



Reserve Officers Association of the United States

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Senate Committee on Armed Services

Revisiting the Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces

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“Serving Citizen Warriors through Advocacy and Education since 1922.”™

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The Reserve Officers Association of the United States (ROA) is a professional association of commissioned, non-commissioned and warrant officers of our nation's seven uniformed services. ROA was founded in 1922 by General of the Armies John “Black Jack” Pershing during the drawdown years following the end of World War I. It was formed as a permanent institution dedicated to national defense, with a goal to teach America about the dangers of unpreparedness. Under ROA’s 1950 congressional charter, our purpose is to promote the development and execution of policies that will provide adequate national defense. We do so by developing and offering expertise on the use and resourcing of America’s reserve components.

The association’s members include Reserve and Guard Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen, and Coast Guardsmen who frequently serve on active duty to meet critical needs of the uniformed services. ROA’s membership also includes commissioned officers from the United States Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration who often are first responders during national disasters and help prepare for homeland security.

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The Reserve Officers Association is a member-supported organization. ROA has not received grants, contracts, or subcontracts from the federal government in the past three years. All other activities and services of the associations are accomplished free of any direct federal funding.

On behalf of our members, the Reserve Officers Association thanks the committee for the opportunity to submit a statement on the future of roles and missions.

The purpose and role of the National Guard and Reserve has shifted over time. The major transition has been from becoming a strategic reserve to an operational reserve with a much greater level of responsibility and assigned tasks from military and civilian leadership. However, as the RC has transitioned into a greater level of integration and operability with the active component (AC), U.S. defense leaders have not always adequately outlined the role and mission of the Reserve Component.

The most recent example was this past June with the release of the *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America 2015*. *The National Military Strategy* details the Joint Chief of Staff's description of what the greatest security threats are facing the United States and what the major missions of the U.S. military are in response to them. Although the National Guard and Reserve are mentioned in the document, their role in fulfilling the major missions outlined in *The National Military Strategy* tends to be general and vague. Of course the expectation should not be for these general documents to detail the absolute specifics of every mission for the Guard and Reserves. However, even given this allowance, these documents do not provide sufficient structure for the Guard and Reserve's role.

This is not a trivial matter. Without a clear definition or criterion of what missions they are best suited to complete, the Guard and Reserve will suffer from both poor direction and lack of adequate funding. If leaders do not understand what the Guard and Reserve are used for, they will misallocate resources and manpower since they are uncertain what skills and equipment are necessary to complete the Guard and Reserve's role. Without a clear understanding of the Guard and Reserve, funds may even be cut entirely because there is no intended purpose for them according to the report, *An Indispensable Force: Investing in America's National Guard and Reserves*. Therefore, this statement expands upon *The National Military Strategy* and offers what ROA considers are the four major missions for the Guard and Reserve as the military transitions from the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. Based on the set of challenges outlined in *The National Military Strategy*, the four major missions of the Guard and Reserve are (1) providing surge capabilities, (2) recruiting, cultivating, and retaining professionals with high level, individualized skill sets especially in cyber fields, (3) assist in overseas stability operations, and (4) homeland security and disaster response.

Before outlining the major missions for the Guard and Reserve from ROA's perspective, let's review the new security challenges described by *The National Military Strategy*. Only by understanding what the U.S. military's national security challenges and priorities are can one fully appreciate the missions the Guard and Reserve should have in response to them. *The National Military Strategy*, from June 2015, outlined three major aims of U.S. defense policy: (1) deter, deny and defeat state adversaries (2) disrupt, degrade, and defeat violent extremist organizations, and (3) strengthen our global network of allies and partners. The strategy explains state adversaries pose a threat due to their large conventional forces with multiple weapons platforms, possible use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), anti-access/area denial systems

and cyber tools. State adversaries pose a sophisticated powerful threat to the United States, but it is more unlikely the United States will have to deter or militarily engage with such a threat. Violent extremist organizations (VEOs) are non-state actors who employ terrorist and insurgent tactics to advance their goals of radicalizing populations, spreading violence and leveraging terror to reshape societal organizations to fit their ideological aims. The most prominent examples are the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Al-Qaeda, according to the strategy report. For both threats, the report stresses maintaining global partnerships and allies as essential.

The Guard and Reserve have a definitive role to play in countering these threats and fulfilling the three major military goals outlined in the National Military Strategy. The first major mission of the Guard and Reserve is offering surge capabilities. This aligns with the original purpose of the reserve component, which was to allow for a large body of well-trained troops to be called up quickly in times of national emergency. In the new security environment outlined in the report, this would follow from a major conventional assault and war with a state actor or a direct attack on the homeland from WMDs. *The National Military Strategy* does mention this strategic role for the Reserve: “War against a major adversary would require the full mobilization of all instruments of national power and, to do so, the United States sustains a full-spectrum military that includes strong Reserve and National Guard forces. They provide the force depth needed to achieve victory while simultaneously deterring other threats.”

There is more nuance to the Reserve’s role than might be initially indicated by this straightforward statement. Two further factors have to be considered: when it is best for the RC to provide surge capability and what type of surge capabilities (in essence what jobs) the RC provide in national emergencies. A Department of Defense (DoD) study called *Unit Cost and Readiness for the Active and Reserve Components of the Armed Forces* helps answer both of these factors. First, the study determines the Active Component is best suited for dealing with the initial stages of surges because of their higher levels of peacetime training and their greater forward presences. This makes them more responsive in the initial stages of a national emergency. RC forces are better suited for later stage surge capabilities because they often need additional training to refresh and hone their skills. That is not to say the RC cannot engage in early stage operations in a national emergency. Air Force integration is higher than other services and Air Force RC members will tend to be involved in early responses, according to DoD. Large maneuver units found in the National Guard and Reserve may also be called up to provide more boots on the ground in the initial stages of a conflict (In these instances, it is especially important to provide identical equipment to both the AC and RC so when the RC are called up, there will be no deployment delays because of an adjustment period as the RC gets used to new equipment). However, by and large, the RC will be called upon in the later stages of a national emergency and preparing for these stages of the operation should be paramount above immediate response.

