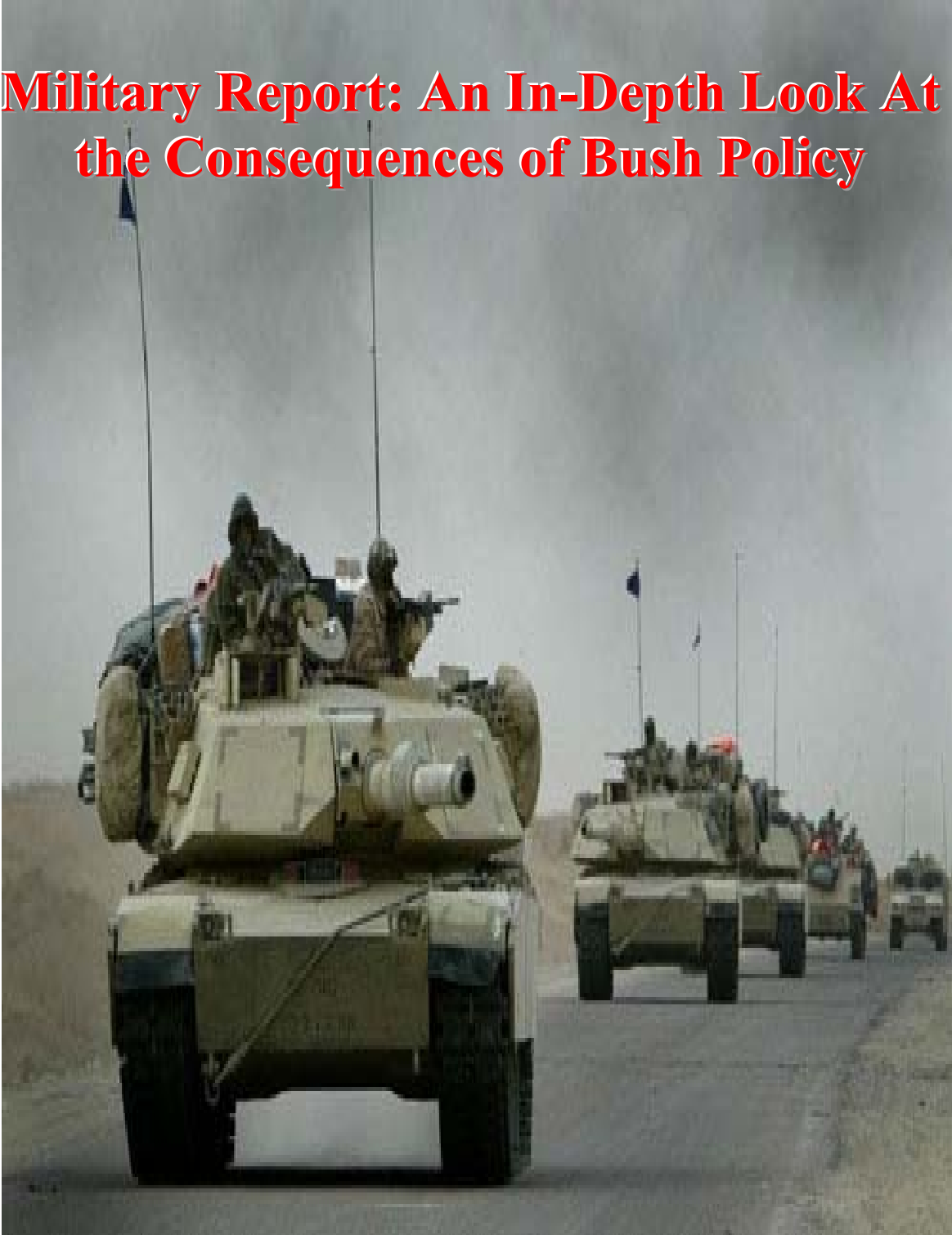


Military Report: An In-Depth Look At the Consequences of Bush Policy



Is George W. Bush a competent commander in chief of the U.S. armed forces?

