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CONSTITUENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY RESERVE: CURRENT STATUS AND FUTURE IMPACT

BY

COLONEL MICHAEL W. BEASLEY

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THE UNITED STATES ARMY RESERVE:
CURRENT STATUS AND FUTURE IMPACT

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THE UNITED STATES ARMY RESERVE:
CURRENT STATUS AND FUTURE IMPACT

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CONSTITUENT PERCEPTIONS OF
THE UNITED STATES ARMY RESERVE:
CURRENT STATUS AND FUTURE IMPACT

INTRODUCTION

The United States Army Reserve, like the other elements of the "Total Army" of which it is a part,¹ is beginning a period of rapid transition. National strategy heresies of only a year ago have become axioms for 1990 as the military girds for severe and immediate force reductions. The uncertain but continuing dissolution of the Warsaw Pact has undermined the United States public's belief in a significant USSR and Warsaw Pact aggressor threat -- a threat which gave central definition and purpose to the Army's post-Vietnam force planning.

In such tenuous times, the U. S. Army Reserve (USAR) is in a particularly vulnerable position. Its personnel strengths, procurements, training funds and administrative infrastructure are in danger of being cut significantly in the name of a "peace dividend," with little apparent consideration of redefining an appropriate role for the Army Reserve within the context of the total force structure. Lacking both the senior rank structure and the political clout of the Active Component (AC) and the Army National Guard (ANG), the USAR may well find itself in a constantly

¹ For purposes of this Study, the U. S. Army Reserve (USAR) is considered separately from the active duty Army, or Active Component (AC), and separately from the other Army Reserve Component, the Army National Guard (ANG). Despite this arbitrary, but necessary, narrowing of the scope of this Study, many of the observations regarding constituent perceptions discussed herein may be applicable (though in different measure) to these other identified uniformed elements of the Total Army.

diminishing position versus the AC and the ANG in fighting for constrained dollars and priorities in the Army of the 1990's.²

Five primary constituent³ sectors of American society will affect directly the force and funding modifications of the Army Reserve during the next few critical years. The Department of the Army, the non-Department of Defense (DoD) portion of the Executive Branch of Government, the United States Congress, the American public and the U.S. news media all will affect, substantially and materially, the changes to be accomplished in the Army Reserve of the future.

It is not presumed, of course, that the identified "constituents" of the Army Reserve either are or act monolithically. The Department of the Army (DA) acts within the necessary parameters of consideration for all of its component parts (and, indeed, must similarly consider demands of the Department of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the war-fighting Theater Commanders-in-Chief).

The Executive Branch of Government includes other National Command Authority actors and such critical elements to the USAR as the Office of Management and Budget. Congress consists of majority

² Current deficiencies in USAR funding for equipment and facilities procurements and full-time unit support personnel in comparison with AC and ANG components have been well-documented in such works as The Army Reserve and U.S. National Defense Strategy, by Colonel David S. Ritterpusch.

³ The term "constituent" as used in this Study refers to a constitutive, or creative, element of U. S. society. It is the identified constituents which, in a true sense, created the Army Reserve -- and it is these elements of American society to which the Army Reserve must continue to respond, and serve.

and minority parties and members, and must be considered only with full realization of the significant importance and the continuing influence of Congressional member and committee staffs.

The "public" is as diverse as society itself, consisting of not only of individuals but also of dozens of component groups as widely defined as corporations, associations, lobbying organizations and "think tanks." And, of course, the media includes individual writers, liberal and conservative institutions, and newspaper, magazine, radio and television reporters and media "personalities."

In an idealized society, and within an idealized Army, decisions affecting the future of the Army Reserve would be based upon a wholly rational balancing of considerations regarding military requirements and necessary budget constraints. National strategy would lead towards the formulation of military strategies, including force structures and budgetary support, and forces would be tailored neatly and effectively to meet specifically identified threats. Needed constraints would be applied fairly, judiciously and with a minimum of destabilization for military personnel, units, and components.

Neither society nor the Army, unfortunately, match the idealized model. The apparant environment of rapid change could well result in a less-than-ideal Army, and an emaciated Army Reserve. Of the five identified constituents of the Army Reserve, only the Department of the Army may be depended upon to examine carefully the competing interests of the components to form the

Army of the 1990's. Many in the USAR community would even express caution regarding over-reliance on DA in maintaining force and budget priorities for the Army Reserve, especially considering the current track record of USAR resource shortages vis-a-vis the Army National Guard. Widely reported DA criticisms of the Army Reserve, discussed herein, may further erode any USAR confidence in DA.

With respect to all five of the primary constituents of the Army Reserve, the attitudes and opinions which will directly affect military, Departmental, Executive Branch and legislative decisions regarding USAR personnel, procurements, training and administrative resources may be based upon current and future perceptions of the Army Reserve. Perceptions, rather than base facts, regarding such issues as unit readiness, mobilization capabilities, and combat training and effectiveness may play a large role in determining the Army Reserve of the future.

If currently reported perceptions of the Army Reserve are an accurate indicator, the USAR could be in for a difficult future. With U. S. News & World Report observing "The Sad State of Weekend Warriors,"⁴ media and public criticism of the Army Reserve has been at a consistently high level. With the Department of Defense (and DA) refusing to request activation of USAR Civil Affairs units for Operation Just Cause in Panama, there is a recognized reluctance to use Army Reserve units for exactly the purpose for which they were created. With the Executive Branch and Congress aggressively

⁴ U.S. News & World Report, "The Sad State of Weekend Warriors," pp. 28-30 (Sept. 25, 1989).

seeking severe cuts in Defense spending and both elements openly considering moving critical combat support and combat service support functions for contingency operations back into the Active Component, the Army Reserve may find its priority of use reduced even further. Finally, with the Army Reserve unable to develop and present a coherent and effective public strategy regarding its role within the Army until that role is defined for it within the "Total Army," the future of the USAR must be viewed with great concern.

It is the purpose of this Study to examine certain current indicators of the perceptions of the Army Reserve held by the various identified constituents, and to assess the potential negative impact of a failure of the Army Reserve to influence positively these perceptions. It then follows that active and effective programs for changing negative perceptions and creating favorable perceptions are major priorities for the Army Reserve as it struggles to maintain parity and healthy viability in the reduced Army of the 1990's and beyond.

I. THE NATURE AND POWER OF PERCEPTION

The term "perception" is used in this Study in the same context as used in traditional psychological and epistemological analyses. The concept represents the individual (or, collectively, organizational) comprehension and mental grasp of objects, qualities, etc., based upon sensory observations. Perception is comprehension of facts and of fictions, and includes mental acceptance of both realities and myths. Arguably, it is perceptions, rather than the objective input of truth or lie,

object or image, upon which individuals and organizations rely in making decisions ... and in acting upon presumed knowledge.

The concept of perception was discussed comprehensively by Aristotle in his treatise De anima II, written approximately 350 B.C. Sense perception, according to Aristotle, is an activity in which external objects so act upon each sense organ that it receives their form (or perceptible properties) independently of the matter with which the form is associated in the object itself.

