

Strategy Research Project

Army National Guard's Role as an Operational Force

by

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Abstract

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While the United States (U.S.) continues to struggle with government debt and the implications of a balanced budget, the Department of Defense quickly moves towards budgetary cuts and manpower downsizing. Cuts to the military budget will shift the priorities and funding support of the Army National Guard (ARNG). Future allocation of funds should be associated with a unit's Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN). Cost analysis history shows the ARNG could be a less expensive operational force to maintain in a fiscally restrained environment. This paper considers the implications of reduced fiscal funding, historical trends, the impact specific to the ARNG, and possible options for senior leaders to maintain an operational force in the National Guard. A viable, ready, and relevant ARNG capable of deploying operationally based on the units Army Force Generation will help senior military leaders meet the National Security Strategy requirements.

Army National Guard's Role as an Operational Force

“Going forward, we will also remember the lessons of history and avoid repeating the mistakes of the past when our military was left ill-prepared for the future.”

- President Barack H. Obama¹

The United States is approaching a decision point to address fiscal problems. Problems such as a balanced budget, debt reduction, reduced spending, increased taxes, and costly long-term benefit programs require a disciplined budget. “The Congressional Budget Office calculates that total government debt will reach 100 percent of GDP by 2023...”² The economic environment will severely affect Department of Defense (DOD) budgets and future Army manpower. The DOD is already moving toward budgetary cuts and manpower downsizing.

This paper analyzes and discusses historical trends, insights, and perspectives on ways to maintain an operational ARNG providing the nation a capable option in the current fiscally constrained environment. In order to do this, the paper will first examine the current environment and its effect on future roles for the ARNG. Three specific areas of the environment analyzed are the economy, future threat, and U.S. strategy. Analysis of historical perspective including conflicts in Korea, Vietnam, and the Cold War will provide possible insights for upcoming fiscal and manpower reductions following the conflict in Afghanistan. Next, recommended solutions to current ARNG operational obstacles will provide direction for future ARNG roles. Finally, the discussion of future roles will provide operational capability and readiness opportunity.

Fiscal analysis in this paper will use the concept of constant dollars for comparison. Constant dollars measure the value of purchased goods and services at price levels that are the same as the base year level. Constant dollars do not contain

any adjustments for inflation. The term real growth refers to changes of constant dollar amounts across various years. Therefore, this will show how much programs have increased or decreased in cost – without the impact of inflation.³

Historical trend analysis can provide valuable data to consider during future Army endstrength and budget reductions. Cost analysis history shows the ARNG could be a less expensive operational force to maintain in a fiscally constrained environment. The implication of reduced fiscal funding historically affects ARNG endstrength. AC drawdown is a strong possibility and will require senior leaders to maintain the ARNG as an operational force. A ready ARNG force capable of deploying to meet the nations security requirements will provide senior leaders viable options for future Army capability.

Army force mix, both active component (AC) and reserve component (RC), approaches another decision point following the 2014 drawdown of forces in Afghanistan. Historically, Congress cuts fiscal funding for the Army following prolonged conflicts such as Korea, Vietnam, and the Cold War. Prolonged conflicts establish increased debt leading senior leaders to develop new guidance, re-align forces, and decrease costs. The fiscal trend analysis relates to the size and mix of the AC and RC forces and indicates the ARNG is a viable and valuable way to maintain capability.

Research, data, analysis, and insights will provide possible options to current economic and security risks. The termination of conflict in Afghanistan coincides with planned reductions in Army budgets and manpower. Lessons learned from past conflicts and the downsizing periods that follow those conflicts should provide senior leaders incentive to maintain capability in the ARNG. These lessons also provide a

powerful tool to guide budget, manpower, and other downsizing decisions. A smaller AC force, however will require capable ARNG forces. The Army maintaining an operational ARNG force is the right thing for the nation.

