The end of the Cold War was followed by a substantial reduction in both the size of the Army and the proportion of the Army stationed overseas. These events brought with them an expectation by some in the Army that the movement of soldiers—so-called personnel turbulence—would subside. As measured by the rate of permanent change of station moves, such a reduction has not occurred and is not expected for the foreseeable future.

The aggregate trends and projections for permanent change of station (PCS) moves, as well as the trends and projections within the individual classes of PCS moves, reveal that the absolute number of PCS moves has declined and is about to stabilize as the Army reaches postdrawdown stability. But the aggregate per-capita PCS-move rates will remain at about the Cold War level.

In particular, accession and separation moves—those moves that bring soldiers to their first duty station and return them to civilian life from their last duty station—will, in the out-years, remain roughly comparable to Cold War levels relative to force size. To reduce the numbers, the Army would have to increase the duration of soldiers’ service.

Rotational moves—those moves of soldiers to and from overseas locations—are driven by overseas strengths and tour lengths. Rotational moves will decline in absolute terms, but will increase relative to overseas strengths because overseas cuts have come principally from long-tour (largely Europe-based) authorizations, rather than short-tour (largely Korea-based) authorizations. Ignoring extensions and curtailments, long-tour authorizations require only one re-
placement per authorization every three years, while short-tour authorizations require a replacement every year. Hence, the disproportionate return of long-tour authorizations raised the average number of replacements required per overseas authorization per year. Only reductions in authorizations or increases in tour length can reduce the numbers further.

The remaining three types of moves—training, operational, and unit, which together constitute about 12 percent of moves—are driven by a number of factors. Operational moves result from the requirement to move soldiers out of CONUS assignments of fixed length or to balance shortages. Training moves result from professional development requirements. And unit moves result from unit restationings. Given officer end strengths and the high per-capita training move rate among officers, the greatest policy leverage to reduce training moves would come from changing policies that now cause officers to attend advanced courses and command and staff college on a PCS rather than TDY basis. Operational moves represent a more complicated situation; a number of demands generate such moves, in both the officer and the enlisted force. While operational moves represent a small fraction of the total, it may be worthwhile to investigate further the various drivers of such moves. No single policy change, however, is likely to have much power to reduce operational moves.

In terms of differences between officer and enlisted forces, Table S.1, which summarizes PCS-move rates, shows that in fiscal year 1997, when much of the drawdown turbulence has subsided, force losses (accession and separation) continue to create the most PCS-move turbulence for both types of forces. However, the second most important source of turbulence differs for the two forces. For the enlisted force, rotational moves to and from overseas assignments generate the most moves per thousand end strength. In contrast, for the officer force, other moves—principally training and operational—outrank rotational moves as the second most prevalent source per thousand end strength.

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1Training moves send soldiers to or from training of 20 or more weeks duration; operational moves are those that occur within CONUS or within an overseas theater; unit moves are the moves of individuals who move when a unit is reassigned.
Three types of moves—accession, separation, and rotational—constitute almost 90 percent of all Army PCS moves. Accession and separation moves can be reduced principally by increasing soldiers’ average length of service. Because these loss-related moves are relatively inexpensive, it would take a substantial improvement in average length of service to save a significant amount of PCS-move money. More importantly, however, compensation incentives such as reenlistment bonuses would be required to achieve the longer career lengths. The cost of these incentives, together with the additional pay and retirement costs associated with a more senior force, would more than outweigh any PCS-move savings. On the other hand, longer service would mean fewer annual accessions and, therefore, smaller initial entry training costs. Although we have not analyzed the costs in detail, it is clear that PCS moves represent only a minor consideration in the cost changes associated with changing average lengths of service.

Rotational moves account for only about one-quarter of all PCS moves but more than half their total cost. Rotational moves can be reduced through two policy actions: reducing the number of soldiers stationed overseas or increasing the length of overseas tours. Neither of these policies lies wholly within the control of the Army, but the Army can influence both. The return of even half the overseas authorizations could save the Army more than $300 million a year. Lengthening tours in Europe from three to four years would save less, only about $100 million a year. The return of all overseas authorizations would save more than $600 million a year in PCS moves and would permit much larger savings in overseas infrastructure, off-

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Officer</th>
<th>Enlisted</th>
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<tr>
<td>Accession and separation</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotational</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (training, operational, unit)</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>646</td>
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Table S.1
PCS Moves per 1,000 End Strength, FY97
set initially by added infrastructure costs in the continental United States (CONUS).

In sum, the more than $1 billion the Army spends on PCS moves each year is largely driven by the length of soldiers’ service and the tour lengths and strengths of its overseas force. Barring changes in these fundamental parameters, modest savings can be achieved through management options, but for the most part, the Army is likely to remain about as mobile as it was during the Cold War and is likely to continue to spend money on about its current number of PCS moves.