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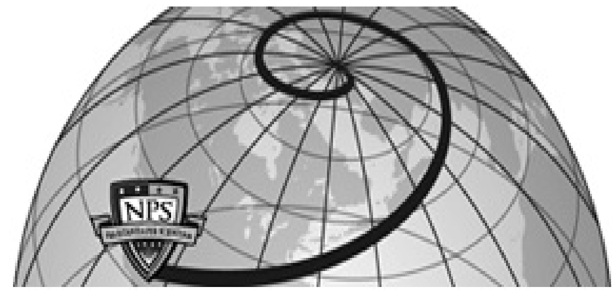

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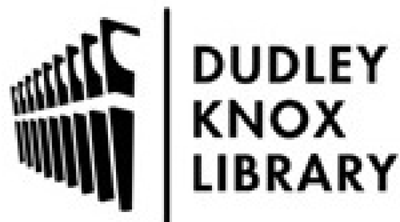

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WAR OR WELFARE:
THE MILITARY AS AN AGENT OF SOCIAL CHANGE

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ABSTRACT

The military has contributed in various ways to social change in America from colonial times to present. Indeed, the modern military exercises an enormous impact on American society. History shows that social change has occurred as a byproduct of the military's normal operations, efforts to improve military effectiveness, and "social engineering." A combination of political, social, and economic factors suggests that the nation's defense needs will be linked with domestic causes in the years ahead.

WAR OR WELFARE:
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In 1941, General George C. Marshall observed that racial segregation was "a social problem which has perplexed the American people throughout the history of this nation." He went on to warn against "experiments within the Army in the solution of social problems," since they present a "danger to efficiency, discipline, and morale" (Lee, 1966:142). A position paper on a proposal for the "progressive integration" of the Army also emphasized this particular point:

> The Army is not a sociological laboratory; to be effective it must be organized and trained according to the principles which will insure success. Experiments, to meet the wishes and demands of the champions of every race and creed for the solution of their problems, are a danger to efficiency, discipline and morale and would result in ultimate defeat (Lee, 1966:142).

Opponents of racial integration in the military of the 1940s frequently summoned this argument: the armed forces have a job to do, and they can't be bothered with unrelated social issues. Society's problems are not the military's concern as long as the military can function effectively and efficiently. Indeed, "every effort should be made . . . to maintain . . . the social and racial conditions which exist in civil life" so the normal customs of military personnel are not disrupted (Lee, 1966:142).

The argument against using the military as an agent of social change, against social experimentation and potentially disruptive action, is as old as the military itself; and it can be found in the commentary of those who once opposed "Project 100,000" or, more recently, in the case against assigning women to combat. The position of hardline traditionalists here—for military efficiency above all—is both curious and ironic. It is curious because the military cannot escape from being an

agent of social change. Whether it's efficient or not, even without deliberate attempts at "social experimentation," by its very nature the military exercises an enormous impact on American society. At the same time, it is ironic that "military efficiency" has *itself* been responsible for many of the most far-reaching social changes attributed to the military—including racial integration—and it promises to produce significant changes in the years ahead.

Impacts of the Military on Society: A Brief Look at the Record

The American military establishment is "so much larger than all other institutions of government," a former Department of Defense official writes, "that its operations and its impacts—on the economy, on class and racial minorities, on science and research, on higher education, on the legal system of justice, on the national scheme of values—are literally of another order of magnitude" (Yarmolinsky, 1973:327). "The military is the largest, strongest, and most pervasive institution in our society," another writer observes. "It exerts its influence over individuals, groups, and the nation as a collectivity"; and "it would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of the armed forces in United States society" (Jacobs, 1986:1–2). Indeed, "with the exception of the public schools and possibly the churches," a scholar maintains, the military's impact on the American people "is greater than that of any other institution" (Ambrose, 1972:4).

Basically, the military does not have to *act* as an agent of social change to be one. It influences the society of which it is a part by just being there, through its massive size and reach, touching the lives of so many Americans. In fact, it is estimated that the Department of Defense has a direct influence on the livelihood of at least 10 percent of all workers in this country—spending close to 30 percent of the entire federal budget. In 1991, it could count among its "employees" over two million active-duty members of the armed forces, one million civil service workers, more than a million military reservists, and a vast number of civilians under government

contract.[1] In addition, there are currently close to three million dependents of active-duty military personnel and an estimated 30 million veterans (5 percent of whom are military annuitants).

