

Fiscal Constraints within the Army – An Invaluable Opportunity

Recently, Department of Defense leadership have testified to Congress that continuing to force the Defense Department to absorb sequestration cuts will leave the military unable to conduct one prolonged, sustained, multiphase campaign. (With regards to the Army, the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff of the Army during their April 3, 2014 testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee, testified that future sequestration cuts will force the Army to reduce its end strength – to 420,000 in the active component (AC), 315,000 in the Army National Guard (ARNG), and 185,000 in the Army Reserve (USAR) by 2019. This would be a reduction of 213,000 from the 2013 wartime high of 1,133,000 soldiers in the total Army. General Odierno testified: “The secretary of defense directed that the Army not retain structure at the expense of readiness. Additionally, the secretary of the Army and I directed that cuts should come disproportionately from the active force before reducing the National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve. Our total force policy was informed by the lessons learned during the last 13 years of war. We considered operational commitments, readiness levels, future requirements as well as costs. The result is a plan that recognize the unique attributes, responsibilities and complementary nature of each component while ensuring our Guard and Reserves are maintained as an operational and not a strategic reserve. ... These are not cuts we want to take but we must take, based on sequestration. I believe our recommendation delivers the best total Army for the budget we have been allocated.”

In response to similar fiscal challenges last year, the Air Force began implementing the recommendations in the January 2014 report from the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force. In that report, two members, R.L. (Les) Brownlee and Margaret C. Harrell, wisely caution that “The recommendations within the Commission’s report should not be reflexively extrapolated from this report with the intent of applying these recommendations to any other U.S. military service or any of their Active or Reserve Components” and specifically state “A likely misapplication, therefore, might be to attempt to apply to the Army some of the report’s recommendations that are intended only for the Air Force.” However, applying these individuals’ cautions to the extreme could lead to the position that none of the report’s recommendations could be applied to the Army – an equally egregious and myopic outcome for the Army.

In a recent article in the Spring 2014 edition of *Parameters*, a quarterly publication of the U.S. Army War College, Brigadier General Campbell provides a historical perspective as to how the United States has undergone repeated wartime expansions followed by post-war contractions of the regular military with a relatively steady sized militia acting “...as a strategic hedge to allow for rapid expansion of the country’s military capacity in time of emergency”. He also argues that a “...critical function of this organizational method was recognized by the founders of the nation – a small standing regular force and reliance for the preponderance of our security on the militia acts as a significant brake on executive power, requiring Congress either to authorize a federalization of the militia or vote for an expansion of regular forces to mobilize the nation for engagement in a major conflict.” His article poses a particularly relevant question: “Why is there a need, given the current National Military Strategy and significant resource constraints, when our conventional forces are not likely to be widely engaged or deployed in the near future, to retain large forces in the active military and reduce the vastly less-expensive National Guard?”

This article explores the benefits that could be achieved by coupling an active to reserve component transfer of structure with proposals to improve the current Army's progress in restoring the Abrams Total Force doctrine, applying appropriate tailored recommendations from the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force, and the full implementation of a continuum of service. Such an alternative, if implemented properly, would: 1) provide sufficient savings to offset the Army's sequestration bill of at least \$7B per year; 2) retain a Total Army end strength of 1,042,000 soldiers that has the ability to respond to immediate crises and retains military flexibility and resilience without doing it at the expense of readiness; 3) sustain the ability of Americans to serve their nation in military service, and 4) reconnect our military to the local citizens that they serve.

Transfer of Structure from Active to Reserve

The Army as it currently exists is comprised of a Congressionally authorized Fiscal Year 2015 end strength of 490,000 in the AC, 350,000 in the Army National Guard (ARNG), and 202,000 in the Army Reserve (USAR). If forced to adhere to the funding limitations under the Budget Control Act of 2011 (sequestration), the Army is proposing to reduce its 2019 end strength to 420,000 in the AC (a further reduction of 70,000 soldiers), 315,000 in the ARNG (a further reduction of 35,000 soldiers) and 185,000 in the USAR (a further reduction of 17,000 soldiers). Any proposal that would result in the reduction in the size of the Total Army would significantly reduce the Nation's flexibility and resiliency if future conflict scenarios that predict America will not need a large ground force prove to be inaccurate (which has been the case throughout history) and further disintegrates the connections between our country's military and our public. In addition, a smaller Army would eliminate short-term access to the valuable combat experience resident in our current soldiers.

