



AUSA BACKGROUND BRIEF

THE FUTURE U.S. ARMY: OUTLOOK FOR THE 1990's



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THE ARMY IN THE TOTAL FORCE STRUCTURE: READINESS, RESERVES AND DEMOGRAPHICS

SUMMARY OF REMARKS BY

HONORABLE JOHN O. MARSH, JR.
(Former Secretary of the Army)

The remarks of Mr. Marsh were delivered on 28 March 1990 at the second in a series of eight guest speaker presentations to be held for members of Congress and their staffs. The series is cosponsored by the AUSA Institute of Land Warfare and the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis. The overall theme of the series is "The Future U.S. Army: Outlook for the 1990's." A separate Background Brief will be issued on each of the eight topics to be presented.

As U.S. policymakers contemplate the drawdown of American active forces deployed around the world, and especially in Europe, the reserve component of U.S. forces will become increasingly important, and will be asked to fill several roles now held by active forces or by other agencies of the United States government. This is the conclusion of John O. Marsh, Jr., Chairman of the Department of Defense Reserve Forces Policy Board.

Mr. Marsh described the process for a legislatively-mandated study of the total force structure, which will examine the threat, possible conflict scenarios, Service missions, and allocation of United States forces in a changing global security environment. Due to be ready for the Secretary of Defense on September 1, 1990, and for the Congress on December 1, 1990, this "landmark study" will be the subject of a series of hearings to be held in various locations throughout the country in the near future.

In the future, Reserve Centers and National Guard Armories in the United States (of which there are 1,800 and 2,600 respectively) will be affected not only by changing mission requirements, as dictated by the international situation, but also by changing demographic patterns and training procedures in the United States. Traditional recruitment bases in the American Northeast and Midwest will continue to shrink, while the potential for recruitment grows in those areas where Reserve and Guard units historically have not been as numerous, namely in the West and Southwest.

Changes in training patterns and procedures have improved the capabilities of Reserve and Guard forces, and will increase their contributions as "round-out" forces with active Army divisions. With the establishment of the National Training Center in California, Mr. Marsh argues, Reserve and Guard units receive "the most realistic training anywhere." Furthermore, increased focus on computer simulations; increased active duty training overseas; and more intensive, higher-level training exercises at the battalion, brigade, and division level, aid in strengthening Reserve and Guard capabilities.

Mr. Marsh called on Congress to recognize that individuals, especially officers and NCOs, being separated from active units, are a vitally important resource for Reserve and Guard units, which the United States cannot afford to lose. Therefore, he recommended placing them in selected reserve units on a full-time basis, thus retaining their leadership skills and experience as a part of the total force. To assist in the transition of former military personnel, he proposed carryover medical benefits, lateral transfers to other government agencies and early retirement on a reduced basis. Mr. Marsh also sought support for increased air- and sealift capabilities, where he sees a "real shortfall" in the ability of United States Army to fulfill mission requirements.