans and put more resources toward innovative solutions that will dramatically increase their ability to be effective across the full range of future operations, especially irregular operations and building the capacities of partner nations to provide for their own security in the future. The United States should also rebalance its investment in SOF to grow more capacity for "indirect action." This will likely require still greater growth in areas such as Special Forces, civil affairs, and psychological operations.

Getting Expansion Right: Key Questions

As the services refine and the Congress considers these proposals, four sets of key questions need to be addressed in order to get expansion right:

- **Roles and Missions.** What is the appropriate division of labor between Special Operations Forces and general purpose forces? Between the Army and the Marine Corps? Among active duty, National Guard, and Reserve forces? Between ground forces and air and naval forces? Between the uniformed military and private contractors? Among the military and civilian agencies?
- **Sustainability.** Will expansion plans reduce the strains on ground forces by ensuring adequate capacity in capability areas likely to be in high demand?

- **Recruitment and Retention.** How can the United States recruit and retain the envisioned force without lowering quality standards?
- **Costs and Risks.** Are the costs of the proposed expansion affordable? And is growing the nation's ground forces the best way to manage risk given the nature of the challenges the United States will likely face in the future?

How these questions are ultimately answered will either enable or constrain the U.S. military's performance in future operations, as well as the options available to future presidents. The stakes are high. Congress must ask tough questions and demand compelling answers to ensure that additional investment in our nation's ground forces yields the capabilities and capacities we need to safeguard American security in the future.

The Bottom Line

The contours of the future security environment suggest that the Army, Marine Corps, and SOF need to grow in size. Exactly how much growth makes sense and what shape that growth takes, however, should be the focus of additional analysis and deliberation.

We recommend a three-track approach. First, the Department of Defense should give top priority to building irregular warfare capabilities. This will require profound changes in the ways in which U.S. military forces – and particularly U.S. ground forces – are organized, trained, educated, equipped, and employed. Changing the mix of U.S. capabilities on the margins will not be enough. This is likely to be the only major increase in ground force strength for a generation. Congress must ask the tough questions and demand compelling answers to ensure that additional investment in our nation's ground forces actually yields the right capabilities in the right quantities for the future. Failing to refine

current proposals to strengthen and deepen U.S. capabilities for irregular warfare, while maintaining conventional superiority, will inadequately safeguard American security in the future.

Second, due to the unprecedented strain on the All-Volunteer Force, the Department of Defense must consider new approaches to recruiting and retaining military personnel, and ensuring that they operate at sustainable levels in the future. Congress should support initial steps necessary to begin expanding U.S. ground forces. However, it should insist that the Army, Marine Corps, and USSOCOM provide more in-depth assessments of future demand, how their expansion proposals will enable them to meet that demand, whether and how quality standards can be maintained as growth occurs, and the long-term costs and potential trade-offs of their proposals.

The third track requires holistically assessing all instruments of U.S. power, both civilian and military, and determining what capabilities the nation requires for the future security environment. In the end, shaping the growth of U.S. ground forces will be even more important than getting the size exactly right. Today, America is fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan with a military that was optimized for winning conventional wars. In a future dominated by adversaries who will likely use predominantly asymmetric approaches (such as terrorism and WMD), the U.S. military must become a truly “full-spectrum force,” as proficient in irregular operations as it is in conventional warfighting.

This report is a scoping effort to provide a framework for thinking about whether and how to expand U.S. ground forces. As such, it raises more questions than it answers. Future CNAS studies will offer more in-depth analysis and possible solutions to many of the questions we raise in this report.



"As disturbing and compelling as the strains from current operations may be, they cannot serve as a sound basis for force expansion. The force we build today is the force that will safeguard our national security tomorrow."

INTRODUCTION

America's ground forces—the U.S. Army, Marine Corps, and Special Operations Forces (SOF)—are under severe strain. Amid growing concern, debate, and Congressional clamor over these strains, President Bush submitted a proposal to Congress in February 2007 to expand U.S. ground forces by 101,211 personnel, increasing total Army end strength by 74,211 personnel and Marine Corps end strength by 27,000 by the year 2012. The administration also plans to increase the size of SOF by more than 13,000 personnel.¹

As disturbing and compelling as the strains from current operations may be, they cannot serve as a sound basis for force expansion. The force we build today is the force that will safeguard our national security tomorrow. Put differently, the administration would have had to increase Army and Marine Corps end strength several years ago for it to have made a difference today. Any proposed expansion must be based on an assessment of the *future* security environment and the types of demands likely to be placed on U.S. forces in the years to come. As Senator Carl Levin recently stated, “We must ensure as we grow the ground forces that we don’t simply create larger versions of the less ready forces we have today, or that we create forces which are ill suited to likely missions of the future.”²

Determining whether and how to grow Army, Marine Corps, and SOF is a matter of deciding how best to balance risk across a range of competing national security and defense priorities. The key issue is not just how big the force should be,

but also what capabilities the United States will need to meet future challenges. In fact, getting the shape of the force (the mix of capabilities) right is likely to be most important, particularly in a future that is likely to be dominated by missions that will require capabilities that are often in short supply in today’s military.

At this moment, the jury is out on whether current expansion proposals are the best way to shape U.S. forces for the future as the Bush administration has yet to develop, much less make, its case.³ In light of this critical gap in the current force expansion debate, this report aims to: highlight the strains on today’s U.S. ground forces; offer our assessment of tomorrow’s operating environment and demand for ground forces; identify key capabilities needed for the future; summarize and assess the administration’s force expansion proposals; and underscore key questions and issues that must be addressed to ensure that additional investments in our ground forces actually yield the capabilities and capacities the United States needs to safeguard our national security in the future.⁴

In this report, we recommend a three-track approach to growing and revitalizing U.S. ground forces for the future.

First, the Department of Defense (DoD) should give top priority to rapidly increasing the capabilities for irregular warfare urgently needed for ongoing and future operations. The services and the Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) should not only boost funding in these areas, but

¹ Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report (QDR)* (Washington: GPO, February 2006), 44, 55; and General Bryan D. Brown, “Statement on Current Manning, Equipping, and Readiness Challenges Facing Special Operations Forces before the House Armed Services Committee,” 31 January 2007, 3.

² Senator Carl M. Levin, “Opening Statement of Senator Carl Levin at Senate Committee on Armed Forces Hearing on Army and Marine Corps,” 17 April 2007, States News Service.

³ See, for instance, Government Accountability Office, *Military Personnel: DOD Needs to Provide a Better Link between Its Defense Strategy and Military Personnel Requirements* (Statement of Janet A. Laurent, Director, Defense Capabilities and Management), GAO-07-397T, 30 January 2007; Tom Donnelly, “The Army We Need,” *The Weekly Standard*, 4 June 2007, 21–28; and Frank G. Hoffman, “A Strategic Rationale for Land Force Expansion,” *Foreign Policy Research Institute E-Notes*, March 2007.

⁴ This report is a scoping effort that aims to provide a framework for thinking about whether and how to expand U.S. ground forces. As such, it raises more questions than it answers. Future CNAS studies will offer more in-depth analysis and possible solutions to many of the questions we raise in this report.

also aggressively pursue innovative organizational approaches to increase key military capabilities and better integrate military and civilian operations.

Second, because of the enormous strains being put on our military personnel today, in particular by the ongoing “surge” in Iraq, the United States finds itself in uncharted waters. No nation has ever asked an All-Volunteer Force to undertake so many back-to-back deployments with so little time in between. DoD must consider a range of new approaches for recruiting and retaining our All-Volunteer Force, and ensuring that it is able to operate at sustainable levels in the future. Innovative ideas must be developed, evaluated, and implemented where appropriate.

Third, in parallel with all-out efforts to increase urgently-needed capabilities for irregular warfare and cope with recruiting and retention for the All-Volunteer Force, it is imperative that the DoD and Congress step back and consider the full range of military capabilities the United States will need to cope with future security challenges. The U.S. military has long aspired to be a “full spectrum” force; now it must truly become one. This does not mean losing the ability to prevail in conventional combat operations. It does mean that the U.S. military’s ability to perform irregular warfare missions must be more fully developed so that it becomes proficient across the spectrum of operations. This will require profound changes in the armed services and in the U.S. government, to include civilian agencies.

In this context, we must consider some fundamental questions: How large should ground forces be, and therefore how much funding should they receive? What should be the division of responsibilities—the roles, missions, and functions—for the Army, Marine Corps, and Special Operations

Command? And how should operational responsibilities be divided among the military and civilian agencies and organizations?

The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that the administration’s ground force expansion plans will cost \$108 billion over the next five years, and an additional \$14 billion per year thereafter. In order to consider whether this is the best allocation of the nation’s resources, the DoD and Congress must ask these first-order questions, and then evaluate the costs, benefits, and risks of alternative investment options. In so doing, they must not only consider where to add capabilities to the ground forces, but also seek to identify areas where the U.S. military has significant over-match that can be reduced to some degree. And in order to be better prepared for the complex challenges of the future, DoD and Congress must consider how to improve the military’s ability to work with other agencies—and the ability of other agencies to better pull their weight in future operations.

These issues need to be given priority in order to size and shape the expansion properly, and to ensure that U.S. ground forces are adapted to meet the challenges of tomorrow rather than simply optimized to fight the wars of today.

TODAY'S GROUND FORCES UNDER STRAIN

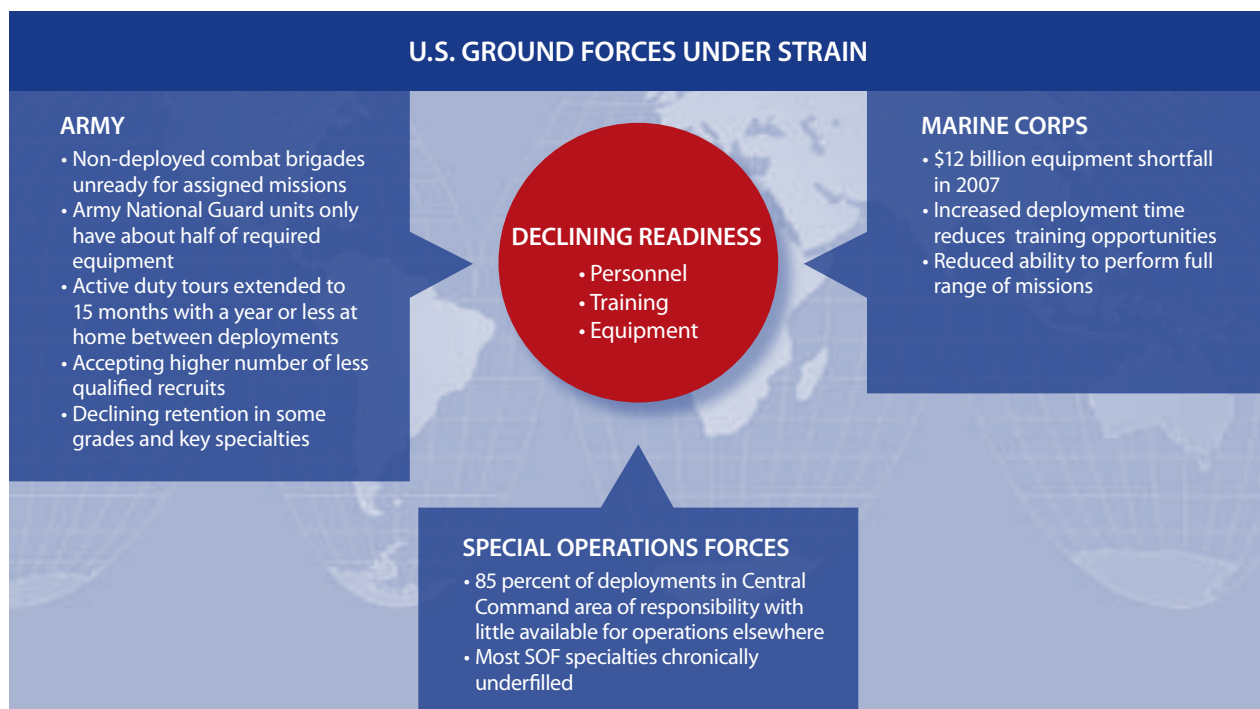
Since 2003, the United States has maintained an average of 138,700 troops in Iraq. With recent “surge” operations in and around Baghdad, the force has climbed back up to approximately 150,000, and is expected to rise further. At the same time, the United States deploys about 25,500 personnel for operations in Afghanistan and deploys or forward stations an additional 175,000 personnel to undertake various missions in some 130 countries around the world.

Sustaining high troop levels overseas has required a tempo of repeated deployments that has taken a substantial toll on Army, Marine Corps, and

SOF readiness—that is, their ability to deploy and conduct their assigned missions effectively. Army readiness in particular has plunged to historic lows. Nearly every non-deployed combat brigade in the active Army has reported that they are not ready to complete their assigned war-time missions.⁵ Similarly, the readiness of some non-deployed units in the Marine Corps has also declined, leaving the Corps without all the capabilities it needs to respond to other contingencies should they arise.⁶

Readiness is based on three elements—personnel, equipment, and training—all of which are under great strain (see Figure 1).

Figure 1



⁵ General Peter Schoomaker, “Testimony before the Committee on House Armed Services,” 23 January 2007, *Federal News Service*; General Peter Schoomaker, “Testimony before the Committee on Senate Armed Services,” 15 February 2007, *Federal News Service*; Andrew F. Krepinovich, “Army and Marine Corps Preparedness, Testimony before the Committee on Senate Armed Services,” 17 April 2007, *CQ Congressional Testimony*; Barry McCaffrey, “Army and Marine Corps Preparedness, Testimony before the Committee on Senate Armed Services,” 17 April 2007, *CQ Congressional Testimony*; Congressman Ike Skelton, “Letter to President George Bush,” 25 July 2006, citing unclassified Army briefing charts; “Equipment Shortfalls Hurt Army Readiness,” *Associated Press*, 27 July 2006.

⁶ Chris Johnson, “Conway: Current Obligations Creating Gaps for Other Contingencies,” *Inside the Navy*, 29 January 2007.

Personnel

Sustaining such a high level of deployments has created very high personnel tempos for U.S. ground forces.⁷ The generally accepted goal is a 1:2 ratio of days deployed versus days at home station. For much of the Iraq War, however, Army Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) have been on a 1:1 rotational cycle, with 12 months deployed overseas followed by 12 months (sometimes less) at home station to train and prepare before returning to the field for another year-long deployment. In April 2007, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates extended the length of Army tours to 15 months in order to support the surge in Iraq and avoid sending units back to Iraq that had had less than 12 months at home.⁸ Similarly, Marine Corps units have been sustaining a cycle of seven months deployed and then seven months at home. As a result, many active duty soldiers and Marines are on their third, or even fourth, tours of duty in Iraq or Afghanistan since late 2001, and a number of National Guard units have been recalled for a second tour of duty. Although the details of deployments for SOF are classified, the average weekly number of deployed SOF in 2005 was reportedly 61 percent higher than in 2000, and this elevated operational demand continues.⁹ Some SOF forces – such as Green Berets, SEALs, and aviation crews – are now being deployed on a 1:1 rotation cycle as well.¹⁰

In the face of current operational demand, the growing unpopularity of the Iraq War, and a

dwindling propensity for eligible young Americans to join the military, the Army and the Marine Corps have found it increasingly difficult to recruit personnel of the quality that they enlisted throughout the 1990s and until 2005.¹¹ After the Army missed its active duty recruiting target in 2005 by 8 percent, the first time the annual target had been missed since 1999 and by a margin not seen since 1979, the Army has been meeting its annual recruiting goals.¹² But it has had to take a number of fairly discomfiting steps to do so. These include: drawing heavily on its Delayed Entry Program (its pool of future recruits) to meet near-term accession goals, substantially increasing enlistment bonuses, accepting less qualified recruits (e.g., increasing the percentage of recruits who scored in the lowest category of the Armed Forces Qualification Test, lacked a high school diploma, or had a previous criminal history), and relaxing age restrictions for new enlistees from a maximum of 35 to 42 years old.¹³ Notably, in order to meet increased end strength targets, the Marine Corps might now lower the high standards for enlistment that they had achieved throughout the last two decades.

