Strategy Research Project

INVESTIGATING THE EXISTING GAP BETWEEN ARMY CULTURE AND BLACK AMERICAN CULTURE

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USAWC CLASS OF 2008

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		Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188
	Report Documentation Page	

Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.

1. REPORT DATE **15 MAR 2008**	2. REPORT TYPE **Strategy Research Project**	3. DATES COVERED **00-00-2007 to 00-00-2008**
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE **Investigating the Existing Gap Between Army Culture and Black American Culture**		5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
		5b. GRANT NUMBER
		5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER
6. AUTHOR(S) **Lentfort Mitchell**		5d. PROJECT NUMBER
		5e. TASK NUMBER
		5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) **U.S. Army War College ,122 Forbes Ave.,Carlisle,PA,17013-5220**		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)		10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
		11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for public release; distribution unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT
See attached

15. SUBJECT TERMS

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT **unclassified**	b. ABSTRACT **unclassified**	c. THIS PAGE **unclassified**	**Same as Report (SAR)**	**30**	

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)
Prescribed by ANSI Std Z39-18

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

INVESTIGATING THE EXISTING GAP BETWEEN ARMY CULTURE AND BLACK AMERICAN CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Lieutenant Colonel Lentfort Mitchell, Sr.

TITLE: Investigating the Existing Gap between Army Culture and Black American Culture

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 19 March 2008   WORD COUNT: 6,040   PAGES: 29

KEY TERMS: Institutional Transformation, Racial Diversity, Strategic Leadership

CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

The U.S. military is the most powerful instrument of national power capable of achieving and defending U.S. national security objectives. The military has done so by being relentless in preserving the values, trust, and confidence of the American people. The aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attacks on American soil had a grave impact on a strategic environment that is volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. Characterized as such, the Army must become culturally competent in order to reach across racial and cultural boundaries to recruit and retain the very best people to meet future challenges and sustain the All-Volunteer Force. This requires a willingness on the part of the Army to include, at every level, talented people of color with diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and linguistic skills. This project identifies three important ways that Army culture can close the existing gap with African-American culture in order to attract talent. Rational findings like these can facilitate the implementation of diverse initiatives that are critical to address current and future shortfalls in recruiting and retaining talent among all ethnic minority groups.

INVESTIGATING THE EXISTING GAP BETWEEN ARMY CULTURE AND
BLACK AMERICAN CULTURE

> The Army's vision is to remain the preeminent land power on Earth - the ultimate instrument of national resolve-that is both relevant to, and ready for, the challenges of the dangerous, complex 21st century security environment.

—The Army Vision, 2006

Since the conception of our great nation, the U.S. Army has remained the most powerful military instrument of national power used to achieve national resolve. As the most enduring national institution, the Army has faithfully fulfilled its mission to help the nation uphold its original constitutional mandate to be "Of the people, by the people, and for the people."[1]

No other Army generation has confronted more daunting challenges than has the current generation of strategic leaders and soldiers in the 21st century. The future operational environment will require strategic thinkers and soldiers who are creative, flexible, and adaptive. This environment demands that the U.S. invest heavily in alliances, partnerships, and institutions at all levels in order to expand American influence, collect and share intelligence, and establish the legitimacy of American action. Technology surely remains a defining feature of 21st century warfare. Likewise, the Cold War – perhaps more than current warfare (irregular) – was a war of competing ideas between Soviet communism and western democracy. This fundamental shift in the geostrategic environment along with evolving changes in technology, demographics, and continued economic growth will remain key factors in shaping the environment. By achieving cultural diversity, the U.S. Army could better connect with the emerging

multicultural society. This would lead to a better understanding of cultures and a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining talent.

