BIRTH OF THE AMERICAN FORCE PROJECTION ARMY: THE IMPACT
OF POLITICAL, MILITARY, AND NATIONAL CULTURE AND
STRATEGIC POSITION ON US EFFORTS TO INCORPORATE
A PRUSSIAN-STYLE GENERAL STAFF SYSTEM

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
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Military History

by

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14. ABSTRACT
In the aftermath of World War II, the Supreme Allied Commander, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, so loathed yet respected the Great German General Staff that he called for its complete destruction on at least two separate occasions. Regardless of whether the individual's view of the Great German General Staff, with its Prussian roots, is revulsion or admiration, the fact remains that in the latter 19th and early 20th centuries, no better system existed.

While the Prussian General Staff solidified its position in history during the German Wars of Unification, the United States Army, under leaders such as Generals Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan, sought to enhance the level of professionalism and excellence throughout the American Army. To this end, these leaders certainly sought to study and incorporate elements of the Prussian General Staff. Unfortunately, American political, military and national culture and strategic position thwarted their efforts. It was not until the deficiencies of the Spanish-American War highlighted the weaknesses in the American military system that Prussian style reforms became possible. The change in strategic position after the war with Spain combined with the identified need to improve military processes brought about enough of a change to the appropriate aspects of American culture that incorporating elements of the Prussian system became possible.

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ABSTRACT

BIRTH OF THE AMERICAN FORCE PROJECTION ARMY: THE IMPACT OF
POLITICAL, MILITARY, AND NATIONAL CULTURE AND STRATEGIC
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

my heart that as long as I have you, I can accomplish anything. I love you with all my

heart.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Napoleon's victory over the Prussian Army at the battle of Jena in 1806

highlighted weaknesses within the Prussian military system. Recognizing a need for

improvement, the Prussians endeavored to advance their military concept. Of the changes

implemented, one of the most significant was the development of the General Staff.

Specifically, Prussian reformers led by Generals Gerhard von Scharnhorst and Augustus

von Gneisenau conceived a general staff system focused on five key elements. These

included staff organization, officer selection, education, assignment methodology, and

Mehr sein als scheinen (Be more than you seem).

More important than the elements themselves, the capabilities these elements

facilitated provided for the Prussian General Staff's true greatness. Activities such as

mapmaking, war-gaming, and historical research laid the foundation for the two most

important aspects of the General Staff: war-planning and technological innovation.[1]

Once implemented, the elements and capabilities of the Prussian General Staff

helped the Prussians achieve such success that in the late nineteenth century nearly every

modern military power attempted to copy their system, to one extent or another. For their

part, United States senior military leaders, such as General William Sherman, General

Philip Sheridan, and Secretary of War Elihu Root, attempted to incorporate aspects of the

Prussian General Staff system in the years following the Franco-Prussian War.

Americans civilians, on the other hand, did not readily accept the implementation of

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Prussian-style reforms, a fact which provides the foundation for this thesis' research question.

Research Question

Several questions must be answered in order to establish a workable research question and subsequent thesis statement. The first of these questions is whether or not the major world powers at the time truly viewed the Prussian General Staff system as a concept to be emulated. Two notable examples indicate both a major European power and an emerging Asian power sought to implement elements of the Prussian system. With regards to the established European power, it appears the Austro-Hungarian Common Army all but copied the Prussian system. The Japanese, on the other hand, primarily received assistance from the French in the years leading up to the 1870 to 1871 Franco-Prussian War. In the aftermath of the French defeat at the hands of the Prussians, however, the Japanese initially invited the Prussians to join the French as advisors and eventually replaced the French with the Prussians all together.

The next issue relevant to the development of a workable research question centers on whether or not the Prussian General Staff concept influenced the United States leaders in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The answer to this question is both yes and no. In 1875, the United States Army dispatched Major Emory Upton to study the general staff models of Japan, China, India, Persia, Italy, Russia, Austria, Germany, France, and England. Although initially directed to primarily study Asian armies, Major Upton wrote most admiringly about the Prussian's military in general and their general staff system in particular. In his book, *The Armies of Asia and Europe*, Upton outlined recommendations for modernizing the American Army's senior leadership system.[2] The

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proposals he submits are heavily influenced by the Great German General Staff and its Prussian roots. Despite Upton's recommendations, there is little evidence to suggest that the United States initially made a serious effort to emulate the Prussian General Staff.

Available evidence indicates two factors prevented the United States from modifying the overarching military leadership methodology of the time: (1) the United States' strategic position in the world (for example, oceans on the east and west coasts and relative allies to the north and south); (2) the prevailing United States' view of standing armies as a potential threat to a democratically elected government. Political, military and national culture together with the country's strategic position precluded the United States from following the efforts of the major European powers to emulate the Prussian General Staff concept.

The American hesitance to incorporate elements of the Prussian General Staff system would soften as the result of a watershed event in United States history. The event, the Spanish-American War, was considered a strategic victory for the United States. However, a closer look into the details of the war indicates a different reality; in particular, the United States encountered significant logistical and mobilization challenges. Since solving logistical and mobilization problems were strengths of the Prussian General Staff system, Major Upton's recommendations for general staff reform no longer seemed unacceptable.

In the aftermath of the problems encountered during the Spanish-American War, President McKinley tapped Elihu Root to serve as Secretary of War.[3] Root soon realized that to avoid problems similar to those encountered during the war with Spain in the future, the United States Army had to be reformed. Upon confirmation by the United

States Congress, Root examined Major Upton's writings. Major William H. Carter, who

had previously served under Upton, had given him a copy of Upton's book.[4] Root

worked to implement many of Upton's recommendations. Most notable of these concepts

was the establishment of the Army War College, a direct attempt to follow the Prussian

Kriegsakademie example, the institution created for the explicit purpose of educating

future Prussian General Staff officers.[5]

The United States change in mindset demonstrates the impact of political,

military, and national culture as well as strategic position on the American view of a

Prussian-style system. By maintaining a presence in the newly acquired territories of the

Philippine Islands, Puerto Rico, and Cuba, the United States assumed a force projection

posture for the first time in its brief history. This changed the United States strategic

position, and more importantly, it indicated a shift in political and national cultural

values. Prior to this time, the idea of engaging a foreign power in another country was all

but unthinkable.

For the purpose of molding the information gathered thus far into a workable

thesis, developing a research question becomes the next logical step. To that end, the

resulting question, which forms the basis of this thesis is: "What impact did culture and

strategic position have on the United States Army's willingness and ability to incorporate

elements of the Prussian General Staff system?"

<u>Thesis Statement</u>

This author's initial research suggests the following thesis: "The political, military

and national culture in the United States, combined with the United States' strategic

position from 1871 to 1917, were key aspects in the willingness and ability of the United States Army to incorporate elements of the Prussian General Staff system."

Thesis Organization

The body of this thesis is broken down into three basic areas. The first outlines the fundamental concepts of the Prussian General Staff and the extent to which Asian and European military powers considered the Prussian General Staff, or elements thereof, a system worth utilizing.

The second section analyzes United States efforts to improve its military leadership system in the years between the Civil War and the Spanish-American War. This section provides a look into the development of the professional officer corps in the United States Army and how it impacted the desire to improve the Army's senior leadership system. It further examines the culture clash that took place between the professional officer corps and American civil society as a result of the corps' evolution. This is followed by an examination of the desire on the part of post-American Civil War Army leaders to incorporate elements of the Prussian General Staff system. The section closes with the impact the political, military and national cultural aspects of American civil society had on their efforts.

The third section concentrates on the Spanish-American War as a watershed event as it pertains to the development of the United States Army's senior leadership system. Included is a study of the mobilization, deployment, and logistics problems encountered in the build-up and execution phases of the war with Spain. The section next reviews the efforts taken by Secretary Root to reform the Army's senior leadership system in the

aftermath of the war and the hurdles he both successfully and unsuccessfully overcame to lay the foundation for the general staff system the United States Army has today.

On a final note, in an effort to provide closure, and to achieve relevance in the context of today's military, the closing section of this thesis provides a brief list of conclusions and recommendations. Hopefully, the pages contained within this thesis provide insight that may someday be useful to those charged with the strategic planning required to prevail in America's current and future conflicts.

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[1]MacGregor Knox and William Murray, *The Dynamics of Military Revolution, 1300-2050* (Cambridge, MA: University Press, 2001), 102-103.

[2]Emory Upton, *The Armies of Asia and Europe* (New York, NY: Greenwood Press, 1968), 324-327.

[3]Allan R. Millett and Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1984), 287.

[4]Stephen Ambrose, *Upton and the Army* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1964), 155.

[5]Richard Leopold, *Elihu Root and the Conservative Tradition* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1954), 40.

CHAPTER 2

THE PRUSSIAN GENERAL STAFF

Introduction

In 1740 when King Frederick II (Frederick the Great) ascended to the throne of

Prussia, the small north European nation did not dominate the landscape of European

politics. Surrounded by the mighty Russian, Austrian and French empires, relatively tiny

Prussia struggled for her place in the world order. A mere 131 years later that changed

when the wars of unification gave birth to the Second German Reich under Prussia.

Primary factors that facilitated Prussia's rise to European military dominance were the

creation, development, and refinement of its army general staff concept or system which

has been dissected, analyzed, and emulated more often than any military leadership

system in modern times. The Prussian General Staff embodies an approach to military

command and control European countries, and even a dominant Asian country, sought to

emulate.

The pages that follow in this chapter first briefly outline the fundamentals of the

Prussian General Staff system. Having defined it, the chapter next focuses on how the

Prussians originally conceived, refined, and then battle-tested their new concepts of army

staff planning and execution. The remainder of the chapter analyzes the efforts of other

nations to implement a system following the Prussian mold.

Fundamentals of the Prussian General Staff

Basically, the reforms that began the development of the modern-day Prussian

General Staff centered on improving the army with regards to war, logistics, and

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mobilization planning. To achieve these objectives, the Prussians not only changed the army's senior leadership organizational construct, they also established a methodology aimed at identifying and training the best possible officer corps.

Organizationally, two initiatives affected the nineteenth century Prussian General Staff. The first of these was the structure of the general staff itself. Grown from the staff proposed by General Gerhard von Scharnhorst, the General Staff that executed the German unification wars consisted of four divisions. The first three divisions were organized around the three major geographical areas in which Prussian anticipated conducting wartime operations. The fourth department, the Railway Department, planned for the use of railways during mobilization, deployment, and re-deployment.[1] Throughout the General Staff's development and evolution, the staff's role with regards to both the government and the field units was more clearly delineated. In addition to providing a single focal point for war planning and associated mobilization and logistics efforts, the General Staff provided a critical link between the strategic efforts of the government and the tactical execution of the field army units.

From a personnel standpoint, the Prussians sought to populate the general staff with the most-talented and well-trained officers possible. They first implemented a merit based selection system. They replaced aristocratic birthright with a more objective selection method by using the *Kriegsakademie* as the focal point for General Staff officer development. Only those officers who could pass the entrance examination could attend the *Kriegsakademie*. Upon successful completion of the *Kriegsakademie* curriculum, the most successful graduates participated in a graduation staff ride. Executed by the Chief of the General Staff himself, the staff rides served as the final hurdle to general staff service.

In short, the officers who passed the entrance exam, successfully completed the war college, and obtained the Chief of Staff's approval during the staff ride obtained the right to serve on the General Staff.[2]

<center>The Prussian General Staff as a System to be Emulated</center>

<center>Forged by Necessity</center>

The Prussian Army actually began its development prior to the nineteenth century. Early Hohenzollerns, leaders of the Brandenburg Electorate of the Holy Roman Empire, were anything but military experts. Basic survival instinct and the desire to no longer be the gateway through which the great European armies passed inspired George William's son, Frederick William, to build an army capable of defending the Electorate. As the Electorate evolved into a Kingdom under Frederick I, Frederick William I and Frederick II (Frederick the Great), so, too, did the army evolve and with it the senior leadership that would eventually become the Prussian General Staff.[3] However, it was not until the devastating defeats at the hands of Napoleon that Prussian reformers began to mold the army's senior staff functions into the institution recognized in the nineteenth century as the Prussian General Staff.