Just as wax can be imprinted with various impressions, so the sense organ or sense can become qualified as colored, resonant, hot, or possessing of other qualities. Neither the sense nor its (perceptible) object has any actual existence, except in the act of perception.

Once perception and belief are melded in the mind, truth and reality become undistinguished from non-truth and unreality. Thus, Thomas H. Huxley could observe that "[w]hat we call rational grounds for our beliefs are often extremely irrational attempts to justify our instincts."⁵

Perceptions become reinforced by, and reinforce, belief. Facts, or objective data, become irrelevant. The French writer and philosopher Michel de Montaigne once noted: "We believe nothing so firmly as what we least know."⁶

⁵ T.H. Huxley, On the Natural Inequality of Man, 1890. Huxley was an English biologist and writer (b. 1825, d. 1895).

⁶ Michel de Montaigne, Essays I, 1580.

In assessing the impact of current and future constituent perceptions on the beliefs and, ultimately, the decisions affecting the U.S. Army Reserve, two elements must be identified and understood. They are (1) the relationships between perceptions and objective realities among the various constituents (or the tendency of the constituent to misperceive facts -- or, similarly, to assume negative perceptions); and (2) the relative power of the various constituent elements to influence decisions or events directly affecting the Army Reserve (in other words, a "decision-making" index). These two relationships, or phenomena, may be demonstrated graphically.

With respect to the first factor, the constituents have a differing ability to distinguish between perceptions based upon objective truth and those based upon incorrect data. This is reflective of both a generic availability of factually correct information, and a tendency on the part of a particular constituent to misperceive data provided or available.

Perception becomes more congruent with reality as the constituent actor gains access to facts on a continuing basis. Thus, DA, with a constant access to facts, has the closest congruence between perception and reality. The media, with measurable representation determined by a single reporter or media personality reflecting the individual perception at any point in time, has the furthest congruence between perception and reality. Said differently, DA has the greatest access to accurate information, and should have the least propensity to possess distorted

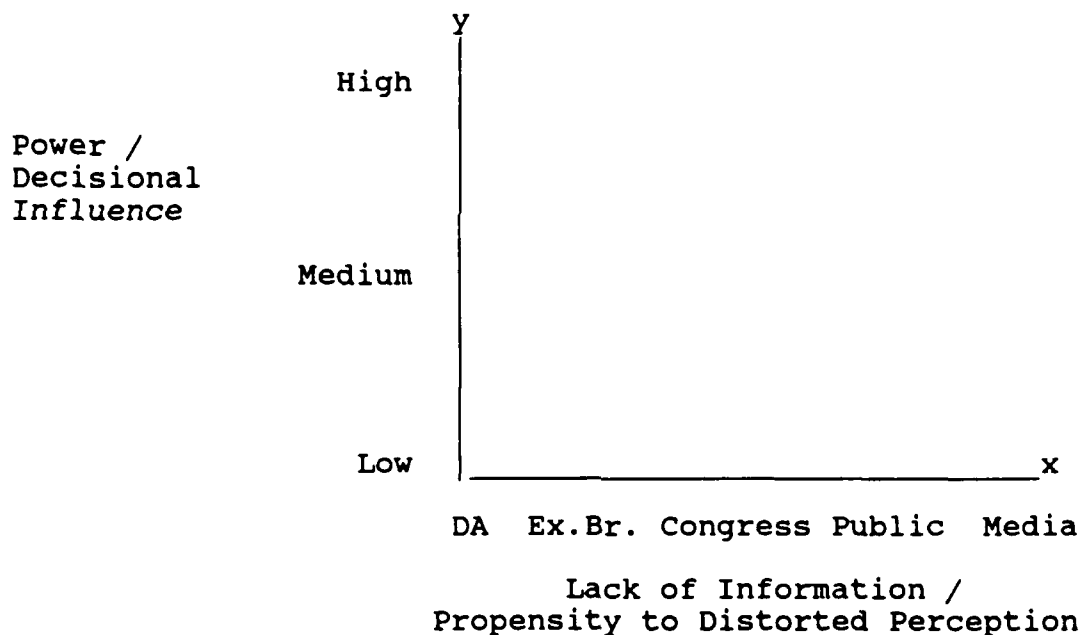
perceptions; the media (as represented in a single story) has the least consistent access to accurate information and the greatest propensity to distorted perceptions. The other constituents may be arrayed between these two on a spectrum:

Perception = Reality or Tendency Towards Distorted Perceptions				
LOW				HIGH
DA	Exec. Branch	Congress	Public	Media

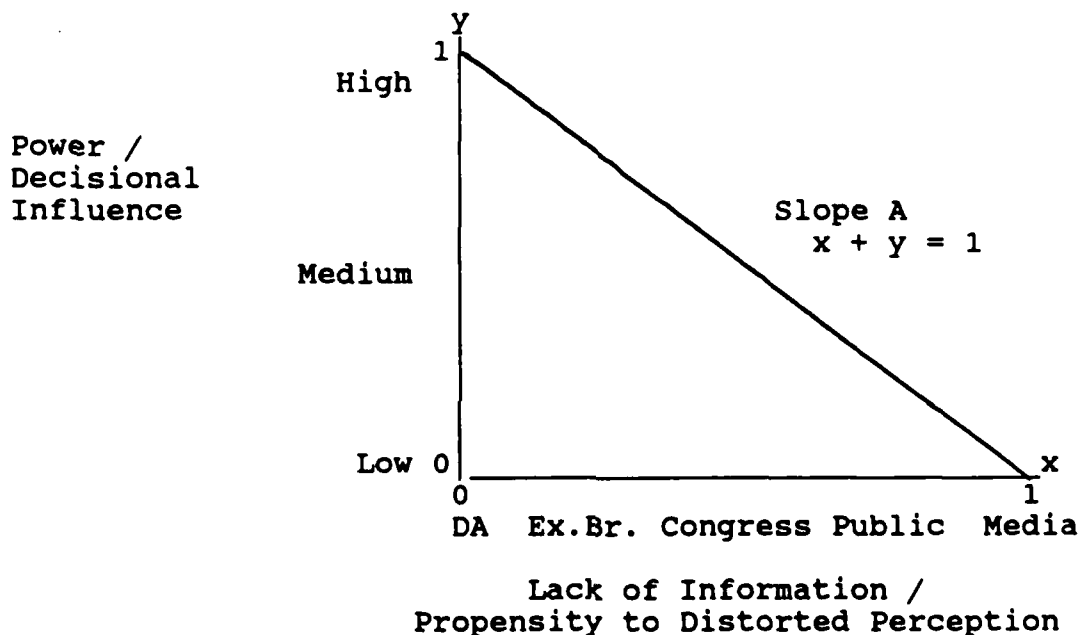
The same constituents may be further examined, however, with respect to their relative influence on decisions of significance to the Army Reserve. In this regard, the array of constituents is precisely the same as in the first (or "perception") analysis: DA has the greatest ability to determine decisions affecting the Army Reserve by virtue of its function as bureaucratic sponsor of the military component. This is followed by the Executive Branch (having primary budget approval); the Congress (with appropriations powers); the public (as the electorate for the Chief Executive and Congress); and, finally, the media which, on a "micro" level with respect to an individual news item, has only minor influence over major decisions affecting the Army Reserve. On the other hand, as will be demonstrated, the cumulative effect of numerous individual media articles which misperceive facts may be highly detrimental to the decision process.

