



**THE  
LAND  
WARFARE  
PAPERS**

No. 17

OCTOBER 1993

**Reserve Forces in the Contingency Era:  
Issues and Answers**

**Lewis Sorley**

A National Security Affairs Paper  
Published on Occasion by

**THE INSTITUTE OF  
LAND WARFARE**

ASSOCIATION OF THE  
UNITED STATES ARMY

Arlington, Virginia

**RESERVE FORCES IN THE CONTINGENCY ERA:  
ISSUES AND ANSWERS**

**by**

**Lewis Sorley**

**The Institute of Land Warfare  
ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY**

## AN AUSA INSTITUTE OF LAND WARFARE PAPER

In 1988 the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) established within its existing organization a new entity known as the Institute of Land Warfare. Its purpose is to extend the educational work of AUSA by sponsoring scholarly publications, to include books, monographs and essays on key defense issues, as well as workshops and symposia. A work selected for publication as a Land Warfare Paper represents research by the author which, in the opinion of the editorial board, will contribute to a better understanding of a particular defense or national security issue. Publication as an Institute of Land Warfare Paper does not indicate that the Association of the United States Army agrees with everything in the paper, but does suggest that the Association believes the paper will stimulate the thinking of AUSA members and others concerned about important defense issues.

### LAND WARFARE PAPER NO. 17, OCTOBER 1993

#### **Reserve Forces in the Contingency Era: Issues and Answers**

by Lewis Sorley

Dr. Lewis Sorley is an independent scholar specializing in military affairs. A former soldier and civilian official of the Central Intelligence Agency, he is a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy and holds a Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University. He has also served on the faculties at West Point and the Army War College. Dr. Sorley is the author of a book entitled *Arms Transfers Under Nixon: A Policy Analysis* and a recent biography, *Thunderbolt: General Creighton Abrams and the Army of His Times*. He is currently at work on a book about reserve forces in the Gulf War.

This paper represents the opinions of the author and should not be taken to represent the views of the Department of the Army, the Department of Defense, the Institute of Land Warfare or the Association of the United States Army or its members.

© Copyright 1993 by  
the Association of the United States Army

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, whether electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the AUSA Institute of Land Warfare, 2425 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, VA 22201.

Inquiries regarding this and future Land Warfare Papers should be directed to: Association of the United States Army, Institute of Land Warfare, 2425 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, Virginia 22201. Telephone: 1-800-336-4570 or 703-841-4300, extension 320.

# CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| FOREWORD.....   | v  |
| INTRODUCTION.....                                     | 1  |
| PERTINENT RECENT HISTORY.....                         | 3  |
| THE EMERGING NEW STRATEGIC CONTEXT.....               | 5  |
| AMERICA'S CHOSEN ROLE IN FUTURE WORLD AFFAIRS.....    | 6  |
| RESULTANT IMPERATIVES FOR THE UNITED STATES ARMY..... | 7  |
| THE SLATE OF OPPORTUNITIES.....                       | 7  |
| Active-Reserve Force Cooperation.....                 | 8  |
| Roundout and Roundup Approaches.....                  | 11 |
| Redundant Capability.....                             | 14 |
| Variable Readiness and Deployability.....             | 15 |
| <i>TOUJOURS PRET</i> .....                            | 17 |
| ENDNOTES.....   | 18 |

## FOREWORD

“The U.S. Army is composed of both full-time and part-time soldiers who, as partners, form the backbone of the landpower of our armed forces.” This statement appeared in the foreword to an AUSA special report on the active and reserve components published in December 1989. It is even more valid today. U.S. interests are worldwide and the threats to those interests come from numerous quarters and regions. The time available to deploy military forces to a theater of operations in response to a crisis situation is limited. Under these circumstances the nation must have a total Army that is trained, equipped and postured to meet a crisis on short notice almost anywhere in the world. Almost any future sizable deployment of an Army task force will include reserve soldiers. The larger and more prolonged the military operation, the greater the involvement of reservists.

There is a continuing political debate over the appropriate size and structure of reserve forces in absolute terms and in proportion to active forces. As the author points out, the Army’s active and reserve leadership has to look beyond the debate for longer-term methods they can implement to foster greater capabilities and soldier satisfaction. These methods include closer active-reserve cooperation, unit roundout and roundup approaches, redundant capabilities, and variable readiness and deployability.

The author’s exploration of these methods serves notice that the approaches to reserve readiness, training and personnel incentives used in the past must be validated and changed as needed to adapt to the post-Cold War environment. In this regard, the Army and the nation require a collaborative approach by the active and reserve components to achieve an effective total Army.



JACK N. MERRITT  
General, U.S. Army Retired  
President

October 1993

## RESERVE FORCES IN THE CONTINGENCY ERA: ISSUES AND ANSWERS

No issue in defense policy comes with more history, or more baggage, than that involving reserve forces. Such forces are, after all, older than the Republic, tracing their origins in some cases to the pre-Revolutionary period when colonial towns and villages organized their own militias for self-defense. Those origins, the often intensely political nature of reserve force issues, and the dramatic changes in both the world environment in which military force may be brought to bear and the role America has chosen to play in global affairs have further complicated determinations having to do with reserve forces.<sup>1</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

There is thus no clean slate when it comes to considering reserve forces policy. As General Creighton Abrams used to observe, "You have to start from where you are."

