

**NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY
NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE**

THE ARMY'S STRATEGIC READINESS SYSTEM (SRS)

The Road to Improved Readiness or Just Another Bright Idea?

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The focus of this paper is the Army's Strategic Readiness System (SRS), a relatively new system the Army is in the process of implementing to more effectively measure readiness of individual Army units and the collective readiness of the Army as an institution. I believe the study of SRS is instructive for several reasons relevant to NWC Course 5603. It provides real-world examples of the course's framework of *people, organization* and *process* and SRS remains both a topical and contentious issue within the Army. As I discussed when getting approval for this topic, although there has been some inter-agency coordination with the Department of Defense (DoD) and Congress, implementing SRS is primarily an example of *intra-agency* challenges because it is so different from the long-standing readiness reporting system the Army has had for decades.

This paper consists of six parts. Part I provides a definition of readiness and background information. Part II is a brief history of Army readiness reporting. Part III describes key external factors that caused the Army to seek a new way to track and report readiness. Part IV discusses the key components of SRS. Part V mentions some of the bureaucratic challenges we have discussed in Course 5603 and their relevance to SRS. Part VI is a summary.

In conducting research for this paper, I spoke with many people within the Pentagon, including civilians working for the Federal Government, civilian contractors, and military officers in ranks ranging from major to general officer. Since SRS remains a program in development and one whose long-term future is still not assured, some people were initially reluctant to speak with me. In an effort to get the people I spoke with to be candid, I informed them their names would not appear in this paper. Through my contacts in the Pentagon, I was also given extended access to close-hold material that only a very limited number of Army officers have seen.

PART I--READINESS DEFINED

The official definition of readiness that has applicability throughout the DoD and for all of the services is stated in the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) Instruction on the Chairman's Readiness System (CJCSI 3401.01B)¹; this definition appears below.

“Readiness is the ability of the U.S. military forces to fight and meet the demands of the national Military Strategy. It is the synthesis of unit readiness and joint readiness. Unit readiness is the ability of the unit to provide capabilities required by the combatant commanders to execute their assigned missions and is derived from the ability of each unit to deliver the outputs for which it was designed. Joint readiness is the combatant commander's ability to integrate and synchronize ready combat and support forces to execute assigned missions.”

Translated into layman's terminology, the above definition basically means readiness is an indicator of “how ready” a military unit is--regardless of its size or composition--to accomplish the primary missions for which it was designed.

As many Army units began to perform humanitarian and peacekeeping missions following the end of the Cold War, an institutional dilemma throughout the Pentagon was determining if performing those types of missions adversely impact on units' readiness to perform combat-related missions, and if so how and by how much? It turns out the answer to the question of whether performing peacekeeping and humanitarian missions erode combat readiness is both yes and no, and it depends. I will come back to this “Ready for what?” discussion later in the paper.

PART II --READINESS REPORTING HISTORY AND OVERVIEW

Prior to 1963, unit readiness within the Army was assessed by individual units and not reported in any standardized format to the Department of the Army level, what then and still is referred to as Headquarters, Department of the Army or HQDA. On August 23, 1963, HQDA published the Army's first regulation solely focused on readiness reporting: Army Regulation (AR) 220-1.

The readiness reporting system defined in AR 220-1 evolved as part of an HQDA initiative to have a more accurate picture of Army-wide readiness under a standardized set of criteria. The need for such visibility and standardization was brought to light during the 1961 Berlin Crisis and the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. The publication of AR 220-1 was an attempt by HQDA to codify unit readiness reporting against standards based on the requirements for sustained combat. Initially, the regulation only applied to active Army units that had a combat mission and were part of what was then known as the Strategic Army Corps (STRAC). For decades, the acronym STRAC meant one thing in the Army--well-trained soldiers and units.