Rather than eliminating Army end strength in both its Active and Reserve Components (AC) as currently proposed by the Army, thus losing the capability completely, the Army could execute a strategy that protects its ability to rapidly mobilize and regenerate capabilities to meet future, unforeseen demands by transferring that structure from the Active to its two Reserve Components (RCs)(combat, combat support, and combat service support). Table 1 below provides an alternative would allow the Army to retain the existing size of the Total Army while also adhering to the funding limitations of sequestration (approximately \$7B a year). Given the cost effectiveness of the RCs, this capability can be maintained at a reasonable level of readiness for one-third to one-half the cost of the AC, allowing the Army to retain force structure without sacrificing readiness.

Using the RC as a cost effective means to provide force structure was a strategy the Army adopted in the late 1980's when faced with a numerically superior Soviet force. In order to increase force structure by 100,000 soldiers with the minimum cost to the Nation, the Army advocated increasing the RCs rather than increasing the Active Component. Transferring capability from active to reserve service is also not unprecedented. During the United States military drawdown in the 1990's, the Air Force made a conscious choice to transfer capability (in the form of airplanes) from the AC into its RCs as a means to retain the experience of their pilots. More recently, the British Government, as part of its Strategic Defence and Security Review of 2010 published a report titled "Army 2020: Transforming the British Army" which directed the British Army to apply seventy percent of the reduction in Regular manpower toward a corresponding increase in the size of its Territorial Army units.

Table 1: Total Army End Strength Allocation

	Wartime High	Currently Proposed FY2015	Currently Proposed FY2019 (w/Sequestration)	Alternative
Active Component	570,000	490,000	420,000	360,000
Army National Guard	358,200	350,000	315,000	432,000
Army Reserve	205,000	202,000	185,000	250,000
Total Army	1,133,200	1,042,000	920,000	1,042,000

A more detailed breakdown of the categories of missions that would be performed by the 360,000 soldiers in the AC is listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Active Component End Strength Allocation

Generating Force	90,000
Overseas Presence	85,000
HQ's/Theater Support	50,000
Rapid Response Force	50,000
Risk Reduction (Reserve Readiness)	38,000
TTHS	47,000
Total	360,000

Currently the Army maintains 20,000 troops in the Pacific theater (South Korea, Japan and the Philippines), 37,000 troops in Europe, and another 28,000 troops in the remainder of the world (Kuwait, Africa, South America). Additionally, the Army currently has 50,000 soldiers assigned to various Army headquarters and in support of joint and theater level commands. In looking at military operations since 1980, where the military was required to respond on very short notice (in less than 30 days), the average size of the response was 18,500 military personnel (with a range of 1,000 to 50,000)(See Table 3). By maintaining 50,000 soldiers at a high state of readiness able to deploy on a moment's notice as part of a rapid response force, the Army would be able to meet any future short notice demand. By maintaining an additional 38,000 soldiers at a lower state of readiness would allow the Army sufficient capacity to rotate soldiers into the higher state of readiness and have available additional soldiers that could respond to a crisis until sufficient RC forces could be mobilized, trained, and deployed. In order to sustain the manning levels within AC units as close to 100% as possible, the Army requires 13.5% of its total AC end strength to account for those soldiers who are in training, transit, or holding (represented by the term Trainees, Transients, Holders and Students (TTHS)).

Table 3: Immediate Response Operations: 1980-2000

Operation Name	Operation Dates	Duration	Military Size	Response Time Requirement
Operation Urgent Fury (Grenada)	Oct 25, 1983- Dec 1983	2 months	7,000	5 days
Operation Just Cause (Panama)	Dec 20, 1989- Jan 12, 1990	1 month	27,684	5 days
Desert Shield	7 Aug 1990- 17 Jan 1991	5 months	50,000	5 days
Operation Provide Relief (Somalia)	15 Aug 1992- 9 Dec 1992	5 months	858	
Operation Restore Hope (Somalia)	9 Dec 1992- 4 May 1993	5 months	28,000	6 days
UNOSOM II (Somalia)	4 May 1993- 31 Mar 1994	11 months	3,000	
Operation Vigilant Warrior (Iraq)	1 Oct 1994- 30 Nov 1994	2 months	28,000	
Operation New Horizon (Haiti)	Mar 1995- Mar 1996	12 months	2,400	
Operation Joint Endeavor (Bosnia)	20 Dec 1995- 20 Dec 1996	12 months	20,000	6 days
KFOR	12 Jun 1999- Jun 20, 1999	12 months	8,000	9 days