Background

    For most Americans, Vietnam was the most unpopular war in American history, with social ramifications far beyond its time span. Some would argue that it was also America's first loss.[2] By the early 1970's, the Army understood that it could not afford any more Vietnam-style breakdowns, and was determined to reshape itself as well as its image. There would be no more angry draftees, because the new American military would be an "all–volunteer" Army. Drug use was to be eradicated, and so was overt racism. Stressing cohesion, inclusion, and diversity, the Army opened doors for black men in the 1950's and for women in the 1970's. The New Army solved the problems of diversity through strict codes of behavior and a refusal to see any color but green. The bottom line was respect for the uniform, and for whomever was wearing it. The Army was interested in changing behavior, not minds. The New Army reached its apogee in the 1990 Persian Gulf War, the first American war with a chief military leader, General Colin Powell, who was black and with recognized heroes who came in all colors and both sexes.[3]

    Among our most cherished national institutions, the U.S. military has had a long standing history of fostering an equal opportunity environment. The army in particular, has been a value based institution that has appealed to Black Americans. It has given disadvantaged blacks a first, and in some cases, a second chance for opportunity and full citizenship status. The operational environment of the 21st century and a thriving economy have created new social and environmental conditions. The Army, like the

corporate world, must now find creative and innovative ways to attract and retain diverse talent.

In the army, the current issue of racial diversity merits commitment on the part of strategic leaders and professional astuteness.   This requires knowledge and understanding of evolving societal changes at home and abroad, as well as of Black American culture. By establishing racial diversity as a top priority, the Army can increase its operational effectiveness and achieve its vision to remain the preeminent land power on earth.

The Strategic Environment of the 21ˢᵗ Century

Compared with the past, American society is less supportive during protracted wars and even less tolerant of a sustained rate of casualties. As a result of its effective national security strategies during the cold war, the U.S. dominated the world and brought an unpredictable end to the 50-year conflict. Some would argue that the cold war continues to this day. The American taxpayers invested time, patience, and money that exceeded 13 trillion dollars in order to dissuade a potential nuclear confrontation. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the U.S. has reduced the size of its military by 36 percent and cut military spending by 40 percent.[4] The Vietnam War cost an estimated 133 billion dollars and over 58,000 lives. According to the National Priorities Project, the Iraq war figures estimates that taxpayers are spending roughly 275 million dollars daily and the U.S. casualty count surpassed 4,000. These events and national sacrifices shaped the foundation of the existing All-volunteer force.

Since the inception of the American all-volunteer force in 1973, the U.S. has not been involved in a long war with high casualty rates. The unprecedented and sustained

growth of the U.S. economy during the 1990s has increased opportunities in the civilian marketplace at a time when military personnel see themselves as overworked and underpaid. The exact size of the compensation gap between military and comparable civilian jobs has been the subject of intense debate. Although some economic estimates put the gap as high as fourteen percent, these studies may fail to properly account for the hardships of military life. There is no disputing that military pay lags behind civilian compensation levels.[5]

The education level of young Americans has increased over the three decades of the all-volunteer force (AVF). A recent National Academy of Sciences panel found that "the dramatic increase in college enrollment is arguably the single most significant factor affecting the environment in which recruiting takes place."[6] In 1974, 82 percent of the population aged 25 to 29 had completed 4 or more years of high school, compared to 86 percent in 2004. The implication for military recruiters is two fold. First, they can assume that current levels of high school completion are relatively stable. Second, they can assume that a greater share of high school graduates will be interested in furthering their education at some time. On the one hand, this trend could decrease the pool of high school graduates interested in military enlistment. On the other hand, given the rising cost of higher education, the military can offer benefits to help enlistees and their dependents fund more education once they leave the military, or to help advance their educational qualifications while they are serving. [7]

Today, the AVF constitutes 1 percent of the US population or approximately 2.4 million serving in uniform. Some would agree that a purpose of the draft was to leverage demographics and galvanize national support. Others would say that the draft

disproportionately overrepresented the poor, uneducated, and underprivileged segments of American society. Based on the lessons learned, reviving the draft is not a viable option that politicians are placing on the table for discussion among the American people.

<u>Update on the American Society and Changing Demographics</u>

In October of 2007, the U.S. total population surpassed 300 million people according to the Census Bureau.[8] Every segment of American society is transforming in order to attract diverse talent. Likewise, corporate America is also transforming at alarming rates in order to stay connected with societal and demographic changes in order to compete and attract the same talent.