The second part to the RC surge role actually ties into the second major mission of the Guard and Reserve forces. The second mission for the Guard and Reserve is recruiting,

cultivating, and retaining professionals with high level, individualized skill sets especially in cyber fields. In regards to what type of surge capabilities and, more generally, what types of skills the Guard and Reserve should be concentrating on, they should tend to be high-level individualized skill sets. The cost study pointed out, this is more cost effective than concentrating on large- maneuverability unit skills because RC forces do not train as often as actives in large formations to hone these skills as efficiently. Furthermore, Guard and Reserve benefit from being employed in the private sector where better training, innovations and advancements are available than in the armed forces. This is especially true of cyber security and other cyber fields, according to *An Indispensable Force*. The most innovative technologies and best training practices are found in the private sector. Instead of developing them within the active component, the armed forces can draw upon the reserve component, which possess these skill sets.

These professional skills are vitally important in addressing the new security challenges facing the United States today especially ones related to cyber-security. Space and cyberspace have become the new domains for militaries to operate. Both of these domains demand advanced technology and high-level skills to effectively engage and maintain dominance. They are being challenged by state and non-state actors who are investing in anti-access/area denial and cyber security technology to undermine the U.S.' long held dominance in these areas. Evidence of this challenge has been the increasing Chinese and Russian investments in space programs and in cyber attacks, the most infamous being the Chinese hacking of the Office of Personnel and Management database. As the private sector increasingly develops the capabilities to operate in space independently, the reserve forces can be a critical link between advancing space capabilities and the military to maintain the U.S. military's competitive advantage in the space domain. The same can be said of the cyber domain as well since it is one of the most innovative sectors in the U.S. economy.

The third mission for the Guard and Reserve is to assist in overseas stability operations. The primary ones are maintaining allied relationships, humanitarian operations and post-conflict stability operations. The reserve forces hold the bulk of the civil affairs personnel in the Total Force. Consequently, the reserves are the ones who possess the largest amount of expertise on relating to U.S. allied governments when the U.S. armed forces conduct overseas operations. As such, the Reserve forces are well-suited to conducting diplomatic roles and maintaining civil-military relations with U.S. allies abroad. The National Guard also plays an important role in maintaining partnerships with U.S. allies through its National Guard State Partnership Program in which National Guard units from a particular State engage in regular joint-training exercises with a U.S. ally's military, as explained in the *Comprehensive Review of the Future Role of the Reserve Component Volume I Executive Summary and Main Report*. These joint-training exercises foster mutual trust and deepen allied relationships.

The second component to assisting overseas stability operations is humanitarian operations. As previously mentioned, reserve forces tend to take longer to mobilize than the active component. However, the Guard and Reserve possess a lot of individualized skill sets

because it is more cost-effective. Consequently, many of the professionals necessary to conduct humanitarian operations are found in the reserve component like medical, logistical and military police. Therefore, the RC will continue to play a part in overseas operations. The RC may handle more of the later part of the humanitarian operations though since their response time tends to be slower than the AC.

The third component to this mission is post-conflict stability operations. Again, given that the reserve forces possess the bulk of civil affairs personnel, they tend to have the skill sets necessary to conduct rebuilding civil institutions. Post-conflict stability operations are usually long-lasting making the assignments more predictable. Predictability is an important component for Guard and Reserve forces since they cannot be called up as quickly due to notifying units in advance. Since post-conflict stability operations tend to be static, major crises do not usually emerge which demand rapid surges. Therefore, longer gaps in deployment cycles are not a major hindrance to these operations.

The fourth major mission for Guard and Reserve is providing assistance to homeland security and disaster response. The Guard and the Reserve has long operated as a responder to domestic natural and man-made disasters. Their greater integration into their civilian communities than the Active Component augments their ability to cooperate with civilian institutions. This can facilitate greater operation efficiency and lead to faster responses. The *Comprehensive Review of the Future Role of the Reserve Component* said the same critical skills necessary for humanitarian operations abroad found within the Guard and Reserve are just as relevant for disaster response here at home. This remains the primary role for the Guard and therefore, even as additional responsibilities are placed on the Guards, funding should always remain available for the National Guard to respond effectively to any homeland threats or disasters that may emerge. However, the Marine Corps Reserve could support this mission by consolidating C-9s at Joint Reserve Base, Ft. Worth, Texas. As the C-9s are replaced with C-40As, the Reserve could provide additional strategic and operational capability because this platform is certified to operate in an all-passenger (121 passengers), all-cargo or combination ("combi") configuration that can accommodate up to three cargo pallets and 70 passengers on the main deck.

In an increasingly difficult budget environment, the Total Force has had to assess what programs are relevant to completing the goals and missions for the new security arena facing the U.S. military today. The Guard and Reserve are under such scrutiny as well with expected RC force numbers to drop to levels not seen since before 9/11 even as national security challenges continue to increase from state and non-state actors. Therefore, it is vital for military leadership to understand the valuable missions the Guard and Reserve contribute to and concentrate the military's more constrained resources into fulfilling them. If not, the Guard and Reserve will risk being further sidelined and take larger cuts to their end strength levels which will make it impossible to fulfill their core missions.

ROA appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony and looks forward to working with Congress, whereby, we can offer our support and perspective of the reserve components.