Placing the constituent components on an "x" axis and their

relative positions of Reserve decisional influence on the "y" axis yields the following graphic display:

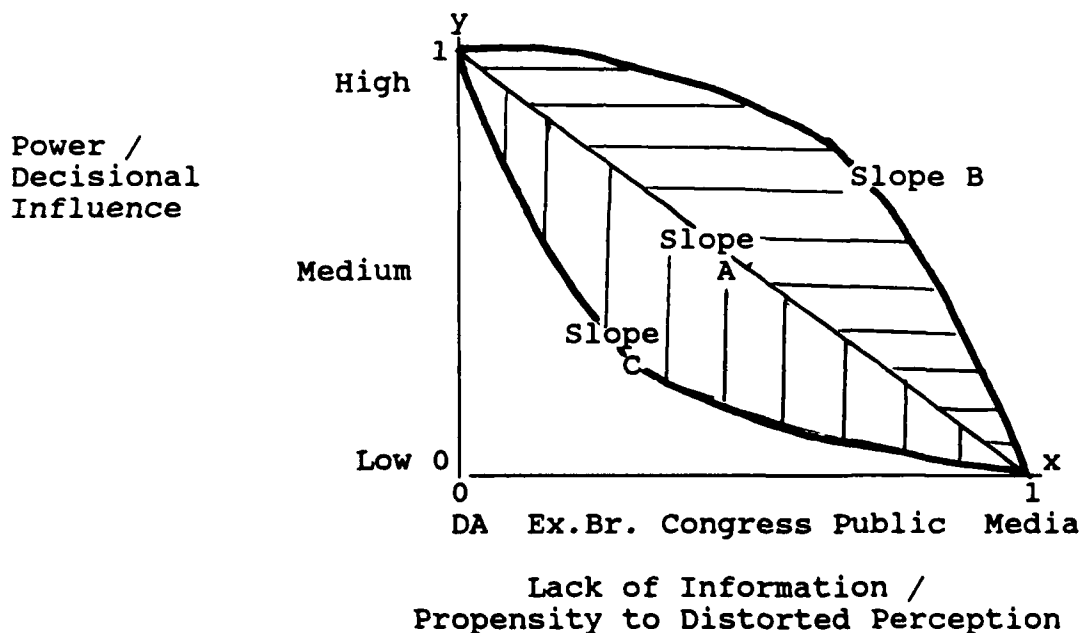


In the idealized Army, a linear relationship would exist to reflect that $x + y = 1$; with the result that Slope A = -1.



As distorted perceptions obtain more influence on decisions, the Slope resembles Slope B below, as $x + y \geq 1$. As reflected in the graph, the significance of distorted perception as an influential factor increases dramatically in the public and media sectors.

Similarly, as distorted perceptions are less influential on decisions, the Slope moves toward Slope C below, and $x + y \leq 1$.



The shaded area bound by Slopes A and B reflects the importance of distorted perceptions on decision-making, and the potential damage caused by erroneous perceptions (Slope B) on a rational decision-making model (Slope A).

The shaded area bound by Slopes A and C reflects the lost potential of favorable perception (Slope C) in bringing decision-making closer to the rational model (Slope A), or in expediting a favorable exercise of power by the decision-maker.

The total area bound by Slope B and Slope C defines the impact of the phenomenon of perception on the exercise of decision-making and the exercise of power. Negative perceptions will curtail the effective and favorable exercise of power within all constituent sectors; positive perceptions may improve the exercise of power.

The graphic results also show that the impact of perceptions is more enhanced among the public and media sectors of the USAR constituent society, but that the impact is even present to a significant degree upon the Executive Branch and Congress, and to a minor (but perhaps determinative) degree upon the Department of the Army.

Additionally, the paradigm presented need not be biased, and the concept of perception need not be viewed negatively in order for the model to have meaning. Indeed, if Slope A represents factual and unbiased decision-making, the negative relative value reflected in Slope C could merely represent the negative results of a failure to present such facts adequately. Slope B could then be read to represent the potentially positive results of a campaign to favorably influence the impact of such facts on the constituencies. Students of propaganda, and of modern advertising, would urge this as the appropriate interpretation of the model.

The graphics merely serve to underscore theses which may be obvious: That positive and negative perceptions exist, although measuring them precisely may be beyond current science, medicine and mathematics; that lack of information and/or negative

perceptions tend to have a negative impact on the exercise of favorable decision-making; that positive perceptions may improve the tendency towards favorable decision-making; and, thus, that the Army Reserve has a vested and demonstrable interest in improving the perceptions of the Army Reserve among its five constituencies.

Similarly, the ability to influence the perceptions, and the amount of influence which may be exercised effectively, varies greatly among the five identified constituencies. It is at least certain, however, that attempts to identify and change negative perceptions, and to create positive ones, can have potentially significant favorable effects on the decisional process.

Any such policies pursued by the Army Reserve, whether through proactive strategy and program development (DA), active coalition-building (the Executive Branch), concerted Congressional information efforts (Congress), creative public information programs (the public), or more intensive and effective media relations (the media), are likely to have a favorable impact on the process of determining the future shape of the Army Reserve. Considering the alternatives to appreciating and taking full advantage of this potential "power of perception," the Army Reserve would be well advised to consider an immediate and considerable program in this area, under whatever program label it deems appropriate.

II. EXAMPLES OF CURRENT CONSTITUENT PERCEPTIONS

By examining examples of current constituent perceptions as expressed directly by the constituents or publicly reported, it is

possible to place into perspective differing attitudes toward the Army Reserve. Such attitudes may result in actions either favorable or detrimental to the organization and its personnel.⁷

A. DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

Statements of the Secretary of the Army and the Army Chief of Staff, and statements of Department of Defense officials endorsed by the Army, best represent official and unofficial pronouncements of the Department of the Army sufficient to begin an analysis of DA "perceptions" of the Army Reserve.

In the United States Army Posture Statement for Fiscal Year 1991, DA recognizes that "The USAR and ARNG play pivotal roles in Army warfighting plans and capabilities."⁸

The June 1989 Army Focus states:

The Army National Guard and the Army Reserve are essential elements of the Total Army. The "Reserves" are fully integrated into all Army plans that provide field commanders the forces necessary to deter aggression and defend U. S. vital interests wherever they are threatened.⁹

In mid-1989, DA observed that "Reserve Component readiness is at its highest level ever due to continued modernization, enhanced training, effective equipment management, and intensive

⁷ For example, in Fiscal Year 1990 61 USAR units already have been identified for elimination, with a corresponding reduction in USAR personnel strength of 9,500 personnel. Citizen Patriot, Vol. 2, No. 4, p. 4 (Feb. 19, 1990).

