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Planning an Army for the 21st Century

Principles to Guide U.S. Army Force Size, Mix, and Component Distribution

Today's U.S. Army comprises the Regular Army and two reserve components (RCs): the Army National Guard of the United States (ARNGUS) and the U.S. Army Reserve (USAR).¹ As recent operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere have shown, the Army employs forces and capabilities from all three components to fulfill operational demands. Recent operations have also highlighted the unique attributes of the Army forces in each component. For example, the Army relied heavily on Regular Army forces—combat forces in particular—for initial major combat operations (MCOs) and employed reserve-component (RC) forces more extensively in subsequent force rotations.

The forces in the Army's three components contribute in different ways because they have different attributes. For example, Regular Army soldiers serve on a full-time basis, while most RC soldiers serve on a part-time basis.² This impacts the relative costs of Regular Army and RC units, as well as the time and opportunities available for training. On the one hand, the annual operations and support costs for a nonmobilized RC unit operating on a part-time basis are less than for a

comparable Regular Army unit operating on a full-time basis. On the other hand, the part-time status for most RC soldiers means that RC units train less—and so are typically less ready in peacetime—compared with their Regular Army counterparts, who typically have much greater time and opportunities to train each year. In short, the principal factors that make RC units cost less in peacetime also make them less ready to deploy in a crisis than Regular Army units of the same type.

When deciding on the distribution of forces among the Army's three components, leaders should address decisions from the following perspective: What distribution of forces best provides the capabilities and capacity needed to meet today's defense strategy, considering risk and then cost? That is, decisions should be informed by cost but driven first and foremost by the readiness of forces needed to execute the defense strategy at acceptable levels of operational and strategic risk.

In this paper, we first briefly review the history of how the United States has adapted the principles guiding Army force distribution to meet strategic needs, with a particular focus on developments since the end of the Cold War. Next, we review the range of major missions that Army forces must be able to perform to meet today's defense strategy.³ Finally, we lay out principles to help guide leaders in making contemporary Army force-distribution decisions. The principles we discuss are not revolutionary; they generally reflect considerations that have guided Army force size, mix, and distribution decisions for the past several decades. Nonetheless, they are worth reflecting on because they reinforce the tenet that decisions on Army force size, mix, and distribution should flow from the defense needs of the present and future rather than preserve legacy decisions of the past.

From the Colonial Era to the Present, the United States Has Repeatedly Adapted the Principles Guiding Army Force Size, Mix, and Distribution to Meet Strategic Needs

Brief History of Army Force Planning

From the end of the American Revolution until the Spanish-American War in 1898, the United States lacked either a significant, persistent external threat to the homeland or a need to involve itself in global military affairs. This strategic environment coincided with a cultural reluctance and fiscal inability to maintain a large standing army, as well as political and cultural traditions that, over time, promoted various forms of compulsory and volunteer militia service. Together, these characteristics combined to create a system that, in times of peace, provided for a small and under-resourced Regular Army focused primarily on policing the frontier, defending the coasts, guarding military depots, and serving as the professional core of an expansible wartime army. For the Army's expansion in times of war, the nation relied on various combinations of increased Regular Army enlistments, conscripts, state volunteer units, and calls to states for federal militia service. During this period, state militias represented a form of standing reserve forces for augmenting the Regular Army. However, the militias were subject to limited peacetime federal regulation and, depending on the form of militia in question, might be accessible for only a few months at a time—and not for service outside the territory of the United States.⁴ Overall, these principles were sufficient to provide for the nation's limited security needs.

The period from the Spanish-American War until World War II marked a new era in the nation's defense strategy. On the one hand, the United States emerged as a power with global interests and responsibilities. On the other hand, it remained but one power among many—with limited objectives and a continuing reluctance to entangle itself in global military affairs. This new era brought about revisions in the principles guiding Army force planning. Congress expanded the Regular Army but continued to under-resource it in peacetime. Although the Army assumed missions outside the Western Hemisphere (e.g., in the Philippines), there was no consensus that the United States should participate in the wars of the great powers. Therefore, despite increases in Regular Army end strength, the nation sustained the Army at insufficient readiness to respond rapidly and in strength around the world. Even after the experience of fighting overseas in World War I, the Army's focus in the 1920s and 1930s reverted largely to repelling invasion of the continental United States by a European or Asian power.

In the event of a major war, the Army required time to mobilize its strength and assumed that sufficient time would be available. To augment the Regular Army in wartime, Congress authorized two federally administered Army RCs—today's ARNGUS and USAR—that could deploy overseas and serve for extended periods. In 1908, Congress authorized the Medical Reserve Corps, the predecessor of today's USAR.

Today's ARNGUS was the product of a series of congressional actions between 1903 and 1933. By the late 1800s, the militia organizations in many states had come to be referred to as *National Guards*. Regardless of the designation, the federal government had almost no role in

organizing, administering, or funding state militias when not in federal service (other than small yearly stipends to assist states in supporting their militias). In 1903, Congress passed the Efficiency in Militia Act (commonly called the Dick Act) to address challenges observed during the war with Spain.⁵ This act gave federal recognition to the National Guards (or whatever other term was specified by law in each state or territory), designating them as the *organized militia*. The act directed the National Guards to organize like the Regular Army. It established federal

Abbreviations

AGR	Active Guard and Reserve
ARNG	Army National Guard
ARNGUS	Army National Guard of the United States
BCT	brigade combat team
BUR	Bottom-Up Review
DoD	U.S. Department of Defense
DSCA	defense support to civil authorities
eSB	enhanced separate brigade
GAO	U.S. General Accounting Office
MCO	major combat operation
MRC	major regional conflict
NDS	National Defense Strategy
ODS	Operation Desert Storm
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review
RC	reserve component
USAR	U.S. Army Reserve
WMD	weapon of mass destruction

oversight and training requirements and provided funding to support training and equipping. The act also authorized the President to *call* the National Guards to federal service for up to nine months to repel invasion, suppress rebellion, or enforce federal laws, but not for use outside the United States.

Thirteen years later—shortly after the United States entered World War I—Congress passed the National Defense Act of 1916.⁶ This act established, for the first time, the National Guards as part of the Army, but only when federalized in service of the United States. This act increased federal oversight, training requirements, and funding. Perhaps most significantly, this act authorized the President to *draft* any or all members of the National Guards into federal service, subject to Congress having authorized the use of military force; guardsmen so drafted could serve overseas and could serve for the length of the war.

Finally, in 1933, Congress amended the National Defense Act of 1916 to establish the National Guard of the United States as an RC of the Army, even when not federalized.⁷ In other words, this act provided guardsmen with a dual status; they would simultaneously be members of both (1) a federal RC (the National Guard of the United States) and (2) the organized militia of the several states and territories (the National Guard).⁸ The President could *order* guardsmen to federal active duty, including for wartime service overseas (subject to authorities provided by Congress); when not on federal active duty, guardsmen served under the control of the various states and territories.

Planners during this era assumed that, in wartime, the Regular Army and both RCs would each organize full divisions, with no essential distinction among the three components in the types of combat and noncombat ground

forces they would provide. However, in both world wars, all divisions were manned primarily with soldiers who volunteered or were drafted after the war's start—meaning that whether a division was nominally Regular Army, Guard, or Reserve in peacetime did not determine its wartime composition.⁹

A third era began shortly after World War II and continues through the present. World War II left the United States as a world superpower with global interests and responsibilities—and as the leader of an alliance of nations. In the previous era of the two world wars, the U.S. Army required several months to more than one year to prepare significant numbers of forces to fight overseas. After the Korean War in the early 1950s, this paradigm was replaced by one in which at least a significant initial tranche of forces was expected to start deploying within a few days to a few months, potentially to multiple theaters simultaneously. In Europe, plans included forward-based units that, in wartime, would be reinforced by successive waves of forces deploying from the United States, albeit as part of a broader strategy ultimately premised on tactical and strategic nuclear capabilities to deter the Soviet Union from attacking Europe—or, in the worst case, to support Europe's defense.¹⁰ The Army also planned for the possibility of rapidly deploying at least some forces to secondary theaters. Although the Army has gone through two counterinsurgency eras (i.e., Vietnam, then Afghanistan and Iraq) and assumed several other roles and missions with implications for force planning, the requirement for a highly ready and rapidly deployable Army has remained a pillar of force planning for decades. This basic imperative, frequently coupled with limited federal appropriations, has been a significant driver of force size, mix, and component

distribution. Because a full-time force has an inherent advantage over a part-time force in sustaining the high peacetime readiness levels needed for rapid response—albeit at the expense of higher annual operations and support costs—the combat forces needed for initial contingency response have generally been balanced toward the Regular Army.