A drop in the quality of the enlisted force has an historical precedent in the post-Vietnam era that alarms many who experienced firsthand the troubling, hollow force of that period. While the scale and scope of the indicators are not comparable between these two periods, the theme remains. The unintended consequences of lowered

⁷ "Personnel tempo" refers to the amount of time service members spend away from their home base. "Operational tempo" refers to the annual operating miles or hours for the major equipment system in a battalion-level or equivalent organization. Unless otherwise noted, all the report's definitions are from the Department of Defense, *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, <http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/>, or the *Oxford Essential Dictionary of the U.S. Military* (New York: Berkley Book, 2001).

⁸ Ann Scott Tyson and Josh White, "Strained Army Extends Tours to 15 Months; Move is Needed for Iraq Troop Increase," *The Washington Post*, 12 April 2007.

⁹ Government Accountability Office, *Special Operations Forces: Severe Human Capital Challenges Must be Met to Meet Expanded Role*, GAO-06-812, July 2006.

¹⁰ Admiral Eric T. Olson, "Senate Armed Services Committee Holds Hearing on U.S. Military Command Budgets," *CQ Transcriptions*, 24 April 2007.

¹¹ The Army Recruiting Command estimates that only three out of ten 17 to 24 year old Americans meet the military's intellectual, physical, and moral standards. See Christine E. Wormuth, Michèle A. Flournoy, Patrick T. Henry, and Clark A. Murdock, *The Future of the National Guard and Reserves* (Washington: The Center for Strategic and International Studies, July 2006), 101.

¹² Congressional Budget Office, *The Impact of Recruiting and Retention on Future Army End Strength: An Interim Report*, 30 November 2005.

¹³ Congressional Budget Office, *Recruiting, Retention, and Future Levels of Military Personnel*, October 2006; "Army Lowers Standards, Top Recruit Goal," *Associated Press*, 9 October 2006.

accession quality can surface in increased criminal activity, drug use, unauthorized absence, or reduced mission performance.

Another challenge has been keeping high quality personnel in the force at a time of enormous strain. Although both the Army and the Marine Corps continue to meet or exceed their overall goals for retaining personnel, some problem areas are beginning to emerge, such as falling reenlistment rates for mid-grade soldiers and some specialty areas where

These troubling trends represent the “canaries” in the retention coal mine.

personnel tempo has been highest.¹⁴ Although the Marine Corps appears to be meeting most of its retention goals for the moment, it may find it increasingly difficult to keep its

high reenlistment rates in the future, especially as it endeavors to grow in size.¹⁵ SOF will be particularly difficult to expand and sustain. Active duty SOF specialties have long been chronically under-filled, even before demand spiked for the “long war.” In 2000 and in 2006, some 82 percent of active duty SOF specialties were under-filled, many with shortfalls over 10 percent.¹⁶

Retention problems may soon get worse. Never before has a country asked an All-Volunteer Force to be at war for so long with so many rotations. Simply

put, no one knows how long the men and women who are experiencing repeated combat tours with little time in between deployments will stay in the military, particularly given the additional strains placed on their families. The warning signs of future retention problems are increasingly apparent: rates of suicide, post-traumatic stress disorder, domestic violence, and divorce within the force are on the rise.¹⁷ These troubling trends represent the “canaries” in the retention coal mine. For Guard and Reserve units, family separation per deployment is typically the longest of any service, often 18 months including pre-deployment training.¹⁸ Few citizen-soldiers or their families expected to ever face such high rates and lengths of mobilization.

In the face of these challenges, the Army has redoubled its efforts to retain soldiers, including by increasing reenlistment bonuses, promoting junior officers early and at unprecedented rates, adopting programs in which soldiers get the branch and post of their choice before they are even commissioned in exchange for extra years of service, and allowing more senior officers to serve beyond their mandatory retirement dates. Many of these changes make sense and are necessary, but some may have potentially negative implications for the force over the longer term.

Equipment

Equipment, the second component of readiness, faces very serious shortfalls due to loss, damage, or

¹⁴ Army reenlistment rates for mid-grade soldiers dropped 12 percent, from 96 percent during the first quarter of 2005 to a low of 84 percent for the first quarter of 2007. Gordon Lubold, “Key U.S. Army Ranks Begin to Thin,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, 2 May 2007. See also David Chu, “Testimony on Recruiting and Retention Before Committee on House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel,” *CQ Congressional Testimony*, 15 February 2007.

¹⁵ Lieutenant General Ronald S. Coleman, “Statement before the Personnel Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee Concerning Recruiting, Retention & Policy Overview,” 15 February 2007.

¹⁶ GAO-06-812, 21-22.

¹⁷ Department of Veterans Affairs, *Fact Sheet: VA Services for Returning Combat Veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom*, November 2006; Benedict Carey, “Stress on Troops Adds to U.S. Hurdles in Iraq,” *The New York Times*, 6 May 2007; Leo Shane III, “Alcohol Misuse, Divorce Rates Higher Among Returning Troops,” *Stars and Stripes (Mideast Edition)*, 9 December 2005; Charles W. Hoge, Jennifer L. Auchterlonie, and Charles S. Milliken, “Mental Health Problems, Use of Mental Health Services, and Attrition From Military Service After Returning From Deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan,” *Journal of the American Medical Association* 295, No. 9 (March 2006).

¹⁸ National Military Families Association, “Cycles of Deployment: An Analysis of Survey Responses from April through September 2005,” 7-8.

extreme wear and tear. Units getting ready to deploy often do not have all the equipment they need to train for or prosecute their assigned missions. As a result, the Army has been forced to cannibalize equipment from units just returning from operations abroad in order to fill out the equipment inventories of units next in line to deploy. This “robbing Peter to pay Paul” approach causes tremendous turbulence in the force and further exacerbates the readiness challenges of units returning home to reset, retrain, and prepare for their next tour overseas. The Marines are experiencing similar problems: 40 percent of their ground equipment has been deployed in Iraq over the past three years and is being used at as much as nine times its planned rate.¹⁹

Recognizing this problem, both the Army and the Marine Corps have submitted substantial bills to “reset” their forces—that is, to restore their equipment inventories and, by extension, their long-term readiness for future missions. The Army expects to need \$12 to \$13 billion per year for its reset efforts as long as the Iraq War lasts, and for a minimum of two to three years beyond.²⁰ The Marine Corps has asked for approximately \$11.9 billion in FY 2007 to reset equipment used in Iraq and Afghanistan.²¹

Meanwhile, according to the nonpartisan National Guard and Reserve Commission, equipment readiness for the Army National Guard is deemed “unacceptable and has reduced the capability of the United States to respond to current and

additional major contingencies, foreign and domestic.”²² After repeated deployments to Iraq, Army National Guard units currently have only about half of their required equipment.²³ The result of this shortfall is a practice called “cross-leveling,” whereby Guard units from different states transfer equipment or people to fill out deploying units. The administration has requested \$22 billion over the next five years to bring the Guard’s equipment up to about 75 percent of authorized levels.²⁴

Training

Training is related to the first two elements of readiness. With soldiers deployed as much as 15 months for every 12 months home, and Marines seven months deployed for seven months home, units have substantially less time to train together than commanders desire. Indeed, with individual soldiers and Marines rotating to different units every two to three

years, a unit may not be fully manned for several months at home and may not be at full strength even upon deployment.²⁵ This problem is exacerbated when equipment shortages mean that troops

The chronic strains on the force are also jeopardizing the long-term viability of the All-Volunteer Force.

¹⁹ Lawrence J. Korb, Max A. Bergmann, and Loren B. Thompson, *Marine Corps Equipment After Iraq*, (Washington: The Center for American Progress and the Lexington Institute, August 2006), 1.

²⁰ General Peter Schoomaker, “Testimony to the HASC on Army and Marine Corps Reset Strategies for Group Equipment and Rotor Craft,” *Federal News Service*, 27 June 2006.

²¹ General Michael Hagee, “Testimony to the HASC on Army and Marine Corps Reset Strategies for Group Equipment and Rotor Craft,” *Federal News Service*, 27 June 2006.

²² Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, *Strengthening American’s Defense in the New Security Environment*, 1 March 2007, 37.

²³ Peter Spiegel, “Guard Equipment Levels Lowest Since 9/11,” *Los Angeles Times*, 10 May 2007.

²⁴ Ibid. Also, see Lt. General Steven Blum, “Testimony before the SASC’s Subcommittee on Military Personnel,” 13 April 2005.

²⁵ The Army is considering changing its force management policy to keep soldiers in particular locations for two tours, or approximately six years.

cannot train with the equipment that they will be using in theater.

In addition, Army and Marine Corps units are not being given enough time between deployments to train for the full range of contingencies for which they are supposed to be prepared. What little training time they have is understandably focused on practicing the specific tasks they expect to undertake during their next deployment. Consequently, competencies are eroding in skill sets that are not relevant to Iraq and Afghanistan but could be critical in future contingencies.²⁶ Shortened training time also means less time to build relationships and cohesive teams, factors key to producing more disciplined troops prepared to deal with the heightened stresses, ambiguities, and frustrations of irregular operations.²⁷

A military adage counsels “train like you fight.” Yet, operational and personnel tempos are obliging current ground force commanders to fight to train instead—fight incomplete rosters, inadequate time, and insufficient equipment to prepare their troops to deploy as effective units and to maintain the full range of core competencies.

The fact that most non-deployed units in the Army and Marine Corps are essentially unready in terms of personnel, equipment, and training is rightly setting off alarm bells. The United States is a global power with global interests, and the absence of a strategic reserve of ready ground forces has increased the level of risk. The chronic strains on the force are also jeopardizing the long-term viability of the All-Volunteer Force. At stake now are the future health of the force and the long-term strategic interests of the nation.

²⁶ In his Commandant's Planning Guidance, General Conway wrote, “Current wartime deployments dictate an almost singular focus on preparing units for their next rotation in irregular warfare operations. As a result, the skills Marines need for combined-arms maneuver, mountain warfare, amphibious, and jungle operations have deteriorated.” According to General Conway, repeated deployments requiring irregular warfare training have essentially narrowed the focus of the entire Marine Corps. Conway, *Commandant's Planning Guidance*, 4.

²⁷ Frank Hoffman, correspondence with the authors, 30 May 2007.

TOMORROW'S OPERATING ENVIRONMENT AND DEMANDS ON GROUND FORCES

Strains on the force and the need to restore U.S. military readiness have been the principal rationales provided for the expansion plans put forward to date. Yet the additional ground forces America builds today will take several years to organize, train, equip, educate, and field. In other words, they will not be in place in time to meaningfully reduce the strains U.S. forces are currently experiencing. However, the ground forces we build today will define a significant portion of the military capabilities and capacities the United States can use to protect and advance its interests for the next 10 to 20 years. That is why any force expansion must be rooted in an assessment of the future security environment and the demands it is likely to place on the U.S. military.

Future Trends and the Changing Nature of Conflict

According to the National Intelligence Council, the international security environment of the next 15 years will be defined by several key trends: continued globalization, including an expanding and integrating global economy, the dispersion of technologies, and lingering social inequalities; the likely rise of China and India, among others, as new major global players that will change the geopolitical landscape; new challenges to governance, such as reversals to democratization in some regions and the rise of identity politics (such as political Islam) in others; and pervasive insecurity driven by international terrorism, internal conflicts, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.²⁸

Demographic trends combined with continued globalization will produce a number of particularly difficult challenges. Mass urban migrations and an expected population explosion will test the capacity of governments to stimulate job creation, provide public services, and sustain livable environments. Weak and fragile political systems will become overwhelmed and invite chaos and conflict, creating “ungoverned” or “undergoverned” areas which can become sanctuaries for a range of illegal activities, including transnational terrorism. Ethnic and religious fault lines may erupt in violence and upset regional stability and balances of power.²⁹ Competition for scarce resources—such as oil, natural gas, and water—will also create or exacerbate tensions that could ignite conflict.

All of these trends point to a future that is likely to include a great deal of uncertainty, change, and instability. In this context, irregular warfare will increasingly become a common form of conflict. Currently, DoD defines irregular warfare as:

A violent struggle among the state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant populations. [Irregular warfare] favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capabilities, in order to erode an adversary's power, influence, and will.³⁰

Thus, irregular warfare is characterized by three principal aspects: asymmetric threats, “warfare among the people,” and a multiplicity of actors on the ground.³¹

²⁸ See National Intelligence Council, *Mapping the Global Future: Report of the National Intelligence Council's 2020 Project* (Washington: GPO, December 2004).

²⁹ National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2015: A Dialogue About the Future With Non-government Experts*, (Washington: GPO, December 2000).

³⁰ Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept (Final Draft), February 2007.

³¹ The term “warfare among the people” was coined in Huba Wass de Czege. *Lessons from the Past: Making the Army Doctrine 'Right Enough' Today* (Arlington: Association of the United States Army Institute of Land Warfare, September 2006).

For the foreseeable future, the U.S. military's capabilities to meet traditional challenges, such as defeating an adversary in conventional military conflict, will remain unparalleled. As a result, future adversaries will use asymmetric or non-conventional approaches (e.g., terrorism, insurgency, criminal activities) to counter the U.S. military's conventional superiority.³² Advances in science and technology, coupled with the diffusion of technology, will also intensify asymmetric threats as hostile states, non-state groups, and

This will require a fundamental shift in orientation, from a force that has been optimized to fight large, conventional wars to a future force that is truly "full spectrum."

enemy forces, is often the key to success. During most American wars of 20th century, the focus of conflict was a *direct* approach: primarily a clash of massed military forces with the ultimate goal being to subjugate a state's political will through decisive military defeat. Irregular warfare, on the other hand, includes both *direct* and *indirect* approaches.

individuals will be able to acquire far more destructive means of doing harm, including WMD.³³

Second, in irregular warfare, the host nation population, not

The direct approach involves combating adversaries through military means (e.g., targeting and eliminating terrorist cells). The indirect approach focuses its operations on addressing underlying security, economic, political, and cultural grievances. Moreover, the indirect approach involves a "war of ideas," where information is central to changing behavior and perceptions among target audiences.

Finally, the multiplicity of actors in the area of operations will complicate future warfare immensely. During conventional conflicts when two opposing armies were fighting for territorial control, the military was the primary means to an end. Irregular operations require an integrated, multidimensional response of military and non-military efforts. Political, psychological, and economic methods must be at the forefront of operations. Therefore, ground forces will increasingly share an area with non-military actors such as civilian agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and intergovernmental organizations.³⁴

Future Challenges and the Demand for Ground Forces

Looking to the future, the United States can anticipate facing a broad range of challenges. Taken together, these challenges will put a premium on the U.S. military's ability to excel in a number of missions that have been largely deemphasized since the Vietnam War.³⁵ This will require a fundamental shift in orientation, from a force that has been optimized to fight large,

³² By "adversary," the authors do not solely mean non-state actors. Rising state powers can also use asymmetric means. See Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare* (Beijing: PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House, February 1999).

³³ National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2015*.

³⁴ Wass de Czege, September 2006. Appendix 2 assembles many of the various challenges, responses, and key enablers for irregular warfare.

