



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON, DC

16 JUL 2010

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR RESERVE AFFAIRS

FROM: HQ USAF/RE  
1150 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington DC 20330-1150

SUBJECT: TOTAL FORCE POLICY 21

Sir, for your consideration I am pleased to provide the Air Force Reserve input to the Department of Defense Comprehensive Review of the Future Role of the Reserve Component. The attached white paper, "Total Force Policy 21: A 21st Century Framework for Military Force Mix Decisions," outlines a new way of force planning that balances resources and risk in an era of changing National Security resource priorities.

As Chief of the Air Force Reserve, I am confident that this paper will prove invaluable as we move forward with Secretary Gates' vision to achieve both a strategic and operational Reserve force that is accessible, predictable, sustainable and quantifiable. What we need can be met through new planning tools, risk mitigation, and fiscal prudence and I believe this paper can serve as the foundation for future discussions.

I am available at your convenience to discuss.

Sincerely

CHARLES E. STENNER, JR., Lt Gen, USAF  
Chief of Air Force Reserve

Attachment:  
Total Force Policy 21 White Paper

cc:  
SAF/MR  
NGB/CX  
DARNG  
CAR  
CMDR MARFORRES  
CNR  
NGB/CF  
CG-13

# **Total Force Policy 21**

A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Framework for Military Force Mix Decisions



## **Air Force Reserve White Paper**

**Lt Gen Charles E. Stenner  
Chief of the Air Force Reserve**

15 July 2010

## **PURPOSE**

Total Force Policy 21 provides a 21<sup>st</sup> century framework for rebalancing the roles and resources of the active and reserve components in a period of changing national security resource priorities. Its critical premise is that sustained operational taskings and recent policy changes have institutionalized the operational aspect of the reserve components to a degree where it is necessary to create a new governing framework for force mix decisions that supports reserve component growth. This framework will generate a more sustainable and affordable balance among the active and reserve components and will preserve important wartime surge capability and force readiness.

## **DRIVING FORCES AND ASSUMPTIONS**

The driving forces for change outlined below include current and projected conditions that make it feasible to leverage the operational aspect of the reserve components with a high degree of confidence. Some are fact-of-life conditions driven by the events of the past ten years, and some are important assumptions based on observation and experience. The most critical of these assumptions address reliable and predictable access to reserve forces and funding to support operational utilization.

- Global economic conditions, combined with public sentiment and competition for resources among government agencies, will affect U.S. national security strategy and resource allocation priorities, resulting in a change in Department of Defense (DoD) fiscal guidance from its current level to a downward ramp across the program years.
- Faced with significant budget reductions, the services will consider rebalancing the mix of active and reserve components to achieve program savings.
- Recent policy and legislative initiatives have institutionalized an operational force generation model that has transformed the reserve components into an operational force and made it possible to achieve a cost-effective balance between risk, availability, and capability in trading active component force structure for reserve component structure.
- Mobilization authority and funding will continue to be available to support the operational use of the reserve components for overseas contingency operations.
- Continuing reforms to policy, management structures, and business processes will ensure that senior leaders have appropriate visibility and control over critical participation, recruiting, and retention variables to manage and allocate force capabilities.

- DoD and congressional leadership will continue to support targeted recruiting and retention benefits to ensure the participation of reserve component personnel in future years given the facts of continued mobilization authority and variable economic conditions.

The operational reserve construct has clearly matured, and each of the services is using some variant of a force generation model based on Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) policy. But for the construct to remain viable, two elements are critical. The first is the long-term mobilization authority that the president put in place to support the Global War on Terrorism. This authority is approaching a ten-year anniversary of continuous use by the services to provide assured access to their reserve components to sustain operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other locations worldwide. Without this authority, the services would have to revert to volunteerism as a planning tool for force generation in support of daily operations, a scenario that would not provide the required level of assurance to credibly use this model for planning purposes. Thus, it may be necessary to modify guidance on utilization of existing presidential-activation authorities or pursue a different statutory authorization that is tailored for these purposes.

