The Millennial and Post-Millennial Generations, and the Sustainability of the All-Volunteer Force (AVF)

By

LTC (ret.) Mike Young
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Abstract

In July 1973, the United States terminated conscription and instituted an all-volunteer force (AVF). Since that time, almost every segment of American society has lauded the success of the AVF. However, requisite force levels for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were barely met primarily through lucrative financial incentives and repeated deployments. The AVF "succeeded" only by exhausting the active and reserve components, and by largely recruiting poor kids and patriots. This article argues that the AVF is unsustainable, especially if the US finds itself in a significant conflict. The late-Millennial and post-Millennial generations have little propensity to serve, and patriotism and economic incentives will not entice them to enlist. The author posits that the services, especially the Army, must change their leadership cultures in order to relate to the youngest generation. He offers that a culture of innovation may be the mechanism by which the services sustain an effective force.

Whom will we ask to don the uniform tomorrow? Next year? In the year 2020 and beyond? Will tomorrow's youth be willing to serve? What will attract them or incent them to do so? Such questions compel us to ask an overall fundamental question: from a personnel perspective, is the All-Volunteer Force sustainable in the future? The short answer is "no." The Millennial and Post-Millennial generations are far less likely to bite at lucrative enlistment bounties to fill the ranks. The AVF has reached a point where throwing money at poor kids and patriots may no longer suffice, especially if the United States finds itself in a larger war.

The *2015 National Military Strategy* stated that "the probability of U.S. involvement in interstate war with a major power is assessed to be low but growing" (JCS, 2015). Hopefully, the phrase "low but growing" will not lead us to believe that we will have the time to field adequate forces, and the practice of relying on allies as we mobilize may no longer be a viable option either. Steven Metz, Director of Research at the U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, stated that "the old model of a relatively leisurely expansion of the United States military while allies bore the brunt of fighting is bankrupt" (Metz, 2015). Historically, our nation has done a poor job of predicting and preparing for larger wars. Should the United States soon find itself engaged in a significant conflict in the future, there may be inadequate numbers for deployment. Indeed, the Army's active and reserve components have yet to fully recover from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the future of the AVF depends on a citizenry that came of age observing its armed forces lose those decade long wars. Who are these young men and women, and how do they view military service today and in the future?

Generational Characteristics and Differences

While generational boundaries are never clearly marked nor do definitions fit every member, the differences between generations are very real. Most observers of generational identification tend to categorize the generations across a twenty-year span of time, usually marked by an important milestone or cultural paradigm shift. American society and our collective culture have long recognized generational characteristics. American novelist and poet Gertrude Stein once told Ernest Hemmingway that his was a "Lost Generation" and thus coined the term that described disillusioned young expatriates in post-First World War Paris. Those veterans felt that their values were no longer relevant in post-war American society. They felt spiritually alienated in the America of the roaring twenties and by Americans who seemed "hopelessly provincial, materialistic, and emotionally barren" ("Lost generation," 2016).[1] That

alienation did not apply only to ex-pats. Those feelings gave rise to the large isolationist sentiment that Americans expressed in the 1930s.

In 1998, journalist Tom Brokaw lent the title of his book *The Greatest Generation* for common usage in describing the generation that fought the Second World War (Brokaw, 1998). The Greatest Generation applied to practically all Americans who put the hardships of the Great Depression behind them to mobilize the entirety of American society behind the war effort. It would be the last time that almost every American had a vested interest in waging war abroad.

The Greatest Generation's offspring, the Baby Boomers, were those born after the war and through the Kennedy administration. Healthier and wealthier than any previous generation, the Baby Boomers watched society tear itself apart over the war in Vietnam and other social movements. Although the "boomers" expressed rebellious, anti-establishment attitudes in their developmental years, which many are now carrying into older age, most "sold out" to economic prosperity. In wanting the best for their children, they conveyed the message that the price of citizenship does not necessarily include military service. In other words, we baby boomers told our children that it was OK not to serve.

