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**RESTRUCTURING THE ARMY:
THE ROAD TO A TOTAL FORCE**

Philip A. Brehm

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RESTRUCTURING THE ARMY: THE ROAD TO A TOTAL FORCE

Phillip A. Brehm



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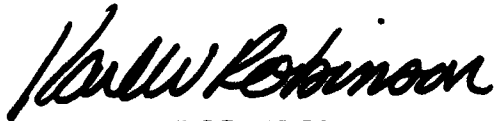
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FOREWORD

The U.S. Army has long accorded the Army National Guard the preponderance of reserve force combat structure. In the aftermath of the cold war, the author questions the continuation of this practice. He suggests instead, in lieu of any current overwhelming threat and with a demonstrated lack of desire by senior military or political leaders to commit Reserve Component (RC) combat forces too quickly, that the RC in general, and the National Guard specifically, be relied on to do what they have demonstrated they do best: *Support*. To accomplish this, he recommends the majority of current reserve combat units, particularly the Separate Brigades, be converted to Combat Support or Combat Service Support (CS/CSS) structure; in fact, more CS/CSS structure than doctrine would call for based on the number of combat units. The advantage of doing this would be to allow the Army not only to remain focused on its combat mission, but also to accomplish its emerging peacetime missions as well. Additionally, by having the more difficult parts requiring extensive training already in place, such a restructuring would allow the Army to be more readily expansible in the future, if the need arises.

The author cites several recent Army documents to support his thesis, offering the assessment that we have not really begun to restructure as the President said we must on August 2, 1990, at Aspen, Colorado. He offers these thought provoking ideas as one way for the Army not only to restructure, but also to actually implement a Total Force.

This is the last of three monographs addressing Reserve Component issues as they apply to the Total Force. These reports will be followed by an SSI study to be published later this year addressing alternative missions for the Army.



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COLONEL PHILIP A. BREHM is the Army National Guard Adviser to the Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College. He is a 1986 graduate of the Army War College and holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Shippensburg University. A Signal Corps Officer, he has served tours of duty in Germany (two) and in Panama: at the National Guard Bureau; and commanded a Combat Support Battalion for a Separate Infantry Brigade. His most recent assignments were as the Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, U.S. Army South and as Senior National Guard Adviser for U.S. Southern Command and U.S. Army South, Republic of Panama.

RESTRUCTURING THE ARMY: THE ROAD TO A TOTAL FORCE

The United States would be ill-served by forces that represent nothing more than a scaled-back or shrunken-down version of the ones we possess at present. If we simply pro-rate our reductions—cut equally across the board—we could easily end up with more than we need for contingencies that are no longer likely—and less than we must have to meet new challenges. What we need are not merely reductions—but restructuring.

President Bush
Aspen Institute
August 2, 1990

In this speech President Bush set out a new military policy for the United States. The policy provides the Army an unparalleled opportunity not only to restructure, as the President said we *must*, but also to truly become the Total Force that was designed more than 20 years ago by then Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird and Army Chief of Staff Creighton Abrams.

By *restructuring* and drawing upon the demonstrated strengths of each of its components, the Army can attain its so far elusive objective of becoming a total force, and will also be following the directive of its Commander in Chief. The Active Component (AC) is best suited to conduct combat operations, particularly the contingency type we may expect in the future; the Reserve Components (RC) are best at providing combat support and combat service support (CS/CSS).¹ Support missions offer distinct recruiting advantages, depend less on accessibility to large training areas, and are most compatible with executing the peacetime mission role of the Army. Additionally, while environmental factors must be considered in future stationing and missioning of all Army units, they carry particular importance for the RC.

Websters' Third New International Dictionary provides the following definition of the word "restructure": to give a new structure or organization to. Using that definition as a guide to its objective as it plans to downsize, the Army has failed to implement or seriously attempt to implement the guidance provided by its Commander in Chief at Aspen, Colorado, on August 2, 1990. The Army's Base Force is indeed nothing more than a scaled-back or shrunken-down version of the force we presently have, which is exactly what the President said we must not do. Restructuring will require abandonment of some "traditional" roles or missions for each component, but it will be what is best for the nation and the Army.

