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## **An Indispensable Force** *Investing in America's National Guard and Reserves*

By John Nagl and Travis Sharp  
Foreword by General Gordon R. Sullivan, USA (Retired)



Center for a  
New American  
Security

## Acknowledgments

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The authors alone are responsible for any error of fact, analysis or omission.

### Cover Image

Left: Soldiers from the Alabama National Guard build and maintain miles of HESCO barriers to protect Dauphin Island, Ala., beaches from the BP oil spill on July 23, 2010.

(STAFF SGT. JIM GREENHILL/U.S. Army)

Right: Guard members and active duty service members of the Provincial Reconstruction Team Kapisia engage targets on the "Stress Fire" range at the National Guard's Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center in central Indiana at dawn

(SPC. JOHN CROSBY/U.S. Army)

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AN INDISPENSABLE FORCE  
INVESTING IN AMERICA'S NATIONAL GUARD  
AND RESERVES

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By John Nagl and Travis Sharp



*"The National Guard and Reserves remain an indispensable force for defending the American homeland and protecting U.S. security interests around the world. Civilian Guardsmen and Reservists possess specialized skills that augment their military capabilities, rendering them a cost-effective and highly talented force well suited for operations that the U.S. military will likely perform over the next 20 years."*

— General Gordon R. Sullivan, USA (Retired); Foreword



**ENDORSEMENT  
BY FORMER COMMISSIONERS**

*The former members of the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves listed below played an instrumental role in preparing this report. They each strongly endorse the overall spirit of its findings and recommendations, though they do not all necessarily agree with every observation presented herein. The former commissioners participated in their personal, not professional, capacities and the views expressed within the report do not reflect the official policy or position of any U.S. government entity or government-sanctioned body.*

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## I. FOREWORD



By General Gordon R. Sullivan, USA (Retired)

The National Guard and Reserves remain an indispensable force for defending the American homeland and protecting U.S. security interests around the world. Civilian Guardsmen and Reservists possess specialized skills that augment their military capabilities, rendering them a cost-effective and highly talented force well suited for operations that the U.S. military will likely perform over the next 20 years.

Though the U.S. government has strengthened its support for the Guard and Reserves since the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves released its final report in 2008, America still has not made the changes required to ensure that the Guard and Reserves can maximize their contributions to U.S. national security. It is time for the U.S. government to accelerate the transformation of the Guard and Reserves into the type of ready, capable and available operational force that will prove essential to protecting the United States at home and abroad throughout the 21st century. To help advance reform efforts, this report identifies and offers recommendations in five thematic areas where further progress is most urgently needed: roles and missions (including homeland response and civil support), readiness, cost, education and the “continuum of service” concept of flexible personnel management.

The Guard and Reserves are at a crossroads. Down one path lies continued transformation into a 21st-century operational force and progress on the planning, budgetary and management reforms still required to make that aspiration a reality. Down the other path lies regression to a Cold War-style strategic force meant only to be used as a last resort in the event of major war.

In past eras of fiscal restraint, Pentagon officials reduced the U.S. military’s operational reliance on the Guard and Reserves and cut their budgets, in part due to the inherent tension between full-time active duty and reserve personnel. Such reflexive

underutilization and downsizing today would squander the immense experience gained recently by the Guard and Reserves during their missions in Afghanistan, Iraq and the U.S. homeland. It would also forego the differentiated capabilities possessed by the Guard and Reserves that are uniquely suited for such vital missions as conducting post-conflict stabilization operations, building partner security capacity both at home and abroad, ensuring access to space and cyber domains, and providing homeland response and civil support to federal, state and local agencies in the wake of a catastrophic domestic incident.

Now is an opportune time for the U.S. government to bridge the cultural, bureaucratic and budgetary gulf that still divides full-time active duty and reserve personnel. After a decade of war in which active duty and reserve troops served side-by-side, the sweat of shared sacrifice should wash away lingering rivalries, particularly among the younger generation of service members. Today, Congress and the Department of Defense (DOD) should work together to strengthen the professional bond between full-time active duty and reserve personnel in order to build a more seamlessly integrated total force better prepared to meet the security challenges of the 21st century.

*General Gordon R. Sullivan, USA (Ret.) is the president and chief operating officer of the Association of the United States Army. He served as chief of staff of the Army from 1991 to 1995.*

## II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

By John Nagl and Travis Sharp

Though the United States required more and more from its National Guard and Reserves after the Sept. 11 attacks, the U.S. government initially failed to recognize the fundamental changes needed to support Guardsmen and Reservists as they deployed repeatedly abroad and protected the homeland. Then, as use of the Guard and Reserves in Afghanistan and Iraq peaked in 2005, Congress created the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves and directed it to evaluate immediate wartime needs as well as enduring U.S. national security interests.

Between 2006 and 2008, the commission produced three reports that collectively presented the most comprehensive review of Guard and Reserves policy in the nation's history. The commission's final January 2008 report, featuring six major conclusions and 95 recommendations, concluded that the U.S. government had "no reasonable alternative" but to rely increasingly on the Guard and Reserves as an operational force that could participate routinely in ongoing military missions at home and abroad.<sup>1</sup> It urged the U.S. government to train, equip and manage the Guard and Reserves in a manner commensurate with their invaluable role in protecting the nation.

Two years later, how much progress has the U.S. government made toward implementing the commission's recommendations? To answer this critical question, the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) partnered with the former commissioners to evaluate continuing challenges and to propose potential solutions. In June 2010, CNAS and the former commissioners convened off-the-record sessions to hear from current and former DOD and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officials, senior military officers and congressional staffers. Additionally, seven nongovernmental policy experts presented independent assessments of progress on the commission's six major conclusions. CNAS and the former commissioners also conducted a thorough literature review, studied

public statements and congressional testimony, and met with additional stakeholders in the House of Representatives, Senate, DOD, DHS and U.S. Northern Command.

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*The U.S. government still is not investing sufficiently in the policies, laws and budgets required to enable the Guard and Reserves to fulfill their critical operational role in U.S. national security.*

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On balance, the U.S. government has come a long way in developing a ready, capable and available operational Guard and Reserves. Policymakers deserve praise for their improvements during both the Bush and Obama administrations. DOD in particular has demonstrated a real commitment to reforming its policies in the ways prescribed by the commission. The Pentagon embraced the vast majority of the commission's recommendations (105 of 118 from all three reports) and revised its policies and doctrine accordingly.<sup>2</sup> In October 2008, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates issued Directive 1200.17, which codified as official DOD policy that the Guard and Reserves "provide operational capabilities and strategic depth to meet U.S. defense requirements across the full spectrum of conflict."<sup>3</sup> Through the support of Congress, readiness in training, equipment and medical and dental health improved, leaving service members better prepared for the grueling challenges of war. DOD and Congress are seeking more flexible

options for Professional Military Education (PME), a vital reform that will help break down cultural barriers between full-time active duty and reserve personnel and create a more adaptive, cohesive and effective fighting force.

Despite Gates' assurance that the recommendations of the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves "continue to be a high priority for the Department [of Defense]," the stress of two simultaneous wars and bureaucratic inertia are combining to slow further progress toward achieving the vision laid out both by the commission and Directive 1200.17.<sup>4</sup> Lack of progress since 2008 in the critical areas listed below demonstrates that the U.S. government still is not investing sufficiently in the policies, laws and budgets required to enable the Guard and Reserves to fulfill their critical operational role in U.S. national security.

**The U.S. government must further strengthen its weapon of mass destruction (WMD) response and consequence-management capabilities.** Since 2008, the United States enhanced its ability to contain fallout and save lives in the event of a catastrophic disaster on U.S. soil. Nevertheless, DHS has not provided DOD with appropriate WMD response requirements, and poor planning, inadequate resources and interagency turf battles still hinder the ability of the Guard and Reserves to maximize their preparedness and effectiveness as a crisis-response force.

**The operational functions of the Guard and Reserves continue to be financed through the "Overseas Contingency Operations" budget account that funds the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.** Since this "supplemental" account will vanish as U.S. military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq wind down, the operational functions of the Guard and Reserves – which will prove essential in future missions requiring specialized and high-tech skills – are at risk of disappearing along with it, particularly if overall defense spending tapers off

as expected. DOD should fully fund the operational Guard and Reserves through the “base” budget, not the supplemental account, in order to make them a fully institutionalized element of America’s strategy to overcome the security threats of the future.

**Persistent equipment shortfalls continue to erode the readiness of the Guard and Reserves.** The Air National Guard, Marine Corps Reserve, Army National Guard and Army Reserve all lacked at least 25 percent of their required equipment as of October 2009. When Guardsmen and Reservists do not possess and train on the modernized equipment they will use during deployments, pre-mobilization readiness declines, “boots on ground” time in theater decreases, morale plummets and the flexibility to reassign units from one mission to another disappears.

**Physical, psychological, emotional and familial wounds continue to run deep for many service members.** In a reversal from previous years, Army Guardsmen and Reservists through July 2010 committed suicide more frequently this year than their active duty counterparts. Civilian Guardsmen and Reservists also continue to face a challenging job market, which adds additional stress and uncertainty to the pressure of continuing deployments. Since the U.S. military is only as strong as the people wearing the uniforms – and the families, friends and employers supporting them – these are indeed disturbing signs that demand immediate attention.