More than just a study of Napoleonic warfare, the development of the Prussian General Staff resulted from the understanding that without considerable improvement, especially in the areas of mobilization and logistics planning, the future existence of the kingdom would be in jeopardy. In the early nineteenth century, the Napoleonic wars forced Prussia to decide between evolution and future existence or status quo and possible irrelevance or worse, possible extinction as a national entity.

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The concept of a great general staff was actually proposed prior to Prussia's involvement in the Napoleonic Wars. Prussian Colonel Christian von Massenbach suggested changes to the Army's senior leadership system as early as 1795.[4] It was not until after Prussia's defeat at the hands of Napoleon, however, that the development of the Prussian General Staff truly began by the five men who, even today, are recognized as "The Reformers." These reformers are Gerhard von Scharnhorst, Augustus von Gneisenau, Karl von Grolman, Hermann von Boyen, and Carl von Clausewitz.[5]

Solidified by Fire

As Napoleon's grip on Europe began to slip, General von Scharnhorst implemented comprehensive reforms formulated in the years between Massenbach's first proposals and the defeat at Jena in 1806. Among the reforms was the creation of the "General Staff of the Army."[6] As a result of Scharnhorst's efforts, Prussian field units took guidance from the new general staff for the first time. With the assistance of General von Gneisenau, Scharnhorst conceived battle plans for the defeat of Napoleon. So critical to Napoleon's final defeat was Scharnhort's and Gneisenau's work, the new general staff could only be labeled an undeniable success.[7]

In the years following the Napoleonic wars, the general staff continued to refine duties and organization. Key among its efforts was an ever-increasing emphasis placed on the conception and implementation of large-scale maneuvers. Further, to ensure the Army was the first to identify faulty planning or weaknesses in execution, the General Staff and its Chief, now General Karl Freiherr von Muffling, fostered an environment where self-critique was not only accepted, but encouraged. The General Staff also conducted an in-depth study of the Prussian railroad system and its potential uses for

mobilization. Both these areas proved critical to the success of the Prussian General Staff concept during the middle nineteenth century wars of unification. Another key ingredient was the initiative of rotating officers between the General Staff and field units. This increased the effectiveness of general staff officers by not only enhancing their knowledge of field craft, but also increasing the level of trust between field commanders, their units, and the general staff officer corps.[8]

Refinement of the Prussian General Staff continued between the Napoleonic wars and the German wars of unification. During the latter, the Prussian General Staff reached the zenith of its success. In addition to establishing the Second German Reich, these wars established Imperial Germany as the pre-eminent power on the European continent. More importantly to this topic, the wars of unification established the Prussian General Staff as the premier senior military leadership system.

By the time General Helmuth von Moltke (the elder) assumed leadership of the Prussian General Staff, the system envisioned by Scharnhorst and institutionalized by Gneisenau had been in existence for forty-five years. For his part, General von Motlke added a new dimension to the General Staff, which embodied the equivalent of Scharnhorst's groundbreaking war planning in 1813. Unlike previous chiefs of the general staff, von Motlke exercised direct command and control of the Prussian field armies.

General von Moltke's influence on the continued improvement of the Prussian General Staff cannot be overstated. At the start of the war with Denmark, despite von Moltke's efforts between 1857 and 1864, orders were still received from the War Ministry and problems still existed in the area of war-making capabilities. In 1864,

Prussia mobilized a mere 65,000 soldiers for the war with Denmark.[9] In contrast, during the war with France a mere six years later, the Prussian General Staff directed the processing of over 1,300,000 soldiers from Prussia, the other North German States, as well as the South German states of Bavaria, Baden, and Wurttemberg.[10] So swift was their movement and so lethal their engagement that in a mere eight weeks, Prussia successfully secured the surrender and destruction of the second French Empire.

With the defeat of the Austrian Empire, the fall of the French Empire, and the associated rise of the German Empire, the balance of power in Europe shifted dramatically to Berlin. As the military architects of the resoundingly successful wars of German Unification, the Prussian General Staff established itself as the foremost system of military planning and organization.

<center>World View of the Prussian General Staff</center>

To this point, the wars of unification served to highlight the dominant nature of the Prussian General Staff concept. The final key to establishing the primacy of the Prussian system is to outline the extent to which the other major powers of the day attempted to follow the Prussian's lead. The remainder of this chapter consists of a look into Austrian, Japanese, Russian, and French efforts to structure similar systems of leadership. This list is obviously not all-inclusive. Certainly there were other major powers on the world stage in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It was the aforementioned countries' efforts that fit most notably into the context of this study as each represents the most significant attempts to follow the Prussian example.

Perhaps the most striking instance of an attempt to incorporate a Prussian style general staff system occurred in Imperial Japan. Forced to open her ports to the west in

1853, the Japanese quickly realized a change to their strategic position, which had driven a focus on sea power as opposed to ground combat forces. To enhance military capabilities and counter what the country perceived as a new threat to national sovereignty, the Japanese turned to the west with the desire of identifying key areas for improvement. Initially, the country focused its efforts on studying the French Army and the French military leadership system. At the time, France was recognized as the dominant military power on the European continent. After the dramatic French defeat at the hands of the Prussians in 1870 to 1871, however, the Japanese Imperial Army struggled with which example to follow.[11]

The solution the Japanese implemented combined elements of both the French and Prussian systems. Eventually, however, the Japanese identified weaknesses in their heterogeneous approach. The problems included war-planning deficiencies, mobilization challenges, and command organization problems. Each of these areas represented specific strengths of the Prussian General Staff so the Japanese modified their approach and followed almost completely the Prussian system. They went so far as to acquire the services of Prussian Major Jacob Merkel to teach the Prussian system at their newly established war college.[12]

In addition to Japan, Imperial Russia also considered applying Prussian style general staff concepts. Initially inspired by the failures of the Crimean war, Russia faced an even more imperative need to transform when Germany emerged as a dominant European power in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian war. Unfortunately, it appears the senior military leaders in Russia did not adequately understand the precarious nature of their position. Case in point, the main proponent for applying Prussian concepts to the

Russian Army, Field Marshall Prince Bariatinskii, concerned himself more with political maneuvering than he did with reform. According to Bruce Menning in his book, *Bayonets Before Bullets--The Imperial Russian Army, 1861-1914*, "Bariatinskii's aim, of course, was to elbow [Field Marshall D.A.] Miliutin aside and make himself master of Russia's military destiny as chief of a revamped general staff."[13] The relatively obvious nature of Bariatinskii's motives combined with Miliutin's relationship with the Russian Emperor conspired to prevent Bariatinskii and the other Prussian-minded reformers from successfully lobbying their position.[14] As a result, the Russians did not incorporate Prussian methods, and the Tsar's General Staff never achieved the level of success enjoyed by Imperial Germany.

While Japan demonstrated the most striking implementation of Prussian General Staff concepts, the fact that both France and Austria attempted to implement elements of the Prussian General Staff serves as perhaps the strongest validation. Entering their conflicts with Prussia, both empires were considered dominant military powers in their own right. Further, both witnessed first hand the Prussian General Staff at work.

For the Austrians, after their defeat at *Koeniggraetz,* the need for reform became supremely evident. Prussian superiority in both war and mobilization planning allowed them to seize and maintain the combat initiative.[15] These advantages, facilitated by the Prussian General Staff's approach, represented a key element necessary for the numerically inferior Prussians to prevail in just over a month. Understanding the need for improvement, Austrian reformers, most notably Friedrich Beck, advocated the implementation of a Prussian-style system. Having observed von Motlke and the Prussian General Staff at work in 1859, Beck fully supported the adoption of Prussian's

concepts.[16] Initially, politics among key senior leaders in the Austrian Army thwarted the success of Beck's efforts. It was not until Beck himself became Chief of the Austro-Hungarian General Staff that the Austro-Hungarian Common Army fully met the spirit and intent of the Prussian General Staff system.[17]

Much like their Austrian counterparts, the French recognized the need for reform after their defeat at the hands of the Prussians. The French sought specifically to enhance their war-planning effectiveness and mobilization timeliness. To achieve these improvements, the French Government passed legislation authorizing a permanent Army corps and the establishment of a General Staff in 1873.[18] Admittedly, the French possessed a general staff concept of their own prior to 1873, but this latest legislation paved the way for an 1874 decree, which re-organized the general staff into an entity more closely approximating the Prussian system. Unfortunately, much like the Russian and to a lesser extent the Austro-Hungarian armies, the French were never able to achieve the level of general staff performance achieved by the Prussians. In the case of the French, there were many underlying reasons, the chief of which was the inability to separate the military from the political sphere of influence. Unlike the Prussian system, the French Chief of Staff remained under the war secretary's (war minister's) control. As a result, each time the political environment drove a change in the war secretary, the chief of staff also changed. Case in point, from 1871 to 1886, the French Chief of Staff changed twelve times[19] In Prussia, Count von Motlke remained the Chief of Staff throughout the same time period and beyond.

The dramatic turn of events of the late 1860s and early 1870s unfolded as a direct result of the leadership capabilities conceived in the early nineteenth century and refined

during the wars of unification. Whether or not the various major world powers

successfully implemented parts or the entire Prussian concept, the fact remains key

nations thought enough of the Prussian system that most at least attempted to follow its

example. Viewed through the lens of hindsight, it can certainly be argued that the very

system, which enabled the establishment of the Second German Reich, also played a role

in its demise. Further, using the same line of logic, it can also be proposed that the

Prussian General Staff methodology facilitated a mindset, which made a second world

war inevitable. Regardless of whether the view of the Prussian General Staff sides on pro

or con, what cannot be argued is the Prussian system was identified by allies and

adversaries alike as the role model of military leadership in the late nineteenth century.

What is most important to understand is not that Prussia and then Germany

developed a flawless General Staff system, but rather the fact that other European nations

and the Japanese perceived the Prusso-German General Staff to possess superior

organization, education, and war planning techniques and practices. More importantly, as

will be discussed in the following chapters, military and civilian leaders in the United

States also saw merit in incorporating the concepts embodied by the Prusso-German

General Staff.

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[1]Walter Goerlitz, *The German General Staff* (New York, NY: Praeger Inc., Publishers, 1954), 76-77.

[2]Trevor N. Dupuy, *A Genius for War* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1977), 47-48.

[3]Ibid., 12-13.

[4]Arden Bucholz, *Moltke, Schlieffen and Prussian War Planning* (Lillington, NC: Edwards Brothers, 1991), 19.

[5]Dupuy, 22.

[6]Goerlitz, 31.

[7]Ibid., 39-46.

[8]Gordon A. Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army--1640-19*45 (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1955), 78.

[9]Arden Bucholz, *Moltke and the German Wars, 1864-1871* (New York, NY: Palgrave, 2001), 43-45.

[10]Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War* (Bury St Edmunds, London: St Edmundsbury Press, 1961), 60.

[11]Theo Farrell and Terry Terriff, *The Sources of Military Change* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), 54-55.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Bruce W. Menning, *Bayonets Before Bull*ets (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992), 15.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Daniel J. Hughes, *Moltke on the Art of War* (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1993), 236-237.

[16]Scott W. Lackey, *The Rebirth of the Habsburg Army* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), 19.

[17]Ibid., 88-97.

[18]Michael Bourlet, "Evolution of the French Army--Organization and Command Structures, 1870-1914," *Doctrine,* no. 5 (December 2004): 77-79.

[19]Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

EVOLUTION OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER CORPS: THE QUEST FOR
PROFESSIONALISM AND CIVILIAN RESISTANCE

Introduction

In 1871, elements of the United States Army's leadership genuinely endeavored

to emulate portions of the Prussian General Staff system. The political, military and

national culture and strategic position within the United States, however, had not changed

significantly enough to facilitate the Army's efforts. It would be another thirty years

before the United States made serious attempts to follow the Prussian example of military

planning and control.