Initiating Restructuring.

First of all, the Army National Guard must be willing to relinquish its attachment to combat units, particularly its separate infantry and armor brigades. Additionally, it must abandon the argument that its infantry and armor units, when rated at C-3,² are combat ready, on par with similar AC units. For its part, the AC leadership must put structure in the Reserve Components, which lends itself to the individual or team training that may be conducted at a fixed location, and which is most compatible with civilian job requirements. Having done that, those units must then be properly equipped to perform the mission assigned; no hand-me-downs and no equipment so old that parts are no longer available.³ Additionally, when evaluating RC units, reports must be forthright and not encourage the delusion of a higher level of readiness than is actually the case.

Addressing the statement about the type of structure in the Reserve Components; considering the demonstrated reluctance of the civilian and military leadership to utilize *RC combat elements* too quickly for any role other than follow-on reinforcement, a serious look should be taken at the cost effectiveness of maintaining and equipping a force which has little likelihood of being committed to combat much before totally new units could be generated. As the President so clearly states, "we will rely on active forces to respond to crises," going on to say, "...reserves will be important, but in

new ways." The new ways to which he refers should not include relying on them, to the extent we do currently, for ground combat units. Long, protracted engagements where those elements might be employed are remote possibilities under almost all scenarios and, as the President also states, should such circumstances occur, we will then have sufficient warning to enable us to generate wholly new forces, not relying solely on existing ones. The restructured Army will, instead of providing a heavy combat force in the reserves, provide the "readiness to rebuild," with that being considered a deterrent, in and of itself, to our enemies.

The most recent Army Plan addresses the fact that the Army must expand its roles beyond simply warfighting, to peacetime missions as well.⁴ It also makes clear that the majority of RC combat elements are unlikely ever to be mobilized. Consequently, why maintain even 8 (6 fully manned and 2 cadre) National Guard divisions, along with 16 Separate Infantry/Armor Brigades (includes 2 brigades identified as Roundout but structured as Separate Heavy Brigades)?⁵ There certainly seems to be little senior military or political desire to commit them. During DESERT STORM, although three Guard combat brigades were mobilized, there never was a real "push" by anyone other than the National Guard to actually deploy the units to Saudi Arabia. Regardless, the participation of these units would not have affected the outcome of the ground offensive. On the other hand, utilization of Reserve Component combat support and combat service support elements truly made a difference. Logistically, the Army could not have accomplished what it did without the RC. Logisticians often found themselves under fire even when they were not on the "front line."⁶ And, while the ground war was over in 4 days, the logistics war, which started immediately, continued long after the last combat soldier departed the Middle East for home station. The groundswell of public support for the war started when the many Reserve Component support units were mobilized and deployed to the war, not when the three combat brigades were finally mobilized. In fact, the Guard received more bad publicity than good from that experience when it was widely reported that all three brigades were not combat ready and would require

extensive postmobilization training. Those reports were then followed by equally widespread newscasts concerning a number of soldiers from one of the brigades going AWOL because of the harsh training conditions they were experiencing.

Stationing And Training.