⁸ Michael P. W. Stone and Carl E. Vuono, Trained and Ready in An Era of Change: The Posture of The United States Army, Fiscal Year 1991, p. VII-6.

⁹ Department of the Army, Army Focus, June 1989, p. 21.

management of unit readiness."¹⁰ Problems, however, also were observed in that time period:

.... Personnel readiness within the Reserve Components has made less dramatic improvements. Reserve Component progress in personnel readiness will require emphasis on recruiting, retention, individual training, personnel support, and the transition management program.

Another readiness challenge is improving the status of combat support and combat service support (CS/CSS) units. Like overall Reserve Component readiness, the trend of CS/CSS readiness shows steady improvement; however, these units continue to face critical shortages in equipment and qualified personnel. The Army has placed special emphasis on the status of these units and is continually looking for better ways to manage them.¹¹

It is important to note that the combat service support units discussed by DA as facing "critical shortages in equipment and qualified personnel" and in need of better management are largely in the Army Reserve.¹²

The Reserve Components and the Army Reserve also have been identified recently by DA as in need of training assistance.

In several recent assessments of its training readiness, the Army recognized the need to bridge the gap between the Active and Reserve Components. To accomplish this, the Army has developed a Reserve Components Training Development Action Plan (RCTDAP) that outlines the approach for training soldiers, leaders, and units of the National Guard and Reserve. ... Implementation of the strategy through the 1990's will bring the training readiness of the Reserve

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Specifically, 48 percent of Army Reserve force structure spaces are CSS versus the Active Army, which has only 17 percent of its force structured as CSS. In total, 43 percent of all CSS is provided by the Army Reserve, 33 percent by the Active Army, and 24 percent by the Army National Guard. Scott Lund, "Military Manpower Tables," p. 4; Diana Woody, "CSS by Compo Structural Strength." Both references are cited in Ritterpusch, supra Note 2, at p. 12.

Components more in line with that of the Active Army and strengthen the Total Army concept.¹³

The training "problem" which exists among Reserve Components was examined even more specifically with respect to the Army Reserve by the Army Training Board in 1987:

[T]he Army's training management system ... is oriented strongly toward the realities of the AC training environment ... and does not adequately address divergent methods more amenable to the RC training environment.¹⁴

Official Department of the Army pronouncements regarding the other primary area of readiness, logistics, are sparse. Especially considering the huge disparities in equipment purchases among the Active Component, the National Guard and the Army Reserve, the DA reluctance to publicly discuss disparities may be understandable. For example, in FY 1986 the National Guard received almost ten times more equipment than the USAR.¹⁵ In terms of equipment on hand (EOH), the Army Reserve

is far and away the lowest of the Reserve Forces. To illustrate, as of the end of FY88, the Air National Guard, the Naval Reserve, and the Air Force Reserve were at 93 percent, 95 percent, and 96 percent of their EOH

¹³ Army Focus, November 1989, p. 25.

¹⁴ Army Training Board, Enhancing Reserve Component Unit Training, p. 31, cited by Ritterpusch, supra Note 2, at p. 14. Ritterpusch also examines the Army Training Board's findings that training devices have not been provided adequately to the USAR by an Army system which lacks "evidence reflecting analysis of unique RC requirements."

¹⁵ David S. Ritterpusch, Equipment on Hand and Readiness of Army Units, Tab I. There are indications that the differences in procurements between the National Guard and the Reserve narrowed in the FY 1988 and FY 1989 periods, but the significant difference in Equipment on Hand ("EOH") in readiness ratings continues between the Guard and Reserve.

requirement, respectively. The Army National Guard was at 77 percent. The Army Reserve was far behind at 59 percent.¹⁶

With respect to force modernization in the Reserve, DA looks to the future rather than to current achievements. "Force modernization continues to align units to the Army of Excellence (AOE) design. A significant number of USAR units will modernize to the AOE organization in the early 1990s."¹⁷

DA does recognize another major deficiency in the Army Reserve, that of insufficient facilities:

The revitalization of USAR facilities is an increasingly critical necessity. USAR centers are operating at 200 percent of capacity. The backlog of construction requirements to enlarge crowded facilities and replace dilapidated ones exceeds \$2.3 billion.¹⁸

Despite this critical shortcoming, however, DA has decreased the USAR military construction budget from \$86 million in FY89 to \$79 million in FY90. The estimated USAR military construction budget for FY 1991 is only \$59 million.¹⁹

Current perceptions of the Army Reserve reported among senior Department of the Army officials have not lacked for controversy, especially considering the negative connotations of several reported comments.

¹⁶ David S. Ritterpusch, "Unique Capability of Army Reserve Value to Nation," The Officer, December 1989, p. 14.

¹⁷ U.S. Army Posture Statement, FY 91, p. VII-6 (emphasis added).

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Army Budget Office, The Army Budget: FY 1991 Budget Estimates, p. 33.

When the United States Southern Command requested that certain USAR civil affairs units be called to active duty for Operation Just Cause under the Presidential 200,000 personnel Selected Reserve Call-Up authority,²⁰ Army Chief of Staff General Carl E. Vuono was quoted as responding that he did not "need Reservists to fight my war."²¹ As it turned out, over 2,000 USAR volunteers applied and some 222 USAR civil affairs and associated skills personnel actually were assigned to Panama for Operation Just Cause support.²²

Somewhat similarly, the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Reserve Affairs), Stephen M. Duncan, recently has criticized the Army Chief of Staff's reported statements downplaying an early USAR mobilization role in future force contingencies.²³

²⁰ U.S. Code, Title 10, Section 673b. The Selected Reserve has been deemed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to be so essential to wartime missions that they have priority over all other Reserves. JCS Pub. 21, citing U.S. Code, Title 10, Section 268(b).

²¹ Citizen Patriot, Vol. 2, No. 1, p. 2 (Jan. 1, 1990). The Chief of Army Reserve, MG William F. Ward, responded to this report with a letter to the publisher of Citizen Patriot requesting that the publication "recheck [its] source of information ..." because of General Vuono's past support for the USAR. Citizen Patriot, Vol. 2, No. 3, p. 2 (Feb. 5, 1990). To date, no correction or retraction with respect to the quotation has been published.

²² Reported in Citizen Patriot, Vol. 2, No. 5, p. 4 (Mar. 5, 1990). See also Courtenay S. Welton II, "Expertise in Reserve," The Officer, March 1990, pp. 11-15, for a detailed discussion of the deployment of USAR civil affairs personnel to Panama for Operation Just Cause.