The second critical element is sustained funding that has been provided through supplemental appropriations to pay for the personnel man days and supporting operations funding. This funding has enabled the services to pay for reserve operational support without undermining their baseline budgets, and it will be difficult for them to fully absorb this cost into their programs during a period of anticipated baseline funding reductions. This means that some type of continuing supplemental or tailored funding mechanism may need to remain in place after the drawdown in Iraq and Afghanistan in order to sustain the operational reserve construct that the services and components have spent years developing and refining.

Because Congress would not be inclined to give free rein to DoD for routine mobilizations, specific conditions and caveats would need to be developed to ensure control and oversight. A separate appropriation authority to support this sustained mobilization authority would also require carefully crafted language outlining the appropriate controls and oversight.

## **BACKGROUND**

The reserve components—traditionally codified as a strategic surge force—were structured and resourced as a force trained to be ready for activation to expand the active service components during times of crisis, national

emergencies and war. Elements of the reserve components routinely provided operational support through volunteerism and as a by-product of normal training activity—but they were still structured and resourced primarily as a strategic surge force. The 1991 Gulf War conformed to that construct, and many reserve and guard personnel were mobilized for war to expand the capability of the regular components. After the war, however, things did not return to the status quo. The need to sustain a high military tempo around the globe, coupled with a drawdown in the force structure of the Total Force, altered the role of the reserve components as a matter of necessity. The post-9/11 wars in Afghanistan and Iraq strengthened this new role through expanded funding of operational man days and continuing mobilization of the reserve components. This new operational role was subsequently institutionalized in OSD policy, and today much of the Selected Reserve operates on a force generation model, providing predictable and sustainable daily operational support while maintaining readiness to support surge requirements in the future.

The strategic nature of the reserve components has traditionally made them one of the first places that the services turned to when forced to reduce funding in their program portfolios. This often resulted in rebalancing resources among the components based on a strategy that favored near-term operational risk reduction over longer-term cost effectiveness and wartime surge capability. This was a logical approach to allocating risk at the time because reserve component daily operational capabilities depended almost exclusively on volunteerism, which was difficult for planners to quantify with a desired degree of assurance. That legacy model is now the exception rather than the rule, since risk associated with the reserve components can be both measured and controlled through management and integration of volunteerism with sustainable mobilization plans based on the force generation model construct. This allows the services to make force rebalancing decisions today based on business case analysis rather than focusing exclusively on near-term risk avoidance.

## **DISCUSSION**

The traditional approach to rebalancing among the service components during a budget reduction has been to reduce reserve component force structure to preserve active component operational capabilities, or to reduce all components through some proportional or fair-share model to spread risk across the force. There are multiple down sides to this approach.

- Transferring force structure from the reserves to the active force eliminates ready and available force capability provided by trained and experienced

reserve personnel. It trades these resources for active manpower slots that must be filled by newly recruited and relatively inexperienced personnel—essentially trading experienced, lower-cost forces for a smaller number of higher-cost forces, ostensibly to optimize availability over cost and wartime capability.

- Transferring force structure results in an immediate reduction in combat capability and rising recruiting, training, operations, and sustainment costs with limited tangible capability return for several years until the active component trains and ages the new personnel.
- Proportional reductions create an opportunity cost by limiting the ability of the reserve components to absorb experienced personnel that are separating from the active component as manpower positions are eliminated across the board.

The traditional approach is also based on assumptions that are no longer valid under the new operational force policy. It incorrectly assumes the reserve components are not accessible in an assured, predictable, and sustainable manner to support daily operational requirements. It also assumes, incorrectly, that it is not possible to plan reliably for access to reserve component forces for daily operations, resulting in planning scenarios that drive unmanageable operational tempo for the active component and/or reduced capability to support daily operations.

Recent changes in law, policy, and management practices have created a reserve component *operational* force that is accessible, predictable, sustainable, and easily quantified for planning, programming, and budgeting purposes, as well as operational risk management purposes.