Restoration of the Abrams Doctrine

In the face of transitioning from a conscripted to all-volunteer force, down-sizing of the Army following the Vietnam War, and tight federal budgets of the early 1970's, while still maintaining sufficient conventional ground force to meet the Soviet threat, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird and Chief of Staff of the Army General Creighton Abrams instituted principles that ensured the Army's structure, funding, and readiness would support the Defense Department's Total Force objectives and would intricately link active and reserve component units. These principles became known as the Abrams Doctrine. A recent book by Rachel Maddow, *Drift*, provides a well written description of this Doctrine; she writes: "Under Abrams' Total Force Policy, the Guard and Reserves would no longer be shelters to avoid service but rather integral parts of the nation's fighting capacity. It would be operationally impossible to go to war without calling them up. Abrams wove the Guard and Reserves into the fabric of the active-duty military; he made those in-your-neighborhood citizen-soldiers responsible for functions without which we could not wage a major military campaign. And in weaving the Guard and Reserves into the active-duty military, he also wove the military back into the country. ... With the Abrams Doctrine, calling up the Reserves would no longer be optional, and therefore neither would the pilgrimage to Congress" (by the President to get approval to go to war)".

In his February 3, 2005 Foreign Policy Research Center article "Total Force Policy and the Abrams Doctrine: Unfilled Promise, Uncertain Future", James Carafano contends that this dependence on the reserve components for the Army to wage war "...serves as an extra-Constitutional tripwire on the presidential use of military power. ...Any large scale mobilization of Reserves would affect communities throughout the country and engage the American people."

Most recently in her book, *Drift*, Rachael Maddow provides a concrete example of just how the Abrams doctrine caused a national debate to occur at the beginning of the First Gulf War. On pages 137-140, she writes: "The only line still tying down the US war machine was the legacy of Creighton Abrams, the good old Abrams Doctrine - the idea that sending the military into war would mean, by definition, sending *the country* [italics in the original] into war. ... The Abrams Doctrine made sure that a decision in Washington, DC, to start a war rang clear in every state and every city...in America. ... But the point was, the debate in Congress had already begun. The call-up of the Reserves had assured it. ... What forced this national debate was not humble respect for the Constitution or the founder's intent to make any decision to go to war difficult, deliberate, wrenching, and collective...what forced us to do the right thing was the last surviving structural barrier to war making - the Abrams Doctrine."

In 2012, the Secretary of the Army formalized the Army's Total Force Policy with Army Directive 2012-08. This policy directs a number of changes to Army processes and concepts. In addition to the changes directed under this policy, the following proposals would further support the intent and concepts articulated in this policy.

Of the 90,000 generating force soldiers, a minimum of 10,000 mid-grade non-commissioned officers and commissioned officers should be assigned to each active component institutional training site and each reserve component regional training center as training cadre. This would support the Total Force Policy by integrating the active and reserve components generating force capabilities and support Training and Doctrine Command's One-Army School System initiative.

In accordance with United States Code, Title 32, Section 506, the Army should assign approximately 15-20 active component mid-grade NCOs and Commissioned Officers to each reserve component division and brigade (a total of about 1,500 soldiers) in order to advise and assist the States in training National Guard units under Title 32, Section 501. These soldiers would perform functions similar to the Readiness Training Detachments from the 1990's and would assist in sustaining the readiness level of these reserve component units.

Another proposal that would facilitate AC-RC integration would be to have United States Military Academy graduates serve at least three of their eight initial commitment obligation years in a traditional reserve unit within the Congressional district from where they received their nomination. Having multiple options for Active Component soldiers being able to serve in the Reserve Component would establish the foundation for requiring the promotion to General Officer in the Active Component dependent on at least one successful tour serving with a Reserve Component unit.

National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force Recommendation

Figures 1 and 2 below provide examples of an Army structure that is based on the language in Chapter 3 of the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force, where they propose that the Air Force increase the overall number of associate units with a single, integrated chain of command that they called "i-Wings" (embedded in recommendations 7-9). These Army tailored configurations take into account the critical need of Army forces to maintain unit integrity at the battalion level. These configurations would be very similar to the approach taken by the Army in the late 1980's/early 1990's, when the Army assigned reserve component brigades to "roundout" some of its active component divisions in order to bring those divisions up to wartime strength. These configurations also ensure that these units will still be able to comply with the DoD guidance for managing the employment of the Total Force to preclude the

Both of these options would align the deployments of the RC and AC units as well as meet Army Total Force Policy guidance to "...integrate AC and RC forces and capabilities at the tactical level (division and below)..." so that they are ..."prepared to deploy as integrated expeditionary forces...".

By utilizing the authority to mobilize RC soldiers provided by U.S. Code, Title 10, Section 12304b, along with the Overseas Deployment Training program and National Guard State Partnership Program activities, the Secretary of the Army could deploy integrated AC-RC capabilities to conduct theater engagement and security cooperation activities much as was done during the 1980's in Central and South America and as are being done today in Africa. The Secretary could also use these same authorities to deploy AC-RC integrated capabilities to fulfill steady-state rotational demands.