²³ Citizen Patriot, Vol. 2, No. 5, p. 3 (Mar. 5, 1990). Assistant Secretary Duncan's criticism also was spurred by the fact that General Vuono's statements came amid issuance of a directive for a new Department of Defense study to be conducted regarding Reserve force structures, training and readiness -- a study to be conducted in large part to determine what should be the proper Reserve role

This apparent lack of confidence and negative perceptions of the Army Reserve on the part of senior DA officials is reflected in a recent survey of senior USAR and National Guard officers conducted by the publication Citizen Patriot. In the survey, the question was asked: "Do you believe the active Army leadership considers the RC to be substandard when compared to the active component?" An amazing 92 percent of the respondents answered "Yes" to the question.²⁴

As has been demonstrated, Department of the Army officials have a very clear grasp of statistical data reflecting what they believe to be deficiencies in the Army Reserve in the areas of personnel, training, equipment on hand, force modernization, and facilities. Various DA publications and references highlight these deficiencies in addressing budgetary requirements and in announcing ambitious DA programs for remedying the identified problems.

What may not be as clear, however, is the very apparent additional problem of negative perceptions regarding the Army Reserve held even by senior DA officials. It is the thesis of this Study that such negative perceptions may indeed affect decisions regarding the Army Reserve: Decisions on budget requests, force structures, and employment of units and individuals in mobilization contingencies. Each of these decisions is particularly within the province of DA, and negative perceptions leading to negative

in future mobilization. Ibid., p. 4.

²⁴ Citizen Patriot, Vol. 1, No. 8, p. 1 (Sept. 4, 1989).

decisions can have nothing except a profoundly negative impact on the Army Reserve.

B. THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Perceptions of the Army Reserve on the part of non-Department of Defense elements of the Executive Branch are not widely reported. The President, in his National Security Strategy of the United States, has described the military support mission largely met by the Reserve as an "unglamorous but essential component of military power."²⁵

It may even be that the other elements of the Executive Branch assume whatever perspectives and reflect whatever perceptions that affect a single issue at a given time. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) may be little inclined to have any opinion of the Army Reserve other than the size of its budget, and on that subject may rely entirely on DA and the Department of Defense.

The State Department, which as Operation Just Cause indicated may be an important future constituent regarding employment of the Army Reserve in civil-military operations and nation-building, has not focussed on the Army Reserve as a component apart from general military forces. It will be interesting to observe the emerging perceptions of the State Department on the performances in support of the new Panamanian government accomplished by the civil affairs, special forces and

²⁵ Ronald Reagan, National Security Strategy of the United States, p. 20.

psychological operations components of the Joint Special Operations Command -- and, particularly, whether there are any distinctions drawn between the Active Component forces and the Army Reserve.

Such perceptions may assist in determining how USAR civil affairs forces may interact with Country Teams and State Department personnel in future deployments. Indeed, such perceptions may determine whether the State Department will indorse such future deployments as in the best interests of U.S. foreign policy; or will ban USAR civil affairs deployments as contrary to State's diplomatic purposes. With the histories of the Department of Defense and the Department of State regarding Operation Just Cause just now being written, much information has not yet been divulged which could affect broad constituent perceptions regarding the success or failure of USAR deployments in support of that campaign.²⁶

Perceptions of the Army Reserve held at the National Security Council (NSC) level could, of course, be even more influential than those held at State in future crisis response

²⁶ Deployment of USAR forces to Panama was anything but a total success, at least from the USAR civil affairs community perspective expressed by returning participants in Just Cause. Questionable command and control, poor organization, lack of unit cohesion (caused by individual rather than unit activation), glaring failures in logistical support, inadequate civil affairs involvement in planning, and uncertain political (i.e. State Department) guidance regarding levels of infrastructure support are just some of the complaints voiced to the author by senior USAR civil affairs officers deployed to Panama. How such evident problems are balanced against the superb accomplishments and contributions of the USAR community to Operation Just Cause in an ultimate assessment of performance will largely be determined by resultant perceptions (rather than bare facts) of Army Reserve involvement.

deployment situations. There is no basis for assessing such perceptions at this time, however, the newly drafted (by the NSC Staff) National Security Strategy of the United States document to be issued by President Bush²⁷ could be particularly instructive in determining the current perceptions of the Army Reserve held at the NSC level.

Other Executive Branch elements in this constituency, including critical actors (Departments and Agencies) in the intelligence, mobilization, law enforcement, commercial, drug policy, transportation, and medical communities, may have directly relevant and important perceptions of the Army Reserve which affect current (and may affect future) policy decisions and resource allocations. A comprehensive treatment addressing such perceptions is beyond the scope of this work, but well worth a future effort.²⁸

²⁷ A revised and updated National Security Strategy of the United States originally was scheduled for release in January 1990. Rapid transitioning events in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and Central America caused the publication of this document to be delayed, and a new release date has not yet been established. A reasonable presumption, however, is for the document to be issued in January 1991, at the mid-point of the Bush Administration.

²⁸ Although a presumption of this Study is that members of the Executive Branch have a greater access to accurate information regarding the Army Reserve than constituents outside of the Executive Branch, and thus are less affected by negative perceptions not based upon facts, that premise may not be warranted with respect to U.S. Government Departments and Agencies with severely or somewhat limited DoD contact. For example, full capabilities of the Army Reserve with respect to domestic emergencies may not be well understood by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); USAR medical resources are not well known by the Department of Health and Human Services; and Army Reserve assets apparently have not been integrated effectively into the National Drug War.

C. CONGRESS

Determining the current perceptions of the 101st Congress toward the Army Reserve is, at best, a difficult and tenuous task. When the Army Reserve is most successful with Congress, at least regarding budgets and programs, such success is often led by the lobbying efforts of such organizations as the Reserve Officers Association of the United States -- with Department of the Army serving as an unlikely opponent.

It is at least apparent that the Army Reserve is beginning to see the same types of success which have marked efforts by the Air Force Reserve (AFR), the Naval Reserve (NR) and the Marine Corps Reserve (MCR) to obtain Congressional support in recent years.

The Army Reserve particularly has been successful with the Senate and House Appropriations Committees in achieving support for revisions addressing command and control of the Army Reserve, as well as for support in preventing diversion of funds specifically appropriated by Congress for Reserve Components.²⁹

The criticality of Congressional perceptions of the Army Reserve during the budget process is obvious:

²⁹ The Officer, January 1990, p. 8. The January 1990 issue of the Reserve Officers Association (ROA) magazine, The Officer, announced the selection of Senator Robert C. Byrd (Democrat from West Virginia), Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, to receive the 1990 Minute Man of the Year award, the highest ROA award given for contributions to national security. Senator Byrd was particularly recognized for providing leadership "which ... added more than \$1.3 billion for Guard and Reserve equipment to the Administration's request," more than \$400 million above the amount approved in the Authorization Bill. Ibid.

Given the constrained fiscal environment facing the Department of Defense, the Army Reserve is left in the challenging position of trying to improve its resource base to the point where it can make itself operationally capable of carrying out the missions required of it by the national strategy.³⁰

Only by effectively assessing such perceptions, then presenting information to Congress necessary to favorably affect such perceptions,³¹ will the passage of adequate resourcing programs become even remotely possible.

D. THE PUBLIC

Public perceptions are most commonly measured, imprecisely and arguably ineffectively, through polling techniques. Unfortunately, national polls regarding the public's attitude towards the Army Reserve have not been accomplished at nearly the scope or frequency necessary to present a comprehensive treatment of this issue.