Generation X, a name presumed to have derived from author Douglas Coupland's 1991 popular novel *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture*, is given to those born from the earliest baby boomers between the years 1964 and 1980 (Coupland, 1991, 98).[2] Gen-Xers, whom some call the new "lost generation" because they find themselves wedged between two huge generations, comprise the smallest population to date. Most observers of this generation agree that they are much more pessimistic and self-centered than the boomers and millennials. Coupland's many characterizations are best summed-up by this passage: "I envy their [boomers] upbringings that were so clean, so free of *futurelessness*. And I want to throttle them for blithely handing over the world to us like so much skid-marked underwear" (Coupland, 1991). Gen-Xers serving in the AVF today are occupying the upper ranks.

Who, then, are the Millennials and Post-Millennials? The Millennials, originally called Generation Y, are those people born between 1980 and 2001. The Pew Research Center's lengthy 2014 report entitled "Millennials in Adulthood" generally described this generation as "unmoored from institutions." By almost every measure, they are significantly different from all previous generations. They "keep their distance" from core institutions such as marriage (26 percent married compared to comparable age boomers at 48 percent), and religion (29 percent

unaffiliated versus 16 percent) (Pew, 2014). Although 50 percent claim political independence, "Millennials stand out for voting heavily Democratic and for liberal views on many political and social issues, ranging from a belief in an activist government to support for same-sex marriage and marijuana legalization" (Pew, 2014). The report cited racial diversity as one key factor in their political liberalism and ideological leanings. It also noted that Millennials are the only generation where liberals outnumber conservatives. In contrast to the majorities of all previous generations, the majority of Millennials favor bigger government providing more services, a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants, interracial marriages, gay rights, and full equality across all professions for women. In late 2015 and early 2016, Millennial voters expressed the strength of their beliefs in the presidential primary elections where a strong majority consistently voted for democratic socialist candidate Bernie Sanders over establishment candidate Hillary Clinton.

The Post-Millennial Generation comprise those people born after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Given that they are still in their formative years, they have yet to acquire a definitive label, although the search is on. In 2015, the music video television network MTV conducted a nation-wide survey to solicit a name. The highest vote getter: "The Founders." The view is that this generation will face the task of cleaning up the mess they inherited and, in the process, become the founders of a new world (Sims, 2015). In fact, 90 percent of the MTV survey respondents stated that they were "going to start a new society with more acceptance of race, religion, and sexuality" (Madov, 2015). While the final label appears to gravitate to "Generation Z," there are signposts that "The Founders" may not be far off the mark. Scott Hess, a senior vice president with one of the nation's largest full-service media agencies and an expert on the Millennial Generation, observes that for the Post-Millennials, unlike all previous generations, what occurred in society before their formative years will shape and define their world views. Hess sees "post" as the key word for these youths that are now teenagers. By "post" he means examples such as post-9/11, and post-mobile computing and social media. "[I]t's a group that will be defined by how it navigates and integrates the seismic social, cultural, economic and technological shifts that occurred just before they hit the hot lights of adolescence" (Hess, n.d.).

While Hess and others point to some differences in their generational makeup, the Post-Millennials will generally extend the primary beliefs and behaviors of the Millennials. Society should expect to see an expansion of the Millennials' political, social, and ideological liberalism.

Undoubtedly, Post-Millennials will be much more cosmopolitan in their world views. The one significant difference is pragmatism. "They're 'old' before their time . . . and they expect sophistication and navigate around safeguards and dumbed-down content" (Hess, n.d.).

The AVF's Sustainability Challenge with Millennials and Post-Millennials

Irrespective of the Post-Millennials' likely future disregard of military service (discussed below), the Army, as the largest stakeholder, currently faces a number of serious obstacles to recruitment, and those obstacles are now reaching critical mass. The first is the demographic data. Of the 4.1 million Millennials who turned eighteen in 2015, only four percent were both qualified and willing to serve (Runey & Allen, 2015). For the Army, recruiters are expecting shortfalls in their goals over the next several years despite the downsizing to a low strength level not seen since the end of the Second World War. *Mission Readiness*, a nonpartisan national security organization dedicated to "smart investments in America's children," reports on their website (https://www.missionreadiness.org/) that "more than 70 percent of 17- to 24-year olds in the U.S. cannot serve in the military, primarily because they are too poorly educated, too overweight, or have a serious criminal record." *Mission Readiness*, with a membership of over 600 retired admirals, generals, and other senior military leaders, believes that childhood obesity is a national security issue. While that statistic does not portend well for a potential Post-Millennial recruiting pool, the problem is already chronic within the services. In November 2015, Sergeant Major of the Army, Daniel A. Dailey, stated that the issue of non-deployable soldiers constituted the number one priority in the Army. Speaking at an NCO conference at Fort Leavenworth, he told the attendees that the 50,000 non-deployable soldiers posed a serious problem that directly impacts readiness, and was "unsustainable in the complex operational environment that exits today" (Vergun, 2015). In stating that the total number of non-deployables equaled three of the Army's ten divisions, Dailey was essentially saying that the Army now has a "hollow force."[3] Millennials have observed, somewhat sarcastically, that the Army did not enforce physical fitness or weight standards when it needed a large number of troops in Iraq and Afghanistan but is now using that criteria to "right-size" the force.