During the Cold War, the RCs retained a division-based combat organization, but this was in the context of a strategic reserve force that was generally undermanned and underequipped and that was expected to require an extended time to mobilize.¹¹ However—and particularly after DoD adopted the Total Force Policy in the early 1970s—certain types of nondivisional units in the RCs were expected to rapidly deploy alongside the Regular Army as part of a contingency response. The units stationed in the United States that would need to deploy most rapidly to theater would still typically come from the Regular Army, given its general advantage in peacetime readiness. However, nondivisional support and sustainment forces from the RCs would form a portion of the contingency response force, and so would some types of RC combat forces (e.g., field artillery or maneuver units at the battalion or brigade level) if circumstances required and sufficient time was available to mobilize and complete training.

Impact of the End of the Cold War on Army Force Planning: A Case Study

The end of the Cold War did not alter the requirement for a highly ready and rapidly deployable Army as a key driver of Army force planning. One thing that changed, however, was the magnitude of the demands the Army was expected

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to meet. The Army no longer focused on fighting Warsaw Pact forces along the Central Front in Europe. Instead, DoD's 1993 Bottom-Up Review (BUR) focused on fighting two nearly simultaneous major regional conflicts (MRCs), and this force-planning construct resulted in a significant reduction in Regular Army and RC end strength and force structure compared with Cold War levels.¹² Although the particulars of the two-MRC construct have changed over time¹³—and although sizing and shaping the force for sustained counterinsurgency and stability operations became a corequisite driver of Army force planning for a time¹⁴—the basic requirement for an Army that is highly ready and rapidly deployable in a crisis has remained.¹⁵

Although the end of the Cold War did not alter this basic requirement, it did cause DoD to reconsider certain aspects of Army force size, mix, and component distribution. Planning no longer focused on general war in Europe,

which would require full mobilization and sequential waves of reinforcing forces. Instead, the two-MRC construct focused on somewhat smaller contingencies that could occur with little notice and require the rapid deployment of forces, with reduced reliance on later-arriving reinforcements. This caused DoD to reconsider the role of ARNG combat divisions.¹⁶

During the 1990s, the Army remained a division-based force.¹⁷ At the end of the Cold War, there were ten divisions in the ARNG (as well as separate brigades), although some ARNG divisions were considerably under-resourced. Initial post-Cold War planning that preceded the 1993 BUR reduced the number of ARNG divisions to eight. In identifying the Army force requirements for a two-MRC construct, BUR planners anticipated that a typical MRC

would require four to five Army divisions as part of a joint force response, although they acknowledged that a higher number of divisions might be needed in some cases. BUR planners concluded that ARNG combat divisions had no role in meeting contingency demands under the two-MRC construct. The planners also concluded that whole ARNG combat divisions would simply take too long to become ready to deploy.¹⁸ Instead, the BUR focused on creating 15 ARNG *enhanced readiness brigades* (eventually referred to as *enhanced separate brigades*, or eSBs), and the goal was to maintain these at a peacetime level of readiness that would allow them to begin deployment after 90 days of postmobilization training and preparation.¹⁹ (Mobilization throughput constraints, such as available range space and numbers of trainers, could constrain the number of eSBs that could mobilize at one time.) While some divisions would be retained in the ARNG (the BUR envisioned five or more such divisions), they would have secondary missions, such as supporting civil authorities at home, serving as a deterrent against possible adversarial regimes, and providing the basis for wartime rotation, if needed.

Planning efforts following the 1993 BUR resulted in plans to convert significant portions of legacy ARNG combat structure into combat support, sustainment, and certain other types of combat units (e.g., field artillery and air defense artillery). These plans were based on analysis indicating that these types of units were in short supply for the two-MRC construct. For example, the 1995 Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces concluded that force planning should not be encumbered by legacy structures but should focus on sizing and shaping the total force to meet the military requirements of the defense strategy. It recommended that the eight ARNG divisions be converted

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into combat support and sustainment units, as needed, to fill identified gaps in the Army's MRC response capability and that any remaining "excess should be eliminated."²⁰

In response, the Army Vice Chief of Staff chartered the 1996 ARNG Division Redesign Study. This study was conducted with the participation of leaders and planners from Headquarters, Department of the Army; Army commands; and both RCs, including representatives of the 54 adjutants general of the various states, territories, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. The working group that conducted the study recommended that the Army retain a future force of eight division headquarters and 30 combat maneuver brigades in the ARNG—a reduction of 12 maneuver brigades compared with the 42 that were still in the ARNG at the time. (Six of the 30 combat maneuver brigades would be organized as part of two new composite divisions, each comprising three ARNG eSBs and a nondeployable Regular Army division headquarters for training and readiness oversight.) The additional 12 ARNG combat maneuver brigades in existence at the time, as well as certain other divisional elements (42,700 soldiers in all), would be transformed into other types of units more highly demanded by the two-MRC construct. This plan was projected to require more than a decade to implement and was only partway through its implementation when Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) began in 2003.²¹

This history provides a case study of Army force planning in light of strategic change. While the end of the Cold War did not alter the requirement for a highly ready and rapidly deployable Army as a key driver of Army force planning, it did change the nature of the requirement. This led DoD planners to conclude that, because of the long postmobilization preparation times for full ARNG combat

divisions, these divisions were less relevant to contingency response. DoD planners refocused ARNG combat maneuver forces at the brigade echelon. They did this under the expectation that, through intensive management of peacetime readiness, ARNG eSBs could be validated as ready in time to begin deploying within 90 days. The ARNG also began converting multiple non-eSB maneuver brigades into other types of units that were in greater demand under the two-MRC construct—unit types that could be ready in time to fill a portion of demand in both the first and second MRCs. This case study also shows that, even in light of strategic change, legacy structure can prove enduring. The ARNG was able to retain eight of its ten Cold War division headquarters, despite findings from the Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces and others. This was because (1) even though these headquarters had no role in the two MRCs, they could be relevant for other missions, and (2) ARNG leaders desired to keep them. ARNG leaders were ultimately able to do so as part of a broader redesign effort intended to reshape the ARNG to better meet the demands of the two-MRC construct.

As a postscript to this case study, we note that OIF MCOs in 2003 essentially represented the first MRC in the two-MRC construct. The 1993 BUR anticipated that each MRC would require at least four to five Army divisions; for OIF MCOs, the Army deployed four full divisions plus four additional brigade-sized formations (the equivalent of more than one additional division). While all of these formations were from the Regular Army, the Army did deploy the equivalent of about seven infantry battalions from the ARNG, most of which came from eSBs. These were employed for various security force missions, such as guarding key sites or lines of communication. Of those

committed in Iraq during MCOs, none was employed in a combined arms maneuver role.

Although the MCO portion of OIF resembled a BUR-envisioned MRC, the BUR did not foresee the ensuing nearly decade-long counterinsurgency and stabilization operation. In the years after the end of OIF MCOs, ARNG combat maneuver brigades provided needed capacity to meet force demands in OIF and in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan. This was particularly the case during the first and second post-MCO follow-on rotations to OIF in 2004 and 2005, when Regular Army combat maneuver brigades were being reorganized as modular BCTs.²² For example, 12 of the 15 ARNG eSBs and two other ARNG brigades led brigade-level ARNG deployments to OIF and OEF in 2004 and 2005.²³ Many of the ARNG brigade-level deployments focused on counterinsurgency missions, while others focused on security force missions or training Afghan security forces. ARNG division headquarters deployed in three instances as “ground-holding” division headquarters in command of multiple maneuver brigades and supported other nonstandard missions (e.g., providing detachments to lead the Army task force in the Balkans or to administer a base cluster in Afghanistan).²⁴

This case study has focused primarily on certain Regular Army and ARNG combat maneuver forces. This should not obscure the importance of the full range of Army capabilities across all three components—with the USAR no less a key contributor than the Regular Army and the ARNG. Recent operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere have shown that forces from all three components have been employed to meet the mission demands that the nation placed on its Army. This case study demonstrates an instance in which the distribution of Army

forces across components was tailored based on the relative attributes of Regular Army and RC forces, with a goal of providing an improved distribution of forces in support of the overall strategy.

