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Strategy Research Project

Public Trust in the Military

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Abstract

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Public Trust in the Military

> Trust is the glue of life. It's the most essential ingredient in effective communication. It's the foundational principle that holds all relationships.
>
> —Stephen Covey[1]

Trust is an essential element of life that allows people to cultivate relationships with others and with organizations. People rely on this concept of trust daily to make life decisions. The military is no exception to this rule, based on the multitude of relationships that extend from and to the institution. As a military, the most critical relationship is the one with the American public. Therefore, as servants of the nation, the military must establish trust at the core of the Profession of Arms, both for the individual and the institution.

Over the past fifteen years, the military demonstrated strength and resolve through combat operations against terrorist organizations in response to the fatal attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001. This event and the years of war that followed, characterize the volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environment of the complex adaptive system that the nation expects the military to operate. Continuous preparation for and operation within this environment strains relationships, both internal and external to the military, challenging the bedrock of trust on which relationships are formed.

The American public continues to exhibit a strong sense of trust in the military.[2] However, this fragile social contract remains under pressure from a variety of sources. Open, visible tension between civilian and military leadership weakens faith and trust in government and the military. The changing demographics of both the American population and the military creates division that results in a detached relationship.

Finally, lapses in judgement or the perception of such offenses by individuals or organizations cause the public to question the professionalism of the military institution. To build equity with the American public and strengthen this vital trust relationship, the eighteenth Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Dempsey, initiated a program to bolster the Profession of Arms across all the military services.[3]

The investment in trust with the American public must be a priority for the military services. Such an investment requires an examination of the current trust relationship and environmental factors affecting its strength. A common definition of the concept of trust must be developed to understand the elements that influence relationships. Only with an understanding of the environment and a baseline definition can a strategy be developed to bolster the Profession of Arms and connection with the population the military has sworn to protect.

Trust Environment

Historically, trust laid a foundation for relationships, and this premise remains true today. "Trust impacts us 24/7, 365 days a year. It undergirds and affects the quality of every relationship, every communication, every work project, every business venture, every effort in which we are engaged."[4] As Stephen Covey points out, trust affects people in all aspects of their lives, both personally and professionally. This concept permeates the military, which relies on both types of relationships in order to accomplish missions based on national interests. This makes the concept of trust paramount for the military. Therefore, in order to build effective relationships, the military must understand the conditions and environment influencing trust today.

The military operates in an environment that presents several challenges to building trust, both on a personal and organizational level. These challenges stem from

the inability to measure the quality of a trust relationship. This leads to assumptions regarding the health of a relationship. Trust relationships are fragile and influenced by a multitude of factors such as social demographics, the connectedness between two entities, and the actions, or perceptions of actions, taken by individuals or organizations.

Measuring trust in relationships is difficult. The primary means for quantifying trust between the American public and national institutions, such as the military, is with opinion polls. Figure 1 depicts the historical confidence in the military from 1975 to 2016 as measured by Gallop. The data highlights some interesting points. First, confidence in the military institution was low in the mid to late 1970s, primarily due to the conflicting expectations during Vietnam between the military, civilian leadership, and the American people. Second, a significant spike of support occurred in 1991 when Iraq invaded Kuwait and the United States took military action in the first Gulf War. Finally, the American public's confidence peaked again in 2002 after the devastating attacks in New York on September 11, 2001. Since this event, America's confidence in the military continues to exceed 70 percent.