Background

Prior to 1865, the political environment in the United States prohibited serious

consideration of implementing a Prussian-style General Staff. From the very beginning,

the preponderance of United States citizens viewed standing armies as potential threats to

the individual rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. To most Americans,

armies were tools used by monarchs for the purpose of territorial gains and the

subjugation of their populations. King George III's use of the British Army in the 18th

Century to control the colonies certainly fit this description. Moreover, simple acts such

as forcing colonials to provide quarters for the royal army reinforced negative

perceptions.

Evidence that Americans viewed standing armies with skepticism was

demonstrated during the two wars with the British and the war with Mexico. In each case,

rapid de-mobilization of the army followed these armed conflicts. After the

Revolutionary War, the Continental Army shrunk from a maximum strength of 89,651 soldiers to a mere 700 soldiers. A similarly dramatic draw down followed the war of 1812 when the standing army went from 527,654 to 10,000 and the Mexican-American War when the army's end strength was cut by almost 90 percent.[1]

In addition to the statement the preceding draw down made, the United States Constitution itself supports the idea that the fledgling democracy looked dimly on the notion of a large standing army. Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution gives Congress the power to "provide and maintain a navy" but also provides for increased Congressional oversight of the Army. Specifically, the Constitution allows Congress "to raise and support armies" with the condition that "no appropriation of money to that use shall be for a longer term than two years." By directing the bi-annual review of the Army's budget, the founding fathers gave Congress the ability to detect, in a timely fashion, attempts to build the Army for purposes other than the basic defense of the United States.

As if cultural prohibitions against a standing army were not enough to restrict size and capability, strategic considerations added to the popular notion that a professional American Army was not necessary. Neither the Canadians to the North or the Mexicans to the South were perceived to be enough of a threat, if a threat at all, to warrant the establishment of a standing Army. Further, should a larger ground combat force be necessary to deal with either neighbor, Americans believed the Army could simply expand with relative ease and then contract when the threat passed. This was the case in 1781, 1812, and 1848. American leaders applied similar logic to the European threat. Should the time come that Great Britain, or any other European nation for that matter,

attempt to re-exert political influence in North America, the Army would simply be increased and decreased in direct conjunction with the level of threat.

The Catalyst for a Professional Army

As the United States Civil War drew to a close in 1865, the leaders of the Union Army and the American public they had so ably served found themselves in a position unlike any other in the nation's brief eighty-nine year history. Much like the three previous wars, the American Congress sought to radically reduce the number of soldiers in uniform after April 1865. Within six months of General Robert Lee's surrender to General Ulysses Grant at Appomatox, 800,000 of the one million Union soldiers were out of the Army.[2] Unlike the previous wars, however, the United States found itself in a different military and political climate. This new operating environment caused both the Army and the American public to re-evaluate long-held views regarding the merits of a standing Army.

Chief among the concerns faced by the reunified United States was the change of governments in Mexico. Union leaders feared the French-backed and short lived Mexican Empire of Maxmillian I perceived the United States as war weary in 1865. In an effort to deter possible Mexican aggression, General Grant ordered Major General Philip Sheridan to skip the victory parade in the Nation's Capitol and instead lead a contingent of 52,000 soldiers to the Mexican border as a demonstration of United States resolve.[3]

In addition to Sheridan's Mexican excursion, the more radical approach to reconstruction proposed by key political leaders in the aftermath of President Lincoln's death drove the need for at least a contingent of Union troops to serve as an army of occupation. Fearing what today would be labeled insurgency warfare, generals, such as

William Sherman, initially handed the former Confederates generous terms with regards to self-governance. In General Sherman's specific case, the Union granted amnesty to former Confederate soldiers and politicians and facilitated the decisive restoration of pre-Civil War southern civilian governments.[4] Sherman's approach decreased the requirement for Union soldiers since former confederate soldiers and politicians occupied key government positions. Unfortunately for Sherman and Union soldiers in general, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton did not approve Sherman's actions, which subsequently increased the burden of governance on Union troops acting in the capacity of military occupiers.

Despite the traditional civilian desire to quickly demobilize, the unknown nature of Mexico's intentions mandated the continued service of a larger number of Union soldiers than originally desired. This combined with the harsher approach to southern reconstruction imposed by Union civil leaders created an environment suited for a larger peacetime standing army than ever before. The challenges the army faced with Mexico and the need to pacify the western frontier highlighted the need for not only an increase in the number of officers but also their competency as well. To increase officer proficiency, General Sherman, promoted to commanding general three years after the end of the Civil War, expanded the number and quality of formal military schools.

At the same time, the increased size of the army mandated improvements in the value and standardization of officer training and the officers themselves desired to enhance their level of professionalism. In essence, the expansion of the peacetime army and the establishment of a professional officer corps combined to create an environment where the idea of a general staff in the United States no longer seemed inconceivable.

Defining Professionalism

To embark on a discussion of the professionalization of the officer corps, the definition of professional must first be established. Two sources, Samuel Huntington's *Soldier and the State* and William Skelton's *An American Profession of Arms,* each provide definitions. Diametrically opposed on the issue of when the professionalization of the American officer corps began, these authors agree, at least, with regards to general substance, on the definition of professionalism. For his part, Skelton uses Allan Millet's definition of professionalism:

> (1) The occupation is a full-time and stable job, serving continuing societal need; (2) the occupation is regarded as a lifelong calling by practitioners, who identify themselves personally with their job subculture; (3) the occupation is organized to control performance standards and recruitment; (4) the occupation requires formal, theoretical education; (5) the occupation ahs a service orientation in which loyalty to standards of competence and loyalty to clients' needs are paramount; and (6) the occupation is granted a great deal of collective autonomy by the society it serves, presumably because the practitioners have proven their high ethical standards and trustworthiness.[5]

Huntington, on the other hand, breaks the concept of professionalism down into three categories. The first of these, expertise, requires an individual to have a specialized knowledge or skill in a field deemed critical to the human race. Furthermore, the acquired skill must be obtained through formal education and training. For the second characteristic, responsibility, the professional must perform a service essential to society. This service must be for the benefit of society and not necessarily for personal gain. The final characteristic, corporateness, embodies the idea that professionals identify themselves as members of a distinguishable group, apart from society because of their profession. Included in the concept of corporateness is the idea that a professional subculture contains a body of rules, which governs its members.[6]

Although stated differently, both models embody the same fundamental concepts. The fact that Skelton and Huntington disagree on when the American Army developed a professional officer corps will be discussed later. For now, what is important is not the difference of opinion, but rather the fact that their definitions of professionalism are so similar. Further, it is the application of the characteristics in these definitions which allows for the determination of when and how the Army's officer corps became professionalized.

<center>Development of the American Professional Officer Corps</center>

The professionalization of the American Army's officer corps reached a zenith of sorts in 1865. The establishment of the United States Military Academy sixty-two years earlier under President Thomas Jefferson created the first United States institution solely dedicated to the development of professional military officers. Further, West Point graduates' successful service as junior officers in the Mexican-American War and as senior leaders in the Civil War laid the foundation, which would ultimately result in the establishment of the United States Army's first professional officer corps.

Some may argue West Point's necessity with regards to the professionalization of the officer corps. West Point's establishment certainly supports both Skelton's and Huntington's notions with regards to the importance of formal education to the establishment of a profession. However, a divergence occurs between the two men with regards to professional education. Skelton argues the existence of the professional officer corps started in the aftermath of the War of 1812 and continued to the Civil War.[7] Huntington, on the other hand, argues professionalization did not occur until after the Civil War. To support Skelton's view, it must be accepted that experience garnered "On

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the drillfield and battleground"[8] and the informal education received as the result of personal study or command influence equates to the formal education received at schools such as Fort Leavenworth's School of Application of Infantry and Cavalry. Unfortunately, without the more formal schools, it was impossible to ensure every officer received any training at all, let alone standardized training. For these reasons, Huntington correctly asserts that the professional officer corps came into existence after the Civil War. Both men are correct, however, in that West Point's establishment played a critical role in the establishment and eventual development of the professional officer corps.

Ironically, it was President Jefferson and his like-minded party members who viewed war as a friend of monarchy and as the opposite of democracy,[9] yet it was Jefferson who established the United States Military Academy. Originally, West Point's purpose centered on the development of engineers intended to assist with building key infrastructure throughout the expanding United States. In an effort to minimize the professionalization of the army and maximize the effective use of soldiers, early American leaders felt it imperative to find civil support functions for the army. Subsequently, it was not at all uncommon to see early American soldiers digging ditches or building bridges.

The Military Academy achieved its original objective of training leaders technically capable of directing projects such as those listed above. In addition to instilling engineering skills, however, the curriculum also inspired cadets to study more liberal pursuits such as government, history, and the art of war. As an example, in the 1830s, the cadets, with Dennis Hart Mahan's guidance, established the Napoleonic Club with the expressed intent of studying the operational and tactical concepts of the great

French Emperor. The resulting unintended consequence of the Napoleonic Club was the establishment of an institution that would eventually become the catalyst for the development of officer professionalism.[10] Moreover, as the nineteenth century passed by, the number of West Point graduates serving in the Army increased dramatically. During the War of 1812, only eighty-nine United States Military Academy graduates served in the Army. By the start of the Civil War, this number had increased twenty-fold to 1,887.[11] This significant increase served to enhance the impact of the first generations of professional soldiers on the Army.

As the number of West Pointers in the Army increased in number and in rank, the drive for increased professionalism in the officer corps also increased. For instance, the Army established its first formal education school in the form of the Artillery School in 1824. Admittedly, the Artillery School would not fully mature until after the Civil War, but the fact remains; the ground had been broken with regards to formal education.[12]

Unfortunately, other than the Artillery School's establishment, the concept of professional military education did not advance noticeably in the years leading up to the Mexican-American War. A key reason for the lack of educational progress resulted from the fact that the more senior officers heralded from the Revolutionary and 1812 War eras, a time when personal courage and creativity on the battlefield were valued more than knowledge of the art of war. A second reason was the demand for West Pointers to serve on civil development projects such has building roads, canals, and railroads. The number of civilian engineers could not keep pace with the ever-increasing number of large-scale projects and developments. Fortunately for United States civilian leaders, West Pointers provided the obvious answer to the engineer shortage.[13] Given the West Pointers' focus

on serving civil needs and the lack of senior leader emphasis, there was not much of a catalyst to force professional growth among junior officers. As the drive for institutionalized instruction stagnated, so too did the push for the professionalization of the officer corps. It was not until the Mexican-American War that professionalization would again become an issue.

More than just their first major test in combat, the Mexican-American War served to introduce West Pointers to fellow West Point graduates. It further instilled in them a sense of commonality with regards to the professional nature of military officership.[14] Officers such as Captain Robert E. Lee and Lieutenant Edmund Kirby Smith, both general officers during the Civil War, felt strongly that the superior performance of West Point graduates during the war with Mexico validated the Military Academy's existence and underscored the value of a more professionalized officer corps.[15]

General Winfield Scott provided the strongest support for the assertions of soldiers such as Lee and Smith. After a string of impressive battles, Scott saved his most glowing endorsement of performance for the West Point officers serving in his command. Congress, however, did not agree with the assessment and instead chose to credit the citizen-soldier volunteers.[16] This perceived lack of appreciation pushed the core of Military Academy officers to become an even tighter knit group. The increased camaraderie coupled with several postwar difficulties inspired the West Pointers to pursue, with ever-increasing zeal, the professionalization of their chosen occupation.