Current Environment

Today's fiscal situation in the U.S. will drastically affect the DOD and Army budget. Therefore, discussion of the current economy can provide insight into possible future fiscal implications to the Army. The financial credit rating company, Egan-Jones, dropped the U.S. credit rating twice in 2012 with the latest drop based on moderation from the Federal Reserve hurting the country's credit quality.⁴ U.S. economic dominance is also dwindling making the future of the Army more unstable. "The United States has been the world's largest economy since roughly 1900, but China is likely to overtake America in total economic output no later than 2025."⁵ Thus, the current fiscal environment will require necessary and possibly large reductions to the defense budget.

The U.S. federal budget for Fiscal Year 2013 is \$3.45 trillion and the defense portion of the total budget is 18%.⁶ The discretionary portion of the total budget is 31% and represents the portion negotiated between the President and Congress each year as part of the budget process. The DOD owns the largest portion of the discretionary portion of the budget at 57%, which will receive fiscal cuts identified in the 2011 Budget Control Act (BCA).⁷ The BCA requires DOD reduction of expenditures by approximately \$487 billion over the next decade.⁸ By comparison, the Vietnam and Cold War budgets saw a decline of approximately 25%.⁹ These are significant reductions and the Army is planning to execute the reductions over a ten year period based on sequestration.

These deep cuts could affect future capabilities and senior leaders such as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) and the Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA)

are wary the cuts may be too deep. For perspective, the U.S. military spends more than the next 14 countries combined and accounts for almost 50% of global defense spending.¹⁰ Also, every U.S. adversary combined totaled less than 15%.¹¹ Reduced DOD spending and the ARNG's operational success over the past decade could increase the role of the National Guard in the future. Another result of these deep cuts could be further downsizing the AC force. Therefore, the RC must retain an operational force to meet the nation's security requirements. Future DOD proposed budgets confirm reduced spending and show DOD budgets will not rise again anytime soon.

The budget proposals from FY 2013 through FY 2017 estimate a low of \$533 billion in FY2014. This is down from the \$691 billion in FY 2010.¹² The proposals recommend significant reductions and require the military to drawdown and cut costs in manpower, force structure, and possibly forward deployments. Historical numbers illustrate the military budget is too large and requires serious cuts. Additionally, the AC endstrength will go from 570k to 490k in the Future Year Defense Plan (FYDP).¹³ The AC endstrength reduction along with potential increased reductions will require an operational ARNG prepared for deployment to meet the need of future threats. Significant savings are evident maintaining RC capability and the threat environment is conducive to a smaller AC force.

Current threat assessments predict the 21st century will produce more global non-state actor conflicts, terrorism, and irregular warfare on a small-scale. It is unlikely the U.S. will declare war on a nation state in the near future. The most likely scenario is a small conflict that grows to a regional issue with global implications. Regional conflicts can proliferate to international interests because of treaties, alliances, and globalization.

New strategic guidelines move U.S. strategy from two simultaneous major theater wars (MTW) to a new model of one major conflict and another simultaneous smaller conflict.¹⁴ With the strategy shift away from two MTWs, a smaller AC force is predictable. One major conflict would require less AC forces. A reduction in AC forces is only possible with the ARNG as an operational force.

Economic conditions and the change in strategy require an operational ARNG. The absence of a two MTW requirement will allow AC reductions without risking the ability to respond in a crisis. The National Security Strategy (NSS), Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) 2010, and the DOD Priorities for 21st Century Defense identify future threats as terrorism, non-state actors, failing states, humanitarian crises, and possible regional conflicts. A smaller AC force can address these threats. The 2012 Army Posture declares a smaller AC can meet current threats and implies we should provide readiness at the best value based on economic situation.¹⁵ The use of an operational ARNG on a rotational basis will mitigate the risk of a smaller AC, reduce enduring AC requirements, and preserve a smaller AC for crisis response. Discussing future roles for an operational ARNG can provide insight to the size of AC/RC force required.