Yet, even when the American military was relatively small, it was a force for social change. As Glick (1971) points out, armies at peace have often been directed toward social or domestic activities as a way of marking time. This experience in America is captured by Zachary Taylor's lament of some 170 years ago that "the ax, pick, saw, and trowel has [sic] become more the implement of the American soldier than the cannon, musket, or sword" (Glick, 1971:10–11). It is also evident in the many nonmilitary accomplishments and contributions of the armed forces toward the growth of the nation. Glick (1971), for example, gives credit to the military for the following internal improvements or diverse cases of "nation-building": the Lewis and Clark Expedition into the territory of the Louisiana Purchase; the explorations of Pike, de Bonneville, Fremont, and Long; assistance to civilians on the American frontier by the Army Medical Corps; medical research and the contributions of Army doctors such as Beaumont, Waterhouse, Gorgas, and Reed; the introduction of civil engineering into the curricula of American universities; the work of the Army Corps of Engineers; and the work of Army engineering officers in early railroad construction.

This is, no doubt, an abbreviated list, for there are much broader areas of influence that have extended from older times to present day. One such area is the military's role in the socialization of young people and its history of providing "second chances" to those at the bottom of America's social or economic ladder. The American military of the 19th century, for instance, employed Indians as scouts, guides, and soldiers (separately and in organized units) partly in the hope of "civilizing" them. As White (1972) observes, it was widely held that the Army could become a "social agency transforming 'wild' Indians into solid citizens"—in a sense, creating a

melting pot for Indians, where they could learn trades, the English language, and habits of obedience, cleanliness, punctuality, and order—while making frontier life safer for settlers.

During the American Civil War, the Union Army became a "school for Negroes," offering basic education to freedmen and black soldiers. Classes were taught by Northern civilians, as well as by Army officers and their wives, chaplains, and enlisted men. According to White (1975), a comprehensive educational system was developed that became a precedent for later schools. In the Department of the Gulf alone, there were 30 regimental schools, where as many as 50,000 blacks learned to read and write by the war's end (Foner, 1974). All told, it is estimated that about 200,000 black men received basic educational skills in the Union Army's schools.

American immigrants turned to the military of the 19th century for employment, status, recognition, English-language instruction, a chance to learn American customs, citizenship, and assimilation into the mainstream of society (the same reasons that attract recent immigrants to service in today's military). The record and accomplishments of immigrants in the American military are well known, with dramatic accounts of valor in all wars since the Revolution (Hicken, 1969; White, 1972). The military also helped to disperse immigrants throughout the country, generally from the Eastern cities to the American frontiers where many served and often settled. In fact, as Jacobs (1986:31) writes, "millions of immigrants have entered the societal mainstream legally and socially, by serving in the [American] armed forces"—gaining vertical as well as geographical mobility.[2]

The military has operated as a training ground and a vehicle for the education of countless young men. This is especially true since the advent of the modern era. Each year, hundreds of thousands of new recruits—mostly teenagers without job experience—are brought into the military and trained in occupations as diverse as

cook and cryptoanalyst. The military runs a "vast vocational education and training system" that must prepare "an underdeveloped human capital resource" to "man and operate a virtually self-sufficient, technologically advanced society" (Levitan and Alderman, 1977:112).

This "vast instructional complex" is the largest training and education establishment in the world. (The Army currently calls itself "the world's largest high-tech school" in recruiting advertisements.) It is difficult to estimate the direct impact exercised by military training on the preparation of young people for civilian occupations; but, by virtue of its methods and size alone, the military has clearly been a primary source of trained manpower for civilian jobs in a variety of skilled areas. "Since the armed services are a public agency," Levitan and Alderman (1977:111) write, "and since they have consciously adopted a policy of high turnover to maintain a youthful composition, education and training not only increase the well-being of those who serve their country, but also improve the nation's stock of human resources." Twenty years ago, it was estimated that one out of every six men in the civilian labor force had received his occupational training in the military (Glick, 1971;42); and the head of the construction unions in New York City claimed that as many as 95 percent of his members were veterans of the armed forces (Ambrose, 1972:14).