The Gallup Poll has at least addressed the issue of the confidence held by the American public in various institutions, including the military. As a starting point, review of recent relevant results may be useful. Responses to a Gallup Poll conducted September 23-26, 1988, were given to the following question: "I am going to read you a list of institutions in American society. Would you please tell me how much confidence

³⁰ Ritterpusch, "Unique Capability of Army Reserve Value to Nation," p. 17.

³¹ Direct lobbying of Congress by Executive Branch Departments and Agencies is prohibited by law.

you, yourself, have in each one -- a great deal, quite a lot, some, or very little?"

Those saying "great deal"
or "quite a lot"

Church or organized religion	59%
Military	58
U.S. Supreme Court	56
Banks	49
Public schools	49
Newspapers	36
Congress	35
Television	27
Organized Labor	26
Big business	25

It is particularly interesting to note that other "constituents" of the Army Reserve, specifically Congress and the media, are held in significantly less confidence by the American public than the military.

It also is interesting to note this level of confidence in an historical perspective, as a National trend. Previous results of the same poll reflect percentages of those responding with a "great deal" or "quite a lot" are as follows:

	<u>1987</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1979</u>
Church/Organized Relig.	61%	66%	62%	65%
Military	61	61	53	54
U.S. Supreme Court	52	56	42	45
Banks	51	51	51	60
Public Schools	50	48	39	53
Newspapers	31	35	38	51
Congress	*	39	28	34
Television	28	29	25	38
Organized Labor	26	28	26	36
Big Business	*	31	28	32

* Denotes Not Asked

The results of this poll,³² reflect the high confidence of the American public in the military as an institution, but do not record the element of that perception applicable to the Army Reserve. Knowing such information, especially in an environment of growing public confidence in the military as an institution, would be useful in evaluating program designed to engender public support for USAR policies, programs and budgets.

The publication Public Opinion Quarterly also has urged a detailed analysis of public attitudes toward and influence of the military and its components. The book The American Soldier, published in 1949, was the last comprehensive study of the importance of the American soldier in American society; the lasting value of their societal contributions; and the influences of the soldier on the development of sociology and social sciences.³³ The Army Reserve, with its greater numbers and expanded role in society having evolved since 1949, would be an important component of such a study.

The effects of Army Reserve members on the American public across a wide range of sociological topic areas³⁴ may directly

³² Reported in The Gallup Poll: 1989, p. 224, published by Scholarly Resources, Inc.

³³ Robin M. Williams, Jr., "The American Soldier: An Assessment, Several Wars Later," Public Opinion Quarterly, Summer 1989, p. 155.

³⁴ For example, USAR members affect their communities in manners affecting small group interaction, bureaucracy, motivation, stress, influence of technology, social class, authority and poer, political stability and instability, decision-making, and responses to uncertainty and risk. Williams, "The American Soldier: Several Wars Later," p. 169.

affect public perceptions of the USAR, and may have significant impact upon the ultimate success of Army Reserve policies and programs. The type of study advocated by Public Opinion Quarterly requiring interaction between the military (and, specifically, the Army Reserve) and sociologists and psychologists would have important ramifications for National policies regarding arms control, peacekeeping, negotiations and international cooperation,³⁵ but also would be invaluable in assisting to determine the role of the Army Reserve within the military, and within society.

Absent the type of comprehensive studies not yet done by the polling experts and the sociologists, any analyses of the current public perceptions of the Army Reserve must rely upon imperfect reporting by the media, as discussed below, and the conjecture of USAR leaders and self-appointed scribes and pundits.

Interestingly, members of the Army National Guard have begun looking at implications on ARNG planning of different evolving trends, including evolving public perceptions.³⁶ For example, the authors of one study have reviewed for implications affecting the National Guard the following areas: Social trends, technological trends, economic trends, political trends, military trends, trends of decreasing numbers of militarily eligible youth, trends of increased technological sophistication in military hardware, the decrease in manpower base, and the reduction of

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 169-170.

³⁶ James L. Morrison and David L. Raney, "Anticipating Future Environments to Enhance Army National Guard Planning," Draft Text from an NGB-Sponsored Presentation on 2 March 1989 on Future Planning.

funding for defense purposes.³⁷ Identified implications for the ARNG of the public's perception of a reduced USSR threat are as follows:

- 1) The Defense budget is reduced.
- 2) Missions are transferred from AC to Reserve and ARNG units due to assessment of increased cost effectiveness under conditions of reduced risk.
- 3) Congress becomes less pro-military based on pressures from constituents to spend funds elsewhere.
- 4) As Soviet economy stabilizes, it becomes prime market for U.S. products and eventually becomes an economic threat.
- 5) United States of Europe becomes reality.
- 6) U.S. reduces its forces in Europe by 20%.
- 7) Tactical nuclear weapons are eliminated in NATO.³⁸

Whether one agrees or disagrees with the authors' identification of specific implications, or the likelihood of the occurrence of anticipated events, it is at least significant that the ARNG is evaluating such trends and such public perceptions. The Army Reserve's dedication to a similar task is not so apparent.

E. THE MEDIA

Literally dozens of newspaper articles are published and television and radio programs broadcast every month which address, in some manner, the Army Reserve. It would be simple and simplistic to categorize every such article or broadcast as typical, and foolish to categorize every example as atypical. Certainly, sufficient examples of "good press" and "bad press" towards the USAR are available to destroy any attempt at general

³⁷ Ibid., Tables 1-5, 7-10.

³⁸ Ibid., Table 6 (Note: The authors state that the assigned numbers do not refer to any assigned priority).

characterization of the nature of media perceptions of the Army Reserve.

It is probably axiomatic to recognize that favorable perceptions on the part of the media regarding the Army Reserve result in favorable media articles, and that such favorable articles may enhance the abilities of the USAR to influence the public, Congress, the Executive Branch and Department of the Army to strengthen (through favorable budgets, policies and programs) the Army Reserve. It is similarly obvious that unfavorable and negative media reports give rise to public skepticism of the need for a strong Army Reserve; foster Congressional tendencies to cut-back or weaken an ineffective military force; and catalyze negative decisions within the Executive Branch and the Department of Defense regarding budget priorities and crisis mobilization/employment of USAR forces and personnel.

Clearly, no individual media report, or reporter, possesses the singular power implicit in recognizing this constituent "power of the press." Thus, absent the availability of a bellwether or accurate measure of the perception of the entire media regarding the Army Reserve, it is useful to examine some constituent examples.

One such example, and an unfortunate one, is the most recent national news magazine article addressed specifically to the Army Reserve, "The Sad State of Weekend Warriors," published in U.S. News & World Report on September 25, 1989. Although the article ostensibly addresses both the Army Reserve and the Army

National Guard, with sources from both elements of the Reserve Component interviewed, the clear perception communicated in the article is a focus on the Army Reserve.