An Army That Is Ready to Rapidly Deploy in a Crisis Is Key to Meeting Today’s Defense Strategy, Although Other Missions Also Help Shape Army Size, Force Mix, and Component Distribution

The Donald Trump administration released its National Defense Strategy (NDS) in January 2018. Like all defense strategy reviews since the 1993 BUR, this newest version acknowledges the basic requirement for an Army that is highly ready in peacetime. Similarly, the NDS acknowledges a range of other missions that help shape the overall size and mix of Army forces.

The 2018 NDS emphasizes that the joint force will “prioritize preparedness for war.”²⁵ The unclassified version of the strategy states, “The surest way to prevent war is to be prepared to win one. . . . The size of our force matters.”²⁶ In terms of wartime force-sizing, the NDS states,

The fully mobilized Joint Force will be capable of: defeating aggression by a major power; deterring opportunistic aggression elsewhere; and disrupting imminent terrorist and [weapon of mass destruction (WMD)] threats.²⁷

Defeating aggression can require more than just the forces needed to meet initial contingency demands. It may also require forces for follow-on rotations to secure the

nation’s overall strategic objectives. The 2018 NDS appears to acknowledge this: “The Nation must field sufficient, capable forces to defeat enemies *and achieve sustainable outcomes* that protect the American people and our vital interests.”²⁸ We construe this to mean that, rather than simply winning the warfight, U.S. forces have a role in post-warfight stabilization as well, which can require follow-on force rotations (although DoD policy no longer sizes Army forces to conduct large-scale, prolonged stability operations, as it did during much of OIF and OEF).

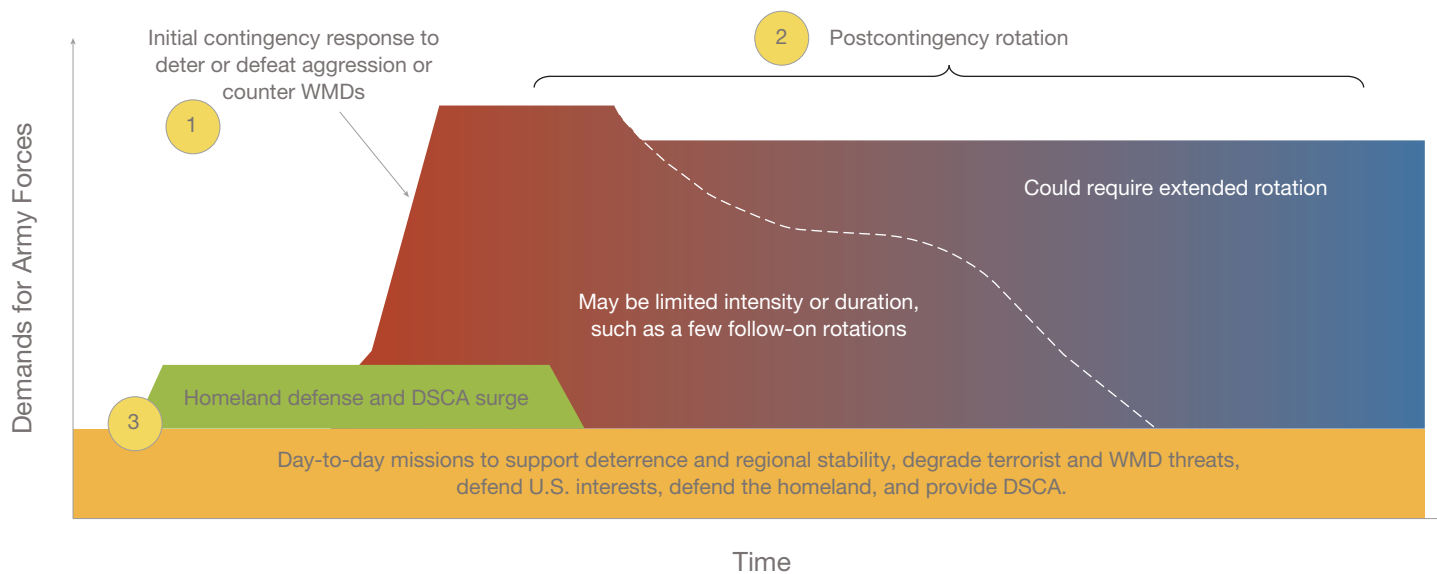
In addition to wartime force-sizing, the 2018 NDS states that the force must be capable of performing a range of other missions:

During normal day-to-day operations, the Joint Force will sustainably compete to: deter aggression in three key regions—the Indo-Pacific, Europe, and Middle East; degrade terrorist and WMD threats; and defend U.S. interests from challenges below the level of armed conflict.²⁹

In addition, “During peace or in war, the Joint Force will deter nuclear and non-nuclear strategic attacks and defend the homeland.”³⁰

Figure 1 illustrates one way to think about how the various missions described in the 2018 NDS shape Army force size, mix, and component distribution.

FIGURE 1
Missions Affecting Army Force Size, Mix, and Component Distribution



NOTE: DSCA = defense support to civil authorities.

Wartime contingencies have two dimensions:³¹

1. *Initial contingency response.* This could involve one or more contingencies across a range of potential missions, including defeating aggression, deterring aggression by deploying additional forces to create an enhanced deterrent posture, or countering the proliferation of WMDs in a failed state. The 2018 NDS emphasizes the ability to defeat aggression through MCOs, partly because deterring aggression is based on the ability to defeat aggression.
2. *Postcontingency rotations.* The intensity and duration of these rotations could vary over time. For example, in the immediate aftermath of Operation Desert Storm (ODS) in 1991, most forces redeployed and the Army's ongoing presence on the ground in Persian Gulf countries was minimal. On the other hand, OIF in 2003 resulted in a large-scale, prolonged stability operation that DoD planners did not anticipate. DoD policy no longer sizes Army forces to conduct large-scale, prolonged stability operations. Nonetheless, the challenges that the Army experienced in meeting postcontingency rotations in OIF and OEF—and the stress on the force that resulted—demonstrate that large-scale, prolonged postcontingency rotations are at least a possibility worth planners' consideration.

Even if postcontingency rotations are of limited intensity and duration, wartime contingencies will still provide the greatest demand driver for overall Army force size, as well as the mix and distribution for *most types* of Army units. However, a *third category* of missions also affects Army force size, mix, and distribution, particularly if they

must be executed simultaneously with wartime contingency missions. This category includes *day-to-day missions* to support deterrence and regional stability, degrade terrorist and WMD threats, defend the homeland, and provide DSCA. It also includes certain types of *surge missions*—for example, a homeland defense and DSCA surge conducted simultaneously with the major contingency surge to maintain an enhanced protective posture against terrorist or other types of attacks on the homeland. In addition, although not explicitly depicted in Figure 1, various *institutional support missions*—for example, the need for military police units to provide installation security—can affect overall force requirements. Thus, the forces needed for this third category are not necessarily just lesser included forces that are simply part of what is required to execute wartime contingencies. These missions and their associated forces represent additive demands shaping the overall requirement and, for some types of units, can be the primary demand driver.

To Meet Today's Defense Strategy, Leaders Should Base Decisions About Army Force Size, Mix, and Component Distribution on Six Principles

In this section, we describe the six principles on which Army leaders should base their decisions about Army force structure.

First, the Army should continue to comprise the three components currently defined in statute—Regular Army, ARNGUS, and USAR—but DoD planners should have the

latitude to recommend alterations in the distribution of forces across the three components based on the requirements of the defense strategy, the attributes of the various components, risk assessments, and available or projected funding levels. Much of the discussion that follows focuses on the relative attributes of Regular Army and RC units, as well as how different attributes bear on force-distribution decisions. Although we do not attempt a similarly detailed discussion of the relative attributes of the two RCs, it is important to note that they are not simply interchangeable. Although both the ARNGUS and the USAR contain many of the same types of units, each component has its own attributes that provide value. For example,

- The ARNGUS, when its soldiers are not on active duty, comprises 54 National Guards under the command and control of the governors of the various states and territories, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. These 54 units allow for governors (and the Commanding General of the District of Columbia National Guard, which serves under the authority of the President) to access capabilities—resourced largely at federal expense—for use in state missions under the command of state authorities.
- The USAR is solely a federal RC that operates under the day-to-day command and control of the federal government under the single command authority of the Chief of the Army Reserve (who is a statutory member of the Army Staff). This facilitates the institutional support that the USAR provides to the Army as a whole and, in some cases, may allow for enhanced management of the readiness of specific units if local resources prove insufficient (e.g.,

The Army should be organized, trained, and equipped first and foremost for defeating aggression through major combat operations.

through the transfer of personnel and resources across state boundaries), without the need for coordination among multiple state authorities.

