

Why We Fight

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A recent Senate hearing addressed a big problem facing America's All-Volunteer Force (AVF): recruitment.

The Army fell 25 percent short of its 2022 goal; the Air Force is 10 percent below; the Navy met its target for enlisted folks but not officers; and the Marines hit their mark but said “never before” has it been so challenging.

“The Pentagon has attributed its difficulties to a variety of factors,” [reports](#) *The Washington Post*, “including the nation’s low unemployment rate, school closings during

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the coronavirus pandemic that limited recruiters’ access to high school students and faculty, and a shifting culture in which more teens gravitate to jobs with work-life balance.”

As *The Post* paraphrased Army Undersecretary Gabe O. Camarillo, “the most significant barriers to service [include] fears of death or injury, suffering psychological



harm, and leaving behind friends and family.”

Indeed, what with possibility of overseas deployment and combat, the job of soldier certainly does not score well in the “work-life balance” category. While a sense of mission — and the country’s need — has helped spark interest in the past, that need has been blurred by a long string of misguided military adventures in recent decades.

Sure, President Joe has repeatedly [promised](#) American military force in defense of Taiwan against repeated Chinese threats to invade.* But do young Americans perceive this as anything to them? Has the [wokeness mission](#), stressed by the administration and the Pentagon and interrogated during the Senate hearings, occluded the more traditional sense of mission upon which the AVF has relied?

It’s time for Mr. Biden to speak to the people on the military’s *core* mission — including his promises, and those of other politicians. Asking them to keep his word.

Plus, a personal presidential request might add an element of responsibility and accountability from the commander-in-chief to the soldiers recruited.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.