
Defense Report

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The Total Army—Inspiring Concept, Still Unfulfilled!

Since its strength stabilized at 780,000 after the post-Vietnam drawdown, the Army has relied increasingly on the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve to assist it in generating the increased combat and support forces needed to meet its steadily growing worldwide commitments: by the end of this year the National Guard and Reserve will comprise more than 50 percent of the Total Army's combat forces and more than 70 percent of its support forces.

It is not generally recognized that a high proportion of these units are assigned early-deploying missions; in fact, many actually "round out" active divisions to full structure and must be prepared to deploy with them. Without them, those divisions are not fully combat-ready.

This liberal transfer of missions from active to reserve components requires radical changes from past practices, including:

- "Round out" and other early-deploying units must be literally "Minutemen," equipped, trained and mentally prepared to deploy with little or no notice. They must attain and maintain levels of proficiency and readiness never before *attempted* in peacetime. Generally, they have not reached these levels today.

- Both the Administration and Congress need to recognize that the President must federalize/call up selected National Guard/and Reserve units much earlier in the crisis-development stage than ever before. The likelihood in today's political climate is remote.

- The Army must continue to equip both active and Reserve units on a "first-to-deploy, first-equipped" basis and must establish and exercise mechanisms to mobilize National Guard/Army Reserve units rapidly to meet their deployment dates. Its ability to do so has been severely constrained by inadequate funding.

Meeting these essential requirements places unprecedented demands on all concerned: the Administration, Congress, the Department of Defense, the active Army and the reserve components. Unless and until each of the concerned elements meets those demands in full, the concept of a ready, integrated Total Army of active, National Guard and Reserve is an unattainable dream.