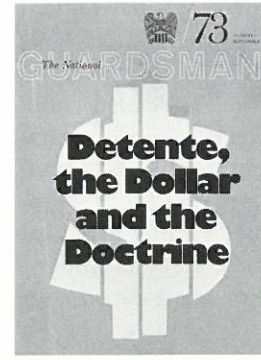


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The words and symbol on the front cover describe tersely the dilemma that confronts the Nation's leaders.

The Manpower Dilemma

THE Armed Forces today find themselves in a most uncomfortable bind in respect to manpower procurement.

The all-volunteer concept is not working, at least not well. It's not producing the required numbers of new enlistments, particularly for the Army, despite massive outlays of money and effort. The shortfalls have been short enough that the Army found it necessary to lower its enlistment standards, opening the door to greater disciplinary problems. And the Reserve Forces likewise are 60,000 men short of the desired level although the Army and Air National Guard have been posting small gains.

On the other hand, personnel costs have sky-rocketed under the impetus of the all-volunteer program. This has led to a hue and cry in Congress for still another reduction in Active strength, to a level that few military leaders would characterize as prudent.

And for the third aspect of the problem, the Draft is no longer available to fall back on if the volunteer system comes a cropper.

It appears to me that the biggest danger in all of this is that Congress will simply decide, more by default than deliberate choice, to let the strength of the Armed Forces, Active and reserve, "seek their own level," wherever that may be.

Although many in Washington talk of reenacting Draft induction authority if Armed Forces strength sags too badly, today's attitudes and political realities don't offer much assurance that the Draft could be reinstated for anything short of a major National emergency. And members of Congress are growing increasingly restive over the high costs of keeping the Armed Forces manned, which suggests that we've about reached the outer limits on more all-volunteer spending.

A fourth facet of the problem for the Guard and Reserves is that they have been given virtually none of the additional all-volunteer resources made available to Active elements except pay raises and a few fringe benefits.

So far, most talk of reduced manning has been aimed at the Active Forces, but we in the Guard and Reserve cannot consider ourselves immune to cuts, either—particularly while we are having trouble maintaining the strengths we are authorized.

One could almost feel encouraged by a recent statement made by Secretary of Defense Schlesinger, that "the lower the active duty strength, the greater is the weight placed on the Reserve Components"—although "weight" is not necessarily synonymous with numbers.

But then comes a still more recent statement, by Deputy Secretary of Defense Clements, that arouses unease. Mr. Clements told Pentagon Newsmen L. Edgar Prina:

"We are taking a real hard look at the Guard-Reserve concept. It is good and it is an integral part of the Total Force but . . . may need revisions. You will see some major changes. The degree of readiness in an emergency is the key. Readiness and effectiveness—numbers are not an answer in themselves."

(See "Detente, the Dollar and the Doctrine" in this issue for Mr. Clements' full quote).

Which reminds us uncomfortably, as it did Mr. Prina, of the "more bang for a buck" era, when costs took precedence over actual National security considerations in manning and funding our Military Forces. ♦



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