The ARNG is a capable and valuable option based on the strategic environment. The ARNG provides 32% of the Army's personnel for about 11% of the Army budget.¹⁶ However, costs for RC forces are comparable or more expensive than AC forces during prolonged conflicts such as Iraq and Afghanistan.¹⁷ This cost is associated with mobilization, training, and reduced time in theater that requires additional units to deploy. The ARNG can provide savings during four of the five years in their scheduled

ARFORGEN cycle based on the new strategic guidance and threat defined earlier. The savings is present in manpower costs alone during the first four years of the RC ARFORGEN cycle. The opportunity to provide the nation an operational force at a fraction of the cost is essential in today's economy.

The U.S. should maintain the ARNG's operational capability gained from the past 10 years of combat experience. During the recent combat operations, the RC received additional funding, equipment upgrades, and training that improved capability. These tremendous gains in the RC provide viable options for future AC and RC force mix decisions. The DOD Directive 1200.17, "Managing the Reserve Components as an Operational Force," provides the basis for maintaining and resourcing an operational ARNG to meet readiness requirements.¹⁸ The ARNG is a viable and valuable option based on the announced reduction in AC endstrength, the economic situation, the threat, and strategy. The ARNG can provide a proven operational capability mitigating the risks of a smaller AC force.

Historical Perspective

The Korean, Vietnam, and Cold War conflicts can provide a good understanding of historical manpower reductions, fiscal cuts, and RC readiness after prolonged conflicts. The following historical trend analysis can lead to insights for future Army downsizing and fiscal budget reduction. The analysis will identify high and low budgets during the conflict and following the drawdown period after the conflict. Manpower analysis will include high and low endstrength, which can be years later to draw down the force slowly. An average percentage in fiscal and manpower cuts following each conflict will provide practical data to predict possible future Army downsizing. Next, a discussion of RC readiness for each conflict will provide perspective to today's RC

force. Budget and manpower data is available in Table 1 for specific details. In addition, readiness snapshots following each conflict will impart additional perspective.

Table 1. Historical Budget and Endstrength Numbers

	High DOD Budget	Low DOD Budget	Budget Difference	High Endstrength	Low Endstrength	Endstrength Difference
Korea	\$622B	\$382B	\$240B/39%	1.6M	858k	742k/46%
Vietnam	\$547B	\$383B	\$164B/30%	1.57M	758k	812k/52%
Cold War	\$577B	\$385B	\$192B/33%	781k	479k	302k/39%
Average	\$582B	\$383B	\$199B/34%	1.3M	698k	619k/46%
OCO	\$736B	\$526B	\$210B/29%	566k	490k	76k/13%

Table 1 data is in constant dollars and provides a couple of statistical takeaways. Historical budget reductions average a DOD low of \$383 billion. Current projections following OCO are \$526 billion. This gap infers there is room for further cuts to the DOD budget. Second, the average difference in endstrength was 46% reductions. Manpower reductions are announced to reduce AC endstrength to 490k. This is only 13% and suggests increased AC manpower cuts are probable. Although the current force is smaller, AC endstrength should reduce further based on the current economic environment.

Reductions following the Korean conflict were \$240 billion in funding and 742k in manpower. DOD spending peaked at \$622 billion in FY 1952 and hit a low of \$382

billion in FY1954 during the drawdown.¹⁹ Army manpower peaked at 1.6 million in 1952 and reduced to a low of 859k in 1961.²⁰ Additionally, RC unit readiness was an issue during partial mobilization for the Korean conflict. In response, the Armed Forces Reserve Act of 1952 established seven reserve components and addressed the purpose of the RC to provide trained units available for the AC in time of war or national emergency.²¹ The policy goal was to improve deficiencies, readiness, and availability based on issues during the Korean conflict.

Reductions following the Vietnam conflict reduced \$164 billion in funding and 812k in manpower. DOD spending during the Vietnam conflict peaked at \$547 billion in FY 1968 and hit a low of \$383 billion in 1975 during the drawdown.²² Army manpower reached 1.57 million in 1968 and downsized to a low of 758k in 1979.²³ A recurring concern from Korea was RC readiness. Following Vietnam, the Army attempted to maintain force structure with reduced funding and fewer troops, resulting in a hollow force. Minimally manned units and inadequate training funds characterized the hollow force. In response to the Tet Offensive, President Johnson activated 24.5k members of the National Guard. By one account, every unit activated failed to meet minimum combat readiness standards.²⁴ General Creighton Abrams adopted a round out strategy using reserve brigades to round out active divisions in response to readiness and accessibility issues.²⁵ Access to the RC was difficult due to political will to mobilize the National Guard during the Vietnam conflict. The round out strategy increasingly integrated RC forces with the AC in an attempt to increase access during times of crisis.