From 1963 to 1978, the Army's readiness reporting requirements were modified eight times to adapt to changing conditions. Coverage expanded from just STRAC units to additional tactical units (known as TO&E units), some units without a go-to-war mission (known as TDA units) and also expanded to include some Army National Guard (ARNG) and U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) units. The first systemic use of computers in readiness reporting occurred in 1969 and was called the Army Force Status Reporting System. That version of AR 220-1 was also the first to designate separate reporting systems for the active Army and the ARNG and USAR.

In 1971, DoD initiated its own readiness reporting requirements and the Army's readiness report contributed significantly to the new DoD readiness reporting system. However, despite the requirement that the Army now had to provide readiness data to DoD, the Army's internal readiness report did not change significantly and the Army continued to administer its own independent readiness reporting system. Another important change that occurred in 1971 was the frequency for readiness reporting within the Army changed from quarterly to monthly.

In 1976, the Army War College (AWC), based at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, analyzed readiness reporting in-depth for the first time. According to a colonel on the Army Staff who routinely deals with readiness issues, the 1976 AWC study determined the existing readiness system in place at the time, "fostered inflated reports based on non-empirical data and that field commanders had little faith in the system."² In response to the 1976 AWC study, the Army modified its readiness reporting system and instituted the Unit Status Report (USR) in 1979 with yet another revision to AR 220-1. A key component of the USR was the inclusion of C-ratings (C-1 being highest rating and C-4 lowest rating) for four key criteria: personnel readiness, equipment availability, equipment readiness and training readiness. From 1976 to 1997, the USR and the reports generated from USR data were modified several times to account for unique joint and reserve component considerations. In 1986, the Army adopted the Status of Resources and Training System (SORTS) to better support joint requirements.

The current version of AR 220-1 was published and implemented in 1999. As was true when I was a young Army officer in the early 1980s, today's lieutenants still use AR 220-1 as their primary reference document to prepare monthly readiness reports for their company commanders who are typically captains. The monthly readiness reports at company level are submitted in hard copy to their battalion headquarters, and proceed up through the chain of command. Most battalions also require company commanders to brief the readiness of their unit in person at monthly meetings logically referred to as USR briefs, which are normally attended by officer and noncommissioned officer leaders within the battalion.

This same scenario is frequently repeated at higher levels, such as at brigade level when lieutenant colonel battalion commanders brief the readiness of their commands to a colonel brigade commander, and at division level, when brigade commanders brief the readiness of their commands to a two-star division commander.

PART III--EXTERNAL INFLUENCES NECESSITATING CHANGE

In many ways, things were relatively simple for the military during the Cold War. There was one principal adversary, the Soviet Union, and U.S. military units and the entire U.S. military establishment was focused on defeating the Soviets. Preparing for war with the Soviets necessitated maintaining high levels of combat readiness in both conventional and nuclear forces. Generations of Army soldiers trained to defeat the Soviets, a fight that presumably would occur along the Fulda Gap or in the Northern Plains of what was then called the Federal Republic of Germany.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, collapse of the Soviet Union and breakup of the Warsaw Pact, much changed for the U.S. military. Two things that changed was service leaders had to re-evaluate what constituted readiness and train their troops to perform many diverse missions with no clear-cut linkage with combat operations.

After the Gulf War, many in Congress--prodded by U.S. public opinion--began to believe the military's Cold War focus on preparation for combat was an outdated model and the U.S. military should be significantly reduced as a peace dividend. During the period 1990-95, the U.S. military went through its largest reduction since the end of World War II--a reduction of nearly 40%. The Army went from 800,000 soldiers on active duty during the 1991 Gulf War to around 535,000 by 1995 and today's active Army end-strength is 478,000. Not surprisingly, the *slash defense sentiment* was also reflected in the amount of funding for defense; 1991 was the first year since 1950 that defense received less than 5% of the Gross National Product (GNP).

By the spring of 1991, the U.S. military was settling refugees, helping people at home and abroad contend with natural disasters, fighting forest fires, delivering food to starving children, and other missions not specifically linked with defeating an adversary and there were lots of these new missions.

