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DISSERTATION

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# Considering a Cadre Augmented Army

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This document was submitted as a dissertation in June 2008 in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the doctoral degree in public policy analysis at the Pardee RAND Graduate School. The faculty committee that supervised and approved the dissertation consisted of Jacob Alex Klerman (Chair), Thomas L. McNaugher, and Richard Hillestad.



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## SUMMARY

This dissertation considers whether integrating a new type of unit into the U.S. Army could reduce costs without significantly increasing military risk. A new type of unit is now worth considering because the Department of Defense (DoD) recently changed its force planning guidance. The DoD shifted its focus from planning primarily for wars fought *without* rotation to planning for wars fought *with* rotation. In a force designed for use with rotation, some units are not needed as quickly as they were in a force designed for use without rotation. Those units that are not needed quickly could be maintained at a lower level of readiness without a significant increase in military risk. Maintaining these units at a lower level of readiness would lower costs because there is a tradeoff between the peacetime cost and readiness of a unit.

The Reserve Component (RC) has historically served as the low-cost, low-readiness force. However, RC combat units are maintained at an unnecessarily high level of readiness for some slots in a rotation. The DoD may wish to consider maintaining some units at a level of readiness lower than that of the RC to reduce costs without significantly increasing military risk.

This dissertation examines one way to do this by analyzing a force augmented by *cadre* units. Cadre units retain only leaders (officers/non-commissioned officers) during peacetime and are brought to full strength only in wartime. Cadre units offer a cost-effective hedge against the need to rotate large numbers of units overseas in future wars. The dissertation analyzes the attractiveness and feasibility of integrating cadre units into the Army from three perspectives: *budgetary*, *operational*, and *historical*. This dissertation is comprised of three separate papers, each of which analyzes cadre forces from one of these perspectives.

The budgetary analysis of a cadre augmented force shows that cadre units can offer annual cost savings measured in billions of dollars. This analysis explores various ways to integrate cadre into the total force. No matter which way cadre units are integrated, this paper shows that a cadre augmented force can significantly reduce annual defense costs. However, these cost savings are accompanied by an increase in military risk. This paper presents the tradeoffs between cost and military risk for the reader to consider.

The operational analysis discusses how cadre units could work in practice. This analysis focuses on how cadre units could be structured, organized, and equipped in peacetime and activated, filled out, trained, and demobilized during wartime. The most important issue discussed in this chapter is the ability of the army to expand during wartime to fill out cadre units. We find that increased recruiting alone cannot fill out a cadre force that mobilizes at a rate of more than one combat unit per year. Therefore, we explore the possibility of activating members of the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) or offering bonuses to Reserve Component (RC) personnel to serve in cadre units. Both of these approaches have disadvantages; they both require significant changes to army personnel policies and can reduce the cost savings from cadre. The ability to fill out cadre units with junior personnel in wartime appears to be the major barrier to implementing a cadre augmented force.

The final analysis in this dissertation is a historical analysis of cadre forces. Cadre forces have been proposed many times throughout the history of the U.S. Army. The historical analysis shows that cadre units have been proposed in the past for two main reasons, either because there was a change in the threat perceived by the Army or because there was a change in the perceived effectiveness of the reserves. This analysis also discusses

the similarities and differences between previous cadre proposals and the cadre forces analyzed in this dissertation.

This research will be of interest to defense policymakers at a variety of levels. From those making decisions about the future structure of the Army, to those looking at a broader picture of defense planning, the analyses in this dissertation provide a new set of alternatives to consider.