Reductions following the Cold War were \$192 billion in funding and 302k in manpower. During the Cold War defense spending peaked at \$577 billion in FY 1985

and hit a low of \$385 billion in 1998 during the drawdown.²⁶ Army manpower peaked at 781k in 1986 and subsided to 479k by 1999.²⁷ Previously, readiness discussion followed DOD budget and manpower analysis. Readiness following Operation Desert Storm will provide comparative data in lieu of Cold War small mobilizations. More than 62k National Guard members mobilized during Operation Desert Storm.²⁸

Following Operation Desert Storm, a GAO report in 1993 found some National Guard brigades displayed inadequate readiness.²⁹ Three instances cited were the 155th Armor Brigade from Mississippi, the 256th Infantry Brigade from Louisiana, and the 48th Infantry Brigade from Georgia due to poor readiness upon mobilization.³⁰ Even though the Korea and Vietnam readiness issues drove new policies, the 1991 Defense Authorization Act made changes in strategy that tasked the AC to deploy rapidly and sustain for 30 days without support from the RC. ARNG readiness was again arguably a factor requiring a change in strategy.

The ARNG's performance during Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) shows marked improvement over previous conflicts. As discussed earlier, history demonstrates readiness was a major obstacle for the ARNG. The past 10 years reveals a viable, operational, highly-trained ARNG that successfully deployed repeatedly. The ARNG mobilized more than 507k Soldiers from September 2001 through October 2012.³¹ This number is indicative of the requirement or necessity to maintain an operational ARNG based on a smaller AC force conducting continuous deployments to support OCO. Operational tempo, funding, predictability, and necessity were contributing factors to the improvement in readiness. Therefore, maintaining overall readiness is the critical obstacle for the ARNG as an operational force.

A November 2012 Peter G. Peterson Foundation study on new defense strategy found the defense budget decreased in constant dollars by an average of 30% following the end of the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Cold War.³² The historical insights gathered from these trends suggest the DOD budget could decrease further, especially considering current economic conditions. The current economy and reduced government credit rating make predicting future reductions in funding and manpower following Iraq and Afghanistan difficult. The average low point in DOD spending during drawdown was \$383 billion following these conflicts. Comparatively, the projected budget low in FY 2014 will be \$526 billion.³³ Since this \$143 billion difference is above the historical average, there is a strong case that the DOD budget could decrease further leading to additional manpower reductions.

The manpower downsizing illustrated by the noted historical trends produced a strong baseline to consider for future downsizing. Army AC manpower ceilings may decline below 400k in the near future based on past historical trends. For example, Korea and Vietnam manpower reductions were close to 50% whereas Cold War reductions were around 39%. Currently, predictions fall short of historical reductions in manpower. The Army cannot return to a hollow force and must maintain readiness in both components to meet the nation's security requirements. Sustaining capability and readiness in the ARNG is a viable option to avoid making the same mistakes from past conflicts.

Analysis of the Korean, Vietnam, and Cold War conflicts also established ARNG readiness to be an obstacle. ARNG readiness improved during OCO in Iraq and Afghanistan just as the U.S. plans to draw down in 2014. Each conflict resulted in a new

policy to further integrate AC and RC forces resulting in improved readiness. Integration and training does improve readiness as shown during OCO from 2001 through 2013. The ARNG can provide consistent operational capability for the Army. ARNG unit readiness during mobilizations for the Korean, Vietnam, and Cold War conflicts was questionable in many cases. Readiness is the key for both AC and ARNG forces to avoid another hollow force.