"The Army is much busier than it's ever been. If you go back again and look at the Cold War, you find that since 1945 to 1989, we used our military, the United States of America did, 10 times. Since 1989, we've found that we had to use our military 33 times. And so with all this draw-down [of forces] that's taken place out in the field, the soldiers have found themselves deploying more and more...doing things that soldiers do in Southwest Asia, Bosnia, Kuwait, Korea."³

In terms of readiness reporting, the new emphasis on all of these other types of missions was having a ripple effect throughout the services. Senior uniformed leaders who had grown up in the Cold War and were accustomed to training for combat and reporting on their units' ability to perform wartime missions were in some cases perplexed. How could they simultaneously maintain combat readiness while performing so many missions not linked with combat and with nearly 40% less forces than they previously had? Not all of the services were affected the same way. For example, a large percentage of the Navy and Air Force is always engaged in getting to a location by sea or air. Even when asked to perform the types of new missions described above, the Navy and Air Force still get to exercise at least one of their core missions: "getting there." However, within the Army and Marine Corps, these new missions posed special challenges because there was no clear linkage between the new missions and many of the types of missions those two ground services would be asked to perform in combat.

One visible manifestation of this cultural challenge in the Army was some Division Commanders, whose commands had participated in large-scale humanitarian or peacekeeping missions, reported their division as C-3 or C-4--not ready to perform their wartime missions. However, since each Division Commander is responsible for submitting their own readiness report to HQDA, there was no uniformity in what different commanders were reporting under essentially similar conditions.

This predicament not only frustrated many senior Army leaders. It also affected officials on the Joint Staff and within DoD as well as many members of Congress, who all started to question whether the services were capable of fully executing the National Military Strategy (NMS). The "Ready for what?" debate mentioned earlier in this paper became a key question for senior uniformed officers and senior officials in DoD.

In an effort to address the problem, in Section 361 of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2000 National Defense Authorization Act (published in calendar year 1999), Congress directed the Secretary of Defense to provide for an independent study of the requirements for a comprehensive readiness reporting system for DoD.

DoD tasked the Institute for Defense Analysis (IDA) to conduct the independent review of its readiness reporting system. The project leader for the review was John C. Tillson, whose team consisted of 11 other IDA researchers. Several prominent former flag officers from the services also assisted with the study, including Gen. Wesley Clark (USA, Ret.), Gen. Wayne Downing (USA, Ret.), Gen. Anthony Zinni (USMC, Ret.) and Adm. Harold Gehman (USN, Ret.). The key findings produced by the IDA study are shown below.

"DoD's readiness reporting has been improved substantially in recent years, but further improvements are needed. These include: providing comprehensive readiness reporting guidance; addressing the full range of National Security Strategy (NSS) requirements; focusing on mission-essential tasks for both military operations and support; developing capabilities to evaluate overall system readiness; and developing better management information systems for collecting, processing, and reporting relevant readiness data. These improvements collectively will provide the Secretary of Defense and the Congress much better understanding of DoD's readiness to execute all elements of the strategy."⁴

In September 1999, at about the same time IDA was beginning their study, the Army War College began another study of Army readiness reporting at the direction of Gen. Eric K. Shinseki, who had become Army Chief of Staff three months earlier.

Gen. Shinseki tasked the War College to develop alternative solutions to improve readiness reporting and design a reporting system that directly answers the question: “Ready for what?” Shinseki also approved the underlying *problem statement* for the War College Readiness Committee, which defined the scope of their duties. The problem statement Gen. Shinseki approved is shown below:

“The current reporting system is not sufficiently comprehensive, accurate, objective, timely and predictive in its measurement of the Army’s ability to support the National Military Strategy and does not facilitate the allocation of resources to maximize readiness across the Army.”⁵

For brevity purposes, I won’t provide all of the findings and recommendations of the 1999 AWC Readiness Study. However, the study’s key conclusion was, “The current readiness reporting system deficiencies warrant major improvements.”⁶

The AWC Study opined, “The ‘Ready for what?’ issue results from the contradiction between the historical focus of organizations on their war fighting missions and the operational realities that employs them in other missions such as peace keeping or humanitarian assistance operations.” In short, the 1999 AWC Study proposed a new and improved Mission-Focused Readiness Reporting System for the Army, and over time this has evolved to what is now known as the Army Strategic Readiness System or SRS.