First among the many problems, which brought the West Pointers together after the Mexican-American War, was the actual size of the postwar military. Already feeling under appreciated, the likes of Grant, Lee, Smith, and others felt Congress asked the

impossible when they decreased the authorized strength to a level lower than that of 1815.[17]

A second problem, which instilled the feeling of under appreciation amongst the officers serving in the Army, came to a head in 1854 when the officer corps expressed dissatisfaction with their pay. At issue was the fact that the economy was good and prices for goods and services were increasing. Recognizing this, Congress endeavored to raise the salaries of their clerks and even the enlisted soldiers serving in the standing Army. When the time came to increase officer pay, however, Congress balked. The fact that officer pay had not increased since 1789 did not help matters.[18] In short, perception of an increased mission saddled with inadequate manning and combined with sub-standard pay served to yet again enhance the West Pointers' pursuit of professionalization. Only an event of previously unparalleled magnitude in United States history remained to solidify the concept of and quest for a professional military officer corps. The United States Civil War provided just such an event.

In the early stages of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln made a minor yet notable historical contribution to the permanent establishment of a professional officer corps in the Union Army. Not long after his inauguration, he appointed General McClellan as Commander of Union troops. With this appointment, for the first time, the Army had a West Pointer serving as its Commanding General.[19] General McClellan would not survive the war at the head of the Union Army. Early in 1862, President Lincoln's confidence in General McClellan wavered and he chose to relieve McClellan. Fortunately, the removal of the first West Pointer to serve in such a senior position in no way diminished the Military Academy's prestige or importance. To the contrary, first

General Henry Halleck and then General Ulysses Grant, both West Point graduates, succeeded General McClellan. At the same time President Lincoln appointed General Grant to command the Union effort; he also promoted him to the rank of Lieutenant General making him the first Military Academy graduate and the first officer since General George Washington to achieve the rank.

Admittedly, there were non-West Pointers who, as individuals, helped forge the Army's professional officer corps, but it was the institution and the soldiers it created that would forever mold the professional officer corps in the fabric of its culture. In addition to the posts held by McClellan and Grant, West Pointers also served in both key and historic leadership positions on both sides of the War. Confederate generals such as Lieutenant General Robert E. Lee, Major General Thomas Jonathan "Stonewall" Jackson, Major General J.E.B. Stuart, as well as Union Generals such as General William T. Sherman, Major General George A. Custer, and Major General Winfield Scott Hancock represented the heart of the professional officer corps during the Civil War. The importance played by these Military Academy graduates cannot be over-stated. For the first time in United States history, officers trained for military service from post-secondary education forward led the United States Army. Whether the American public wanted to accept it or not, for the first time in history, professional officers permeated all ranks and levels of the United States Army. In short, a fully professional officer corps now existed in their country.

<u>The First Clash of Cultures: The Aftermath of the</u>
<u>United States Civil War</u>

Unfortunately, few in the United States understood the level to which the officer

corps solidified its existence during the Civil War. Actions and incidents in the years

following the war clearly indicated that as a culture, Americans did not fully appreciate

the role the professional officer corps filled in 1865. Further, as time passed between

1865 and the start of the Spanish-American War in 1898, the divide between American

society and the officer corps increased. This division created a vicious cycle in that as the

division increased, the officers felt more and more alienated. The more they felt

alienated, the more they withdrew from society, making the division even greater.

At the core of the Army's mistrust for civilian America and the subsequent

feeling of under appreciation was the perception of neglect following the war. In addition

to the previously discussed rapid draw, the increased emphasis placed on the frontier

wars formed the basis for the Army's point of view. In the first place, the frontier wars

could be, at times, quite perilous and yet, since non-settler Americans knew little of their

efforts, soldiers serving in the American west felt "out of sight, out of mind" with regards

to their civilian counterparts.[20] In addition, frontier soldiers mistrusted the western

settlers under their protection because they viewed the settlers as greedy and

unnecessarily brutal in their treatment of the Indians.[21] In the end, for the reasons stated

above, most officers held the opinion that they did not receive the respect accorded other

professions in nineteenth century America.[22]

As the Army's officers felt less and less valued, they sought to increase the level

of professionalism throughout the service. In an effort to do so, senior leaders such as

General Sherman and General Sheridan focused their attention on Europe to study,

understand, and in some cases emulate, elements of the most successful military staff systems. After 1871 and the victories that unified Germany, Prussia became the center of attention.

<center>The Army's Desire for a Prussian-Style General Staff</center>

Prior to the Civil War, few officers dedicated themselves to self-education. Those who did, mostly younger officers, sought out the concept of self-education primarily in an effort to loosen the promotion bottleneck. The post-Civil War demobilization left the Army with many more officers than needed. Very few of the officers who remained in the Army did so at the rank they had held during the War. Unfortunately for the most junior among them, the mandatory retirement system did not come into existence until 1882.[23] Without a retirement system, the push for more senior officers to leave the Army did not exist. This meant that for more junior officers to get noticed, they had to set themselves apart. Self-education provided the most effective means to do so.

To further drive the mandate for education, Major General John Schofield, future Commanding General of the Army, encouraged officers to pursue self-education. General Schofield felt, rightly so, that the Industrial Revolution would have a significant impact on the art of war. In an effort to meet General Schofield's intent and assist junior officers with their pursuit of self-education, many frontier post commanders instituted classes on military history and tactics.[24]

In addition to self-education, officers wishing to distinguish themselves sought to publish articles on the various topics of warfare. Major Emory Upton was just such an officer. Immediately after the war, the Army assigned Upton to General John Pope, Commanding General of the Department of Missouri, who, in turn, dispatched him to

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Denver, Colorado.[25] Upton's orders were to reduce the size of Union forces in Colorado

to the maximum extent possible. Upon arrival in Denver, Upton quickly executed Pope's

orders and provided the added benefit of reforming a supply system he viewed as

extremely corrupt.[26] With his initial task complete, Upton turned his attention to the

study of tactics in an effort to make himself the foremost authority on the subject. To do

so, he not only examined conflicts such as the Napoleonic and Crimean Wars, he also

studied technological innovations. By the spring of 1866, Upton completed a proposal on

tactics he felt ready for consideration and approval by the Army senior leadership in

Washington.[27]

Upton's opportunity presented itself in a rather unique form. Congressionally

mandated reductions in the size of the Army resulted in Upton's muster out of the

volunteer service and subsequent loss of the rank of Major General. Hoping to at least

remain a Colonel in the Regular Army, Upton was instead offered the rank of Lieutenant

Colonel and an assignment to the 25th United States Infantry. He accepted both and used

the time between assignments to travel to Washington and request the War Department

study his tactical system.[28] The War Department approved his request for travel and

study. Subsequently, Upton spent the next year at West Point training cadets on his new

concepts and demonstrating the results to the board. Upton ultimately achieved success in

1867 when the War Department's board recommended approval and General Grant,

signed General Order No. 73 directing adoption of Upton's system throughout the regular

Army and Militias of the various states.[29] By successfully accomplishing this self-

imposed task, Upton not only established himself as a foremost expert on tactics, he also

caught the eye of a former commander, General Sherman. It was General Sherman who,

six years later, would obtain the funds Upton needed to conduct his world tour of Asian and European Armies. Of the many countries and their armies Upton visited and studied respectively, the German Army, with its Prussian roots, most notably caught Upton's eye.

It is not surprising that newly re-unified Germany provided Upton with many of the recommendations he forwarded to General Sherman. When Secretary of War William Belknap and Army General-in-Chief Sherman dispatched Upton, they directed him to pay special attention to the German Army as a direct result of the Prusso-German victories during the wars of unification. Even before dispatching Upton, General Sherman had proclaimed at least one portion of the Prussian military system of as "simply perfect."[30] Admittedly, Upton dutifully followed his orders and studied multiple armies from both Asia and Europe. His recommendations, however, most critical to this thesis, came almost exclusively from the study of the Prusso-German General Staff.[31]

Upton's general staff recommendations emphasized the areas of organization, officer training, and officer assignments. To match the organization of the Prussian General Staff, Upton proposed re-organizing the Army's senior leadership into an Adjutant General's Division and Quartermaster General's Division. Although not identical to the Prussian system, the tasks and purposes of the proposed divisions closely matched those of the main and accessory branches of the Prussian General Staff.[32]

Upton proposed a second imitative which closely resembled the Prussian system. Upton intended the establishment of a war academy, the American version of the Prussian *Kriegsakademie*, to "prepare them (officers) for staff and to hold high command."[33] In conjunction with the re-organized general staff and the associated war academy, Upton recommended an assignment methodology that closely resembled the

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Prussian system. Much like the Prussian system of rotating general staff officers between staff and field unit assignments, Upton proposed, "The officers constantly pass from the line to the staff, and the reverse. They thus keep in sympathy with the troops, know their wants and fighting qualities, and, furthermore, know how to maneuver them in nearly every emergency that may arise."[34]

The most compelling evidence Upton submitted to support his recommendation to incorporate Prussian General Staff concepts emphasized the quickness with which the Prussians were able to defeat the Danes, Austrians and French during the German Wars of Unification. To make his point, he compared the duration of the German Wars of Unification with the duration of the wars fought in America from the Revolutionary War through the Civil War. As table 1 indicates, a stark contrast certainly exists. The explanation, in Upton's own words:

> If we now compare our military policy during the first century of the Republic with the present military policy of European nations, we shall find that the difference lies principally in this--that, while they prosecute their wars exclusively with trained armies, completely organized in all of their parts, and led by officers specially educated, we have begun, and have prosecuted, most of our wars with raw troops, whose officers have had to be educated in the expensive school of war.[35]

Table 1. Length of Prussian Versus United States Wars			
Prussian Wars of Unification	**Duration**	**American Wars**	**Duration**
Denmark	6 Months	War of the Revolution	7 Years
Austria	7 Weeks	War of 1812	2.5 Years
France	6 Weeks*	War with Mexico	2 Years
		War of the Rebellion	4 Years

Source: Emory Upton, *The Armies of Asia and Europe* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), 321. Note: Upton uses the date of Napoleon III's capture as the end date of the Franco-Prussian War. In actuality, the Franco-Prussian war went on for five months after the fall of the second French Empire.

Upton submitted the final report of his travels to Asia and Europe to Secretary of

War Belknap and General Sherman on 15 December 1877. In addition to the changes in

staff organization, staff officer training, and officer assignments mentioned above, Upton

also recommended a more comprehensive method of evaluating officers. As a direct

result of these recommendations, General Sherman instituted a series of reforms aimed at

accomplishing the spirit and intent of Upton's recommendations. Of the reforms General

Sherman attempted to implement, the most notable was the establishment of the School

of Application of Infantry and Cavalry at Fort Leavenworth. In his book, *The

Leavenworth Schools and the Old Army*, Timothy Nenninger quotes a letter from General

Sherman to General Sheridan dated 31 July 1881 in which the former admits to having

ulterior motives for establishing the school. In the letter, Sherman espouses to Sheridan:

> I confess I made the order as a concession to the everlasting demands of friends
> and families to have their boys detailed to Signal duty, or to the School at Fort
> Monroe to escape company duty in the Indian country. The School at
> Leavenworth may do some good, and be a safety-valve for those who are resolved
> to escape from the drudgery of garrison life at small posts.[36]

Regardless of his motives, General Sherman believed strongly in military education. In

addition to establishing the Fort Leavenworth School, he appointed Upton as head of the

Artillery School at Fort Monroe, to modernize the school's outdated curriculum.[37]

Unfortunately, while the schools did meet the demand to provide formal military

education to officers, neither of the schools effectively trained staff officers. Not until

Secretary of War Elihu Root established the War College early in the next century did the

United States have a school with a focus similar to the Prussian *Kriegsakademie*.

Even before he received Upton's report, General Sherman strongly supported a

re-organization in the Army to build a general staff much like the Prussian system.