Second, the Army should be organized, trained, and equipped first and foremost for defeating aggression through MCOs (although other missions, such as countering WMD, may be paramount for some Army capabilities). The 2018 NDS's emphasis on prioritizing preparedness for war is consistent with this principle. Although the Army must possess forces capable of executing the full spectrum of missions, defeating aggression through MCOs is arguably the most complex and demanding mission for most types of Army forces. This mission requires ready forces that are capable of executing combined arms maneuver, which involves the close coordination of ground combat units, field artillery, aviation, and various other types of combat and support capabilities. It also requires careful and timely integration and synchronization across echelons—from companies and teams to divisions and

corps—and with other services and potentially coalition partners. This mission should be the first consideration in determining Army force size, force mix, and the distribution of forces among the three components. Here, we refer specifically to the forces needed to meet initial contingency demands as opposed to those needed for follow-on rotations (we address follow-on operations later). For example, if Army and DoD leaders are to consider potential changes to the Army's force structure—such as creating additional armored BCTs—the first consideration should be fulfilling combatant commander timelines for providing ready Army forces to defeat aggression through MCOs. As the 2018 NDS indicates, deterring aggression is based on the ability to defeat aggression, so there is unlikely to be significant difference in the types of forces needed between the two missions.

DoD force planning should continue to focus on scenarios with little or no unambiguous warning, which require the rapid deployment of forces over a few months.

Third, although not all future contingencies will occur with no prior warning, some will. Moreover, having a recognized ability to rapidly deploy to unforeseen contingencies may also deter some forms of aggression in the first place. When assessing the force requirements for defeating aggression through MCOs, DoD force planning should continue to focus on scenarios with little or no unambiguous warning, which require the rapid deployment of forces over a few months. This approach supports developing a force structure that can meet a range of contingency demands at low to moderate risk—whereas assuming longer warning times could decrease the President's options and result in higher risks for some contingencies.

Fourth, when deciding how the Army should distribute its forces among its components to defeat aggression through MCOs, considering risk first and then cost, readiness to deploy should be the most important factor. *Readiness* refers most directly to how well units are trained and resourced for a mission—and, if temporarily deficient, how long they will take to get ready. The length of time until the units are ready is important because, even in a rapid deployment scenario, not all forces are needed immediately; some can deploy later in the flow, allowing other units some additional time to get ready before they need to begin deployment operations. Because Regular Army units are manned by full-time personnel and can train and prepare on a full-time basis, they generally have a short-term readiness advantage over part-time RC units. Although this does not mean that all Regular Army units are immediately ready to deploy, Army readiness models are designed to keep adequate numbers of Regular Army units at high readiness to deploy on short notice, with additional units becoming ready in the following

weeks and months. In contrast, even the most-ready RC units often need at least some additional preparation after mobilization before the Army can validate them as ready to deploy.³² How much additional preparation is required depends heavily on the type of unit and its mission (e.g., units whose readiness is predominantly a function of individual or small-team skills generally take less time to be made ready than units that require extensive collective training and integration). This does not mean that an RC unit cannot be made ready in time to help meet demands in a contingency. Although the bulk of the earliest-deploying forces may need to come from the Regular Army, there is typically time for some RC units to complete needed postmobilization training and preparation and still deploy in time to meet a combatant commander's demand for forces. For example, in both ODS in 1991 and in OIF in 2003, RC units filled a significant portion of the demand for combat support and sustainment units. Limited numbers of ARNG combat forces deployed as well (e.g., two ARNG field artillery brigades deployed in ODS, and several ARNG infantry companies and battalions deployed for security force missions in OIF). In both ODS and OIF, however, the Army relied principally on Regular Army divisions and brigades to execute combined arms maneuver operations, partly because of the enormous complexity of these missions, as well as the relatively long timelines required to make similar types of ARNG combat units ready for deployment to a combat zone.

Fifth, cost should be a factor in force-distribution decisions, but it should be secondary to readiness. In terms of the requirement for defeating aggression through no-notice or short-notice MCOs, cost differences between full-time and part-time units become most relevant when RC

units have the time needed to be made ready to deploy—including any necessary postmobilization training and preparation—consistent with the combatant commander's deployment timelines. This is most relevant for types of units requiring relatively short training and preparation times or for units needed later in a force flow. Cost differences are also relevant for missions in which deployments are predictable and RC unit training and preparation can be scheduled and resourced based on a known future deployment date. Such conditions are typically the case for post-surge or rotational deployments.

Sixth, once force requirements for defeating aggression through MCOs are identified, funded, and distributed, the Army should identify any additional, incremental force requirements that are consistent with the NDS and can be funded with available resources. These additional force requirements may involve incremental or niche capabilities associated with other potential initial contingency response missions, such as countering WMD (or any other missions consistent with category 1 in Figure 1). Additional force requirements may also result from the need for follow-on postcontingency rotations or from other day-to-day or surge missions required by the NDS (categories 2 and 3, respectively, in Figure 1). That is, as noted earlier, the forces needed for these additional missions should not be assumed to be lesser included forces that are simply part of what is required to defeat aggression through MCOs. Rather, they represent additive demands shaping the overall requirement if funding is available to resource them.

Applying the Principles to Support a Framework for Decisionmaking

In the following discussion, our goal is to provide a conceptual outline for those in the Army, DoD, and elsewhere who are not regularly immersed in the details of the force-planning process. That is, our intent here is to present a high-level, conceptual thought model, not a rigorous model suitable for detailed analysis. Army analysts employ the latter types of models.

Regardless of the specific number, intensity, and duration of missions, one can think through Army force size, mix, and component distribution by stepping through the three major mission categories that we discussed earlier and depicted in Figure 1.

Step 1. Identify the Requirements for Initial Contingency Response

The requirement for an Army that is highly ready and rapidly deployable to surge to one or more nearly simultaneous major contingencies will set the initial conditions for the size, mix, and distribution of forces. Planning should focus on scenarios with little or no unambiguous warning and with rapid deployment of forces over a few months.³³

When planning the Army's distribution of forces among its three components, differences in readiness should be the most important factor, while cost should be a secondary factor. In particular, differences in readiness should be considered in the context of when forces are needed in theater based on combatant commander force flow requirements. Some units are needed very early, while others can deploy later in the flow. If it can be determined

with high confidence that RC units can be available and ready in time to meet a combatant commander's demands for forces, then force planners should distribute needed forces to the RCs because they have lower average peacetime costs compared with comparable Regular Army units. If the RC units might not be ready in time, force planners should instead distribute needed forces to the Regular Army. Readiness assessments should be based on the level of unit capability and capacity that a combatant commander determines is sufficient to perform a given mission at acceptable risk. For example, the readiness requirements for a truck company operating in a nonhostile environment, or where other units will provide for its security, may be different from the requirements for a truck company that must provide for its own security during convoy operations in a hostile environment. The readiness requirements for an aviation unit providing general theater support may be different from the requirements for a unit operating in direct support of ground troops. A wartime mission for a BCT to perform company-level security force tasks carries a less onerous and time-consuming training requirement than does a wartime mission for a BCT to conduct brigade-level combined arms maneuver as part of integrated division-level operations. Depending on such factors as warning time, when units are needed in theater, and levels of premobilization readiness, it may be challenging or infeasible for an ARNG BCT to complete postmobilization preparations and deploy in time for the latter mission but feasible at limited or no risk for the former mission. In short, when determining whether RC units can be available and ready in time to meet a combatant commander's demands for forces, the criterion is not necessarily whether an RC unit can be as ready as a

full-time Regular Army unit that has been resourced and trained to the highest objective standard; it is whether the RC unit can meet the combatant commander's readiness requirements, which should be based on the parameters of the mission and the level of risk that the combatant commander determines is acceptable.

