

National Guard Readiness and Responsiveness

Overview

This paper addresses Army National Guard responsiveness by reviewing testimony from senior Army officials regarding mobilization timelines and demonstrating how the timelines they reference present a misleading picture. Next, it corrects a logical fallacy that distorts predictions for future ARNG mobilization timelines during short-notice deployments. Finally the paper examines how ARNG responsiveness can be increased in the future.

SECARMY/CSA Testimony to NCFE

In testimony presented to the National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCFE), the Honorable John M. McHugh (SECARMY) and General Raymond Odierno (CSA) make several remarks regarding Reserve Component mobilization timelines. Coming from such senior level officials, these remarks bear much weight and merit further scrutiny. Specifically, we wish to comment on the following quotes from their testimony.

“[I]t required almost 300 days to prepare an ARNG Apache Battalion to deploy for security force missions.”¹

“Looking at combined arms maneuver missions, the findings revealed that counter-insurgency missions required 165 days of preparation, security force missions required 118 days, and advising/assisting required 127 days.”²

Mobilization Timelines

These statements suggest mobilization timelines that are significantly lengthier than other studies submit as the norm. In 2013 the Department of Defense reported to Congress that an Army Guard Brigade requires from 50-110 days of post-mobilization / pre-deployment training depending upon the unit's level of collective training proficiency upon mobilization.³ On what, then, do SECARMY/CSA base their claims? They cite a 2014 RAND study titled, “*Assessing the Army's Active-Reserve Component Force Mix*,”⁴ as a source for their numbers. The deployment numbers provided by the RAND study are misleading for several reasons explained below.

Statistical Outlier

The Apache Battalion mentioned in the testimony is a statistical anomaly. The Arizona National Guard's 1-285 ARB required 300 days to prepare for deployment due to the receipt of new AH-64D model Apaches that required them to conduct the mandatory Unit Fielding and Training Program (UFTP) for the new model. The decision was made to conduct UFTP during their pre-deployment training, which added significantly to the amount of time required to deploy. The same would have been true if the unit were from Active component. The next Army Guard ARB to deploy in the Apache, North Carolina's 1-130 ARB, took just 111 days of post-mobilization / pre-deployment training. Contrary to the implication in the written testimony, a typical National Guard ARB does not require 300 days of pre-deployment training.

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Apples to Oranges

When comparing responsiveness between the Active Component and the Reserve Component, one must establish a “starting line”—a chronological point at which the timeline begins, and a “finish line”—a time at which the timeline ends. Conventional wisdom and most studies use mobilization as the starting line and completion of pre-deployment training as the finish line. However, the Army Guard BCT mobilization timelines taken from the RAND study and cited in SECARMY/CSA testimony include from 50 to 75 days of *pre-mobilization* days depending upon the type of mission, *to include 39 days of UTA and Annual Training in addition to transit time to the theater.* ⁵ (See Attachment 1)

When questioned about how long the transit time was, the author of the RAND study stated “it averaged about a week.”⁶ All units regardless of Component spend roughly the same amount of time in transit to theatre. Transit time is not part of the normal dialogue used to compare mobilization timelines; therefore, including it in the study skews the conclusions. Removing the pre-mobilization training days and transit times from the equation resulted in BCT mobilization timelines as follows:

Counterinsurgency Missions 88 days

Security Force Missions 61 days

Advising/Training Missions 70 days

In short, the RAND study’s mobilization timelines are misleading because they start the Reserve Component’s clock before the race begins, and continue the clock running after the Reserve Component has passed the finish line. This leaves the reader comparing RAND’s numbers insinuating lengthy Army Guard BCT mobilization timelines to the Army’s claim to “Fight Tonight.” The assessment should have been conducted using the difference between the date that a MOB order is effective and the date that the unit is prepared for transit to theater. It is truly, apples to oranges and insinuates a gross disparity in Army Guard and Active Component responsiveness, which simply does not exist.

Logical Fallacies

In discussing Active and Reserve Component responsiveness, RAND focuses on a “short-notice, rapid-response surge mission”⁷ that has been coined the “Godzilla Scenario.” We accept this as a planning scenario as planners must consider worst case scenarios in weighing AC-RC force-mix decisions. However, it is unreasonable to apply the Godzilla Scenario to force-mix analysis without considering that scenario’s potential impact to Army Guard mobilization timelines.

RAND fails to do this, claiming that “overall trends in the historical data should hold.”⁸ This is not a logical assumption. RAND uses historical preparation times from conflicts in which the Reserve Component had sufficient time to methodically prepare units for deployment with a known projected deployment date. With that future date in mind, the unit systematically trained

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and prepared for the upcoming deployment. However, in a true Godzilla Scenario, historical timelines are not necessarily accurate predictors of the future. National Guard BCTs would move through the mobilization process as quickly as possible and not waste precious time on redundant or unnecessary training. They would find every way imaginable to hasten their preparations for deployment. Thus, a Godzilla scenario would logically and naturally elicit every possible efficiency, none of which are captured in the historical data relied upon in the RAND study.

Additionally, the RAND study only analyzes deployments between 2008 and 2010. Their calculations do not capture the increase in post-mobilization efficiencies that allowed Army Guard BCTs to prepare more quickly than they had in previous years. Had this information been added to the calculations, ARNG mobilization timelines would have been even further reduced.

Additional efficiencies

Mobilization timelines are not just important in force mix decisions when considering a Godzilla Scenario. These timelines are necessary considerations in *all* force size and mix calculations and a Godzilla Scenario is not required to garner efficiencies that would serve to compress timelines and thereby speed responsiveness, even in routine deployment cycles.

Such methods include the elimination of redundant and/or unnecessary training, granting Adjutants General the authority to validate their units' combat skills, increasing ARNG access to Combat Training Center rotations, and adjusting collective training requirements based on actual events in a given theater of operations. Though a detailed analysis of those and other possible methods of compressing training are beyond the scope of this paper, they bear further analysis.

Another method that would enhance Army Guard responsiveness is to increase the baseline readiness of specific ARNG units. As the RAND study suggests, "The Army could invest in extra annual training days for certain RC units to shorten their post-mobilization preparation times."⁹ While the additional training days would add to the cost of these units, the cost would be offset by a reduction in required Active Component units due to increased RC responsiveness—a logical correlation echoed in Commissioner Brownlee's additional viewpoint in the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force.¹⁰

Conclusion

In a standard rotational model, ARNG BCTs take between 50-110 days to prepare for deployment, depending upon their collective training experience upon mobilization. There exist many potential efficiencies that would serve to speed up that timeline. In the event of a short-notice or no-notice national emergency, these same BCTs would be able to speed up the mobilization process even more.

¹ Statement by The Honorable John M. McHugh, Secretary of the Army and General Raymond T. Odierno, Chief of Staff, Army, before the Commission on the Future of the United States Army, May 19, 2015, 10.

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² Ibid, 10.

³ U.S. Department of Defense, *Unit Costs and Readiness for the AC and RC* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, Report to Congress, December 20, 2013), 3.

⁴ McHugh/Odierno, 10 and Klimas, et al, "Assessing the Army's Active-Reserve Component Force Mix," RAND, February 2014, 6

⁵ RAND, 6.

⁶ Personal interview with Josh Klimas, June 3, 2015.

⁷ RAND, 4.

⁸ RAND, 6.

⁹ RAND, 6.

¹⁰ National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force, January 2014, 67. Brownlee states "*The primary difference between the Army and the Air Force underlying the foundational conclusions cited in this report is the level of readiness and responsiveness the Air Force accords to its Reserve Component units.*"

Attachment 1