PART IV-- KEY DETAILS AND COMPONENTS OF SRS

The Strategic Readiness System (SRS) was designed as an integrated strategic management and measurement system that will revolutionize the way the Army thinks about and reports readiness. The system helps ensure that all levels of the Army recognize and align their vision, objectives and initiatives to those articulated in an overarching Army Plan produced at the Pentagon. Additionally, SRS measures each element’s progress toward achieving these goals. HQDA and the major commands have already begun working with SRS. By September 2003, the process will expand further to include additional units. SRS displays the status of strategic objectives as *red*, *amber* or *green* (green being the most positive characterization) on what is called a scorecard. The colors indicate the degree of success toward achieving strategic objectives. Before producing their scorecards, commanders are asked to produce a mission map, which helps identify their core competencies. A model of a strategy-focused organization and a sample mission map are shown at Enclosure 1.

SRS will transform the way the Army manages and measures readiness by focusing and aligning strategic goals and objectives across the entire force. It takes into account the significant number of units and activities within the Army whose readiness is not assessed by current readiness reporting standards and broadens the Army’s definition of readiness to include installations, infrastructure, the industrial base, etc.

SRS does not replace the current Unit Status Report; it integrates the data required by our current readiness reporting system with other data--such as from institutional elements of the Army that have not previously been part of the Army’s existing readiness assessment--and provides a more holistic view of readiness. It provides Army leaders down to the Division and separate Brigade level with a tool that will help in prioritizing the allocation of resources to maximize overall readiness.

In line with Gen. Shinseki's initial guidance, and different from today's USR reporting system, SRS enables senior Army leaders to monitor the ability of the Army to achieve its stated strategic objectives and core competencies. SRS is designed to link resources to readiness, while also leveraging available technologies to more accurately forecast the effects of resource allocation decisions. This will be accomplished by identifying the strategic objectives of all elements of the Army above separate Brigade level and evaluating progress toward achieving those objectives through use of clearly articulated metrics.

SRS consists of two parts. The first part identifies a unit's strategic goals and objectives. It is based on a *balanced scorecard*, an administrative tool that was the brainchild of two Harvard Business School professors: Robert Kaplan and David P. Norton. The two professors have published a few books with the balanced scorecard as the centerpiece of new management strategies and also jointly started their own firm, known as *Collaborative* (www.bscol.com). It is no coincidence the Army has signed a multi-million dollar contract with *Collaborative* to help institutionalize SRS within the Army. The balanced scorecard methodology uses different indicators to measure a unit's progress toward achieving its strategic goals and objectives. Eventually, automated links will reach approximately 5,800 separate functional Army databases and all scorecards will be aligned to the Army Scorecard to ensure the objectives of subordinate units are consistent with the strategic objectives of the Army's senior leadership.

The Army Scorecard is the foundation of the SRS. This document articulates the Secretary of the Army's (SA) and Chief of Staff of the Army's (CSA) vision, objectives and initiatives for the Army. Gen. Shinseki approved the Army Scorecard on March 13, 2002. Army major commands (MACOMs), such as U.S. Forces Command, Training and Doctrine Command, Army Material Command, etc. and Army Staff Directorates within the Pentagon (G1, G2, G3, etc.) developed their own scorecards, which have all been approved by the CSA.

The second part of the SRS is data collection. After HQDA and the MACOMs complete their scorecards, units down to Division or separate Brigade level will complete their own scorecards to identify what is important in their organizations. An automated system will collect and assimilate all that data and compute how well the respective organization is progressing toward achieving their own as well as the Army's strategic objectives. By implementing SRS, the Army is attempting to get all key commands, installations and activities on the same sheet of music and focused on more efficiently achieving their own core competencies while supporting the Army's overall strategy.