This readiness determination will vary based on the type of unit, the complexity of its mission, and when specific units are needed in theater. It can also vary based on whether units can be identified for potential contingency deployment ahead of time and whether their readiness and resourcing (including fill of personnel and equipment) can be intensively managed to reduce preparation time after the start of a contingency. We noted earlier that, in OIF and OEF, it was common for one ARNG brigade to be selected to lead a mission, with other ARNG brigades or nonbrigade units—often from multiple states—also providing subordinate elements to create a task-organized brigade for deployment.³⁴ Individual soldiers were also cross-leveled from other units to support the task organization. This was true of not just ARNG BCTs but also a wide range of RC units. In a contingency operation, if such attachments and cross-leveling must be done at the time of mobilization without prior planning, it can slow the mobilization process. On the other hand, if RC units are identified as potential candidates for contingency mobilization and are subject to steady-state intensive planning and personnel management in anticipation of a potential mobilization, this could mitigate the challenge. Finally, planners must account for the amount of in-place mobilization throughput capacity for RC units (e.g., trainers, support personnel, facilities, range space, and training equipment) that will

Planners must account for the amount of in-place mobilization throughput capacity for RC units that will exist at the start of a contingency, as well as how rapidly additional capacity can surge after the contingency starts.

exist at the start of a contingency, as well as how rapidly additional capacity can surge after the contingency starts.

In the following discussion, we talk in general terms about how the mix of Regular Army and RC forces may vary over the course of a contingency force flow. However, given uncertainties related to many of the factors we have discussed, we do not attempt to identify specific time ranges applicable to the various segments of the flow.

Note that the following discussion applies most directly to the first contingency in a multicontingency construct; the delay before the second contingency could provide additional warning and time to prepare RC forces—if one assumes that national leaders will take

Defense planners should be cautious regarding assumptions about the speed or willingness of political leaders to order a preparatory mobilization of reserve forces.

advantage of this time to order a preparatory mobilization. Historically, U.S. political leaders have been hesitant to mobilize reserve forces until a requirement for them in theater is clearly identified. Defense planners should be cautious regarding assumptions about the speed or willingness of political leaders to order a preparatory mobilization of reserve forces.

In any case, for at least the first contingency, we note the following guidelines:

- Units needed very early in a force flow should generally come from the Regular Army, given its inherent readiness advantage.³⁵ There may be some exceptions—for example, RC units required to support the deployment of all Army forces from U.S. ports and airfields and to provide installation support at RC mobilization stations to assist

other RC units as they are made ready to deploy to theater. Similarly, some units needed to assist with port operations and staging in theater, or to support theater-level headquarters, may be able to come from the RC if risk assessments support such a distribution of forces. This is perhaps most feasible if the tasks the units are to perform primarily involve individual skills rather than significant collective training and integration with other elements that must be exercised intensively ahead of time to achieve needed proficiency.

- Units needed in the middle of the force flow can be a mix of Regular Army and RC units. Which capabilities can be RC or need to be Regular Army is a function of unit type and mission. Some RC units will have relatively short postmobilization training and preparation requirements. History shows that some types of RC units, especially smaller units (e.g., companies and detachments) or units that largely depend on individual or small-team skills for their readiness, can complete their preparations and deploy in this time frame. Other types will have more-substantial training and preparation requirements; if they must also train with and then deploy their own equipment via sealift, this can add weeks or even months until their theater arrival.
- Demands for later-arriving forces can generally be filled with RC units. Even here, though, there can be exceptions. For example, the Army has no historical experience in rapidly mobilizing and deploying ARNG divisions, ground maneuver brigades, or attack helicopter units for contingency operations, so it is unclear how long this process

would take.³⁶ If ARNG combat brigades, divisions, and attack aviation units can reliably be validated and deployed in time to meet a combatant commander's needs—including, if needed, time to maintain, load, and deploy equipment via sealift after completing postmobilization training—then ARNG units of these types should be considered. If not, then needed units should typically come from the Regular Army.³⁷

When there are no historical data on time to prepare a given RC unit type for a contingency deployment, the Army could consider basing such decisions on a series of real-world experiments—possibly including actually mobilizing RC units and taking them through an entire post-mobilization train-up through validation. This approach would be disruptive and expensive, but it would yield critical insights into what is realistically achievable, and it may inform changes to Army planning.

Step 2. Identify the Additional Requirements for Follow-On Rotations

Follow-on rotations after the initial contingency deployment are typically required to solidify gains and secure overall national objectives. Initial follow-on rotations require additional forces over and above those needed to execute the major contingency. (Later rotations may be filled by forces that had deployed to the initial contingency, depending on policy goals for minimum time needed at home between deployments, the degree of expected combat losses requiring significant replenishment and reconstitution, and other factors.) When planning the component

distribution of units required for an additional increment of forces, key factors to consider include the following:

- Are Regular Army and RC units likely to have significant differences in *readiness* for follow-on rotations, particularly if deployments can be planned well in advance of when units need to arrive in theater?
- Are there differences in *availability* between Regular Army and RC units—that is, are there statutes or DoD policies that limit how often or for how long RC units can deploy?³⁸
- What are the differences in long-term *costs* between Regular Army and RC units?

Because follow-on rotations can usually be planned in advance of when units need to arrive in theater, RC units should generally have ample time to mobilize and be validated as ready. Even if follow-on forces are needed very early after the start of a contingency—for example, to replace units suffering significant combat losses—readiness challenges may affect only the types of RC units with the longest postmobilization preparation times. A caveat is that forces needed to replace combat losses or to meet other emergent demands may need to deploy rapidly with little or no warning. To meet these response timelines with RC units, the Army may need to mobilize RC units and hold them in an “on order” status in anticipation that the combatant commander may need them in the future. As noted earlier, based on historical precedence, defense planners should be cautious regarding assumptions about the speed or willingness of political leaders to order a preparatory mobilization of reserve forces.

If readiness is not the determining factor, this leaves decisionmakers to consider cost and availability. When it comes to cost, the relevant consideration is not simply the difference in cost between Regular Army and RC units at the time they are used to meet an operational demand. Component mix decisions involve how the Army should shape its supply of forces in the *present* to be able to meet operational demands at some indefinite point in the *future*. Therefore, the relevant cost consideration involves differences in the long-term average costs of Regular Army and RC units.

When not mobilized, a part-time RC unit has lower costs than a comparable full-time Regular Army unit in such categories as personnel compensation, training, and base support. This is because most RC soldiers serve on a part-time basis. When mobilized, on the other hand, Regular Army and RC units cost about the same. However, because a typical RC unit spends most of its time not mobilized, its average long-term cost is lower than a comparable full-time Regular Army unit under such conditions.

The difference in cost depends on the type of unit. Take, for example, some types of sustainment units (e.g., certain types of medical, finance, contracting, or public affairs units). Such units have relatively low equipping, training, and full-time support requirements and can cost as little as one-fourth of what a comparable Regular Army unit costs annually when not mobilized. However, an aviation unit in the RC can cost more than half as much as a comparable Regular Army unit annually when not mobilized. This is still cheaper, but the RC cost advantage is much less pronounced, given that RC aviation units have relatively high equipping, training, and full-time support costs.

When determining the component mix of forces that are required for follow-on rotations—if differences in readiness or availability between Regular Army and RC units are not significant issues—RC units typically have an advantage because of their lower average costs. For example, let us assume that only one follow-on rotation is needed, with ample time for units to get ready to deploy. Let us also assume that Regular Army and RC units will be able to deploy for the same length of time, so there are no differences in availability. In this case, the key question is whether the Army should add one Regular Army or one RC unit to the supply of forces in the present, primarily to execute a single follow-on rotation in the future. Given no significant readiness or availability concerns, the RC unit has the advantage because of its lower average long-term cost.

However, in some cases, differences in availability can be a determining factor alongside cost.³⁹ For example, let us assume that the Army must sustain follow-on rotations for an extended duration—perhaps not as long as in OIF and OEF but long enough that units added to supply for the purpose of meeting follow-on rotations may need to deploy more than once. In this case, there may be differences in availability—that is, differences in how often or for how long RC units can deploy compared with Regular Army units—that affect the cost calculus. In sustained operations, current DoD policy is that RC units are available to deploy less often than Regular Army units are. This means that it can take two or more RC units to provide the same deployed output—the same time on the ground performing operational missions—that one Regular Army unit can provide. Because of the higher number of RC units needed, in some cases, it can be more expensive to

provide the same sustained output with RC units than with Regular Army units.