As we restructure the Army, additional consideration must also be given regarding where RC units are stationed and where they can train in relation to their hometown armories. While National Guard recruiting advertisements may leave the impression that every weekend assembly is spent driving M-1 tanks or rappelling from helicopters, the fact is that exciting, adventurous training seldom happens. And, while developing the teamwork required for combined arms operations can be accomplished to a limited degree through simulation, full proficiency requires time in the field. Occasional weekends and 2, even 3 weeks during the summer are not sufficient to acquire and maintain required combat proficiency.⁷ The "Company" is the maximum size RC combat arms unit that should be expected to train for and achieve a C-1 readiness rating. Battalions *might* be expected to train and maintain C-2, but only if they are staffed more heavily with full-time support soldiers, and the balance of the unit manned with carefully selected personnel, who are chosen not necessarily because they are the best qualified, but because they possess compatible civilian occupations allowing them time to participate in additional RC training periods or planning sessions. Brigade and larger combat organizations, *generally speaking*, cannot honestly attain and maintain even C-3, based on the scattered nature of their stationing, availability of time, and access to suitable training areas.⁸ Time limitations, if nothing else, will prevent the command and control elements of these larger units from mastering and retaining the staff coordination and combined arms employment expertise that is necessary to survive on the modern battlefield. Additionally, considering the fact that the units of only two of the ten National Guard Divisions are all located in one state, (two of them spread over five states), it is even more difficult to understand

how they can be considered or expected to be combat ready. This also does not take into account that the geographic location of many of the Guard combat elements is such that satisfactory maneuver room is not readily available to the armory. When heavy divisions and heavy separate brigades are located in New Jersey (soon to be New York), Ohio, Wisconsin, and other such locations devoid of adequate maneuver area for the size or type of force located within that state, it seems totally unreasonable to expect them to ever be combat ready, even C-3, in peacetime. And, while much has been made of the role simulations can play in staff training, they cannot replace the physical, mental, and environmental stress of actual field training. Simulations are excellent training supplements, but no one should believe they can be the primary method of teaching and training, especially for the leadership and soldiers of ground combat units.

Environmental Considerations.

On a final note, the environment itself will become a significantly greater limiting factor in future field training as the public becomes more concerned about noise pollution (limitations on aircraft and heavy vehicle operation), highway overcrowding (limitations on convoy movements), and wildlife protection (ban on training within 400 meters of nesting areas of the red cockaded woodpecker at Ft. Bragg, as an example). While AC units can compensate for these limitations of being able to train when and where it causes the least disruption, RC units don't have that luxury; instead, being captive to the weekends and compatibility with civilian occupations. Regardless, local communities are now less inclined to exempt the military from meeting its own environmental standards. No longer is the claim of national security acceptable to exempt the Army from compliance with environmental laws. Therefore, even if RC combat elements were equipped as the Active Component and were located near major training areas, they might still be unable to train to the degree required to maintain even C-3 level proficiency due to environmental limitations. M1 Abrams tanks and M2/3 Infantry/Cavalry Fighting Vehicles require significantly more maneuver room than M60A3s and

M113s. The difficulty in obtaining additional maneuver space was recently illustrated when the Army tried to purchase or lease an additional 100,000 acres at Ft. Riley, Kansas when the local populace very effectively blocked the attempt. Clearly, additional maneuver room may be impossible to obtain.

Structure and Missions.

It now seems abundantly clear the Army will have more Reserve Component soldiers than it wants because the Congress will not agree to removing RC units from 30 percent of the communities where they are currently located. The Army leadership should accept that political reality and plan for effectively utilizing the forces available. Recent speakers at the U.S. Army War College all seem to have a severe case of "traditionalitis," however, in approaching this challenge. While all agree we are in a period of transition, referring frequently to President Bush's Aspen speech, they proceed to outline traditional approaches to solving the problem.

What follows are some alternatives for consideration; ideas that take the President at his word to not merely reduce what we have, but to restructure. Why not put structure in the Reserve Components that lends itself to home station training; training not requiring extensive field maneuver?⁹ Why not look to the RC for what they have proven they can do best: *Support*? Not coincidentally, this is also where the greatest acceptance and integration with the AC has been achieved. Why not assign the RC missions of full-time support for the AC? Many daily support missions, echelon above division (EAD), including base operations and "schoolhouse," could be executed by the Reserve Components. This would free some of the approximately 125,000 to 130,000 active soldiers currently in TDA (Table of Distribution and Allowances) organizations to be transferred to TOE (Table of Organization and Equipment) fighting units. Why not make the RC more robust by structuring it with more Combat Support and Service Support units than doctrine requires to support the number of combat forces in the Army? Instead of accepting the complaint from the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of