January 2003 is the first time SRS-generated readiness data will be briefed at the Army's Monthly Readiness Review (MRR), the key readiness meeting attended by the senior leadership of the Army that always precedes the Joint Monthly Readiness Review (JMMR) held on the Joint Staff. Using SRS-generated data at the MRR is an important milestone in the relatively young history of SRS.

PART V--SRS PROVIDES REAL-WORLD EXAMPLES OF COURSE 5603 FRAMEWORK

I believe SRS is a worthwhile case study that exemplifies many of the bureaucratic challenges we have identified throughout Course 5603. In this section, I provide examples of the Army's experiences thus far with SRS and discuss how they reinforce the importance of people, organization and process in any major undertaking within a bureaucracy.

PEOPLE. When he was Army Chief of Staff back in the early 1970s, Gen. Creighton Abrams emphasized that people aren't merely in the Army; people *are* the Army. Perhaps more so than any other organization in the United States, the ability of the Army to successfully perform the full spectrum of missions it is assigned is directly related to the quality and dedication of its people. Quality people are the reason the Army repeatedly does more with less and can perform what oftentimes seems miraculous to people outside of the Army. As Gen. Dennis J. Reimer, Army Chief of Staff from 1995-99, said repeatedly, "Soldiers are our credentials."

However, like other people organizations, the Army is not immune to the typical people problems, including resistance to change, wide range of intellectual capacities--even among senior officials, biases, many different personalities which don't always support each other or the boss, self-promotional individuals, etc. All of these nuances and many others have been evident in the effort to implement SRS.

Since the Army is a traditional hierarchy, where rank almost always wins out and has the final say, one of the key reasons why SRS has come this far in such a relatively short period of time is that Army Chief of Staff Shinseki is firmly behind the program and has basically told his generals to get on board. Along this vein, according to a GS-15 on the Army Staff who is involved on an almost daily basis with some aspect of SRS, "There's no doubt about it, the chief of staff is the primary reason SRS has gained momentum. Without his personal support and involvement, SRS would never have gotten off the ground."⁷

"To master our strategic transition, we must focus on the other two components of the Army vision: people and readiness...The magnificent Army we see busily deployed abroad today will remain the force of choice should this Nation go to war anytime in the next 15 years...To more accurately measure Army readiness, we are developing a new reporting system that reflects active and reserve component capability to meet the requirements of today's strategic environment."⁸

The same GS-15 who discussed the importance of Gen. Shinseki's involvement with SRS also stated Secretary of the Army (SA) Thomas White, a sub-cabinet level political appointee, also has lent his full support to SRS and has signed memos to that effect, which have been disseminated to Army general officers and Army Senior Executive Service (SES) employees.

Despite CSA Shinseki's and SA White's endorsement and support, not all senior officials within the Army have warmly embraced SRS. The current Army Vice Chief of Staff, Gen. John Keane (whose nickname in the Army is "Mad Jack") appears to be reticent about SRS. In fact, when he was given a briefing in his office on SRS in the spring of 2002, which was led by a major general involved closely with SRS and a senior executive from *Collaborative Inc.*, Gen. Keane ended the meeting abruptly after only about 10 minutes and showed the briefing team the exit door.

This is significant because The Washington Post⁹ reported last April that Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld is probably going to select Keane as the next Army Chief of Staff this June. Gen. Keane is not the only senior Army officer who has reservations about SRS. An Army lieutenant colonel that works daily with SRS informed me, "Several Army generals have reservations about SRS, including a few four stars who command some of our major commands." When I asked the lieutenant colonel whether he thought SRS would survive if Gen. Keane became the next Chief of Staff, he said:

"As far as turning SRS off, yes the next CSA could do that and he might do that. But we've already briefed OSD and briefed Congress and have invested \$13-14 million through FY 04 funding, so it might not be as easy to shut down as some people think."¹⁰

Part of Gen. Shinseki's challenge in gaining support for many of his programs in and outside of the Army is he doesn't appear to have a self-promotional bone in his body. He has never felt compelled to justify his many contentious decisions in public (see below), does not appear to be skilled in building consensus or followings, and almost never speaks with the media. Collectively, these attributes makes him at times appear like an out-of-touch recluse--even to the many people who respect him as a selfless soldier.