The demographics for education and crime are equally concerning. In the Army, less than 10 percent of first-term soldiers have a college degree, perhaps statistically corresponding to the 50 percent who belong to an ethnic minority and come from low income communities ("Who will fight," 2015). In regard to criminal backgrounds, the wars' demands for troops led the Army and

the Marine Corps to significantly increase their felony waivers in 2006 and 2007. In 2006, the Army and Marine Corps granted 249 and 208 waivers, respectively, and 511 and 350 in 2007. To reach the higher numbers in 2007, the services granted waivers to recruits convicted of more serious felonies (CNN, 2008).

The second serious obstacle to recruiting, especially for the Army, is meeting end-strength numbers for the reserve component (RC). It is not lost on young people that the Army has deployed the reserves as much as active duty soldiers to repeatedly fight the never-ending wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. While the RC may attract some recruits with the promise of a paid college education, Army recruiters reported that in fiscal year 2015 they missed their RC recruiting goals by 2000 recruits (12 percent) ("Who will fight," 2015). Well into a second decade of support, employers are also losing heart. Although few employers have violated the 1994 Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), they have voiced serious concerns about the frequency and length of deployments of their employees. They remarked that when the law was initially passed, their employees accounted for a combined total of 5.3 million duty days, and that the law never anticipated that deployments would rise to 68.3 million duty days a decade later. While most employers do not believe that the law should be changed (most likely because deployed duty days dropped significantly after 2010), they expressed concern for the number of employees who returned with "emotional problems" (Gates et al., 2013).[4]

Employers were not the only group to notice returning veterans with "emotional problems." The Millennials took note as these veterans, especially reservists, shared their experiences and problems with communities throughout the United States. Frequent, highly publicized reports of mental illness, problems with the Veterans Administration, and rising suicide rates have shaped the negative views of late Millennials and early Post-Millennials regarding military service. Indeed, they have been shocked by the thousands of deaths and tens of thousands of wounded who came "home broken, physically, mentally and emotionally" ("Who will fight," 2015). Although the services have implemented extensive training programs targeted at reducing suicide rates, real progress is not forthcoming (Zoroya, 2016). Across the services, there were 265 active duty suicides in 2015 compared to 254 in 2013. In the RC, there were 210 last year compared to 170 suicides in 2014 (Kime, 2016). Overall, veteran suicides are outpacing non-veteran suicides at a ratio of three to one.

The third major demographic obstacle to recruiting is the chronic problem of attracting "high quality" recruits. While the Army and the Marine Corps have always struggled with signing highly educated people, the Air Force has never really faced that problem—until recently. In January 2014, the Air Force noted that "demographic changes continue to have an effect on . . . [recruiting] the best young Americans" (Garamone, 2014). Over the last several years, the Air Force, like all of the services, began to experience a shortage of personnel for high technology jobs. For example, in 2013, the Air Force recruited only 61 percent of the remotely piloted aircraft (RPA) pilots that it needed. A year later, the Air Force pushed that number to 85 percent but continued to face challenges in meeting recruiting goals (McCaney, 2015). Still, the services have always faced the quality issue. What is concerning, however, is that American technological superiority is slipping. Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work stated in April 2015 [that] "we see it every day" (Metz, 2015).