**The U.S. government has made little progress implementing the “continuum of service” concept of flexible 21st-century personnel management.** DOD still lacks a comprehensive personnel management strategy. Moreover, the services have recommended few changes in their promotion policies, and excessive duty statuses governing Guard and Reserve personnel (e.g. mobilization authority under U.S. code, voluntary vs. involuntary commitment, active vs. inactive duty) continue to disrupt successful receipt of pay, benefits and health care by Guardsmen and Reservists.

**Many senior policymakers and active duty officers remain uninformed about the Guard and Reserves.** Compounded by lingering anti-Guard and Reserves bias among some full-time active duty personnel, this lack of awareness damages active-reserve unity by stifling improvements that could result from reformed PME curricula and attendance policies, as well as a strengthened commitment to the continuum of service.

**The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) did not include a legally required assessment of the future roles and missions of the Guard and Reserves.** Because the QDR establishes DOD’s future strategic and budgetary priorities, the omission minimized the relevance of the Guard and Reserves beyond the current conflicts and perpetuated DOD’s historical reluctance to think presciently about their role in U.S. national security strategy. A forthcoming DOD review of the Guard and Reserves should ameliorate the situation, but the Guard and Reserves will nevertheless remain behind the curve in terms of long-range planning initiated by the QDR.

**DOD still lacks an agreed-upon method for comparing the relative costs of full-time active duty and reserve personnel.** This methodological gap leaves DOD at risk of making future force structure decisions based not on cost-benefit analysis, but on the sporadic yet recurring anti-Guard and Reserves cultural bias that motivated previous DOD attempts to reflexively slash the Guard and Reserves when defense budgets decline.<sup>5</sup>

### III. INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the Vietnam War, the United States has considered its reserve component an intrinsic and inseparable part of what is now known as the “total force.” The reserve component refers collectively to seven entities within the armed forces: the Army National Guard, Air National Guard, Army Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Navy Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve and Coast Guard Reserve. Though they primarily provided strategic depth in the event of major war during the Cold War, the National Guard and Reserves entered a new operational era when the Soviet Union collapsed. American military involvement in Iraq, Haiti, Somalia, Bosnia and Kosovo required increased operational deployments by the reserve component. Total Guard and Reserves duty days per year increased by 140 percent between Fiscal Year (FY) 1993 and FY 2001 as fewer full-time active duty forces were available after post-Cold War U.S. military downsizing (see Chart 1, page 22).<sup>6</sup> Experience gained in these operations made the Guard and Reserves a more effective fighting force.

The terrorist attacks of Sept. 11 opened a new era in which America’s need for operational service by its Guard and Reserves deepened dramatically. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, along with intensifying homeland response and post-disaster domestic support missions, required recurring mobilizations and deployments by the Guard and Reserves, which today include 1.1 million service members comprising 43 percent of total U.S. military manpower.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the United States has mobilized more than 770,000 Guardsmen and Reservists since 2001.<sup>8</sup> Through early September 2010, 208 Guardsmen and Reservists have been killed in Afghanistan and 911 have been killed in Iraq, representing nearly one-fifth of total U.S. military fatalities.<sup>9</sup> “We could not have accomplished what we have these past eight years were it not for our Reserve and National Guard forces,” ADM

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*Allowing the Guard and Reserves to regress back to a Cold War-style strategic force meant only to be used as a last resort in the event of major war would be a tremendous mistake that would damage U.S. national security.*

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Michael Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, wrote recently about the reserve component’s service since Sept. 11, 2001.<sup>10</sup>

As this report will demonstrate, allowing the Guard and Reserves to regress back to a Cold War-style strategic force meant only to be used as a last resort in the event of major war would be a tremendous mistake that would damage U.S. national security. In fact, the longer the U.S. government takes to fully transition the Guard and Reserves into an operational force for the future, the more likely it becomes that funding for doing so will vanish as the DOD budget flattens or contracts over the next five years. This potential outcome would leave the United States without the invaluable protection provided by a fully supported Guard and Reserves. To avoid such dangerous vulnerability, the U.S. government should accelerate the necessary transformation of the Guard and Reserves into a 21st-century operational force by making improvements in the five thematic areas outlined by this report: roles and missions (including homeland response and civil support), readiness, cost, education and the continuum of service.

#### IV. ROLES AND MISSIONS: UTILIZING THE CAPABILITIES OF THE GUARD AND RESERVES

The U.S. government will not enact future policies or apportion future resources based solely on the reserve component's wartime contributions over the past decade. Unless policymakers coalesce around a shared vision for the reserve component's role in overcoming the security threats of the 21st century – that is, unless the question of “Why do we need an operational reserve component?” is answered convincingly – momentum toward an operational Guard and Reserves will dissipate. If that happens, the valuable capabilities possessed by Guardsmen and Reservists will disappear as they retire from a U.S. military in which they are underutilized.<sup>11</sup>

As U.S. policymakers assess the future role of the Guard and Reserves, they should consider the approach other countries take toward their own reserve forces. Many powerful nations no longer manage their reserves as strictly strategic assets meant only to be used in the event of major war. Canada, Australia, Japan, Israel and the nations of Western Europe now rely on their reserves as essential operational components within their total military forces.

China, a nation whose military modernization concerns U.S. policymakers, notably incorporates approximately 500,000 to 800,000 reservists directly into its order of battle, requires reserve units to train alongside active duty forces and is devoting more funding and time to reserve training and equipment. In recent years, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) increasingly has recruited civilian reservists who lack prior military service but possess high-tech skills with military applicability. Reservists employed in the chemical industry serve in PLA chemical warfare units, and telecommunications workers serve in units specializing in information warfare and information operations. These highly skilled reservists play a growing role

in China's technology-dependent national security strategy of using sophisticated cyber and electronic attacks to degrade battle networks, forward bases and maritime forces, thereby inhibiting a potential adversary's power projection capabilities.<sup>12</sup>

The 2010 QDR did not provide a comprehensive vision for the reserve component's role in U.S. national security strategy. It stated:

Prevailing in today's wars requires a Reserve Component that can serve in an operational capacity – available, trained, and equipped for predictable routine deployment. Preventing and deterring conflict will likely necessitate the continued use of some elements of the Reserve Component – especially those that possess high-demand skill sets – in an operational capacity well into the future ... The challenges facing the United States today and in the future will require us to employ National Guard and Reserve forces as an operational reserve to fulfill requirements for which they are well-suited in the United States and overseas. For example, the National Guard often serves at the forefront of DoD operations.<sup>13</sup>

On the positive side, the QDR codified the “likely” need for an operational reserve component “well into the future,” including in “preventing and deterring conflict,” one of the QDR's four priority objectives. Inclusion under this objective confirms that the Guard and Reserves will play an operational role in future missions, not just in today's wars. On the negative side, the QDR did not identify which specific roles and missions the Guard and Reserves might fulfill. Instead, it vaguely posited that “some elements” of the reserve component, especially those with “high-demand skill sets,” are needed “to fulfill requirements for which they are well-suited.” But this begs the questions: which elements, which skill sets and which requirements? According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), by specifying neither the reserve component's future roles and missions,

## Creating a Sustainable Operational Reserve

“The nation requires an operational reserve force. However, DOD and Congress have had no serious public discussion or debate on the matter, and have not formally adopted the operational reserve. Steps taken by DOD and Congress have been more reactive than proactive, more timid than bold, and more incremental than systemic. They thus far have not focused on an overarching set of alterations necessary to make the reserve components a ready, rotational force. Congress and DOD have not reformed the laws and policies governing the reserve components in ways that will sustain an operational force.”

- *Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, January 2008*

### SIGNS OF PROGRESS SINCE 2008

- In October 2008, Gates issued Directive 1200.17, which codified as official DOD policy that the Guard and Reserves provide both operational capabilities and strategic depth across the full spectrum of conflict. The directive enshrined DOD’s requirement for an operational reserve component.

- The 2010 QDR described the “likely” need for an operational reserve “well into the future,” including in “preventing and deterring conflict,” one of the QDR’s four priority objectives.

### PROBLEMS THAT REQUIRE FURTHER ACTION

- The U.S. government has not enacted, and the federal bureaucracy has not fully embraced, many of the underlying changes in policy, process and budgeting required to support and sustain an operational reserve component.
- The 2010 QDR did not include a legally required assessment of the reserve component’s roles and missions.

### NEXT STEPS

- In the forthcoming reserve component review currently being prepared by the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs:
  - » DOD should designate the reserve component as a “force of first choice” within missions for which Guardsmen and

Reservists possess “first choice” skill sets, including irregular warfare and post-conflict stabilization operations, building partner security capacity, ensuring access to space and cyber domains, and homeland response and civil support.

» DOD should identify all of the policy, process and budgeting reforms required to enable the Guard and Reserves to successfully perform the roles and missions identified as top priorities by the review. It should also develop an implementation plan to accomplish the required reforms.