This being the age of the dinosaur resurgent, let's begin with *Jurassic Park*. Dr. Ian Malcom, the mathematician in that work who predicted the multiple disasters of Isla Nublar, did so based on his belief in chaos theory. Soldiers also believe in chaos theory, even if they haven't seen it formally articulated. They have grown up with Murphy's Law, which holds that "if anything can go wrong, it will go wrong." And they know all about the Corollary to Murphy's Law: "Murphy was an optimist." On the battlefield soldiers call the effects of these unpredictable and often unfriendly factors "the fog of war." Or, as Michael Crichton's character explained, "Now chaos theory proves that unpredictability is built into our daily lives."<sup>2</sup>

Some modern theorists, schooled in systems analysis and operations research, have been pleased to observe disparagingly that "military science" is unscientific. Soldiers themselves have more often used the term "military arts and sciences," intuitively recognizing that successful conduct of battle requires a combination of both sorts of skills.

We now confront the post-Cold War era, defined by some as the contingency era, a designation I have chosen to adapt for purposes of this discussion. As in every era, the soldier asks that most fundamental question, "What is the mission?" And, as usual, the answers given by our political leadership are not entirely clear, not even very concrete. In some ways it is reminiscent of the bleak days of the Vietnam War. General Fred Weyand arrived, fresh from the "peace" talks in Paris, to serve as deputy to General Creighton Abrams. "What's the mission?" Weyand asked. "Who the hell knows?" retorted Abrams. "You know what has to be done. I know what has to be done. Let's get on with it."

That's what soldiers have always had to do. Every era requires them to make the classic estimate of the situation, determine what forces, resources and doctrine are required to perform whatever missions may be assigned, and then go about acquiring those assets and putting them in place just as efficiently as they can.

The history of our profession tells us that many missions cannot be anticipated. That is why the Army, in particular, puts much of its emphasis on what are called "general purpose forces," meaning that they have applicability to a range of missions and in a variety of mission environments.

Then the responsible soldier plans for use of those forces in whatever contexts he thinks may call for them. He calls these contingencies, and prepares a range of so-called contingency plans. He is not so foolish as to think that any of these plans will ever be put into effect just as he has written them, without modification, but he believes the planning process has a value of its own. It focuses attention on the strategic, tactical and logistical details of a projected operation, and provides a basis for modification and augmentation when a crisis erupts. General Fred Franks calls these modifications to the basic plans "audibles," picking up on the terminology of professional football, and tries to plan some of them as part of the central process, thus gaining flexibility and rapidity when they are implemented.

Asked what the current mission is, today's leadership might very well answer, with Abrams, "Who the hell knows?" But they would assuredly also add, as he did, that they know what has to be done and are getting on with it. The issues up for resolution in the process of doing that involve force structure and stationing; force mix (both within the active force and between the active and reserve components); equipment, both current and in research and development; operational tempo and its derivative, readiness; and quality of life. The resulting calculus must be solved without knowledge of two key variables — the end strength of the force and the size of its supporting budget. Both those crucial elements will continue to be the subject of intense political maneuvering and will thus almost certainly remain substantially in flux. Too bad — the work must still go on.

The soldier knows this. He has faced this situation many times before, beginning with General Washington and the Continental Army. General Abrams faced it after Vietnam, and began the reforms and initiatives of that era with the most fundamental question: "Why an Army?" Having satisfied himself that he knew the answer to that, Abrams was confident he could make the case to the politicians and appointed officials for the resources needed to support at least the minimum force required.

His task was easy, although I am certain he didn't see it that way at the time, because he had a well-defined and universally acknowledged threat to counter, that represented by the Soviet Bloc. This provided an organizing principle that was really quite useful. Today's leaders lack that advantage. Too bad again — they still have to get on with the job.

## PERTINENT RECENT HISTORY

The decade of the 1970s, the period encompassing and following defeat in the war in Vietnam, was extremely difficult for the United States Army. The residual effects of the long and divisive struggle included social turmoil that wracked the Army with racial disharmony, drug abuse, indiscipline and internal dissent. Failure to call up reserve forces<sup>3</sup> in any significant and timely sense had deprived the Army of not only the military capabilities of its National Guard and Reserve elements, but also the maturity and dedication of the leadership inherent in those components.

There was, it seems clear, a direct causal relationship between the failure to mobilize reserve forces and the subsequent decline in professionalism of the Army overall. Instead of being able to draw on experienced reserve force leaders who had spent years preparing to perform active service when the nation needed them, the massive expansion of the active Army and the creation of thousands of new units had to be done from scratch. As General Abrams later observed, the buildup consisted entirely of privates and second lieutenants.

Failure to mobilize for the Vietnam War had another and equally unfortunate consequence. When, despite repeated strenuous efforts on the part of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to get President Lyndon Johnson to authorize mobilization, it became clear that he had no intention of doing so, the reserve forces began to be seen by those who wished to avoid military service as attractive safe havens. Sadly, they were entirely correct in that conclusion, and dedicated reserve forces members had to watch in dismay as their once proud units were more and more populated by those whose only motive was to avoid military service. The residual effects of this traumatic phenomenon were still being felt many years after the war had ended.

Other quite devastating impacts of the Vietnam War resulted from the fact that, although the conflict had consumed many billions of dollars in defense expenditures, it had at the same time to a considerable extent been paid for by taking the costs “out of the hide” of the Army. This meant that the forces in other theaters, from Korea to Europe to the strategic reserve maintained in the United States, were over a long period subjected to debilitating austerity. The effect of years of undermanning, equipment shortages, inadequate operations and maintenance support, and inexperienced and insufficient leadership at all levels eventually reduced these forces to mere shells of their former capabilities. As General Bruce Palmer Jr. later sadly recalled, “The proud, well trained, and combat-ready Seventh Army in Germany was in effect, over time, destroyed as a fighting force.”<sup>4</sup>

It is painful to recall, but must be acknowledged, that the cumulative result of these experiences was the Army’s loss of professional competence, loss of the support of the American people, and loss of self-respect.