The 2007 Census Bureau confirms that the U.S. is a diverse country racially. The Census reports that a majority of persons of White ancestry are located throughout the country. Racial and ethnic minorities are concentrated in coastal and metropolitan areas. The black or African-American population is concentrated in the South with 70 percent of blacks living there, accounting for 20 percent of the region's population. Asian Americans are concentrated mainly in areas along the West coast. Hispanics and Latinos, an ethnic group with a membership that cuts across all races, are concentrated in the Southwest, making up 25 percent of the region's population. The 2007 census also reports that the population of Native Americans is 4.5 million, the highest population count for the group since the U.S. was founded in 1776. Most live in the western half of the U.S.[9] The dark areas of the U.S. map in Figure 1 shows the southeast region as having the highest concentration of Black Americans.
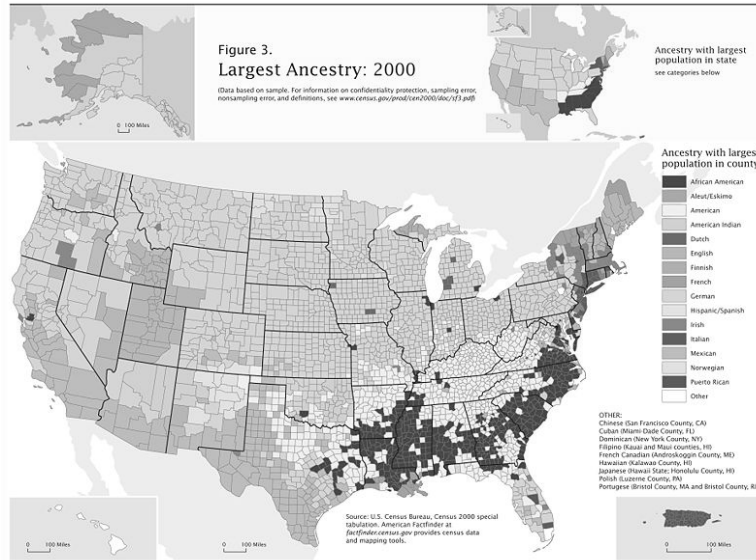
Figure 1:

In an effort to show what a national demographic projection will look like, Joseph C. Jones of the U.S. Army Strategy Institute provides insight into how America will look, in terms of its racial composition, over the coming years. Using data from the 1996 Census Bureau's population reports, Jones projections indicate that:

- The white share of the U.S. population (non-Hispanic) will fall from 74 percent in 1995 to 72 percent in 2000, to 64 percent in 2020, and to 53 percent in 2050. Also by 2050, the black population will increase to 61 million, nearly double what it was in 1995.

- Based on the impact of immigration, after 2016, more blacks and non-Hispanic whites will enter the population annually. From 1996 to 2050, less than half of the U.S. population growth will occur in combined black and white non-Hispanic populations.

- The highest rates of increase will be in the Hispanic-origin and the Asian and Pacific Islander populations, with annual growth rates that may exceed 2 percent until 2030.

- Annually from 1996 to 2050, the ethnic group adding the largest number to the population will be of Hispanic origin. Moreover, starting in 2020, more Hispanics will be added to the U.S. population each year than all other ethnic groups combined.

- By 2010, the Hispanic-origin population will become the second largest ethnic group.

- By 2030, the non-Hispanic white population will constitute less than half of the U.S. population under age 18. But in that year, the non-Hispanic whites will still comprise three-quarters of the 65 and over population.

The enormous flux in ethnic population projections from now to the middle of the 21st century, especially among individuals age 18 and under, will deeply affect the military.[10] How well the Army and corporate America manages diversity will become critical in recruiting and retaining talent.

In order to find and retain top talent, one must have a keen understanding of the evolving demographics in society. This understanding requires not only an appreciation of racial and ethnic demographic transformations but also an awareness of transformations brought about because of America's aging population. At issue is the current and future impact of the aging of the nearly 83 million Americans now living who were born in the two decades following the end of WW II. These so-called baby boomers are more numerous than those born earlier or later. Forty-six percent fewer

Americans now alive were born between 1966 and 1985. The aging of this substantial

cohort of post WW II baby boomers will significantly affect America's economy.