³⁵ Andrew F. Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); Andrew F. Krepinevich, "Past as Prologue: Counterinsurgency and the U.S. Army's Vietnam Experience in Force Structuring and Doctrine," in *Democracy, Strategy, and Vietnam: Implications for American Policymaking*, ed. George K. Osborn (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1987); Andrew F. Krepinevich, "Recovery from Defeat: The U.S. Army and Vietnam," in *The Aftermath of Defeat: Societies, Armed Forces, and the Challenge of Recovery*, ed. George J. Andreopoulos and Harold E. Selesky (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), Robert Endicott Osgood, *Limited War Revisited* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1979).

conventional wars to a future force that is truly “full spectrum” —with greater capacity for irregular operations while retaining the ability to prevail in high-end warfighting against a conventional or WMD-armed foe.³⁶

Deterring and responding to traditional military threats. Although traditional military challenges will likely be less prominent in the future, U.S. ground forces must remain prepared to deter and, if necessary, prevail against a range of conventional threats, including:

- Cross-border aggression (e.g., North versus South Korea).
- Coercion or aggression by a regional competitor or adversary against the United States, its allies, or its interests in a given region.

Combating violent Islamist terrorists. Beyond operations in Afghanistan and now Iraq, the struggle against violent Islamist terrorist groups will likely place significant and new demands on U.S. forces for many years. Violent Islamist extremists are organized in a highly dispersed and decentralized manner—a loose network of terrorist groups, self-starter cells, and radicalized individuals. For example, al Qaeda and its affiliates are now present in more than 80 countries around the world, from the Middle East, South Asia, and Southeast Asia to Africa and Europe.³⁷ Such groups present a difficult and persistent threat to the prevailing international order, and the United States will need a highly differentiated strategy that combats these nebulous, transnational networks in a variety of ways based on local contexts and conditions and employing both direct and indirect approaches.

Far more often than not, this will require supporting partner nations and allies in their own struggles for security, legitimacy, and the well-being of their populations.

Specifically, for U.S. ground forces, combating terrorist groups and violent extremists will involve missions such as:

- Sharing intelligence with U.S. allies and partner states in support of counterterrorism operations.
- Conducting counterterrorism operations to neutralize known terrorist cells, thwart planned operations, and deny terrorist groups safe havens.
- Assisting partner nation governments in marginalizing terrorists from the mainstream population by drying up their sources of recruits, financing, and public sympathy.
- Working “by, with, and through” indigenous security forces to enable them to attack terrorist networks and deny the terrorists safe haven. Rather than taking the leading role, the United States will often take an indirect approach, such as a training and advisory role, while foreign partners conduct operations.

Combating the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. Another critical future challenge is preventing the acquisition and use of WMD (nuclear, chemical, and biological) by hostile states or non-state actors. The WMD threat is becoming increasingly complex as proliferators are forming dispersed, A.Q. Khan-like networks, using creative means to conceal programs, and benefiting from the spread of technical expertise, materials, and sophisticated dual-use technology. As the strategies of our adversaries evolve and mature,

³⁶ Current U.S. defense strategy calls upon the U.S. military to be able to conduct operations in support of homeland defense, the “war on terrorism,” and major combat operations. More specifically, the strategy calls on the U.S. military to be able to surge to conduct two major theater wars, or one major war and one large counterinsurgency or stability operation, simultaneously. See Department of Defense, *QDR*.

³⁷ Department of Defense, *QDR*, 21.

America's counter-WMD strategy must be equally flexible and adaptive.

For U.S. ground forces, combating WMD proliferation involves various counter-proliferation, nonproliferation, and consequence management activities, including:

- Conducting interdiction and elimination operations that locate, characterize, secure, disable, and/or destroy WMD capabilities.
- Developing partnerships that support international efforts to combat WMD, as well as assisting partners in enhancing their own capabilities to prevent and counter proliferation, including securing stockpiles of fissile material.
- Conducting consequence management operations to mitigate the effects of a WMD attack and assist in restoring essential operations and services.

Addressing conflict and instability arising from weak and failing states. In many regions of the world, globalization pressures, coupled with poor governance,

U.S. ground forces must be prepared to conduct a more demanding set of steady state and surge missions than they did pre-September 11, 2001.

have resulted in states that cannot meet their population's basic needs. These states, which may fail to earn or maintain legitimacy in the eyes of their populations, may come under threat

from insurgencies bent on overthrowing the central government, or simply those who wish to take advantage of ungoverned space. In other cases, states may collapse or lose control within parts of their territory,

creating ungoverned or undergoverned regions that could become terrorist safe havens.

When such instability reaches crisis proportions, U.S. ground forces may be called on to conduct surge operations to help a host nation thwart a major insurgency or to protect U.S. interests in the face of the catastrophic collapse or hostile takeover of a key state, including:³⁸

- Conducting non-combatant evacuations to remove U.S. citizens and other non-combatants from harm's way.
- Conducting large-scale counterinsurgency operations (e.g., Iraq and Afghanistan).
- Intervening in a collapsing or chaotic state to secure nuclear weapons and materials (or other WMD) and prevent them from falling into the hands of terrorists or other adversaries.
- Intervening to stop genocide or prevent instability due to large flows of refugees.

The United States should, however, seek to prevent such crises before they arise, particularly in areas where it has vital interests. The United States must be prepared to undertake continuous or "steady state" missions to proactively shape the international security environment in ways favorable to its interests. These shaping activities can help prevent threats from materializing, reduce the need for surge operations, enhance the ability of partner nations to respond, and better position the United States to intervene should that prove necessary.

For U.S. ground forces, shaping missions can take a variety of forms, including:

- Deploying U.S. forces to operate in regions where it has vital interests in order to reassure friends, deter potential foes, enhance the U.S. military's familiarity with potential future

³⁸ "Surge" operations occur episodically and typically require a sharp increase in U.S. force deployments for a period of time, ranging from months (e.g., the first Gulf War) to years (e.g., Iraq and Afghanistan). "Steady state" operations, on the other hand, involve continuous operations to proactively shape the international security environment in ways favorable to U.S. interests or to help defend the U.S. homeland. See Department of Defense, *QDR*, 37.

operating environments, and provide combatant commanders with ready, rapid reaction forces in a region.

- Providing military advisors and trainers to help partner states improve their military capabilities and reduce their vulnerabilities.
- Conducting preventive civic action (e.g., medical and construction activities) to reduce the vulnerability of populations in weak, failing, or post-conflict states, particularly those at risk of becoming safe havens for terrorists.
- Conducting small-scale counterinsurgency operations as part of a broader U.S. government effort focused on assisting weak or failing states to defeat insurgents and build their legitimacy and capacity to meet the security and other basic needs of their people (e.g., the Philippines).

Assisting partner governments to combat terrorism and insurgency and to enhance their own security capabilities will be core missions of U.S. ground forces in the years to come. These missions will drive much of the steady state demand for both general purpose and Special Operations Forces, and will require significant depth of capacity in capability areas ranging from human intelligence, linguists, and foreign area officers, to trainers, advisors, and civil affairs—capacity that is utterly inadequate in today's force.

The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) called for shifting our weight to address irregular warfare and other non-traditional challenges. In order to succeed, the United States must also “punch above” our weight by leveraging and enabling our partners and allies.

Responding to humanitarian crises. Humanitarian crises can be man-made (e.g., the Darfur genocide), result from natural disasters (e.g., the Pakistan earthquake), or both (e.g., the Somali famine in the early 1990s exacerbated by drought and poor governance). Typically, the immediate goal is to stop and alleviate the suffering in the disaster area, and the longer-term goal is to help restore the host nation's capability and capacity to provide for basic human needs. Responding to humanitarian crises also involves close coordination with other U.S. government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and international partners. For U.S. ground forces this may involve: providing security for displaced populations; providing food, water, and temporary shelter; providing immediate medical care; and, in some cases, building, rebuilding, and/or restoring critical infrastructure.

In sum, even after Iraq-driven demand is significantly reduced, U.S. ground forces must be prepared to conduct a more demanding set of steady state and surge missions than they did pre-September 11, 2001. Day to day, the overwhelming demand for U.S. ground forces will likely fall on the irregular warfare end of the spectrum, and operations lasting years rather than months will be the norm.³⁹ Consequently, U.S. ground forces must be able not only to surge for major contingencies, but also to sustain multiple rotations to long-duration missions over time. This will require ensuring that the U.S. Army, Marine Corps, and SOF have adequate rotation bases, particularly in the capability areas that will be in highest demand.

³⁹ During Secretary Rumsfeld's tenure at the Pentagon, U.S. defense planning put a premium on the ability to deploy U.S. forces with little warning, quickly defeat an enemy, and redeploy forces quickly to prepare for the next contingency. This paradigm might be appropriate for certain scenarios, such as rolling back cross-border aggression or conducting limited strikes or raids; however, in the future it is likely to be the exception rather than the rule. The Former Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Richard Meyers, cites seven to 12 years as the average duration of 20th century insurgencies. See “Top US General Sees Lasting Iraq Insurgency,” Reuters, 25 February 2005. Marine Corps Commandant James T. Conway put the average at eight to 12 years. See “Testimony Before the House Armed Services Committee, Iraq's Effect on Total Force Readiness,” *Federal News Service* (23 January 2007).

Taken together, these demands will require some growth in U.S. ground forces. More importantly, they will require substantial change in U.S. ground forces' orientation, training, and mix of capabilities to be better prepared to deal with the demands of a much broader range of operations, especially irregular operations.

KEY CAPABILITIES FOR THE FUTURE

Since Vietnam, the U.S. military has been optimized primarily for high-end warfighting against conventional military foes. The last several QDRs have rightly posited the need to rebalance the force by improving the U.S. military's ability to meet a broad range of other challenges and become a truly full spectrum force. Therefore, any expansion should enable this rebalancing of capabilities within the U.S. military.

"Contact with the population" calls for something very different from "contact with the enemy." This different focus requires some different capabilities. As the new Army and Marine Corps *Counterinsurgency* (COIN) manual identifies,

Some capabilities required for conventional success—for example, the ability to execute operational maneuver and employ massive firepower—may be of limited utility or even counterproductive in [COIN] operations. Nonetheless, conventional forces beginning [COIN] operations often try to use these capabilities to defeat insurgents; they almost always fail.⁴⁰

That is not to say that infantry are not useful, or indeed essential, in irregular operations such as COIN or stability operations, but that these soldiers or Marines must be differently trained,

educated, equipped, and organized than for traditional combat operations.⁴¹ Indeed, when operational and personnel tempos eventually ease, there will be a temptation for the Army and the Marine Corps to revert to their traditional training regimens—a "system reboot."⁴² However, the future operating environment suggests that such a system reboot would be an egregious error that would serve neither the nation nor America's soldiers and Marines. Readiness needs to be defined and measured in terms of the full spectrum of missions that will define the future operating environment.

In a future in which shaping activities and irregular warfare will likely be the most common types of operations, the Army, Marine Corps, and SOF will need more capacity in a number of critical capability areas that have proven to be in high demand (and often short supply) in post-Cold War and post-9/11 operations.⁴³ The list of military capabilities in Figure 2 highlights areas that will continue to be in demand in the future security environment, and must therefore be prioritized.

Developing the capabilities necessary to meet future challenges will require resources as well as innovative ideas. Current end strength proposals should be evaluated as to whether they put adequate emphasis on building U.S. capacity in these key capability areas.

⁴⁰ Department of the Army, *Counterinsurgency*, FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5 (Washington: GPO, 15 December 2006), ix.

⁴¹ "Counterinsurgency" is defined as those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency. "Stability Operations" is an overarching term encompassing various military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the United States in coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief.

⁴² "System reboot" is a phrase coined by CNAS's Shawn Brimley. For a starting point regarding a previous "system reboot," see Andrew F. Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

⁴³ It will be necessary to go one step beyond merely identifying critical capabilities for these missions by asking if these current specialties are adequately prepared and postured for future challenges. For instance, is civil affairs organized, trained, equipped, and educated adequately for future missions, or is it still geared for dealing with civilians in a more traditional fight? Are medical personnel trained for family medicine or combat triage and emergencies? Are engineers prepared for tasks such as reconstruction, economic development, and reestablishing (or in some cases, creating) essential services, or are they primarily combat engineers who build under fire the facilities needed for conventional military engagements? Even more fundamentally, given the complexity of the task, it may be possible that new specialties need to be created. The authors thank Janine A. Davidson for this point.

Expansion also offers an important opportunity to improve how the U.S. military organizes, trains, educates, and equips these critical capabilities as well as how they are employed to maximum effect. Based on lessons learned and best practices, a number of innovations have been proposed to enhance America's ability to conduct various types of irregular operations more effectively (*see* Appendix 3). Although the authors do not endorse them universally, they are worthy of careful consideration as the administration refines its plans to expand U.S. ground forces for the future.

Figure 2

KEY MILITARY CAPABILITIES FOR THE FUTURE*	
Capability	The Ability To:
Psychological Operations	Convey information to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately behavior.
Information Operations	Influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp a foreign adversary's decision making processes, while protecting U.S. decision-making processes.
Public Affairs	Disseminate public information and conduct community relations activities that provide truthful, timely, and factual unclassified information about U.S. activities in a given area.
Civil Affairs	Establish, maintain, and influence relations between military forces, governmental, and nongovernmental civilian organizations and the civilian population in order to facilitate military operations. This may include performing (or helping to build another nation's capacity to perform) activities and functions normally the responsibility of local, regional, or national government.
Military Police	Conduct protection, enforcement, and detainment operations primarily for U.S. forces, but also for a host nation population.
Construction Engineers	Construct and/or maintain infrastructure necessary for sustaining military operations or the strategic mission, to include host nation support.
Trainers and Advisors	Train host nation security forces in simulated conditions and mentor them during actual operations.
Special Forces Teams	Conduct special operations with an emphasis on unconventional warfare (a broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations conducted by, with, or through indigenous or surrogate forces).
Medical Units	Provide health-related activities to the military and a host nation populace, ranging from dental care to emergency medicine.
Legal Affairs	Provide expertise to the military and/or a host nation government on administrative, civil, claims, international, and operational law, and military justice.
Intelligence (especially Human Intelligence, HUMINT)	Collect, process, integrate, analyze, evaluate, and interpret information concerning foreign countries or areas. HUMINT is information collected and provided by human sources.
Counterintelligence	Collect, process, integrate, analyze, evaluate, and interpret information to protect against espionage, other intelligence activities, sabotage, or assassinations conducted by or on behalf of foreign entities.
Explosive Ordnance Disposal	Disable munitions containing explosives, nuclear materials, and biological and chemical agents.
Foreign Affairs Officers	Apply area, foreign language, cultural, political-military, economic, and social expertise.
Linguists	Use language proficiency to assist many other critical capability areas.

* It should be noted that civilians have the comparative advantage in many irregular warfare capability areas, but currently lack the capacity and expeditionary culture.

THE ADMINISTRATION'S EXPANSION PROPOSAL

On February 5, 2007, President Bush submitted his FY 2008 federal budget request to Congress, which included a proposal to expand U.S. ground forces by 101,211 personnel. The Army's end strength would increase by 74,211 personnel (65,000 Active, 1,010 Reserve, and 8,201 National Guard) and Marine Corps active end strength by 27,000 by the year 2012. The active Army increase would be accomplished by making permanent the 30,000 temporary positions added in 2004 and by further increasing end strength 7,000 per year for five straight years. The Marine Corps increase would be accomplished by making permanent the 5,000 temporary positions combined with an additional 5,000 Marines per year through FY 2012.