Attracting enough well-educated and highly skilled technologists will continue to become more difficult, not only because other nations are closing the gap or because technology is becoming more complex and specialized, but also because the Millennials and Post-Millennials view technology in a fundamentally different way than do their predecessors or the services. For the youth of today and tomorrow, it is not how they *operate* technology but how technology is *embedded* in every aspect of their lives. Whereas the Millennials were called digital *natives*, the Post-Millennials should be called digital *beings*. Their technologies are integral to their social identities. While boomers incorrectly view young peoples' use of communication technologies as an isolating detriment to socialization, the Millennials and Post-Millennials are actually more social than any preceding generation, albeit in an entirely different way. They are connected to both people and information, often simultaneously, more than ever before. This is a form of power—in this case, self-empowerment and independence. As pollster and columnist Kristin Soltis Anderson remarked on the MSNBC television show *Morning Joe* in April 2016, Millennials trust information from people they know through social media more than they do that of established news media or other media outlets and information sources. Anderson, whom *Time Magazine* calls the GOP's "go-to" person for Millennial political views, noted that "140 characters in Twitter from a friend are far more powerful than any other source of information" (Anderson, 2015, p. 14).[5]

As independent social creatures, Millennials are less concerned about their financial futures and significantly less patriotic than their predecessor generations, thus making poor kids and patriots a much smaller target for recruitment. As the Pew Study revealed, Millennials are "the nation's most stubborn economic optimists," with 85 percent believing that they have or will have enough money to lead the lives they want (Pew, 2014).[6] Despite current reports of high unemployment rates for college graduates, there is logic to such optimism. Millennials have already affected change by initiating peer-to-peer economics which, in essence, has created a revolution in American work culture. *Time Magazine* reported in January 2016 that peer-to-peer economics (such as Uber and Airbnb) is gaining significant momentum, with hundreds of thousands of transactions occurring daily. *Time* stated that more than 90 million Americans have already participated and, in the process, have by-passed the traditional employer-employee model (Steinmetz, 2016). For the Millennials, the central issue is control. In their minds, employees are controlled by a boss, whereas independent contractors are not. Having passed through the most serious recession since the Great Depression, and observing high levels of job layoffs and lingering unemployment, they believe that being an employee is a vulnerability rather than job stability. Millennials claim that in the new economy they can work as much or as little as they prefer and be much more innovative (Steinmetz, 2016). The Harvard Institute of Politics (IOP) Fall 2015 Poll asked Millennials what goal they most valued in their career. By a huge margin over other criteria, at 85 percent, "having time to spend with family and friends" came first (Harvard, 2015). The Millennials crave flexibility in order to "work when, where and how they want in order to balance work-life demands. Many are even willing to take a pay cut or skip a promotion to get it." Two-thirds state that "they'd rather earn $40,000 per year at a job they love than $100,000 at one they hate" (Steinberg, 2015).

Patriotism is waning as well. This decline may be an offshoot of more cosmopolitan world views (with less ethnocentric perspectives), as Millennials see themselves more and more as active participants in globalization. The trend is clear, however, with only 32 percent describing themselves as "a patriotic person" (Pew, 2014). That the Millennial generation is the first generation in which the majority do not view themselves as patriotic should concern recruiters, especially if the United States is drawn into a larger ground war with ISIS. The Harvard IOP Fall 2015 Poll reported that only 16 percent of Millennials "have already," "would definitely," or "would strongly consider" joining the military to fight ISIS if needed (Harvard, 2015).

The freedoms of the new economy and antiquated work cultures may be drawing young people away from government service in general. A 2015 study based on extensive Office of Personnel Management (OPM) FedScope data and 2015 OPM surveys reported that Millennials are leaving federal service in alarming numbers. Authored by Navy employee Dr. Ian Barford, the study revealed that Millennials are quitting their government jobs at twice the rate of all other employees—and that particular finding included boomers who were retiring. Barford found that a lack of "job satisfaction," which outweighed the other five criteria combined, was the primary reason for leaving (Barford, 2015). "Job satisfaction" to the Millennials meant that they were involved in decisions that affected their work. It did not mean that they were well compensated or treated fairly or had interesting work to do, such as the AVF recruiting model assumes.

The data and analysis suggest that government employment does not meet the social needs of young workers. Job satisfaction means not "what do I receive" but rather "how do I *feel* about. . . ." Annual evaluations, bonuses, and awards are no substitutes for communicative feedback and participative practices. Millennials prefer involvement, the questioning of the status quo, and exploring innovations that can improve their work environment. Businesses in the private sector have learned in recent years that they must heavily over-communicate with their Millennials and involve them in decision-making processes. The public sector, however, has been woefully slow to respond. The AVF, at this point, has barely responded at all.