The task of rebuilding the Army fell to General Abrams, just back from five long and difficult years in Vietnam, the last four as commander of all U.S. forces. There he had been subjected to something quite dismaying for the leader of an expeditionary force—the progressive redeployment of his command while it was engaged in active combat. Near the end of his tenure in Vietnam, during the 1972 Easter Offensive, Abrams as an Army officer had the enlightening experience of being forced to rely solely on air and naval forces in his conduct of the battle. They were all he had left.

Back in Washington, it was not long before Abrams faced a similar problem. The war-swollen Army was, in keeping with American custom, being slashed with a vengeance. While Abrams knew that with the end of hostilities major reductions were inevitable, he was concerned about arresting the decline at a level that would permit him to carry out the Army's residual missions with reasonable assurance, including most importantly those focused on the Soviet and Warsaw Pact threats in Europe. While the Vietnam War might be over, the Cold War most assuredly was not.

Three imperatives drove Abrams in the early days of his tenure as chief of staff: The Army's discipline and readiness must be reestablished. The end strength must be stabilized. And more combat capability must be extracted from the resulting force.

Abrams' own appointment to the Army's top job, given the confidence the rank and file had in his good sense and integrity, was a long first step toward reform. Before long, the 13 divisions in the residual forces were all rated combat-ready. When Abrams took office, only four had been able to meet that standard. But he found the continuing decline in the Army's authorized end strength troublesome indeed. "The thing that worries me is that we Americans will let the Army go down to 500,000 men, then to 300,000 and so on," he told an interviewer. His solution here was to work out an agreement with Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger that Abrams could keep any manpower savings resulting from headquarters reductions and the like and plow them back into combat power. Meanwhile Schlesinger would work to stabilize the Army's end strength at 785,000.

Abrams determined that 16 divisions were essential for the Army to meet its obligations with an acceptable degree of risk. He undertook to man the three additional divisions with no increase in end strength. Despite his success in eliminating numerous headquarters layers and severely cutting back others, including his own, there were still not enough people available to fill up the 16 divisions. This circumstance is what led to yet another of the key initiatives taken by Abrams as chief of staff: the thorough-going integration of reserve forces into the overall Army. Roundout units and other related initiatives eventually, when others carried through on Abrams' vision after his death, produced the 16-division force. How this worked when it came time for proof of concept we saw in the Gulf War.

## THE EMERGING NEW STRATEGIC CONTEXT

This background is important and pertinent because, in the current post-Cold War era, the Army's leadership is faced with some problems remarkably similar to those which confronted Creighton Abrams after Vietnam. Of course this time we can be grateful that we are dealing with the aftermath of victory rather than defeat, but in some respects that victory seems to fall into the category of "with friends like these ... ."

In these circumstances Army chief of staff General Gordon Sullivan has made effective use of "no more Task Force Smiths" as a rallying cry, and it is against the perennial American impulse to assume that every conflict concluded was the last there will ever be that he must struggle. The particular manifestation that appears most dangerous is a kind of free-floating concept of what the Army's end strength ought to be, even more than the derivative issue of how that end strength should be divided among the Army's several components.

Making the case for military forces of whatever size and capability is an extremely difficult challenge when the threat is diffuse and ill-defined. General Colin Powell even went so far as to suggest at one point that he was "running out of demons."<sup>5</sup> That assessment was rendered in the first flush of the post-Gulf War euphoria, and with the massive forces that had successfully conducted that campaign still relatively intact. Today, it seems fair to suggest, there are both more observable potential threats of one magnitude or another and far fewer forces available to deploy against them.

Some voices, perhaps insufficiently schooled in history, have been describing the large active-duty force maintained by the United States during the years of the Cold War as an "aberration," and using that argument to press for a return to an earlier primary reliance on reserve forces, with a much smaller active force in consequence. Representative Greg Laughlin, a Texas Democrat, is one who is making this argument, most recently at last July's Nashville convention of the Reserve Officers Association.<sup>6</sup>

But such judgments need to be approached with caution. In the years before World War II, the United States was essentially an insular nation. True, it had — late in the game — made a major commitment to international order by entering World War I, and there was President Woodrow Wilson's abortive attempt to launch the League of Nations with the United States as a leading participant. But in the main the nation was content to look to its own affairs and let the rest of the world fend for itself.

Since American entry into World War II, however, America has carved out for itself an entirely different role, one entailing leadership of the free nations and a major commitment to the resolution of international problems. This has been manifested not only in the deployment and fairly frequent commitment of armed forces, but also in foreign aid, foreign military assistance, international negotiations on trade and the environment, contributions to international financial entities such as the World Bank

and International Monetary Fund, efforts to advance peace negotiations such as those in the Middle East, and arms control negotiations.

Now the major threat of the Cold War — the Soviet Union and the Eastern European nations it controlled in the Warsaw Pact — has gone away. But does anyone seriously think all those other aspects of America's international involvement — the aid, the trade, the negotiations, the leadership role — are also going to go away?

Merely to raise the question is to answer it. And thus it is essential to remember, no matter how nostalgic we may become for the "normality" of a world in which substantial standing armies were not required, that is not the world of today, post-Cold War or not, new world order or not.