- Laws now extend recruiting and retention benefits to the reserve components that enhance the ability to attract and sustain a force that is willing to participate at levels well beyond the minimum statutory requirements, and many recommendations of the Commission on National Guard and Reserves have been included in legislation and policy that support institutionalizing the reserve components as operational forces.
- New DoD policies require the services to develop and implement operational force generation models to provide predictable and sustainable access to reserve force capabilities while maintaining wartime surge readiness, and reservists have adapted to what has now become a new expectation for reserve service.

- New DoD and service mobilization business rules provide advanced notice for reservists, which encourages higher participation rates through improved predictability for individuals, employers, and families.
- The reserve components are responding to DoD directives by developing new policies, management processes, and structures to institutionalize the operational force aspect of the reserves while maintaining a wartime strategic surge capability.
- Partial mobilization authority has been extended since 9/11, demonstrating that mobilization authority can now be sustained over extended periods without significant political or force management limitations, and assuring the services predictable access to their reserve components for operational planning.

These changes point to a new framework for force planning. It is now possible to quantify and plan for a predictable level of access to operational support from the reserve components in critical capability areas. Since this access to operational support capability is quantifiable, it is possible to do reliable cost/capability tradeoff analyses to quantify both cost and risk for options placing greater military capability in the reserve components. This does not mean that reserve component growth will always be the prudent choice, but it does mean that the choice can be made based on measurable outcomes of cost, capability, and risk rather than using arbitrary rules of thumb, notional ratios, or emotional arguments.

Increased reliance on part-time reserve forces also provides extended returns on investment by recruiting and retaining experienced active component personnel. By reducing higher-cost active component forces and expanding the reserve components, the part time-force can absorb trained and experienced personnel leaving active service, providing a robust surge potential at reduced cost during times when cost considerations outweigh daily operational demands. Under the new operational aspect of the reserve components, these trained and experienced personnel are readily accessible through mobilization and supplemental funding mechanisms when increased operating tempo or continuing contingency needs require their service.

## **SUMMARY**

The traditional approach to rebalancing between the components creates inefficient outcomes that have an immediate impact on warfighting capability. Trading away highly experienced reserve component personnel to invest in a future active component daily operations capability is a sub-optimal choice that exchanges trained and available combat capability in the reserve components

for options that create added costs for recruiting and training new personnel for the active component. This legacy approach also affects active component operational capability because it limits deployment of experienced personnel who must be available to supervise, train, and age the new accessions. It also eliminates reserve component positions that can be used to absorb future losses from the active component, thereby eliminating the ability to gain extended returns on investment from these experienced personnel leaving active duty.

The Total Force Policy 21 approach to force mix focuses on balancing daily operations, surge capability, and cost. It relies on the fact that reserve forces are ready, available, and accessible to fulfill operational requirements, and that they can be sustained at significantly lower cost than full-time active forces based on the force generation model formula. From within the reserve forces, a sustainable level of mobilized capability can be identified for employment on a continuous basis, while still retaining the capacity to surge for extended periods under expanded mobilization authority. The new approach to rebalancing allows for a force that is agile and responsive to uncertainty and rapid changes in national priorities and mitigates the loss of surge capability and the high cost associated with the traditional approach to adjusting force mix. This approach also acknowledges that the reserve components have become and will remain a responsive operational force that allows the services to respond quickly and efficiently to funding reductions without creating warfighting capability gaps and incurring large active component recruiting and training bills associated with the traditional force rebalancing model.

The nation is at a critical point where a number of major forces are in play that make large-scale adjustments to defense resource strategy likely. The combination of recent economic events and a continuing Global War on Terrorism will set the stage for significant changes in the military as we reduce our presence in Iraq and look for efficiencies in the defense budget. This is a defining moment for the Total Force. It will require both an analytic-based framework that balances near- and long-term cost and operational effectiveness and bold action to ensure that the services leverage the strengths of all components to respond to future challenges with a robust set of capabilities.