Pew Research Center also conducts opinion polls to gauge public confidence in institutions. In a survey conducted in October 2016, the results showed that roughly 79 percent of the population expressed "a great deal" or "a fair amount" of confidence in the military.[5] In a similar survey in 2013, 78 percent of Americans expressed that members of the military contribute "a lot" to society's well-being.[6] These results appear consistent with the Gallop data, indicating that the American public trusts the military.
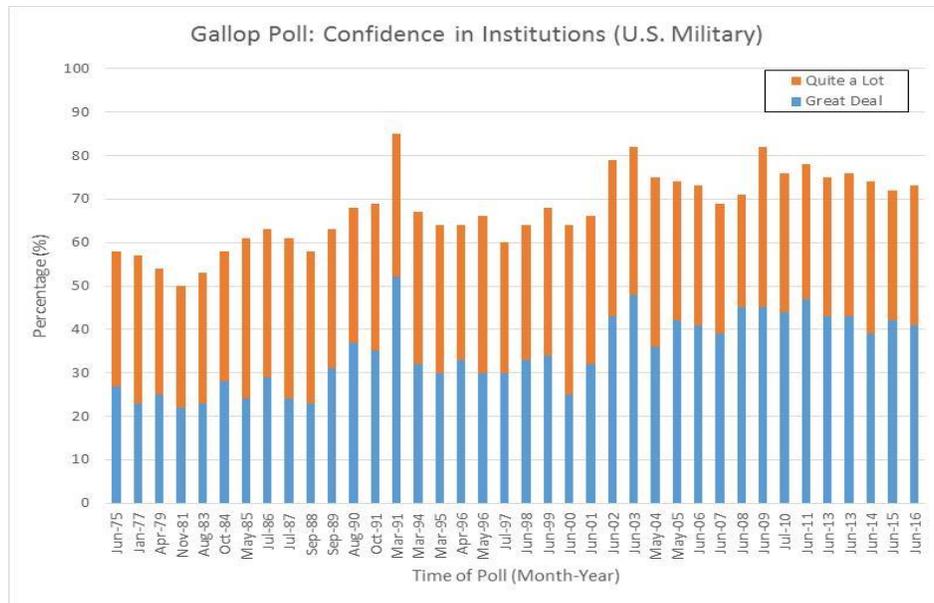
Figure 1. U.S. Population Confidence in the Military[7]

While this data appears encouraging, digging deeper reveals some interesting

conclusions. Similar to the decline in the confidence in the military during and after the

Vietnam War, a series of Gallop opinion polls between 2003 and 2015 show an

analogous decline in the support for the Iraq War itself.[8] This decline in Iraq War support

does not translate into a decline the public's confidence in the military. This tends to

support the idea that the American public is cognizant, if only subconsciously, of the

civil-military relationship and that they subscribe to the Samuel Huntington theory of

"objective control." This theory describes a scenario where the military operates

independently from the political process, only to provide expert advice and execute the

assigned missions as decided by civilian leadership.[9] While the public's confidence in

the military and support for the Iraq war seem to be in opposition to one another, there

appears to be a direct relationship between Presidential approval ratings, for both

Barack Obama and George H. W. Bush, and the downward trend of support for the Iraq

War.[10] This further supports the hypothesis of "objective control" as the basis of a civil-

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military relationship, where civilian leaders are held accountable, not the military, for policy decisions and execution. While the notion of the civil-military relationship and its implications on trust relationships is indeed interesting, this debate is beyond the scope of this project.

The next factor that creates a challenge for building trust is the connectedness between the military and the American public. Today, the American public is not as familiar with and less engaged with the military than in past generations. As a result, the military is becoming more isolated from the nation it vows to serve.[11] There are several reasons that exacerbate this lack of connectedness phenomenon.

The size of the military in relation to the American population is getting smaller, with fewer people serving in the armed forces. Historically, less than 1 percent of the population served in the military, except during periods of conflict.[12] During the most recent, historical conflicts, such as World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War, the United States observed service levels of approximately 12 percent, 4 percent, and 4 percent respectively.[13] To understand how this relates to connectedness, a review of the United States population data is required to put it into perspective. The United States population grew 97 percent between 1954 and 2016 based on population estimates from the United States Census Bureau.[14] Over the same period, the active duty military end strength declined from 3,302,104 to 1,337,648 individuals, roughly a 60 percent drop in manpower.[15] Over this sixty-year period, the population doubled, and the military reduced by over half. Based on the numbers, roughly 0.4 percent of the population serves in the military today. This inverse relationship between the military and the

population creates fewer interaction opportunities between the two groups, resulting in further isolation of the military.