Increasing numbers of soldiers, veterans and retired officers are voicing doubts. The ranks of the military, usually one of the most loyal constituencies a president has, now include vocal critics of Bush and his civilian advisers. We sat down with several members of the military, both enlisted and retired, and have documented their comments.

- Gen. Anthony Zinni (Ret.) former commander of all U.S. troops in the Middle East, goes on national TV to charge the Bush administration with “poor strategic thinking” before invading Iraq and “poor operational planning and execution on the ground.”
- Another retired four-star, Gen. Joseph Hoar goes to Capitol Hill to tell U.S. Senators that "the policy people in both Washington and Baghdad have demonstrated their inability to do a job on a day-to-day basis this past year."
- In the field, lower-level troops openly express doubt about the Iraq mission as defined by the president. One soldier tells a reporter, “I just think it's a lost cause.”

Is this the sound of our soldiers losing their resolve at a moment of historic challenge? Is this the second guessing of Monday morning quarterbacks? Or are these voices that speak out of concern for the well-being of the U.S. military and the safety of the American people?

This military report seeks to answer those questions by talking to current and former U.S. military personnel. President Bush has taken the country to war in Afghanistan and Iraq. He has defined himself as a “wartime president” and asked to be returned to office based on actions. How has he performed in the eyes of military people?

From sergeants and service wives to four star generals and Pentagon planners, the people of the U.S. armed forces weigh in with honest talk about the state of the military under President Bush’s leadership.

This military report explores the growing gap between the civilian and military leaders in the United States. Military men and women explain how the Bush White House planned for war in Iraq by rejecting the best advice of experienced soldiers and scholars. The effect of Bush’s decisions on military morale is described by troops just back from Iraq. Soldiers talk about the shortage of flak jackets. Mothers recount the human cost of unarmored Humvees.

Many military people may well disagree with some of the views expressed here. Nonetheless, the plain-spoken candor of these American soldiers is valuable. They help define and promote a new standard of accountability for the next U.S. commander in chief, whoever he may be.

Section 1: The Civilian-Military A Growing Problem

“It might be interesting to wonder why all the generals see [the prospect of war in Iraq] the same way, and all those that never fired a shot in anger and really hell-bent to go to war see it a different way.” -- retired Marine Corps Gen. Anthony Zinni.ⁱ

- The gap between the civilian and military leadership of the United States of America has never been so great.
- About one out of every 200 Americans is an active duty member of the military or reservist, the smallest percentage in decades.
- The trend that has been growing for decades continues: Soldiers and civilian leaders come from very different backgrounds.

“Our enlisted ranks resemble the British: they're lower- to middle-class, working-class, intelligent people, who are joining for both the adventure and economic opportunity,” says military sociologist Charles Moskos who has been studying the U.S. forces for decades.ⁱⁱ By contrast, the civilian military leadership of the Bush administration has relatively little experience in the armed forces or reserves. Among senior policymakers, only retired general Colin Powell and Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage have experienced combat.

“The officer corps today does not represent American nobility,” Moskos says. “These are not people who are going to be future congressmen or senators. The number of veterans in the Senate and the House is dropping every year. . . . Our upper class no longer serves.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Service in the armed forces is *not* a prerequisite for American leadership. Some popular presidents, such as Dwight Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy, had extensive military records. Others, such as Ronald Reagan and Franklin Roosevelt, had no real military experience.

The problem arises when civilian and military leaders cannot forge an effective working relationship.

Exhibit A: The troubled occupation of Iraq.

Many of the difficulties now plaguing the U.S. presence in Iraq can be traced to the lack of respect of President Bush and his civilian advisers showed to senior military advisers in the run-up to the war.

This lack of respect is documented in the next chapter.

Section 2: Wisdom Rejected - Bush Spurns the Military on Five Key Iraq Questions

The troubled U.S. occupation of Iraq illuminates one grave consequence of the growing gap between civilian and military people: poor decision-making.