- DOD should require Guardsmen and Reservists to register annually with the new online “Civilian Employment Information” database, created by the Defense Manpower Data Center, to help the U.S. military track and utilize the specialized and high-tech skills that are instrumental to success in complex military operations.

nor the corresponding strength, capabilities or equipment needed to perform them, the QDR neglected to directly address one of the 17 reporting items required by law.<sup>14</sup>

To compensate for this omission, the QDR pledged a comprehensive DOD review of both the future of the reserve component and the balance between active and reserve forces. DOD will release the review, currently being led by Gen James

Cartwright, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Dennis McCarthy, assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs, in early 2011. The last governmental study to devote serious thought to this issue was the 2001 QDR-directed Review of Reserve Component Contributions to National Defense published in December 2002. It proposed rebalancing the force mix, reassigning missions and creating more flexible management systems in order to capitalize on the different comparative advantages

of the active and reserve components.<sup>15</sup> The U.S. invasion of Iraq three months later, however, pushed aside the study's fundamental reforms in pursuit of the immediate wartime tasks at hand.

### The Future of Warfare

The 2010 QDR's discussion of future threats and missions offers tremendous insight into the new reserve component review's potential conclusions. The QDR emphasized nontraditional security threats such as failed and failing states, WMD terrorist attacks, hybrid warfare combining high- and low-tech tactics, and the potential disappearance of shared access to the global commons in air, sea, space and cyberspace. The QDR's survey of the international security environment envisioned the U.S. military performing such future missions as:

- Assisting partner nations in developing and acquiring the capabilities and systems required to improve their security capacity.
- Maintaining awareness of global threats and opportunities, including the capabilities, values, intent and decision-making of potential adversaries.
- Supporting U.S. diplomatic and development efforts and strengthening governance.
- Extending a global defense posture composed of forward-stationed forces, prepositioned equipment and facilities, and international agreements.
- Protecting DOD infrastructure in space and cyberspace.
- Building tailored regional deterrence architectures and missile defenses.
- Contributing to homeland response and civil support capabilities.<sup>16</sup>

Many of these complex missions require specialized skills, and one of the strongest arguments in favor of maintaining a strong operational reserve component is the opportunity for the U.S. military to draw upon cutting-edge skills and knowledge from the

civilian world.<sup>17</sup> Reserve component service members' civilian backgrounds and careers provide them with expertise, particularly in specialized and high-tech fields, that is generally difficult to locate, train and retain in the active component.

In an era when warfare is becoming more multifaceted, individuals possessing a wider repertoire of military and nonmilitary abilities will prove invaluable during complex operations involving military, political, economic and technological lines of effort.<sup>18</sup> The Guard and Reserves offer a deep repository of such differentiated abilities. For example, recent RAND Corporation assessments of the Air Force judged that Guardsmen and Reservists employed in high-tech fields such as information technology "can be tapped to provide the most current knowledge, tools, and techniques for network warfare operations."<sup>19</sup> Using Guardsmen and Reservists in this way "could offset additional staffing requirements that may be needed in the active component for these operations."<sup>20</sup>

Senior Pentagon officials have reached similar conclusions. As Gates wrote last year about National Guard agricultural specialists serving in Afghanistan, a country that employs nearly four-fifths of its labor force in agriculture, "More programs like this can be developed and we are working with the Services and their Reserve components to find appropriate force structures that can capitalize on the professional skills of reservists and Guardsmen, while not detracting from the readiness in our conventional formations."<sup>21</sup>

Using the Guard and Reserves as a "force of first choice" in missions for which they are well suited is also cost-effective. While DOD could pay for an active duty infantry soldier to learn the latest police training and tactics so that he or she could advise host nation police forces, it often makes more sense for an Army Guardsman or Reservist with 20 years of experience as a law-enforcement officer to do the job. Likewise, an Air Guardsman with a graduate

degree in European studies could liaise with a fledgling Balkan defense ministry, or a Navy Reservist who works in civilian life as a Google software engineer could fill a critical cyber security billet.

While private-sector contractors increasingly perform such roles for the United States and can sometimes deploy to theater more rapidly than the Guard and Reserves, the contracts governing such arrangements are often inflexible and can require military commanders to issue change orders when making even the smallest alteration in contractors' duties.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, contractors' ostensible speed of deployment advantage over the Guard and Reserves will recede as the U.S. government makes the changes required, particularly in areas such as training and equipment, to fully support the reserve component as an operational force.

Leaving aside difficult but solvable personnel management issues related to the quantity and predictability of matching Guardsmen and Reservists to the appropriate posts, the U.S. military cannot afford to bar the reserve component's cost-effective and differentiated skill sets from continued operational use.

The Guard and Reserves possess capabilities required for the types of operations that the U.S. military is likely to perform over the next 20 years. For instance, the Guard and Reserves are especially qualified for conducting irregular warfare and post-conflict stabilization operations in failed or failing states; building security capacity to enhance the U.S. military's relationship and interoperability with its allies, thereby strengthening coalitions that prevent and deter conflict; and ensuring access to space and cyber networks and blunting attacks against civilian and military information nodes. As noted above, these missions were featured prominently in the 2010 QDR's assessment of future national security priorities. Consider the reserve component's current contributions to these increasingly vital missions:<sup>23</sup>

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*The Guard and Reserves possess capabilities required for the types of operations that the U.S. military is likely to perform over the next 20 years.*

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- The Army Reserve provides the total Army with 87 percent of its civil affairs capacity, more than two-thirds of its expeditionary sustainment commands and nearly half of its military police commands and information operations groups.<sup>24</sup>
- The Air National Guard provides 25 percent of both remotely piloted vehicle sorties and processing, exploitation and dissemination services to the joint force.<sup>25</sup>
- The Air Force Reserve provides the total Air Force with approximately half of its aerial port and strategic airlift ability, not to mention around one-fifth of its theater airlift, intelligence and air operations center capacity.<sup>26</sup>
- Navy Reserve personnel, who have provided over two-thirds of all individual augmentees to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility since Sept. 11, 2001, constitute 53 percent of all Navy Expeditionary Combat Center forces, which support such operations as explosive ordnance disposal, construction and engineering (e.g. SEABEES), port and cargo handling, document and electronic media exploitation, and building partner security capacity.<sup>27</sup>
- The Marine Corps Reserve provides the total Marine Corps with over half of its civil affairs capacity, primarily through the Reservists of the 3rd and 4th Civil Affairs Groups.<sup>28</sup>

## Enhancing DOD's Role in Homeland Response

"The Department of Defense must be fully prepared to protect American lives and property in the homeland. DOD must improve its capabilities and readiness to play a primary role in the response to major catastrophes that incapacitate civilian government over a wide geographic area. This is a responsibility that is equal in priority to its combat responsibilities. As part of DOD, the National Guard and Reserves should play the lead role in supporting the Department of Homeland Security, other federal agencies, and states in addressing these threats of equal or higher priority."

- *Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, January 2008*

### SIGNS OF PROGRESS SINCE 2008

- DOD enhanced its ability to contain fallout and save lives in the event of a catastrophic disaster on U.S. soil by restructuring its WMD response forces.
- Obama established the Council of Governors, one of the commission's core recommendations, by executive order in January 2010. The council has met twice and is fulfilling its envisioned role as a forum to address issues associated with defense support to civil authorities.
- The White House last year merged the staffs of the Homeland Security Council and National Security Council into a single, unified National Security Staff.
- U.S. Pacific Command, U.S. Northern Command and the National Guard Bureau published various "concept of operations"

plans for supporting civil authorities. The plans are reviewed and approved annually by the secretary of defense.

### PROBLEMS THAT REQUIRE FURTHER ACTION

- The U.S. government needs to further strengthen its WMD response and consequence-management capabilities.
- DHS has not provided DOD with its requirements for crisis-response forces.
- The specific roles and responsibilities of the Guard and Reserves remain unclear to many of DOD's federal and state agency partners.
- Outdated DOD policies and guidance, which are inconsistent and misaligned for civil support missions, complicate efforts to identify capability gaps and preposition equipment and supplies.
- On the command and control of mobilized Guardsmen and Reservists, the "Who's in charge?" debate between federal and state officials has not gone away. Gaps in the law continue to limit the nation's ability to use its full civil support capabilities.

### NEXT STEPS

- DOD and Congress should ensure that a portion of the National Guard is dedicated to and fully funded for homeland response activities, particularly WMD response and consequence management. This funding should come in addition to the Guard's current budget and should not be taken away from the Guard's non-WMD response activities.

- DHS should produce civil support requirements and provide them to DOD, which should then validate and fund them as warranted.
- DOD should ensure that forces required to respond to a catastrophic incident in the homeland are manned, trained and equipped to the highest level of readiness.
- DOD should create mechanisms to promote greater organizational synergy between the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Americas' Security Affairs.
- DOD and DHS should assign a National Guard general officer to the DHS Military Advisor's Office to advise the DHS secretary on homeland response and civil support and to ensure that the Guard is fully integrated into DHS planning and operations.
- DOD should continue, in coordination with the Council of Governors, to develop protocols allowing governors to direct the activities of federal forces engaged in disaster response in their states.
- Congress should amend mobilization statutes to provide military service secretaries with the authority to mobilize federal reserve component forces for a limited time in response to imminent natural or manmade disasters.
- Congress should codify DOD's responsibility for homeland response and civil support activities as soon as possible.