Similarly, looking at the civilian leadership in the United States Congress, one finds an analogous phenomenon with the decline in the number of Representatives and Senators that have served in the military. Figure 2 depicts this trend in both the House of Representatives and Senate beginning with the 107th Congress through the 114th Congress. Both graphs show a steady decline in the number of veterans serving in civilian leadership roles. Now compare this to the 95th Congress in 1977, where the House of Representatives and Senate had 347 and 81 veterans, respectively.[16] The significant decline in civilian leadership with military experience creates a void of knowledge and experience that leads to a condition of disconnectedness and lack of understanding of the military. The lack of connection based on experience can generate the perception of a waning connection between Congress and the military, which may generate concerns over Congress's ability to exercise their responsibility to provide oversight over the military and authorization for its use.
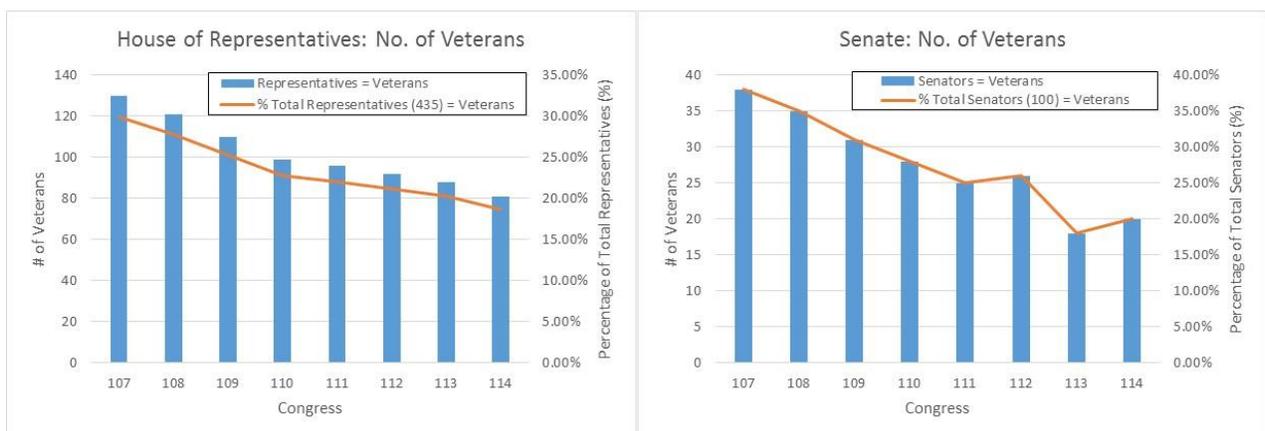

Figure 2. Veterans Serving in Congress[17]

Further compounding the lack of connection between the American public and the armed forces is the fact that the nation transitioned the active force from the draft to an all-volunteer force on July 1, 1973. This removed a forcing mechanism for individuals to identify with the military, and thus placed increased emphasis on recruiting and inadvertently created a lack of diversity based on a bias of self-nomination. Today, recruiting tends to draw from those sectors of the community that are most familiar with the military, primarily from states with an existing, heavy military presence. Most military installations exist in states along the east and west coasts, as well as in south central states. New England and the northern, central states have a relatively low concentration of military.[18] Combine that with the simple fact that the United States military is more active and visible across the globe than it is domestically, these conditions generate fewer touch points with the American public.[19]

With this narrowly defined recruiting pool, the military limits its ability to fill its ranks with a diverse population that is representative of the nation's overall demographics.[20] The final insult to injury comes from a report from Military: Readiness, an organization under Council for a Strong America. Their most recent survey shows that 75 percent of Americans between the age of 17 and 24 are ineligible to join the military. The primary reasons for the dwindling size of this recruiting pool include poor education, criminal history, and physically unfit.[21] The additive effects of all of these factors exacerbates the lack of connectedness between the population and the armed forces.