Obstacles to the ARNG as an Operational Force

There are several obstacles to maintaining the ARNG as an operational force that are not present if the ARNG is only a strategic reserve. The most pressing obstacle is readiness. The Commander's Unit Status Report (CUSR) defines readiness and gives senior leaders a snapshot on overall readiness. The report focuses on personnel, equipment, training, and operational readiness. The assessment reflects the units' ability to accomplish core functions, provide designed capabilities, and execute their assigned mission. A unit's Mission Essential Task List (METL) defines these core functions and is assessed by the commander regularly. The commander's assessment will identify the number of additional training days required to attain full proficiency. The overall CUSR ratings are C1 through C5. C1 units are ready to deploy and meet the highest readiness ratings.³⁴ The CUSR standard is part of the readiness solution providing comparative data for commanders' analysis.

Mobilization of ARNG units during Korea, Vietnam, and Desert Storm identify a history of questionable readiness. More specifically, old equipment and training were not on par with AC counterparts. Additionally, tiered strategic reserves affected levels of funding and readiness levels throughout the RC. Tiered readiness levels determine funding that affects overall readiness. Low priority units receive minimal funding and

may not have required equipment and personnel. When the ARNG was a strategic reserve, the mobilization model was mobilize, train, and deploy. The future ARNG as an operational force will have difficulty maintaining readiness with tiered levels of funding and reduced integration with AC forces. The ARFORGEN cycle can provide a solution for tiered readiness issues.

ARFORGEN is a proven tool to prioritize funding, provide predictability, and improve readiness in the ARNG. The ARFORGEN cycle mixes AC and RC rotations, provides depth, meets surge requirements, and generates predictability for units. RC units are ready to deploy once every five years during the cycle. A Rand study reassessing the Army's AC/RC force mix in February 2012 suggests the RC is well-suited for predictable deployments and homeland missions.³⁵ ARFORGEN funding is minimal the first three years whereas years four and five provide increased funding and focus on training to prepare for mobilization. The CUSR C-rating is the guide to readiness throughout the process and provides the commander aimpoints to meet readiness goals. The 2012 Army Posture statement goes further stating Combatant Commander's (CCDR) require ensured access and operational depth from the RC.³⁶ The ARNG can maintain readiness and provide access to CCDRs using ARFORGEN to meet our nation's security goals.

Tough, realistic training is a necessity but can be an obstacle to readiness. Combat Training Center (CTC) rotations, Overseas Deployment Training (ODT) rotations, operational missions, building partner capacity, and blended AC/RC operations are critical to maintaining an ARNG operational force. CTC rotations are difficult to acquire for most ARNG units. AC forces and ARNG Brigade Combat Teams

(BCTs) receive priority for CTC-level training. All ARNG units need realistic CTC-level training to improve readiness. The reduction of AC forces and BCTs will provide opportunities to mitigate this obstacle. These company, battalion, and brigade level CTCs are vital to maintaining readiness and efficiency in the ARNG.

The ARNG needs a capability to address two specific personnel readiness obstacles to the ARNG as an operational force. New enlistments and medically non-fit Soldiers are non-deployable and affect the C-rating on the CUSR. New enlistments require a position in a unit prior to attending Initial Active Duty Training (IADT). The new enlistment decreases the C-rating until completing IADT that could be up to 18 months. Medically unfit Soldiers count against the CUSR rating and can take up to 24 months to resolve. The ARNG cannot move non-deployable Soldiers to a separate unit to resolve training or medical issues. The AC has medical hold and training units to alleviate personnel readiness issues. The AC receives trained Soldiers after IADT that does not affect their CUSR rating. Developing a medical hold company or training company to place non-deployable Soldiers is critical to readiness. ARNG units could improve one or two full personnel ratings on the CUSR by addressing these two issues with a Trainee, Transient, Holdees, and Students (TTHS) account similar to the AC. The slots to manage the TTHS account should be growth for the ARNG based on reductions to the AC producing personnel savings and increased readiness for the ARNG.