Again, the type of unit and expected mission matter. For example, consider the types of sustainment units mentioned earlier, in which the average long-term cost of one RC unit may be as little as one-fourth the cost of a Regular Army unit. Even if three such RC units are needed to match the sustained output on one Regular Army unit, for these unit types, the RC option is still cheaper. But for aviation units, even if only two RC units are needed to match the output of one Regular Army unit, the RC option is generally more expensive. However, planners should also consider whether there is strategic or operational value in having multiple RC units rather than one Regular Army unit; that may be the case for homeland missions, for deterrence, or if overseas operational demands exceed what is forecasted in planning scenarios (assuming that RC units can mobilize and respond in time).

In sum, the need for follow-on rotations after the initial contingency deployment will establish the requirement for additional increments of forces. In general, RC forces will have a cost advantage. In some circumstances, however, if multiple RC units are needed to match the sustained output of one Regular Army unit, then choosing the Regular Army unit can be the cheaper option, particularly for unit types with higher equipment and training costs.

In the event of long-term, high-demand follow-on rotations after the initial contingency, the Army does not necessarily need to have all required forces in existence at the outset. That is, the Army should be able to create at least some additional forces over time—for example, as it did after Secretary of Defense Gates and Congress approved the Grow the Army Plan in 2007.⁴⁰ However,

The Army should generally be sized to meet demands in at least the first several follow-on rotations after the initial contingency because it may be infeasible to grow additional forces in time to meet these demands.

growing the Army is typically both time-consuming and costly (e.g., financially costly as a result of recruiting and retention incentives; costly in terms of risks, such as lowering personnel standards; and costly in terms of force stress and potential political or recruiting backlash related to policies like stop-loss).⁴¹ At a minimum, and short of full mobilization, the Army should generally be sized to meet demands in at least the first several follow-on rotations after the initial contingency because it may be infeasible to grow additional forces in time to meet these demands—particularly if national leaders remain committed to the all-volunteer force.

Step 3. Identify Whether There Are Additional Requirements for Other Missions That Cannot Be Met with an Army Sized for the First Two Considerations

Additional missions will establish the conditions for whether a third increment of forces is required beyond what is needed for the initial contingency surge plus follow-on rotations. As described earlier, this category includes missions to support deterrence and regional stability, degrade terrorist and WMD threats, defend the homeland, provide DSCA, and meet Army institutional support missions.

Needing a third increment is most likely if these additional missions must be executed in parallel with missions in the first two increments—that is, at the same time as the contingency surge or the follow-on rotations. However, there may be a limited number of unit types for which

Force planners need to assess the impact of ongoing steady-state missions on the readiness levels of forces at the time of the initial contingency surge.

these additional missions are the driver of Army requirements; for example, requirements associated with countering terror and irregular warfare may be the driver for at least some types of special operations forces.

Moreover, even if policy guidance assumes that the Army will disengage from or decrease its level of effort in some of the additional missions during a major contingency, force planners need to assess the impact of ongoing steady-state missions on the readiness levels of forces at the time of the initial contingency surge. For example, forces that are deployed, are just preparing to deploy, or have just recently returned from steady-state missions may not be able to get ready in time to deploy for the initial contingency surge; this would affect overall force requirements.⁴²

In some cases, accounting for these additional missions could cause an adjustment in the component distribution of forces. For example, planners might determine that, based on analysis of demands in contingency response missions and follow-on rotations, units needed to perform cargo lift and medical evacuation missions should be placed primarily in the Regular Army. However, ARNG units of these types have a significant role in homeland missions—a consideration that might cause one to balance a portion of supply in the ARNG. In general, the ARNG's role in supporting homeland missions means that there is utility in distributing capabilities for state-led DSCA missions to the ARNG. While DoD generally does not use state-led missions as an element of force-sizing, the ARNG's role in such missions can still inform decisions on component distribution. Moreover, the preference to be able to keep a certain portion of each state's ARNG forces at home and available to the governor for state use could be a factor in force planning as well.⁴³

Conclusion

The principles discussed in this paper are not revolutionary. They generally reflect considerations that have guided Army force size, mix, and component distribution decisions for the past several decades. Nonetheless, they are principles that Army and DoD leaders, force planners, and others should keep in mind when considering changes or new investments in Army end strength and force structure. Deliberations should be guided by a set of principles that

articulate how allocation decisions can best meet the needs of the defense strategy, considering risk first and cost second. Decisions on the distribution of forces among Army components should be driven first and foremost by the required readiness of forces to fulfill operational demands and only secondarily by cost considerations when readiness is not a significant factor. The ultimate goal of these decisions is to implement the defense strategy at best value while minimizing operational and strategic risk.

Appendix. Planning and Operational Use of ARNG Maneuver Brigades Since Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm

This appendix provides a summary of how the Army has either used or planned to use ARNG combat maneuver brigades to fulfill wartime operational demands since Operation Desert Shield in 1990 and ODS in 1991. It also provides additional sources on the subject.

During Operation Desert Shield, the Army alerted three ARNG combat maneuver brigades on November 15, 1990. It mobilized two of them (the 48th Brigade, Georgia ARNG, and the 256th Brigade, Louisiana ARNG) on November 30, 1990, and the third (155th Brigade, Mississippi ARNG) on December 7, 1990. The 48th Brigade completed its training 90 days after mobilization—the same day that MCOs ended. With the end of such operations, the brigade was not needed in theater and did not deploy. According to a 1995 GAO report, the Army estimated that the 48th Brigade would have required an additional 24 days of post-training activities before deployment.⁴⁴ Neither of the other two brigades completed training before the end of MCOs. After ODS, GAO released a series of reports that assessed the mobilization process for these three brigades, as well as pre-war readiness challenges.⁴⁵

The 1993 BUR recommended creating 15 ARNG enhanced separate brigades. According to DoD's *Reserve Component Employment Study 2005* (released in 1999), the plan was for the first tranche of four ARNG eSBs to be ready to deploy to the second MRC starting 90 days after mobilization, with a second tranche ready to deploy 35

days after that. The limiting factor for the number of eSBs that would mobilize at one time was that, based on existing resource levels, only four brigades could be trained and validated at one time. The Army planned to use four major postmobilization training sites: Fort Irwin (California), Fort Hood (Texas), Yakima Training Center (Washington), and Fort Polk (Louisiana).⁴⁶ The plan to have the first eSBs ready to deploy 90 days after mobilization rested on a series of assumptions about the level of premobilization readiness that they could sustain. Assessments conducted by GAO noted that, although there was demonstrated improvement in some readiness measures over time, the eSBs also demonstrated persistent challenges in meeting premobilization readiness goals.⁴⁷

No ARNG maneuver brigades were used in OIF for MCOs in 2003, but they did deploy to both OIF and OEF in follow-on rotations. These ARNG maneuver brigade deployments fell into one of three types of missions: ground-holding counterinsurgency, security force, and the advising and training of Afghan and Iraqi forces. Although arguably less complex than preparation for combined arms maneuver as part of an MCO, preparation for the counterinsurgency mission was the most time-consuming of the three types of missions that ARNG maneuver brigades executed. Eight ARNG brigades executed counterinsurgency missions in 2004 and 2005. Most training was conducted after mobilization, and these ARNG brigades averaged 152 days from mobilization to arrival in theater. The postmobilization time included a combat training center rotation and often included some predeployment leave; it is unclear whether it also included time to deploy equipment after training was complete or whether, instead, units either deployed equipment beforehand or received

theater-provided equipment. These eight counterinsurgency missions occurred early in OIF, when DoD policy allowed RC units to mobilize for up to the two full years permitted under partial mobilization authorities. In 2007, Secretary of Defense Gates changed this policy, allowing RC units to be involuntarily mobilized for a maximum of one year, plus an additional 30 days or so for soldiers to take accrued leave upon redeployment while still in a mobilized status. In response, the Army pushed more RC predeployment training into the period prior to mobilization.

