

5-1-2007

Manning the Force

Douglas V. Johnson Dr.

Follow this and additional works at: https://press.armywarcollege.edu/articles_editorials

Recommended Citation

Johnson, Douglas V. Dr., "Manning the Force" (2007). *Articles & Editorials*. 253.
https://press.armywarcollege.edu/articles_editorials/253

This Op Ed is brought to you for free and open access by USAWC Press. It has been accepted for inclusion in Articles & Editorials by an authorized administrator of USAWC Press.

MANNING THE FORCE

Dr. Douglas V. Johnson II

OK, so the Total Force is being expanded. What will that expansion look like? Colonel (Ret.) John Bonin of the U.S. Army War College argues that restricting the increase to all “trigger-pullers” is the wrong answer. In the long run, he is clearly correct, but maybe there is another dimension that bears consideration—the Trainees, Transients, Holders, and Students (TTHS) limits.

Army Force Generation may or may not work once the Total Force expands, but as we better comprehend the nature of the fight in which we are likely to be engaged, it may be more important than ever to make time and space to allow the Soldier-leaders in this force to study, think, and “waste time” doing both. Current officer, noncommissioned officer (NCO), troop ratios do not allow this beyond a very limited scope. Further, it has almost always been the case that real war is much more junior leader intensive than Tables of Organization and Equipment have ever allowed, and urban combat, which is progressively becoming the norm, is even more so. As a result, officer/NCO percentages in the force should increase significantly. In the long run, this will cause difficulties in career progression, but that is partly a matter of expectation management. This is also not a TTHS account issue directly, but the two feed off each other—the relative numbers of officers and NCOs has to increase to meet the Army’s future demands and may best be met through judicious expansion of the TTHS account.

The hard truth is that the Army needs more junior and intermediate leaders at almost every echelon. It needs them to be in school—formal military schools as both instructors and students; in advanced civil schools (universities), and on internships across a much expanded range of disciplines. It needs them in a broader range of positions within the military establishment, and here I am thinking more of mid- and senior grade. It needs them to be allowed increased recovery time from repetitive combat tours.

Army officers need to perform internships at the Department of State (DoS). Army officers need to perform internships at the United Nations, Department of the Treasury, Commerce, Justice, Transportation, and a host of Nongovernment Organizations (NGOs) all of which will be players in implementing Department of Defense (DoD) Directive 3000.05, *Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations*. It is not likely that DoS, or any of the other departments will ever be allowed to expand their numbers to be able to meet the Stability and Reconstruction requirements. Strict interpretation of DoD 3000.05 makes it essential that the Army have a stable of officers capable of performing liaison at a minimum, and augmenting or, worst case, performing the duties of DoS and other agency representatives to meet the mission requirements.

A quick review of the seldom read, mostly unknown Army Green Book, *Soldiers Become Governors*, strongly suggests the Army must be able to come up with Soldier-leaders with a host of other than traditional military talents. This cannot be accomplished

unless space is made, institutionally, for a higher percentage of officers to be absent from operational units, to be in training, and to be on detail to other than direct military duties.

The institution needs more officers of high talent on “the Bench” to be able to carry the present burden. If the operating tempo (OPTEMPO) does not change significantly, more of the same will only generate burnout. Graduate school must once again become possible without causing career death. Internships must be expanded across all relevant government departments and even into selected NGOs. The headlong pursuit of cultural studies cannot be restricted to classrooms. Immersion, and the accompanying honing of language proficiency, is possible to a degree in the classroom, but there is simply no substitute for living in the culture. That means time in the culture and out of the military mainstream—a program already underway on a very limited basis for U.S. Military Academy graduates.

The concept of creating officers who are “pentathletes” further reinforces this idea. To become a pentathlete, a person must devote most of his/her time to training and education to become expert in each of the five categories—one cannot compete as a pentathlete by training on weekends or periodically between other jobs. Pentathletes require focused engagement in their required disciplines and that translates to time and extraordinary administrative support to allow them to train and develop with minimal distractions.

The looming requirement, noted above, is to do something substantive about DoD Directive 3000.05. If the Army is going to be serious about adhering to this directive, a significant amount of training and educating will be required to build a credible capability. There are several good reasons to do so, entirely aside from the fact that it is a directive and is supposed to be obeyed. The Army should vigorously pursue effective implementation of this directive, if for no other reason than it already possesses the essential infrastructural base in the Maneuver Enhancement formations currently building. These modular structures will necessarily possess an engineering base element to which additional infrastructure-development capabilities may be added. Funding to support the development of these brigade structures should be viewed by DoD as investing in a sure two-for-one process. These organizations will be capable of meeting the operational support requirements of the combatant commanders in peacetime, and in combat operations as initially intended, but may also become the base organizations responsible for executing DoD Directive 3000.05 missions. But development of this mandated capability should not be seen as a purely engineering exercise—reconstruction certainly; the other portions, however, tend to be Soldier-centric and, like Urban Combat, are NCO and junior officer-centric. To fulfill the mandate of the directive, the Army will have to develop broad expertise in civil infrastructure functions. Arguably, this too can be viewed as a “two-fer.” Soldier-leaders acquire the expertise necessary to reestablish civil infrastructure and administration during that uncertain period between the time matters are in flux and when it becomes safe enough to bring in civilian contractors; and these Soldier-leaders will acquire the ability to perform serious urban infrastructure analysis as an intelligence function should it later be required.

I am not talking about resurrecting Emory Upton’s “Expansible Army” concept,

although there are parallels. That we need more capable junior to mid-grade officers and NCOs is hardly worth debating. That we need to accept and adapt to the obvious interagency, urban management, and other DoD Directive 3000.05 requirements follows, and that we can get double return from our investment should make the adjustment more palatable. The existing TTHS account limitations are based on an Army structure and task orientation that no longer exist. What a reasonable percentage should be remains to be worked out between the Army G-3 and the G-1 once they have a grasp on what the changed situation requires. In the end, an increased TTHS account will provide the Army the ability to achieve: desired cultural depth through schooling and on the ground experience, DoD Directive 3000.05 capabilities across a broad range of disciplines, the depth to conduct prolonged urban combat operations, broader service, and joint tour experience, adequate between tour recovery time, and potentially, an expansion base for any larger conflict that might come along. We must have the time to develop our leaders to be able to master our new situation and since we cannot manufacture time, we must accept "inefficient use" of manpower spaces in an expanded TTHS account to make time available.

Organizations interested in reprinting this or other SSI opinion pieces should contact the Publications Department via e-mail at SSI_Publishing@carlisle.army.mil. All organizations granted this right must include the following statement: "Reprinted with permission of the Strategic Studies Institute Newsletter, U.S. Army War College."