The task at hand is not dismantlement of the active force, despite our long-standing custom of doing just that after many major conflicts. No, the task is to devise forces of a size, structure, type, mix and readiness sufficient to protect American interests in the volatile world of today. One important part of that calculus is reserve forces policy.

## **AMERICA'S CHOSEN ROLE IN FUTURE WORLD AFFAIRS**

The primary factor affecting the kinds of armed forces America ought to have in the years ahead, or so it seems to me, is the role she determines to play in world affairs. Opinions differ about what is meant, or ought to be meant, by "a new world order." For the sake of this discussion, however, let me suggest that it could mean a world in which individual states and other political entities are restrained from aggressive use of force against other members of the community of nations, and possibly against elements of their own populations.

We have seen some precursors of such an international regime in the so-called "peacekeeping" operations conducted from time to time under the auspices of the United Nations. I admit to some skepticism about at least the terminology employed in such operations, which often seems to consist primarily of putting some hapless neutrals in blue helmet liners in between two belligerents determined to inflict bodily harm on one another. It seems somewhat surrealistic to call it peacekeeping when there is not any discernible peace in the first place.

But something quite interesting may be taking place. We see emerging a more assertive variation on this theme, what might be called "peace-imposing" rather than peacekeeping. Laying waste to the compound inhabited by the forces of the unsavory warlord Mohammed Aidid in Mogadishu, Somalia, as United Nations forces recently did with some apparent enthusiasm, suggests this possibility. The difficulty of actually laying hands on Aidid himself, illustrated by more recent abortive attempts to do just that, makes clear some of the inherent frustrations of such operations entrusted to traditional military forces.

What role the United States is going to play in these evolving actions has not yet been determined. The sad reality for military planners is that they cannot tell in advance what they may be called upon by their civilian masters to do. Nor are they likely to be able to get funding adequate to maintain in readiness a force sufficient to undertake many of the potential missions. Thus they are faced with doing exactly what their predecessors have usually had to do, which is fight for the most robust force they can get, fall far short of what they think they might need, then try to cobble together the best compromise possible pending further developments.

## **RESULTANT IMPERATIVES FOR THE UNITED STATES ARMY**

With commendable sensitivity to the historic precedents, our military planners are today talking in terms of a “contingency corps” of five divisions capable of being deployed in a short period of time. Being deployed where? The answer is that we do not know. But we have read our history, and we feel sure there will again come a day when some commander-in-chief wants to deploy some substantial military force somewhere in the world, and as usual he will want to do it right now. The prudent planner thinks he better have something ready when that time comes, and hopes he can get Congress to fund it as he thinks wise.

Reserve forces have an important role in the overall planning matrix. In the interests of concision, I will postulate several conclusions that seem obvious to me: Reserve forces proved themselves in the Gulf War. They should not have to fight to maintain a role — they have earned one. What that role is, or ought to be, also seems fairly clear: to provide a link to the nation at large by being included in appropriate skills and numbers with early-deploying units for any significant level of conflict; to save money in the defense budget, and conserve resources for both active and reserve components, by maintaining in the reserve forces the bulk of those skills not quintessentially military; to provide reinforcing elements in all categories — combat, combat support and combat service support, thus enabling the active force to expand without erosion of maturity, experience and leadership; and to supply cadres for constitution of further forces when needed. In addition, of course, the Army National Guard must also maintain the capabilities essential to the tasks it is responsible for performing at the state level.

## **THE SLATE OF OPPORTUNITIES**

Over the coming months and years there will inevitably be continuing debate over the appropriate size of reserve forces, both absolutely and in proportion to active forces. The structure of whatever reserves may be maintained will likewise be in contention, and — inevitably, I fear — reserve forces units and individuals will be subjected to yet other rounds in the seemingly endless series of reorganizations and realignments.

Those evolutions will be shaped largely by political and fiscal considerations. What I want to address for purposes of illustration are a small number of opportunities that are more or less independent of such factors, and therefore more accessible to the professional military leadership. Almost regardless of the level of reserve forces decided upon, these opportunities offer promise of increased capability and increased satisfactions in service. They are in four general categories: active-reserve force cooperation, roundout and roundup approaches, redundant capability, and variable readiness and deployability.

### **Active-Reserve Force Cooperation**

Deborah Lee, who is assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs, said in an interview that civilian officials in the Pentagon “were seeking to forge a new partnership between active and reserve troops.”<sup>7</sup> While that objective is unexceptional, it is doubtful that civilian leadership can impose such an accommodation. Rather it will have to come from the shared efforts of uniformed leaders in each component, and that in turn will have to be based on a shared understanding that such cooperation is in the interest of active and reserve forces alike and — of far greater significance — in the national interest as well.

The basis for such understanding exists today, and it derives in large part from the proof of principle furnished by reserve forces in the Gulf War. There are the aspirations of General Creighton Abrams, and his determination that “they’re not taking us to war again without calling up the reserves,” were validated in the only way that counts — on the battlefield.