Despite the challenging factors identified above, military to public connectedness appears to be at an all-time high, if one equates Gallop confidence polls with

connectedness. Perhaps another interpretation suggests the presence of a bystander effect by the American population. Today, there is no shortage of support for the military, although this support is primarily symbolic in nature.[22] The public acknowledges and believes in the Constitutional basis for a military, but it appears many may feel they are not obligated to become personally involved. The inference is that if the public symbolically displays support for the military, their patriotic duty is complete without having to serve, without interacting with those serving, or even understanding the circumstances surrounding service to the nation.

Overall, fewer people serving in the military today, coupled with a weak connection with the population, leads to less understanding.[23] With fewer contact points to connect to the military, the media becomes the default conduit that provides the primary means of interaction. While at times, the media is an excellent source of communication, it can also intensify the lack of connectedness based on its own limited organic military experience. In an attempt to mitigate this, the media leverages former military expertise with retired general officers to bridge that divide. As an intermediary attempting to bridge the interaction gap, the American public is subject to the reporting practices of the media. Typically, the news focuses on negative topics or catchy headlines that can generate misperceptions. The combination of these factors can lead to further isolation, false perceptions and weakened trust in the military.

Finally, the social contract between the military and the American people is vulnerable to personal and professional lapses in judgment by Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines. Unfortunately, a significant number of infractions, or the perception of infractions, have taken place recently within the ranks of all the services. It is important

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to note that perceptions of impropriety are just as detrimental to a relationship as the actual act. Ultimately, these infractions and perceptions generate suspicion and doubt in the trust placed in the armed forces.

Lapses in judgement are evident in all the services and at all levels of authority and rank. In 2008, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates fired the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff over heightened concerns regarding the increasing number of incidents and mistakes surrounding the nation's nuclear arsenal.[24] This included a cheating scandal amongst Air Force nuclear missile launch operators on recurring proficiency exams.[25] Then in 2012, the Army demoted and retired a 4-star General for allegations of fraud, waste and abuse regarding his lavish travel habits.[26] In addition, there are multiple scandals involving sexual assault and recruiting fraud in the Air Force and Army.[27] Finally, there are those perceived infractions that spark suspicion. For instance, Lieutenant General Franklin overturned a sexual assault conviction for an Air Force pilot, discarding all punishments and returning him to service.[28]

This apparent nepotism initiated investigations regarding the perceived sexual assault epidemic in the military and caused Congress to debate withholding Uniformed Code of Military Justice authorities from Commanders.[29] Institutional actions and perceptions like the media reports of fraud waste and abuse by the Department of Defense in the realms of $125 billion increases skepticism about military leadership as good stewards of taxpayer's resources.[30] Additionally, continued tensions between the President and military leaders, such as the negative comments by General McChrystal and his staff regarding the Obama administration and subsequent firing, undermine the

civil-military relationship and the trust between civilian leaders, the military and the public.[31] All of these examples raise suspicion and cause trust in the military to waver.

The relationship between the military and American public is fragile and sensitive to a multitude of environmental factors. To develop a close, interactive relationship, and not simply partake in the symbolic gesture of support, both parties must understand these environmental factors in order to eliminate biases and misperceptions. Only then will increased understanding foster trust.

Concept of Trust

Trust as a concept creates tremendous discussion among scholars and practitioners alike. The discussion surrounds the basic definition. For something that affects the daily lives of every person on the planet, the notion of trust is extremely elusive to explain. Therefore, a common definition of trust must be established to further understand the concept for application in life at the personal and organizational level.

Trust is a tangible, yet abstract concept. The definitions traverse many fields of study, to include psychological, behavioral, economics and organizational management. While all offer key insights and some common aspects of a definition, no consolidated meaning exists. Bennis and Nanus explain that "…trust is hard to describe, let alone define. We know when it's present and we know when it's not, and we cannot say much more about it except for its essentiality and that it is based on predictability."[32] This comment alludes to some attributes of trust, but a foundational definition of trust must be examined before attributes are explored.