Sherman first mentions his dissatisfaction with the split between staff and line troops in his Civil War memoirs, "The almost entire separation of the staff from the line, as now practiced by us, and hitherto the French, has proved mischievous."[38]

In the years between the Civil War and General Grant's election to the Presidency, General Sherman discussed with General Grant the need to unify the Army's staff functions under the General-in-Chief. Both men felt strongly that the lack of unity of command between the Army's line functions, which fell under the General-in-Chief, and the staff functions, which fell under the Secretary of War, hindered effectiveness and efficiency. Initially, upon election, President Grant changed the Army's structure such that all the Army's functions fell under the purview of the commanding general. Despite his own beliefs, Grant reversed his decision not long after publishing the original order. Upon his appointment as Secretary of War, former General John A. Rawlins, also a Grant confidant, mustered his own political clout to wrestle the staff functions back from Sherman. However, unhappy Sherman may have been about his change of fortunes, for the sake of his friendship with Grant, he executed the order as directed and without expressing disapproval in public.[39]

For a short time, General Sherman would eventually achieve his vision of unified Army staff and line functions. Not long after assuming his post, Secretary Rawlins passed away and Sherman temporarily filled in as Secretary of War, which, de facto, unified the line and staff. In short order, however, President Grant appointed General Belknap to permanently succeed Secretary Rawlins. Even hungrier for power than Secretary Rawlins, Secretary Belknap not only retrieved control of the staff for himself; he continually interfered with General Sherman's attempts to command the Army by issuing

orders directly to officers without General Sherman's knowledge.[40] The problems with

Secretaries Rawlins and Belknap undoubtedly played a role in General Sherman's well-

known dislike for all things political. It also highlighted a character trait in General

Sherman, which, in hindsight, played a role in the United States' inability to enact a

Prussian-style General Staff system. General Sherman emphatically espoused the

superiority of civilian law to military law, subsequently, instead of sparring with

Secretary Belknap, he simply moved his headquarters from Washington, District of

Columbia, to Saint Louis.[41]

Upon General Sherman's retirement, Lieutenant General Philip H. Sheridan

assumed the post of General-in-Chief. A major contributor to the Union's success in the

Civil War, General Sheridan watched the 1871 Franco-Prussian War as a guest of

Prussian King Wilhelm I. He witnessed General von Moltke and the Prussian General

Staff firsthand as they destroyed the Army of the Second French Empire. Primarily

because of their military effectiveness, but also nominally as a result of the hospitality

and courtesy the Prussians extended to him, General Sheridan returned to the United

States with a great admiration for the Prussian Army and its General Staff.[42] Most

important, combined with General Sherman's difficulties leading an Army when its staff

worked for the Secretary of War, the Franco-Prussian experience left General Sheridan in

complete agreement with General Sherman's views on the union of line and staff.

Subsequently, upon replacing General Sherman, General Sheridan attempted to re-align

the Army's staff functions from under the Secretary of War to the General-In-Chief.

Knowing full well General Sherman's reputation as a warrior and a fighter,

General Sheridan never fully understood his predecessor's reluctance to press the issue

with regards to the Army's staff bureau chiefs. Once in command of the Army, he worked to establish his authority as the senior Army officer by sending orders directly to the staff's bureau chiefs without the approval of the Secretary of War.[43] The Secretary of War, President Lincoln's son, Robert, immediately took steps making it clear to both General Sheridan and the staff officers that the latter worked directly for the Secretary of War and not the General-In-Chief.[44] Despite the obtrusive nature with which he had told friends he would remedy the situation, General Sheridan acquiesced. General Sheridan actions, especially in light of the way both Secretary Lincoln and Lincoln's successor, Secretary Endicott treated him, speaks volumes on why the Army failed to institute a General Staff system of the type and style of the Prussian General Staff. As General Sheridan's West Point classmate and successor, Major General John Schofield in his memoirs, *Forty-Six Years in the Army*:

> But the loyal, subordinate soldier, who had commanded great armies and achieved magnificent victories in the field while those bureau chiefs were purveying powder and balls, or pork and beans, submitted even to that without a murmur, for a great lawyer had told him such was the law, and how could he know better.[45]

The issue remained that despite the evolution of West Point and the development of the United State's professional officer corps, the fundamental culture of these officers, as Americans had not changed sufficiently for them to challenge their civilian masters. Further, since neither the Mexican-American War nor the Civil War changed the United States' strategic position, the move to change the organization of the Army's most senior levels of leadership lacked necessity. These factors and prevailing civilian outlook toward the military in America at the time helped ensure the Army maintained status quo with regards to its command, control, and planning model.

<u>The Impact of American Civil Culture</u>

In the years between the Civil War and the Spanish-American War, the civilian view of the professional officer corps regressed. At the time Prussians viewed their officers with esteem and prestige after the wars of unification. American civilians, however, somewhat mistrusted the professional officer corps. To the average citizen, the number of West Point Graduates who fought for the Confederacy sent a clear message with regards to loyalty to the Constitution and the Republic. It did not help matters that when the West Pointers rose to the prominent ranks and positions in the Army, many sided with an army created for the destruction of the Republic.

The preceding view and the idea that an amateur American army had twice risen en masse to defeat a professional European Army in 1775 and 1812 cemented the popular American attitude towards military professionalism. This attitude ensured that despite the officer corps' best efforts, increased military capability was not a necessity. The War Department's budget in the 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s speaks volumes with regards to American attitudes. At the height of the Civil War, the United States spent over a billion dollars on the Army. In contrast, the budget shrank to 35 million dollars in 1871 and 29 million dollars in 1880.[46]

From the very beginning, the United States' forefathers emphasized the principles of liberty and democracy and with the Confederate rebellion suppressed; it was time to enjoy the fruits of victory, namely, economic prosperity. From a peace perspective, democratic armies consisted of citizen soldiers. Such armies fought crusades they did not fight wars. Professional armies fought wars.[47] More specifically, professional armies with professional staffs fought wars and therefore peace could not be assured if the United

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States developed a system that paralleled the monarchical systems that had spawned wars

in Europe for centuries.

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[1]Lt Col Marvin A. Kreidberg and 1st Lt Merton G. Henry, *History of Military Mobilization in the United States, 1775-1945* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1955), 163.

[2]Edward Coffman, *The Old Army* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1986), 215.

[3]Ibid., 216.

[4]Ibid., 237.

[5]William B. Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms* (Lawrence, KS: The University Press of Kansas, 1992), 88.

[6]Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, 1957), 8-10.

[7]Skelton, xv.

[8]Ibid., 114.

[9]Huntington, 154.

[10]Coffman, 96-98.

[11]Ibid., 45.

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[30]William Sherman, *Military Lessons of War* (Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 1957), 388.

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[44]Robert Lincoln, "Letter to the Commanding General," *Army and Navy Register* (5 September 1885).

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CHAPTER 4

BIRTH OF THE REPUBLIC'S FORCE PROJECTION ARMY

Introduction

In the twilight of the nineteenth century, the winds of war once again began to blow strongly inside the United States. The United States approach to the rising Cuban insurgency and the Spanish desire to retain the last vestiges of its once great empire combined to place the two powers at odds. With an Army of a mere 25,000 soldiers, however, the United States did not appear to possess the capability to project military power commensurate with this new political-military policy. Further, United States civilian leaders continuously stymied the efforts of the now-institutionalized professional officer corps to achieve a level of excellence required to engage and defeat a European power on the field of battle. Fortunately for the Americans, the days of Spain's imperial glory had long since passed. Had Spain remained a world-class power, the outcome of the Spanish-American War could easily have been quite different. In the end, however, the United States did defeat Spain, but the conflict between the two countries highlighted severe mobilization, logistical, and planning weaknesses in the United States Army's senior leadership system.

The Army's Struggle to Fight the Spanish-American War

In the early days of 1898, when the war with Spain seemed imminent to many, the United States Army was anything but prepared. George B. McClellan, Jr., United States Representative from New York and son of the Civil War General of the same name, best

indicated the state of affairs when he proclaimed to his Congressional colleagues that the Army was "Little better than a clumsily organized National police force."[1]

Further, the size of the Army did not lend itself to war preparedness. The active duty force hovered around twenty-eight thousand officers and men. To further exacerbate the size problem, the forces were scattered across the United States with many of the individual units' officers serving outside their combat units in positions such as military science instructors or militia advisors.[2] For these reasons, the regular Army was anything but ready for the war with Spain.

In addition to the regular Army shortfalls mentioned above, the militia also lacked war preparedness. Numbering approximately 114,000, severe shortfalls in both training and equipment plagued the citizen-soldiers.[3] Both the disparity in numbers between the regular and militia forces and the lack of the latter's training and equipment reflected the prevailing and historic United States attitude to military readiness. As outlined in the previous chapter, the average American firmly believed in the citizen army's ability to successfully form at a moment's notice. This belief certainly matched United States strategic needs, as the country perceived them in the late 1800s, but it also sowed the seeds of a mobilization disaster when the United States attempted to project power outside the North American continent for the first time.

The most fundamental mobilization problem encountered centered on the size and composition of the ground forces necessary to successfully prosecute the war. United States leaders could not achieve consensus on the size of the force to be raised for two reasons. First, it was not clear which service, the Army or the Navy, would play the prominent role. Navy supporters argued that isolating Cuba by defeating the Spanish fleet

and destroying Spain's merchant shipping would reduce the number of ground forces needed to defeat the Spanish in Cuba. Second, Cuban resistance would further occupy precious Spanish ground forces further reducing the number of United States forces required to deploy to Cuba.[4]

Along with the force size issue, American leaders also struggled with the composition of the wartime Army. The plan that evolved through the late 1800s emphasized the regular Army as a cadre or foundation upon which volunteers could be added to form an adequate combat force. The problem, however, centered on how much of the expeditionary force should be regular and how much should be volunteer or militia. In addition, the United States never achieved consensus on how the volunteers would integrate into the regular Army. Regular Army thinkers, such as the aforementioned Upton, suggested an expandable Army with the notion that volunteer state militia members would form a national reserve designed to augment the standing peacetime army on an individual basis. Although Upton's recommendation had gained notoriety both inside and outside the United States, leaders within the state militias successfully resisted the concept.[5]

The defeat of Upton's initiatives highlights a relatively significant level of influence wielded by officers within the state militias. Enjoying status achieved in the aftermath of the United States Civil War, militia officers learned to successfully petition their state and federal representatives for both monetary and political support. To increase their influence even more, the state militias joined together in 1879 to form the National Guard Association. The Association, with backing from civilian politicians, ensured the state militias retained unit integrity, their inherent chains of command, and parity with

their regular Army counterparts.[6] The end result matched Upton's intent in that the state militias provided the National reserve he proposed but not in the fashion he advocated.

The militias, now collectively referred to as the National Guard, enjoyed success despite the efforts of the regular Army and in some ways because of the efforts of politicians who supported the regular Army's position. One United States Representative in particular, Iowa Republican A.T. Hull, proposed legislation that would have severely restricted the nature in which National Guard soldiers contributed to the war with Spain. Hull's legislation, which would become known as the "Hull Bill," sought to preclude National Guard units from serving in offensive operations in Cuba. The Hull Bill provided that to serve in the United States Armed Forces, National Guardsmen would be required to join the cause on an individual basis. For their part, National Guard officers would only be allowed to serve if they voluntarily relinquished their commissions and accepted service as non-commissioned officers.[7]

To say this infuriated the National Guard would be a tremendous understatement. Considering themselves socially superior to their regular Army counterparts, Guard senior leaders found Hull's proposal ludicrous. Moreover, they considered it counter to the citizen-soldier principles they believed contributed to the history of military successes the United States enjoyed throughout its brief history.[8]

Despite support from President McKinley's and his administration, the Hull Bill was soundly defeated. One by one, National Guard supporters, both inside and outside the United States Congress, criticized Hull and his proposal. The Guard and its proponents argued that regular Army soldiers were somewhat mercenary in that they fought because they had no better option for employment. Conversely, the citizen-

soldiers of the National Guard only fought when national security required it. In the end, the National Guard and its supporters won a decisive victory over Representative Hull's proposal and the regular Army's wishes.[9]

In the aftermath of the Hull disaster, President McKinley backed a new bill which became law on 22 April 1898. This second proposal accomplished the Guard's desired objectives in that it facilitated the incorporation of state-level units into the regular Army. It also gave the power to appoint officers at the regimental level and below to the state governors.[10] By clearly delineating the means through which National Guard units would augment the regular Army, this bill and the National Guard Act (also known as the Dick Act for Major General Charles Dick), which followed in 1903, laid the foundation for the National Guard system as it is known today.