The added costs for these end strength increases from 2007 through 2013 are estimated to be \$77 billion for the Army (active, Reserve, and National Guard) and \$32 billion for the Marine Corps. When the expansion is complete in 2013, the annual steady state cost will be approximately \$14 billion per year.⁴⁴ Figure 3 outlines the main contours of the administration's plan. Additionally, Appendix 4 details the projected growth rate plans for the Army, Marine Corps, and SOF.

This proposal follows on the heels of the administration's plans to substantially increase the size of U.S. Special Operations Forces, as described in the 2006 QDR. The QDR mandated the increase

in funding and personnel due to U.S. Special Operations Command being designated as the lead Combatant Command in the war on terror.⁴⁵ The proposed SOF expansion of more than 13,000 personnel includes increasing Special Forces Battalions by one third, increasing psychological operations and civil affairs personnel by one third, establishing a new Marine Corps Special Operations Command (MARSOC) of 2,600 Marines, and growing three new Ranger companies, as well as adding reconnaissance and support capacity for existing Ranger units.⁴⁶

Administration officials have offered three primary reasons for the proposed Army, Marine Corps, and SOF increases: first, the need to strengthen the U.S. military to meet the demands of the future, especially the so-called "long war" against terrorism; second, the need to relieve the strains that five years of major operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have placed on the All-Volunteer Force; and third, the need to enable U.S. forces to train for the full range of missions they may face, rather than only the operations in which they are currently engaged.⁴⁷ However, judging from the details of how the administration proposes to allocate the additional end strength, they appear to be giving much more weight to the last two reasons than to the first.

It is worth noting that the Bush administration had resisted calls to permanently increase the size of the Army and Marine Corps prior to the

⁴⁴ These figures are compared with personnel costs from the FY 2007 NDAA, and they include costs for military personnel, healthcare, O&M, procurement, and military construction and family housing. See Congressional Budget Office, *Estimated Cost of the Administration's Proposal to Increase the Army's and Marine Corps's Personnel Levels*, 16 April 2007, 6.

⁴⁵ Department of Defense, *QDR*, 44.

⁴⁶ Department of Defense, *QDR*, 44, 55; and Brown House statement, 31 January 2007, 3.

⁴⁷ See statement by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, 11 January 2007; General George Casey, "Testimony to the Airland Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee," 25 April 2007, *Federal News Service*; General Peter J. Schoomaker, "Statement on the Army's Preparedness for Current and Future Missions before the Senate Armed Services Committee," 15 February 2007; General James T. Conway, "Statement on Readiness before the Senate Armed Services Committee," 15 February 2007; and Jim Garamone, "The U.S. Department of Defense's American Forces Information Service Issued Press Release," *US Fed News*, 22 November 2006.

Figure 3

GROUND FORCES EXPANSION: BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSAL TO INCREASE END STRENGTH				
	Current End Strength (FY07 baseline)	Increase	% Increase	Projected End Strength
Army (Active Component)	482,000	65,000	14%	547,000
Army (Reserve Component)	555,000	9,200	2%	564,200
Marine Corps	175,000	27,000	16%	202,000
Special Operations Command (military & civilian)	46,000	13,000	28%	58,000

Numbers and percentages rounded

Projected Cost of Expansion

- Approximately \$108 billion for the initial expansion (2007–2013)
- Approximately \$14 billion per year to maintain the expansion (steady state after 2013)

Sources: Congressional Budget Office, "Estimated Cost of the Administration's Proposal to Increase the Army's and the Marine Corps's Personnel Levels" (16 April 2007); General Bryan Brown, "Hearing of the HASC Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities on Current Manning, Equipping, and Readiness Challenges Facing Special Operations Forces," (31 January 2007).

president's announcement on January 10, 2007.⁴⁸ Several factors influenced this policy reversal. Senior officials in the Pentagon initially believed that the high operational tempo caused primarily by the war in Iraq was a "spike" rather than a "plateau."⁴⁹ When a drawdown in Iraq proved elusive, repeated deployments began to strain the force, as described above. Furthermore, increases to the overall budgets of both the Army and the Marine Corps eroded some opposition within the Pentagon to what would otherwise have been unsavory trade-offs between personnel and modernization.⁵⁰

Explaining how the additional end strength would be spent, Secretary Gates said, "The emphasis will be on increasing combat capability."⁵¹ Given the immediate and severe pressures to relieve tempo strains caused primarily by Iraq and Afghanistan, it is not surprising that a healthy chunk of the increased end strength is slated to build additional brigade combat teams (BCTs) for the Army and infantry battalions for the Marines.

The Army

Although the Army is still determining how best to allocate additional personnel slots to specific specialties, it has created five major baskets of growth (see Figure 4): BCTs; combat support/combat service support (CS/CSS); high-demand/low-density (HD/LD) capabilities (parts of the force for which

demand consistently exceeds supply); Trainees, Transients, Holdees, and Students (TTHS); and tables of distribution and allowances (TDA). All told, the Army plans to devote 59 percent (47,400) of its growth towards CS/CSS capabilities, and 39 percent (31,200) towards BCTs. Pending Congressional approval, the Army's expansion is scheduled to be complete in FY 2013.

Before the increase was announced (and, indeed, before the Bush administration even came topower), the Army had been trying to enhance its ability to deploy soldiers with less strain on the force. Modularity, one of the biggest organizational changes to the Army since World War II, replaced divisions with brigades as the Army's main organizational unit, making units easier to deploy.⁵² The Army also began rebalancing its forces, both active duty and Reserve, in an effort to relieve stress on HD/LD specialties. By the end of FY 2006, 57,000 of 116,000 total slots had been moved.⁵³

While there is some goodness in the proposals they have put forward, the Army, Marine Corps, and USSOCOM are at risk of missing this opportunity.

⁴⁸In January 2004, the administration announced only temporary increases of 30,000 for the Army and 5,000 for the Marine Corps. By way of explanation, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said, "A permanent end strength increase could prove to be the slowest and most expensive option for reducing stress on the force. The costs are sizeable over a lifetime of each added service member; and because of the time it takes to recruit, train, and integrate new military personnel, the benefits really cannot be felt for some time." See Donald H. Rumsfeld, "Defense Department Operational Briefing," *United States Department of Defense News Transcript*, 13 January 2004. Accordingly, the 2006 QDR called for the Army and Marine Corps end strength to return to 482,400 and 175,000, respectively, by FY 2011. See Department of Defense, *QDR*, 43.

⁴⁹Citing Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, in Doug Sample, "Rumsfeld Says Increase in End Strength Not Likely For Now," *American Forces Press Service*, 13 January 2007.

⁵⁰Peter J. Schoomaker, from "U.S. Representative Duncan Hunter (R-CA) Holds Hearing on Army Transformation," *FDCH Political Transcripts*, 21 July 2004.

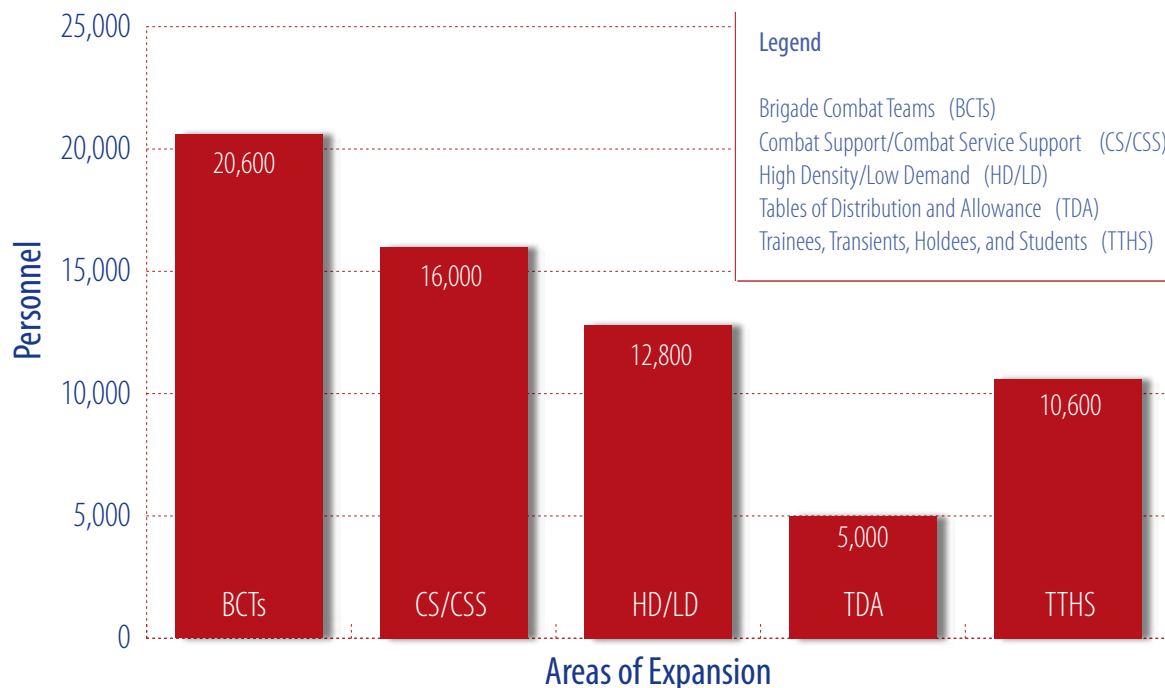
⁵¹All numbers for active duty Army and Marine Corps. See statement by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, 11 January 2007.

⁵²The Army first defined modularity as "a force structure design methodology which establishes a means of providing force elements that are interchangeable, expandable, and tailorable to meet the changing needs of the Army." Facing a wide variety of missions meant the Army required "more efficient packaging of force capability." United States Army and Training and Doctrine Command, "Military Operations: Concept for Modularity," *TRADOC Pamphlet 525-68*, 10 January 1995, sections 3-1 and 2-1.

⁵³39,000 in skill set rebalancing and 18,000 of eliminating over-structure. For the entire rebalancing plan, see Appendix 5.

Figure 4

INITIAL ARMY EXPANSION PLAN INCREASE ACTIVE COMPONENT BY 65,000 PERSONNEL



Source: Department of the Army Briefing, May 24, 2007.

It appears that the Army intends to use a substantial portion of its planned end strength increase to build greater depth in a number of key capability areas including military police, military intelligence, linguists, engineers, medical, explosive ordnance disposal, and information operations. These increases will be critical in a future operating environment likely to be dominated by irregular operations.

But questions still remain regarding the Army plan. For instance, some of the additional HD/LD slots will go to Patriot battalions, fires brigades, and

theater missile defense – none central to irregular warfare. At this point it is unclear whether the Army expansion plan will strike the right balance between addressing irregular versus more conventional threats. Because the Army's plan is still very much a work in progress, its evolving details should receive close and continuing scrutiny. The Army should be encouraged to use its force expansion to enhance its capabilities for irregular operations, including seriously considering some of the innovative approaches summarized in Appendix 3, none of which have been included in the Army's

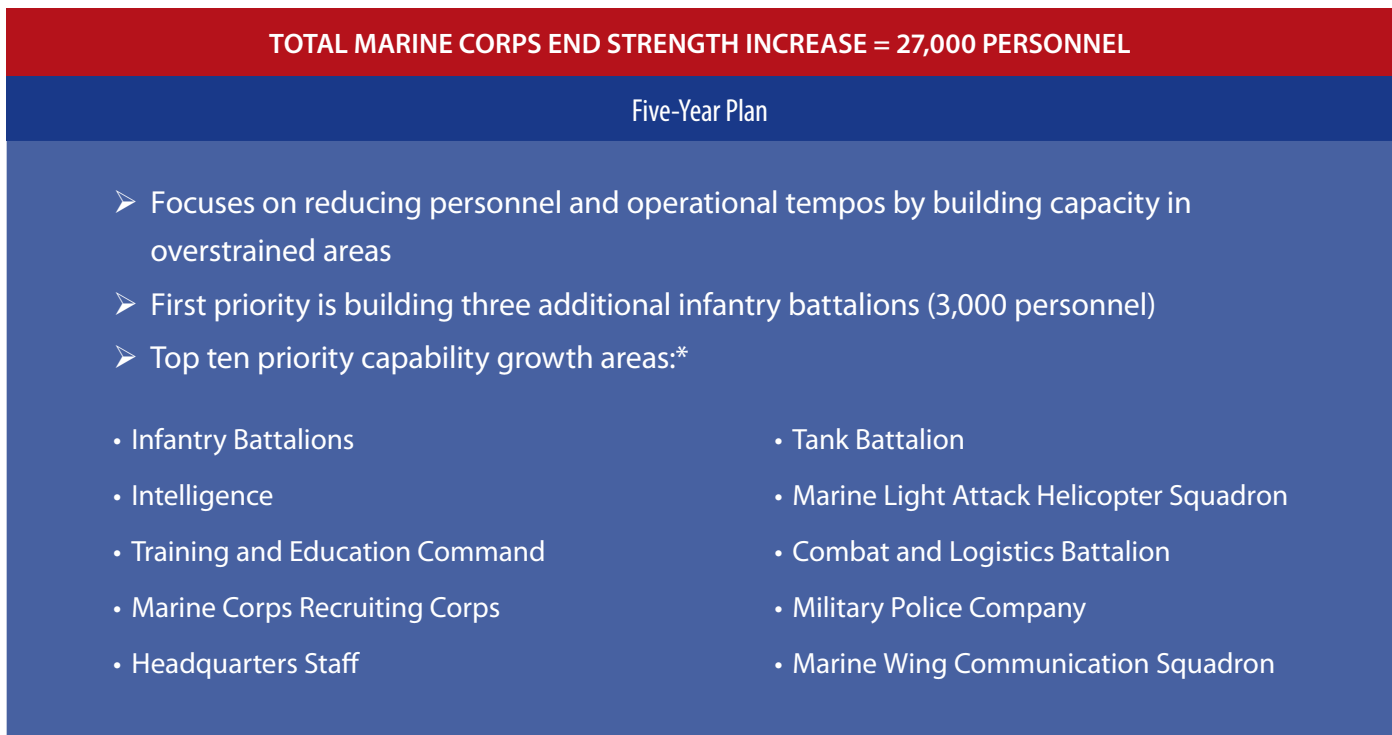
proposal. In addition, the analytic basis for the Army’s estimate of the number of BCTs it will need in the future remains opaque, and these assumptions should be clarified and carefully examined as expansion plans are considered.

Even as it implements the first track of its growth plans, the Army should look to put more resources toward innovative solutions that will dramatically increase its ability to be effective across the range of future operations, especially irregular operations and building the capacities of host nations to provide for their own security in the future.

The Marine Corps

At least two simultaneous pressures are affecting Marine Corps calculations regarding how much end strength is enough, and how best to allocate additional personnel: increasing the time between deployments and ensuring Marines have time to train on “core competencies.”⁵⁴ Navy Secretary Donald C. Winter said that the first priority for the Marines with the new increase would be to “build three new infantry battalions and their supporting structure — approximately 4,000 Marines.”⁵⁵ The Marine Corps’s preliminary expansion plan suggests other priorities exist as well.

Figure 5



Source: USMC Briefing to the Center for a New American Security, May 10, 2007.

* Priorities based on preliminary information for active duty forces only

⁵⁴ “Statement of Stephen T. Johnson Deputy Commanding General Marine Corps Combat Development Command and Mr. Michael F. Applegate Director Manpower Plans And Policy Manpower And Reserve Affairs, Military Force Requirements,” *CQ Congressional Testimony*, 30 January 2007.

⁵⁵ Navy Secretary Donald C. Winter, “The Secretary of the Navy’s FY 2008 Posture Statement,” 1 March 2007, 7.

