

1. Introduction

Background

The disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and Soviet Union that signaled the end of the bipolar international strategic environment in place since the end of World War II affected U.S. national security strategy in several ways. Key among these was a one-third reduction in total military force structure, the increased strategic importance of U.S. capabilities to dominate potential major regional conflicts (MRCs),¹ and subsequently, the increased U.S. military involvement in missions that were short of armed conflicts between nations. The latter diverse missions included such activities as peace operations, disaster relief, and nation and humanitarian assistance. The U.S. position as the single dominant “superpower” increased the demand for its involvement in these international missions. As a result, the increasing operational tempo (OPTEMPO) for a diminishing active military force structure suggests a growing need for employment of reserve forces in these operations.

In October 1993, the Secretary of Defense completed a comprehensive review of defense strategy and requirements for the post-cold war era, called the “Bottom-Up Review” (BUR), which defined the strategy and objectives needed for the new national security environment. The BUR postulated the increased likelihood of U.S. military involvement in “peace enforcement and intervention operations,” which cover a diverse set of missions generally referred to as Operations Other Than War (OOTW). The BUR also recognized that the reduced size of the active component (AC) would increase reliance on reserve component (RC) forces and noted that reserves would be required to support, augment, reinforce, and backfill active forces engaged in contingency and OOTW missions.²

To assess the role of the reserve components in this new environment, RAND’s National Defense Research Institute (NDRI) initiated a series of studies across the spectrum of missions that might employ the reserve components. It studied the size, composition, and mix of active and reserve forces required to execute a

¹Throughout this report, the use of the term major regional conflict (MRC), which reflects DoD terminology at the time of our research, is recognized as major theater war (MTW) in current terminology.

²Les Aspin, Secretary of Defense, *Report on the Bottom-Up Review*, Department of Defense, October 1993, pp. 1, 8, 9, 91.

military strategy that addressed two near-simultaneous MRCs in a study completed in 1992.³ Subsequently, NDRI analyzed the state and federal missions of the National Guard, which explored the use of reserves in U.S. domestic missions.⁴ The present study investigates missions that are lower on the conflict scale than major regional conflicts but still require military involvement overseas. Specifically, it addresses OOTW missions, and it completes the series.

Objective

The research reported in this report has three objectives. First, it explores the potential for using reserve component forces in OOTW on either a voluntary or involuntary basis. Second, it seeks to determine what might limit the use of the reserve components in such operations. Finally, given sufficient demand for forces, it offers recommendations designed to increase the likelihood of being able to use the reserves. Included as part of this third objective is an analysis of the planned functional mix of active and reserve forces to determine if alternative mixes or sources of capabilities would improve the capacity to carry out OOTW contingency missions.

Approach

This study builds on the previous RAND analyses, which were expanded by extensive interviews with the staffs of the U.S. unified combatant commanders, the many staffs of their respective Service component commands, the Joint Staff, and the staffs of the military departments. It reviews recent and historical mission involvements in OOTW by the United Nations and several of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member countries (e.g., Canada, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Italy) with specific focus on the use of reserve forces. We also reviewed Department of Defense, Joint Staff, unified command, and military department policies, doctrine, and plans that were relevant to both OOTW and the use of reserve component forces, including their pay and accessibility.

We focused on those key factors that determine mission or task requirements for forces and capabilities, the decision process and the criteria for selecting the

³National Defense Research Institute, *Assessing the Structure and Mix of Future Active and Reserve Forces: Final Report to the Secretary of Defense*, RAND, MR-140-1-OSD, 1992.

⁴R. A. Brown, W. Fedorochko, Jr., and J. F. Schank, *Assessing the State and Federal Missions of the National Guard*, RAND, MR-557-OSD, 1995.

required forces, and the Service cultures that determine the existing and planned reserve institutions and their intended uses within the military departments.

Organization of the Report

The remainder of the report is organized into six additional sections.

Section 2 discusses the mission set for OOTW and describes the analytic framework for the study.

Section 3 discusses the joint planning process at the unified combatant command, develops key operational factors that shape OOTW contingencies, and identifies some common characteristics of recent peacetime contingency missions.

Section 4 reviews the organization for providing force capabilities to the unified commands that perform these OOTW contingency tasks and outlines the decision process and criteria used by “force providers” for selecting forces for assignment.

Section 5 discusses the diverse character of reserve cultures of the military Services including several comparative measures that illustrate varied philosophies for reliance on reserve forces, the basis for their functional mixes among active and reserve components, and doctrinal aspects affecting employment of the RC.

Section 6 examines the potential to improve joint OOTW response capabilities by considering alternative force mixes and capability sources such as civilian contract services.

Section 7 provides our conclusions and recommendations to remove or ameliorate impediments to the use of reserve components in OOTW.