While war always presents surprises, the problems now facing U.S. forces in Iraq were not unexpected--at least not in the ranks of the U.S. military. As the Bush administration and the armed services began to prepare for military action in Iraq in late 2002, military leaders faced a series of basic questions:

- Did Iraq have weapons of mass destruction?
- What would the war cost?
- How many troops would be needed?
- How would the Iraqi people respond?
- What would be consequences of U.S. victory?
- What should be done with the Iraqi armed forces?

The first question, about Iraqi WMD, was more of an intelligence issue than a military issue and will not be reviewed here. On the other five questions, President Bush and his civilian advisers rejected the recommendations of uniformed officers corps and military experts.

On each of these five questions, President Bush adopted his own course.

QUESTION	MILITARY ANSWER	ADMINISTRATION ANSWER	WHO WAS RIGHT?
<p>What will the war in Iraq cost?</p>	<p>\$25-105 billion</p> <p>In February 2003, the Center for Strategic and Budget Assessments, a think tank run by former Pentagon officials and military officers, concluded that:</p> <p>"The direct military costs of the war could range from as little as \$18 billion to as much as \$85 billion. . . . Occupation costs could far exceed the direct military costs of the war. A reasonable estimate of the average number of U.S. troops that would be required for occupation and peacekeeping duties might be 20,000 to 90,000 over the next five years. That would equate to five year costs of roughly \$25-\$105 billion."</p>	<p>\$1.7 billion.</p> <p>Several administration officials said that Iraqi oil revenues would fund the U.S. occupation. The only official to cite a specific figure was Andrew Natsios, U.S. AID administrator. In April 2003, he told "Nightline" that the post-war cost in Iraq would be \$1.7 billion.</p> <p>"The rest of the rebuilding of Iraq will be done by other countries who have already made pledges ... But the American part of this will be one-point-seven billion dollars. We have no plans for any further-on funding for this."</p>	<p>The Center for Strategic and Budget Assessments</p> <p>Their estimates were low. The administration's estimates were fantasy.</p> <p>So far Congress has authorized \$149 billion for the war. The war is costing \$4.6 billion per month.</p>

<p>How will the Iraqi people respond to U.S. forces?</p>	<p>U.S. soldiers will be regarded with suspicion.</p> <p>In Feb. 2003, Dr. Conrad Crane and Andrew Terrill of the Strategic Studies Institute at the U.S. Army War College wrote:</p> <p>“Long-term gratitude is unlikely and suspicion of U.S. motives will increase as the occupation continues. A force initially viewed as liberators can rapidly be relegated to the status of invaders should an unwelcome occupation continue for a prolonged time. Occupation problems may be especially acute if the United States must implement the bulk of the occupation itself rather than turn these duties over to a postwar international force.”</p>	<p>U.S soldiers would be greeted warmly.</p> <p>On March 16, 2003 Vice President Dick Cheney said:</p> <p>“I really do believe that we will be greeted as liberators ... The read we get on the people of Iraq is there is no question but what they want to get rid of Saddam Hussein and they will welcome as liberators the United States when we come to do that.”</p>	<p>The Army War College analysts</p> <p>While the overthrow of Saddam Hussein was welcomed by most, U.S. troops now face widespread hostility and localized insurgencies.</p>
<p>How Big a Post-War Force Will Be Needed?</p>	<p>Several hundred thousand troops.</p> <p>Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Eric Shinseki told to the Senate Armed Services Committee on Feb. 25, 2003:</p> <p>“Something on the order of several hundred thousand soldiers, are probably, you know, a figure that would be required. We’re talking about post-hostilities control over a piece of geography that’s fairly significant, with the kinds of ethnic tensions that could lead to other problems. And so, it takes significant ground force presence to maintain safe and secure environment to ensure that the people are fed, that water is distributed, all the normal responsibilities that go along with administering a situation like this.”</p>	<p>One hundred thousand-plus.</p> <p>Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz scorned Shinseki’s estimate on Feb. 27, 2003, saying:</p> <p>“Some of the higher-end predictions that we have been hearing recently, such as the notion that it will take several hundred thousand U.S. troops to provide stability in post-Saddam Iraq, are wildly off the mark.”</p> <p>“It’s hard to conceive that it would take more forces to provide stability in post-Saddam Iraq than it would take to conduct the war itself and to secure the surrender of Saddam’s security forces and his army. Hard to imagine.”</p>	<p>Gen. Shinseki</p> <p>Even former Bush administration officials admit the invasion force was too small.</p>