A Deficiency in Human Relations

Since the 1980s, when the services experienced unprecedented technological modernization with the dawning of the Information Age, the AVF has looked at its recruits first and foremost as operators of technology, and only secondarily as human beings. That transactional relationship is a perfect model for the contractual AVF. In other words, "we'll pay you a lot of money to train and operate those systems, but we may or may not listen to you or welcome your dissenting views or include you in the decision-making process." This managerial and transactional approach to leader development explains why the American military produces the best managers of complex systems in the world but largely only mediocre leaders. At work here is an institutional and cultural preference for management and technology over leadership and human relations.

For decades, the officer corps of all the services have debated the difference between management and leadership. This debate arose out of the ashes of Vietnam as many veterans of

the war asserted that the war had been mismanaged and not misled. For evidence, critics pointed to statistical analyses such as body counts, career "ticket punching," and a zero-defects culture that fostered falsified reporting and lying. As the AVF was born in July 1973, the debate within the Army sprouted in different directions. Some wanted a return to the pre-Vietnam "brown boot" Army of strict discipline and training. The All-Volunteer Army reformers aimed to economically compete with the private sector for talent by offering volunteers higher wages, assignment choices, college classes, and a slew of new amenities such as "go-go" dancers in the clubs and beer in the barracks. A small group of progressive veterans armed with recent advanced degrees in the behavioral sciences, however, sparked a grass roots movement that advocated a revolutionary approach to "human relations" and a transformation of the Army's leadership culture. Supported by arguably the Army's most liberal and progressive Chief of Staff in history—General Bernard "Bernie" Rogers—the Army Organizational Effectiveness (OE) Program was born. During its ten-year run and Rogers's strong attempt to institutionalize it, Army OE educated more than 1700 "internal consultants" who spread out across the entire institution to advise their commanders on change management, human relations, and leadership. However, at the peak of the Reagan-era military buildup of the 1980s, Army Chief of Staff General John Wickham suddenly terminated the program as rapid technological advances subsumed everything in their wake. Rogers's efforts were the first and last time in the Army's long history that the stewards of the institution placed a premium on human relations.

Despite claims to the contrary, the Army has largely ignored or discounted the rich and vast research that has evolved over the last few decades in the fields of organizational psychology, and leadership and change. Evidence for this assertion exists in the Army's leadership doctrine itself. An analysis of the evolution of leadership doctrine since 1946, especially in the five revisions published after the start of the AVF, reveals that doctrinal writers were aware of advancing leadership theories but largely expanded upon managerial concepts and embraced leadership theories that complimented time-honored managerial practices.[7] By the 1990s, the Army's leadership doctrine had settled into what Pulitzer-Prize-winning historian James MacGregor Burns called "transactional leadership" where it largely remains the preferred model today (Burns, 1979).

Burns described transactional leadership as an extension of the earlier leader-centric and leader-member exchange theories that centered on the behaviors of leaders who accommodated

the basic needs of workers (Northhouse, 2006).[8] Transactional leaders motivate followers by rewarding or punishing worker performance or behaviors. Burns contrasted transactional leadership with "transformational leadership," which he described as the process in which "one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality" (Burns, 1979). This type of leader strives to help followers reach their fullest potential. For Burns, transformational leadership takes place exclusively within a large moral dimension.

Transformational and servant leadership theories suggest that there is no such thing as a "leadership position" (Greenleaf & Spears, 1998).[9] In any organizational structure, there are only positions of authority and power. What exists is a relationship between two or more people where one holds authority and power over the other(s). Whether one demonstrates leadership or not while occupying one of those positions is an entirely different question. Because leadership is all about people and not about systems, it deals solely with emotions and morals. Those two ingredients form the foundation and core of transformational and servant leadership behaviors.

What Will Incent Late-Millennials and Post-Millennials to Serve?