In addition to the eight ARNG brigades that deployed for counterinsurgency in 2004 and 2005, there were two additional ARNG counterinsurgency deployments after 2008. These two BCTs had significantly different experiences in how they apportioned preparation time between pre- and postmobilization. The 56th Stryker BCT, 28th Infantry Division (Pennsylvania ARNG) completed

most of its predeployment preparation after mobilization (42 days before mobilization and 121 days after mobilization). The 30th Heavy BCT (North Carolina ARNG) completed most of its predeployment preparation before mobilization (100 days before mobilization and 66 days after mobilization). However, total training and preparation days for these units were almost identical: 163 and 166 days, respectively.⁴⁸ The times described here were for deployments to preplanned operations scheduled months or years in advance, with no significant constraints on time or resources to prepare. It is possible that the Army could develop combined pre- and postmobilization training models to prepare ARNG brigades to conduct combined arms maneuver in a contingency environment in less time, but the Army has not yet tested or demonstrated such models. The data presented here are not intended to be predictive; the intent is simply to provide historical data as background to help inform deliberations.⁴⁹

Notes

¹ U.S. Code distinguishes between the Army National Guard (ARNG) and the ARNGUS. In short, the ARNGUS is an RC of the Army, while the ARNG is the organized militia of the several states and territories, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. In this paper, however, we generally use *the ARNG* as shorthand to refer to both the ARNG and the ARNGUS. The full definitions of the ARNG and the ARNGUS from U.S. Code are as follows (see 32 U.S.C. 101):

- ARNG: “that part of the organized militia of the several States and Territories, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia, active and inactive, that: is a land force; is trained, and has its officers appointed, under the sixteenth clause of section 8, article I, of the Constitution; is organized, armed, and equipped wholly or partly at Federal expense; and is federally recognized.”
- ARNGUS: “the reserve component of the Army all of whose members are members of the Army National Guard.”

² By law, reservists and guardsmen are generally required to train 38 or 39 days per year, respectively, although soldiers who are in initial entry training or on extended periods of active duty serve longer. For guardsmen, see 32 U.S.C. 502; for reservists, see 10 U.S.C. 10147.

Although most RC soldiers serve on a part-time basis, some serve as full-time support. For example, some RC soldiers serve full time as part of the Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) program for such purposes as organizing, administering, recruiting, instructing, or training fellow members of their RCs. Military technicians, another type of full-time support personnel, are federal civilian employees providing full-time support for administrative, training, or maintenance purposes. There are two types of military technicians: dual status and non-dual status. Dual-status technicians are required to maintain membership in the Selected Reserve as a condition of their federal civilian employment. Dual-status technicians are required to serve the statutory minimum number of days of military service, just as other non-AGR RC soldiers do. For more information, see U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), 2014b.

As of September 2016, the ARNG reported 29,901 AGR soldiers and 23,359 military technicians; the USAR reported 16,302 AGR soldiers and 7,008 military technicians (numbers for military technicians include both dual status and non-dual status). See Kapp and Torreon, 2017.

³ By *today's defense strategy*, we mean the series of defense strategies that have been articulated since the end of the Cold War and that generally share common themes, though with some evolution over time.

⁴ For histories of the U.S. militia, see Mahon, 1950; Mahon, 1951; Mahon, 1960; Mahon, 1983; Mahon, 2010.

⁵ Pub. L. 57-33, 1903.

⁶ Pub. L. 64-85, 1916.

⁷ Pub. L. 73-64, 1933.

⁸ In 1947, Congress authorized the U.S. Air Force as a military service separate and distinct from the U.S. Army. This led Congress to designate the ARNGUS and the Air National Guard of the United States as separate and distinct federal RCs of the Army and Air Force, respectively. Each state and territory could also have an ARNG and Air National Guard in its organized militia.

⁹ See Holley, 1982; Kreidberg and Henry, 1955; Lerwill, 1954; Weigley, 1962; Weigley, 1967; Weigley, 1973.

¹⁰ Trauschweizer, 2008.

¹¹ All USAR combat divisions either deactivated or converted to training divisions by the end of the 1960s, leaving all RC combat divisions in the ARNG.

¹² Aspin, 1993.

¹³ The two-MRC strategy is currently codified in statute, at least in a sense. 10 U.S.C 691(a), Permanent End Strength Levels to Support Two Major Regional Contingencies, stipulates,

The end strengths specified in subsection (b) are the minimum strengths necessary to enable the armed forces to fulfill a national defense strategy calling for the United States to be able to successfully conduct two nearly simultaneous major regional contingencies.

For the Army, the current number “on active duty at the end of any fiscal year shall be not less than” 483,500, per Section 691(b). See 10 U.S.C. 691.

¹⁴ The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) was the first to consider, as a key element of DoD’s force-sizing construct, the need to “conduct a large-scale, potentially long-duration irregular warfare campaign including counterinsurgency and security, stability, transition and reconstruction operations” (DoD, 2006, p. 38). The 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance directed that “U.S. forces will no longer be sized to conduct large-scale, prolonged stability operations” (DoD, 2012, p. 6).

¹⁵ Regarding the requirement for highly ready and rapidly deployable forces as a key driver of force planning, the 1993 BUR stated,

The dynamic and unpredictable post-Cold War environment demands that we maintain military capabilities flexible and *responsive* enough to cope with unforeseen dangers. Thus, U.S. forces will be structured to achieve *decisive victory* in two nearly simultaneous major regional conflicts and to conduct combat operations characterized by *rapid response* and a high probability of success, while minimizing the risk of significant American casualties. . . . The new dangers thus demand that we keep our forces *ready to fight as a top priority* in allocating scarce defense resources. . . . Our overseas presence provides the leading edge of the rapid response capability that we would need in a crisis. . . . In the event of a short-warning attack, more U.S. forces would need to *deploy rapidly* to the theater and *enter the battle as quickly as possible*. (Aspin, 1993, pp. 8, 12, 15, emphasis added)

In other words, although forward forces would often provide a key rapid response capability (if any were located in the area where the conflict occurred), the United States also needed ready forces that could deploy quickly and win quickly. Subsequent defense reviews reiterated this theme. For example, in the context of deterring threats and coercion against U.S. interests, the 2001 QDR found that a key element involved “*rapidly deployable* and sustainable forces that can *decisively defeat* any adversary” (DoD, 2001, emphasis added). In the case of MCOs, “U.S. forces will fight from a forward deterrent posture with immediately employable forces, including long-range precision strike capabilities from within and beyond the theater, and *rapidly deployable maneuver capabilities*” (DoD, 2001, emphasis added). The report further concluded, “To better meet future warfare challenges, DoD must develop the ability to integrate combat organizations with forces capable of *responding rapidly to events that occur with little or no warning*” (DoD, 2001, pp. 12, 21, emphasis added).

Similarly, in the context of projecting power and winning decisively, the 2014 QDR found,

Our posture of global engagement is the foundation from which the United States responds to crises when required. For more than sixty years, the United States has maintained unmatched capabilities to project large-scale military power over great distances. Our power projection capabilities include *ready and trained forces in the United States, the ability of our forces to move rapidly from place to place, and our forces’ ability to operate anywhere around the world*. (DoD, 2014a, p. 19, emphasis added)

¹⁶ As a result of the BUR, the Army in 1993 convened the Offsite Group—made up of senior officers of the Regular Army, the ARNG, and the USAR, as well as various RC advocacy groups—to resolve certain

outstanding issues related to the RCs. One outcome of the group’s final agreement was a realignment of functions between the ARNG and the USAR. In particular, the USAR agreed to inactivate most of its remaining combat units, including all remaining brigade-sized combat units. (The USAR retained a few battalion-sized combat units; the battalion is the tactical echelon one level below the brigade.) In short, this Offsite Agreement left nearly all Army RC combat forces in the ARNG.

¹⁷ At the end of the Cold War, divisions were tactical organizations of about 10,000 to 18,000 soldiers. A brigade is one tactical echelon lower than a division, and most divisions at the time comprised three subordinate maneuver brigades. In addition to divisions, the Army contained separate brigade-sized organizations. These divisional brigades were not inherently designed to be independently deployable from the division as a whole, although, at times, partial elements of a division could deploy for certain missions. Nonetheless, for MCOs, intact divisions were the primary building block of Army combat power. In 2003, the Army began to convert to a brigade-based force as part of a process known as *modularity*. As a result of modularity, the Army reorganized its combat maneuver forces around brigade combat teams (BCTs) of about 4,000 soldiers that were *designed to be independently deployable*, although in an MCO, most BCTs would still fall under the tactical control of a division headquarters. The Army remains a BCT-focused force today.