<p>What is the danger of post-victory disorder?</p>	<p>Huge. Establishing security should be the top priority.</p> <p>In November 2002, after Congress authorized the president to use force in Iraq, the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the National Defense University (NDU) called together 70 leading military thinkers, including officers, planners and experts, to develop a plan of attack. The workshop's very first recommendation was:</p> <p>"Given the potential for internal disorder and conflict, the primary post-intervention focus of U.S. military operations must be on establishing and maintaining a security environment in which all other post-interventional activities can operate."</p>	<p>Minimal.</p> <p>The relatively small U.S. and British invasion force had neither the boots on the ground nor contingency plans in hand to prevent the massive looting that engulfed Baghdad after U.S. victory. Even as the city's infrastructure was being destroyed, the Bush administration's attitude remained nonchalant. When asked U.S. soldiers were not stopping widespread looting in Baghdad, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said on April 11, 2003:</p> <p>"Freedom's untidy, and free people are free to make mistakes and commit crimes and do bad things. They're also free to live their lives and do wonderful things, and that's what's going to happen here."</p>	<p>The military experts.</p> <p>Looting and crime have done more than anything else to alienate the Iraqi people from U.S. troops.</p>
<p>What should be done with the Iraqi military?</p>	<p>Keep the Iraqi military intact.</p> <p>In Feb. 2003, Dr. Conrad Crane and Andrew Terrill of the Strategic Studies Institute at the U.S. Army War College wrote:</p> <p>"The U.S. should recognize that the military is a national institution and one of the few forces for unity in the country."</p> <p>The Nov. 2002 report of the National Defense University workshop recommended a phased transition.</p> <p>"Planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the Iraqi military must precede an intervention, and should envisage a phased downsizing and supervised use of selected former Iraqi Regular Army troops."^{iv}</p> <p>The State Department's Iraq Study Group also recommended a phased transition.</p>	<p>Disband the military.</p> <p>The Bush administration ignored the recommendation of Pentagon planners and the State Department. Paul Bremer, Coalition Provisional Authority chief, dissolved the entire Iraqi military by decree on May 23, 2003, putting some 400,000 Iraqi soldiers out of work.</p>	<p>The military experts.</p> <p>The disbanding of the Iraqi army coincided with the beginning of the insurgency. As the insurgents gained strength in the spring of 2004, coalition chief Bremer reversed his policy and began meeting with former Iraqi generals.</p>

Section 3: Who Pays the Price of Failure?

Four Consequences of Bush's Decision-Making on Uniformed Soldiers and their Families

There is no longer much dispute that the Bush administration's rejection of Gen. Shinseki's recommendation to field a larger invasion force was unwise.

"We don't have enough troops in Iraq to do everything at once," says Larry Diamond, a former political adviser to the Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad. "I think it's been obvious for almost a year now that we haven't had nearly enough troops there, we probably needed twice as many forces post-war as we've had."^v

As a result of President Bush's decision, soldiers and their families suffered in at least four ways.

- 1) **The small size of Rumsfeld's invasion force meant U.S. soldiers had to stand aside as looters destroyed government office buildings, electrical installations and water supplies.** The resulting chaos made every soldier's life more difficult than it needed to have been.

As the British Ministry of Defense concluded in November 2003, the "outbreaks of anarchy, looting and crime . . . significantly complicated the post-conflict task."