The article begins by asserting that "America's part-time soldiers have long been dismissed by their fellow warriors and many of their countrymen as poorly trained, ill-equipped and out of shape 'weekend warriors.'"³⁹ "But," the article continues, "the nation's second-string soldiers are now part of its first line of defense."⁴⁰

The article actually does a credible job of reporting many of the same USAR deficiencies in training, logistics (particularly equipment on hand) and mobilization preparedness reported through official DA and DoD sources. Elements of the article even assume a sympathetic tone towards the Reserves:

Despite the increased importance of the Reserves, the Regular Army continues to treat them like second-class soldiers. Too often, it is more interested in funding peacetime programs for active-duty soldiers or buying fancy weapons than arming and training the reservists who would fight another war.

* * *

In the Army Reserves, the demands of training are complicated by a sluggish bureaucracy, officials say.

* * *

.... Although they would be sent to the front lines, most part-time units still depend on hand-me-down goods from the Regular Army. Some units receive no equipment at all. Army Reserve officials estimate that out of \$900 million in acquisitions authorized by Congress for the Reserves in recent years, \$600 million has not yet been spent. Reserve officials blame the Regular Army for foot dragging, and the evidence seems to support the charge.

³⁹ Liz Galtney, "The Sad State of Weekend Warriors," U.S. News & World Report, Sept. 25, 1989, p. 28.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

* * *

The Army further aggravates the problems of the Reserves by constantly changing the missions of individual units. ... Worse, as missions are added or changed, old ones are not dropped, leaving part-time units overwhelmed by paper work and unprepared for the real work they would be called on to do in wartime.

* * *

.... Though Army officials agree that much of the [administrative] paper work is unnecessary, they have done little to solve the problem, according to congressional sources. The Army, despite having spent 10 years and roughly \$50 million, has failed to install a computer system that would help speed the mobilization of the Reserves in an emergency and eliminate much of the paper work. Because the Army failed to do the job, Congress recently assigned the task to the National Guard.⁴¹

Certainly, everything reported in the U.S. News & World Report article is not totally accurate, and certain conclusions may be overdrawn, but the article describes a severely troubled system. The perception by readers (including the public, the Congress and the rest of the Government) of a troubled system is useful to the Army Reserve only if it results directly in decisions to implement concrete and substantial systemic improvements. Such decisions are not yet evident.

As a result, the potential negative impact of the cited article on Reserve personnel morale, employer support for the Reserve, and recruiting and retention cannot be over-estimated. The conclusion that it is in the best interests of the Army Reserve to avoid such negative media reporting, and the negative perceptions it engenders, is unavoidable.

Studies have been accomplished examining the extent to which the media may affect what people think. One such study,

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 28-30.

performed by Robert M. Entman of Duke University,⁴² acknowledges that the political messages of newspapers are "significantly associated with the substantive political attitudes of a national sample of their readers."⁴³ The article summarizes:

... Diversity of news perspectives and editorial liberalism show significant relationships to readers' support of interest groups, public policies and politicians. The relationships vary among self-identified liberals, conservatives, and moderates in accordance with the predictions of information-processing theory. The standard assertion in most recent empirical studies is that "media affect what people think about, not what they think." The findings here indicate the media make a significant contribution to what people think -- to their political preferences and evaluations -- precisely by affecting what they think about.⁴⁴

Entman's political media analysis has a similar application to the Army Reserve in that the lack of negative publicity may, in and of itself, not be a desired objective. He observes:

... I believe the findings ... suggest that the very way scholars have conceptualized media influence may need revision. Scholars have usually attempted to find evidence that the media are persuaders, deliberate causers of public thinking. It may be more realistic to think of the media as contributing to -- but not controlling -- the structure of publicly-available information that shapes the way people can and do think politically. This information includes not only concrete data for cognitive processing but symbols that may engage little-understood emotional needs. Such a picture indicates an inter-dependent media and public, with neither fully controlling the news or its effects.⁴⁵

⁴² Robert M. Entman, "How the Media Affect What People Think: An Information Processing Approach," The Journal of Politics, Vol. 51, No. 2, May 1989, pp. 347-370.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 347.

⁴⁴ Ibid. (emphasis in original).

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 366.

Although a complex concept, the realization that the media acts interdependently with the public and, indeed, with all consumers of its product, can significantly affect the attitude of the Army Reserve in its efforts at influencing the critical media constituent.

Several analyses following the criticisms by the media of the Department of Defense regarding the treatment of the media during Operation Just Cause have rekindled discussion of the media-military relationship.

On the subject of media bias, Aaron Wildavsky has written that the media displays an egalitarian prejudice, with journalists distrusting the elites of money and power and attacking traditional hierarchical structures such as Government, the military and big business.⁴⁶

Economist and social critic Professor Thomas Sowell has argued that the media has a "liberal-left" bias, noting:

Survey after survey among journalists themselves have shown their views are overwhelmingly liberal-left.... Television journalists will go after a businessman or a president like he was a war criminal. But let Ralph Nader or Gloria Steinem come on, and they are treated like messiahs with a holy message for a troubled world.⁴⁷

Conversely, Michael Robinson, described as "perhaps

⁴⁶ Aaron Wildavsky, "The Media's 'American Egalitarians,'" Public Interest, Summer 1987, pp. 94-104.

⁴⁷ Thomas Sowell, "Tom Brokaw's 'Patriotism,'" Compassion Versus Guilt and Other Essays, p. 223.

America's most meticulous media-watcher,"⁴⁸ has shown that when the media report an event rather than analyze, they generally are even-handed:

.... As [Robinson] puts it, "the national press is biased against everybody, but in near equal proportions." Moreover, since there are so many sources of news, it is possible for the populace to gain a fairly full picture of most events. [Robinson] concludes that the media are as reliable a source of information as can be expected.⁴⁹

As James Pontuso observes, if the media is "not always able to present the truth, perhaps it is because the truth is sometimes difficult to ascertain."⁵⁰

Again, the importance of these observations for the Army Reserve is to stress the need for a continuing program of media relations which: (1) Recognizes the importance of the media in creating public perceptions; (2) considers the media as a supplementary source of constituent perceptions, rather than a controlling factor; (3) recognizes the presence of some level of media bias, which bias is more likely to be reflected in media analysis rather than in media news-reporting; and (4) understands the need for maximum dissemination of factual information as a media-relations policy.

⁴⁸ This and other observations of media critics are drawn from the work by James F. Pontuso, "Combat and the Media: The Right to Know Versus the Right to Win," Strategic Review, Winter 1990, pp. 49-60.

⁴⁹ Michael Jay Robinson, "Just How Liberal Is the News? 1980 Revisited," Public Opinion, February/March 1983, p. 59, cited in Pontuso, "Combat and the Media," supra p. 55.

⁵⁰ Pontuso, "Combat and the Media," supra p. 55.

By understanding the nature, the limitations and the potential of the media, the Army Reserve can enable itself to utilize the great potential of the media for influencing constituent perceptions across the spectrum.