The Marine Corps's current plan includes five phases, each lasting one year. The first three years focus largely, but not exclusively, on building greater capacity in capability areas that have been experiencing deployment-to-dwell ratios below 1:2. Assuming Congress approves subsequent years of expansion, the Marine Corps will complete its growth in FY 2011.

The Marine Corps expansion proposal is more mature than the Army's, but is also still evolving and includes some promising elements (*see* Figure 5). Having added civil affairs personnel to the Marine Corps for the first time in 2004, the Marines are now expanding the number of civil affairs billets and cross-training all artillery regiments to have a secondary military occupational specialty of civil affairs. If successful, this could be a good model for other specialties and services. The Marines also plan on increasing their military police and intelligence assets, both of which are critical in irregular warfare scenarios. (Appendix 6 provides the complete preliminary plan.)

But several key capability areas are either missing from the current proposal or slated to grow only slightly. Linguists, for example, are notably absent. Although the Marine Corps is expanding its Training and Education Command to enhance language capabilities across the force, a lot of Marines speaking only a little bit of a foreign language is no substitute for highly trained linguists who can enable units in the field to interact more effectively with the local population. Similarly, despite the recognition of the need to build more cultural awareness in the force, the Marine Corps is adding only two dozen foreign area officers/regional affairs officers to their ranks. And in a

future in which "winning hearts and minds" will be a paramount challenge, the Marine Corps is adding relatively few information operations slots and no psychological operations specialists.

Clearly, the Marine Corps is considering significant changes that would provide greater capacity for irregular warfare operations. But it is not clear how many innovative ideas will actually be implemented. For example, an initial proposal to create a Marine Corps Advisor Group did not make the cut. Although the Marines argue that this advisory role can be picked up by the Corps's Security Cooperation Education and Training Center (SCETC), training and advising foreign forces are not necessarily interchangeable skills.⁵⁶ Increasing the Corps's capacity for these missions should be given a much higher priority, especially given the importance of building the capacity of the security forces in dozens of partner countries.

The Marine Corps proposal includes some laudable steps to strengthen the Corps's capabilities for irregular operations, but the bulk of additional end strength is currently allocated to building more conventional combat capabilities. While expanding the number of infantry battalions could arguably enhance the Corps's capacity to train for and conduct irregular operations in the future, growing additional artillery batteries, tank units, and fighter squadrons seems far less relevant to the future we are likely to confront. Like the Army plan, the current Marine Corps plan does not include any major organizational innovations to improve the Corps's performance in future irregular warfare missions. Both expansion plans give a nod to the future, but seem to be more driven by current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. As suggested for the Army, the

⁵⁶ Whereas training occurs in simulated conditions, advising involves the practical application of knowledge to actual situations in a host country.

Marine Corps should revisit and rebalance its proposal to strengthen the irregular warfare capabilities needed for the future.

Special Operations Forces (SOF)

Since September 11, 2001, SOF spending has increased dramatically from \$3.1 billion in 2001 to \$6.7 billion in 2003, and an estimated \$8.8 billion this fiscal year.⁵⁷ The 2006 QDR directed the growth of SOF across the board, including increasing active duty Army Special Forces (SF) Battalions by 33 percent, adding 3,500 active duty Civil Affairs (CA) and Psychological Operations (PSYOP) personnel, and establishing for the first time a Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command.⁵⁸ As it grows, U.S. Special Operations Command will also transfer 9,000 Reserve CA and PSYOP personnel to the U.S. Army Reserve, leaving the long-term net increase of SOF at approximately 4,000.⁵⁹

USSOCOM plans to add one SF battalion (about 450 soldiers) per year for five years starting in FY 2008, create three new Ranger companies (150 soldiers each) with attendant reconnaissance and other support structures, increase Air Force special operations capacity with additional aircraft and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) assets, and build a SOF-dedicated Predator squadron. Navy sea-air-land teams (SEALs) will see approximately 20 percent growth in end strength. Drawing on existing force structure, the Marine Corps has already tapped approximately 1,500 Marines to build the 1st and 2nd Marine Special Operations battalions and a MARSOC

Foreign Military Training Unit (FMTU). Ultimately, MARSOC will grow to about 2,600 Marines under USSOCOM command. By FY 2013, the SOF budget will grow to \$10.1 billion. Figure 6 summarizes the SOF expansion plan.

The nominee to command USSOCOM, Admiral Eric Olson, stated that the growth was “not to relieve stress on SOF or add to the numbers already deployed to Afghanistan and

Iraq, but to increase special operations force presence in the areas of the world where we are now underrepresented.”⁶⁰ Despite the urgency of ongoing operations, the global nature of the long war suggests that Admiral Olson’s approach is likely correct.

Because SOF are typically recruited from the services’ general purpose forces, the decision to increase Army and Marine Corps end strength should help the expansion of SOF by increasing the pool of available soldiers and Marines. Seventy-six percent of planned SOF growth will be in the Army’s Special Operations Command (USASOC) and MARSOC, and will therefore come from the base Army and Marine force structure. Beyond the growth for SOF, the QDR directed a shift of many SOF tasks associated with

Congress will need answers to these questions to help size and shape the expansion properly and to ensure that U.S. ground forces are equipped and adapted to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

⁵⁷ Department of Defense, *National Defense Budget Estimates for FY 2008*, March 2007.

⁵⁸ Department of Defense, *QDR*, 44–45.

⁵⁹ United States Special Operations Command, *2007 Posture Statement*, April 2007, 12.

⁶⁰ Admiral Eric T. Olson, “Senate Armed Services Committee Holds Hearing on U.S. Military Command Budgets,” *CQ Transcriptions*, 24 April 2007.

Figure 6

TOTAL SOF END STRENGTH INCREASE = 13,000 PERSONNEL	
Five-Year Plan	
➤	Stand up 2,600-member Marine Special Operations Command (MARSOC) by FY 2008, including two Foreign Military Training Units and nine Marine Special Operations Companies
➤	Create five new Army Special Forces battalions by FY 2012
➤	Grow three new Army Ranger battalions and two Navy SEAL team equivalents by FY 2011
➤	Add 3,500 active duty Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations soldiers by FY 2011
➤	Establish a Special Operations Unmanned Ariel Vehicle Squadron and an Air Force Special Operations Intelligence Squadron
➤	Complete transfer of 9,000 Reserve Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations to U.S. Army Reserve

Sources: Department of Defense Quadrennial Defense Review; United States Special Operations Command FY 2007 Posture Statement; and Government Accountability Office, GAO 06-812.

foreign internal defense (FID) and theater security cooperation to general purpose forces.⁶¹ In fact, one USSOCOM official stated that the Army and Marine Corps growth would be most useful if it specifically enabled general purpose soldiers and Marines to take on more FID missions, like training and advising. Without expansion of conventional forces' FID capabilities, SOF's planned growth would not be adequate for the demands of the future security environment.

Although plans for SOF expansion do include increasing Special Forces, CA, and PSYOP, the bulk of the additional resources are going to direct action capabilities, such as classified Special Mission Units, and the units that directly support them. While direct action missions to capture or kill high value targets like senior al Qaeda leaders will continue to be critical in the years ahead, as Admiral Olson has

said, "We cannot kill our way to victory in the War on Terrorism."⁶² The most critical capabilities in this long struggle will be those that enable an indirect approach, such as building the capacity of local governments and security forces to fight terrorism and insurgency, and disrupting and countering jihadist narratives to marginalize the extremists from their bases of support. Therefore, as SOF and conventional force growth progresses, the United States must rebalance its investments to grow more capacity for indirect action. This will likely require additional growth in areas such as Special Forces, CA, and PSYOP.

In sum, any dramatic change in force structure deserves careful scrutiny, for the health of the services and the security of the nation. The Bush administration's proposed expansion offers a unique opportunity to reshape U.S. ground forces

⁶¹ Foreign Internal Defense is defined by DoD as participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency.

⁶² Admiral Eric Olson, "Address to the Project on Special Operations Forces Inaugural Conference," Center for Strategic and International Studies, 17 October 2006, Washington.

for a future that looks very different from the past for which today's forces were built. While there are some positive aspects of the proposals they have put forward, the Army, Marine Corps, and USSOCOM are at risk of missing this opportunity. Current expansion proposals are focused primarily on reducing the strains driven by operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. They do not appear to take adequate account of how tomorrow's demands may differ from today's. Absent are the sorts of organizational innovations that would signal that a more fundamental shift was afoot.⁶³

⁶³ The authors recognize that organizational change is but one component of assessing operational capabilities, and that change must be analyzed across DOTMLPF—doctrine, organization, training, material, leadership, personnel, and facilities. This report largely focuses on organizational change given the topic at hand—the administration's end strength proposal.

GETTING EXPANSION RIGHT: KEY QUESTIONS

In light of the future security environment and the types of demands it will likely place on U.S. ground forces, current proposals to expand the nation's Army, Marine Corps, and Special Operations Forces raise at least four sets of key questions.

- **Roles and Missions.** What is the appropriate division of labor between Special Operations Forces and general purpose forces? Between the Army and the Marine Corps? Among active duty, National Guard, and Reserve forces? Between ground forces and air and naval forces? Between the uniformed military and private contractors? Among the military and civilian agencies?
- **Sustainability.** Will the proposals enable the future force to operate at sustainable tempo levels?
- **Recruitment and Retention.** Can the United States realistically recruit and retain the envisioned force without lowering quality standards?
- **Costs and Risks.** Are the costs of the proposed expansion affordable? And is growing the nation's ground forces the best way to manage risk given the nature of the challenges the United States will likely face in the future?

These four issue areas require further analysis and some clear answers. They should be the focus of discussion between civilian and military leaders before expansion plans are approved and implemented. Congress will need answers to these questions to help size and shape the expansion properly and to ensure that U.S. ground forces are equipped and adapted to meet the challenges of tomorrow rather than simply optimized to fight the wars of today.

Roles and Missions

It is impossible to evaluate Army, Marine Corps, and USSOCOM plans for expansion in isolation from one another, or from the role of the Air Force and Navy. There is substantial overlap in their roles, missions, and functions and a degree of redundancy in their capabilities, which means all three expansion proposals should be examined together to determine whether they will ultimately yield a robust and balanced portfolio of U.S. ground force capabilities for the future.

This requires making some basic assumptions about the appropriate division of labor between various elements of the force. Division of labor questions need to

be asked across the entire U.S. government (including civilian agencies and military services), among the services (Army, Marine Corps,

Navy, Air Force, as well as SOF), within the services (active duty, National Guard, Reserves), and between government and private contractors. These issues must be addressed in order to determine whether overlapping capabilities make sense or are unnecessary, and whether there are capability gaps that no one is adequately addressing.

Answering these roles and missions questions has become more difficult in recent years as recent operations have required parts of the U.S. military to depart from more traditional interpretations of service roles and responsibilities. For example, as the demand for training and advising missions has

The United States military is in uncharted waters, and many worry about an upcoming shipwreck.

skyrocketed in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere, these missions—which have been the traditional domain of SOF—have expanded beyond SOF’s capacity, causing Combatant Commanders to rely more heavily on regular soldiers and Marines.

Similarly, the demands of counterinsurgency operations in Iraq have required the Marine Corps to step in alongside the Army to conduct tasks more often associated with a force of “occupation” than with an “expeditionary force,” as the Marine Corps had come to define itself.⁶⁴ In addition, a number of Navy and Air Force personnel have been deployed to Iraq to undertake missions and tasks traditionally reserved for ground forces. The obvious question is whether this flux in roles and missions is anomalous and likely to disappear once demand in Iraq declines, or whether it signals a lasting redistribution of roles and responsibilities.

Assessing expansion plans will also require some judgments about the division of labor between active duty and Reserve forces. Are the American people comfortable relying on the National Guard and Reserves as a more operational force that regularly contributes to future foreign missions? Is the United States willing to accept a higher level of risk on the home front by having the Guard regularly deployed overseas and potentially less available and ready to respond to domestic crises? How these questions are answered will determine the extent to which the United States should build additional capacity in the active component versus in the Guard and Reserves. There may also be more creative and effective ways to manage the Total Force, and these should be explored in depth.⁶⁵

Questions should also be asked regarding how much the U.S. military relies on private contractors to perform key functions. Many have argued that the degree to which private contractors are used in lieu of the military has gone too far in Iraq, particularly relying on them for security functions normally undertaken by uniformed personnel, with a host of negative consequences.⁶⁶ In addition to questions regarding proper oversight, improved contracting procedures, and the legal status of contractors on the ground, the proper roles of contractors must be addressed in order to determine whether and how much the Army’s own support capabilities need to be expanded.

Finally, the types of missions the United States is likely to face in the future operating environment will require more than military capabilities for success. Civilians have a comparative advantage in many areas that are critical to success in irregular operations, including building governance capacity and spurring economic development. Currently, U.S. civilian agencies lack the capacity and expeditionary culture to make significant and timely contributions to many missions. Can they attract and retain a credible corps of civilian experts that are willing and able to deploy and operate in dangerous environments? A related question regards if or when resources proportional to the need for deployable civilian capacity will be allocated. Determining which tasks can and should be performed by civilian vice military personnel will be crucial to sizing and shaping U.S. ground forces for the future. At the end of the day, however, when the environment is too dangerous

⁶⁴ Before the war in Iraq, sustaining multiple rotations to the same theater had come to be viewed more as a traditional Army role rather than a Marine mission. This was not always the case. Throughout much of its history, the Marine Corps had extensive experience with so-called “small wars” in Latin America and Asia, the lessons learned and best practices of which were enshrined in the Corp’s now famous *Small Wars Manual*. See United States Marine Corps, *Small Wars Manual* (Philadelphia: Pavilion Press, 2004); Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

⁶⁵ Wormuth, et al., *The Future of the National Guard and Reserves*.

⁶⁶ For more on contractors and war, see P.W. Singer, *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2003); Debra D. Avant, *The Market for Force: The Consequences of Privatizing Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

for civilians to operate effectively, many of these tasks will continue to fall to the ground forces.

The bottom line is that the assumptions about roles and missions underlying the administration's force expansion proposals are not spelled out, and it appears that such division of labor questions were not adequately addressed as individual components developed their plans. In order to ensure coherence, avoid unnecessary duplication, and guard against unwanted gaps in capability, roles and missions issues need to be sorted out in the course of the force expansion debate.

Establish a Government-Wide Commission on Roles and Missions. Because the services are not likely to be able to adjudicate these roles and missions questions on their own, an independent commission should be established to examine these important roles and missions questions and recommend to the next president a division of labor that makes sense in a post-Cold War, post-9/11 environment. This commission would be similar to the one that was established in 1994 and to the roles and missions review recently proposed by the House of Representatives, with one significant difference: the roles and missions of the entire U.S. government, civilian and military, in irregular operations should be evaluated since a whole of government approach is critical to success.⁶⁷ Given the acute shortfalls of deployable civilian personnel, this commission should also assess ways to increase the expeditionary culture and capacities of these agencies.

Reassess the use of private contractors on the ground. Private contractors provide critical support to the U.S. military in the field. Without their contribu-

tions, ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan would not be possible, and U.S. ground forces would have to grow far beyond the levels being contemplated in order to undertake these support functions themselves, and at higher cost. But the more expansive use of contractors in security roles in Iraq has raised fundamental questions about their proper and improper roles on the ground, particularly in operations where the host nation population is the key to success. In addition to holding hearings, Congress should require that the Department of Defense assess its use of private contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan—and the associated costs, risks, and benefits—with a view toward identifying lessons learned and determining the appropriate division of labor between uniformed and contractor personnel for future operations.

Sustainability

The proposed force expansion will help some, but not significantly reduce current strains on the force for the critical next several years. However, if done right, it can help to ensure that the future force will be able to operate at more sustainable tempos.

