
Defense Report

AUSA



Our Military Strength is Returning— We Shouldn't Quit Now

At one time, the Soviet military forces were ahead of ours only in quantity; but with the technology transference of recent years, either by theft, greed or carelessness, the Soviets have gained substantially in the area of quality and now match or exceed us in some categories.

There remains, however, one vital area where we beat them hands down. That is in the quality of our soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen. There is no way they can reverse engineer their soldiers to perform up to the standard of ours.

We have achieved this advantage over the past couple of decades by weaving together a compensation and challenge package which has attracted a volunteer force in the numbers we required. We improved pay, reinstated the G.I. Bill, kept retirement apace with inflation, added a valuable survivor benefit option and placed greater emphasis and resources into improving the quality of family life for an Army that was 54 percent married. Medical care and commissary and post exchange privileges were parts of this—so were enlistment and reenlistment bonuses to help get and retain good people.

The results have been spectacular. We have the most efficient, best trained, best disciplined and probably the most educated force in our history. We have certainly been getting an excellent return on our investment and this has allowed us to be the only major nation in the world to operate with an all-volunteer force.

Unfortunately, the fabric of our success is beginning to unravel. Military pay is not keeping pace with the civilian sector. Cost-of-living adjustments are being passed over. The administration is directing the demise of the G.I. Bill. And Congress has mandated a drastic reduction of funds for the military retirement account. These are but a few examples of the fiscal folly now under way.

We didn't get the best soldiers in the world by accident. We found it cost effective to provide them with an attractive and challenging career. If present trends continue, we'll be doing something to our all-volunteer force that the Soviets could never do on their own. Can conscription be far behind?