- 2) **The insufficient invasion force means U.S. troops have to serve longer and more frequent tours.**

When Gen. John Abazaid finally increased troop levels to 138,000 in the spring of 2003, some 20,000 soldiers had their tours extended by 90 days. When the extended soldiers were sent home, they were replaced by soldiers serving their second tour in Iraq in less than a year, according to the Army.^{vi}

- 3) **Rumsfeld's decision to disband the Iraqi army had the unintended effect of helping the Iraqis determined to take violent action against U.S. troops.**

"This was a mistake, to dissolve the army and the police," said Ayad Alawi, head of the security committee of the Iraqi Governing Council told *The Washington Post*. "We absolutely not only lost time. The vacuum allowed our enemies to regroup and to infiltrate the country."

Retired Marine Gen. Anthony C. Zinni calls the move the Bush administration's "worst mistake" in postwar Iraq.^{vii}

- 4) **The cumulative effects of President Bush's decisions harm military families back home, especially National Guard and reserve families.**

The story has been reported across the country.

A Seattle Guardsman loses his job upon returning from extended rotation. Since 9/11 roughly 3,000 reserve soldiers have filed job-related complaints with the Department of Labor, according to ABC News.^{viii}

An Army reservist in Ohio loses his business while on his second tour of duty since the Sept. 11 attacks. His family only kept their home when the federal government forgave loans and back taxes.

“There are many cases like this,” said Lani Burnett of the Reserve Enlisted Association. “There are so many different horror stories.”^{ix}

“The high rate of deployment is fundamentally changing what it means to serve in reserve units today, exacerbating problems of lost pay, fears of job insecurity, and the isolation of dispersed families,” according to the Christian Science Monitor.^x

Section Four: Morale and Retention and Other Growing Problems

It's the nature of a soldier's job to endure unwanted hardship, unpredictable demands, unsympathetic superiors and unwelcome dangers.

But in the case of Iraq, the available data suggest morale problems that go beyond the run-of-the-mill military bellyaching. They suggest that command decisions are increasing military unhappiness. The best available data suggests that morale is highest in the Air Force, lower in the Army, and lowest among reservists.

- Almost half of reservists (48 percent) who responded a *Stars and Stripes* questionnaire in August 2003 reported "low" or "very low" morale.
- More than a third of Army soldiers (36 percent) reported "low" or "very low" morale.

The differences in morale between the services are important because the troop rotations implemented in the spring of 2004 increased the proportion of Army and Guard and reserve personnel in Iraq.

Key Fact: The armed services with the lowest morale in 2003 now constitute 40 percent of the troops in Iraq. One component of the morale deficit seems to be a lack of belief in the mission as defined by the commander in chief.

- Almost a third (31 percent) of self-selected respondents in the *Stars and Stripes* survey thought the war had "little value" or was "not worthwhile at all" for the country.

Morale problems today imply retention problems in the future. When *Stars and Stripes* asked soldiers how likely they were to stay in the military after completing current obligations, almost half (49 percent) said "not likely" or "very unlikely."