Many future operations are likely to be long-duration missions—that is, they will require multiple rotations of U.S. troops to carry out operations over a period of years. This will be true for small missions, such as maintaining a training and advising presence in a partner country, as well as larger missions such as stability or counterinsurgency operations.

Therefore, force expansion proposals must be evaluated not only in terms of whether they include the right mix of capabilities, but also in terms of

⁶⁷ U.S. House, *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 Report to Accompany H.R. 1585*, House Report 110-146, 11 May 2007, 380. For the 1994 commission findings, see John P. White, *Direction for Defense: Report of the Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 1995).

whether they include adequate capacity or depth of capability in areas that are likely to be in high demand over time. Specifically, do they provide an adequate rotation base for unit types and personnel specialties likely to be in highest demand? If not, parts of the force will continue to experience a pace of deployment that will make it difficult to recruit and retain high quality personnel.

The services and USSOCOM have articulated personnel tempo and rotation policies that they believe will enable them to recruit and retain people in the All-Volunteer Force. As Secretary Gates noted on January 11, 2007, DoD's goal is to have active duty forces deployed only one year for every two years at home station and to have the Guard and Reserve components mobilized only one year for five years demobilized. Different components plan to achieve these ratios in different ways: the active duty Army aims for soldiers to have two years between one-year deployments, the Marines hope for 14 months between seven-month deployments, and guidelines for SOF vary by component.⁶⁸

Getting to the point where service members are at home station for twice as long as they are deployed is a laudable goal given the current 1:1 ratio. In the future operating environment, however, the United States will require even more agile, culturally aware, and adept soldiers and Marines at all levels. Developing these kinds of soldiers and Marines may require even more time between deployments to allow more time for education, training, and professional development.

Unfortunately, such dwell times do not appear to be on the horizon for America's ground forces.

Nevertheless, it is imperative that expansion proposals be assessed to determine whether they build the necessary rotation base to support sustainable tempo levels, particularly for units and personnel who are likely to be in highest demand in the future.

Adopt more flexible force management approaches to enhance sustainability. In some areas, operational and personnel tempos can be made more sustainable using more creative and flexible force management approaches. For instance, the Army has at least temporarily suspended its mandatory retirement dates, a central aspect of the old "up-or-out" system. If an individual performs well at a certain level of leadership, but has been passed over for promotion, it may be still worthwhile to keep that experienced individual in the service at his or her current rank rather than forcing retirement. Another potential idea is to create "off-ramps" and "on-ramps," whereby military personnel could leave and rejoin the services with greater ease.

Additionally, there are some individuals who would be perfectly happy to remain deployed for longer than the standard tour of duty. The services should ensure that their personnel and force management systems are flexible enough to take advantage of

*Changing the mix
of U.S. capabilities
on the margins will
not be enough.*

⁶⁸By way of example, a Navy SEAL usually spends 6 out of every 24 months deployed, although since 9/11 that has become 6 out of every 18 months deployed. See Christopher Spearin, "Special Operations Forces a Strategic Resource: Public and Private Divides," *Parameters* (Winter 2006/07), 60.

such volunteerism. With regard to the “citizen-soldiers” in the National Guard and Reserves, the services should be bending over backwards to offer a wider variety of more flexible service contracts, a “continuum of service,” that would encourage and enable more Americans to contribute their skills and talents to the military.⁶⁹ All of these proposals require more in-depth analysis of their potential costs and benefits for sustainability.

Recruitment and Retention

Another key issue is whether the U.S. military can realistically recruit and retain a larger force without lowering quality standards. Today, only 30 percent of the age-eligible youth in America meet the military’s physical, educational, and moral standards.⁷⁰ Whereas 9/11 spurred many young Americans to seek opportunities to serve in uniform, the Iraq War has made the military recruiting environment far more difficult. As long as the Iraq War continues, the recruiting challenges that the Army and Marine Corps are facing are likely to become more acute as the services attempt to grow and their respective recruiting targets increase by several thousand people.

To meet current accession targets, the Army is already accepting more recruits with lower qualifications than in the past, and it appears that the Marine Corps will soon follow suit. Having to meet even larger accession goals will likely only make the quality problem worse. Whether the Army can maintain quality standards as it increases its size is unclear. The coming year will be telling, and the results should inform not only the size but also the pace of the Army’s

expansion.⁷¹ If the quality of recruits cannot be maintained or improved, the rate of growth should be reconsidered.

There may also be inherent limits on how fast the United States can grow various elements of the military while maintaining the quality necessary for success. For example, the complexity of the future operating environment will only increase the need for “strategic corporals” – soldiers and Marines who have the intellect, maturity, and judgment to make tactical decisions that will often have strategic import. Furthermore, a mature and fully trained Special Forces non-commissioned officer with deep operational experience, cultural awareness, and language abilities may take six years to grow. Not everyone can do these jobs, and it takes time to develop and prepare those who can.

Force expansion will also require higher rates of retention. For example, the Marine Corps has historically reenlisted approximately 25 percent of its first-term enlistees, but will be required to reenlist 30 percent or more in order to grow to 202,000.⁷² The Army will also need to retain more soldiers to meet its expansion goals.

These factors will also be affected by some major unknowns. First, will soldiers reenlist when they come home from their third or fourth tours in Iraq? No nation has ever asked an All-Volunteer Force to undertake so many back-to-back deployments with so little time at home in between. The United States military is in uncharted waters, and many worry about an upcoming shipwreck. Second, once the drawdown begins in Iraq and tempo strains begin to ease, will recruiting and

⁶⁹ For a more in depth discussion of the notion of variable service contracts, see Wormuth, et al., *The Future of the National Guard and Reserves*, 94-98.

⁷⁰ Wormuth, et al., *The Future of the National Guard and Reserves*, 101.

⁷¹ Army Chief of Staff George Casey has asked his staff to develop a strategy that would accelerate the Army’s expansion, getting its end strength to 547,000 “as quickly as we can.” Geren and Casey Senate Statement, April 25, 2007.

⁷² Coleman House Statement, 15 February 2007.

retention become easier? Many analysts suspect this may be the case, but no one knows for sure.

Recruitment and reenlistment bonuses will certainly help, but given the dramatic increase of personnel costs in recent years, continuing to increase these bonuses could ironically undermine sustainability in the long-run if the cost per soldier or Marine becomes unaffordable.⁷³ The challenge is to find ways other than purely financial incentives to meaningfully increase recruiting

and retention.

The proposed expansion of U.S. ground forces offers a rare opportunity for both the Department of Defense and the Congress.

The next president should issue a call to service. While the U.S. military has been mobilized since September 11, 2001, the nation has

not. Perhaps the most consequential step the next president could take would be a Kennedy-esque call for all Americans to contribute in some way to the nation's security, including by serving in the military. Currently, less than two percent of American adults serve in the Armed Forces.⁷⁴ The president and other government leaders should issue calls to national and military service, work with the services and Congress to ensure that military recruiting offices are properly staffed for

ease of entry, and create a broader range of more flexible options for service.

Simply giving a few speeches and using the “bully pulpit” will not be enough. An ongoing dialogue with the American public needs to take place, “for if we decide that there are no public things to which we should be willing to pledge some of our time and some of our effort—not to mention ‘our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor’—we will be breaking faith with our nation’s experiment in liberty rooted in mutual assistance and democratic aspiration.”⁷⁵ Some may argue that the moment for this conversation passed soon after September 11th. Yet if the United States is indeed engaged in a long struggle against violent Islamist extremism, avoiding this topic could have dire strategic consequences for the nation.

Costs and Risks

In the absence of resource constraints, few would question the desirability of expanding U.S. ground forces for the future. But the reality of resource constraints raises two additional questions: Are the costs of expansion affordable over time? Is growing the nation's ground forces the best way to manage risk given the nature of the challenges we will likely face in the future?

The estimated cost of the proposed ground force expansion is likely to be only two to three percent of the U.S. defense budget and only a small and shrinking fraction of our nation's GDP. In this sense, expanding U.S. ground forces is certainly affordable.

⁷³ Efforts to attract and keep military personnel have resulted in a 33 percent increase in the cost per service member between FY 1999 and FY 2005. See Towell, et al., *Defense*, 9.

⁷⁴ CNAS estimate based on 2007 CIA World Fact book data and total number of Americans serving in the Armed Forces.

⁷⁵ E.J. Dionne, Jr. and Kayla Meltzer Drogosz, *The Promise of National Service: A (Very) Brief History of an Idea*, Policy Brief 120 (Washington: The Brookings Institution, June 2003).

The harder and more important issue is whether the proposed expansion is the best use of limited resources. The question is not whether increasing the end strength of the Army and the Marine Corps would enhance the capability of today's ground forces—it undoubtedly would. The question is whether the U.S. military could improve its portfolio of capabilities to meet future challenges even more significantly by investing the same amount of money in a different way—either in a different mix of ground force capabilities, in some combination of ground, air, and naval capabilities, or in civilian capabilities.

On this critical question, the jury is still out and will remain out until the Pentagon and the Congress engage in an in-depth discussion of the trade-offs associated with growing the Army, Marine Corps and SOF—trade-offs between investment in manpower versus modernization, among the various services, and between military and non-military instruments of national security. Working through these trade-offs is key to making tough decisions about where to accept or manage a degree of risk.

Such trade-offs will become more difficult and more important in the near future. As America's military commitment in Iraq begins to decline, as it will eventually, so too will supplemental funding for the Department of Defense. At the same time, pressures to reduce the federal deficit and to increase spending on entitlement programs as the baby boomers retire are also growing, putting enormous downward pressure on the federal government's discretionary spending, of which the defense budget is the largest share.⁷⁶

When these trends converge, we may confront the makings of a “perfect storm.” Congress will be under enormous pressure to rein in defense spending. At the same time, the DoD will be dealing with runaway personnel costs, still significant operations and maintenance costs, a reset “hang-over” to pay for repairing and replacing equipment damages or lost in Iraq and other operations, and spiraling modernization costs.

In this situation, the next president, secretary of defense, and Congress would be forced to make some tough trade-offs. Within the defense budget, exceedingly difficult choices would have to be made between near-term priorities (such as personnel and readiness) and longer-term priorities (such as recapitalization and modernization), both within and among service budgets. This would only intensify competition among the services for a fixed and perhaps shrinking resource pie.

This debate over defense spending priorities will also need to be rooted in a larger discussion of U.S. national security strategy and how best to wield all the instruments of our national power to safeguard American security. Given the complex nature of the future security environment, the United States needs a “whole of government” approach to meet most of the challenges on the horizon and, therefore, a more robust and balanced set of national security tools. This will undoubtedly require some reallocation of resources. As one defense analyst put it, “Today, the United States has one instrument on steroids—the U.S. military—and everything else is on life support.”⁷⁷

⁷⁶ The Office of Management and Budget, the Congressional Budget Office, and the Government Accountability Office all “agree that the current mix of federal programs is fiscally unsustainable for the long term.” See Towell, et al., *Defense*, 8, referencing Philip D. Winters, *The Budget for Fiscal Year 2008*, Congressional Research Service, 12 March 2007; also Office of Management and Budget, *Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2008*, 5 February 2007, 16-21; Congressional Budget Office, *The Budget and Economic Outlook: Fiscal Years 2008-2017*, January 2007, 10-11; Government Accountability Office, *The Nation's Long-Term Fiscal Outlook: January 2007 Update*, GAO-07-510R, 23 February 2007.

⁷⁷ Clark Murdock, discussion with Michèle A. Flournoy.

Simply put, Americans will not be safe until the government has the tools necessary to implement a smart, integrated national security strategy. Right now, the United States lacks not only the tools but the strategy as well.⁷⁸

In this context, the greatest challenge for senior defense leaders and the Congress is setting priorities for resource allocation—determining where to minimize risk and where to accept or manage it. The United States cannot afford to grow its military to the point where it can prevail in every conceivable combination of simultaneous scenarios. The task is ensuring that plans to grow U.S. ground forces offer the smartest way possible to manage risk in the future operating environment.

⁷⁸ CNAS is undertaking a number of projects with the aim of developing a new national security strategy for the United States, the most important of which is the Solarium II project. CNAS is also exploring how the United States can adapt and better integrate all of the instruments of its national power in the new security environment, including the idea of creating a national security budget. For more information on CNAS projects, go to www.cnas.org.

SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITY

The contours of the future security environment suggest that the Army, Marine Corps, and SOF need to grow in size. Exactly how much growth makes sense and what shape it should take, however, should be the focus of additional analysis and deliberation. Current expansion proposals appear to be driven more by strains on today's force than on the likely demands of tomorrow's missions. More discussion of future requirements is needed to inform upcoming Congressional decisions on how best to expand the U.S. military.

In the meantime, Congress should support the initial steps necessary to begin expanding U.S. ground forces. However, it should insist that the Army, Marine Corps, and USSOCOM provide more in-depth assessments of future demand, how their expansion proposals will enable them to meet that demand, whether and how quality standards can be maintained as growth occurs, and the long-term costs and potential trade-offs of their proposals.

We recommend a three-track approach to growing and revitalizing U.S. ground forces for the future.

First, top priority should be given to rapidly increasing the capabilities for irregular warfare urgently needed for ongoing and future operations. This will require profound changes in the ways in which U.S. military forces, particularly U.S. ground forces, are organized, trained, equipped, and employed. Changing the mix of U.S. capabilities on the margins will not be enough. Seen in this light, growing the force is a critical opportunity to rebalance the mix of U.S. military capabilities to ensure that we have the right specialties in the right quantities for the future. The Army, Marine Corps, and USSOCOM should substantially boost their investment in

these areas while aggressively pursuing innovative approaches to increase high demand capabilities and to better integrate military and civilian operations. Unless current proposals for expansion are further refined to strengthen and deepen U.S. capabilities for irregular operations, this rare opportunity will be missed.

Second, the Department of Defense must develop and implement new approaches to recruiting and retaining the All-Volunteer Force and ensuring that U.S. ground forces are able to operate at sustainable tempo levels in the future. Innovative ideas, such as those highlighted in this report, must be further developed, assessed, and where appropriate implemented. Saving and strengthening the All-Volunteer Force must be a top priority and a lens through which expansion proposals are evaluated. It is also well past time for the president and other national leaders to issue a call to service to the American people.

Third, in parallel with these efforts, the United States must assess the full range of capabilities that the U.S. military, and the U.S. government more broadly, will need to protect and advance U.S. interests in the face of myriad future challenges. A future in which irregular operations figure prominently will require rethinking not only how the U.S. military operates, but also how the U.S. government does business. An independent, government-wide commission on roles and missions could help to clarify the comparative advantages of various agencies, a workable division of labor, capability gaps, and how best to allocate resources to ensure that the United States has a robust and balanced set of national security tools for the future.

As the administration's expansion plans are refined, several caveats should be borne in mind. First, assessing and balancing risks involves subjective

judgments about the relative likelihood of various types of operations and the relative importance of alternative capabilities for each type of operation. There is no single “right” answer, but good analysis will make those judgments explicit and provide a basis for informed discussion, debate, and ultimately decision.

Second, the strategic environment will continue to change over time and so will the demands placed on U.S. ground forces. Therefore, the United States must be prepared to adapt its plans and force postures thoughtfully over time.⁷⁹ This requires an ongoing, iterative process. Decisions relating to the size of the ground forces and their capacity to accomplish various missions are likely to take years to work through the system. As a result, changes will still be in process when new decisions are taken to make adjustments. Growing the force will be more of a journey than a destination.