Because the spending patterns of older consumers tend largely to favor health care

services, the demand for services will skyrocket. That soaring demand will create

millions of new jobs to be filled by workers who span the spectrum from highly skilled

(e.g., registered nurses) to moderately skilled (e.g. repair personnel) to unskilled (e.g.,

home health aids).[11]

Managing Diversity: What Factors Differentiate Success From Failure?

The issue of diversity is always a sensitive subject. The combination of evolving

technology, the economy, and changing demographics brings this issue to the forefront

of every organization. This important issue no longer focuses on changing attitudes

(e.g. affirmative action, civil rights, quotas, and equal opportunity), but rather focuses

attention on changing personal and organizational behaviors and enforcing the principle

of inclusiveness at every level of management. Government agencies and private

companies that made a strong commitment to managing diversity have gained

competitive advantages, increased innovation, market growth and improved mission

effectiveness.   The 2007 DiversityInc Magazine's Top 50 companies for diversity

demonstrate consistent strength in CEO commitment, human capital, corporate

communications, and supplier diversity. For the Army, these factors translate to:

Strategic Leader commitment; Human dimension-winning the war for talent; Strategic

Communications; and Recruiting and retaining diverse talent.[12]

Managing diversity should be a key task of every strategic leader in every

organization. A thriving institution must be dedicated to becoming culturally competent

so that it can meet the expectations and self-fulfillment of its people. Being able to recognize and address cultural and ethnic disparities at all levels can positively affect an institution's ability to compete and attract new and diverse talent. The Army continues to embrace the value of equal opportunity and has acknowledged the added value of racial and ethnic diversity in order to dominate the challenges of the 21st century security environment. As for corporate America, it too has embraced the core value of diversity and has adopted a goal of cultural inclusion at all levels of management. Organizations with a strong understanding of the factors that influence the success of diversity management may begin to better recruit and retain ethnic minorities.

To address the question of managing racial diversity in the Army, we must first identify the key facts and scan the environment to search for worthwhile answers. In a 2006 study conducted at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, then Lieutenant Colonel Anthony D. Reyes examined the under-representation of black officers at the field grade level and senior ranks of the Army. Both of these levels had shown a marked drop-off in racial diversity. While Black Americans make up 22 percent of the Army overall, they comprise only 12.3 percent of the officer corps, and between 7 to 8 percent of the Combat Arms officers who are now part of the Maneuvers, Fires, and Effect (MFE) career field. The MFE branches are of particular importance because they represent the predominant pipeline to the Army's senior ranks currently serving. Of the 318 General Officers serving, 59 percent are from the combat arms branches.[13]

Also troubling is the significant decline among enlisted recruits since the turn of the century. A recent Boston Globe article highlighted that Black Americans have turned away from the armed forces in record numbers since 2000, a period covering the

September 11 terrorist attacks and the start of the Iraq War. The Defense Department

statistics show that the number of young Black enlistees have fallen by 58 percent since

2000. The Army in particular has been hit the hardest; more than 42,000 Black

Americans applied to enlist during 2005 but only slightly more than 17,000 signed up.[14]

Two main reasons were cited for the difference in applicants who applied and those

who signed up: 1) the protracted war in Iraq and the lack of support among parents and

community leaders; and 2) Army recruiters recruited from a lesser probable regional

area and some saw the Army as too low-tech and likely to be slotted in combat arms

related fields.[15]

The failure to manage racial diversity, particularly at the executive level in the

corporate world, has also had adverse consequences. This issue was recently brought

to light with the resignation of Merrill Lynch's CEO, E. Stanley O'Neal, and the

retirement of Time Warner's CEO, Richard Parsons. The fact that both men are black

has caused people to wonder why there are so few CEOs of color at the helm of

Fortune 500 companies. In 1995, not one Fortune 500 company had a person of color

as CEO. Today, 14 Fortune 500 companies are led by people of color.[16]

So why are there so few CEOs of color? A significant reason is that there are still

too few senior leaders of color throughout corporate America. According to Clarence