The amount of risk American citizens and elected leaders are willing to accept is an obstacle worth considering. A smaller AC force's capability to respond to an uncertain global crises is a critical consideration. A rapid decline in the ability of EU states to fund their militaries could mean the U.S. conducts future operations without

significant allied force contributions. The U.S. may receive even more of the burden of global security operations while it is attempting to cut defense spending.³⁷ These economic concerns are leading to a reduction in military forces in many EU countries further complicating the role of American forces contributing the largest forces in future coalition deployments. The AC must maintain a force to meet our nation's immediate threats. ARNG units in year four and five of ARFORGEN can mobilize and deploy to reduce the risk of a smaller AC force and meet the nation's security needs. AC manpower reductions will determine the amount of risk involved. Historically, the AC force could drop below 400k which is an unacceptable risk if the RC is not maintained in an operational role. Today's threat and new defense strategy suggest this is a viable option.

Tiered strategic readiness is an obstacle. The three noted wars show tiered readiness will degrade overall readiness in the ARNG. The units will not meet readiness levels identified in the CUSR and will require additional time to prepare for combat when mobilized. Strategic tiered readiness is not the solution. ARFORGEN is cyclic but has tiered funding, readiness, and available units incorporated in the process. ARFORGEN is a form of strategic tiered readiness. The key is every unit must cycle to maintain readiness. The main difference and improvement is all ARNG units are part of the readiness cycle. Every unit rotates through readiness levels to prepare for mobilization and year five of the cycle. Tiered readiness with units in 1:4, 1:5, or even 1:6 ARFORGEN ratios is another way to place lower priority units and a slower readiness cycle and reduce cost without ignoring readiness.

Future Roles for the ARNG

The Army continues to examine possible force composition options that could affect future ARNG roles. Future ARNG roles could determine perceived relevance as a contributing force, force requirements, shape force structure, and affect ARNG endstrength. The assigned roles will dictate funding, readiness levels, and operational experience. Relevant roles will allow the nation to assume the risk of a smaller AC force. The Secretary of the Army, John M. McHugh, established policy requiring “military departments to organize, man, train and equip their active and reserve components as an integrated operational force to provide predictable, recurring and sustainable capabilities.”³⁸ Future ARNG roles and missions depend on Army force structure and the AC/RC mix of forces. These future roles or missions are critical to maintaining operational capability and overall readiness in the ARNG.

The ARNG is already participating in the role of building partner capacity. This includes military-to-military training, security cooperation, and rotational presence for CCDCR. The National Guard Bureau (NGB) State Partnership Program (SPP) has relationships in more than 60 countries and already performs the mission of building partner capacity. The possible reduction in forward-deployed AC units, change in security situation, or changes to strategic guidance may dictate adding additional countries to the SPP. CCDCRs endorse this program as a way to build relationships within their command. The use of the ODT rotations for ARNG units is a proven and successful program to build partner capacity. Agri-business Development Teams (ADT) train and mentor host nations on agriculture, business, veterinarian, and other development principles to improve capabilities. The SPP, ODT, and ADT programs are

excellent training and viable options for units in their ready year of ARFORGEN if not deployed for contingency operations.

The ARNG will continue to provide operational forces for Homeland Defense (HD), Homeland Security (HS), and Defense Support to Civilian Authorities (DSCA). The Office of the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs completed a comprehensive review of the future role of the RC in April 2011 finding, the National Guard should play the principal role in HD, HS, and DSCA.”³⁹ The ARNG is the primary contributor to DSCA. The role in HD and HS should increase as fiscal cuts begin. The AC should maintain Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) but depend on RC forces to fulfill contingency requirements. This is a viable option that relieves a smaller AC from this responsibility, thus allowing AC units to focus on global crisis response.

The role of providing operational forces to support prolonged conflicts is apparent based on the past 10 years in Iraq and Afghanistan. A smaller AC force would require the ARNG to provide operational forces in this scenario. The missions could easily be planned and resourced using the ARFORGEN rotational ready units. The November 2012 Peter G. Peterson study on new defense strategy suggests the RC take the primary lead in a time of war given the international security environment.⁴⁰ The objective is to provide operational forces within 30 days of the initial crisis. The Army should maintain a capability to grow quickly and project force.