¹⁸ At a news briefing on the 1993 BUR, then–Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell explained,

The big change [is] anticipated in Army Reserves, particularly the National Guard part of Army Reserves. We usually have looked at that capability in terms of divisions—National Guard divisions. The combat part of the National Guard. We are going to shift to a focus on enhancing the readiness of brigades rather than enhancing the readiness of entire National Guard divisions. The simple reason is it takes too long. We want to shorten the time, by focusing our enhanced readiness activities on brigade-sized organizations. . . . The important teaching point here is we’re moving from a focus on divisions being ready to a focus on smaller-sized National Guard units being ready. (Aspin and Powell, 1993)

¹⁹ See the appendix for a discussion of post–Cold War plans and experience for mobilizing ARNG maneuver brigades.

²⁰ Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces, 1995, p. 2-23. The commission noted,

The Reserve Components should be assigned all tasks that they can accomplish within the mobilization and deployment times envisioned in the National Security Strategy. . . . All units

should be evaluated on the basis of their readiness to accomplish assigned tasks within the time frames specified. (p. 2-23)

It also noted, “We believe eight divisions is too large a force” for the secondary missions identified in the BUR (Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces, 1995, p. 2-24).

²¹ U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO), 1997.

²² In 2004, the Army began converting nearly all of its units to new modular force designs, as the Army transitioned from a division- to a brigade-based force. Modularity enabled the Army to grow its supply of Regular Army BCTs to meet demands in Iraq and Afghanistan. Regular Army units generally began to convert to modular designs at earlier dates than RC units and, during conversion, were unavailable to deploy.

²³ We say that ARNG brigades led brigade-level ARNG deployments to OIF and OEF because the norm was for one ARNG brigade to be selected to lead a mission while other ARNG brigades or nonbrigade units provided elements to round out the task organization for deployment.

²⁴ The 42nd Infantry Division headquarters deployed to OIF in 2004; the 34th Infantry Division headquarters deployed to OIF in 2009; and the 36th Infantry Division headquarters deployed to OIF in 2010.

²⁵ DoD, 2018, p. 6.

²⁶ DoD, 2018, p 5.

²⁷ DoD, 2018, p 6.

²⁸ DoD, 2018, p. 5, emphasis added.

²⁹ DoD, 2018, p 6.

³⁰ DoD, 2018, p. 6.

³¹ Here, we refer specifically to wartime contingencies of the type contemplated in defense planning since the end of the Cold War—as opposed to, for example, those experienced during World War I and World War II or contemplated for the Central Front in Europe during the Cold War.

³² The Secretary of the Army is required by statute to validate that ARNG units are ready for deployment. 32 U.S.C. 105 states,

Under regulations prescribed by him, the Secretary of the Army shall have an inspection made by inspectors general, or, if necessary, by any other commissioned officers of the Regular Army

detailed for that purpose, to determine whether . . . the units of the Army National Guard meet requirements for deployment.

There is no similar language in Title 10 that specifically requires the Secretary of the Army to validate USAR unit readiness. However, 10 U.S.C. 3013 can be construed as providing the Secretary of the Army the general authority and responsibility for validating the training of all Regular Army and RC units for federal missions. Specifically, this section directs that “the Secretary of the Army is responsible for, and has the authority necessary to conduct, all affairs of the Department of the Army,” including functions related to training and mobilization.

³³ OIF in 2003 presents an example of a rapid contingency deployment executed over approximately four months. Between mid-January and mid-May 2003, DoD moved more than 200,000 personnel from the Army and other services, plus equipment, via air and sea. Although much of the Army’s 3rd Infantry Division was already in theater by January 2003, this still amounted to moving at least 13 Army maneuver brigades, plus other units. Other units continued to flow to and from Afghanistan and other locations during the same period.

When assessing Army force requirements, planners must also account for strategic mobility or prepositioned assets needed to deploy those forces on timelines consistent with combatant commander–required delivery dates.

³⁴ In contrast, Regular Army brigades deployed as whole brigades—because the Regular Army represents a global supply pool of personnel that can be allocated as needed to meet the readiness requirements of deploying units. RC units, on the other hand, draw most soldiers from within a local commuting radius of about 100 to 150 miles and generally carry a significant percentage of soldiers who are temporarily nondeployable because they are in initial entry training, are undergoing skills requalification, or are medically or administratively nondeployable. Historically, this has meant that, at the time of mobilization—or in the months prior, if there is advance notice of the pending mobilization—other RC units or individuals must be attached to the RC unit selected to lead the deployment, which creates a task organization that has the required number of deployable soldiers.

³⁵ In July 2003, for example, then–Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld directed the military departments to “reduce dependence on involuntary mobilization of reservists needed early in an operation,” particularly those that would need to mobilize within the first 15 days (Rumsfeld, 2003).

³⁶ See the appendix for a summary of how the Army has either used or planned to use ARNG ground maneuver brigades to help meet wartime operational demands since ODS.

³⁷ Note that the Army may be constrained, by funding and other factors, in the number of RC soldiers it can mobilize at one time. In some circumstances, it may be advisable to focus on mobilizing and deploying multiple tranches of RC combat support and sustainment units that have comparatively short postmobilization training needs as opposed to mobilizing and deploying a single ARNG BCT that must remain at mobilization for an extended period as it completes its more time-consuming collective training requirements.

³⁸ There are no statutory limitations on how long a Regular Army unit can deploy. However, the various statutory authorities that provide for RC mobilization (e.g., full mobilization, partial mobilization, presidential reserve call-up) set different durations for how long RC units can be mobilized, which in turn limits how long they can deploy. Moreover, DoD policy may limit durations for RC mobilization and deployment to shorter periods than what statute permits. For example, RC units that mobilized for OIF and OEF did so under partial mobilization authority, as provided for in 10 U.S.C. 12302. Partial mobilization allows RC units to be mobilized for up to two years at a time, and in the early years of OIF, many RC units mobilized for longer than one year to accommodate predeployment preparation activities and for a full year deployed to theater; a few RC units even deployed for longer than a year. In 2007, however, then-Secretary of Defense Robert Gates issued guidance that limited RC mobilizations to a maximum of one year, plus an additional 30 days or so for soldiers to take accrued leave while still in a mobilized status.

³⁹ For a more detailed discussion of this topic, see Klimas et al., 2014.

⁴⁰ The Grow the Army Plan increased the Army's authorized end strength by 74,200 spaces: 65,000 in the Regular Army, 8,200 in the ARNG, and 1,000 in the USAR.

⁴¹ The Army may also be able to satisfy shortfalls for specific units types, at least temporarily, using some combination of joint force substitutions or "in-lieu-of" forces, which are personnel temporarily assigned to tasks outside their normal specialties. For example, in OIF, the Army frequently assigned security missions to truck or quartermaster companies in lieu of military police or infantry units that would typically perform such missions.

⁴² Although it might seem that forces just getting ready to deploy to steady-state missions can be readily repurposed to meet contingency demands, this may not always be the case. For example, a maneuver brigade tasked with performing a steady-state stabilization or security force training mission may not have completed the type of training needed to be ready to deploy for combined arms maneuver as part of an MCO. At least some additional training will likely be needed, and it may not be feasible to complete this training in time to meet a combatant commander's demands for deployed forces.

⁴³ For example, during Hurricane Katrina in 2005, a significant portion of the ARNG forces from Louisiana were deployed and unavailable to assist with disaster relief operations. Per discussion with DoD planners, it appears that there was some consideration within DoD about attempting to ensure that each state retained half of its National Guard forces at home at all times. We found no documents indicating this was ever officially codified in policy, but it may have been a factor in force structure decisions at the time. In practice, ARNG forces from other states can be available to provide needed capabilities—for example, via Emergency Management Assistance Compacts. Regular Army and USAR forces may also provide capabilities to support certain missions.

⁴⁴ GAO, 1995.

⁴⁵ GAO, 1991; GAO, 1992; GAO, 1993.

⁴⁶ DoD, 1999, pp. 14–15.

⁴⁷ GAO, 1995; GAO, 2000.

⁴⁸ The two BCTs did experience different lengths of time deployed to theater. Gates's 2007 policy change meant that RC units were limited to approximately one year of mobilization time, split primarily between (1) time completing preparation after mobilization but before deployment and (2) time deployed to theater. Because of the 30th Heavy BCT's relatively shorter postmobilization preparation period (66 days), it spent about 295 days deployed to theater. Because of the 56th Stryker BCT's relatively longer postmobilization preparation period (121 days), it spent only about 240 days deployed to theater.

⁴⁹ For more information on ARNG brigade deployments from 2008 to 2010, see Klimas et al., 2014.

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