- The National Guard State Partnership Program helps build security capacity in 62 nations allied with the United States throughout Central and South America, Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia.<sup>29</sup>

Civilian agencies should undertake some of these missions with the U.S. military acting in a supporting role. Regardless of which agency leads, however, civilian Guardsmen and Reservists offer differentiated capabilities and perspectives that active duty military personnel cannot always provide. As James Jones, national security advisor to President Barack Obama, said in 2006, “The unique expertise the Guard and Reserve units bring to Civil Affairs, Information Ops, and PsyOps, and many other aspects of our high-demand, low-density type capabilities that are in such precious supply, are absolutely critical to ... the execution of our future strategy.”<sup>30</sup>

### Homeland Response and Civil Support

As a force “forward deployed” in communities throughout the United States, the Guard and Reserves are uniquely suited to perform DOD’s homeland response and civil support mission, which became exponentially more important after Sept. 11. Homeland response and civil support involves providing defense capabilities to federal, state and local civilian agencies in the wake of a disaster. This mission is akin to building partner security capacity with international allies, one of the Pentagon’s top priorities, except that it takes place with domestic partners.<sup>31</sup>

From multiple attempted terrorist bombings to tension along the southwest border to the Gulf oil spill (for which 17,500 Guardsmen were authorized for deployment), domestic demand for the Guard and Reserves is extraordinarily high and will remain so for the foreseeable future.<sup>32</sup>

The Reserves and especially the National Guard, enshrined as both a federal and state force by the U.S. Constitution, continue to play the central and iconic role in DOD’s efforts to defend U.S. sovereign territory.<sup>33</sup> While protecting the lives and property

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of Americans is a shared responsibility among state and local governments, DHS, DOD and other federal agencies, the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves recognized that in the event of a catastrophic domestic incident, “DOD will be expected to respond rapidly and massively.”<sup>34</sup>

The Guard and Reserves have enhanced their ability since 2008 to contain fallout and save lives in the event of a catastrophic incident. Following an analysis performed as part of the 2010 QDR, Gates revamped DOD’s WMD response forces. By the end of FY 2012, DOD plans to stand up one governor-directed Homeland Response Force (HRF) comprised of 570 Guard personnel in each of the 10 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regions.<sup>35</sup> The HRFs will train other civilian and military responders in their regions and form a core that other HRFs can augment and reinforce during a disaster. Due to their strategic prepositioning, the HRFs will also be able to respond more quickly than the 48- to 96-hour response time under the previous force structure.

Despite this improvement, the U.S. government needs to further strengthen its WMD response and consequence-management capabilities given the lingering threat of a WMD incident on American soil. The demands of a high-consequence event require even more highly trained and well-equipped forces than DOD has assigned under the revamped force structure. The 2010 Nuclear Posture Review affirmed the urgent need for these preparations when it judged that al Qaeda and its extremist allies would presumably use nuclear weapons against the United States if they managed to obtain them.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, a January 2010 report card by the Commission on the Prevention of WMD Proliferation and Terrorism concluded that unless government oversight improves and disaster response forces are strengthened, “the United States will remain woefully underprepared to respond to the growing WMD threat.”<sup>37</sup>

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DHS in particular should bolster its responsibility and preparation for crisis preparedness. Though the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves recommended that DHS, as the lead federal agency, provide DOD with its requirements for crisis-response forces, DHS still has not generated such requirements. The 2010 Quadrennial

Homeland Security Review stated that “Federal departments and agencies should jointly conduct planning and analysis for homeland security and related defense activities.”<sup>38</sup> Because very little happens at DOD without validated requirements, however, this doctrinal stance did not do enough to advance unified efforts to protect the homeland.

While senior U.S. government officials have demonstrated greater awareness since 2008 that homeland security is an urgent priority that must be managed holistically, across all government agencies, the Pentagon still needs to solidify its commitment to the homeland response and civil support mission. On the positive side, the White House last year merged the staffs of the Homeland Security Council and National Security Council into a unified National Security Staff, reinforcing a commitment to “whole of government” approaches and demonstrating that homeland security equals national security. On the negative side, the 2010 QDR stated only that “the role of the Department of Defense in defending the nation against direct attack and in providing support to civil authorities, potentially in response to a very significant or even catastrophic event, has steadily gained prominence.”<sup>39</sup> This formulation avoided explicitly recognizing that the Pentagon has an obligation to perform this mission. The lack of meaningful legislative directives, which continue to fall prey to congressional committees’ jurisdictional battles, undoubtedly contributed to the QDR’s formulation. Congress should codify DOD’s responsibility for homeland response and civil support activities as soon as possible.

Since 2008, U.S. Northern Command has solidified its position as the lead planning entity in DOD’s Title 10 homeland response activities. Northern Command took steps to tighten its coordination with interagency partners and to improve its information-sharing processes with state and local officials. ADM James Winnefeld, who recently took over at Northern Command, announced a set

of proposals including a pilot program to prepare National Guard commanders, after undergoing pre-crisis training and education, to serve simultaneously in a federal role during homeland response and civil support emergencies. This dual status should help resolve many existing legal problems and ensure closer coordination between active and reserve component forces during domestic emergencies. Northern Command also has better incorporated Guard and Reserves personnel and perspectives into its organizational fabric by filling over 100 billets with individuals possessing reserve component qualifications and credentials.<sup>40</sup> This approach to leader development for reserve component general and flag officers will prove important to Northern Command's long-term success. Overall, Winnefeld has cultivated strong working relationships with such key stakeholders as the Council of Governors, the National Guard Bureau and the state adjutant generals.

Nonetheless, DOD's specific homeland roles and responsibilities remain unclear to many of the Pentagon's federal and state agency partners, especially during scenarios demanding the fully integrated commitment of civilian and military resources. In March 2010, the GAO reported that key DOD planning documents on interagency coordination for homeland response and civil support missions are "outdated, not integrated, or not comprehensive."<sup>41</sup> GAO found that outdated DOD policies and guidance, which are inconsistent and misaligned for civil support missions, complicate efforts to identify capability gaps and preposition equipment and supplies.<sup>42</sup> Many DOD officials mistakenly believe that departmental policy prevents the reserve component from procuring or maintaining supplies, materiel or equipment exclusively devoted to the civil support mission. In reality, however, the policy merely requires the secretary of defense to authorize these preparations beforehand.<sup>43</sup> Such misunderstandings clearly hinder the reserve component's

ability to maximize its preparedness and effectiveness as a crisis-response force.

After the tragic domestic disasters of the past decade, the American public now holds a "zero tolerance" attitude toward delayed or mismanaged disaster response by the federal government. As a result, the Guard and Reserves today must be trained, equipped and organized to respond rapidly and flawlessly. To advance these objectives, the U.S. government urgently needs to take the following actions to protect the homeland:

- As the QDR Independent Review Panel recently concluded, DOD should ensure that a portion of the Guard and Reserves is dedicated to and fully funded for homeland response activities.<sup>44</sup> This funding should come in addition to the Guard's current budget and should not be taken away from the Guard's non-WMD response activities.
- The secretary of DHS should produce civil support requirements and provide them to the secretary of defense, who should then validate and fund them as warranted. The commander of Northern Command should expedite the definition of these civil support requirements in coordination with DHS.
- The secretary of defense should ensure that forces required to respond to a catastrophic attack on the homeland are manned, trained and equipped to the highest level of readiness.
- On the contentious issue of command and control, DOD leaders should continue, in coordination with the Council of Governors, to develop protocols allowing governors to direct federal forces engaged in disaster response in their states. DOD leaders should avoid getting dragged into unproductive jurisdictional debates and bureaucratic turf battles. Frequent training and exercises can provide confidence that planning for "unity of effort" is in fact progressing as intended.

## Developing a Ready, Capable and Available Operational Reserve

"The reserve components have responded to the call for service. Despite shortages in equipment, training, and personnel they have once again proven their essential contribution to meeting national security requirements in a time of need. To sustain their service for the duration of the global war on terror will require maintaining the force at a new standard of readiness. Current policies cannot accomplish this task. A ready, capable, and accessible operational reserve will require an enduring commitment to invest in the readiness of the reserve components. This commitment will necessitate service integration, additional resources, and new constructs for employing the reserve components and for assessing readiness."

- *Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, January 2008*

### SIGNS OF PROGRESS SINCE 2008

- Many reserve component units reduced their need for post-mobilization training on basic combat skills and fitness, leaving more time for theater-specific training and actual deployments.

- Reserve component units are now incorporated into military force generation models.
- Readiness improved in certain areas, such as Army National Guard training and equipment preparedness, due to steadily increasing budgetary investment.

### PROBLEMS THAT REQUIRE FURTHER ACTION

- The reserve component's operational functions are financed through the "Overseas Contingency Operations" budget account, which will vanish as U.S. military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq wind down.
- The Guard and Reserves continue to suffer from equipment shortages.
- Pentagon documents continue to display conflicting figures for reserve component equipment expenditures and deliveries.
- Full-time support of the reserve component is still not adequate to maintain appropriate readiness and to sustain the active-reserve force mix.

### NEXT STEPS

- DOD and Congress should transfer as many reserve component

operational functions as possible from the FY 2013 Overseas Contingency Operations budget to the FY 2013 DOD base budget once the reserve component review is completed next year.

- DOD and Congress should eliminate equipment shortages in the Guard and Reserves in order to ensure that they become a ready, capable and available operational force.
- DOD should publicly release the new National Guard and Reserves equipment delivery reports prepared for Congress in order to ensure that consistent data are available in the political, media and bureaucratic battles that determine budget outcomes.
- Congress should direct the GAO to prepare studies in the mold of GAO's September 2009 report (GAO-09-898, *Army Needs to Finalize an Implementation Plan and Funding Strategy for Sustaining an Operational Reserve Force*) that analyze the challenges facing the Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force as the Guard and Reserves become fully operational.