General John W. Vessey, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said it well in the aftermath of that campaign. “When Americans watched the stunning success of our armed forces in Desert Storm,” he wrote, “they were watching the Abrams vision in action. The modern equipment, the effective air support, the use of the reserve components and, most important of all, the advanced training which taught our people how to stay alive on the battlefield were all seeds planted by Abe.”<sup>8</sup>

The superb contribution of reserve forces to the Gulf War was widely recognized and appreciated, especially by active force leadership. “We could not have done it without them,” said General Colin Powell in a typical tribute,<sup>9</sup> and that was literally true. And General Jack Merritt, addressing members of the Association of the United States Army, observed that of the many success stories reflected in Desert Storm “the most pervasive and important ... is the story of the reserve components — the Reserve and the National Guard.”<sup>10</sup> In the wake of this cooperative triumph there was, in my estimation, an unprecedented level of good will and mutual regard between active and reserve forces at all levels.

Much of that was unfortunately dissipated—squandered, really—by some senior members of what I will call the “reserve forces establishment” who chose to focus unduly on the vicissitudes of the roundout brigades, forces whose roles had been defined in an era emphasizing the dominant Soviet threat and not yet redefined in the flux of that threat’s evaporation. This led to among other things, an identity crisis in the wake of somewhat outdated but nevertheless genuinely frustrated expectations. Instead of helping to articulate and explain these realities, some commentators concentrated instead on “explanations” that verged on conspiracy theories.

As a result, much acrimony and argument attended discussion of what should have been done with those units, even though they constituted a very small segment of the mobilized reserve forces, to the neglect of a really splendid performance by almost all the remaining elements. These unfortunate events substantially eroded the greatly improved relations between active and reserve forces that had been engendered by shared success in battle. Now it is in everyone’s interest that they be repaired and strengthened, and that this be done not on the basis of any “public relations” kind of approach, but on genuine respect for one another and mutual commitment to the public weal.

A key to achieving this is to recognize that what we have here is not a zero sum game. What the active force gives up does not necessarily accrue to reserve forces, for example. Another reality is that short-term gains do not necessarily translate into long-term benefits.

If we are going to be candid in our discussion of these matters, we have to acknowledge that the reserve forces have customarily enjoyed far greater political influence than have the active forces, or least greater than the uniformed leadership of the active force. This disparity has often meant that, in budget hearings and force structure determinations, the reserve force leadership has been able to prevail politically even when what it sought was at variance with what the Army’s leadership was recommending. There is no doubt that reserve forces leadership lobbying has frequently succeeded in protecting this armory or keeping that unit on the rolls, but in my view it has also often been short-sighted. The reason is obvious. Inevitably this success in undermining the Army’s recommendations has engendered great resentment on the part of the active leadership, and that resentment has just as inevitably colored every other aspect of the active-reserve force relationship.

Another facet of this long-standing problem has to do with efforts of the reserve forces establishment to stake out greater and greater independence from the Army’s leadership. Indeed, it is a tenet of the faith in certain quarters that the more independence the better. Representative G. V. “Sonny” Montgomery, a Mississippi Democrat, is an impassioned spokesman for this viewpoint, arguing virtually on the eve of the Gulf War — in a typical formulation — that “the National Guard and Reserve work well because they operate independent from active force control.”<sup>11</sup> If that be so, then the converse, that more integration is bad, must also be the case. I think just the opposite is true in both instances.

Fortunately there is some evidence that current leadership in both the active and reserve force communities is beginning to appreciate the need to speak with one voice in the current era of constrained resources and a rapidly changing strategic context. They are, we are led to believe, working together on collaborative resource allocation decisions, force structure recommendations, and other key aspects of the “total Army” future.

While it may not be possible to document this definitively, I believe that — to the extent this newfound cooperation is a reality — it may have its origins at least in part in the superb cooperation among components that characterized the Gulf War. I was in Saudi Arabia during the autumn after the war was over, working on a book about reserve forces in that conflict, and during my visit I interviewed hundreds of people from every component. In the operational theater, where it counted, there was no doubt in anyone’s mind about the crucially important and highly professional contribution of reserve forces to the successful conduct of the campaign.

But of equal importance, neither was there anything but mutual appreciation between forces of the various components. It is hard to see how it could have been any other way, because by the time the ground campaign was launched the forces were so intermingled and mutually dependent it was virtually impossible for anyone to tell them apart. In fact, said Lieutenant General William G. “Gus” Pagonis, the logistical genius of the war who had thousands upon thousands of reserve force men and women under his command, he used to delight in taking senior visitors around to various units and challenging them to tell him whether they were from the active or reserve forces. They never could, he observed with satisfaction, and that was the real story.<sup>12</sup>

Senior active force leaders in the Gulf War, at least down through division level, therefore not only were exposed to what reserve forces could do, but were critically dependent upon them in the midst of battle. As those officers advance to stewardship of the Army’s affairs, their experience with reserve forces can be expected to have a most beneficial effect on how they view them in the context of the total Army.

Lieutenant General Frederic J. Brown, who before his retirement had much to do with reserve forces while commanding general of the 4th Army, has since written persuasively about the need for many more active Army leaders to gain experience with reserve forces. “One of the greatest problems facing reserve readiness,” he maintains, “is the paucity of active Army understanding of the reserves. Very few senior leaders in the Army have seen much service with reserves.”<sup>13</sup> Fortunately, that may be changing.

The years of the Cold War, it might be argued, provided little opportunity for active Army leaders, especially those at the company- and field-grade levels, to gain experience in operating with reserve forces. Usually, by the time the several components were thrown together, it was on the field of battle. And, given our nation’s propensity to neglect readiness during periods of supposed peace, the impressions gained during such abrupt introductions were not always the most favorable.