Third, force planning is not just a game of arithmetic; creative new approaches can serve as invaluable force multipliers. Congress and DoD need to incentivize the development of creative options for organizing, training, educating, and equipping the force that improve capabilities and capacity in key areas, and so reduce risk.

Expanding the force also provides an opportunity to rethink the incentive structures that have been put in place in each service. For example, what types of soldiers and Marines do the promotion boards favor? Are officers who take the risk to be innovators celebrated and promoted or sidelined? Are those who broaden their skills by taking on additional specialties adequately rewarded? The signals sent by promotions and assignments are among the most powerful for shaping the U.S. military. These should be considered carefully as part and parcel of shaping the force for the future.

The proposed expansion of U.S. ground forces offers a rare opportunity for both the Department of Defense and the Congress to dramatically increase the U.S. military’s ability to prevail in the face of a wide range of challenge—from asymmetric threats and irregular challenges to conventional combat. Their choices over the next several years will either enable or constrain the U.S. military’s performance in future operations, as well as the options available to future presidents. The stakes are high. Congress must seize this opportunity to reshape U.S. ground forces for the future. It must ask the tough questions and demand compelling answers to ensure that additional investment in our nation’s ground forces actually yields the capabilities and capacities we need to safeguard American security in the future.

⁷⁹ The Pentagon’s Integrated Global Posture and Basing Strategy, which would relocate many forces from overseas bases and relocate them to the United States, is a prime candidate for review and adaptation. Michael O’Hanlon is currently conducting an analysis of the global posture strategy on behalf of CNAS.

A P P E N D I X 1

ACRONYMS

BCT	Brigade Combat Team
CA	Civil Affairs
COIN	Counterinsurgency
CORDS	Civil Operations, Reconstruction, and Development Support Groups
CSB (ME)	Combat Support Brigade (Maneuver Enhancement)
CS/CSS	Combat Support/Combat Service Support
DoD	Department of Defense
FLAG	Forward Liaison and Assistance Group
FM	Field Manual
FID	Foreign Internal Defense
FMTU	Foreign Military Training Unit
FY	Fiscal Year
GWOT	Global War on Terror
HD/LD	High Demand, Low Density Units
HQ	Headquarters
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
JTF	Joint Task Force
MAAG	Military Advisory and Assistance Group
MARSOC	Marine Corps Special Operations Command
METL	Mission Essential Task List
MNSTC-I	Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
PSYOP	Psychological Operations
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review
SCETC	Security Cooperation Education and Training Center
SEAL	Sea, Air, and Land Forces
SF	Special Forces
SOF	Special Operations Forces
STEG	Security Training and Equipping Group
TDA	Tables of Distribution and Allowance
TTHS	Trainees, Transients, Holdees, and Students
USA	U.S. Army
USASOC	U.S. Army Special Operations Command
USMC	U.S. Marine Corps
USSOCOM	U.S. Special Operations Command
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

IRREGULAR WARFARE: CHALLENGES, RESPONSES, AND KEY ENABLERS	
Challenges	Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Insurgency ➤ Terrorism ➤ Transnational criminal activities (e.g., narco-trafficking, illicit arms dealing, trafficking in persons, money laundering) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Unconventional Warfare ➤ Foreign Internal Defense ➤ Counterinsurgency ➤ Counterterrorism ➤ Law Enforcement ➤ Stabilization, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction Operations
Key Enablers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Intelligence and Counterintelligence ➤ Strategic Communications (including Information Operations, Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy) ➤ Psychological Operations ➤ Training and Advising ➤ Civil-Military Operations (including Civil Affairs, Engineering and Essential Services, Economic Activities, Governance, Military and Civilian Police, and Legal Affairs) ➤ Additional SOF and Special Forces Capabilities ➤ Language and Cultural Capabilities (e.g., Foreign Area Officers) 	

Source: CNAS adaptation of the Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept (Final Draft), February 2007.

A P P E N D I X 3

INNOVATION PROPOSALS

A number of innovations have been proposed to enhance America's ability to conduct irregular warfare more effectively. Although we do not endorse all of these proposals, all are worthy of careful consideration as the administration refines its plans to expand U.S. ground forces for the future.

These proposals generally fall into two categories: organizational innovations involving general purpose forces and creating specialized units and capabilities for irregular warfare.

A number of proposals argue that new organizational structures could enhance the ability of the U.S. to conduct irregular or stability operations. One idea is to create a joint task force (JTF) led by a two- or three-star general that will assume command and control for stability operations.⁸⁰ The general purpose forces under this commander would, for that tour of duty, specialize in stability operations. Given the types of capabilities required for these irregular missions, the JTF would be weighted towards psychological operations, military police, civil affairs, engineers, and medic specialties. Rather than create a special purpose force, whose members would always be devoted to missions other than combat, these forces would be task-organized for irregular warfare or stability operations, and once their tour with the JTF ended, these troops would cycle back into the general purpose forces. The British used a similar model when they required continual rotations for the conflict in Northern Ireland, but also wanted to maintain a force base for other operations.

Another proposal would resurrect and revitalize an old organizational idea—the Military Advisory and Assistance Group (MAAG) concept.⁸¹

Comprised of military personnel that augment the U.S. country team in a host nation, the MAAG is designed to build that country's capacity. Each MAAG's composition is specifically tailored to the host nation's circumstances. The MAAG works closely with—and in many cases would be subservient to—the U.S. ambassador as the chief of mission to the country team. Since the best, and some would argue only, way to “win” an irregular warfare operation is through indirect means, MAAG teams provide a way to bolster a weak state's security apparatus. Since the MAAG is integrated into the country teams, and at the command of the ambassador, shoring up security is not done in isolation, but just one of the pillars of the U.S. strategy to strengthen the host nation government's legitimacy. The MAAG leader's rank would vary, but like other proposals that will be examined, the MAAG team would be rank heavy, being led by a colonel or brigadier general (or a Navy captain or rear admiral).

Whereas the MAAG proposes an organizational fix to training and advising missions, another idea focuses on building specialists to fill this role.⁸² Born out of watching the Army man and train for these missions in an *ad hoc* fashion, the proposal calls for the creation of a permanent Army Advisor Corps comprised of 20,000 Combat Advisors. Although these Combat Advisors would come from the pool of Army general purpose forces, they would receive extended training and education on their new mission, and would be in the Corps for three years. With a lieutenant general serving as commander of the Corps, and an appropriate command structure down the echelons, the Advisor Corps would also be rank heavy. Importantly, the Corps would be made a career-enhancing move, thus providing incentives

⁸⁰ Charles Barry, “Organizing Land Forces for Stability Operations,” *National Defense University and the Center for Technology and National Security Policy Short Course on Force Structure for Stability Operations and Interagency Integration* (Washington: Ft. McNair, 23 May 2007). See also Hans Binnendijk and Stuart E. Johnson, eds., *Transforming for Stability and Reconstruction Operations* (Washington: National Defense University Press, 2004).

⁸¹ Robert Killebrew, *The Left-Hand Side of the Spectrum: Ambassadors and Advisors in Future U.S. Strategy*, (Washington: The Center for a New American Security, June 2007).

⁸² John A. Nagl, *Institutionalizing Adaptation: It's Time for a Permanent Army Advisory Corps*, (Washington: The Center for a New American Security, June 2007).

for the best and brightest to seek out this assignment. By setting up a home for Combat Advisors that would systematically address and institutionalize training, equipping, organization, education, and doctrine for training and advising missions, the United States would substantially improve its performance in these missions.

Other proposals argue for the creation of specialized units—specifically, carving out a number of specialized brigades from the general purpose forces. Although not a new idea, the most recent incarnation calls for creating a significant number of Army brigades focused on stability operations.⁸³ This proposal would also create MAAGs, but these MAAGs would be the deployed field command in charge of stability operations, and come with three more elements.

First, Forward Liaison and Assistance Groups (FLAGs) would provide the principal ground force maneuver formations in the area. FLAGs would be primarily composed of intelligence units, infantry, military police, SOF, construction engineers, transportation, communications, and logistics elements, civil affairs, psychological operations, quick reaction force (QFR) squadrons, WMD QRFs, and military advisor teams.⁸⁴

A second element would be Security Training and Equipping Groups (STEGs). The United States set up something similar to STEGs in Iraq, Multi-National Security Transition Command—Iraq (MNSTC-I), to train local security forces. Given the *ad hoc* way in which MNSTC-I was established, however, its results have been less than optimal.⁸⁵ This proposal would create “MNSTC-I in a box”

through the STEGs—a rapidly deployable training, equipping, and mentoring capability.

Finally, the MAAG would have Civil Operations, Reconstruction, and Development Support Groups (CORDS). Whereas STEGs would focus on strengthening the host nation’s security apparatus, CORDS would focus on building the non-security arm of the host nation’s government such as civil administration, the rule of law, health care, and economic development. Having a deployable “CORDS in a box” would institutionalize the ability to perform reconstruction and development in less permissive environments.

While the authors do not endorse these proposals, all of these innovative ideas deserve to be developed and assessed in detail. The most promising, in our view, are the proposals to create an Army Advisor Corps and to update the MAAG concept.

A much more vigorous debate needs to be had regarding how best to address future challenges. Simply changing the general purpose forces on the margins will not put stability operations on par with combat operations, as a recent DoD directive rightly mandates. Nor will it do enough to improve our capabilities for irregular operations writ large. While specialized forces may not be the answer, neither are general purpose forces without proper reorientation and preparation for missions other than conventional warfighting. The debate over expansion should be used to create more intellectual space for such innovative ideas to be developed and discussed. Force expansion also offers opportunities to put some of the more promising innovations into practice.

⁸³ The authors are flexible in terms of the ultimate number of total brigades created, but initially proposed 27 Active Army brigades, 18 Army Reserve brigades, 3 Marine regiments (brigade-equivalents), and 15 National Guard brigades. Andrew F. Krepinevich, Nadia Schadow, and Marin J. Strmecki, “Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction Operations: Meeting the Challenge,” presentation to the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy, 22 January 2007.

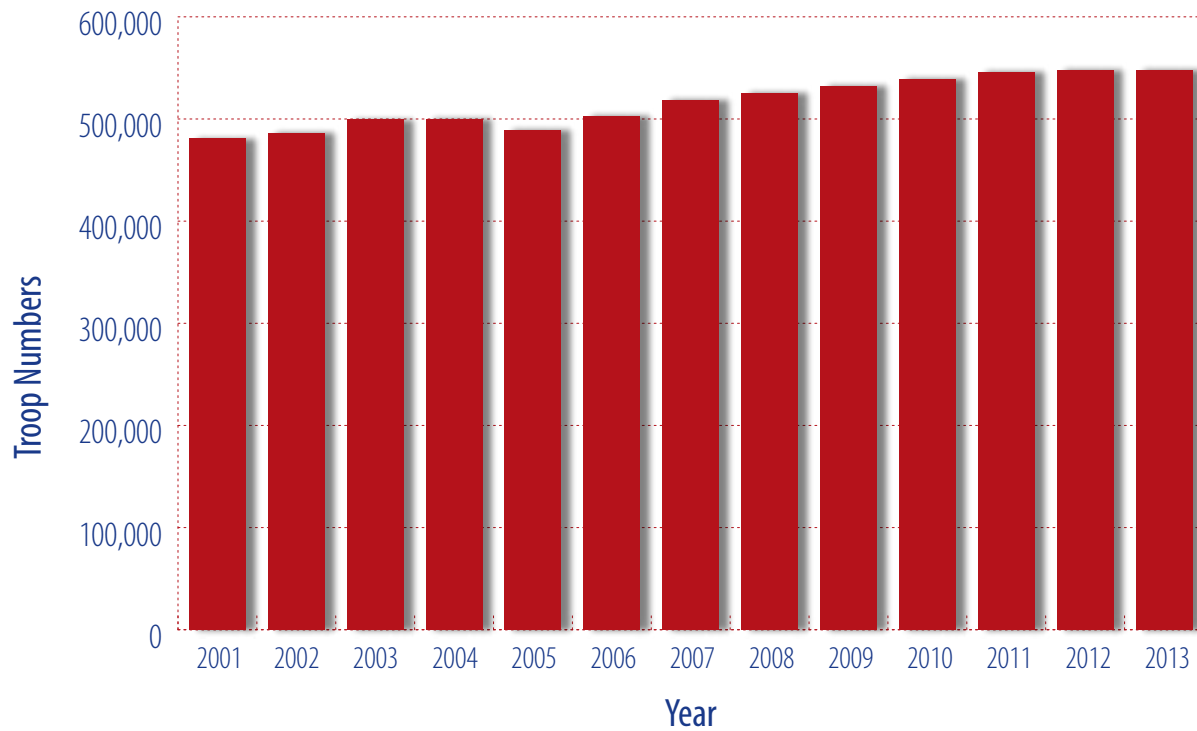
⁸⁴ In response to the FLAG concept, the Army asserts it already has this capability in its Combat Support Brigade (Maneuver Enhancement), or CSB (ME). But this assertion glosses over important differences between the two concepts that deserve more careful examination and debate. See, for instance, Tammy S. Schultz, “Ten Years Each Week: The Warrior’s Transformation to Win the Peace” (Ph.D. diss., Georgetown University, 2005), p. 268; James D. Shumway, “A Strategic Analysis of the Maneuver Enhancement Brigade,” (Carlisle: U.S. Army War College, 18 March 2005), 16.

⁸⁵ See Nagl, *Institutionalizing Adaptation*.

A P P E N D I X 4

ARMY EXPANSION PLAN (ACTIVE COMPONENT)—
PROJECTED END STRENGTH GROWTH
FY 2001 TO FY 2013

Figure A.1

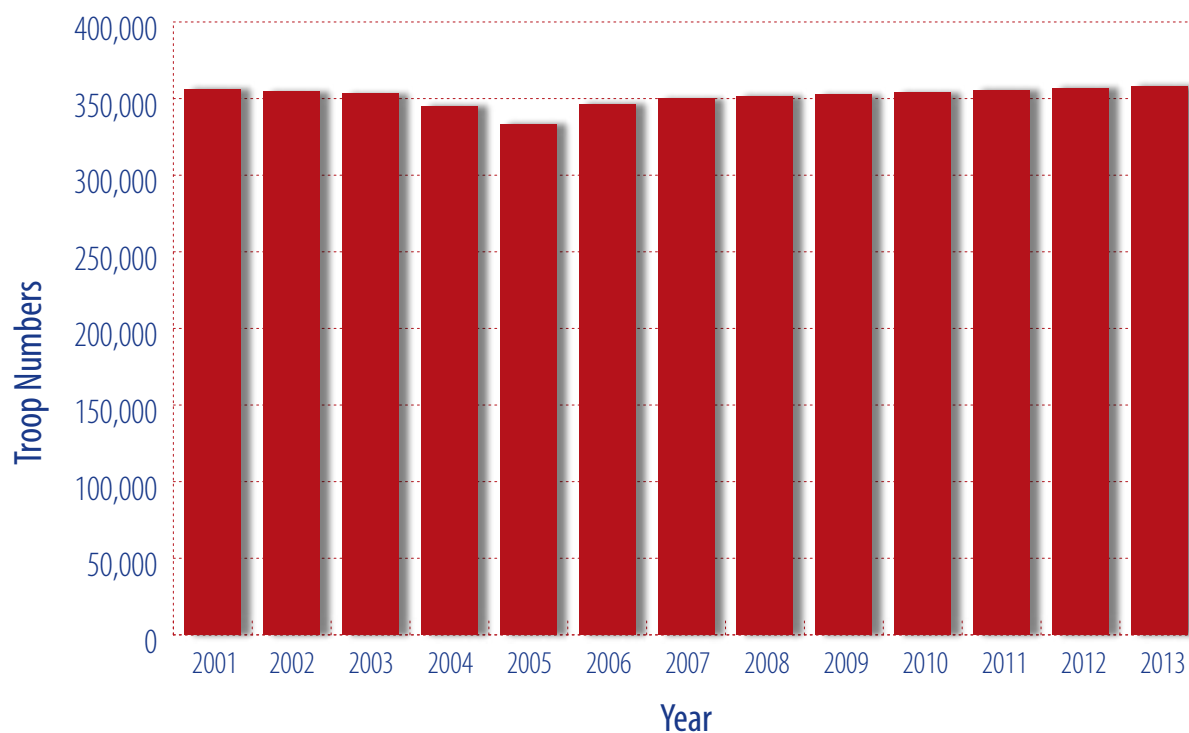


Sources: End strength data from 2001 to 2004: *Annual Report of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to the President and Congress* (2005); Offices of the Undersecretary of Defense, *FY 2008 Budget Justification Materials*; Congressional Budget Office, "Estimated Cost of the Administration's Proposal to Increase the Army's and the Marine Corps's Personnel Levels" (16 April 2007).