- Current law prevents the federal government from mobilizing Guardsmen and Reservists when a massive hurricane is bearing down on a major American city – even if reserve component forces are the nearest and most capable. This arrangement defies logic and unnecessarily endangers American lives. To correct the

problem, Congress should amend mobilization statutes to provide military service secretaries with the authority to mobilize federal reserve components for a limited time in response to imminent natural or manmade disasters.

## V. READINESS: PREPARING THE GUARD AND RESERVES FOR TOMORROW'S CHALLENGES

In contrast to a strictly strategic reserve component, an operational Guard and Reserves must be trained and equipped to a higher standard of readiness in order to serve routinely in such challenging missions as conducting post-conflict stabilization operations, building partner security capacity, ensuring access to space and cyber domains, and responding after crippling domestic disasters. Proper preparation for these demanding activities requires, as the final report of the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves put it, “an enduring commitment to invest in the readiness of the reserve components.”<sup>45</sup>

Today, however, Pentagon planners hesitate to make enduring investments at a time when the future defense budget is expected to grow slowly (if at all) and is beset internally by rising personnel, operations and maintenance, and procurement costs, as well as externally by ballooning federal non-defense mandatory spending on Social Security and Medicare.<sup>46</sup> To choose wisely among force structure options, as opposed to reflexively slashing the Guard and Reserves if and when defense budgets decline, the Pentagon must understand the status and future readiness requirements of the operational reserve component, which offers a cost-effective option for managing many national security challenges.

Since 2001, the Guard and Reserves secured levels of funding consistent with their wartime importance and the growing defense budget. In inflation-adjusted dollars, reserve component funding for personnel increased by nearly 50 percent, operations and maintenance by 33 percent, and procurement by 157 percent between FY 2001 and FY 2010.<sup>47</sup> During the same period, each individual reserve component’s share of its respective service budget remained relatively stable and

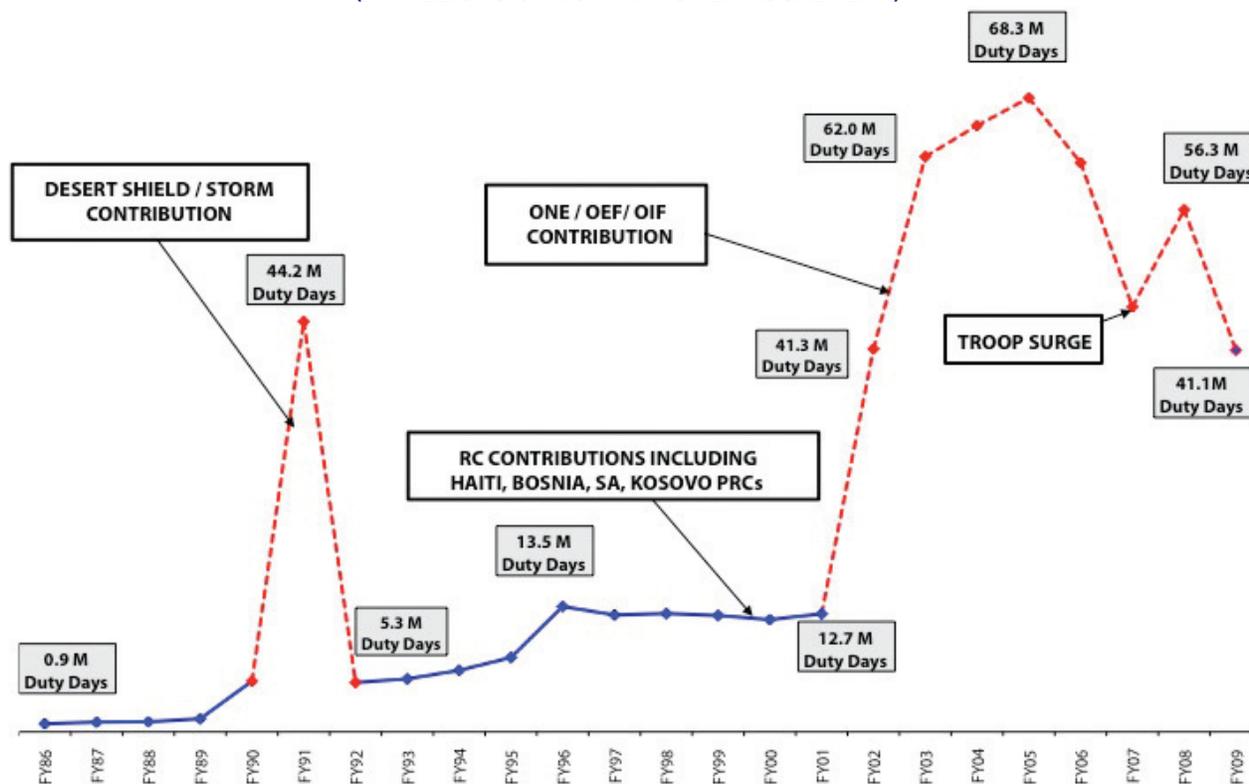
rarely fluctuated from year to year by more than 2 percent. As an example, the Navy Reserve received approximately the same percentage (plus or minus 2 percent) of the total Navy budget each year even as the overall defense budget increased.

Readiness improved in certain areas, such as Army National Guard training and equipment preparedness, due to this steadily increasing investment. Many Guard and Reserves units reduced their need for post-mobilization training on basic combat skills and fitness, leaving more time for theater-specific training and actual deployments.<sup>48</sup> The Army National Guard possesses much more of its critical dual-use equipment, used for both warfighting and domestic missions, on hand today than it did in years past. Indeed, equipment availability increased by nearly 30 percent since 2006.<sup>49</sup>

Anecdotal evidence suggests that morale has improved because Guard units are better equipped. “Since I joined the Guard (in 1981), the first 10 years I was in Vietnam-era Jeeps, World War II trucks,” said COL Mark Campsey, commander of the Texas Army National Guard’s 72nd Infantry Brigade. “Now I don’t have a single set of wheels or weapon that isn’t new within the last 18 months.”<sup>50</sup> Of course, such advancements do not come cheap. Between FY 2006 and FY 2009, the Army National Guard was allocated approximately 25.1 billion dollars for new procurement and recapitalization. It will need an additional 16.9 billion dollars between FY 2010 and FY 2015 for continued modernization.<sup>51</sup>

Other facets of readiness remain inadequate and threaten to stifle the reserve component’s effectiveness and stability as a fighting force. First, senior reserve component officers still struggle to influence decisions about readiness that directly affect them. National Guard Bureau Chief Gen Craig McKinley was not consulted – despite expecting greater access to top decision-makers after

CHART 1: RESERVE COMPONENT CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE TOTAL FORCE  
(IN MILLIONS OF DUTY DAYS PER FISCAL YEAR)



Source: DOD

receiving his fourth star – when DOD decided this year to retire active component C-130 aircraft stationed in Little Rock and transfer Air National Guard aircraft there as replacements.<sup>52</sup> Second, while DOD has strengthened its oversight of Guard and Reserves equipment funding and distribution, the convoluted process and conflicting data still detract from accurately assessing readiness.<sup>53</sup> This inconsistency impedes policymakers from verifying that the Guard and Reserves receive what they were promised and undermines the reserve component’s credibility in the political, media and bureaucratic battles that determine budget outcomes.

While all of the reserve components continue to suffer from equipment shortages, the ground forces and the Air National Guard suffer

disproportionately. “The reality is current operations are consuming Army Reserve readiness as fast as we can build it,” the 2010 Army Reserve Posture Statement noted.<sup>54</sup> The Army Reserve needs approximately 11 billion dollars through FY 2016 for procurement because only 65 percent of its equipment on hand is modernized, a shortfall that erodes pre-mobilization readiness.<sup>55</sup> Air National Guard aircraft are on average 29 years old, and 80 percent of the Air Force’s air sovereignty alert force for homeland defense (a mission almost exclusively assigned to the Air National Guard) will reach the end of its service life in seven years.<sup>56</sup> This impending “age out” is creating anxiety as existing Air National Guard F-16 aircraft units wonder whether they will receive F-35 aircraft, newer F-16s or be

**TABLE 1: RESERVE EQUIPMENT SHORTAGES AT BEGINNING OF FISCAL YEAR 2010  
(IN MILLIONS OF DOLLARS)**

RESERVE COMPONENT	REQUIREMENTS (equipment value)	ON HAND (equipment value)	SHORTAGE OF REQUIREMENTS	SHORTAGE OF REQUIREMENTS
<b>Air National Guard</b>	\$1,307	\$842	\$465	36%
<b>Army National Guard</b>	\$109,355	\$79,090	\$30,265	28%
<b>Air Force Reserve</b>	\$23,206	\$22,433	\$773	3%
<b>Marine Corps Reserve</b>	\$6,686	\$4,007	\$2,679	40%
<b>Navy Reserve</b>	\$10,007	\$9,476	\$531	5%
<b>Army Reserve</b>	\$27,659	\$17,173	\$10,486	38%

Source: Figures are from DOD's FY 2011 National Guard and Reserve Equipment Report.