Now, however, there are new statutory and policy initiatives that seem likely to yield important benefits of the kind advocated by General Brown. Large numbers of active force officers and noncommissioned officers are going to spend tours of duty working with reserve forces, and high percentages of those same reserve forces are going to be required to have had substantial active duty experience. Active force officers who have served with reserve forces almost invariably come away from the experience with greater sympathy for their reserve force counterparts and with greater respect for their dedication and patriotism. Often this also translates into greater regard for their military capabilities.

Thus the results of these new initiatives could, over time, include a greater sense of solidarity among various elements of the overall force, certainly greater understanding on the part of active forces of the challenges reserve forces must overcome to achieve and maintain combat readiness, and greater sympathy for the citizen soldier willing to accept the challenge.

If the events of the Gulf War and their aftermath, and the imperatives of maintaining overall force readiness in the current environment, thereby serve to bring all elements of the Army and its leadership into closer harmony and cooperation, then I am confident the many, many other problems can be managed.

### **Roundout and Roundup Approaches**

Much thought and discussion have been devoted to the topic of roundout units, reserve force battalions and brigades designed to fill out the structure of an active force division organized at less than full strength. More recently, the similar concept of roundup units, which would augment rather than substitute for active divisional elements, has received similar attention.

There are several things I would like to say about these concepts and their current utility. First, it is important to recognize that the roundout concept was born of necessity. When General Creighton Abrams sought to increase the Army from about 13-1/3 divisions to 16 divisions with no increase in end strength, there was just not enough available manpower in the active force to fill those units. The solution was to turn to the reserve forces for part of the structure, using the roundout concept as the means of integrating elements from the several components.

Now, the threat environment having been substantially altered, there does not seem to be quite the same urgency to maintaining a large number of active divisions, and in fact current plans are to reduce to 10 divisions rather than, as in the earlier post-Vietnam period, to build up more. Nevertheless it is my view that roundout has proven itself so valuable in a number of other respects that it ought to be retained and improved.

The planning and training collaboration that are inherent in roundout are valuable to active and reserve forces alike, and the necessity for compatibility of equipment between the forces planned for or integrated employment also benefits the reserve forces. And— a very important outcome — it is my sense that officers who have commanded active units with associated roundout elements come away from the experience with a much greater understanding of and appreciation for reserve forces in general. Those are important benefits that seem to me to argue for continuation of roundout or roundup or both.

Nevertheless, our experience in the Gulf War makes it clear that there are some aspects of the roundup approach that need work. One obvious task is to devise better means of evaluating reserve force readiness and deployability, and of doing that in a manner that is viewed as fair, objective and accurate by both active and reserve forces.

Another is to factor into planning the very real differences in difficulty of achieving desired standards of readiness and deployability for combat maneuver elements as compared to practically all other types of forces. Clearly, given the uncertainty even of the threat, much less how it will evolve, there can be no assurance in advance as to how much time mobilized reserve force combat elements will have to get ready to deploy.

Since that is inevitably the case, my suggestion is that we take a variable approach to deciding on what level to integrate roundout and roundup elements into the active force. What this means is that, when the time to go to war is at hand, mobilized roundout and roundup forces could be integrated at the level to which they had trained. If brigades were certified combat ready and so on, then they could be sent as brigades. If their elements had only been certified combat ready at battalion level, or company level, then they could be integrated into active force units at those levels, much as active force units routinely cross-attach, or task organize, in anticipation of combat.

Something very much like this was done in the Gulf War within the active forces. Although we saw maps on which the 1st Armored Division swung wide in the VII Corps left hook or the 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized) drove north as part of XVIII Airborne Corps' drive to the Euphrates, what we were really watching was composite units made up for the occasion.

In the case of the 24th Mech, of course, it got the 197th Infantry Brigade (Mechanized)(Separate) from Fort Benning to replace its roundout unit, the Georgia National Guard's 48th Infantry Brigade (Mechanized), thereby engendering a great deal of controversy. But very similar things were happening to many of the other force elements which were composed of all-active elements.

VII Corps in Germany had only one armored division, the 1st Armored. But it came to the desert with two, its own and the 3d Armored Division, acquired for the occasion from V Corps. Many of the divisions deployed had, in turn, been augmented by units taken from other divisions, or they had traded off like elements with divisions that were not deploying. The 1st Armored Division's 1st Brigade, for example, had not yet been equipped with Abrams tanks and Bradley infantry fighting vehicles, so it remained behind in Germany, replaced by a brigade of the 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized), also based in Germany.

VII Corps also left behind in Germany its own mechanized infantry division and got instead the 1st Infantry Division (Mechanized) from Fort Riley, Kansas. But a brigade of that division, which was forward-deployed in Europe, was in the process of deactivation, so the 1st Infantry was given instead a forward-deployed brigade of the 2d Armored Division. Only the 3d Armored Division, of all the heavy divisions, deployed with all its own organic major elements.<sup>14</sup> The rest was a patchwork of attachments, further homogenized by the usual cross-attachments in preparation for combat, that demonstrated the feasibility of integrating well-trained and well-led forces at various levels into larger combat formations.<sup>15</sup>

The same approach could work with roundout and roundup forces, and by recognizing that the integration could be done at various levels of aggregation (brigade, battalion, or whatever) much of the trauma could be taken out of the precrisis determination of readiness and deployability. When the time came, those reserve forces needed could be integrated at the levels appropriate to their current status.

Undoubtedly reserve force headquarters at various levels would in many cases receive similar attachments from active force units, and again this is something that happened in the Gulf. In fact there were outfits that were put together in the desert that eventually contained elements of all three components.