This question plagues both recruiters and long-established veterans organizations such as the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). The latter have struggled with recruiting younger vets as they watch their memberships sharply decline. The American Legion, for example, has experienced a decline in membership from three million members 20 years ago to approximately two million today, and the decline is accelerating rapidly, with the vast majority of members now 60 years or older (Constantine, 2013). In both cases, however, the answer lies in building a relationship with young people. For example, in 2005, veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan organized their own veteran organization that met their needs. Today, the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) speak for the 2.8 million vets of those wars to raise awareness in public and in Congress about the issues their members face, such as "mental health injuries, a stretched VA system, inadequate health care for female veterans and GI Bill educational benefits." With an impressive social media presence, the IAVA claims "the most diverse and rapidly growing membership in America." Their programs are proving to be very effective, underscoring their mission statement: "We don't just support veterans, we empower them!" (IAVA, 2016).

As the IAVA is now demonstrating, it is time to approach the AVF sustainability issue from the younger generations' viewpoints, not from the established organizations' perspectives. The first recruiting poster for the All-Volunteer Army in 1973 contained the slogan "The Army Wants to Join You!" Detested by the old guard, the Army soon replaced it with the more popular "Be All That You Can Be!" (Bailey, 2009, p. 86). However, the original slogan is especially pertinent today. What can the services and the veteran organizations offer that will meet the needs of Millennials and Post-Millennials? To date, the services have done little to answer that question. On the contrary, social media, such as FaceBook's community "Why I'm Not Re-enlisting," and the various service publications under *Military Times* contain frequent comments, stories, and letters to the editor over a number of issues that reflect tensions between generations or behaviors that Millennials disapprove. Examples include resistance to the abolishment of "don't ask, don' tell," the pervasiveness of menial tasks, resistance to women serving in the combat arms and attending Ranger School, the frequent reported behaviors of toxic senior leaders, and a perceived difference in degrees of punishment between the enlisted and officer corps.

Perhaps the most visible, publicized disconnect between boomers and millennials occurred over the issue of tattoos, especially in the Marine Corps and in the Army. The previous sergeant major of the Army (SMA), Raymond F. Chandler III, declared war against visible tattoos, citing their unprofessional appearance, apparently unaware of the strong symbolic meanings that many Millennials attach to skin art. Indeed, any number of popular cable television tattoo shows would have conveyed to him that young people give great meaning, usually commemorative of an emotional life changing event, to their tattoos. The extensive push-back, almost entirely from the Millennial enlisted corps, sarcastically called out that tattooed soldiers were good enough for multiple combat deployments but not for post-war retention. It is telling that one of the first actions taken by Chandler's successor, SMA Dailey, was to modify the tattoo policies.

In short, what Millennials want and what Post-Millennials will demand, is to contribute and work within a transformational and servant leadership environment. Such environments will directly envelop the lifestyles of the youngest generation and align with their social behaviors and fundamental beliefs. This, of course, will require a radical and revolutionary cultural change across all of the Department of Defense, similar to what Rogers attempted to implement in the

Army of the 1970s. The good news is that some observers of these issues are now calling for changes in that direction.

From the top, Secretary of Defense Ash Carter has proposed a robust set of personnel reforms that he calls "Force of the Future." In his November 2015 announcement, Carter stated that "in the face of generational, technological and labor market changes, we in the Pentagon must think outside our five-sided box and try to make ourselves even better at attracting talent from new generations of Americans" (Garamone, 2015). Despite Carter's recognition that the personnel system has changed very little since the creation of the AVF in 1973 and now requires significant reform, the services' stewards are already fighting the programs, with one official stating that "you don't abandon things that seem to have worked for you in some way, unless you have a compelling case about the need for change" (Tilghman, 2015). Therein lies the crux. The old guard have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo because the current system brought them to the top, a system in which they paid their dues. They simply do not see a need for change. Such blindness indicates a serious ignorance or detachment from the younger generation.

The good news is that some military officers writing for military publications are starting to advocate for cultural change. For example, Colonels Michael Runey and Charles D. Allen, in a recent article published in *Military Review*, correctly addressed the unsustainability of the AVF by calling out the Army's inability to "meet today's quality demands." They accurately noted that the Army has no tools to assess higher-caliber recruits who possess the physical, mental, and moral traits that could meet requirements.[10] Therefore, they assert, the Army should recruit for "perceived potential" rather than skills. They also agree that amenities and monetary compensation will not incent recruits. Runey and Allen believe that policy makers "must devise means for incentivizing such service by aligning the desires of the unwilling with national interests." Unfortunately, they offer no means by which to persuade the unwilling (Runey & Allen, 2015). While their analysis is sound, for the Army to move away from recruiting for skills (technological management and training) and closer to assessing morality and learning potential (human relations and education) would require the Army to develop transformational and servant leaders, thus radically changing its human relations culture.

