3-1-1958

The Armed Services and Their Needs

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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Mr. President:

President Eisenhower has sent to Congress a record-breaking peacetime Budget. The largest portion of the Administration's program for Fiscal Year 1959 is for an expanded and accelerated defense effort. World events have spurred the United States on to new achievements in weapons, missiles and rocket technology; a prerequisite to the maintenance of our position as a world power.

Vast sums of money have been spent and much more will be expended in years to come for an ever-improving arsenal of weapons and equipment for the Armed Forces. As the tools of modern defense become more intricate and complex the need for more highly skilled technicians and operators becomes more important. Contrary to some beliefs, the human element in defense is now in a position of greater importance than at any other time in our past history.

The emphasis has now shifted from a preoccupation with numbers of men to that of the quality of our men in uniform.

Greater numbers of men will not meet the challenge. Only marked increases in the level of competence and experience of the men in the Armed Forces can provide for the effective, economical operation required by the changing times and national needs.

Although numerical strength objectives are being met, the Armed Forces are not able at the present time and under the present circumstances, to attract and retain the kinds of people needed for the period of time necessary for them to make an effective contribution to the operation of the force. The problem in the simplest terms is; how do we stop the rapid turnover of military personnel?
Recommendations were submitted last year to the Secretary of Defense by Ralph J. Cordiner, Chairman of the Defense Advisory Committee on Professional and Technical Compensation which would, if put into effect, acquire and retain the competent personnel required by our defense activities. The recommendations of this Committee, more frequently called the Cordiner Report, have been put into legislative form in a bill introduced in the Senate by the distinguished junior Senator from Missouri, Mr. Symington, and the distinguished junior Senator from Arizona, Mr. Goldwater.

In presenting their recommendations, the Committee expressed its belief based on exhaustive studies that "through modern management of the manpower in the armed services, we can simultaneously reduce the cost and increase the effectiveness of the national defense. The Committee feels that through the adoption of their program in its entirety it will be possible to attract, retain and motivate the scientific, professional, technical, combat leadership and management skills required by the Department of Defense today and in the future. It is believed the improvements will be far reaching and long lasting, and will bring in greater savings and gains with each passing year as the new systems are instituted. Such benefits cannot be achieved by half-measures which adopt the terminology but kill the substance of the recommendations."

I am in accord with these recommendations and, in my opinion, we will be derelict in our responsibilities if positive action is not taken during this session of Congress.

In approaching this problem of military personnel we should consider two things. What is the situation today and what can be done about it?

At the present time there are approximately 2.5 million men in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and the Air Force.
Since 1939 the annual costs of the armed forces have increased approximately 3500 per cent.

According to information I have received from the three services during Fiscal Year 1956 there was a turnover of 1,472,512 military personnel. These figures are based upon gross gains (including reenlistments) and losses. During this same year the estimated additional cost of the turnover of personnel in the Army alone was $1,104,000,000 and it is estimated that it will cost nearly as much in the current Fiscal Year.

The cost of our defense apparatus is of such magnitude today that it is unfortunate that billions must be lost each year to the turnover of personnel because of resignations, retirements, the reduced rate of reenlistments, and then the induction and training of new officers and enlisted men. Not only is this a needless expense, it is lowering the proficiency and capabilities of our military people when the contrary is so vital in this age of advanced technology.

One of the most disturbing things about this rapid turnover is that first term reenlistment rates are highest among personnel for whom the training investment is lowest; conversely, reenlistment rates are lowest where the training investment is highest. This is one of the major findings of the Cordiner Report.

Every time the Air Force loses a B-52 aircraft commander the Federal Government loses $809,360 in prerequisite training and flying costs and this same amount must be invested in a new B-52 commander.

In 1950 the training of a multiengine airplane pilot was approximately $34,470. With the more advanced equipment, the training of a B-52 aircraft commander costs $401,950. This represents the upgrade training only. And, additionally, prerequisite flying costs for each of these officers is in
the area of $407,410 - a total of $809,360. Similarly I am informed that in 1950
the training of a single-engine jet pilot cost $38,000. In 1957 the training of
an F-102 pilot has climbed to $233,930.