ORGANIZATION. The Army Headquarters in the Pentagon (HQDA) is your typical government bureaucracy. It is divided up into two key groupings. One grouping is the Army Staff, which officially works for the Army Chief of Staff and is comprised primarily of uniformed personnel and Department of the Army Civilians. The second grouping is what is known as the Army Secretariat, which officially works for the Secretary of the Army and is comprised primarily of political appointees, Department of the Army Civilians and a smaller uniformed presence. The conduit between the Army Staff and the Army Secretariat is a three-star position known as the Director of the Army Staff. Like any bureaucracy, there is tremendous inefficiency and redundancy within both elements and it's not uncommon for one side to not know what the other side is doing at any given time.

Since current SA White is a West Point graduate who rose in rank to become a brigadier general after 22 years in the Army, there is not as much acrimony between the Army Staff and Army Secretariat as there has been in the past. However, there always has been and likely always will be a significant cultural gap and friction between the Army Staff and Army Secretariat that manifests itself in many ways.

An underlying foundation of our government is civilian control over the military. The Army Secretary has final say on almost all key decisions affecting the Army and officially can overrule most decisions made by the Chief of Staff. As mentioned previously, there exists a possibility that the next Chief of Staff, whomever that turns out to be, may not support SRS and he could move to kill the program. Irrespective of the views of the next CSA, the next SA could also play a significant role in sustaining SRS or canceling the program.

Like other large bureaucracies, the Army fundamentally is resistant to change. The Army grew accustomed doing more with less during the Clinton years and developed an institutional aversion to adding anything new to an already overflowing plate unless it was possible to take something off, which was rarely the case.

One senior officer I spoke with concluded there were two active organizational impediments to SRS. First, the Army was being asked to implement SRS without being provided any additional resources. “Shinseki intentionally did not provide any additional resources because he truly believed the balanced scorecard process, if properly implemented, would lead to greater efficiency in the Army and would actually take stuff off the plate instead of adding more stuff on it.” It was left up to the senior commanders implementing SRS to either add the fairly rigorous intellectual effort on top of everything they were already doing, or to effectively use the scorecard system to identify key organizational objectives and impose those key objectives over the current workload and stop doing things not directly supporting the key objectives.

The second organizational impediment was a somewhat obstructionist mindset of the senior Army officer population. According to the lieutenant colonel who works with SRS on a daily basis, a common refrain for many senior lieutenant colonels and above had three themes: “Give me the regulation and tell me what you want me to report;” “If you can’t provide me with new doctrine or detailed written guidance for SRS, I’m not playing;” and “Tell me what you want and I’ll give it to you.” This type of righteous resistance is common when an organization is asked to do something new that is significantly different from the way the majority of people have grown accustomed.

Acknowledging that it is nearly impossible to teach an old dog new tricks, the people within the Army responsible for SRS at HQDA level have focused most of their efforts on getting corporate buy-in at the rank of major and below and on the brigadier general population. The organizational dilemma facing the Army as it attempts to fully implement SRS seems to be directly related to Jervis’ hypothesis that states, “Decision makers are apt to err by being too wedded to the established view and too closed to new information, as opposed to being willing to alter their theories.”

PROCESS. The key ingredients within the course framework for process are *turf*, *history*, *stakes* and *personalities*. All four of those ingredients have influenced SRS thus far.