On 26 April 1898, the President and Congress finally agreed on both the size and the composition of the force required to defeat Spain. Legislation signed that day expanded the authorized strength of the regular Army to 64,700 and the National Guard to 216,500.[11] The initial intent was to form these authorized numbers into eight corps, seven for service in the Caribbean and one for service in the Philippines. As the result of mobilization problems, which will be discussed in the following paragraphs, the Army never reached either authorized number. The highest number the Regular Army ever achieved was 58,688 soldiers in August of 1898.[12] For their part, the National Guard mustered 200,422 of the authorized 216,500. Fortunately, the Spanish threat did not immediately require the authorized number of soldiers. Although supply and training issues are not solely to blame, the fact remains that 136,000 of the Guards authorized 216,500 never stepped foot outside the United States.[13] The inability to deploy the

wartime Army's authorized number highlights once again that size and composition squabbles were not the only mobilization problems that plagued United States entry into the Spanish-American War.

Despite the best efforts of Generals Sherman, Sheridan, and Schofield to unify the Army's senior leadership under the position of Commanding General, the various department heads remained separate and under the direct supervision of the Secretary of War. To make matters worse, as the United States prepared for war with Spain, the two men serving in the key positions of Secretary of War and Commanding General not only lacked the ability to effectively execute their assigned duties, they also did not work well together.

For his part, Secretary of War Russell A. Alger, a general officer during the Civil War, had not kept pace with modern developments in warfare. Further, he was considered to be self-centered and arrogant. At the same time, Commanding General Nelson A. Miles was not only vain but overly ambitious politically. Much like his predecessors, Miles sought to exert more influence over the other departments, which reported directly to the Secretary of War. Ultimately, however, Miles' expertise won out. Subsequently, it was General Miles who provided the plans that directed the operational employment of the Army.

The poor mix of Alger's and Miles' personalities initially soured President McKinley's desire to solicit advice from either person.[14] What is more, the on-going conflict between the two hindered not only the size and composition debate, but also the Army's ability to generate mobilization momentum. To solve the apparent conflict, President McKinley first turned to retired Commanding General Schofield, who Miles

had replaced a mere three years earlier, and then to Adjutant General Henry C. Corbin. Initially, McKinley relieved neither Alger nor Miles (Alger would eventually be relieved by McKinley and Miles would retire as a result of Secretary of War Elihu Root's successful general staff reforms). He did, however, take a more personal role in directing the mobilization effort. Through his actions, President McKinley eventually got the mobilization process moving, but precious time was lost. While this loss of time did not prevent victory against the Spanish, it certainly could have been disastrous against a more formidable foe.

Along with mobilization challenges, the United States faced logistical challenges preparing for the war with Spain. In an effort to ensure war readiness in March of 1898, Congress authorized 50 million dollars in military spending. Because of the perceived threat posed by the Spanish fleet, three-fifths of the 50 million dollars went to the United States Navy.[15] Of the remaining two-fifths, the Army spent most of it on fortifying coastal defenses. For this reason, when it came time to tackle the supply shortfalls inherent in building a large wartime army on short notice, not much funding remained. Funds that were subsequently earmarked to solve supply shortfalls eventually helped build small stockpiles of medical, quartermaster, and signal supplies.[16] However, even these belated attempts to accumulate the materiel required to successfully fight the war were met with difficulty. Congressional regulations designed to ensure oversight of United States Army expenditures served as bureaucratic roadblocks to logistical preparations throughout the course of the war.

The Army also experienced logistical problems resulting from the previously discussed size and composition issues. Without a clear understanding of what size Army

to prepare for, those responsible for logistics did not have a solid foundation with regards to the number and types of supplies needed. Moreover, when President McKinley and the Congress finally agreed to muster a majority of forces from the National Guard, the inherent lack of adequate equipment across the National Guard's forces served to exacerbate the situation.[17]

The obvious answer to the logistical shortfalls would normally be to use stockpiles of uniforms and individual equipment. Regrettably, the small amount of surplus clothing contained in the Quartermaster's stores more effectively suited a more northern climate, not the tropical climate expected of both Cuba and the Philippines.

As troops arrived in training camps, the type and condition of their uniforms ran the spectrum from ill-fitting to poor condition. In the most dramatic cases, some units remained outfitted in civilian attire. As early as March, the Quartermaster General had requested assistance from government manufacturing depots and civilian manufacturers,[18] but it was not until after war was declared that Congress authorized the funds necessary to get the process moving. The problem at this point was that once again precious time had been wasted. In some cases, the materials required were not immediately available. In others, it simply took more precious time to produce the type, quantity, and quality of uniforms and items required.[19]

Equally as severe as the uniform and individual equipment issues was the state of ordnance stockpiles. As mobilization began, the Army only had 53,508 rifles and 14,875 carbines. The rifles alone would have been enough to outfit the expanded regular Army, but not nearly enough to also outfit the National Guard forces. The latter issue boiled to the surface when the Army discovered the National Guard equipped its forces with single

shot breech loading Springfield rifles. Although an improvement over their Civil War predecessor, the issued models most certainly did not represent modern technology of the day.[20]

Perhaps the example that best represents the weapons shortfall occurred when Major General Joseph Breckenridge, United States Army Inspector General, conducted his inspection of the training camps in May. During his review, General Breckenridge discovered two complete regiments without weapons and other units with as many as 60 to 70 percent of their soldiers without weapons. According to official reports, it was not uncommon to see posted sentries standing guard with clubs or sticks.[21]

As if the situation were not already bad enough, the fact that the war expanded to include the Philippines further complicated matters. Equipping an Army to fight in one location a mere ninety miles from the United States Coast is one thing; expanding that Army's mission to also engage enemy forces at a second location half a world away, further complicated an already daunting task.

Over and above the mobilization and logistical challenges, the lack of pre-planning for a contingency of this nature presented the final obstacle to success. Unlike their Prusso-German counterparts, who excelled at war planning, the United States simply did not invest either time or mental energy into this endeavor. Ideally, the commanding general would have conducted war planning, as it was he who owned the fielded forces. Unfortunately, the limited size of the commanding general's staff precluded such planning. Moreover, war planning, perhaps more than any other area, highlighted the uniquely American political, military and national culture, which did not believe democracies planned or prepared for war except through local militias.

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The preceding problem centered on the fact that, to this point in American history, two prevailing views supported the notion that war planning was not necessary. First, the nation lacked an immediate external threat. For the first 123 years of the nation's existence this assumption proved to be largely correct.[22] The problem created by the Spanish-American War was that, for the first time, the United States openly sought direct aggression with another nation to resolve a conflict involving a third nation. In essence, the Spanish-American War initiated the era of active United States involvement in international affairs. Had the political leaders who initiated the change in United States strategic policy thought to include equivalent changes in the American military model, the state of United States readiness at the dawn of the Spanish-American War could have been substantially different. Had these same leaders merely listened to the Army's senior leadership in the years following the Civil War, the same readiness could have been achieved. As it was, the desire to accept a different approach with regards to standing armies and the leadership systems required to lead them never materialized. From a planning point of view, this oversight precluded adequate preparation at the start of the war and the problem only got worse as the scope and complexity of the war expanded.

Among the many planning issues experienced in the build up to the war with Spain, the fact that planning did not begin in earnest until 9 April best explains why there were problems. To put that date in context, the USS Maine was attacked on 15 February, the United States issued its ultimatum to Spain on 29 March, President McKinley asked Congress for permission to intervene in Cuba on 10 April, and war was declared on 25 April. As the timeline highlights, the United States did not start planning for the war until

after the ultimatum was issued and only sixteen days before the United States declared War.

On 9 April, when General Miles finally did dispatch a letter to Secretary Alger, he outlined his recommendations for the call-up and mobilization of the Army. Given the relationship between the two men, it took almost a week for Secretary Alger to act on Miles' input. To further exacerbate the problems, nowhere in the letter did General Miles indicate the need for more detailed planning with regards to the operational methodology with which the war should be executed. Admittedly, Miles did outline proposals in a general sense. Specifically, he suggested troop concentrations and the tasks against which they should be assigned (for example; coastal defense, city defense, future offensive operations), but nothing more detailed than that. When Secretary Alger finally acted, his directives closely mirrored those recommended by Miles.[23] The directives initiated the all important mobilization process with regards to generating forces, equipping and training them, but did not provide pertinent data on how exactly the forces would be employed once mobilization was complete. The lack of planning in this latter area presented a couple of problems. For starters, the United States did not have the adequate ability to transport the requisite forces to Cuba, let alone the Philippines.

Obviously the United States successfully overcame the mobilization, logistical, and planning challenges encountered during the Spanish-American War. The undeniable fact remains the United States expelled Spain's influence in not only Cuba, but the Philippines as well. The Spanish colonial presence, which began over 400 years earlier, had dominated South and Central America for centuries. As a result of the war, however, Spain no longer represented a colonial power and the United States claimed the role as

dominant power in the New World. Fortunately for the United States, the Spanish military's senior leadership system proved to be no more effective than their own. Had the United States encountered the kind of mobilization, logistical, and planning capability embodied in the Prusso-German System during the unification wars, the outcome in Cuba and the Philippines most likely would have been significantly different.

To understand the level with which Prussia's ability to mobilize, logistically support, and plan for war far surpassed that of the United States, one need only study the Prussia's efforts during the wars of unification. Prussia's ability to mobilize more quickly, equip more effectively and plan more decisively provided for the defeat of the two major powers and a third lesser power in Europe. From the mobilization, logistics and planning perspectives, the fact that Prussia's General Staff was unlike any other in the world at the time, proved to be the critical difference.[24] In contrast, the United States lack of a similar system or concept of operation facilitated the difficulties encountered on the path to war with Spain.

Considering mobilization issues first, the contrast between Prussian and American efforts is dramatic to say the least. Admittedly, the Prussians themselves were anything but perfect during the first unification war with Denmark. By the time France declared war six years later, however, the General staff had all but perfected the ability to mobilize massed forces. Unlike the Americans, who were never able to fully mobilize the authorized Army of 281,500, the Prussians effectively processed and assigned 1,200,000 soldiers to their wartime units in 18 days. Even more importantly, they dispatched 482,000 of the million-man Army to engage the French on their own soil in the same time frame.[25]

Logistically speaking, Prussia achieved a similar level of success to that achieved during mobilization. Once again, unlike their American counterparts, the Prussians did not experience any significant shortfalls with regards to uniforms or individual equipment. Furthermore, weapons and ammunition did not pose a serious problem for the Prussians. It did not hurt matters that the Prussian Chancellor and Diet ensured adequate funding for the Army, but as the Americans proved, when the Congress finally authorized the appropriate funds to equip the Army, money itself cannot solve shortfalls. Without a solid plan on what the funds are needed to procure, something the United States did not have, but Prussia certainly did, the power of a country's economy cannot be fully brought to bear in terms of military effectiveness.