Merriam-Webster defines trust as "assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something," or "one in which confidence is placed."[33] Alternatively, Rousseau suggests a similar definition based on a review of research, "a

psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectation of the intentions or behavior of another."[34] Covey asserts, "Simply put, trust means confidence…When you trust people, you have confidence in them--in their integrity and in their abilities."[35] While these three interpretations approached the essence of trust from different angles, they all converge at a common understanding that encapsulates similar elements.

First, the definitions of trust presented above imply multiple participants. Trust establishes a bond between two individuals or entities. The permutations of this bond can take many forms, ranging from a single individual with oneself, individual to individual, individual to organization, organization to organization, or individual/organization with an object. This leads to a hierarchy of trust that begins with the individual. Trust builds from an individual before it extends externally to other individuals. As individual trust builds, it eventually translates into organizational trust. Eventually, organizations, through the collective trust of individuals, build and reach an external expression of trust with other organizations or entities. Trust is a human phenomenon that builds from the bottom up, with focus on the individual.
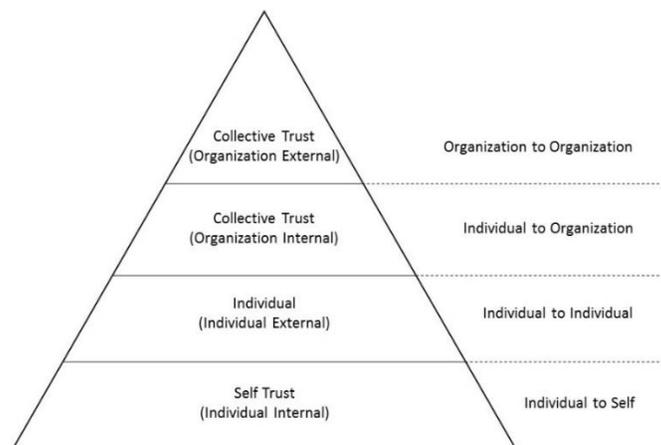

Figure 3. Hierarchy of Trust

Second, the definitions of trust imply there are several basic elements inherent to the participants. Each participant exhibits these elements, which Blanchard defines as competence, integrity, care/concern for others, and dependability.[36] Covey defined these elements more broadly as competence and character. "Character includes your integrity, your motive and your intent with people. Competence includes your capabilities, your skills, your results, and your track record."[37] The United States Army links the elements to military expertise, honorable service, esprit de corps, and stewardship of the profession.[38] The United States Air Force defines these elements in a similar manner, as character, courage and competence.[39] The commonality across these elements suggests that there are essential elements of character and competence, and maybe service, which characterize participants engaged in a trust relationship.

Third, trust assumes a degree of vulnerability. The element of vulnerability involves the willingness to accept a level of risk concerning the potential failure of the individual or object in which you place trust.[40] Therefore, the conclusion drawn from this element indicates that trust originates from a conscious decision, making trust a choice. Individuals base the decision to trust on personal rubrics, which develop early in life.[41] Blanchard supports this assertion, stating that trust is "…predicated on who we are and how we are raised and is shaped by our experiences and perceptions of the other's behavior."[42] The decision to accept a degree of vulnerability also involves an optimistic outlook on the individual, organization, or object in which one places trust. The assessment of trust elements, a combination of character and competence, forms the basis for the level of optimism.[43]

Lastly, trust must be earned. Individuals and organizations accomplish this through their actions and interaction with other individuals and organizations.[44] The United States Army emphasizes the same principle, proclaiming, "Trust is earned, not given, through deeds not words."[45] As one earns trust, it also leads to a degree of autonomy.[46] This stems from the confidence in the competency and character bestowed, granting them freedom of action to accomplish or achieve the stated ends.