Notes: Totals may not add due to rounding. Requirements, on hand and shortage entries are total equipment value, excluding substitutes.

forced to transition into other missions such as unmanned aircraft systems, intelligence or cyber operations.<sup>57</sup>

Though senior Pentagon officials recognize the need to fully fund the equipment needs of the reserve component given its enhanced role as an operational force, persistent equipment shortfalls continue to erode the reserve component's readiness. "Since the Guard was considered in the past a strategic reserve, it was a lower priority for funding. That has changed," Gates observed in 2008.<sup>58</sup> "Today, the standard is that the Guard and Reserves receive the same equipment as the

active force," he later added.<sup>59</sup> Despite this public commitment, however, the Air National Guard, Marine Corps Reserve, Army National Guard and Army Reserve all lacked at least 25 percent of their required equipment at the beginning of FY 2010 (see Table 1).<sup>60</sup>

When Guardsmen and Reservists do not possess and train on the modernized equipment they will use during deployments, pre-mobilization readiness declines, "boots on ground" time in theater decreases, morale plummets and the flexibility to reassign units from one mission to another disappears. Such conditions are unacceptable in the

### Supporting Service Members, Families and Employers

“To maintain an operational reserve force over the long term, DOD must appropriately support not only the service members themselves but also the two major influencers of members’ decisions to remain in the military – their families and employers. Significant improvements in current programs in all three areas are essential to sustain an operational reserve force both today and in the future.”

- *Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, January 2008*

#### SIGNS OF PROGRESS SINCE 2008

- Guard and Reserves units now receive a 30-day alert for mobilization.
- DOD extended early TRICARE access to up to 180 days prior to activation.

- DOD established the Office for Reintegration Programs, commonly known as the “Yellow Ribbon Program Office,” to help Guardsmen and Reservists and their families find local support and resources before, during and after deployments.

#### PROBLEMS THAT REQUIRE FURTHER ACTION

- The suicide rate continues to increase for Guardsmen and Reservists returning to civilian life.
- Civilian Guardsmen and Reservists continue to face a challenging job market, which adds additional stress and uncertainty to the pressure of continuing deployments.
- DOD has not developed or implemented the necessary monitoring systems for post-deployment health assessments.

#### NEXT STEPS

- Congress should authorize a single “Basic Allowance for Housing” rate, legislate mechanisms that improve cooperation between DOD and the Department of Veterans Affairs and mandate compliance with post-deployment health reassessments.
- DOD and Congress should vigorously oversee the Wounded Warrior Act and Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program to ensure that they provide appropriate support.
- DOD and Congress should monitor the effects of health care reform on military beneficiaries because the requirement to ensure coverage could influence participation rates in TRICARE Reserve Select by Guardsmen and Reservists who are currently uninsured.

active component and, according to Gates’ “same equipment” standard, are therefore unacceptable in the reserve component. DOD and Congress should eliminate equipment shortages in the Guard and Reserves as soon as possible in order to help the reserve component meet the readiness standards consistent with a fully operational force.

### Service Members, Families and Employers

While training and equipment are integral to military readiness, support programs for Guardsmen and Reservists, their families and employers are vital to achieving personnel readiness and retaining experienced service members.<sup>61</sup> The U.S. government has improved personnel readiness since the original commission report in 2008. For example, Individual Medical Readiness improved between

2008 and 2009, particularly on dental health and immunizations for Army and Marine Corps reserve component service members.<sup>62</sup> Guardsmen and Reservists also now receive more notice prior to mobilizations, allowing them to prepare personally and professionally for deployments.<sup>63</sup>

After a decade of continuous war, however, the physical, psychological, emotional and familial wounds continue to run deep for many service members. Alarming, the suicide rate continues to increase for Guardsmen and Reservists returning to civilian life. In a reversal from previous years, Army Guardsmen and Reservists through July 2010 committed suicide more frequently this year than their active duty counterparts (total Army manpower is roughly divided in half

between the active and reserve components).<sup>64</sup> This trend is partially explained by the fact that service members not on active duty are much harder to monitor for mental health problems and suicidal tendencies.

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*In a reversal from previous years, Army Guardsmen and Reservists through July 2010 committed suicide more frequently this year than their active duty counterparts.*

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Unlike their active duty counterparts, civilian Guardsmen and Reservists continue to face a challenging job market, which adds additional stress and uncertainty to the pressure of continuing deployments. Young veterans are more likely to be unemployed than non-veterans of the same age, and requests by Army Guardsmen and Reservists for support to help mitigate conflicts arising from their military commitments increased by 62 percent between FY 2006 and FY 2009.<sup>65</sup> Since the U.S. military is only as strong as the people wearing the uniforms – and the families, friends and employers supporting them – these are indeed disturbing signs that demand immediate attention.

The U.S. government should take several steps to promote personnel readiness and ensure Guardsmen and Reservists get the support they deserve. First, Congress should authorize a single “Basic Allowance for Housing” rate, encourage collaboration between DOD and the Department

of Veterans Affairs and mandate compliance with post-deployment health reassessments. Second, DOD and Congress must recognize that the Wounded Warrior Act and Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program, while helping service members and their families tremendously, are still evolving and require oversight to guarantee the level of support intended. Finally, DOD and Congress must monitor the effects of health care reform on military beneficiaries. The requirement to ensure coverage could influence participation rates in TRICARE Reserve Select by Guardsmen and Reservists who are currently uninsured. While the long-term impact on medical readiness may be positive, policymakers should watch the situation closely.

## VI. COST: MAKING INFORMED DECISIONS ABOUT THE GUARD AND RESERVES

Despite their wartime sacrifices, the Guard and Reserves now face an existential threat to their continued transformation into a fully supported operational force: funding. The reserve component's operational functions continue to be financed through the "Overseas Contingency Operations" budget account. Since this "supplemental" account will vanish as U.S. military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq wind down, the reserve component's operational functions – which will prove essential in future missions requiring specialized and high-tech skills – are at risk of disappearing along with it. As Chief of Army Reserve LTG Jack Stultz told Congress, "If we operational[ize] the Reserve – and in my opinion, we don't have a choice – then we've got to put those dollars required for training, for equipping, all that, into the base budget."<sup>66</sup> A 2008 report estimated that it will cost approximately 24 billion dollars over the next six years to transition the Army Reserve and Army National Guard, the reserve components least integrated with their parent service, to a properly supported operational role. (Much of the funding would go to these reserve components anyway, i.e. this is not all additional funding on top of their existing budgets).<sup>67</sup>

The conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq have demonstrated repeatedly that the Pentagon still resists institutionalizing needed battlefield capabilities if doing so runs counter to bureaucratic business as usual.<sup>68</sup> Continuing this perilous deficiency, the process of fully institutionalizing Guard and Reserves operational costs is progressing only haltingly, especially within the Army. A September 2009 GAO report concluded that while the Army plans to request billions of dollars between FY 2012 and FY 2017 to transform its reserve components into an operational force, "the Army has not established firm readiness requirements

for an operational reserve component or fully incorporated the resources needed to support the operational role into its budget and projected spending plan."<sup>69</sup> According to GAO, the Army also lacks a concrete plan that outlines requirements and monitors progress on transitioning to an operational Guard and Reserves. The lack of such evaluable metrics means that "DOD decision makers and Congress will not be in a sound position to determine the total costs to complete the transition and decide how to best allocate future funding," GAO concluded.<sup>70</sup> The Army is not the only service with underdeveloped plans, and such uncertainty does not bode well for stable, predictable funding of an operational reserve component in DOD's future base budgets.

Behind these budgetary difficulties lies the critical challenge of comparing the relative cost of the active and reserve components. Without a precise understanding of the cost difference between the components, DOD risks making future force structure decisions based not on cost-benefit analysis, but on sporadic yet recurring anti-reserve cultural bias that motivated previous DOD attempts to reflexively slash the Guard and Reserves when defense budgets decline.

Analysts have spilt much ink trying to calculate how much Guardsmen and Reservists cost compared to their active duty counterparts.<sup>71</sup> The reserve component's lower operational and training tempo, reduced part-time pay and benefits, and smaller infrastructure requirements (such as for family housing) help keep its costs down. As the 2010 QDR concluded, effective use of the Guard and Reserves "will lower overall personnel and operating costs, better ensure the right mix and availability of equipment, provide more efficient and effective use of defense assets, and contribute to the sustainability of both the Active and Reserve components."<sup>72</sup> This finding corroborated the work done previously by the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, which conducted

a thorough examination and concluded that an active component service member costs approximately four times more than a reserve component service member when he or she is not activated.<sup>73</sup>

As discussed above, however, maintaining the readiness of today's operational reserve component costs significantly more than the strictly strategic force of the past. Pentagon officials confirm that there is still no generally accepted approach to determining the relative cost of the Guard and Reserves compared to active duty personnel. Reserve component leaders are still forced to answer questions regularly about the cost-effectiveness of the Guard and Reserves despite the fact that senior DOD leaders and numerous studies have stated repeatedly that the reserve component offers a significant return on investment given the unique abilities it brings to the total force.

To resolve lingering uncertainty about current reserve component costs and to improve decision making about force structure tradeoffs, the forthcoming DOD review of the future of the reserve component intends to establish a baseline costing methodology and to identify instances where such a baseline is not feasible. If the baseline permits each service to employ its own unique cost methodology, however, senior leaders will not be presented with "apples to apples" cost comparisons that allow them to weigh tradeoffs across the joint force. Furthermore, if the baseline concludes that the Guard and Reserves do in fact offer a cost-effective force structure option, but the conclusion is perceived as emanating from the reserve component community – which could happen given that the assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs is co-chairing the review – stakeholders opposed to an increased role for the Guard and Reserves may simply disregard the findings.