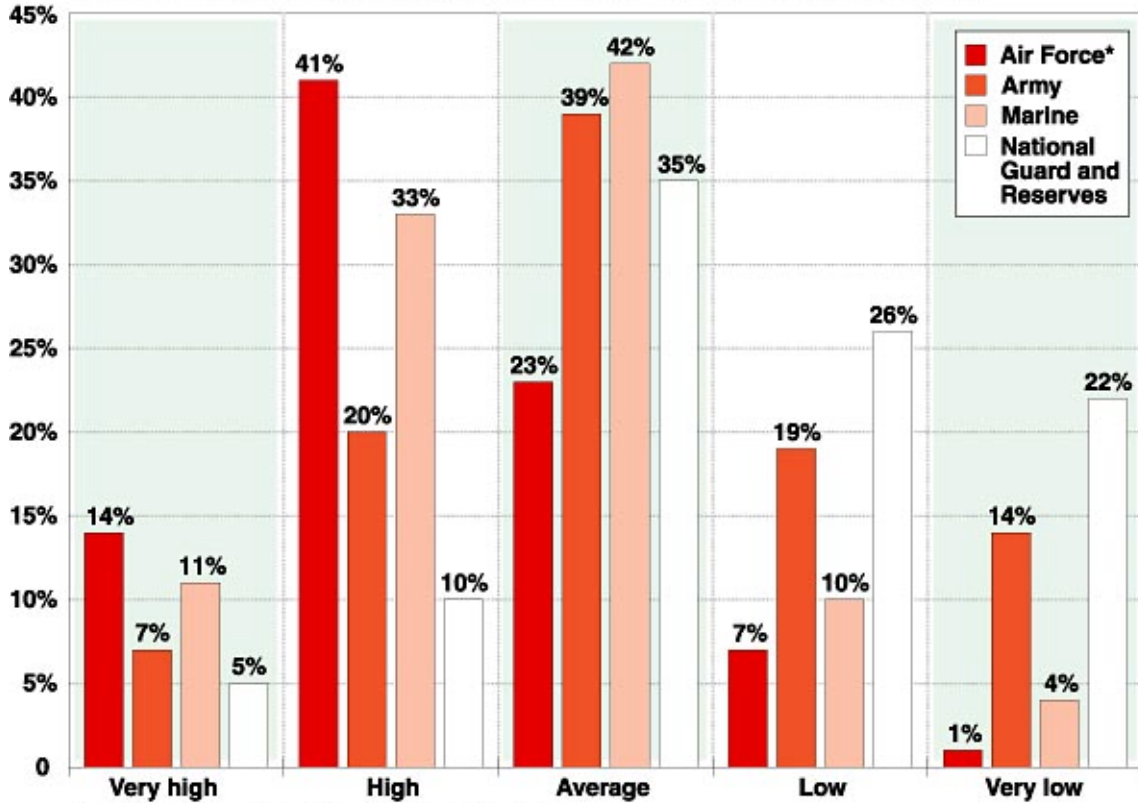
- A March 2004 *Washington Post* poll found that half of all Army spouses agreed that the Army was headed for "a major retention problem."

MORALE AT A GLANCE

Personal Morale: It's lowest among soldiers and reservists, highest among Marines, sailors and airmen.

How do you rate your personal morale?

A breakdown of how troops from different military branches rate their personal morale.



* 14% of the Air Force surveyed did not respond to this question

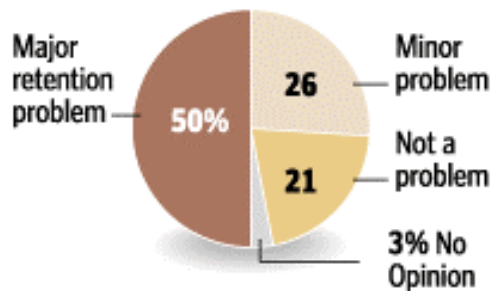
Source: Stars and Stripes questionnaire, August 2003

PETER PHOTIKOE/Stars and Stripes

RETENTION AT A GLANCE

A poll of military spouses predicts a retention crisis in the Army.

Q: Do you think the Army is heading for a major problem with retaining personnel, a minor problem, or don't you think retaining personnel will be a problem?



SOURCE: Washington Post/Kaiser/Harvard Poll

THE WASHINGTON POST

Resources on Morale and Retention

Stars and Stripes series on morale

<http://www.stripes.com/morale/>

Washington Post/Kaiser poll

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A28977-2004Mar27.html>

Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society

<http://www.bsos.umd.edu/ius/>

Military Family Research Institute at Purdue

<http://www.mfri.purdue.edu/>

Contacts

David Segal, University of Maryland, military sociologist

Charles Moskos, Northwestern University, military sociologists, emeritus professor

Section 5: Flak Jackets, Humvees and the Loss of Trust

“We’re doing everything we can to protect the troops, and it’s important for their loved ones to understand that,” -- President George W. Bush

“We’ve virtually destroyed our own ground forces, they’re so overextended, our equipment is so rundown and un-repaired right now.” -- Lt. Gen. William Odom, U.S. Army (Ret.)^{xi}

U.S. forces in Iraq are well-equipped and supported in many ways. By most accounts, they live more comfortably than U.S. soldiers in the first Gulf War in 1991. But military families report--and the Bush administration acknowledges--shortfalls in two key areas.