The ARNG is an excellent location for the Army to build and maintain force structure at a value. The concept of reversibility requires the US to retain the capability

to increase the size of the Army for possible prolonged conflicts or war. The defense priorities for the 21st century states the reversibility concept requires a strong RC and is a vital element of the concept of reversibility embedded in the strategic guidance.⁴¹ Maintaining force structure in the RC allows the opportunity to address the AC/RC force mix with significant AC reductions looming. The April 2011 review of the future role of the RC, found the RC should be a force of first choice when rebalancing the force to meet future national security challenges.⁴² A November 2012 Stimson study on a new defense strategy suggests Guardsmen are a much more scalable labor force. The study also suggests savings of approximately \$35 billion through better balancing between the AC and RC.⁴³ An operational ARNG is a viable and valuable way to maintain capabilities as we drawdown the AC force to 490,000 and possibly much lower.

The ARNG can execute the roles discussed and help the nation meet national security requirements with a projected smaller AC force. Using ARNG forces to execute these discussed roles will maintain readiness and operational experience gained from the past 10 years of conflict. The experience gained during the friction of training, unit alert, unit mobilization, deployment to a theater, execution of the mission, redeployment to home station, and re-integration with families is irreplaceable. ARNG units in the ready year of ARFORGEN should be assigned operational missions such as Kosovo Force (KFOR) rotations. Ready year units can deploy for rotations to CCDR areas of responsibility and execute coalition training, build partner capacity, cooperative security operations, or nation building exercises.

Conclusion

The current environment and historical trend analysis suggest severe fiscal and manpower cuts are not only possible but also are probable. As sequestration takes

effect, the Army could downsize an additional 80k to 100k Soldiers from the planned 490k.⁴⁴ These reductions are only possible with the ARNG as an operational force. The January 28, 2013 issue of *Army Times* cites CSA General Odierno advising the Army to plan for the worse. The Army is cutting 30% of its operations and maintenance budget and warns commands to slow spending.⁴⁵ The ARNG can provide the additional capability, when needed, for the smaller AC force to focus on global crisis response. More important, it is the right thing to do for the nation in today's economic environment.

With a reduction in budgets and a smaller AC force, readiness is the key component to maintain the ARNG as an operational force. There are several ways discussed to maintain readiness. Maintaining the ARFORGEN process will allow programmed training, operational deployments, and predicted budgets. To sustain increased readiness, the 2012 defense for 21st century defense recommends DOD leverage the operational experience and institute a progressive readiness model in the RC.⁴⁶ Further defining the ARNG role in HS, HD, and DSCA can relieve the AC from these duties. ARNG units can build partner capacity while conducting ODT and SPP missions to lessen the burden on AC forces while providing capability to CCDRs globally.

As noted, Congressional Research Service studies establish maintaining readiness in the ARNG is a better cost benefit than maintaining a large AC force. Additionally, the QDR states the National Guard can lower overall costs and provide more efficient use of resources in our fiscally constrained environment.⁴⁷ AC force reductions are a reality based on announced endstrength and historical analysis noted

earlier. The ARNG is an efficient organization and can provide cost-effective capability based on AC endstrength reductions.

Budget reductions and Army draw downs are a reality after major conflicts. Reductions after Korea, Vietnam, and the Cold War all show historical data that predicts the upcoming cuts in the Army. It would be irresponsible to continue receding back to a state of non-readiness for the ARNG. President Obama stated, "Going forward, there should be no doubt: the United States of America will continue to underwrite global security."⁴⁸ The nation should maintain an operational ARNG to meet the concept of reversibility, cost benefit, and new defense strategy capability requirements. Our global environment is ever-changing yet our force structure is slowly morphing into a 21st century force. With sequestration signed by the President, the time is right to shift to a smaller AC with a capable RC operating force to meet our national security requirements.

Endnotes

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