

Statement of Executive Director Jeffrey E. Phillips of the Reserve Officers Association of the United States before the Commission on the Future of the Army – 20 May 2015

Chairman Ham, Vice Chairman Lamont and distinguished members of the commission. On behalf of the nearly 30,000 Army members of the Reserve Officers Association (ROA), thank you for the invitation to share our thoughts with you and engage in a continuing conversation as the National Commission on the Future of the Army does its important work.

ROA was founded in 1922 by General Pershing, who said at its first convention, “The logical development of the Reserves cannot be accomplished unless we have a certain amount of instruction annually The influence of this organization should be very great in arousing our people to the necessity for reasonable appropriations for these purposes. It would be false economy to save a few dollars by neglecting common sense preparation in peace times and then to spend billions to make up for the deficiency when war comes.”

Congressionally chartered and signed by the hand of a valiant reserve component artilleryman named Harry Truman in 1950, ROA advises the Congress and the president on reserve component use and resourcing as it affects national security on behalf of all members of the nation’s reserve components.

Most of ROA’s Army members either serve in or have served in the Army Reserve. Our respect for and pride in our Army Guard members notwithstanding, my comments today will thus focus on the Reserve, as my friend General Gus Hargett will share with you the perspective of the Army National Guard.

Today we have three general recommendations and several specific recommendations.

Our first general recommendation is that the Commission embraces the imperative of an operational reserve. Everyone here understands that the fundamental participation of the RC has radically changed from the Cold War.

There can and should be discussion regarding just what an operational reserve entails, in differentiation from the strategic reserve of yesteryear. ROA invites the commission to consider this definition of an operational reserve to be worthy of its especial efforts; we would look forward to helping shape and engage in that discussion.

What needs no exploration is the fact that the Army Reserve and Army National Guard have performed well on the field and are ever more vital components of the total force.

The RC brings in some cases a great majority of capabilities – the Army Reserve, for example, supplies about three-fourths of the Army’s medical, civil affairs and psyops capabilities, as well as much of its engineer and logistics capabilities. The *process* of integrating those capabilities and the men and women who bring them is vital to the success of an operationalized reserve.

The Army has made progress in integrating its RC enablers in operational settings. The so-called “seamlessness” of operations during the war is often cited as evidence of success. Already, however, the components may be perceived “going to their corners,” especially in the face of

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budgetary pressures. With the “forcing function” of war now easing, ROA fears that integration will suffer and erode.

More must be done to establish and exercise multi-component enabler units during peacetime. Implementation of AC-RC pairing programs would result in integrated operational training. Already the Army’s Training and Doctrine Command One Army School System uses RC instructors to teach AC students – a prime example of integration that also may serve to “imprint” soldiers at formative points in their careers.

My only caution is that the Reserve and Guard comprise citizen soldiers. They want to be properly used, but they are not an active duty force – they are a force that in a cyclic manner can ably support and augment the active force.

Our second general recommendation is the need for the Army to fully embrace the Army Total Force Policy. The policy affects every aspect of organizing, training, manning and equipping the force. It must be understood and implemented throughout the force – especially in headquarters that resource. For example, the RC must receive its share of new equipment. Foisting old gear on the Reserves merely increases RC sustainment costs and makes it more difficult to recruit and retain good soldiers. Embracing ATFP will mean that all units train to the same standard and have the resources to do so. This is a cost of having an operational reserve.

Our third general recommendation is to preserve the separate identities, roles and missions of the Federal Army Reserve and the Army National Guard. The two components have fundamentally different roles and each performs them well. Benefits of merger are illusory; the issue was thoroughly reviewed and rejected most recently by the Commission on the National Guard and Reserve and the GAO. Instead, we must as a total force continually develop cooperation between the components and efficient use of their complementary strengths in support of the Army and the nation.

Our specific recommendations are:

1. The Army should make better use of the mobilization authority provided by Section 12304(b) of Title 10. This authority permits the Army, with reasonable planning and budgeting, to employ Reservists in tasks well-suited to their capabilities. The Service secretaries control this mobilization process without the necessity of presidential approval. Use of this authority facilitates excellent training opportunities, exposure to overseas operations, and combatant command staff work. It is inherently integrative. Currently, the Army requests of the Reserve only about 1000 man-years of usage under 12304(b) – given the manpower pressures the Army will experience, that number could increase five- or ten-fold. One way to ensure proper funding might be for appropriations in this category to be handled like NGREA: with the funds traceable through the Army finance system while ensuring that other RC operational funds are not decremented when 12304(b) funds are programmed. With more aggressive use of this authority, the Reserve role as an integrated operational reserve will be enhanced, as will force readiness generally.