All young people who have entered the military have been socialized to some degree during their time in uniform. (Basic training itself is believed to be as traumatic as any event in a normal life.) The military experience teaches obedience, respect for authority, and discipline—"traits which are indispensable in an industrialized society" (Ambrose, 1972:15). Military members likewise learn how to "survive" as a small cog in a large organization, and how to deal with a mammoth bureaucracy. The act of socialization is a natural product of an effective armed force that, by necessity, must bring people together from varied backgrounds to serve for

a common cause. In the modern era, this means training substantial numbers of raw recruits how to work together for the defense of the nation, how to deal with adversity, how to build self-confidence, and how to lead as well as follow. The military has also worked to raise the educational level of its members so that they can be effective in their jobs. There is no precise tally on the number of service members who have gained education in basic skills through the military—or the number of young people who entered service as a high school dropout and came out with an equivalency diploma or more—but the figure must be quite large. In the 1960s, Janowitz (1971) observed that more than a quarter of the Army's enlisted men were obtaining a high school equivalency diploma while on active duty. In fact, the General Educational Development equivalency diploma (or GED, as it is commonly known) was originated by the military, which still operates one of the largest programs of this type in the country. The obvious implication of this, as Barber (1972:156) writes, is that "the Armed Forces, by raising the educational level of those who spend a few years in service, tend to incrementally raise the educational level of the society as a whole."[3]

The armed forces have also influenced the lives of many "marginal men"—that is, those who are physically, intellectually, educationally, emotionally, morally, or otherwise on the fringe of qualifying for military service. For example, during World War I, the Army established Development Battalions to train and assimilate men who had physical, mental, or moral limitations that were deemed to be remediable (Department of Army, 1965). Mobilization for World War II compelled the military to extend its manpower base as far as possible. Over the course of the war, the Army enlisted over 300,000 illiterate or semiliterate men; and 85 percent of these men were successfully graduated from special training programs for assimilation in Army units. The Army also enlisted about 100,000 convicted felons during the Second World War, pulling 2,000 men directly from prison (Department of Army, 1965).

The military's history of taking "morally marginal men" and offering them a second chance in life is quite interesting. According to the Army (1965:213), former convicts allowed to enlist during World War II were being given a rare opportunity to "vindicate themselves to some extent and reestablish themselves in the eyes of society." After World War II, the Army returned to a policy of almost complete exclusion of men with felony convictions. Yet, there are numerous anecdotal accounts of juvenile offenders who were permitted to avoid prison terms by enlisting in the military. "Neither the courts nor the services keep records of the number of persons who might enlist in lieu of sentencing and conviction," a journalist writes; and "even less is known about the impact of such decisions on the services or the individuals themselves" (Judge, 1985). The fact is that it has occurred over a long period (though it is far less common today)—with courts sometimes going "to great lengths to present young defendants with the choice of military service or conviction and sentencing" (Judge, 1985).[4] Even now, some judges are often willing to dismiss charges involving certain offenses if the defendant is planning to enlist, believing that the "healthy discipline" of the military is far preferable to alternatives under the criminal justice system.[5]

Special programs have sometimes been designed to help the military meet its manpower needs by "rehabilitating" marginal groups. The Alien Enlistment Program (or Lodge-Philbin Act) of 1950 provided for the enlistment overseas of persons with special skills or expertise who could acquire "the ultimate reward of citizenship" in return for "faithful service in the Army" (Jacobs, 1986:39). Programs for Hispanics who have limited ability to speak English, but otherwise possess aptitude for military service, have been in operation variously since the early 1950s (Eitelberg, 1988). The Army's Transitional Training Program or Basic Education Project (1953), the Navy's Recruit Preparatory Training Study (1952), and the Air Force's Project 1000 (1952) were experimental programs to examine the feasibility

of enlisting men who would otherwise be rejected from military service (Department of Army, 1965). In 1964, the Army experimented with the Special Training and Enlistment Program (or STEP) for the educational and physical rehabilitation of men who would have failed to qualify for regular enlistment. (This experimental program was ultimately halted by Congress, which felt that it duplicated the existing Job Corps Program.) Perhaps the most well-known of these programs was Project 100,000, a "war on poverty" initiative of the 1960s that allowed the annual induction of 100,000 men who would have ordinarily been screened out because of their limited educational background and low aptitude test scores.[6]

The armed forces have been involved in other social action programs broadly aimed at promoting national security. Between 1921 and 1941, for example, 625,000 young men participated in the Citizens Military Training Camps. These camps were created to train civilians, enlisted men, and warrant officers for appointment as reserve officers and NCOs in the Army; but they were generally felt to be a way of bringing together young men of all types, "both native and foreign born," to "develop close national and social unity" (Department of Army, 1965:57). In 1946, an experiment in Universal Military Training (UMT) was conducted at Fort Knox, Kentucky. The experiment faded away with little notice; however, President Truman remained a firm supporter of the UMT concept both for national security and for "the health, education, character development, and training for citizenship" of young Americans (Department of Army, 1965:56; Barber, 1972:152–153).