Perhaps the starkest contrast between Prussia's efforts during the wars of unification and America's efforts during the Spanish-American War centers on the concept of war planning. As outlined above, the United States certainly did not engage in seriously planning for the war with Spain prior to 1898. From the strategic ability to assemble, deploy, and employ forces to the operational and tactical utilization of the Army, the United States did not engage in serious war plan development until war was all but inevitable. In contrast, Prussia initiated strategic war planning some thirty-three years before the wars of unification. As early as 1837, the Prussian General Staff conducted a comprehensive study of the use of railroads to conduct massive troop and materiel movements and their war planning did not stop there.[26] As an example, less than a year after assuming his position as Chief of the General Staff, General von Moltke commenced planning for a war with France, a war, which would not take place for another thirteen years.[27] In short, Prussia's ability to mobilize, sustain, and employ its

Army proved to be the decisive factor in the unification of Germany while the United States' inability to execute in any of the same three areas limited the speed and effectiveness with which they prosecuted the Spanish-American War.

Reform in the Aftermath of the Spanish-American War

Despite eventual victory over the Spanish, the Army's inability to effectively mobilize, employ, and sustain itself stimulated heated debate in Washington, District of Columbia. Charges of corruption, impropriety, stupidity, and intentional negligence resonated both inside and outside the War Department. In an effort to no only quell the uproar, but also identify the root causes behind the Army's inability to efficiently and effectively mobilize for war, President McKinley directed an inquiry to look into the processes the Army utilized to prepare for and prosecute the war.

To head the inquiry, the President tapped Grenville M. Dodge, former Civil War General and Iowa Congressman who, by the time of his appointment, had served as the president or head engineer of multiple civilian railroad companies. The significance of the Dodge commission's findings and recommendations cannot be overstated. For starters, the commission debunked the most outrageous of charges. Most notable among these allegations were those of General Miles himself who insisted the reason so many of the soldiers were sick was not for the lack of proper medical equipment and quality rations, but rather a deliberate attempt to poison them by injecting their meat with harmful chemicals. By objectively refuting such outrageous claims, the Dodge commission was able to identify the true causes of ineffectiveness and thereby set the stage for the necessary reforms.[28]

Perhaps the most significant conclusion reached by the Dodge Commission was the fact that contrary to initial supposition, the problems encountered by the Army prior to and during the war were not the result of negligence or incompetence. The Dodge Commission found that the War Department's officers had worked hard to solve the complex challenges laid before them. The commission found that War Department officials simply were not trained or organized to handle such a daunting task. The Dodge Commission's final conclusions asserted the primary reasons for the Army's difficulties centered on the hasty nature with which too many soldiers were mobilized, and even more importantly, the country's long neglect of its Army.[29]

Unfortunately for Secretary of War Alger, the average American did not readily accept the Dodge Commission's findings. Perhaps the commission's objective analysis of the Army's problems proved to be too detailed or tedious. Regardless, it was far too easy to place the blame on a single person, especially when it came to such things as mobilization, logistics, and war planning. Subsequently, the American public identified Secretary Alger, as the person responsible, more than any other, for the ineffectiveness that plagued the Army's preparation for, and prosecution of, the war. In the aftermath of the Cuban campaign, the term "Algerism" grew to represent the worst kind of government graft, dishonesty, and ineptitude.[30]

In spite of the growing criticism of his Secretary of War, President McKinley remained loyal to Alger initially. It was not until Secretary Alger openly supported an anti-McKinley senatorial candidate that the President finally relieved his previously loyal subordinate.[31] In Alger's place the President appointed New York lawyer Elihu Root. The Dodge Commission's findings, and Root's proposed solutions, proved to be the keys

to reforming an Army that would eventually become involved in multiple international

situations. In the report he submitted to Congress in 1902, Secretary of War Root

declared,

> Neither our political nor our military system makes it suitable that we should have
> a general staff organized like the German general staff or like the French general
> staff; but the common experience of mankind is that the things which those
> general staffs do have to be done in every well-managed and well-directed army,
> and they have to be done by such a body of men especially assigned to do them.[32]

Following President McKinley's guidance to decisively address the problems

encountered during the Spanish-American War, Root outlined four main proposals. Root

directed two of his four proposals, manpower and a more effective method of integrating

the National Guard, towards the Army as a whole. The other two, the abolition of

permanent assignments in Washington, District of Columbia, and a complete overhaul of

the Army's educational system, spoke directly to the professionalization of the Army's

senior leadership system. Combined with his zealous push to form a General Staff and

redefine the role of the Commanding General of the Army, these last two measures

provided for a senior leadership construct closely mirroring the Prusso-German General

Staff. Although the American General Staff would continue to work through growing

pains after Root's time as Secretary of War, he enacted reforms in a few short years that

Generals such as Sherman, Sheridan, and Schofield had worked for decades to

implement.

Root's first action with regards to establishing a more effective method of leading

the Army was the elimination of permanent assignments to the national capitol.

Originally, the Army, with Congressional support, established the permanent assignment

system to ensure the proper level of expertise to tackle the complex issues of

procurement, supply, and fiscal responsibility.[33] Root, on the other hand, had two

problems with the permanent assignment system. First, the ability to interact with

Congress or effectively tackle the administrative problems inherent to staff work in

Washington did not guarantee successful battlefield leadership. Second, Root expressed

concern over the fact that many in Washington had lost touch with the needs of the field

Army.[34]

In an effort to ensure a proper balance between administrative expertise and field

experience, Root proposed to limit Washington staff tour lengths to four to five years.

Under Root's plan, these staff tours would be followed by mandatory service in the field

Army for a period of at least twelve months. Once again given Root's understanding that

successful staff work did not always equate to effective field leadership, he further

proposed assigning staff officers to field duties based on their performance at one of the

Army's existing educational institutions or another school Root proposed as part of his

reformation, the War College.[35]

To coincide with his new staff assignment methodology, Root advocated the

development of the Army War College. Similar to the Prussian *Kriegsakademie*, Root's

vision for the American Army War College focused on advising the President, as

Commander-in-Chief, as well as training officers on courses such as strategy and

strategic planning. Root recognized the effectiveness of an equivalent Navy school, the

Navy War College, established in 1884.[36] Moreover, when Root began focusing on the

educational systems in the Army, Assistant Adjutant General, William H. Carter, gave

him a copy of Upton's writings.[37] Secretary Root did not agree with all of Upton's

opinions.[38] A simple study of Root's methodology, however, supports the assertion that

Upton provided key ingredients to the educational reforms Root eventually enacted.

On the topic of educational reforms, Root did not stop with the War College's

establishment. It is true that he is best remembered for initiating the Army's senior

service school, but he also focused on improving educational processes in the existing

schools such as the one Sherman had established at Fort Leavenworth during his tenure

as Commanding General of the Army. Ordered by the Department of the Army to close

in 1898, the School of Infantry and Cavalry shut its doors when its officers were ordered

to join their regiments to support the war.[39] The school re-opened on 1 September 1902.

Renamed the General Service and Staff College, Root's intention was to use the school as

a step between entry level education and the senior studies provided at the War College.

Further, his intent emphasized that only those who excelled at one level would progress

to eventually study at the next.[40] Having instituted assignment reforms and educational

programs, Root shifted his attention to the formation of the General Staff itself.

From his first days as Secretary of War, Root clearly understood the problems

inherent to the Army's senior leadership construct. Root discovered that even more

troubling than the relationship between the Commanding General and the Secretary of

War was the manner in which the Army's departments and bureaus were administered.

As a direct result of the permanent assignment system, department and bureau heads such

as the Inspector General, the Adjutant General, the Chief of the Office of Record and

Pension, and the Quartermaster General were able to establish relationships with the

political elite of Washington. Further, because their tours were sometimes longer than the

Commanding General's, and almost always longer than the Secretary of War's, they were

able to establish mini-empires.[41] The existence of these empires made Root's reform efforts more difficult and certainly extended the amount of time until the old methods were finally swept away.

As Root saw it, the underlying flaw with the system he inherited existed because of systemic issues like the mini-empires discussed in the preceding paragraph. Root believed strongly in the concept of authority tied to responsibility and in his view, the Commanding General had no authority. To remedy the situation, he proposed changing the title from Commanding General to Chief of Staff. Further, to eliminate what he perceived as lack of focus on logistics, Root argued for the consolidation of the Quartermaster, Subsistence, and Pay Departments into the Department of Supply which was to report directly to the Chief of Staff.[42] To rectify the planning shortfall, he also proposed creating a planning staff. Comprised of forty-five officers, ranging in rank from Major to Brigadier General, Root wanted the staff to plan for the type of contingency that had thoroughly overwhelmed the Army in 1898.[43] By using the newly established education system to educate and train this new cadre of officers, and the modified assignment system to ensure their knowledge of field needs remained relevant, Root hoped to preclude mobilization, logistics, and planning failures from occurring in the future.[44]

To say Secretary Root's efforts met with resistance would be a tremendous understatement. Starting with the Commanding General himself, General Miles, Root's reforms were contested. Given the similarities between Root's proposals and the Great German General Staff, Miles charged the Secretary of War's proposals too closely resembled "Prussian Militarism." Given the country's inherent mistrust of such concepts,

Miles' resistance found support both in Washington and among the American population as a whole.[45]

For their part, the heads of the various departments and bureaus saw the reforms as a direct attack on their authority and power. Enjoying the aforementioned political influence inherent to their positions, the generals sought to oppose Secretary Root. The Secretary's most notable opponents were Inspector General J. C. Breckinridge and the Chief of the Record and Pension Office, Brigadier General Fred C. Ainsworth. Breckinridge opposed Root's initial reforms because part of the proposal called for the elimination of the Inspector General's Department. Wielding substantial political power, General Breckinridge was successful in getting this particular provision dropped.[46] For his part, General Ainsworth protected his office by successfully lobbying to have the Record and Pension Office omitted from the list of those bureaus subject to the new Chief of Staff's control. Fortunately for the future Army, Root was not only politically connected himself; he was also a sound strategist. Identifying the precarious nature of his reforms, he used the tools of patience and finesse to continue the evolution of his programs.[47]

Feeling that he had accomplished all he could with regards to reforming the Army, Secretary Root retired as Secretary of War in 1904, much to his wife's pleasure and President Roosevelt's chagrin. As the preceding paragraph implies, the full effect of Root's reforms had certainly not come to fruition by the time of his retirement. Because of the input provided by generals such as Breckinridge and Ainsworth, the final law Congress enacted only gave limited control of the departments and bureaus to the Chief of Staff of the Army.[48]

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All told, the early days of the new American General Staff were fraught with difficulties to say the least. The important point, however, is that the foundation for true reform had been laid. This framework, established as the direct result of Root's efforts, would pave the way for a future Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson, and his Chief of Staff, General Leonard Wood, to solidify the General Staff's position in the United States Army. Certainly there were further attacks on the General Staff. The concept itself seemed too militaristic to some. Furthermore, Wood's immediate successors did not exhibit the kind of strength he had as Chief of Staff. It is important to remember, however, that the Prussian's perfected their system over multiple decades. So, too, would the American system evolve. What mattered most was that the American Army finally had the senior leadership system necessary to lead what would eventually become a force projection Army.

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[3] Ibid., 146.

[4] Trask, 149.

[5] Cosmas, 41.

[6] Ibid., 42.

[7] Ibid., 82-83.

[8] Cosmas, 87.

[9] Ibid., 88-89.

[10] John Mahon, *History of the Militia and the National Guard* (New York, NY: MacMillan Publishing, 1983), 126.

[11]Kreidberg and Henry, 163.

[12]Trask, 155.

[13]Rear Admiral French E. Chadwick, *The Relations of the United States and Spain: The Spanish-American War* (New York, NY: Scribner's Sons, 1911), 47-48.

[14]Millett and Maslowski, 269.

[15]Ibid., 270.

[16]Ibid., 271.

[17]Keidberg and Henry, 167.

[18]Ibid., 167-168.

[19]Ibid., 168.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Huntington, 145.

[23]Keidberg and Henry, 152.

[24]Bucholz, Moltke and the German Wars, 104.

[25]Howard, 60.

[26]Dupuy, 50.

[27]Howard, 42.

[28]Millett and Maslowski, 286.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid., 287.

[32]Elihu Root, *Secretary of War's Annual Report to Congress* (Washington, DC: War Department, 1902), 3-5.

