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# Defense Report

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## **Transferring Missions to the National Guard and Army Reserve—How Far Can We Go?**

Since the start of the decade of the 1980's the Army has aggressively pursued a policy of transferring missions from the active forces to the Army National Guard and Army Reserve in order to obtain maximum combat power from the total Army while maintaining a fixed active strength. The objective is to develop a balanced force with a high state of readiness and the capability of mobilizing, deploying and conducting joint and combined operations successfully.

By switching missions, particularly combat support and service support, to the Reserve forces, the Army will add 27 combat battalions and two active light infantry divisions within its fixed 781,000 active strength by the end of next year.

Come 1991, the more than 40 unit missions which will have been transferred to the Guard and Reserves will require a 90,000 soldier increase in Reserve Component strength. At that time 52 percent of total Army strength will be in reserve elements. This ballooning reliance on the Reserve Components places unprecedented demands on them and has reached the point where careful analysis is required before additional assignments are transferred. Projected shrinking demographics demand a close examination of the impact on availability of people, equipment and dollars and on the ability of the Reserve Components to meet training, readiness and deployment requirements before further adjustments are made to the Active-Reserve balance.

It has often been suggested that the assignment of more missions to the Reserve components affords us the opportunity to save money by reducing the active Army strength. The fallacy of this argument is that, even with the projected Reserve growth to about 800,000 the total Army will fall short of meeting the war-fighting requirements foreseen in the Defense Guidance issued by the National Command Authority.

Reductions in the active strength would only exacerbate those shortfalls. Additionally, such false economy would have major adverse impacts on national security, on the Army's ability to accomplish its mission and on the Army itself.