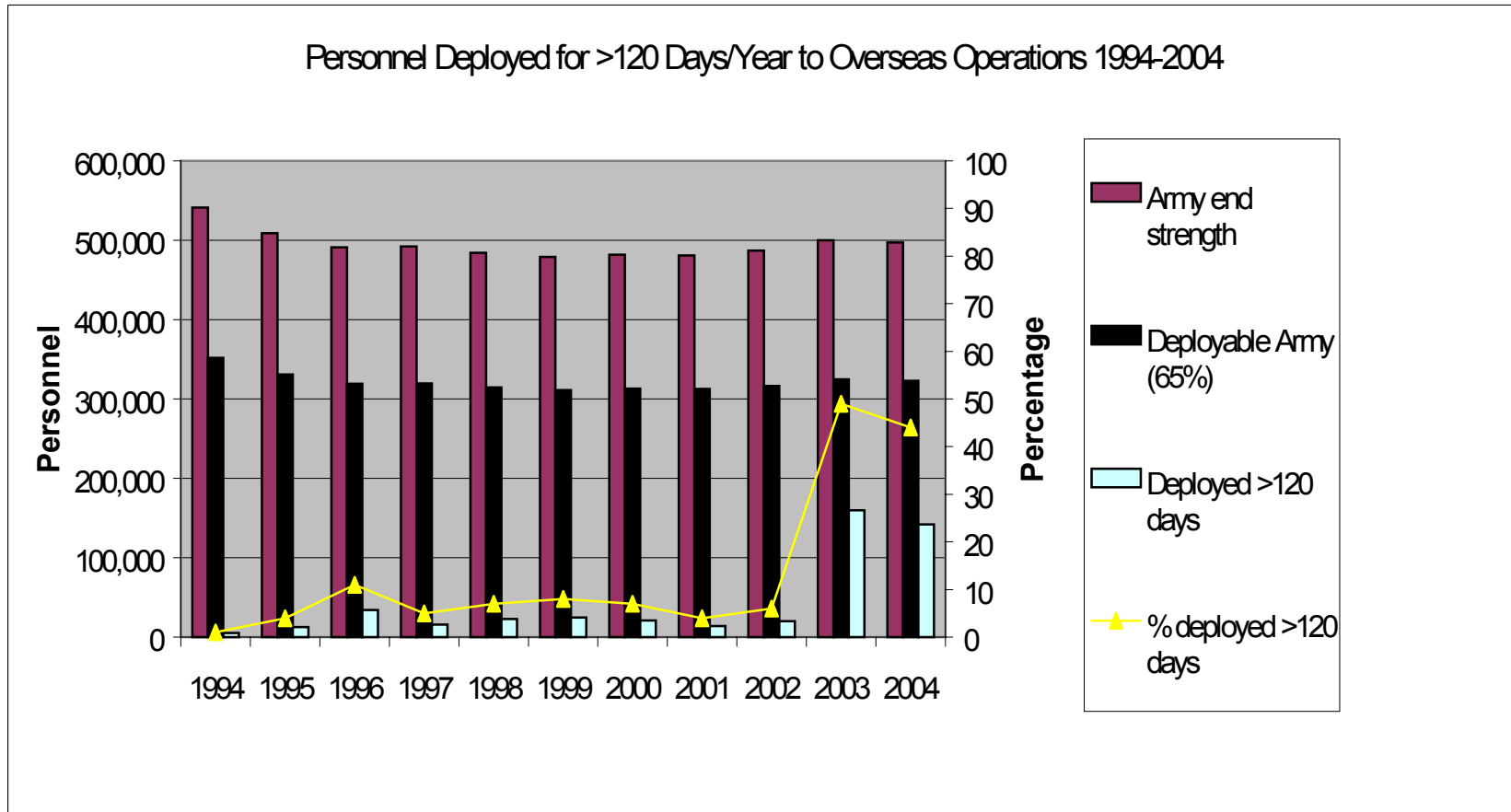


## A Measure of Stress to Active Component Army Personnel 1994-2004:

number of soldiers (and percentage of deployable force) deployed to overseas operations for more than 120 days in a given year.



**Sources:** 120+ day deployment numbers for the years 1994-2000 are from J. Michael Polich and Ron Sortor, "Deployments and Army Personnel Tempo," RAND MR-1417, 2001, page 39. Polich and Sortor derive their numbers from Standard Installation and Division Personnel System (SIDPERS) data which tracks individual soldiers in the Army. **(continued on next page)**

## Sources, continued

Comparable SIDPERS data for 2001-2004 is not currently available. I have made estimates using various government/NGO sources and press reports which give aggregate numbers of troops deployed to countries, regions, and major operations. I believe these estimates (which likely fall within a +/-10% error probability) serve reasonably well as indicative of relative stress levels, but should not be considered individually precise. For that level of accuracy we will have to wait for the Army to make available data comparable to those used by Polich and Sortor. As with the RAND numbers for the earlier period, I have **not** included troops stationed in Europe or Korea as "deployed," even though DoD has begun to refer to troops in Korea as on "hardship deployment." Nor do these deployment numbers include assignments to overseas training exercises or training centers.

**Note on deployable force:** common estimates of the deployable U.S. army range from 55 to 75% of endstrength. Part of the reason for the wide range of estimation is found in the variation in meaning of "deployable." In a war emergency many home-based soldiers assigned to non-expeditionary billets can be, and sometimes are, deployed overseas in fighting units. However, drawing on such troops for more than a short period of time will adversely effect normal functioning of the Army and eventually degrade readiness of the force. For the purpose of this illustration I have chosen the mid-point of 65% deployable, a percentage very close to what is now called "the expeditionary Army."

## Comment

Almost by definition a warrior's profession is stressful and so a discussion of stress in the Army is only meaningful if there is an effort to distinguish between *ordinary* levels of stress and *extraordinary* levels of stress. The graphic presented here adopts a **threshold between ordinary and extraordinary of greater than 120 days in a given year deployed to overseas operations**. Soldiers can deploy occasionally for 120 days overseas without missing out on important yearly routines at their home base, such as training, special assignments, and leave. Deployment of much more than 120 days in a year results in deficits accumulating in the other aspects of a soldier's career and personal life.

In 1996 there was quite a lot of Congressional criticism of deployment-related stresses in the Army when 120+ day deployments reached upward of 10% of the deployable force due to the Bosnian intervention. By my estimate the 120+ day overseas deployment rate (averaged for 2003 and 2004) has been **46%** during the Iraq War years, with most of it being 365 day deployments. This rate is likely to decline only marginally in 2005. Furthermore, *many of the soldiers deployed in 2005 will be on their second 365 day deployment in three years. We can anticipate that accumulated stresses by late 2005 will exceed any since the Vietnam War period.*

It should also be noted that ***the most significant portion of this accumulated stress is due not to the brief conventional war fighting stage of the Iraq intervention in early 2003, but rather to the unanticipated demands of the occupation and counter-insurgency -- demands that continue unabated as they stretch through 2004, into 2005, and probably beyond.***

Charles Knight, Project on Defense Alternatives, 19 October 2004