Darden, CEO of Darden Restaurants, a lack of senior leaders of color is a major barrier

to the advancement of people of color in the business world. In a 2006 interview with

National Public Radio, Otis observed: "The biggest challenge [to climbing the corporate

ladder] is really not having the role models and not seeing yourself at the senior levels

early on in your career." Executives of color, unlike white executives, have to see past

the dearth of senior-level executives of color and focus on the similarities they can find with white executives. Doing so can be a tough assignment considering the human predisposition to seek out people who are similar.[17]

In an investigation of the experiences of governmental and corporate organizations that have been successful in diversifying their leadership, researcher Ann M. Morrison found that a lack of mentors and role models is a barrier for many women and people of color. Nontraditional managers may especially need the guidance, encouragement, and advocacy that more seasoned managers can provide to overcome such hurdles as isolation, lack of credibility, and perhaps a naïveté about institutional politics. Sometimes encouragement alone can make the difference to nontraditional managers who only see white men in the positions to which they aspire and who as a result become unsure about their advancement prospects.[18]

<u>When Cultures Collide</u>

Although civil and military cultures share many values in a democracy, there are significant differences between the two cultures. For example, while our civil culture appropriately emphasizes liberty and individuality, military culture downplays them and emphasizes values such as discipline and self-sacrifice that stem from the imperative of military effectiveness and success on the battlefield.   At the same time, civil and military cultures are interactive. In his 1957 book, The Soldier and the State, Samuel Huntington reminds us that a nation's military reflects both its own functional imperative and "the social forces, ideologies, and institutions dominance" within its parent society."[19]

Within the 21st century security environment, most conflicts stem, at least in part, from cultural and/or ideological differences. While people of different cultures frequently share basic values, they may view those values from different angles and perspectives. This is a reason for being optimistic about cultural diversity. By focusing on the cultural roots of national or ethnic group behavior, both in society and business, it is possible to foresee and calculate with a surprising degree of accuracy how people will react. A working knowledge of the basic traits of other cultures can minimize culture shock, give people insights in advance, and enable them to interact successfully with nationalities and different ethnic groups with whom they previously had difficulties.[20]

A failure to learn and acquire a working knowledge of the basic traits of other cultures can have far reaching implications. This creates a gap between cultures and breeds the conditions for misunderstandings and misconceptions. As we can attest to American history, this can have grave impact on a society, its people, and the legitimacy of its most trusted intuitions.

Based on the evolving dynamics of U.S. and world technology, demographics, and the interdependency of the global economy, cultures will compete and in some cases collide. A collision is not necessarily a bad circumstance. As evident in the national response to a catastrophic event like 9-11, people can be motivated to set aside societal norms and their cultural identity for the good of achieving a national cause. There are two examples in which the New York City (NYC) elected officials and community leaders recognized the strength of having had the cultural astuteness in determining a strategic vision for reestablishing its intuitions in the aftermath of the 9-11 terrorist attacks:

Restoring Law and Order: The New York City Police Department (NYPD) was ordered by the mayor to restore civil law and order and in an effort to regain credibility and the confidence of the people immediately following the terrorist attacks on 9-11. Based on the national support and funding, NYC received adequate resources to reorganize and in some cases transformed its institutions and agencies to deter, defend, and combat terrorism. As for the NYPD, it not only reorganized, it reached across its diverse corps and sorted out skills and talents essential for combating terrorism (human dimensional skills-languages, origin, and ethnicity). As a result, it recruited and reorganized from within a diverse intelligence collection capability, reemployed more diverse policing practices, stood up a counterterrorism bureau, and set in motion initiatives like the Immigrant Outreach Unit.[21]

The Transformation of the NYC Supreme Court: Within American society, New York is the best example of America being categorized as a, "melting pot". Vastly different cultures able to live and work together are a phenomenon within itself.   In an effort to remain relevant and astute to societal and demographical changes, the judges implemented a rehabilitative approach to practicing and enforcing community law. First time misdemeanors and drug offenders are offered the opportunity to enroll in one of the rehabilitation programs vs. serving time in jail. The judge assigns a case manager and requires the offenders to appear in court monthly in an effort to monitor progress being made. While observing a court in session, I was astonished by the impact of the programs. I saw first hand the significant impact the judges made by having learned how to connect and understand the ongoing changes in society.[22]