Between 1933 and 1942, the Army was tasked with administering the Civilian Conservation Corps or CCC (Sherraden, 1981). This program was created by the Roosevelt administration for both income redistribution and rural conservation, and it involved the efforts of over three million young men during the course of its existence. The CCC camps were managed by the Army, which used 60,000 reserve officers as camp commanders and executive officers. Although the CCC was not

intended as a preparatory for military service, it is estimated that around one million participants subsequently served in World War II. These men benefited from the program in various ways, many acquiring skills in areas such as cooking, radio operation, typing, first aid, sanitation, and equipment maintenance and operation. The CCC also conducted an education program (with over 167,000 enrollees in June 1935) (Department of Army, 1965). At the same time, the program helped the military by providing Army officers with valuable experience in leadership and organization, and by enhancing the public image of the military (Sherraden, 1981).

The 1960s witnessed a number of programs aimed at improving national security through social betterment. In addition to Project 100,000, the armed services operated Project Transition—a program of technical training for enlisted personnel who were nearing completion of their term of service. The target group for Project Transition generally consisted of those who were planning to enter the civilian world and had the slimmest prospects of finding meaningful, long-term employment. Participants included combat-disabled men, combat-arms specialists and others who did not receive training in a civilian-related skill, persons who wanted to upgrade their skills, military retirees, people needing referral help, and those wishing to be "retooled" in a civilian skill or trade (Glick, 1971; Janowitz, 1982).[7] In 1965, under Exercise Polar Strike, the military's resources were used to help Alaskan Indians and Eskimos—by having the Army's Special Forces provide medical, dental, and veterinary assistance in cooperation with the U.S. Public Health Service and the Alaskan government (Glick, 1971).

There are many other ways in which the military has been an instrument of social change. Certainly, one of the most important of these has been in the area of education, and not just in the basic education and vocational training of enlisted personnel. As Glick (1971:42) points out, West Point was once the primary science and engineering teaching center in the country, furnishing the very first

engineering professors at civilian universities. Indeed, the armed forces have been in the business of educating officers through various college programs for a long time. West Point, the first of the military academies, was founded in 1802; and the first Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) units were established in 1916 (preceded by the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862).[8] The military additionally operates a network of institutions for the professional development of officers, and it encourages officers to achieve graduate degrees through fully-funded education programs, cooperative degree programs, and other means (including special programs for health professionals). Currently, over four out of five Air Force officers at the rank of major or above possess a graduate degree—as well as 75 percent of Army officers, 56 percent of Navy officers, and 40 percent of Marine Corps officers at this level (Eitelberg et al., forthcoming). Most of these officers will retire from the military at the age of about 43 and begin careers in the civilian sector.

Perhaps the greatest influence exercised by the military (indirectly) on the educational level of the population has come through the GI Bill. The original "GI Bill of Rights" was created through the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944. It contained a comprehensive package of benefits to compensate veterans for their lost opportunities and to ease their transition to civilian life. Probably the most well-known feature of the program was the very generous financial assistance available to veterans attending college. The GI Bill has been modified over the years—radically since the end of the Vietnam era and start of all-volunteer recruiting—but educational benefits are still available to qualified veterans in varying amounts.[9] The GI Bill has been called "one of the most successful and important programs in the history of the nation" (Department of Defense, 1980:2–2). Indeed, no educational assistance program, past or present, can match the overwhelming impact that the several GI Bills have had on individuals and their families (including succeeding generations), the education establishment, and society. One study, completed in

1951, found that 20 to 25 percent of the World War II veterans who took advantage of the original program would not have attended college without it. In 1968, veterans' readjustment benefits constituted about 27 percent of all federal expenditures for student support; and by 1976, GI Bill assistance represented almost 53 percent of all federal education aid (Department of Defense, 1980). During the GI Bill termination hearings before Congress in 1976, several witnesses estimated that the economic return to the nation (based on the taxable incomes of recipients) amounted to between four and six dollars for every one dollar invested in the program.[10]

The integration of blacks in the American military has also been called "one of the most far-reaching social and racial experiments in American history" (Ambrose, 1972:16). It began in 1946, was then spurred on by an Executive Order in 1948, and was finally achieved in 1954—the same year the Supreme Court decided Brown vs. Board of Education, one year before Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, and a full decade before the omnibus Civil Rights Act of 1964. (Racial integration of the military is discussed more fully below.)