Full Implementation of a Continuum of Service

The 2008 Commission on the National Guard and Reserves Final (CNGR) Report, *Transforming the National Guard and Reserves into a 21st-Century Operational Force*, states, "As generally understood, a continuum of service would facilitate the seamless transition of individual reservists on and off of active duty to meet mission requirements and would permit different levels of participation by the service member over the course of a military career." Currently, the Army is in the process of implementing its Integrated Personnel and Pay System-Army (IPPS-A) that will provide integrated personnel and pay capabilities across the AC, ARNG, and USAR. This system will create a comprehensive personnel and pay record for all soldiers for their entire Army career. IPPS-A provides one of two critical enablers mentioned in the CNGR Report required for establishing a continuum of service and sets the framework for expanding the continuum of service concept to facilitate the seamless transition between Active and Reserve statuses for all Army soldiers, those currently serving in the AC as well as those currently serving in the RCs.

The Army is currently expanding the number of opportunities it is providing to its AC soldiers to broaden their experiences by assigning them to certain businesses, federal governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and civilian college programs. By expanding how the Army creates these opportunities to gain experiences outside of the operational Army, extremely cost-effective solutions can be developed. The Army could greatly expand the number of broadening experiences to include local and state governments for all Army junior and mid-grade officers, with little impact to the operational force and no increase in resources. By allowing AC Soldiers the ability to easily transfer between the AC and RCs, all Army Soldiers would then have the same opportunity to pursue their graduate degrees and broadening experiences while retaining the ability to maintain their military skills by participating in training with a RC unit. Additionally, a continuum of service would allow RC Soldiers, who in many cases have already had the opportunity to achieve their broadening experience as a result of their civilian occupations, the opportunity to serve in the AC. Such a mechanism would allow the Army to recognize and leverage the civilian experiences of their RC Soldiers.

Expanding the continuum of service concept to all Army soldiers would allow the Army to support and leverage the current movement in the private sector of a shift away from permanent lifetime jobs to more fluid and flexible working relationships where U. S. workers are changing

jobs more frequently and staying in those jobs for shorter periods. It would also provide the Army the opportunities to establish personnel management policies that promote the retention of experience and trained individuals for longer careers and allow all Army soldiers the opportunity to pursue both a civilian and a military career.

With these descriptions of the Total Army's composition, a more in-depth assessment of its benefits to the Nation can be explored.

Sustain the Nation's Ability to Respond to Immediate Crises

Arguments have been made that the size of the AC during the 1990's (at its smallest of 480,000 soldiers just prior to 9-11) was insufficient to meet the demands placed upon it. It is therefore critical that the Army's AC is of sufficient size to sustain our Nation's flexibility and ability to respond to immediate crises (e.g. those that arise and need a response within 30 days time). A close look at the operations of the 1980's and 1990's, as listed in Table 3, show that a reasonable minimum proportion of the AC Army dedicated to immediate response would be 50,000 soldiers (the largest demand of the listed operations). This size is the equivalent of five combat brigades and their corresponding support forces (one to two divisions worth of forces).

Based on the strategic lift assessment in Brig Gen Patrick Donahue, II and Lt Col (ret.) Frank Womble's article "Getting There is Half the Battle" in the October 2011 Armed Forces Journal, the United States has sufficient strategic airlift and sealift capacity to move this 50,000 strong immediate response force in one to two months time. If needed, this same strategic lift capacity could move the remaining 38,400 soldiers that are advocated in this alternative as a risk reduction measure over an additional one to two months time. This two to four months time would allow the Army, based on its current approved reserve component pre- and post-mobilization training strategy, to begin deploying (using this same strategic lift capacity) reserve component brigades and their associated support forces if it appeared that the conflict was going to continue for an extended time. Mobilization data from the last twelve years of fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan clearly indicate the validity of this mobilization strategy as reserve component brigades have been able to deploy within 60 days of mobilization.

Retain our Nation's Military Flexibility and Resilience

The alternative proposed would assist the Army in achieving five of the eight force guidance and program development principles articulated in *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense* (which has also been institutionalized as DoD's Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review report to Congress): 1) DoD will manage the force in ways that protect its ability to regenerate capabilities that might be needed to meet future, unforeseen demands, maintaining intellectual capital and rank structure that could be called upon to expand key elements of the force; 2) Support the concept of "reversibility." – including the vectors on which we place our industrial base, our people, our active-reserve component balance, our posture, and our partnership emphasis ; 3) Resist the temptation to sacrifice readiness in order to retain force structure (in fact, this alternative would allow the Army to sustain sufficient readiness AND retain force structure); 4) Reduce the "cost of doing business"; and 5) Continue to employ National Guard and Reserve forces.