III. THE IMPACT OF PERCEPTIONS ON THE ARMY RESERVE OF THE FUTURE

It would be too easy, and perhaps erroneous, to state that the various constituent perceptions of the Army Reserve actually will determine the future of the USAR in the decade of the 1990's. No constituent would acknowledge the difference between its understanding of facts (its perceptions) and the actual truth of the information at issue. No constituent would acknowledge that the slopes identified as Slopes B and C in the model presented in Part I above would at all differ from the rational decision-making model, Slope A.⁵¹ Even more emphatically would each constituent deny the possibility that the Army Reserve could proactively or affirmatively affect its perceptions with any type of program directed towards it.

Nonetheless, the media will continue to report its observations and analyses regarding all topics of American society and Government, including the military and, specifically, the Army Reserve. The public will continue to interact on a daily basis

⁵¹ This is probably the case even though every constituent would likely recognize the differences between perceptions and reality in the other constituents. Thus, the public would recognize biases in the media, the Congress and the Executive Branch, but would deny its own biases. Similarly, DA sees flaws in the perceptions of all other constituent actors, but denies the existence of its own erroneous perceptions.

with members and organizations of the Army Reserve and will, to a measurable degree, make decisions regarding its public support, elections of congressional representatives, and continuing attitudes towards the missions and purposes of the Army Reserve based upon such contacts.

Congress will continue to make difficult budget allocations and will continue to pass specific Reserve-directed laws based upon its perception of the role of the Army Reserve in the National defense. The Executive Branch will continue to make deployment decisions and budget recommendations based upon its perceptions of the organization and the institutions of the USAR, along with its personnel and leadership.

Finally, DA will directly influence all aspects of the future of the Army Reserve in every manner imaginable. Force structure, mission employment, training assets, and equipment procurements all will be affected by DA perceptions of the role and value of the Army Reserve as an element of the Reserve Components and as an essential part of the Total Army. Whether there will be any divergence at all in the factual bases for its bureaucratic decisions (Slope A) and the influence of perceptions (Slopes B and C), negative or positive, is an issue to be resolved in the future. It is at least certain that some differences between facts and perceptions have been evident, even in DA, in the past. Given this history, it would be foolish to discount the potential prospects for a future impact on DA of its perceptions of the Army Reserve.

IV. AN AFFIRMATIVE ARMY RESERVE PROGRAM FOR INFLUENCING PERSPECTIVES

To set forth a program for influencing perspectives has all of the attendant hazards of presenting a propaganda campaign for implementation. What makes it particularly hazardous is the fact that perceptions of such a program by and among the identified constituents could be extremely negative.

Reserve Component infighting at DA is considered unseemly⁵² and even counter-productive to the unified Army effort. Army Reserve attempts to influence directly other elements of the Executive Branch would be perceived as representing an Army Staff lack of control and cohesion, likely to result in a harsh tightening of the reins on the Army Reserve leadership.

Presentations to Congress must overcome the proscription on lobbying efforts by the Executive Branch, and not be contrary to unified DA positions presented to the Legislative Branch. Active surrogate lobbying efforts, accomplished by the Reserve Officers Association and other non-Governmental groups, are sometimes confused and effectively dispersed in that the National Guard often must be considered in allegiance with the Army Reserve -- while in truth the objectives of the two groups (USAR and ARNG) may be substantially different.

If perceived as "propaganda," any Army Reserve attempts at influencing public opinion or media relationships could have a

⁵² Indeed, dark discussions of the Army Reserve and National Guard "mafias" have often been heard in DA corridors among Active Duty personnel.

similarly negative backlash effect. Mere comparisons with the tremendous media outcry against Defense Department efforts to "manage" the news even during combat operations give adequate warnings of dire consequences in attempting to influence such opinions with respect to Reserve affairs in peacetime.

Having observed these limitations, is it necessary to reject all possible affirmative actions in obtaining favorable perceptions among the various constituents on behalf of the Army Reserve? Certainly not.

First, the Army Reserve must more actively monitor and evaluate instances of negative perceptions on the part of the various constituents, and confront each example with an active effort to correct the perception. This effort must be organized, timely and meticulously implemented (within resource constraints) with a direct purpose of countering or neutralizing the negative impact on potential decisions of the perception.

Secondly, the Army Reserve should reassess its approach to programs and policies within DA with a view towards the impact of such programs on perceptions. For example, the perceived importance of the Army Reserve among the Congress, the media and the public will be directly influenced by its role in future emergency contingency operations. Any attempt to limit an active role for the USAR in such operations should be strongly fought. In fact, an active program towards removing negative perceptions and connotations of any Selected Reserve (200K) call-up should be initiated immediately at the highest USAR levels.

Thirdly, a more effective public information program must be established to carry favorable impressions of the Army Reserve to the public. The Reserve falls far behind the Active Component and the Army National Guard in obtaining favorable press relations and coverage, far too often relying on military and Reserve oriented publications for all news and public interest articles regarding the Reserve.

Finally, such programs as the Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) should be revitalized and made more effective. The initiatives of the British Volunteer forces in their execution of Exercise Executive Stretch are instructive in showing how an effective program of participation by civilians from senior civilian enterprises can be imaginatively administered.⁵³

Even prior to implementing any initiatives which actually involve interaction with the identified constituencies, however, the Army Reserve must look more proactively and incisively to its evolving role in the National Defense posture. Internal studies such as those conducted by the Army National Guard⁵⁴ regarding the importance of national and international trends and the evolving perceptions which may affect the future of the Army Reserve are essential. Such studies must be juxtaposed, moreover, with modern sociological and psychological studies in order to place the

⁵³ Major-General Edward Fursdon, "Exercise Executive Stretch," Army Defence Quarterly & Journal, Vol. 119, No. 3, July 1989, pp. 342-344.

⁵⁴ See the discussion regarding the ARNG-sponsored article, "Anticipating Future Environments to Enhance Army National Guard Planning," in Section IIA above.

military presumptions into a broader socio-cultural context. Analyses of advertising principles and processes also would provide an important perspective to these efforts.

Whether these recommendations would require any new programs, or additional personnel or budget expenditures, is not currently known. It is at least certain that attitudinal changes within the Army Reserve senior command structure and a revitalized focus on the importance of perceptions to the future of the USAR could well accomplish most of the objectives identified here.

CONCLUSION

Perceptions are as difficult to grasp as the elusive photon in physics -- we sense that they are there and can point to their visible results, but capturing, weighing and measuring them is most difficult. For one thing, they won't stand still.

Nonetheless, it is time to try harder in our efforts to affect positively the perceptions of those critical constituents which will have an impact on the future of the Army Reserve.

Rather than present an authoritative program for specific implementation, the purpose of this Study has been on identifying that a phenomenon called perception exists, and that it can indeed be "a force to be reckoned with." Certain possible initial steps for doing so have been presented, but with full recognition of possible negative implications of the effort.

Even absent a thorough risk-benefit analysis, however, it is clear that to do nothing with respect to the identified constituencies and their potential impacts on the future of the

Army Reserve would invite continuing abuse and neglect in a period of severe force and budget curtailments. That prospect alone presents a risk which, one way or another, must be addressed immediately if the Army Reserve is to continue a viable and effective role in the National Defense. The solutions presented in this Study provide a means, and a motivation, for a more active participation in the process.

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