There are also many other ways in which the military has influenced social change in America—much too many ways for treatment here. However, a comprehensive list would probably include the following: the effects of military service on personal values, attitudes, and behavior; influences on culture, customs, and life styles; the role played by military sponsorship of research and development in American universities; the contributions of the military's scientific studies and technological advances on society in general; the effects of military installations on surrounding communities; the effects of military service on families and family members (including intergenerational effects); the costs and benefits associated with being a military veteran or retiree; the use of the military in civil intervention (such as riot control, or, as Jacobs (1986) notes, the 49 occasions between 1970 and 1983 when military forces were used as replacements for striking public employees); the

role played by examinations for enlistment or induction in diagnosing medical or emotional problems of individuals (including the only large-scale screening for AIDS); the military's position as one of the world's largest hospital operators and users (Glick, 1971); and so forth.

It should be noted that there are many other areas of social change or influence that may occur during periods of war. The Vietnam era, for example, witnessed significant domestic unrest, conflict among social classes, families, and generations, as well as violent protest. (Writers are still analyzing the social and political ramifications of the war at home.) Large or long wars also require a redistribution of resources (including human resources) and domestic priorities. During World War II, women were called upon to replace men in the civilian labor force in unprecedented numbers. (Actually, 35 percent of all women were working at the height of the war—greater than any labor participation rate up to 1965. This included 59 percent of all single women, a proportion that was not matched for the next *32 years*.) In addition, the effects of injury or death (upon individuals and families, or upon society and the nation as a whole during a war of attrition) are clearly important, as well as the long-term behavioral or psychological responses of individuals to wartime service (such as stresses induced by battle or other military experiences).

Motives for the Agency of Change[11]

The previous discussion highlights several instances when the American military has acted as an agent of social change. The causes or motives behind these changes can be described in three ways: 1) Change has occurred as a *byproduct* of the military's normal activity in either peace or war (by the very nature of the military and its relationship with society); 2) Change has occurred as a result of intervention aimed at improving *military effectiveness* or *efficiency*; and 3) Change has occurred as a result of intervention aimed primarily at *improving society* through the instrument of the military. These three causes or motives may work

independently or in combination. The first two are obviously interrelated, assuming that the military is constantly engaged in improving itself (for example, through the education and training of its members); but there are also clear cases of special activity that are somewhat extraordinary. The third cause of change is fairly unusual in the history of the military; and in its rare occurrences, it has been justified on national security as well as social grounds.

Racial integration of the military is perhaps the most interesting major event that falls mainly in the category of improving effectiveness. History records that President Truman took a bold step forward in issuing Executive Order 9981, calling for the "equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services." Similarly, the armed forces are credited with being trail blazers for equal opportunity and race relations. Yet, as MacGregor (1972;133) points out, Truman's directive had strong political dimensions (namely, to unite minorities behind his campaign in a close election and to head off a boycott by blacks of the newly-enacted draft). Moreover, the armed forces were rather reluctant pioneers in integration, seeking to escape "social experimentation" until it became absolutely necessary.

In fact, the Navy was the first Service to integrate its ranks, announcing a policy of "nondiscrimination" in February 1946. The Navy was basically forced to adopt this policy "because segregated service had proved incredibly inefficient" (MacGregor, 1972, 1981). It had unsuccessfully experimented with an all-black ship (Purdon, 1972), and was compelled to remove certain barriers to blacks at the close of World War II. With a limited number of shore-based jobs for blacks and an incapacity to expand existing units, the Navy decided it could no longer afford to run separate programs for whites and blacks.

The Air Force had reached the same conclusion even before Truman issued the Executive Order. "It was impossible, in short, in a time of shrinking budgets and manpower cuts," MacGregor (1972:133) writes, "to operate two Air Forces [one black

and another white].” The Army became the last Service to integrate, stubbornly resisting the President’s directive on the grounds of military effectiveness (Binkin and Eitelberg, 1982). Eventually, the pressing need for troop replacements (during the final days of World War II and later in Korea) and modernization (leading to the removal of large-scale labor units) altered the Army’s perspective on social integration and force effectiveness; and in 1954, the Army abolished its last all-black unit. MacGregor (1981) credits the convergence of several forces—including pressure from civil rights advocates and idealistic leadership—in finally bringing about integration. But, “most important,” he concludes, “was the services’ realization that segregation was an inefficient way to use the manpower provided by a democratic draft law or a volunteer system made democratic by the Secretary of Defense”; and, “reinforcing the efficiency argument was the realization by the military that manpower could no longer be considered an inexhaustible resource” (MacGregor, 1981:619,612).