- **Flak jackets:** Do soldiers have adequate body armor?
- **Humvees:** Do they have armored transportation?

The answer in both cases is: Not yet.

President Bush’s claim is accurate. The United States is sparing no expense or effort to obtain the needed equipment. The fact remains, soldiers were sent into Iraq with inadequate supplies.

Who is responsible?

HUMVEES

It took a 44-year-old Massachusetts businessman and father of a fallen soldier to prod the Bush administration into solving the Humvee problem.

Brian Hart’s son, John, was killed by a burst of gunfire while riding in an unarmored vehicle last October. To honor his son’s memory, he brought together a loose network of soldiers, their relatives, politicians, and defense contractors to pressure the military to beef up its Humvees. According to the *Boston Globe*, Hart has obtained results.

Why wasn’t his son’s vehicle fully protected?

When US troops first arrived in Iraq in April 2003, “there wasn’t a feeling that all Humvees should be up-armored,” said acting Secretary of the Army Les Brownlee. The extra weight slowed them down, he said. By last June, the Army saw that its Humvees needed more protection from the flood of land mines blowing up along Iraqi roads.

Asked why he acted, Brian Hart said, “It’s an obligation. Pretty much an obligation from a father to his son to try to protect his friends.”^{xii}

The new up-armored vehicles will not arrive until mid-2005, according to the Army.

FLAK JACKETS

The Iraq war started with the Army issuing the body armor only to "the dismounted fighting soldier." By June 2003, it was clear that there was no front line. The Army decided to hand body armor to all troops. Suddenly the Army needed 80,000 more pieces of body armor.

While the army geared up production lines, military families pursued their own fix. Many news outlets reported that military families were paying up to \$1,400 out of their own pockets to make sure their loved ones had the best available³

Reliance Armor, a Cincinnati company which makes armored vests for soldiers and police, reportedly "nearly doubled" in size as a result of the shortage.

"We're getting people locally who are deployed National Guard and parents, specifically, coming in and buying," said Don Budke, the company's vice president of sales. "The military people don't want to advertise the fact that there are people doing this on their own."^{xiii}

Jonathan Turley, a George Washington University law professor who has talked with hundreds of families who bought body armor for soldiers in Iraq, said the military lost the trust of soldiers' families.

"No one that I know of has been truly held accountable," Turley says.

Section 6: Abu Ghreib - A failure at the top

After the publication of the photos of U.S. soldiers abusing Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghreib prison, the editors of *Army Times* published an editorial called “A failure of leadership at the highest levels.”

“There is no excuse for the behavior displayed by soldiers in the now-infamous pictures and an even more damning report by Army Maj. Gen. Antonio Taguba. Every soldier involved should be ashamed,” the editorial said.

The editorial blamed:

- Army commanders in Iraq: for having no legal adviser to the prison commander and no ultimate responsibility taken for the care and treatment of the prisoners.
- Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs: for asking “60 Minutes II” to hold off reporting news of the scandal. When the report was finally aired, Myers still hadn’t read Taguba’s report.
- Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld: for failing to read Taguba’s report until after the scandal broke in the media and failing to inform the president.

“On the battlefield, Myers’ and Rumsfeld’s errors would be called a lack of situational awareness — a failure that amounts to professional negligence,” the editorial concluded. The responsibility for the Abu Ghraib scandal, they said, “extends all the way up the chain of command to the highest reaches of the military hierarchy and its civilian leadership.”^{xiv}

Section 7: Debate in the Ranks

Military Leaders Criticize Bush's War in Iraq

President Bush continues to enjoy the support and good will of many people in the military community. At the same time, a growing number of former senior military officers openly question President Bush's performance as commander in chief of U.S. forces in Iraq.