<u>The Army Culture</u>

The steadfast Army core values remain its source of existence for over 200 years. Today, based on national public opinion, the Army and the military are among the most respected institutions. According to a report conducted by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, it defined Army culture as the essence of how things are done in the Army. Army culture is an amalgam of values, customs, traditions, and their philosophical underpinnings that, over time, has created shared institutional ethos. From military culture springs a common framework for those in uniform and common expectations regarding standards of behavior, discipline, and teamwork, loyalty, selfless duty, and the customs that support those elements.[23]

In 2004, General Peter J. Schoomaker, the former Chief of Staff of the Army, promoted these same elements along with having had the foresight to promulgate a culture of innovation in the army.[24] The innovation, national commitment, and the ability to adapt have become the leading factors in the Army's success in being able to sustain two wars (Afghanistan and Iraq) , fight the global war on terror, transform, and defend the homeland.

The protracted wars are taking their toll on the Army's most precious resource, soldiers and their families. Voices are being heard and the strategic leadership of the Army is listening and taking immediate steps in responding to the needs and concerns of soldiers, families, and rightfully, wounded veterans returning home. The Army is adapting its culture from the Top-down and has made a decision to have the strategic leadership involvement and oversight management on this issue. How well the Army succeeds and communicates this commitment to the American public can have a positive impact on recruitment and retention.

Despite substantial increases in the financial incentives being offered to Americans to serve in the military, there are indications that the quality of recruits has declined. The Army granted some 8,500 morale waivers for recruits in 2006, more than triple the 2,260 granted a decade ago. Waivers for recruits who committed felonies were up 30 percent in 2006. The Army also has to accept more high school dropouts. Last year roughly 82 percent of the Army recruits had high school diplomas. [25]

What is Black American Culture?

Based on the demographics and dynamic strategic environment of the 21st century, it is becoming more and more difficult for a particular ethnic group in America to claim the sole rights of its culture. For most Black Americans, the culture they grew up in now consists of many regionalized subcultures. Amazingly, the original African ancestors adapted, retransformed, and infused their once scripted core values and formed a unique social, political, distinct language, art, music, and economic expression throughout the western hemisphere.[26] Although, the 21st century Black American culture can be described as nothing short of multidimensional, the Black family and the church have consistently remained the foundation of the culture.

Black Americans are seeing more breakage and attacks against these two institutions. Across the country, efforts are being made to focus on survival and disparities of equality gaps between Black and White Americans. Since 1973, the National Urban League has released its annual State of Black America (SOBA), a barometer of conditions of the Black communities in the U.S. across five different categories: economics, education, health, civic engagement, and social justice. This year's SOBA features a foreword written by Illinois Senator Barack Obama and

essays written by Marian W. Edelman, Eric M. Dyson, and others. The focus is on black males, who are disproportionately worse off than white men, on many levels.[27] The following paragraph will highlight the findings and uncover problem focus working areas aimed at empowering black communities and culture:

In summary, Black American men are more than twice as likely to be unemployed as white males and only make 75 percent as much a year. They're nearly 7 times more likely to be incarcerated and their average jail sentences are on average 10 months longer than those of white men. In addition, young black males between the ages 15 and 34 years are 9 times more likely to die of homicide than their white counterparts and nearly 7 times as likely to suffer from Aids.[28]

Today, there are a number of factors including what was highlighted in the National Urban League annual report that can contribute to the changes in Black culture. The thriving economy and recent educational opportunities appears to be the leading causes why young Black Americans are seeking alternative choices besides the military. As more and more Black Americans enter the middle class, this segment of the population will turn towards the highly technical career fields. However, the Army can still count on the primary recruiting market consisting of 2/3 of the Black recruits ages 17-24 year old men and women. There are high school graduates who will excel on the Army's entrance test, meet moral and physical qualifications, and not likely be enrolled in college. The good news story is that in spite of the protracted wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the quality of eligible recruits continues to rise. The sad news story is that Army recruiters are not targeting the most populated Black areas.[29]

Yes it is true, the Black American people and culture are in crisis, but remain decisively engaged not to fail. As for the majority of young Black American males, they have accepted one model of black masculinity. The acceptance of the "gangsta-thug" model-that of the "tough guy" - has derailed many young black men from achieving success in the U.S. Black-on-black violence is one consequence of this hypermasculinist behavior.[30] Understanding the different types of cultural uprisings and social conditions, which can be related to across all communities in the nation, the Army can better connect with, recruit, and retain not just Black talent, but proportional talent representative of all ethnic groups.