Trust is a complicated artifact of life and human interaction. Many people take it for granted, as it is something that is primarily accomplished through the subconscious based on individual biases and experiences. Trust is relationship focused, but based upon essential key elements of character and competence. Thus, trust is extremely fragile. Relationships are under constant evaluation, making trust subject to continuous variation. Thus, the military must understand the foundations of trust and the implications it has for executing its mission, as well as building a strong bond with the American public.

Building and Maintaining the American Public's Trust

After 15 years of combat, the military continues to engage adversaries around the globe. While the nation remains engaged in conflict against terrorism, the military must balance today's mission against that of the future. The future character of war, as described by Clausewitz, will continue to change, which places urgency on preparing for the future. Growing tensions between national budgets and force structure complicate the military's ability to strike a balance. To make matters worse, lapses in judgement by individuals and organizations tarnish the military. Despite the hardship, tension, and challenges faced by the military, the American public continues to bestow trust and confidence in its servicemen and women, who vowed to support and defend the

Constitution of the United States. It is essential for the military to adapt to the changing environment and reverse negative trends in order to build and maintain that sacred trust.

In 2011, General Martin Dempsey, commander of Training and Doctrine Command initiated a campaign to recommit the Army to the Profession of Arms. After becoming the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in October 2011, General Dempsey continued this initiative directed at all the services. He asserted that, "…the pace of operations has been such that leaders have neglected some of the safety nets traditionally used to manage the behavior of the force."[47] He later commented on unethical behavior, stating, "There's criminal acts, there's ethical mis-steps, there's unacceptable behaviors--all these issues get blurred together, but they are very different. The one thing they have in common is they erode our profession. It erodes that which allows us to call ourselves a profession."[48] The Profession of Arms relies on internal and external trust, which *Army Doctrine Reference Publication*-1 (ADRP-1) professes as the bedrock of the military profession and the relationship with the American public.[49]

In 2014, Secretary of Defense Hagel appointed Admiral Margaret Klein as the senior advisor for military professionalism to assist the services with professional development and leadership. The onslaught of senior official scandals and increasing concerns of systemic or cultural problems drove this appointment. Admiral Klein's office assisted the services in building centers of excellence to bolster a culture of "trust, humility, integrity, empathy."[50] Senior civilian and military leaders recognize that trust requires an internal foundation before external trust can exist. Therefore, building the

Profession of Arms directly strengthens the basis of internal trust that leads to trust with external stakeholders.

The United States Air Force (USAF) established the Profession of Arms Center of Excellence (PACE) in March 2015. The PACE developed a 5-year strategy to achieve its vision of "Airmen who do the RIGHT thing – the RIGHT way – for the RIGHT reason."[51] To achieve this vision, the center strives towards four professionalism goals, "inspire a strong commitment to the profession of arms, promote the right mindset to enhance effectiveness and trust, foster relationships that strengthen an environment of trust, and enhance a culture of shared identity, dignity and respect."[52] This USAF strategy emphasizes internal trust in individual Airmen, their peers and organizations, developing character and competency, the key elements of trust.

To complete this transformation of character and competency, the USAF places near term importance on training leaders and the creation of professional development tools.[53] The goal is to reach all Airmen within 3-years through various forums. The objective of this initiative is to improve the organizational culture through individual training and development. The strategic roadmap articulates the USAF espoused values and establishes them as the basis of trust, both internally and externally. The more difficult step is to enact those values. Minimizing the difference between espoused and enacted values demonstrates and reinforces the character of the USAF.

The challenge is extrapolating leader training and tools to affect culture. Culture change, or even correction, in any organization is difficult to accomplish. Over time, training evolves, new tools emerge, and it becomes another check box to complete in a long list of training requirements. Tools do not change culture, people do. Change within

the USAF must focus on what Edgar Schein, noted social psychologist and scholar of organizational culture, calls embedding mechanisms that challenge the underlying assumptions of a culture. Embedding mechanisms instill the foundational assumptions required to change an organization.[54] This requires an investment in people and the organization, providing attention and oversight to professionalism, allocating resources commensurate to the priority of the initiative, and establishing criteria or conditions that make professionalism an active agent that influences the missions and careers of Airmen. Reinforcing mechanisms, such as organizational structure and formal statements, support embedding mechanisms. Prime examples include the creation of PACE and the development of the USAF Profession of Arms Strategic Roadmap.