Organizational efficiency and effectiveness also played a supporting role in shaping the military’s “social action” programs of the 1960s. Many officials of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations looked upon the military as a potential force of change in society. Secretary of Defense McNamara, for example, posed this fundamental question in 1967: “Can the vast resources [of the Department of Defense] be used to contribute to our nation’s benefit beyond the narrow—though vitally necessary—role of military power?” (Glick, 1971:11). McNamara’s successor, Clark Clifford, raised the same issue, but expressed it somewhat differently, observing that the defense establishment owes “more of its time and more of its thinking and more of its resources to those aspects of our domestic problems which are important to our total national security” (Glick, 1971:12). As things turned out, Clifford’s twist on the argument—that national security depends on both the strength of the military and that of the greater society—more accurately reflects the

motives officially espoused by social engineers of the 1960s. In fact, Project STEP, Project 100,000, Project Transition, and the Defense Department's anti-discrimination initiatives were based on the principle that the military can be an important agent of social change without sacrificing its efficiency; and that contributions to the general welfare can be achieved as byproducts of the military's own need to be effective.

McNamara recently stated that the main objective of Project 100,000 was "to increase equity and raise the lifetime potential of disadvantaged individuals without cost to the services." There was an element of "social justice" in the program, he insisted; "but I wanted to do it in a way that didn't penalize the security forces" (Sticht et al., 1987:193). He had tried to accomplish the same objective with Project STEP about one year earlier, but Congress "absolutely refused" to support it (Sticht et al., 1987:192). By August 1966, McNamara had found the support needed to initiate the program—based on the hope that participants could "earn their fair share of this nation's abundance" and be given "an opportunity to return to civilian life with skills and aptitudes which for them and their families will reverse the downward spiral of decay" (Baskir and Strauss, 1978:126). A Deputy Chief of Manpower for the Marine Corps echoed these words: "Those of our youth who lack education, those who live in ghettos, combine the ills of idleness, ignorance, and apathy. Our task is to help cure these ills with education, training, and incentives" (Baskir and Strauss, 1978:126).

There are those (including former Defense officials) who maintain that the primary purpose of the program was to meet the early strength requirements of the Vietnam mobilization—without resorting to activation of the reserves or increased draft calls and the elimination of certain popular deferments (Eitelberg, 1988). Evidence for this position lies in the fact that Congress had just previously rejected a similar program (Project STEP would have included only volunteers—as opposed to

Project 100,000, which included both volunteers and draftees); and in the fact that aptitude standards had been lowered operationally for the Vietnam conflict even before Project 100,000 took shape. Moreover, Project 100,000 was "sold" to the armed forces by the administration not on the basis of its social objectives, but rather for its practical benefits in beefing up available manpower (Eitelberg, 1988:179). In all likelihood, the program probably was intended to serve multiple objectives; and, as one writer has observed, there is "a political habit of using the robe of national security to do the educational and training activities that might or might not be able to find nonmilitary justification and support" (Glick, 1971:43).

Another interesting example of this tactic is found in the Defense Department's racial fairness initiatives of the early 1960s. Some members of the Kennedy administration wanted the military to spearhead the national movement for civil rights reform, recognizing that civil rights legislation was still impossible to achieve in Congress. It was also felt that racial discrimination in communities near military installations created a morale problem among black service members. The Gesell Committee, tasked with surveying the problem, called for a "vigorous program to enhance the morale and efficiency of the black soldier" (MacGregor, 1972:137). Within the next few years, the Defense Department applied economic pressures to local communities, and was directly responsible for opening thousands of theaters and bowling alleys, restaurants, and taverns to black service members. In 1967, the Department extended its reach into communities by launching an open housing campaign. As MacGregor (1972:137) notes, "military efficiency was the rationalization used by the Gesell Committee, and it was certainly McNamara's reason for issuing his 1963 directive from which all the department's later racial reforms flowed." And the impetus came from "the social engineers in the Kennedy Administration, convinced that the services could be an effective instrument of social change."

The motives for Project Transition are less clear, since the program was designed to help service members who were leaving the military. In this case, the major advantage to the military itself may have been improved public relations for recruiting—coming at a time of the Vietnam War when the military's image was suffering. Another advantage was the improved skill level of persons entering the nation's pool of reservists for mobilization. But this may be stretching the point. It is more likely that Project Transition was a rare case of using the military almost exclusively for social purposes or for national security in the broad sense. This may help to explain why it lasted for such a short time and why most of the statistics on the program were withheld from publication.