Staff that we will have large numbers of reservists with no mission,¹⁰ why not be imaginative and provide one that will enhance the peacetime value of the Army and give the American taxpayer added benefit for his defense dollar? Combat Support and Service Support units can train and be employed at the larger unit level, *generally speaking*, more easily and dependably than combat elements. Just as a medical doctor is practicing when he performs an operation, so is a transportation unit training when it is delivering rations. When most support units are training, they often are actually performing their TOE support mission. A good example of this is currently ongoing in Germany with the Reserve Component Equipment Maintenance Center in Kaiserslautern. General Support Maintenance units from the Guard and the Reserve deploy, for 3 week periods, to assist the 21st TAACOM in its normal workload. The same practice could be expanded to all Army commands, posts, camps, and stations, to include those within CONUS. Although outside the scope of this paper, these same support elements could also be used to perform community assistance missions in the many communities where RC units are located throughout the United States. The opportunities are almost endless. All that is required is for all Army components to think imaginatively and work together as a total force, doing what is best for the nation and the Army, in that order. With each component tasked to do what it has demonstrated it does best, everybody is a winner.

Additionally, by conducting missions as outlined above, a critical element for the orderly and timely expansion of the Army would already be trained and in place. The "long pole in the tent" for reconstituting additional combat forces will not be the combat elements, it will be the technical specialties that require long periods of schooling, often followed by extensive on-the-job training and/or periodic individual recertification. This same thought was voiced 19 years ago by General Creighton Abrams in an address to the Armor Officer Advanced Course when he stated "...adequate support is a necessary part of combat power, and that support is harder to mobilize in crisis than combat strength."¹¹ Likewise, the technical specialties should be easier to recruit for in peacetime since they can accommodate females as well as

males, thereby doubling the recruiting pool from which to draw, and relying on those skills most easily transferable to civilian employer requirements. It is a documented fact that RC soldiers performing annual training doing nation assistance projects are much more highly motivated than those participating in the mock battles of the National Training Center or previously in "Reforger" exercises.¹²

Conclusion.

By relying more directly on the Reserve Components, the Army could also depend on the support of the American people since commitment to combat or potential combat would have an immediate impact on thousands of American communities across the nation as the RC were mobilized to *support* the effort. For an appreciation of this factor, we only have to look at DESERT SHIELD/STORM to see the support generated when "hometown America" was involved; contrast that with Vietnam, when attempts were made to keep the war away from the American public.

If these suggestions are to be implemented, the Reserve Components generally and the Guard specifically must admit to their legitimate limitations; the Army must admit to and draw on the strengths of the RC; and all must work together, not parochially. In so doing, the Army could retain more Active Component combat forces, have a highly trained, reliable and proven Reserve Component to support it; have the hard pieces in place to allow for timely expansion; and finally be a "Total Force."

ENDNOTES

1. For the sake of argument in this paper, I consider combat to include only armor and infantry forces. Field Artillery is considered a Combat Support element. See note number nine.

2. AR 220-1 provides the following definition of a C-3 rating: "Unit possesses the resources and has accomplished the training necessary to undertake the major portions of the wartime mission for which it is organized or designed." By contrast, a unit reporting C-1 or C-2 would be capable of undertaking the *full* wartime mission or the *bulk* of its wartime mission, respectively.

3. As outlined in the *Reserve Component Programs, Fiscal Year 1990: Report of the Reserve Forces Policy Board*, Washington, DC: GPO, 1990, the Army National Guard and Army Reserve have only 74 percent and 63 percent respectively of their wartime equipment requirement on hand. As the report further indicates, equipment shortages continue to be identified as one of the most critical factors limiting RC readiness.

