

Fogleman Calls Out the Militia

Gen. Ronald R. Fogleman probably intended to ruffle feathers with an address in Cleveland nearly two decades ago. The USAF Chief of Staff, speaking at a time of budget cuts, called for the armed forces to embrace a "militia model," the historical American norm. Rather than maintaining a large standing force, said Fogleman, the US should field smaller active services and put more reliance on reserves. Fogleman's idea did not meet universal applause. Even so, the idea stuck. His concept was endorsed this year by the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force.

A fundamental precept of our American military tradition is that the United States of America is a militia nation. ... During the Cold War period, where we maintained a large standing military force, ... many of us came to believe that that was the way things had always been and always would be. But the fact of the matter is it was an aberration in our history.

It was an aberration that was driven by a very dangerous threat to America's security. It was driven by a leadership role that we assumed after World War II. It was driven by a very different set of circumstances. ...

The militia tradition goes back nearly 360 years to when the Massachusetts colony established the first militia in North America. ... This tradition was bolstered in large part by a deep resentment of large standing military forces. They were seen as an unnecessary burden on these young colonies. ...

It was in the early 1970s, when we moved to an All-Volunteer Force after the Vietnam War, that the true importance of the Guard and Reserve was brought home to our national security planners once again. Because, when we went to an all-volunteer force, that meant we could no longer pay this force at minimum subsistence-type wages. We were no longer drafting people, asking them to serve for a few years and then letting them leave and go back to society. We were out there effectively competing with the rest of the American workforce to get people to come on board, to stay on board.

We could not afford to pay the numbers of people required to provide the security of this nation. We had to find a better way to utilize our Guard and Reserve forces. From this was born the idea of the Total Force ... that emerged eventually into the Total Force policy in 1974.

As a result, our Guard and Reserve forces have achieved some of the highest states of readiness in the peacetime history of our nation. Units were provided with modern, advanced weapon systems and some of the very best in realistic training. ...

Recently, under President Clinton, we conducted a Bottom-Up Review to [review] this strategy. The concept was validated. In fact, it resulted in further decreases of the Active force.

When we started this process, the United States Air Force had 40 fighter

"America—Militia Nation"

Gen. Ronald R. Fogleman
Air Force Chief of Staff
Remarks to 117th General Conference
National Guard Association of the United States
Cleveland, Ohio
Sept. 7, 1995

Find the full text on the
Air Force Magazine's website
www.airforcemag.com
"Keeper File"

wing equivalents of force structure. The Navy had 16 carriers, and the Army had 18 Active divisions. When we complete it, the Air Force will have 20 fighter wings; the Navy 12 carriers; and the Army 10 divisions. Of those 20 fighter wings that the Air Force will have, seven of them will be in the Guard and the Reserve. ...

This is no small drawdown. This is a demobilization, and it's taking us back toward our traditional reliance on Guard and Reserve forces. ...

I'll tell you straight out that we consider the Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve as full partners on our team. We put our money and our first-line equipment where our mouth is. We have relied very heavily on you all to help us deal with the challenges of the post-Cold War world.

As we reduced our force structure some 33 percent, we found ourselves being tasked at four times the rate we had been tasked during the Cold War period. ... We took the logical step of going back to the National Guard and the Reserve to seek additional assistance and look for new and innovative ways that they could help us with this optempo. The response has been tremendous.

The Air National Guard has been an active partner in our contingency operations around the world. Your forces flew mobility missions to deliver aid and supplies and troops to crisis locations and to refuel the aircraft that built the so-called air bridges. You provided A-10s, F-15s, F-16s and F-4G fighter units for Deny Flight, Southern Watch, and Provide Comfort. Your people even volunteered to pull holiday tours so that our Active Duty members could spend Christmas with their families. ...

We're seeking to expand the role of the Guard in areas where it makes sense. ... The bottom line is that I'm proud to serve with outstanding members of the Army and Air National Guard in these very challenging times. I won't let anybody tell me that guardsmen are just weekend warriors, because I know better. ■

Capt. Ronald Fogleman, right, was a Misty FAC in the Vietnam War. Standing to his right is Maj. Tony McPeak, who directly preceded Fogleman as Chief of Staff.