In 1950 the training of a communications officer cost the Air Force
approximately $8,600, while in 1956, to train an officer to be a qualified
communications-electronics staff officer, the cost has been established as
$21,470. In 1957, the Air Force lost 15,100 officers. This represents a loss
to the United States of billions of dollars.

The major contributing factors causing this increase are the vastly
increased complexity of the equipment used and the advances in technology. This
training and equipment is so expensive we cannot afford to waste it.

In the Army the training of a pilot in 1950 cost $7,000 and today it
costs $24,000 to train a fixed wing airplane pilot. In 1950 it cost $3,716 to
train a microwave radio repairman; today this same training costs $5,076.

While it is easy enough to retain the less skilled in whom the taxpayers
have invested little training money, the electronics maintenance men and operators,
the radar men and the missile men, the aircraft mechanics, the pilots and
 navigators -- these men with the key skills of modern defense are leaving the
 Armed Forces as fast as they can.

When they go, they not only take with them thousands of dollars worth
of training acquired at the taxpayer's expense, but they leave the Armed Forces
with the frustrating task of starting all over again with raw recruits.

Some turnover is inevitable and desirable. But the turnover rates that
exist in the critical skills and among the young officers is dangerously and
destructively high.
During his testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Mr. Cordiner stated that during the course of his Committee's study, they found out that 73 percent of the junior officers completing obligatory tours of duty during Fiscal Year 1955 promptly returned to civilian life. In Fiscal 1955, 4,000 pilots left the Armed Forces. This represented a minimum training loss alone of $480 million and a severe loss to the country's capacity to respond immediately and powerfully to an enemy attack.

An important consideration in this high turnover is that it takes 500,000 trainees just to maintain an effective combat force and support service of 2.3 million. The more of those 2.3 million trained people we can induce to reenlist and develop toward even higher skills and responsibilities, the fewer trainees we will need to maintain an effective force.

The challenge before us is to build up the reenlistment rates of the men who have the skills that are most needed, or who have the aptitude to develop such skills. These people cannot be retained without offering genuine incentives.

How can we best meet the challenge? I am firmly convinced that this can be done by adopting the recommendations of the Cordiner Report.

The Cordiner Report proposes a modernized compensation plan. Skills, performance and incentive would be a major consideration in adjusting the military pay scale rather than length of service alone.

The Department of Defense would be given greater flexibility and control over the distribution of skills and experience in the services and the emphasis would be placed on quality rather than quantity.

The adoption of the Committee's recommendations would mean a 15 per cent improvement in the combat capabilities of the Armed Forces, without a significant
change in the budget. After 1962 there would be savings in defense costs of over $5 billion. Training accidents would be sharply reduced. It would allow a reduction in the number of military personnel for national defense. And above all, the adoption of these recommendations would improve the attraction, retention and motivation of the officers and airmen in the Armed Services.

In addition I feel that there is a great need for additional fringe benefits such as low-cost insurance, dental care for dependents, commissary and PX privileges and other inducements which are an attractive consideration to our military personnel, particularly family men.

When we talk about increased pay, increased benefits we automatically think about increased costs. In the area of defense one might feel that the costs would be staggering but, as a matter of fact, the implementation of the Cordiner Report would mean savings after the first couple of years.

The astounding thing about the proposals recommended in the Cordiner Report is that it would require only about $600 million a year in increased payroll costs even when the Armed Services have a top strength of 2.8 million.

The savings from increased retention would very quickly offset these added payroll costs, and the second full year of operation would result in net savings that would increase year after year. Statistics presented to the Armed Services Committee indicate that gains would overtake the costs in Fiscal 1960 and that by 1962 the gains would rise to $367 million.

If the entire program is put into effective operation, the Department of Defense has estimated that $5 billion savings can be achieved by Fiscal 1962.

Since the beginning of World War II we have depended upon the draft as a permanent source of men for the Armed Services. Much of the military manpower is either drafted or influenced by the draft. I cannot help but feel that the selective service program is not an entirely satisfactory means of maintaining
an adequate force under present conditions. Conscription should be used only when other means and inducements are not meeting the quotas.

A man who is inducted into the service by the draft is there, usually, for only as long as he has to be and does not reenlist. And I don't know that we can blame these draftees because no one is as efficient and aggressive doing something they do not like. Many talents are wasted under the present system. What we want and need are career military personnel. The draft will never satisfy this need.