Recommendations

My research has identified recommendations in four main areas that the U.S. Army should use in closing the existing gap between Black American cultures. Despite the proliferation of books and articles on diversity, there is still only limited information available on what to do.[31] These recommendations were developed to address the lack of diversity management and cultural competency within the Army profession as a systemic problem. Specifically, an institutional problem, spanned over decades, now in critical need of finding creative and relatively low cost resolutions in order to sustain the all-volunteer force. If implemented as a key component to Army transformation, the Army will remain ready to fight and win its nations war by being relentless in embracing the diverseness and talents of all Americans. Therefore, the recommendations should be implemented in order to manage, attract, and retain diverse human talents essential in overcoming the increasingly irregular threats of the 21st century.

Institutionalizing a Culture:

Unless the strategic leadership of the Army is fully engaged in setting racial diversity as a strategic priority, it will be extraordinarily difficult for the most concerned strategic leader to make and keep it as a key component of transforming the Army institution. Senior Army Leaders have nothing to lose. Each should be about carrying out the oracle as professionals, committed to fixing the problems of the profession.

By broadly addressing the issue of diversity, it will cause some degree of turmoil and fractions of denial. General Casey, the incumbent Chief of Staff of the Army understands the importance of having top-down attention on diversity and has recently stood up a new Diversity Task Force now headed by a flag officer.[32] An immediate challenge facing this newly formed Task Force is implementing the management mechanisms at all leadership levels that will ensure the important issue does not become marginalized as have the Equal Opportunity and Sexual Harassment Programs (focuses on changing attitudes vs. behaviors).   For these reasons, I recommend that the Diversity Task Force be headed by a Major General and a deputy Brigadier General. Organizing the task force directly under the Vice Chief of Staff would further exemplify the importance and the commitment from the top.

When comparing the diversity management issue in corporate America, they seem to be one step ahead. Successful CEO's have directly tied strong diversity commitment and practices to wider profit margins and more innovative problem solving. When PepsiCo CEO and Chairman, Steve Reinemund, announced his decision to retire last fall after five years in the top spot, an analyst asked him to name his greatest contribution in his more than 23 years with the company. He specifically highlighted his success around having embraced diversity and inclusion. He attributed the 20 percent

of the company's business growth to the different perspectives that were brought to bear on unique business challenges which captured the best of the best ideas.[33]

Human Capital

The heart and soul of an organization is measured by the quality of its people. As for the Army, the current plan calls for adding 7000 a year to reach the maximum authorized strength of 547,000 by 2010. Based on the demographic trends, the Army cannot reach these numbers without drastically increasing incentives to attract talent and pay and bonuses to sustain the existing all-volunteer force. The following are three ways the Army can make a better investment in attracting diverse talent:

1) Immediate Investment vs. Long Term Commitment: The Army has implemented a number of incremental changes in order to better manage its people during the protracted wars. However, most, if not all the changes have focused on addressing current shortfalls in enhancing the human intellect of the United States Military Academy (USMA) and Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) cadets and soldiers. Based on the emerging requirements to have more culturally competent soldiers, the Army should demand area and regional focus study scholarships. This would require (ROTC) scholarship recipients and USMA Cadets to study 4 years in a regional/area study along with 4 years of studying a targeted language. The sophomore summer of that 4 year commitment would be spent in a regional country taking immersion language and cultural training. The time frame before and or after fulfilling the junior summer requirements, cadets can reinforce language training and spend a week or two as a summer intern within the interagency community.