As a Profession of Arms, the USAF must implement culture change through individual development by enacting the core values, rekindling its heritage, and investing in future leaders at all levels of the organization. Accomplishing this begins with individual interaction more than tools. Investing time in people to train, mentor, and care for them is critical. The goal is to build the skills required for people to execute their mission, empowering them to take action, and maintaining an appropriate level of accountability. These actions promote self-trust in individuals and their own capabilities that allow them to then contribute to an organizational mission, thus fostering organizational trust. Along this journey, Airmen must teach each other and understand their role in the ownership and advancement of the Profession of Arms, specifically the sacred trust that every Airman is responsible for at an individual and organizational level, as well as their role in the social contract with the American public. These actions provide enabling mechanisms that build internal trust through strengthening individual

bonds and organizational ties. Ultimately, it is leaders who build trust by setting the conditions of the environment, and then making the time investment in people and the organization.

While the services focus on bolstering the bonds of internal trust with the Profession of Arms through character and competency, there is a void in strengthening external trust. The assumption made presumes that increasing internal trust will have a direct effect on external trust. While this may be true to some degree, the lack of a strategy for external trust neglects opportunities to improve joint collaboration, the civil-military relationship, and the connection with the American public.

First, the Profession of Arms advisor to the Secretary of Defense was only a temporary assignment. This position and associated staff will reach its conclusion in early 2017.[55] The Department of Defense will rely on the services to continue this initiative. From a Joint perspective, this action sends a clear signal that professionalism is a service centric responsibility. General Dempsey highlights that Jointness relies on trust and confidence.[56] Part of building trust requires investment in the Joint team that fosters collaboration and removing obstacles that perpetuate parochialism. In times of conflict, the services operate in relative harmony as a Joint force, leveraging the strengths and expertise each brings to the range of military operations. The remainder of the time, the services, especially when faced with increasing budget pressures, tend to digress into parochial stereotypes. The internal trust conflict amongst the services will continue as long as the current budget environment persists, infusing competing demands for limited resources. To mitigate some of this tension, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff must continue to push integration amongst the services. Minimizing

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barriers begins with familiarity, which fosters collaboration and strategic, whole-of-force perspectives. A method to achieve this is through expanded presence of sister services at intermediate and senior service schools. Additionally, increase joint assignment opportunities and reward service members accordingly. Currently, joint assignments are required for advancement, and can be challenging for service members trying to balance a whole-of-force perspective vice their service centric agenda. Services need to promote and reward joint assignments better, and be sure not to alienate those who exercise the whole-of-force view over their service. Jointness demands are increasing and will only rise under the current fiscal environment. Instilling collaboration and trusting relationships across services will be essential to dampen parochialism.

Transparency is crucial for relationships and trust. With the military, there is a delicate balance between transparency and classification. On one-hand, there is a requirement to be open and forthright with civilian leadership and the American public. Then on the other hand, the military must protect the nation's capabilities to maintain an asymmetric advantage over its adversaries. Getting this balance correct is not easy, and can result in the perception of subterfuge. Therefore, the military should not use classification to avoid communication, but must design communication to convey information and provide rationale for those areas that need to be protected by classification requirements.

Transparency is also required for accountability. As a Profession of Arms, a key tenant is the self-policing of the profession, which occurs through accountability.[57] As public servants, service members have an obligation to uphold ethical and moral standards, not only of the profession, but also in their personal lives. As public servants,

the American public is entitled to the information surrounding misconduct and corruption. While such acts negatively impact trust, the transparent discussion of such acts and events increases the trust in the military profession, so long as laws, regulations and processes are rightly followed. Deviations can occur, but transparency in processes and outcomes must accompany that communication. While these lapses in judgement damage trust, transparency build credibility and trust that enhances the military's ability to self-police the profession.