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2. The Army Reserve can be of great value in Defense Support to Civil Authorities under expanded authority within 10 US Code 12304(a). We echo the Chief of the Army Reserve in our support of the use of Army Reserve capabilities in providing life-saving and sustaining capabilities at a governor's request. While the Guard has proven admirably capable with in this arena, circumstances can justify use of the Reserve, such as geographic proximity of a crisis site to a nearby Reserve unit; this boils down to ensuring civil authorities have the best resources in the timeliest manner.
3. The Army should place qualified members of the Reserve and Guard in senior roles at the three- and perhaps four-star rank. A Guard four-star general deservedly serves on the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Is there any reason why a qualified RC general officer should not be considered for a major command or a senior staff position? Entities such as 1st Army and NORTHCOM have many RC troops and could quite feasibly be led by a Reserve commander. If we are serious about an operational reserve and if we are serious about the "seamless" quality of AC-RC performance, there should be no question that such a policy would both strengthen integration and afford the nation a deeper bench of quality leaders where we need them most.
4. Senior active Army leaders must have some reasonable RC experience serving or working with a reserve entity. Leading Citizen Soldiers, with their dual lives, presents issues different from those faced in leading active forces. With over half the Army in the Reserves, it is reasonable to require somewhere in a career to have at least one short-term assignment with a Reserve unit. With the densely packed career agenda facing most officers, we recognize the value of even 90- or 120-day attachments to an RC unit as an advisor or staff officer. Within total force, our Army leadership must have substantial understanding of the components; immersion in another component culture will be invaluable. The Army Reserve's Total Force Partnership Program and Continuum of Service initiative deserve support and expansion; the latter faces severe friction due to its difficulty, but offers proportionally great payoffs in Soldier attraction, retention, and force readiness.

These integrative experiences can help counter the "tribal" nature of Army culture: except for the episodic experience of wartime service together, perhaps in a combatant headquarters, AC officers and NCOs essentially develop and serve as a cohort; RC officers and NCOs come up in their own cohorts. Leaders can serve 20 or 30 years in their component undisturbed by substantive integratory experience. The result: integration is an act overlaid on an unintegrated culture.

5. One challenge facing the Commission will be sorting out the true costs of Active vs. Reserve units. Fortunately, excellent work has already been done by Rand and the Reserve Forces Policy Board. A rule of thumb is that the cost to maintain Reserve units is just under one-third the cost of active units, but there is variation, and mobilization injects costs, of course. This differential becomes even more important as the active army draws down. The RC should be recognized as a "home" for many Soldiers leaving active duty, and the economical repository of select capabilities traditionally performed by the active component.

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6. Congruent with Total Force Policy, we urge the reform of Joint Qualification standards to reflect the improvements in education delivery. Requiring residential senior service college for Joint Qualified Officer Level III certification is outdated thinking; it is inconsistent with the intent of Total Force Policy. If a distance-educated MEL 1 colonel can command a brigade, what reason is there to exclude her from Phase II credit and JQO level III? To produce more credentialed leaders, commissioned and non-commissioned, we could more efficiently use present course offerings and facilities, distance learning, limited residential classroom work, and the Joint Forces Staff College and its faculty. The result will be more joint qualified officers, more career and job satisfaction among experienced officers we badly need to retain, at less cost to the taxpayer.
7. Educational opportunities must be enhanced across the board for RC Soldiers. These would include more chances to attend senior enlisted courses, senior service colleges, and CAPSTONE. Junior and senior development courses must be accessible to the RC. We understand that seats are scarce and costly, but to limit the investment in the education of our Soldiers is short-sighted and counter-productive. Too often, in the battle for money and time, the operational competes successfully with the generational; ROA believes that the requisite resourcing of the generational is what determines the success of the operational.

To venture one “out-of-the-box” recommendation, ROA suggests consideration be given to a new type of reserve entity. Secretary of Defense Carter has emphasized the need to understand and take advantage of the skills of the millennial generation, while also understanding them better. In his book, “Bleeding Talent,” former US Air Force officer Tim Kane explores the military’s centralized personnel systems and what he sees as their corrosive effect on retention. Kane criticizes the inability of the military to accommodate lateral entry from outside. Yet the military needs expertise in areas it may not be growing experts. This is not new; the 1943 “Oscar” was awarded to the Army for a film called “Prelude to War.”

The film was the first of the “Why We Fight” series showing troops why America was going to war. The film was directed by Frank Capra, recruited to be a major by the Army because it had no such expertise in filmmaking. The Reserve could be home to a revival of this enlightened way of accessing specialized expertise for the dedicated use of the service; the Reserve could even be responsible for identifying capabilities needed and candidates for accession. For example, with the evolving nature of military operations, experts in macroeconomics and finance may well be critical to a combatant commander; there is no MOS for these skills.

Much thought must be given such a proposal, but its implementation would dramatically expand the types of people potentially amenable to service, would be a major step in enhancing civil-military relations, and most important, would increase the ability of the total force.

Over a decade of war has seen the RC used as never before. The Guard and Reserve have performed well, but it has been a sprint. Now, we must look to the marathon that some call the long war and others call simply the future, a future with fewer resources and likely more crises occurring faster than at any time in our nation’s history. How we shape the total force will help

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determine the nation's success in that marathon; ROA appreciates the opportunity to address the commission today on this matter, and looks forward to helping it in its vitally important work.