Turf has been a factor because some commanders resent the fact that SRS forces them to align their priorities with the Army’s overall priorities as identified by the Army Chief of Staff. While it may seem illogical at best and disloyal at worst, the fact is some four-star commanders don’t feel compelled to integrate their own organizational objectives with those of the Chief of Staff. Some of this resistance is culture-driven and some of it is personality-driven. In terms of culture, some Army four-stars see themselves as commanders and the Chief of Staff as a staff officer; in the Army, a staff officer is never held in the same esteem as a field commander. The generals with this view do not fully embrace SRS and the work its implementation is causing--especially since they are not being provided any additional resources and nobody is lessening their current workload in order to free up assets to implement SRS.

In terms of personalities, those senior officers who have yet to warmly embrace SRS know that Gen. Shinseki is retiring this summer and that it is not certain the program will survive after his departure. This has led to a few senior officers noticeably dragging their feet. This is a common stall tactic we have all seen for years.

From one historical perspective, given the end of the Cold War and assumption of many new missions, it was inevitable the Army would have to adopt a new readiness system. In my view, the Army proceeded in a logical manner in searching for a new readiness reporting system by having the Army War College initially lead the effort. The War College offered two advantages. First, officers at the school are not in the rating scheme of the Chief of Staff, so they were not constrained in any way other than addressing the specific areas Gen. Shinseki tasked them to address. The second advantage of having the AWC lead the effort was the College could tap into considerable expertise in the class in session, many whom had recently relinquished command of battalions and were knowledgeable of the current readiness challenges facing the Army.

Once Gen. Shinseki approved the AWC Committee's final report, the mission to develop and implement a new readiness reporting system was assigned to the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans/G-3, the biggest staff activity on the Army Staff and one that already had oversight of readiness--including a two-star Director of Operations, Readiness and Mobilization and a colonel who leads a fairly robust Readiness Division. It was also logical for the Army to hire *Collaborative Inc.* as its primary SRS contractor since the firm's two senior officials developed the balanced scorecard and had experience helping produce strategy-focused organizations.

A second historical factor is many senior Army officers know that Gen. Shinseki was basically rendered a lame duck in April 2002, when his likely successor was named by DoD sources, almost a year earlier than the customary timeframe when a new service chief is named. Additionally, it has become evident over time that Gen. Shinseki has not endeared himself to Secretary Rumsfeld. The way DoD handled the cancellation of the Crusader artillery system and the fact that Gen. Keane--not Gen. Shinseki--was informed of the SECDEF's decision is not lost on the senior generals in the Army.

Gen. Shinseki's tour as Chief of Staff has also included other decisions that have been second-guessed by many senior officers, including the decision to go with wheeled vehicles in the Army's new more agile brigades instead of track vehicles as well as the decision to have conventional forces wear black berets, which for years were worn only by elite Ranger units. Collectively, this has resulted in a reluctance to embrace what many senior lieutenant colonels and above view as yet another bright idea being generated in the Pentagon by senior Army officials who have lost track with reality in the field.

In terms of more recent history, a third factor that has influenced the degree to which SRS has been accepted is the cacophony surrounding 9-11, ensuing Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), ongoing peacekeeping missions in the Balkans and the preparations for a possible war with Iraq, which have all entailed considerable training and deployments of Army units.

Readiness issues have always been the purview of commanders and operations officers. The truth is a significant percentage of the Army's senior commanders and their operations officers are actively involved in one of the activities mentioned in the previous paragraph--leaving them little time to invest into SRS.

Given this context, it's easy to see why many commanders are looking at SRS with some trepidation. This last predicament seems to align with Jervis' hypothesis that says, "When messages are sent from a different background of concerns and information than is possessed by the receiver, misunderstanding is likely." In the context of SRS, the *receivers* are the senior Army commanders who are already contending with many issues simultaneously that are keeping them busy for 14-16 hours a day.