Here's what these critics are saying about President Bush's performance as commander in chief.

On current progress in the war

ARMY MAJ. GEN. CHARLES SWANNACK JR.

Commander, 82nd Airborne Division.

Asked if the United States is losing the war in Iraq, Swannack replied, "I think strategically, we are."^{xv}

On President Bush as military strategist:

GEN. ANTHONY ZINNI

U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.)

Former Commander, Central Command

"We had a basic flawed strategy [in Iraq]. All those that believed this [war] was going to be the catalyst for some kind of positive change out there, or some sort of revolutionary change in the [Middle East] region, I think got more than they bargained for."^{xvi}

The President as leader of the troops in the field

LT. GEN. WILLIAM ODOM

U.S. Army (Ret.)

Former head of the National Security Agency

"We've virtually destroyed our own ground forces. They're so over-extended, our equipment is so rundown and un-repaired right now."^{xvii}

On President Bush as a decision maker

GEN. WESLEY CLARK,

U.S. Army (Ret.)

Former NATO commander

"President Bush took us to war exaggerating hyped intelligence, without an imminent threat to our country. He took us to war before all diplomatic options were exhausted, before our allies were on board, and before we had a realistic plan or adequate ground forces to deal with what happened after we reached Baghdad. And all of this was a distraction from our pursuit of Osama bin Laden."^{xviii}

On President Bush's decision to invade Iraq

LT. GEN. BRENT SCOWCROFT

USAF (Ret.)

National security adviser to Presidents Gerald Ford and George H.W. Bush

“Any campaign against Iraq, whatever the strategy, cost and risks, is certain to divert us for some indefinite period from our war on terrorism.”^{xi}

On President Bush’s case for war in Iraq

GEN. JOSEPH HOAR

U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.)

Former Commander, Central Command

Asked for a one word assessment of President Bush’s Iraq policy, Hoar replied, “Deceitful.”

On the prospect of success for Bush’s policies

ARMY COL. PAUL HUGHES

Former director of strategic planning for the U.S. occupation authority in Baghdad and a Vietnam veteran.

Speaking of his experience in Vietnam, Hughes said, “I promised myself ... that I would do everything in my power to prevent that from happening again. Here I am, 30 years later, thinking we will win every fight and lose the war, because we don't understand the war we're in.”^{xx}

President Bush as Commander in Chief

As commander in chief, George W. Bush has presided over a marked decline in the state of the U.S. armed forces. The main reason is the war in Iraq. The already troubling gap between the country's civilian and military leadership has widened, not the least because the president and his civilian advisers consistently rejected sound military advice in the run-up to the war in Iraq. The unrealistic plans adopted by the president had the effect of squandering the potential for a swift military victory for U.S. soldiers on the ground. The failure of the president's war cabinet to plan for the breakdown of order in Baghdad left ordinary Iraqis defenseless against a massive crime wave that followed.

The Iraqi people, initially grateful for the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, became disenchanted. Never inclined to greet U.S. forces as liberators as Bush's civilian advisers naively predicted, many Iraqis began to resent and reject the U.S. occupation. The decision of Bush's civilian advisers to disband the Iraqi army, since reversed, deprived U.S. troops on the grounds of local allies. As hostility and localized insurgencies grew, under-equipped U.S. troops suffered unnecessary casualties because adequate supplies of armored vests and vehicle were not available. Morale has suffered, especially in the ranks of the Army, National Guard, and reservists who make up the bulk of the U.S. troops in the field.

As more and more members of the military community speak out, the assessment of Bush's performance as commander in chief becomes clearer. The poor management of the Iraq situation has left our overall armed forces badly stretched, and facing serious recruitment and retention problems that will have consequences for years to come. In the eyes of many in the military community, he is failing on the job.

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