We want to make a career in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force so attractive that most of its members will be there because they want to be. I am convinced that a military career can be made that attractive. The recommendations of the Cordiner Report recognizes the need and presents a reasonable solution. I firmly believe that the implementation of new incentives and an adjusted compensation schedule will make the abolition of the draft desirable.

I believe also that now is the time to raise the IQ's of the enlistees and inductees in the Armed Services. At the present time the Army requires a score of 40 for all enlistees and a score of only 10 for inductees on the Armed Forces Qualification Test. The minimum score of 10 is based upon Congressional action. All branches of the Armed Services base their intelligence ratings on the Armed Forces Qualification Test. Each Service is required to take 12 percent of their enlistees from those people who score in Category IV, that is those who have a test score of less than 30. I understand that a Category IV test score is equivalent to a score of approximately 70 on an IQ test. The Average IQ for the entire nation is 85 to 114.
According to information I have received from the Office of Education, the following table illustrates how the population of the U.S. stands on an Intelligent Quotient basis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IQ Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>150+</td>
<td>&quot;Near Genius&quot;</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130-149</td>
<td>&quot;Very Superior&quot;</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115-129</td>
<td>&quot;Superior&quot;</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-114</td>
<td>&quot;Normal&quot;</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-84</td>
<td>&quot;Dull&quot;</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>&quot;Borderline&quot;</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59 and below</td>
<td>&quot;Moron, Imbecile, Idiot&quot;</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This last category can be broken down still further as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IQ Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40-59</td>
<td>&quot;Moron&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-39</td>
<td>&quot;Imbecile&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-19</td>
<td>&quot;Idiot&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These criteria are adapted from the Stanford-Binet tests. Although the IQ average or median for the entire population varies somewhat, it is approximately 100.

The complexities of our modern weapons and instruments require a much higher quality of personnel than ever before. The simple fact of the matter is that the Army, under existing physical and mental standards, has been required to
take too many men with low mentalities to perform the highly complex and extremely important assignments that have been imposed on the Army. The other services are not forced to take in inductees so they have been able to establish somewhat higher standards. I think it is time that the intelligence requirements for the Armed Forces be raised to a more realistic standard.

In Fiscal Year 1957 of 179,000 individuals inducted, approximately 63,300 were Mental Group IV -- the lowest IQ group. 26,700 of these failed to meet current minimum aptitude requirements for training. Non-productive expenditures occasioned by their discharge will exceed $69 million. These cost figures do not include intolerable waste in training time and material.

Mr. President, the House passed in the last session legislation, H.R. 8850, which is now pending before the Senate Armed Services Committee giving the President somewhat broader authority, except in time of war or national emergency declared by the Congress, to defer from training and service in the Armed Forces persons whose induction would tend to produce an excess of persons with similar qualifications in certain categories. The President would have the power to modify these standards.

This legislation would improve the present situation and I hope that the Senate Committee on Armed Services will consider this legislation at an early date. When we are attempting to improve the caliber of our Armed Forces, we should give them an opportunity to select men on somewhat higher standards than those that now prevail.

Mr. President, national survival is the most vital issue confronting us in the nuclear age. We therefore must have a highly skilled and efficient Armed Force. This is vital to the interests of the taxpayers and the entire Nation.
Mr. President, I wish to restate that it is my belief that these top-quality officers and enlisted personnel cannot be retained without offering genuine incentives and these things are provided for in the Cordiner Report.

In conclusion, the following is a summary of the highlights of the 3 speeches I have made on the defense establishment:

1) The power of Congress to prescribe roles and missions for the armed forces must remain with the Congress and not be transferred to the Executive.

2) The collective judgment of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is a superior mechanism than would be the creation of a single chief of staff or principal military advisor to the President.

3) The number of assistant secretaries, their assistants, commissions and committees in the Pentagon should be reduced drastically and the civilian bureaucracy in the Department of Defense should be overhauled.

4) The Cordiner Report or something approximating it should be adopted.

5) The minimum IQ's of all enlistees and inductees should be raised to a more realistic standard.

6) If the Cordiner Report, or something similar to it, is adopted, the draft should be abolished.