It is obvious that reserve force leadership must be provided the opportunity for meaningful career progression. The integration of mobilized reserve force elements at various levels need not undermine this necessity, for what we are advocating could amount to a series of cross-attachments at levels dictated by the time available for post-mobilization training and the level to which various units had been able to train before being called up.

In the Gulf War the overall force, comprising large segments from each of the components, achieved a high degree of homogeneity. It was the kind of "total Army" conceived by Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird and Army Chief of Staff General Creighton Abrams. It does not seem to be that those results were critically dependent on the level at which integration was effected. Thus I conclude that such integration could in future crises be accomplished at whatever level the readiness of the mobilized forces made most appropriate, and that the level chosen could vary from one unit to the next without difficulty. The results could be significantly more effective utilization of reserve forces at any given level of resource commitment.

## Redundant Capability

An issue of real significance is what happens to reliance on reserve forces if the United States is going to become involved in substantial commitments of military force on a regular and frequent basis. Already in recent years we have seen deployment of forces to Grenada, Panama and then the Persian Gulf. In each case the force deployed was larger than the time before, and thus more reliant on mobilized or volunteer reservists.

Repeated call-ups at frequent intervals could have very negative effects on the reserve forces, so there are very clear finite limits to the use of such forces. That may be one reason the active force leadership wants a contingency corps that can be relatively self-sufficient, being much less dependent on mobilized reserve forces than the Army has been in recent years.

If there is going to be a series of crises such as in Grenada, Panama and Kuwait, some may be bigger than others but most will require reliance on reserve forces to some degree. It will become more and more difficult to keep asking reserves to once again leave their homes and their jobs and their families to go to war for an indeterminate period.

There are ways to ameliorate the effects of such a scenario, but they are only palliatives, not absolute cures. One such approach is to retain in the reserve force structure redundant capabilities for those missions most likely to be needed repetitively. Redundancy costs money, of course, a negative element in the current environment of greatly constrained resources. But it need not cost much in certain cases, and it could be money well spent.

In the Gulf War, for example, line haul truck companies were at an absolute premium. Elements of the 1st Armored Division, for example, had to begin road marching the hundreds of kilometers from the port to their tactical assembly areas because the lowboys and heavy equipment transporters they would have preferred to use were simply not available in sufficient numbers, and they couldn't wait because the date set for commencement of the offensive was rapidly approaching.

Virtually all the truck companies available within the reserve forces were called up for the Gulf War, and what that means is that in any similar contingency that might arise we are going to have to go back to some of those same people and ask them to serve again. If, however, we had redundant truck companies, next time we could ask another set of troops to serve. One possibility would be to have two sets of soldiers trained and ready to operate each set of equipment. One would be next up for deployment, while the other — the one which had most recently been called up — would be in a backup mode. Truck companies provide a good example because they were fully utilized the last time around. They will undoubtedly be needed for a wide range of foreseeable future contingencies, and they are relatively cheap to maintain — thus lending themselves to planned redundancy.

## Variable Readiness and Deployability

Certain things that are obvious can help us formulate new initiatives based on the same insights. It is clear, for example, that it is possible to organize, equip and train units — whether active or reserve — to various levels of readiness. The key variable is commitment of resources. Of the numerous factors involved—money, equipment, training facilities, personnel fill, leadership, school quotas, stability, cohesion and so on — time is often the most critical for reserve forces.

We know, too, that it is common to deliberately vary the readiness objectives of various units, recognizing that not all could be deployed simultaneously in any event, and that it would therefore be wasteful of resources to try to bring all to the highest level of readiness simultaneously.

There seems to me to be an opportunity to build on these understandings and existing practices to vary by type the resources — particularly time — allocated to various reserve force units. If this prospect were laid out as a continuum, then combat maneuver elements would stake out one end, the end that required the greatest allocation of resources to achieve a given level of readiness and deployability. The other end of the continuum would be defined by type units whose military mission was most closely approximated by what its soldiers do in civil life.

There are, for example, no infantry squad leaders or tank commanders in civil life, and thus virtually the entirety of those skills must be acquired in military service. But quite often those who serve as military medics or truck drivers or military policemen follow civilian careers that are identical, or at least that closely approximate the military mission. Now I realize that that case can be overstated. There are in military service such factors as leadership, survival in the combat environment, and operation under adverse conditions of weather, climate and terrain that are not normally a part of the civilian work experience. But by and large certain types of military functions are far more closely replicated in civilian life than are others, and the difference offers possibilities of economy and responsiveness of reserve forces.

Now, as I understand the approach, individuals assigned to reserve units drill for the same amount of time each year, regardless of the type unit. This is set at a weekend a month and a two-week period of annual training, which adds up to 39 training days a year. We all understand that the leaders of reserve forces units devote far more of their time to the job, but we are talking here about the mandatory commitment of time for unit members.

What I want to suggest is that it may not be necessary for members of a line haul truck company, for example, to drill 39 days a year in order to maintain proficiency and readiness in their military skills, unit as well as individual. Maybe they would only need to drill for 17 days a year, derived from serving one weekend a quarter and one week (including the weekends on each end of it) a year. Or maybe, for certain types of units, 11 days would be enough (two weekends a year plus one week of annual training).

During that reduced training time members of the unit could be schooled or refreshed in uniquely military skills not part of their civilian jobs (chemical warfare protective measures, individual marksmanship, and spare parts requisitioning procedures, for example). They would not need to spend any time driving trucks, however, because that is what they do every working day on their civilian jobs.