Other officers contributing to *Military Review* are calling for the Army to end its "cultural legacy of muddy boots, anti-intellectualism, and egalitarianism [that] hinder the effective development of senior leaders." Colonels Charles D. Allen and George J. Woods argue that this

legacy produces the wrong kind of senior leader required to lead (or manage?) at the enterprise level. While they applaud former CSA General Raymond T. Odierno's implementation of the 2013 *Army Leader Development Strategy* (ALDS) and the 2014 revised Officer Evaluation Report (OER) as steps in the right direction, the authors believe that these improvements "are insufficient to sustain change" (Allen & Woods, 2015). This is true but for reasons other than those they cite. The OER of a commander will remain flawed and biased (and suspect to Millennial followers) until the 360 degree evaluation becomes the center piece of the report. The ALDS, like its other preceding strategies, will fall short because the Army leader development model central to the ALDS is a *management* model. It is essentially the framework of the career gates that a soldier should pass through that espouses a balance of experience, education, and training. The ALDS is filled with the "shoulds" and "wills" that leaders must give their subordinates. It presumes that leader development is a one-way street from seniors to juniors (an erroneous presumption), thus it is a transactional model.

Whether or not Post-Millennials will be willing to serve in the AVF of the future is an open question. The services still have a choice at this juncture in time. They can embrace the youngest generation to meet their needs in order to manage change and adapt to a new human relations culture, or the services can cling to the ways of the past and face uncontrollable, imposed change, most likely in a crisis. If the latter, the AVF may have only three options: decline war, implement emergency conscription, or outsource the war. The first may not be an option, and the second would result in political suicide and possibly social rebellion. In regard to the third option, some would argue that the AVF is already on the road to outsourcing war by employing an unprecedented number of contractors.

The AVF cannot wait for or expect the service stewards to successfully implement top-down institutional change, as Carter is trying to do now or as General Rogers attempted in the late 1970s. Rogers was pragmatic about the time required—he envisioned a time frame extending well beyond a decade for Army OE (which his successors did not allow). In the uncertain world of 2016, the US Armed Forces cannot afford a decade-long transitional period. What is required now is a grassroots movement with small-scale initiatives such as the Air Force Technical Applications Center (AFTAC) is implementing today at Patrick AFB, Florida.

AFTAC, in wanting to re-energize its long history of innovation, realized that its Millennial airmen, those closest to operational challenges and problems, were key. The commander of this

wing-equivalent (brigade level) organization formalized an innovation program by creating an innovation lab under the direction of a captain with assigned airmen to oversee a program that involves everyone in the unit. Today, everyone at AFTAC, uniformed and civilian, is permitted up to one half day per week to brainstorm new ideas. There are no managerial constraints. People are free to meet wherever and whenever new ideas arise or time permits. Over the last 18 months, more than 50 ideas have led to a cost savings/cost avoidance of approximately seven million dollars. More importantly, AFTAC's airmen are excited to see their ideas go the full cycle from concept to operational implementation. Today, a previously sensed climate of apathy among the youngest airmen has largely dissipated.

AFTAC's example, though small compared to the entire Air Force, is a perfect example of how transformational leaders are meeting the needs of Millennial service members. The key here is empowerment and trust. Listening and allowing airmen to fail and make mistakes lead to ideas which, in turn, lead to innovation.[11] More importantly, successful innovations do not require much expense or top-down driven programs but rather "buy-in" from the entire chain of command. AFTAC learned from consulting successful innovation programs in the corporate world that most innovation programs fail, even with abundant resources, because intermediate managers in the chains of command do not buy into the vision and fail to support their subordinates. This is precisely what Rogers experienced in the 1970s, as senior NCOs and officers at the O-6 level (colonel) resisted change and obstructed progress on the Army OE Program. The AFTAC experience is not unique. Any military organization at any level should be implementing similar activities. In the AVF today, however, it is difficult to visualize infantry command sergeants major or gunnery sergeants permitting their soldiers and marines to congregate whenever or wherever to brainstorm and innovate new ways to improve training and operations. For post-Millennials, though, innovation may provide the mechanism by which the AVF affects sustainable cultural change.