There is one additional instance of social change that deserves mention here, if only for its unusual origins. It occurred as a byproduct of the "normal" operation of the military. It was not planned, and it had nothing to do with military efficiency. Indeed, it was a *mistake*—the so-called "misnorming episode" of 1976-80, when scoring errors on the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) allowed a large number of "marginal men" to join the military. Actually, research shows that almost 360,000 young men—more than in the entire history of Project 100,000—entered military service with enlistment test scores that were later discovered to have been below the minimum required level. The AFQT misnorming turned out to be the Project 100,000 nobody knew about, involving over one in four enlistees at the time and over 40 percent of all black recruits (Eitelberg, 1988:172–179). This mistake may have kept the country from returning to the draft; and it stands as a major "social program" of the modern era, since it offered employment, training, and career opportunities to a few hundred-thousand young men who may never have had those opportunities without it.

The Military as Change Agent in the Years Ahead

The 1990s will undoubtedly mark a period of transformation for the American military. The decade began with the promise of a hefty "peace dividend," following the collapse of the iron curtain in Eastern Europe and a warming of relations with the Soviet Union. The stage was set for an unprecedented "drawdown" of the cold-war military; but before any mighty swords could be turned into plowshares, the United States found itself with more than 500,000 troops primed for battle in the Middle East. After a half-year mobilization, a six-week war, and a half-year demobilization, the nation attempted to return to normalcy in a new world order. Certainly, there would be some lasting effects of the conflict on the country and its military; yet, oddly enough, within days of war's end, the dusty plans for a "downsizing of the force" were back on the drawing board.

Even before there was any talk of a "peace dividend," the military was being put to work on domestic causes. As previously noted, peacetime militaries are often perceived as an idle extravagance, and this tends to promote their employment in nonmilitary activities. President Lyndon Johnson waged a "war on poverty" in the 1960s and engaged the military as an instrument of that effort. When George Bush was elected President, he promised to summon the nation's resources for a war on drugs.

The Reagan Administration had earlier established a precedent for using the military in the anti-drug campaign—combating cocaine trafficking in South Florida in 1982 and in the Bahamas a year later, and once again for Operation Blast Furnace (1986) in the jungles of Bolivia (Knox, 1990). By 1988, the military was fully committed to drug interdiction, armed with the legal authority to arrest drug criminals overseas, and ready to fight, what one defense official termed, "the only war we've got."[12] Several billion dollars of Defense Department funds were earmarked for the effort, which included a few-hundred-thousand hours of military surveillance

and other activities to stem the flow of drugs in the United States, Central America, and the Caribbean (Leen, 1990; Weiner, 1991). A five-year plan also called for an "Andean Initiative" of training and equipping Army and police personnel in Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru (Jehl, 1990; Constable, 1990; Holmes, 1991). Indeed, Operation Just Cause, the military's action to rid Panama of Manuel Noreiga, was portrayed as both a gesture for democratic government and a drug bust. On a more refined level, Bush Administration officials were additionally exploring ways to rescue potential drug users through military service.[13]

The search for innovative uses of the military was similarly evident in Congress during 1989 when no less than 26 proposals for "national service" were introduced. The most widely discussed proposal was the "Citizenship and National Service Act of 1989," which would, according to its sponsors, "renew the ethic of civic obligation," expand the opportunities of young people to "pursue educational, vocational, and professional objectives," and "give young people experience, self-discipline, and self-confidence to overcome barriers to opportunity" (U.S. Congress, Senate, 1989:3–4). About the same time, Congress directed the Department of Defense to prepare a series of annual reports on the military's "efforts to enhance civilian skill training and the assignment process"—recognizing the need "to maximize the positive influence that Defense can offer in developing our national youth" (U.S. Congress, House, 1989:265).

Just prior to Operation Desert Shield, the defense establishment was busily bracing for a massive reduction-in-force that would involve at least a half-million active duty personnel and another 300,000 reservists over five years. Education officials around the country suggested that the military's prospective veterans could help to ease the nationwide shortage of mathematics, science, and vocational-technical teachers (Chira, 1990; Cooper, 1990). Meanwhile, others were desperately "scrambling for a new niche," seeking missions for "warriors without war" and a

raison d'etre that could keep the defense budget from sinking too far, too fast (Turque and Waller, 1990).