In transferring a portion of the Army's AC currently being proposed for elimination into the RCs, the Army would be able to reliably provide sufficient forces to meet a contingency demand of 12-15 brigades, Four Divisions, and Two Corps (e.g. sufficient to meet current Defense Planning Scenarios) for a minimum of two years with the existing Defense Department BOG:Dwell ratio goals of 1:2 for Active Component and 1:5 for Reserve Component forces and for an indeterminate time frame with some adjustment to these same BOG:Dwell ratios. This transfer of Soldiers and force structure to the RCs would also allow the Army to retain its current distribution of forces with their equipment in readiness centers, posts, camps, and stations throughout the Nation in order to retain a connection to our local communities, provide a rapid response to homeland defense or civil support demands, and increase the Army's power projection from home station capability.

Sustaining the existing Total Army force structure would allow the Nation to retain the significant investment over the last decade it has made toward improving the readiness of the Total Army to the largest extent possible. Encouraging existing AC combat trained Soldiers to remain in military service within this transferred structure would allow the RCs to act as a repository of military skills and experience gained over years of service that would otherwise be lost. It would provide the Army with the ability to: retain the combat experience it has acquired over the last 10 years to the maximum extent; retain a slightly more senior force by retaining mid-grade NCOs and commissioned officers even as the AC end strength decreases; and preserve the organizational structure and training force upon which it may build if required. In this way, they will have the structure and cadre of experienced leaders necessary to build upon if we have to re-grow the force quickly.

Reduce Fiscal Burden of the Military on the Nation

It is true that transferring any cuts to the active component and sustaining those forces in the reserve component will require fiscal resource support (e.g. the savings to the nation would be less than eliminating these forces completely), however, the nation would still see a savings of at least \$1.4B/year for every 15,000 soldiers transferred. If the Army were to transfer soldiers at the same average annual rate as executed in the 1990's (27,500/year), then the Army could achieve the level in the proposed alternative by 2021, save the nation \$99B by 2023, and sustain this force for a cost at least \$7B a year less than the current force. And if there were concern about the ability of these transferred soldiers to find a job, Congress could authorize a program similar to the post-World War II GI Bill which provided demobilizing veteran's with a year's worth of wages whether they worked or not (in addition to the more commonly remembered payment of college tuition and a living stipend).

Reconnect our Military to the Local Citizenry

In the November 23, 2011 Pew Research Center report, "The Military-Civilian Gap: Fewer Family Connections", the authors state: "A smaller share of Americans currently serve in the U.S. Armed Forces that at any time since the peace-time era between World Wars I and II. During the past decade, ...just one-half of one percent of American adults have served on active duty at any given time. As the size of the military shrinks, the connections between military personnel and the broader civilian population appear to be growing more distant." This reduction in ability to attain military experience would also lead to a longer term reduction in the

percentage of veterans in the overall population and the percentage of members of Congress who have any military experience. In a September 4, 2013 Pew Research Center report, "Most members of Congress have little direct military experience", author Drew Desilver states: "Only about a fifth of current members of Congress have any military experience themselves, from a recent high of 77% in the 95th Congress (1977-1978) of Congressional members having served in the armed forces. Veterans currently make up about 7% of the overall population, down from 13.7% in 1970."

Transferring the force structure to the RCs would disperse Soldiers who are currently serving in large, effectively self-contained bases out into much smaller, local community-based armories and readiness centers. This dispersal, along with the proposed means of increasing the ability of Army Soldiers to serve in assignments at the local level throughout the Nation can only help to increase the contact between Army Soldiers and the American citizens for whom they serve, increasing the appreciation each has for the other.

And sustaining the Total Army's end strength at this proposed 1,084,600 would allow approximately 40-80,000 more American citizens the opportunity to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces over the current down-sizing proposals.

Despite what many in the Defense Department have been decrying as a threat to national security, current sequestration figures and our nation's fiscal crises may in fact be the impetus needed to rethink how we view our Army. By focusing the challenge at the Total Army level, rather than each of its components - AC, ARNG, USAR - developing solutions from themselves, this proposal provides a means for the Nation to "have its cake and eat it too". America can retain an Army with the sufficient readiness to response to any future threat and achieve a fiscal savings that can be used to assist in meeting the Nation's fiscal needs.

NOTE: These comments represent my personal opinions and should not be taken to represent the views of the Army National Guard, National Guard Bureau, or Department of the Army.