In the long term, the AVF's sustainability rests on the recognition that for Post-Millennials, enlistment will not be an economic contract but rather a social contract. The military's chains of command will have to be more comfortable with diminished direct control. The old adage "knowledge is power" is true. As we have already observed with Millennials, power has become more democratized and employable. Millennials and Post-Millennials understand that power exists within interactive social structures and not within technological frameworks or traditional

bureaucratized organizations. Millennials see that shared ideas are more important and powerful than physical activity. Post-Millennial service members will expect their leaders to welcome dissenting views and to allow them to participate in decision-making processes. Effective leaders, at all levels, will be transformational and servant leaders who listen and learn from all members of the organization, and then guide ideas toward solutions.

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[1] See the Encyclopedia Britannica's definition: "[I]ts inherited values were no longer relevant in the postwar world and because of its spiritual alienation from a U.S. that, basking under Pres. Warren G. Harding's 'back to normalcy' policy, seemed to its members to be hopelessly provincial, materialistic, and emotionally barren."

[2] See also Taylor, P. & Gao, G. (2014, June). Generation X: America's neglected 'middle child.' *Pew Research Center.* Retrieved from http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/ 2014/06/05/generation-x-americas-neglected-middle-child/.

[3] The term "hollow force" was first used by CSA General Shy Meyer in 1978 to describe the ill-equipped and ill-manned Army at that time. The term has received extensive and enduring usage ever since.

[4] The authors stated that "about 15 percent of employers that experienced a duty-related absence reported that the RC members faced problems, such as difficulty interacting with clients or emotional problems, upon return to civilian employment," xix. I suspect this percentage is under-reported given that they did not target mental health issues.

[5] Anderson appearance on MSNBC Morning Joe, April 7, 2016. In her book, Anderson noted that what she "found should terrify Republicans . . . [because they] fundamentally misunderstand millennial values and where the opportunities—and challenges—exist. They often take too simplistic a view of what young people want," 14-15.

[6] See also Harvard University, Institute for Politics. (2016). Survey of young Americans' attitudes toward politics and public service." Retrieved from http://iop.harvard.edu/iop-now/harvard-iop-spring-2016-poll. Their latest poll revealed that only 19% identify as capitalists and only 42% support capitalism as an ideology.

[7] Situational leadership theory was initially formulated by Dr. Paul Hersey and Dr. Ken Blanchard. It deals with "the amount of guidance and direction (task behavior) a leader gives, the amount of socio-emotional support (relationship behavior) a leader provides, and the readiness level that followers exhibit in performing a specific task, function, or objective." In the early 1980s, they converted their theory into the popular "situational leadership model." Hersey's work is very closely aligned with transactional leadership theory, and Blanchard's work is focused on management. Blanchard has published more than 30 management books. For a short overview, see http://www.toolshero.com/toolsheroes/paul-hersey/.

[8] *Leader-match theories* is the general term used to describe several leader-centric theories that arose in the 1960s. The most notable was Fred Fiedler's "Contingency Model." Fiedler worked at the University of Illinois and studied the personality and characteristics of leaders. In short, he believed that a person's leadership style was fixed and could be assessed so that an organization could match the right leader to a given situation. See Northouse, (2006), chapter six.

[9] In 1970, Robert Greenleaf coined the phrase "servant leadership." He believed that "the servant-leader *is* servant first. . . It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is *leader* first, perhaps because of

the need to assuage an unusual power drive." At the heart of Greenleaf's work was the concept of moral and ethical leadership. Greenleaf asked, "Do those served grow as persons? Do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?"

[10] In 1978, CSA General Bernie Rogers consulted psychologists with the same question.

[11] As the Millennial captain in charge of AFTAC's lab recently stated, "It's the establishment of an office dedicated to developing and cultivating the culture required to inspire innovation. Senior leaders talk all the time about empowering their people but the innovation lab stands as a living testament to that promise. The success of the effort is vital to a healthy organization because if the culture of the organization is not supportive of flexibility or change in methods then the organization and its people will fail to adapt to evolving conditions." Email to author dated April 22, 2016.