**In light of these realities, DOD or Congress should obtain an independent and comprehensive analysis that compares the cost and value of**

**the active and reserve components using a variety of up-to-date assumptions. At minimum the analysis should review, and thereby add greater legitimacy to, the methodology being developed in DOD's forthcoming reserve component study.**

GAO or the Congressional Budget Office are excellent organizations to conduct such an analysis because of their impartiality and rigor. Both DOD's methodology and the independent analysis should seek to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Minimize use of methodologies tailor-made for individual services or components that can obscure "apples to apples" cost comparisons across the joint force.
- Assess the cost of the Guard and Reserves relative to the readiness levels they must sustain for deployment and the rotational policies under which they are called up for duty in order to paint a realistic picture of the overall cost of an operational Guard and Reserves.
- Determine the cost of the reserve component in both its operational and strategic roles, along with lifetime career costs and infrastructure support, in order to capture both the value and burden of the Guard and Reserves to the American taxpayer.
- Gauge the cost when reserve component capabilities are used as the "force of first choice" in missions for which they are well suited.
- Consider the cost-effectiveness and value of alternative active-reserve force mixes in order to break inertia's historical stranglehold on force structure decisions.

## VII. EDUCATION: BRIDGING THE DIVIDE BETWEEN ACTIVE AND RESERVE COMPONENTS

Although the United States has mobilized more than 770,000 Guardsmen and Reservists since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, many senior defense decision makers remain uninformed about the Guard and Reserves, including how they operate and what capabilities they possess.<sup>77</sup> For instance, in the months leading up to the U.S. invasion of Iraq, former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld issued several of his famous “snowflake” memos requesting elementary information about the capabilities, readiness and operational use of the reserve component.<sup>78</sup> This lack of awareness about the reserve component, which comprises approximately 43 percent of total U.S. military manpower, illustrates the yawning cultural gulf separating active duty and reserve service members in the minds of some senior defense officials.

The modern roots of this cultural divide can be traced back to the Vietnam War, when President Lyndon Johnson ignored the advice of his Joint Chiefs of Staff and chose not to mobilize the Guard and Reserves. Indeed, Vietnam represents the only conflict in U.S. history that did not feature extensive use of the Guard and Reserves.<sup>79</sup> As the conflict progressed and the reserve component became a refuge for young men looking to avoid deployment, the Guard and Reserves were diminished in the eyes of the active component.<sup>80</sup> For those active duty personnel who experienced Vietnam firsthand, and for those too young to participate but who studied the war afterward, the conflict provided virtually no familiarity with and in some cases lingering contempt for the Guard and Reserves. As a result, many current political and military leaders, for whom Vietnam represents a formative experience, are still playing cultural “catch up” on the type of competent, reliable and operational reserve component that exists today.

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*When active duty personnel study reserve component policy during their Professional Military Education (PME) or sit next to Guardsmen and Reservists during their classes, misperceptions and biases are broken down.*

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Education is the most effective way to overcome the lingering active-reserve component cultural divide. When active duty personnel study reserve component policy during their PME or sit next to Guardsmen and Reservists during their classes, misperceptions and biases are broken down on both sides. This can lead to greater cross-component respect, trust and cohesiveness – effects that translate into enhanced fighting power. DOD must reform both PME curricula and PME attendance to ensure that the active and reserve components get the chance to bridge their cultural divide not only on battlefields abroad but also in classrooms back in the United States.

While many of the service and joint colleges do incorporate reserve component material into their curricula, the depth and breadth vary and few of the institutions offer a course exclusively devoted to the Guard and Reserves. In response to the commission’s recommendation to increase exposure to Guard and Reserves issues at all levels of PME, the services responded that they feel their course material is sufficient.<sup>81</sup> Given the rapidly evolving role of the reserve component, however, this sufficiency will disappear

## General George C. Marshall and the Reserve Component

General George C. Marshall, labeled the “organizer of victory” by Winston Churchill, is widely known as the exemplary leader who helped the United States prevail in World War II and then aided the recovery of war-torn Europe through the Marshall Plan. Less well-known about Marshall is that he served frequently with the National Guard, something unusual then – and now – for an active duty Army officer. While teaching at the Infantry and Cavalry School, then 2LT Marshall spent his summers as an instructor at National Guard encampments. He later served as a full-time instructor with the

Massachusetts volunteer militia and with the Illinois National Guard.<sup>74</sup> While he sometimes worried that service with the reserve component might harm his promotion prospects, the experience proved invaluable when the pre-World War II Army of only 187,000 soldiers was increased to more than 8 million men under arms and many mobilized Guardsmen suddenly came under his command.<sup>75</sup> As Marshall himself once remarked, “It is a fact that the better informed an Army officer is, the more he is impressed with the vital importance of the National Guard.”<sup>76</sup>



swiftly unless college administrators and faculty members dedicate themselves to keeping up. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff should propose the reserve component as a “Special Area of Emphasis,” a designation that would elevate its importance to service and joint colleges, in order to catalyze greater incorporation of Guard and Reserves material into PME curricula.<sup>82</sup>

Though increased exposure to reserve component material will help narrow the active-reserve divide, the greatest influence on one’s educational experience is often the students, instructors and learning environment, not the formal curriculum. When active duty and reserve service members debate one another in seminars, carpool together to class and socialize together on weekends, prejudices are transcended much faster and more effectively than by merely reading textbooks. Several recent reports concluded that diverse experience, education and training are instrumental to developing officers prepared for the challenges of the 21st century.<sup>83</sup>

Yet getting Guardsmen and Reservists into the classroom to share their diverse experience, education and training can be arduous and costly. Many Guardsmen and Reservists must fit PME in between their civilian jobs, military training, deployments and families. As a result, they often select distance (i.e. nonresidential, Internet-based) learning to accomplish their PME requirements. This is understandable and completely justified. However, many Guardsmen and Reservists also want to attend PME in-residence but cannot do so because of lack of space. As Lt Gen Harry Wyatt, director of the Air National Guard, told Congress in April 2010: “We see Guardsmen who, as we become more operational, decide in their lives that they have more time to spend in-residence, so we’re looking for increased residence seats to help us with our PME.”<sup>84</sup> This growing interest, which should increase as Guardsmen and Reservists recover from the strains of Afghanistan and Iraq, belies the oft-repeated assertion that reserve component service members’ civilian careers cannot

## Reforming the Organizations and Institutions that Support an Operational Reserve

"The current reserve component structure does not meet the needs of an operational reserve force. Major changes in DOD organization, reserve component categories, and culture are needed to ensure that management of reserve and active component capabilities are integrated to maximize the effectiveness of the total force for both operational and strategic purposes."

- *Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, January 2008*

### SIGNS OF PROGRESS SINCE 2008

- The chief of the National Guard Bureau now holds a standing invitation to attend "Tank" sessions, the high-level meetings with senior officials and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as well as Defense Advisory Working Group meetings with the deputy secretary of defense.
- Reserve component officers and senior enlisted personnel are selected for leadership positions regardless of their geographic location.
- Guardsmen and Reservists may now serve on boards of inquiry.

### PROBLEMS THAT REQUIRE FURTHER ACTION

- Many senior defense decision makers remain uninformed about the Guard and Reserves, including how they operate and what capabilities they possess.
- DOD has not provided Guardsmen and Reservists with an appropriate increase in Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) opportunities that actually entail face-to-face interaction with their active duty colleagues.
- Reserve component officers selected for general or flag officer rank are still not required to attend CAPSTONE, the six-week in-residence course now required only for newly minted active duty general and flag officers.

### NEXT STEPS

- The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff should propose the reserve component as a "Special Area of Emphasis," a designation that would encourage service and joint colleges to incorporate more Guard and Reserves material into their curricula and

thereby increase active duty personnel's knowledge of the reserve component.

- The Office of Management and Budget should support DOD's proposal to reform the Joint and Combined Warfighting School program, the 10-week in-residence course for mid-level officers to gain JPME II certification, so that it offers a hybrid option of distance and in-person learning more conducive to Guard and Reserves officer attendance.
- Congress should pass legislation requiring reserve component officers selected for general or flag officer rank to attend CAPSTONE in order to instill cross-component unity within the highest levels of the U.S. military.
- DOD and Congress should remove the obstacles barring more reserve component officers from attending in-residence PME at every level, from specialty schools to staff colleges to war colleges to CAPSTONE.

survive time away for PME. Such claims ignore both the relatively short duration of many PME courses and the discordance in asserting that Guardsmen and Reservists cannot find time for in-residence PME but can somehow find time for year-long combat tours.

As reserve component officers have gained more chances recently to earn designation as joint-qualified, including through the addition of

approximately 1,400 part-time reserve component positions to the Joint Manpower Information System, DOD has not provided a concomitant increase in Joint PME (JPME) opportunities that actually entail face-to-face interaction between active duty and reserve service members.<sup>85</sup> For example, the Marine Corps is allocated 24 slots per year in the Advanced JPME (AJPME) program, but it received 62 applications from Reservists to attend in 2008 and 56 in 2009.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, while the

distance-learning APJME program allows more mid-level reserve component officers to earn JPME II credit, no active duty officers attend the program and it therefore fails to cultivate the personal relationships crucial to improving active-reserve unity. DOD is currently seeking to alter the JPME II-granting Joint and Combined Warfighting School program, currently a 10-week in-residence course for mid-level officers, so that it offers a hybrid mix of distance-learning and in-person seminars more conducive to Guard and Reserves officer attendance. This promising approach deserves the full support of the Office of Management and Budget, which is now considering the proposal.