[33]Leopold, 39.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Leopold, 40.

[37]Nenninger, 54.

[38]Philip C. Jessup, *Elihu Root; vol. 1: 1845-1909* (New York, NY: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1938), 242.

[39]Nenninger, 51.

[40]Ibid., 56.

[41]Leopold, 41.

[42]Deutrich, 79.

[43]Root, 9.

[44]Leopold, 39-40.

[45]Ibid., 42-43.

[46]Mabel Deutrich, *Struggle for Supremacy* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1962), 81.

[47]Millett and Maslowski, 310-311.

[48]Ibid.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Should someone ask the average American to point out the Kingdom of Prussia on a map, the questioner would most likely meet with extremely limited success. Very few in America today understand that prior to 1871, Germany did not exist as a country nor would they comprehend the role Prussia and its General Staff played in reuniting the German states to form the second German Reich. Yet, the level to which even today's American Army feels the impact of the Prussian General Staff's influence makes current ignorance of Prussia's role somewhat ironic.

Senior leaders both inside and outside the United States military establishment attempted to emulate the concepts embodied in the Prussian General Staff as early as the aftermath of the American Civil War. Institutions such as the United States Army War College stand as testimonials to the efforts undertaken to incorporate elements of the Prussian system into the American Army. Organizations such as the United States Air Force's Checkmate division of the Air Staff exist to provide the type of war planning deemed so critical in the days of Generals von Moltke, von Schlieffen and others. That said, despite tremendous efforts by men such as Emory Upton, William Sherman, Philip Sheridan, John Schofield, and, especially, Elihu Root, to emulate aspects of the Prussian system, two key factors create definite differences between the leadership construct of the late 19th and early 20th century American Army and the Prussian General Staff.

<u>Conclusions</u>

The four key influences which combine to explain why differences exist between the Prussian and American concepts are strategic position as well as political, military and national cultural differences. By understanding the impact of these influences, it becomes possible to comprehend why American reformers could not simply transplant to the United States a mindset or organizational and educational system as complex and detailed as the Prussian General Staff.

In the first years of the nineteenth century, Prussian King, Frederick William III, made a conscious decision to build on King Frederick II "the Great's" tradition of victory and military excellence and ensure the survival of his Kingdom.[1] To achieve this, he instructed General von Scharnhorst to remedy shortfalls in the Prussian Army's senior leadership construct. In essence, Prussia's survival mandated the establishment of the general staff.

On the other hand, the United States Army that existed after the War of 1812 did not evolve out of the necessity for survival. Hostile North American equivalents to France, Russia, and Austria-Hungary simply did not exist. For this reason, the need for a powerful standing Army and equally capable senior leadership construct did not exist either. Not until the Spanish-American War did the United States fully understand how complex mobilizing for war against a foreign adversary could be. Even then the war with Spain was about influence in the hemisphere and not the survival of a nation.

Lacking the "life or death" imperative outlined above, influences such as politics as well as personal and group agendas, played a more significant role in the United States than they had first in Prussia and then in Germany. In essence, the existence of these

influences created a distinct military, political and national cultural difference between the United States and Prussia. In essence, not only did strategic position itself play an important role in how each country's military developed, it also helped fashion cultural differences which further contributed to the United States' inability to more closely emulate the Prussian General Staff.

As mentioned earlier, from its inception as an electorate, survival mandated Prussia maintain a strong standing army organized to fight short decisive wars. Furthermore, because the Prussian Army existed to not only ensure the survival of the country, but its class system and monarch as well, its existence served the needs Prussian society as a whole. For this reason, most Prussians grew to revere their Army and its General Staff. In the years following the unification wars, the General Staff enjoyed a status unparalleled in Prussian and then German society.[2] In fact, one could argue that the German view of its general staff's infallibility allowed for the almost total control over German affairs enjoyed by Field Marshal von Hindenburg and General von Ludendorff towards the end of World War I. It could further be argued that this view helped feed the "stab in the back" legend prevalent in German society between the world wars. Regardless, what cannot be debated is the status enjoyed by Prusso-German officers, especially those selected to serve on the General Staff in the years during and following the Wars of Unification.

In contrast to the Prussian view, throughout United States history, peacetime service was not viewed with the same level of reverence. Ironically, at the same time the Prussian General Staff enjoyed the pinnacle of its success and acceptance as a result of the Wars of Unification, United States citizens pushed harder and harder for the

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dissolution of the large standing Union Army following the American Civil War. For their part, southerners viewed the Union Army as an army of occupation. Northerners, on the other hand, viewed the Army as a drain on both the personnel and resources necessary to fully realize a capitalist society's potential, especially as the Indian threat receded. The mistrust of military influence so permeated American society that even the development and evolution of a professional officer corps could not drive the acceptance of a Prussian-style general staff system within United States political-military culture.

As stated earlier, the Spanish-American War dramatically changed the strategic position of the United States. This change enabled Secretary Root to develop and begin the evolution of the American General Staff. The impact of Root's reforms and the impact of American culture on their implementation highlight the importance of a second cultural difference between the United States and Prussia/Germany.

At the time of unification, few doubted Prussia's status as Germany's most dominant power. The Prussian King became German Kaiser and, while some of the smaller Germanic states contributed their own army and, in some cases, their own general staffs, the smaller federal states and their armies deferred to the Great German General Staff. For this reason, the Great German General Staff did not receive much political interference from the various other Germanic states. This, coupled with the status enjoyed as a result of the successful wars of unification, precluded outside attempts to meddle in the general staff's affairs.

Unlike Germany, the states that joined the United States did so by choice and as relative equals to the other states in the Republic. Furthermore, because of the prevailing belief in the value of the state-run militia, state representatives, senators, and in some

cases even state governments themselves, felt both a duty and an obligation to remain involved in the Army's affairs. Thus, men like Emory Upton could not successfully lobby for a national reserve system similar to the Prusso-German concept. American political and national culture had evolved such that the States simply would not relinquish their individual militias to the federal government. Hence the structure of the National Guard at the beginning of the 20th century required Secretary Root to petition the United States Congress when he worked to implement reform. Even when Congress finally passed the General Staff Act, in order to achieve consensus, they watered down many of Root's initial reform proposals. The idea of such a process in Prussia and Germany was all but inconceivable. Admittedly, the civil government in German society had influence over the German Army's budget, but the Great German General Staff answered only to the Kaiser. Only the Kaiser and to a lesser extent the Prussian Minister of War influenced the Army and its General Staff. In short, from a political cultural standpoint, where the German system enjoyed decisiveness and increased efficiency, the United States system required more negotiated, therefore more time consuming, solutions. It is for this reason even today; the American military senior leadership construct represents elements of not only the Prusso-German system but other nations such as France as well.

<div align="center">Recommendations</div>

As the United States military transformation efforts continue in an effort to meet 21st challenges, senior leaders must understand the role political, military and national culture played in shaping the American Army. In some situations, like the post-civil war era, United States political, military and national culture outright prevented the incorporation of general staff type reforms. In other times, such as the years following the

Spanish-American War, circumstances mandated change. Yet, despite the need for change and effective "change agents," such as Elihu Root, the modifications made to initial proposals were not made out of military necessity. Rather, they were made as a result of the impact of the uniquely American culture on the process of reform. Understanding this fact and therefore acting accordingly may directly shape the success or failure of modern-day reform efforts.

Of the many challenges facing the various attempts by the Services to continue the modernization process, one, which highlights the impact of culture, is the push on the part of United States Senators Leahy and Bond for a four-star National Guard general to serve on the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As part of their proposal, both Senators are also attempting to provide a separate procurement budget for the National Guard.[3] For many reasons, this is not an ideal situation for General Schoonmaker and his senior staff. One would have to ignore historical lessons such as those learned during the mobilization for the Spanish American War, to name just one example, to support granting the National Guard this kind of independence. Despite this fact, these Senators are proposing legislation designed to bring these ideas to reality.

The point, as it applies to this thesis, is that the role of the citizen-soldier in our national defense remains an issue. For this reason, the military complex continues to face concepts such as those supported by Senators Leahy and Bond. In order for the United States military's senior leaders to objectively and effectively address on-going issues of this nature, they must understand the role the various aspects of culture play on permeating such view points. Only by doing so can the problem be properly framed and subsequently addressed.

The fact that the United States is now engaged in nation building for the foreseeable future underscores the importance of understanding culture and its influences on the exportation of one country's system(s) to another country. One needs to look no further than modern-day Southwest Asia to understand culture's importance. In the United States, democracy and individual rights are at least as old as the country itself. In Southwest Asia, both concepts are viewed quite differently. The United States' inability to relate to the political, national and military cultural views of the region provided the catalyst for developmental issues as the United States attempted to export its military concepts to the new Iraqi Army.

In the aftermath of the "combat phase" of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Coalition struggled to realize the impact of political and national culture on exporting military concepts and ideas. Dissolving Saddam's Army, as Coalition Provisional Authority Chief L. Paul Bremer did in the summer of 2003, highlights the Coalition's lack of understanding of the Iraqi military. It is true the Iraqi Army existed to ensure the survival of the Ba'athist regime. More importantly, however, the Army also fought for nationalist reasons. Even after being cut-off from Saddam and his senior leaders, the Iraqi Army fought tenaciously in parts of Iraq because of their national loyalties. It is also for this reason that Iraqi conscripts, predominantly Shia, pressed the attack against the Coalition during Operation Iraqi Freedom despite years of Shia repression under the Ba'ath party rule.[4]

National and political culture continues to play a key role in the establishment of the New Iraqi Army. Armed militias, for instance, pose a serious threat to the future of Iraq and its Army. Political chaos and sectarian violence in the years during and after

Operation Iraqi Freedom fostered an environment such that political and religious groups felt compelled to develop some type of armed force. As the new Iraqi Army continues development, the question becomes what to do with these militias. In some cases, the best option is full demobilization. In others, incorporation into the new Iraqi Army, in some form or fashion, will best support enfranchisement of the diverse groups in Iraq.[5] By correctly assessing the various aspects of the cultural environment and acting accordingly, the Coalition will be able to more effectively incorporate military concepts in Iraq and therefore more quickly establish a self-sustaining Iraqi Army.

The challenge in Afghanistan is equally daunting, but for different reasons. Unlike Iraq, a true national military structure, in the traditional Western sense, has not existed in recent history, if ever, in Afghanistan. Armed groups and militias have long been a part of Afghan history. Moreover, unlike the Coalition armies training it, the new Afghan Army faces an internal as well as external security mission.[6] The results of the Coalition's efforts to build the Afghan Army are mixed to say the least. The Coalition's inability to completely understand the political, military and national cultural aspects of their mission has played a part. For this reason, if the Coalition's efforts are to be ultimately successful, the various nations supporting the effort must understand the cultural landscape in order to successfully navigate through it.

In the end, the United States position in world affairs is anything but assured. Given the destructive power available in the world today, environments such as that in Afghanistan prior to 2002 and in Somalia today cannot be allowed to exist. A major part of preventing such environments will continue to be nation building. To successfully undertake such a daunting task, it is critical the United States fully understand the

importance of political, military and national culture as well as the nation's view of its

own strategic position. Failure to do so could have disastrous consequences.

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[1]Dupuy, 20.

[2]Dupuy, 110.

[3]Breanne Wagner, Aerospace World, "Does JCS Need a Guard Chief," *Air Force Magazine* 89, no. 5 (May 2006): 20-22.

[4]Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq--The Failure of Nation Building and a History Denied* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2003), 164.

[5]James Dobbins, John G. McGinn, Keith Crane, Seth G. Jones, Rollie Lal, Andrew Rathmell, Rachel Swanger, and Anga Timilsina, *America's Role in Nation-Building* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2003), 180.

[6]Ali Jalali, "Rebuilding Afghanistan's National Army," *Parameters* (Autumn 2002): 72-86.

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