Finally, connectedness is an important factor that allows the American public to identify with and become familiar with the men, women and capabilities of the armed forces. Fiscal constraints continue to impact the military's ability to showcase people and capabilities to the public. For example, in 2013, both the USAF Thunderbirds and Navy Blue Angels cancelled performances amidst budgetary pressures, only later to reinstate these vital interactions with the public.[58] Withdrawing from the public only further isolates the military, causing the public to resort to symbolic gestures of support rather than forming substantive relationships. Therefore, the military needs to explore opportunities to connect with those they serve.

First, the services need to develop a strategic communication plan. Military leaders and commanders attend conferences and forums that communicate with defense industries, think tanks and international partners. Many accept invitations as guest speakers for holiday celebrations, such as Veterans Day or Memorial Day. Most of these originate from communities near military installations that already have strong ties to the military. The strategic communication plan needs to focus on all service members giving back and connecting with communities. This needs to be a total force

approach, Active Duty, Reserves and National Guard alike. This maximizes the exposure to the public as force structures continue to decline. Bases should look to host open houses to invite the public in to see aircraft, tanks and ships. Providing opportunities for exposure to capabilities and discuss them with the individuals who are called upon to employ those capabilities forges bonds. Commanders need to work with Public Affairs to generate speaking opportunities in the community for young Airmen, and then mentor them on how to engage with the public. This should not be limited to speaking engagements, but expand to philanthropic opportunities as well. Engagements such as these foster trust on multiple levels, both internally and externally to the military. Other programs like drill and ceremony teams or bands build images of military discipline and service. These programs need to go past just building images and providing entertainment and exploit opportunities to interact with the public. Airmen, Soldiers, Sailors and Marines are the military's greatest resource, and everyday ambassadors to the public.

Exposure to the military extends to civilian leadership as well. With the declining number of Congressmen and women with military experience, it is vital to connect with civilian leaders today. This must occur on two levels. First, civilian leaders need to understand military capabilities and culture, which occurs through continuous dialogue. The second requires building collaborative working relationships. More common today are instances that portray adversarial relationships during events such as Congressional testimony or the annual budgeting process. There will always be a level of tension or conflict, but the military must become self-aware of this environment and

work with civilian leaders to provide the best military advice to support national policy decision making.

Transparency and connectedness are also vital to recruiting. Without them, there is no trust, resulting in a population that is reluctant to allow their sons and daughters to enter into the profession. To foster this relationship, the military must be open and honest with the public, who seeks assurances the military will train, equip and care for their children. Then, as national demographics continue to change, the military needs to adapt recruiting strategies to ensure the diversity within the military represents the population it serves. Achieving diversity can best be accomplished through increasing connectedness and understanding of the military's values, principles and capabilities.

Conclusion

The trust relationship between the American public and the military is fragile. The military and the nation have undergone significant changes over the last 75 years, which changed the dynamic of this relationship. Both experienced major demographics changes, which inversely affected the connectedness between the two. Additionally, the military experienced a recent wave of negative publicity stemming from lapses in personal and professional judgement of its members. These factors make building trust with the American public more difficult, while also highlighting the obligation of those in the Profession of Arms to foster such a relationship.

To build trust, the military must understand the foundation of a trust relationship and the environment in which it operates. Trust originates at an individual level and then builds outward to relationships with other people and organizations. Understanding trust and the environment will enable to the military to continue with its core strengths and reinforce its weaknesses. This begins internally with a recommitment to the Profession

of Arms to reverse the declining trends in professionalism seen during 15 years of conflicts. Therefore, a culture correction, not change, is needed to emphasize heritage and core values. To manage this correction properly, the military requires embedding mechanisms to facilitate change and reinforcing mechanisms to make sure the change is enduring. Finally, the military must engage the American public and civilian leaders on multiple levels to connect with the people they serve, vice the symbolic gestures that mask the lack of connectedness today.

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