

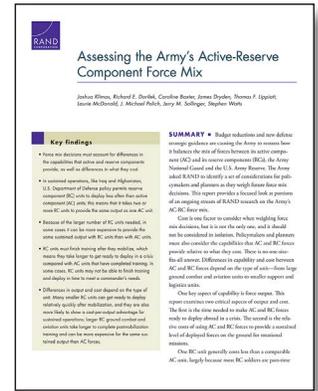


# Assessing the Army's Active-Reserve Component Force Mix

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Multiple factors should influence decisions about the mix of Army active and reserve component forces, including the capabilities that these forces provide and their respective costs. This report focuses on two critical aspects of capability and cost: (1) the time needed to make forces ready to deploy in a crisis and (2) the costs of active and reserve component forces to sustain the same level of deployed output for rotational missions.



## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the differences in how rapidly active and reserve component forces can get ready to deploy abroad in a crisis?
- What are the comparative costs of using active and reserve component forces to provide a sustained level of deployed output for rotational missions?



## KEY FINDINGS

Force Mix Decisions Must Account for Differences in the Capabilities That Active and Reserve Components Provide, as Well as Differences in What They Cost

- In sustained operations, like those in Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. Department of Defense policy permits reserve component (RC) units to deploy less often than active component (AC) units; this means that it takes two or more RC units to provide the same deployed output as one AC unit.
- Because of the larger number of RC units needed, in some cases it can be more expensive to sustain the same deployed output with RC units than with AC units.
- Because they must finish training after they mobilize, RC units take longer to get ready to deploy in a crisis compared with AC units that have completed training. In some cases, RC units may not be able to finish training and deploy in time to meet a commander's needs.

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- Differences in output and cost depend on the type of unit: Many smaller RC units can get ready to deploy relatively quickly after mobilization, and they are also more likely to show a cost-per-output advantage for sustained operations; larger RC ground combat and aviation units take longer to complete postmobilization training and can be more expensive for the same sustained output than AC forces.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

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- Policymakers should consider both capability and cost as they weigh AC-RC force mix decisions.