PART VI--SUMMARY

Predictably, the Army's efforts to implement SRS have run into many of the bureaucratic challenges we have discussed throughout Course 5603. As with any major undertaking, it requires change from a long-standing status quo, a new set of competencies, and a willingness on people of all ranks to look at the same things they've been looking at for years--but in new ways. Like many things in our busy world, SRS has been widely perceived by many good-intentioned people as additional work--undesirable to someone who already feels over-worked. The seniority of key personalities within the bureaucracy has enabled considerable progress to be attained in a relatively short period of time. In this case, the four-star Army Chief of Staff, analogous to a private sector CEO, has seen the potential long-term benefits of SRS from the onset and been a champion of the program. Gen. Shinseki has also been successful in getting Secretary of the Army Thomas White to support SRS implementation.

Despite the personal involvement and backing of the Army's two senior leaders, there still is considerable angst in the ranks, including the general officer ranks. One explanation for this cool support in the field for a hot headquarters idea is that fundamentally, the Chief of Staff is paid to be a visionary--to look 10-20 years ahead and develop strategies and programs today to contend with anticipated future challenges. In contrast, the senior officers in the field commanding Brigades, Divisions, Corps and Major Commands are almost exclusively focused on accomplishing the missions they are assigned today or may be assigned tomorrow. As a group, they tend to not appreciate the panoply of new ideas generated by HQDA, especially when those new ideas add to their existing workload and do not come with additional resources, funding or manpower. The tension between "upper management" and "operators in the field" is present in all bureaucracies and the Army is no different.

In my view, it is too early to predict whether the full implementation of SRS will come to fruition. While there is strong support at the highest levels of the Army in the Pentagon, there also appears to be many senior Army officers who are skeptical at best on the merits of SRS. From my interviews, it was clear there is at least one four-star in the Army who has yet to be convinced SRS is worth the time, effort and money. There will be a new Army Chief of Staff in June 2003, and according to some people, the Secretary of the Army may also depart not long after. The long-term sustainability of SRS will be in the hands of their replacements.

The officer many people believe will be the next Army Chief of Staff, Gen. John Keane, has not given any clear signal as to his intentions regarding the future of SRS. Suffice it to say, there are many colonels and above outside of Washington who hope Keane [or whomever the next Chief of Staff is] will shelve the program entirely, modify its implementation so as to not affect as many field commands, or study it further before making a final decision on whether the Army should adopt SRS. Since SRS is a new program, has no direct connectivity with DoD's readiness system and the dollar amount invested so far is relatively small by Washington standards, there will not likely be any negative ramifications in DoD or on Capitol Hill if the next Chief of Staff or Army Secretary decides to cancel the program.

Another key potential variable that will presumably have a major impact on SRS implementation is if the United States goes to war with Iraq. Under such a scenario--which seems more likely every day given the fact we have nearly 100,000 American troops deployed in the Middle East--the Army's senior leadership would probably defer full implementation of SRS for many years or cancel it all together.

Nobody can say with certainty at this juncture what will come of SRS--whether it will be institutionalized or eventually set aside as a bright idea whose time had not yet come.

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NOTES:

¹ John C. Tillson (Project Leader), Institute for Defense Analysis (IDA), *Independent Review of DoD's Readiness Reporting System* November 2000; p.1-5.

² Based on Pentagon interview with an Army colonel who works with readiness issues, including SRS, on a daily basis.

³ Ibid.

⁴ IDA Study; p. S-9.

⁵ Final Report of the U.S. Army War College Readiness Committee ("Close-Hold" document--never officially published or publicly released), January 2000; p. 1.

⁶ Ibid, p. 22.

⁷ Based on Pentagon interview with a GS-15 Department of the Army Civilian who works with Army readiness issues on a daily basis.

⁸ Remarks by Army Chief of Staff Gen. Eric K. Shinseki at the annual conference of the Association of the United States Army, Washington DC, October 17, 2000.

⁹ Article by Thomas E. Ricks, published in the April 10, 2002 edition of *The Washington Post* and reprinted in the April 11, 2002 edition of the *Houston Chronicle*.

¹⁰ Based on Pentagon interview with an Army Lieutenant Colonel whose daily duties involve SRS.

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