2) More Meaningful Recruiting Incentives: The thriving economy is the center of gravity in the war on winning and retaining talent. A strong economy means that young Americans will have more options for jobs and education. Few private business organizations can match the recruitment incentives the military offer. Future Army recruiting incentives should be targeted to address some of the societal issues that are highlighted in the State of Black America 2007 Executive Summary. Some of these focus areas are: Assistance in owning a home (four years or more of service equates to having an option of receiving money towards home ownership; accelerated citizenship for successfully serving the first two of a four year service commitment. Instead of receiving costly bonuses, offer small business investment down payments after completing first term service commitments.

3) Creative Ways to Connect and Attract: Through massive outreach, strategic leaders and soldiers should consider establishing and maintaining key relationships with the corporate America, local businesses, and local government. This will help build consensus necessary to keep in touch with societal and cultural changes.   These initiatives can facilitate attracting diverse talent across the country. The Army can strike at the core of Black American culture by showing an interest in offering solutions to address emerging social issues. Instead of investing millions in sponsoring NASCAR, invest hundreds in sponsoring early childhood and head start programs. Army sponsorship for inter-city youth service and sport programs can make a big impact in planting the seed early and often.

Growing a Diverse Pipeline

In order to be successful in growing a diverse pipeline, you must first implement a long term strategy to have diversity represented at every level. Kay Foster-Check, vice president of human resources at Johnson and Johnson (No. 17 on the top 50 diverse companies), believes in, "harnessing talent" early. It is the only way to cultivate a pipeline of top diverse talented people who are different by any dimension, including race/ethnicity, gender, experience, and a feeder pool for management-succession.[34]

As you look at the Army's strategic leadership, it is blindly obvious that there are few senior leaders of color. The low numbers of black officers currently filling the combat arms branches is directly attributable to the disproportionate number of black officers serving in ROTC assignments and as a result, young motivated cadets are missing the opportunity to connect with a role model early in development. In order to make an immediate impact, the Army should no longer marginalize, but set a precedence of rewarding talented black combat arms officers for volunteering and serving a 3 year assignment at HBCUs.

Leveraging Strategic Communication as an Integrated Approach

Get a positive message out fast is the bottom line. Every soldier should recognize his or her potential in shaping public opinion. Living the Army values can bridge the gap and perceptions between cultures. Who is best suited for this?

The Army Strategic Leaders and soldiers should rely on strategic communications to promote and share the Army experience in churches, by volunteering and sponsoring community youth programs, and presiding over promotion and reenlistment ceremonies back in your hometowns.

Build Relationships and Invest in Society

Civil and military cultures may share some of the same values, but yet they are distinctively different for the right reasons. How the Army and the military nourish this relationship will become critical in sustaining the All-volunteer force. U.S. demographics and the composition of the future workforce and will present the Army a different set of conditions to seek and attract talent. A thriving economy and increased educational opportunities will continue to be more appealing to ethnic groups, meaning; young Americans will have more obvious choices than choosing the Army.

Other creative ways the Army could connect with diverse talent early is by forming partnerships with HBCUs, public school districts, and businesses. This would facilitate working with industry programs, opportunities to detail soldiers to work full-time in technical jobs during their final year of service, and make appealing opportunities for departing soldiers to pursue teaching as a second career. By becoming culturally competent, the Army can connect with Black and other ethnic cultures in order to attract and retain talent.

Conclusion

By becoming culturally competent, the Army will be able to reach across racial and cultural boundaries to recruit and retain the very best diverse talent essential to sustaining the AVF. This will increase the operational effectiveness of the Army and help achieve its vision to remain the preeminent land power on earth. By achieving cultural diversity, the Army could better connect with the emerging multicultural society. This will lead to better understanding of cultures and win a competitive advantage over the business world in attracting and retaining talent. Unfortunately, the Army has not

been culturally astute and has failed in managing diversity since the conception of the

AVF. Consequently the following five broad recommendations for closing the existing

gap between Army and Black American cultures are proposed: Institutionalizing the

Army culture; long term investment in human capital; growing a diverse pipeline;

leveraging strategic communications as an integrated approach; and build community

and business relationships and invest in the society.

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