4. *The Army Plan(S)*, Washington, DC: GPO, October 1991, p. 4. Under the heading of "Setting the Course (U)," the plan states that in shaping the force to meet the national military strategy requirements, the Army will, "Enhance its peacetime value and expand its role as a versatile national resource by engaging in a variety of non-combatant missions at home and abroad that.... and enhance the Nation's well-being..." By the mere fact they are already located in over 5000 communities across the nation, the Reserve Components are an obvious resource to implement this portion of the plan.

5. *National Guard Bureau, Force Management Division 1992 Black Book*, Washington, DC: NGB, pp. I-5 to I-6. While the Army National Guard currently has ten combat divisions, they will be reduced to eight by the end of FY95. The three "Northeast" divisions, the 26th headquartered in Massachusetts, 42d headquartered in New York, and 50th headquartered in New Jersey, will be consolidated into a single armored division headquartered in New York and known as the 42d. This will perpetuate a command and control problem by stationing division elements through several states.

6. A good, but tragic, example of this is the February 25, 1991, SCUD missile attack on the U.S. barracks at Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia, hundreds of miles from the "front line" in Kuwait. The eventual toll was 28 dead and 90 wounded. Half the dead and many of the wounded belonged to a Army Reserve Quartermaster unit from Pennsylvania.

7. Barton Gellman, "Services Sacrifice Precedent to Stay in Fighting Trim," *The Washington Post*, December 9, 1991, p. 10. In this article, Gellman, in reporting primarily about the optempo in the 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized), reports that most of the senior officers and noncommissioned officers he interviewed, across the services, stressed that intense, realistic training is undervalued in defense budget debates, with the focus instead being on dollars and equipment. He goes on to state that those same leaders explained they cannot be ready to fight without frequent rehearsal of perishable combat skills.

8. The conclusions stated in this paragraph are based on personal observations, both as a "part-time" Guardsman and as an AGR Guardsman serving both at the unit level and with the National Guard Bureau. This includes time as a battalion commander, Overseas Deployment Training manager at Headquarters United States Army Europe, and as the Senior

National Guard Advisor to United States Southern Command and United States Army South. During those assignments I observed, first-hand, Reserve Component units from essentially every state in the union. Without exception, the combat elements did well at the company level but, at battalion and above, the command and control weaknesses were critically evident.

9. As an example, Field Artillery crews can practice crew drill and calls for fire very easily in the motor pool. If all the procedures are correct, firing the gun is really incidental. Engineers, medical personnel, truck drivers and most other support units do not require extensive maneuver room to hone their skills; certainly not field maneuver. Truck drivers can practice their skills by staying on the roads and highways; medical personnel need only a clinic, hospital, or other such fixed facility; engineers likewise do not need extensive field maneuver room to practice their technical skills. Most of the skills included in the above type units, minus the Field Artillery, are also easily transferable to civilian job requirements.

10. Jim Wolffe, "Powell Warns of Unneeded Structure in the Reserves", *Army Times*, October 7, 1991, p. 6.

11. Speech by Army Chief of Staff Creighton Abrams, October 4, 1973, to the Armor Officer Advanced Course, Fort Knox, KY.

12. David Grissmer, Sheila Kirby, Glenda Nagami, *Comparison of Retention Patterns For Army National Guard and Army Reserve Units Participating in National Training Center, Reforger and Blazing Trails Exercises*, July 1988. Results of this study illustrated that prior to participating in the various exercises, soldiers rating their unit morale as okay to high or very high were: NTC-83 percent; Reforger-95 percent; Blazing Trails-96 percent. Upon returning from those exercises, the same soldiers rating unit morale as okay, high or very high were: NTC-63 percent; Reforger-64 percent; Blazing Trails-86 percent. Other data regarding soldier estimations that participating in the exercises was worth any personnel losses the unit incurred, or that it was a recruiting and retention incentive, showed similar percentage differences with the overall picture that when soldiers participate in something that produces a tangible end product, such as a road, bridge, a well person, etc., they are more enthusiastic about their military duties and continuing them into the future. Personal observations from assignments in Germany and Panama bear out the validity of the study findings.

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