One month before Iraq invaded Kuwait, Senator Sam Nunn and several other legislators proposed the creation of a "Strategic Environmental Research Program" to confront "the massive environmental problems facing our nation and world today" (Tyler, 1990). Calling environmental destruction "a growing national security threat," Nunn advocated the use of defense resources to gather information on changes in the environment, develop new energy technologies, and invent new techniques for environmental cleanup (Shabecaff, 1990; Towell, 1990). Several commentators, tongue-in-cheek, wondered if this represented a "greening of the Pentagon"; but most observers recognized that it was primarily an attempt to retain the defense research establishment and safeguard some military spending (*New York Times*, 1990; *Washington Times*, 1990; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1990).

In fact, Nunn's response to the defense drawdown may well be a harbinger of things to come. The political advantages of using the military as an agent of social change are clear: if advocates of stable defense spending can claim that the peacetime military is a benefit to society, they are better armed to battle the inevitable budget cuts. Historically, increases in defense spending have come to some extent at the expense of social programs, and emphasis on social programs usually means less for defense. It is the traditional trade-off between "guns and butter" when resources for each are limited.

A recognized need for defense flexibility and the surge capacity to fight any future Desert Storm may also encourage the continued use of "double-duty dollars" —that is, programs linking national security with education, human resources development, health care, and our respective wars against drugs, crime, unemployment, illiteracy, homelessness, poverty, and environmental pollution. More and more leaders, intent on keeping a solid defense structure in the face of shrinking

budgets and compelling domestic problems, may well echo the words of McNamara and Clifford in the 1960s: shouldn't we employ the resources and technology of the military for more than military purposes; and shouldn't we "defend" ourselves against internal as well as external threats to the national well-being?

During a period of intense fiscal pressures, as Jacobs (1986:88) observes, civilian political leaders and others "will have no trouble thinking up new uses for military personnel and equipment." Indeed, since the start of the 1990s, it has been suggested that the military be used to fight fires, build roads, restore wetlands, control inner-city crime, help the homeless, construct parks and soccer fields, guard civilian prisoners, conduct diagnostic health examinations, enforce customs and immigration laws, and run a "service corps" for out-of-school youths.[14] In the Preamble to the American Constitution, a single comma separates "provide for the common defense" from "promote the general welfare." Over the next several years, that small separation may become practically indistinct.

NOTES

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1. Reservists actually numbered 1.7 million, including 1.2 million members of the Selected Reserve (which drills on a regular basis). Leaders in Congress and the Defense Department have called for a 24-percent cut in active forces and a 21-percent cut in reserve strength by 1995 (Auster, 1991).
2. According to Jacobs (1986:41), approximately 123,000 immigrants became naturalized citizens through military service in World War I and about 160,000 were naturalized through service in World War II. The author notes that, as of 1986, there were about 85,000 aliens in the U.S. military.
3. The Department of Defense operates many programs in adult education and offers various in-service opportunities at the college level. It also runs an overseas school system for the dependents of military personnel and civilians on government assignment. The dependents schools have about 152,000 students and close to 10,000 educators in 272 locations within 19 foreign countries—making it the ninth largest U.S. school system.
4. The quote is attributed to Donald Newman in *Conviction: The Determination of Guilt Without Trial.* Also see Ambrose (1972:15).
5. The recent appearance of prison "boot camps"—civilian rehabilitation programs modeled after the military's basic training methods—attests to the one-time effectiveness of the military in this area.
6. Between 1966 and 1971, a total of 341,127 men were recruited by the military under the program. About 9 percent of the Project 100,000 participants were "medical remedials."
7. The Predischarge Education Program, or PREP, was established in 1970 as a joint venture of the Department of Defense and the Veterans Administration. It

was specifically aimed at helping high school dropouts (as an adjunct to Project Transition).

8. As of 1991, there were over 1,000 colleges participating in the military's ROTC programs, including host institutions and affiliated schools or extension centers.
9. The present variant is called the "Montgomery GI Bill," including about $10,000 in government scholarship aid. In addition, the Army offers $14,000 to qualified soldiers through the Army College Fund.
10. Various estimates of the return in added tax revenues were presented during the hearings on GI Bill termination before the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs (1 October 1975). However, the author has never seen any supporting evidence for the claims.
11. This section does not address the social changes that occur as a result of war—where the motives of the organization are obviously tied to winning.
12. From an interview with a high-ranking officer directly involved in the drug interdiction program.
13. From comments of an official in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. (See American Psychological Association, audio tape transcript no. 190, Sound Images, Inc., 1989.)
14. These are actual proposals taken from various published articles. U.S. Army troops have already fought fires in Idaho and constructed roads in Costa Rica and Honduras.

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