To improve in-residence JPME opportunities at the highest leadership levels, Congress should pass legislation requiring reserve component officers selected for general or flag officer rank to attend CAPSTONE, the in-residence course required for newly minted active duty general and flag officers. Some associated with CAPSTONE argue that such an expansion will not work logistically because classes must stay small. But this logistical barrier seems surmountable given the importance of instilling cross-component unity in leaders who will soon serve together operationally as general and flag officers. For example, CAPSTONE could be held more times per year or broken into two classes (with active duty and reserve component personnel in both classes) as more Guardsmen and Reservists enrolled.

Improving balance between the active and reserve components in PME today is as important as cultivating inter-service jointness in PME was 25 years ago. While the availability and use of in-residence PME slots will always vary by service and by each reserve component service member's personal circumstances, the need and desire for these slots will grow at every level of PME – from specialty schools to staff colleges to war colleges to CAPSTONE – as the Guard and Reserves become more operational.

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*DOD and Congress must work together to remove the obstacles barring more Guardsmen and Reservists from attending in-residence Professional Military Education (PME) throughout their entire educational journey.*

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DOD and Congress must work together to remove the obstacles barring more Guardsmen and Reservists from attending in-residence PME throughout their entire educational journey. Policymakers should pursue flexible options, such as hybrid combinations of distance-learning and in-person class time, so that even when reserve component officers cannot attend in-residence as full-time students, they can still interact face-to-face with their active duty counterparts.

## VIII. THE CONTINUUM OF SERVICE: FLEXIBLE MILITARY SERVICE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

The “continuum of service,” a set of laws and policies providing career flexibility, will allow the U.S. military to recruit and retain the most talented people from a 21st-century workforce in which individuals do not expect to work at the same company for 40 years, but instead prefer diverse experiences with varying levels of intensity over time.<sup>88</sup> Tapping into this talented and mobile workforce will prove essential to fielding a U.S. military versed in the overlapping political, economic and technological lines of effort required for success in future military operations.<sup>89</sup> Under a fully implemented continuum of service, the only decisive factors in personnel decisions will be the quality of the person and the mission at hand.

Properly understood, the continuum of service does *not* apply only to the Guard and Reserves, as it must also apply to active duty service members in order to become a true continuum. GEN George C. Marshall illustrated the spirit of the continuum of service by moving between active and reserve component assignments on his way up the career ladder.

The Commission on the National Guard and Reserves called for a more flexible military career advancement system based on the development of competencies rather than the current “up or out” time-based system designed in the wake of World War II. As with the landmark Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, which clarified the military chain of command and helped integrate the services, the U.S. government cannot – and should not – make these changes overnight.

Yet DOD has not made enough progress instituting the principles of the continuum of service since the commission issued its final report in 2008. The services recommended few changes in

their promotion policies, although DOD did commission a RAND study to scrutinize the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) and Reserve Officer Personnel Management Act (ROPMA), the statutes governing promotion policies and requirements.<sup>90</sup> Without making these statutes more flexible and more based on acquired knowledge, skills and abilities – not merely time spent in a rank – the movement between active and reserve components envisioned by the continuum of service is not realistic because such mobility is still perceived as representing a “kiss of death” for active duty officers seeking promotion. Once RAND submits its study, Congress should amend DOPMA and ROPMA accordingly. In the interim DOD should, to the extent possible under existing law, revise its current policy directives and instructions dictating time-based promotions to instead permit advancement that varies based on career field and competitive category (i.e. competencies).

A promising pilot program featuring more flexible service options was unveiled this year by Representative Ike Skelton, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. Skelton introduced an amendment to the FY 2011 National Defense Authorization Act that would authorize a pilot program “to evaluate [an] alternative career track for commissioned officers to facilitate an increased commitment to academic and professional education and career-broadening assignments.”<sup>91</sup> The service secretaries could offer officers with between 13 and 18 years of service the opportunity to participate in this alternative track, with each secretary authorized to select up to 50 officers per year. In explaining his amendment, Skelton noted that “this holistic vision of officer development requires a diverse and flexible career path that does not exist in today’s personnel system that is marked by mandatory retirement standards and a rigid up-or-out policy.”<sup>92</sup> As this program or similar initiatives

## Creating a Continuum of Service: Personnel Management for an Integrated Total Force

“Current law and policy still reflect a Cold War-era vision of the employment of valuable military manpower assets and do not adequately support an operational 21st-century force. A new integrated personnel management structure is needed to provide trained and ready forces to meet mission requirements and to foster a continuum of service for the individual service member.”

- *Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, January 2008*

### SIGNS OF PROGRESS SINCE 2008

- DOD established a Joint Duty career path for Guardsmen and Reservists.
- DOD created the “Civilian Employment Information” database.

### PROBLEMS THAT REQUIRE FURTHER ACTION

- DOD still lacks a comprehensive personnel management strategy.
- The services recommended few changes in their promotion policies.
- Excessive duty statuses continue to disrupt personnel pay, benefits and health care.

### NEXT STEPS

- Congress should amend the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) and Reserve Officer Personnel Management Act (ROPMA) to make them more flexible and more geared to reward the development of knowledge, skills and abilities.
- DOD should, to the extent possible under existing law, revise its current policy directives and instructions dictating rigid “up or out” time-based military promotions instead to allow timing to vary based on career field and competitive category (i.e. competencies).
- Congress and DOD should pursue flexible career tracks for commissioned officers to facilitate an increased commitment to education and other career-broadening assignments, including service with the reserve component by active duty officers.
- Congress should act upon the upcoming 11th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation’s recommendations for simplifying the 29

duty status categories, which complicate benefit awards and assessments of operational accessibility and thereby undermine the real and perceived readiness of the Guard and Reserves.

- DOD should prioritize deployment of integrated service pay and personnel systems, which provide logistical continuity consistent with the continuum of service concept, in the wake of this year’s cancellation of the Defense Integrated Military Human Resources System (DIMHRS), a plan to bring all four services under a single payroll and personnel records system.
- DOD and Congress should, as recommended by both the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves and the recent QDR Independent Review Panel, conduct a comprehensive review of military personnel policy that assesses options for reforming compensation, promotion policies, military health care and retirement benefits.<sup>87</sup>

evolve, policymakers should modify the criteria to encourage and reward service with the reserve component by active duty officers.

As military service becomes more adaptable, the U.S. government must erect systems to support service members throughout their entire careers. Improvements are most needed on duty status reform and creating an integrated pay and

personnel system, which will provide logistical continuity consistent with the continuum of service concept.

Comptrollers within DOD and the services, along with congressional appropriations staffers, reportedly oppose simplifying the 29 duty status categories, which complicate benefits and operational accessibility, because doing so will make

tracking and reporting too difficult.<sup>93</sup> With today's technology, however, it is difficult to understand why the U.S. government cannot track and report manpower expenditures without the current patchwork of duty statuses. The upcoming 11th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation, scheduled to release its recommendations by May 2011, plans to weigh in on duty status reform, and Congress should act on any simplifications it proposes.

An integrated pay and personnel system also continues to elude DOD. After 12 years and 1 billion dollars spent on development, DOD cancelled a plan in 2010 to bring all four services under a single payroll and personnel records scheme known as the Defense Integrated Military Human Resources System (DIMHRS).<sup>94</sup> The cancellation is not necessarily a bad outcome given that DIMHRS probably never would have worked as intended, but DOD wasted valuable time and resources in the drawn out development process. Senior DOD leaders should devote high-level attention to this issue and direct the testing and deployment of service pay and personnel systems to proceed apace. Without improvements in duty statuses and pay systems, the continuum of service will remain a logistical impossibility.

If fully embraced, the continuum of service will transcend cultural barriers and foster a unified force that provides the U.S. military with the most qualified people possessing the most relevant skills – regardless of which component they serve in. By making service more flexible and more attuned to the variability of the 21st-century workforce, the continuum of service promises to attract and retain talented individuals possessing skills the U.S. military needs to overcome the security threats of the future.

## IX. CONCLUSION

Since 2008, the U.S. government has taken great strides to support the National Guard and Reserves in a manner consistent with their current and future importance to the nation. DOD in particular has demonstrated real commitment to reforming its policies in the ways prescribed by the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves. Given the depth and breadth of the commission's work, however, it will take years of sustained commitment and enduring investment by the U.S. government to fulfill the commission's overarching vision of a fully supported 21st-century operational reserve component.

The U.S. government should not allow this opportune moment, when the reserve component's wartime experience makes it more combat capable than ever before, to lapse without making further progress on implementing the commission's unaccomplished recommendations. DOD and Congress should address the challenges posed by roles and missions (including homeland response and civil support), readiness, cost, education and the continuum of service by cooperating to strengthen the professional bond between active and reserve component personnel in order to build a more seamlessly integrated total force. Doing so will ensure that the cost-effective National Guard and Reserves can fulfill their role as an indispensable force for defending U.S. sovereign territory and protecting America's security interests around the world.

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