Year	Army Active Component End Strength	Year	Army Active Component End Strength
2001	480,801	2008	525,400
2002	486,542	2009	532,400
2003	499,301	2010	539,400
2004	499,543	2011	546,000
2005	488,944	2012	547,400
2006	502,466	2013	547,400
2007	518,400		

ARMY EXPANSION PLAN (NATIONAL GUARD)—
PROJECTED END STRENGTH GROWTH
FY 2001 TO FY 2013

Figure A.2

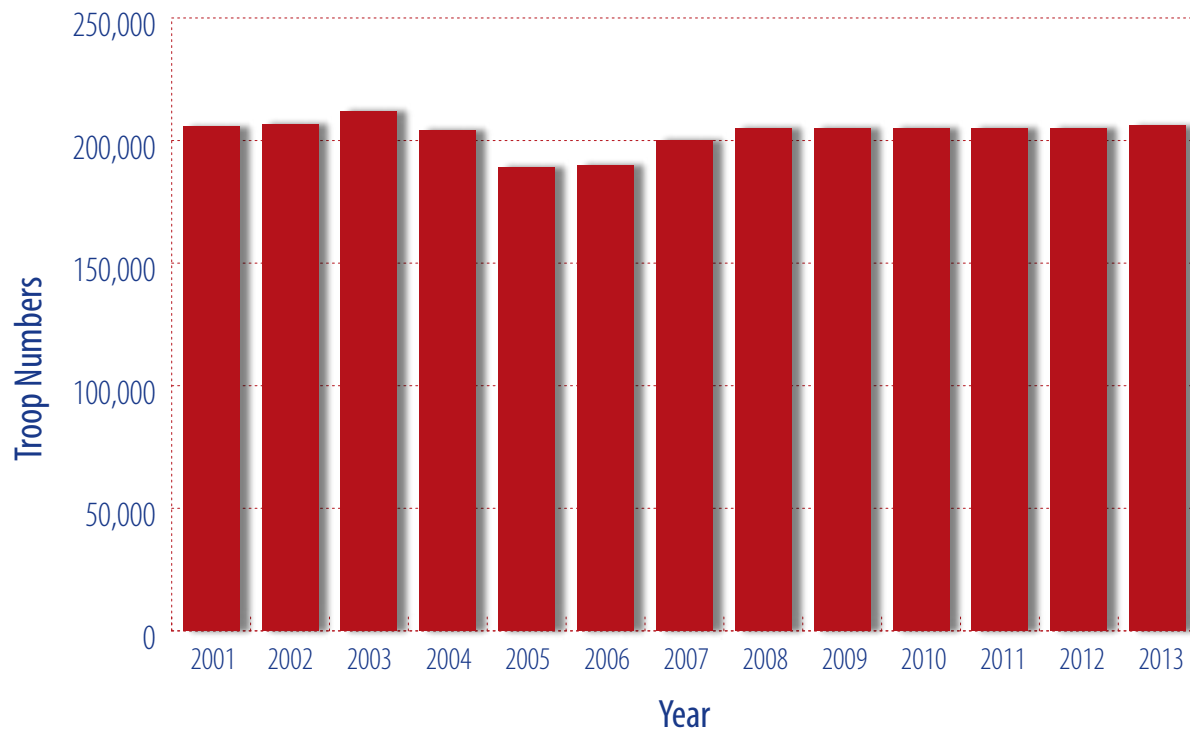


Sources: End strength data from 2001 to 2004: *Annual Report of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to the President and Congress* (2005); Offices of the Undersecretary of Defense, *FY 2008 Budget Justification Materials*; Congressional Budget Office, "Estimated Cost of the Administration's Proposal to Increase the Army's and the Marine Corps's Personnel Levels" (16 April 2007).

Year	Army National Guard End Strength	Year	Army National Guard End Strength
2001	355,981	2008	351,319
2002	354,451	2009	352,566
2003	353,229	2010	353,901
2004	345,056	2011	355,333
2005	333,177	2012	356,820
2006	346,288	2013	358,201
2007	350,000		

ARMY EXPANSION PLAN (RESERVE)—
PROJECTED END STRENGTH GROWTH
FY 2001 TO FY 2013

Figure A.3

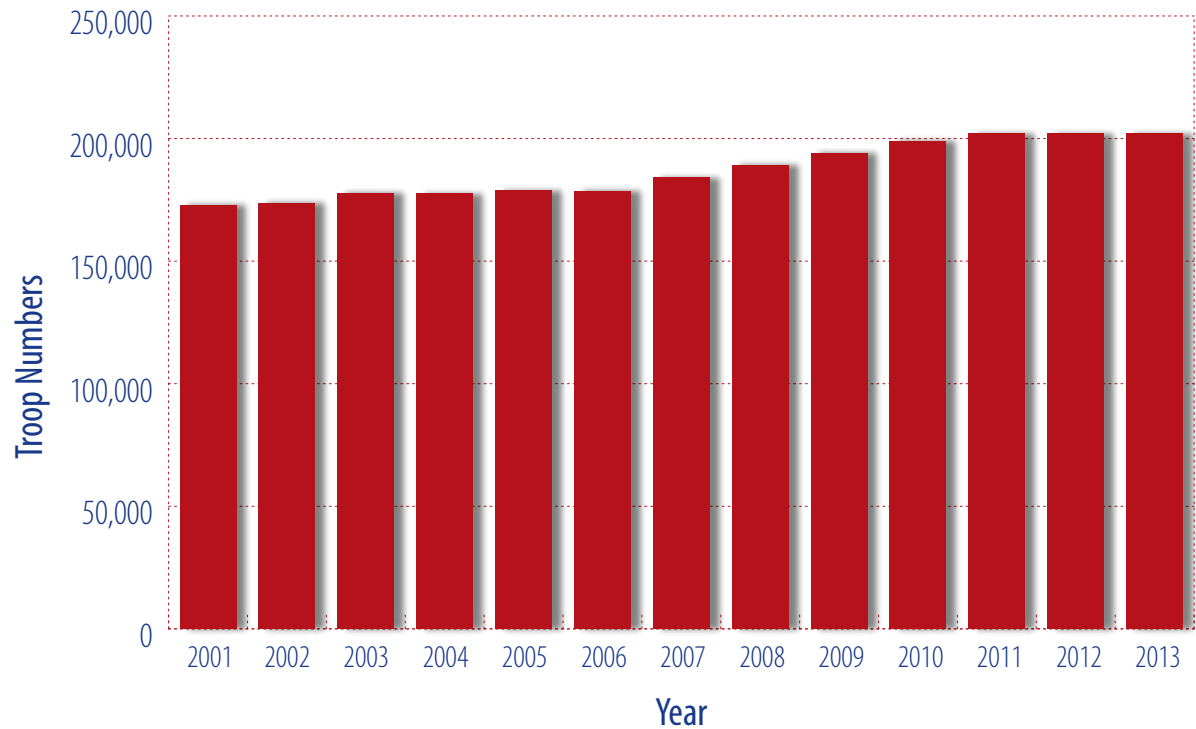


Sources: End strength data from 2001 to 2006: Offices of the Undersecretary of Defense Comptroller, *FY 2003 to FY2008 Budget Justification Materials*; End strength data from 2007 to 2012: Congressional Budget Office, "Estimated Cost of the Administration's Proposal to Increase the Army's and the Marine Corps's Personnel Levels" (16 April 2007).

Year	Army Reserve Component End Strength	Year	Army Reserve Component End Strength
2001	205,628	2008	205,000
2002	206,682	2009	205,000
2003	211,890	2010	205,000
2004	204,131	2011	205,000
2005	189,005	2012	205,000
2006	189,975	2013	206,010
2007	200,000		

MARINE CORPS EXPANSION PLAN (ACTIVE COMPONENT)—
PROJECTED END STRENGTH GROWTH
FY 2001 TO FY 2013

Figure A.4

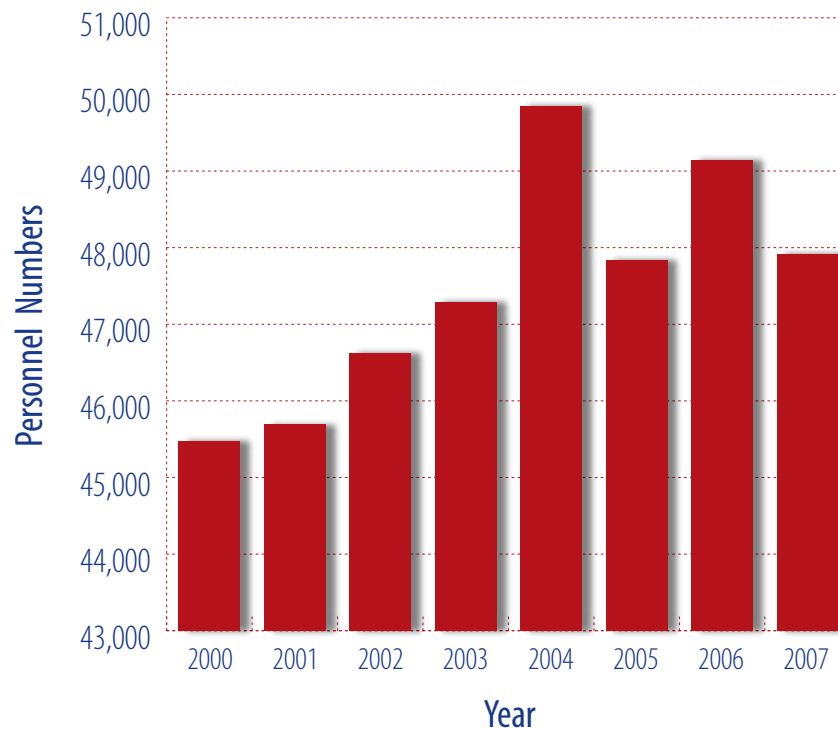


Sources: End strength data from 2001 to 2004: *Annual Report of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to the President and Congress* (2005); Offices of the Undersecretary of Defense, *FY 2008 Budget Justification Materials*; Congressional Budget Office, "Estimated Cost of the Administration's Proposal to Increase the Army's and the Marine Corps's Personnel Levels" (16 April 2007).

Year	USMC Active Component End Strength	Year	USMC Active Component End Strength
2001	172,934	2008	189,000
2002	173,733	2009	194,000
2003	177,779	2010	199,000
2004	177,480	2011	202,000
2005	178,704	2012	202,000
2006	178,477	2013	202,000
2007	184,000		

SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND END STRENGTH FY 2001 TO FY 2013

Figure A.5



Over the next five years, Special Operations Forces will increase its end strength by 13,000 personnel. The specific growth plan per fiscal year is yet to be made public.

A future CNAS study, the Project on Special Operations Forces, will examine SOF end strength issues, as well as other challenges facing Special Operations Command.

Sources: 2000-2007 SOF Posture Reviews; Government Accountability Office, "Special Operations Forces Severe Human Capital Challenges Must be Met to Meet Expanded Role," (July 2006); General Bryan Brown, "Hearing of the HASC Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities on Current Manning, Equipping, and Readiness Challenges Facing Special Operations Forces," (31 January 2007).

Year	Special Operations Command End Strength	Year	Special Operations Command End Strength
2000	45,471	2004	49,848
2001	45,690	2005	47,835
2002	46,624	2006	49,146
2003	47,285	2007	47,911

APPENDIX 5

PLANNED ARMY ACTIVE CORPS/RESERVE CORPS REBALANCING FY 2003 TO FY 2013			
DECREASES			
Units	Numbers	Skills	Numbers
Field Artillery Battalion	20,000	Field Artillery	34,600
Air Defense Battalion	18,000	Air Defense Artillery	6,100
Signal Battalion	28,000	Signal	10,600
Armor Battalion	10,000	Armor	19,300
Engineer Brigade Headquarters	25,000	Maintenance	11,000
Logistics Headquarters	12,000	Adjutant General/ Personnel Service Support	8,000
Quartermaster Company	74,000	Finance	1,400
TOTAL	187,000	TOTAL	91,000
INCREASES			
Units	Numbers	Skills	Numbers
Military Intelligence Battalion	15,000	Military Intelligence	5,400
Military Police Company	58,000	Military Police	11,400
Engineers Company	252,000*	Engineer	1,500
Infantry Battalion	18,000	Aviation	11,700
Medical Company	7,000	SOF	11,000
Quartermaster Company	17,000	Chemical	1,600
Ordnance Company	14,000	Space Operations	1,400
		Information Operations	1,300
TOTAL	381,000	TOTAL	45,300

*Engineering moved from battalion centric legacy force to a company centric modular force

A P P E N D I X 6

THE MARINE CORPS'S PRELIMINARY EXPANSION PLAN FY 2007 TO FY 2011						
	FY 07	FY 08	FY 09	FY 10	FY 11	Totals
Intelligence		371	273			644
Foreign Area Officer/Regional Affairs Officer (FAO/RAO)					24	24
Information Operations			101			101
Reconnaissance Platoon	46	46				92
Civil Affairs		173				173
Military Police Company	140	333	292			765
Combat Engineer Battalion (CEB)	114	114	287			515
Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD)		36	45			81
Training and Education Command (TECOM)	600	325	325			1250
Infantry Battalion	1746	873		513		3132
HQ	159	228		336		723
Counter Battery Radar Platoon	58		58	58		174
Air Naval Gunfire Liaison (ANGLICO)	52	104				156
Fleet Replacement Squadron (FRS)	110	160				270
Div Truck Company		448				448
MC Recruiting Corps (MCRC)	400	200				600
Radio Battalion		67	349			416
Marine Heavy Helicopter (HMH)		335				335
Artillery Battery		146	146	146		438
Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron (VMU)		190				190
Marine Air Control Group (MACG HQ)		44				44
Marine Air Support Squadron Detachments (MASS)		246				246
Operational and Test Evaluation Unit for AH1 Cobra (H1 OT)		36				36
Combat Logistics Battalion (CLB)		343	751			1094
Marine Air Control Squadron— Air Traffic Control Detachments (MASC ATC Det.)			92	92		184
Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron (HMLA (ATS))			932		466	1398
Marine Wing Communication Squadron (MWCS Det.)			267	267		534
Combat Logistics Regiment (CLR)				436		436
Assault Amphibious				382		382
Marine Logistics Group (MLG)				329		329
Joint Strike Fighter Fighter/Reconnaissance/Strike (JSF FRS)				198	237	435
Marine Tactical Air Command Squadron (MTACS)				122		122
Tank Battalion					772	772
Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA)					492	492
Combat Logistics Company (CLC)					218	218
Bridge Company					180	180

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