Now even among the units of like type there might be variations in the prescribed annual days of training. Maybe some truck companies **would** have to spend some time driving trucks, not because they needed the practice, but because other reserve forces units needed their support during their own training. And of course for specialized equipment not replicated in the civilian work force there would have to be more training allocated.

Economical variations in allocated training time could also be established across the spectrum of type units. If combat maneuver elements need the most time, and truck companies the least, then somewhere in between would lie the rest of the vast array of skills and units that make up a modern military expeditionary force. Cargo handlers would be in the category requiring less training, artillery batteries toward the higher end, postal units less, explosive ordnance disposal more, ammunition handlers and civil affairs units and water purification outfits somewhere in between.

For those types of units determined to need less than the standard 39 days of training a year, there would be several benefits. People would find it more feasible to remain as members of the unit if they were required to devote less time to it, time taken away from their jobs, families, and communities. For the Army overall, drilling these people for fewer days a year could translate into significant dollar savings.

There, of course, also lies the primary problem to be resolved. People join and remain in reserve forces for a variety of reasons. Not least is the fact that such service provides a modest second income. Thus it is obvious that reducing the number of paid drill days could also reduce the attractiveness of reserve service, especially to those members most dependent on the second income, which probably means those in the lower grades and with relatively low-paying civilian jobs.

This aspect cannot be overlooked, and before any scheme for variable numbers of drill days could be instituted some accommodation to the effects on pay would need to be devised. One possibility would be to devise a formula that would, in effect, pay members of certain units a percentage of full pay for days not drilled (up to the 39 maximum) so long as they maintain the requisite skills (by virtue of identical civilian work, for example).

Thus, a qualified line haul trucker who was required to drill only 17 days a year might be paid 60 percent of the drill pay he would have received for each of the other 22 days a year he is now no longer required to drill. Of course, it would be specified that he could be required to drill instead (thus covering such cases as, for example, when his trucking company was needed to support training by other types of units).

With a smaller force (inevitable) and a more diffuse mission (given the evolving world environment) the potential for savings by differentiating between types of units, individual units, and even individuals seems not only a fruitful area for analysis but also one that can be handled by planners and trainers. Variable annual training days by unit type provides an example of what it might be productive to explore.

### *TOUJOURS PRET*

This slate of opportunities is illustrative of the kinds of initiatives it seems to me are most likely to be available, productive and appealing in the current environment. Not primarily dependent on budget factors for implementation, they offer the prospect of increased readiness and deployability within existing resource allocations, whatever that level might be.

There is no question that reserve forces will be a critically important element of the post-Cold War Army. And in my judgment one of the clearest conclusions one may draw in reflecting on the recent Gulf War is that General Abrams' policies on integration of active and reserve forces proved to be right on target for the time and conditions of that conflict.

Whether they continue to be the right policies for the rapidly and drastically changing circumstances of the immediate future remains to be determined. Part of the answer, as we have discussed, will lie in the role America chooses to play in the world. If there is truly going to be a "new world order," then the United States will have to take the lead in bringing that about.

Under those circumstances, frequent resort to force in varying degrees for the suppression of aggression will be a virtual certainty. It is my strong conviction that, if our military leaders are wise, they will ensure that reserve forces are a part of any resulting military operations of substantial magnitude.

There is just one thing more. It is an observation that General Abrams made to Chief of Staff General Harold K. Johnson when Abrams was serving as his vice chief of staff. "I just don't feel that any scheme," wrote Abrams, "no matter how efficient, modern, theoretically effective, or brilliantly conceived, can ever get anywhere unless the people of the Army Reserve and the Army National Guard in some way have helped in its development and believe in its goals."<sup>16</sup> I think we can leave it right there.

## ENDNOTES

1. This essay is concerned solely with the Army's reserve components and their relationship with the active Army. Thus the observations and conclusions offered do not necessarily apply to the other services. The generic term "reserve forces" is used, unless otherwise noted, to refer to both the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve.
2. Michael Crichton, *Jurassic Park* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1990), p.313.
3. For a fuller description of this policy decision and its impact on the Army, Lewis Sorley, *Thunderbolt: General Creighton Abrams and the Army of His Times* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), pp. 183-191.
4. General Bruce Palmer Jr., *The 25-Year War: America's Military Role in Vietnam* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1984), p. 94.
5. As quoted in *Army Times* (15 April 1991), p. 4.
6. As reported in *Army Times* (12 July 1993), p. 21.
7. As quoted by Eric Schmitt, *The New York Times* (3 September 1993).
8. Letter to publisher commenting on advance copy of *Thunderbolt*, 1 April 1992.
9. Interview, 18 May 1992.
10. *AUSA News* (April 1991), p. 6.
11. Center for Strategic and International Studies & National Guard Association of the United States Symposium, "The Future of the National Guard and Reserve," Washington, D.C., May 21-22 1990, p. 15.
12. Interview, 28 October 1991.
13. *The U.S. Army in Transition II* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 1993), p. 59.
14. Gordon Rottman and Ron Volstad, *Armies of the Gulf War* (London: Osprey Publishing, 1993), passim.
15. And, it should be noted, VII Corps — unlike the rest of the forces deployed to the Gulf — did not have the benefit of long months of training and adaptation to the desert environment before it was committed to combat. Even so, the ad hoc composite organizations that made up the corps performed brilliantly in conducting the main attack.
16. Handwritten note to the chief of staff, 18 May 1966, "Management of Reserve Components," The Creighton W. Abrams Papers, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.