

March 1996

ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Validate Requirements for Combat Forces and Size Those Forces Accordingly





United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

National Security and
International Affairs Division

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March 14, 1996

The Honorable John R. Kasich
Chairman, Committee on the Budget
House of Representatives

The Honorable Robert K. Dornan
Chairman
The Honorable Owen Pickett
Ranking Minority Member
Subcommittee on Military Personnel
Committee on National Security
House of Representatives

The Department of Defense (DOD), in its bottom-up review of the nation's defense needs in the post-Cold War era, identified the number of both active and reserve component combat forces needed to accomplish the national military strategy. The Army combat forces in the reserve components are in the Army National Guard. As you requested, we reviewed the roles and missions of the Guard's combat units and efforts by DOD and the Army to redesign the Guard's combat divisions.

Background

The Army's reserve components are the Army Reserve and Army National Guard. The Army Reserve is comprised of units that support combat forces and is restricted to federal missions. The Guard has both combat and support units and federal and state responsibilities. The Guard is to be organized and resourced for federal wartime missions, according to Guard policy. Federal missions range from participating in full-scale military conflicts to operations other than war, backfilling active forces deployed on operational missions, providing training support to the active component, supporting domestic disaster relief and emergency operations under federal control, and providing strategic reserve forces to meet unknown contingencies. The Guard's state missions typically involve support for state officials and organizations during domestic civil emergencies and natural or man-made disasters.

The size of DOD's forces and budgets has declined with the end of the Cold War and pressures to reduce the deficit. In 1989 the Guard had about 457,000 personnel. By the end of fiscal year 1996, the Guard plans to have 373,000 personnel in 54 separate state and territorial military commands in the 50 states, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, and

Guam. About 161,000 Guard personnel are to be in 42 combat brigades, including 67,000 in 15 enhanced brigades. The remaining 212,000 personnel are in headquarters units and units that support combat. By the end of fiscal year 1999, the Guard plans to be down to 367,000 personnel, with about 187,000 personnel in the combat units, including the 67,000 in the enhanced brigades.

The Guard's 42 combat brigades are organized as follows: 8 divisions comprised of 3 brigades each, 15 enhanced brigades, and 3 separate combat units, consisting of 2 separate brigades and a scout group. In addition to the combat units, the Guard has elements that support combat units, such as engineers, military police, military intelligence, and transportation.

The enhanced brigade concept, described in DOD's 1993 Report on the Bottom-Up Review, became effective on October 1, 1995. The concept provides for 15 separate brigades that are not part of a divisional structure during peacetime and that are required to be ready to deploy at the Army's highest readiness level within 90 days of mobilization. The enhancements, according to the bottom-up review, are training and resources above those provided to the Guard's other combat forces. The enhancements are to enable the 15 brigades to achieve peacetime readiness goals so that they can meet their deployment criteria by the end of fiscal year 1998.

The President's budget request for fiscal year 1996 included \$5.5 billion for the Guard, which represents about 2.2 percent of DOD's budget request and 9.3 percent of the Army's request. About \$1.7 billion of the \$5.5 billion request is for the Guard combat units. The remaining \$3.8 billion is for such organizations as headquarters units and elements that support combat. These other organizations receive most of the funds because they include support elements that are the first to deploy. For fiscal year 2001, the Guard's budget is projected to be about \$6 billion, with about \$1.8 billion for combat units. Table 1 further breaks down these budgets.

Table 1: Projected Budgets for Guard Organizational Elements

Dollars in millions			
Element	Fiscal years		
	1996	1999	2001
Divisions ^a	\$956	\$782	\$816
Enhanced brigades	730	919	956
Other ^b	3,854	4,104	4,305
Total	\$5,540	\$5,805	\$6,077

^aIncludes the three separate combat units that are not in divisions.

^bIncludes organizations such as Army National Guard Headquarters and units that support combat.

Results in Brief

Although the Guard has come down in size, our analysis shows that the combat forces may still be too large for projected war requirements. The Guard's combat structure, with 42 combat brigades, exceeds projected requirements for two major regional conflicts, according to war planners and DOD and Army studies. According to DOD documents and Army officials, the excess forces are a strategic reserve that could be assigned missions such as occupational forces once an enemy has been deterred and as rotational forces. However, we could find no analytical basis for this level of strategic reserve.

State and federal laws generally authorize the Guard to provide military support to state authorities for certain missions, such as disaster relief.¹ Support skills and equipment such as engineering and military police are most often needed for state missions. The Guard primarily supplements other state resources for these missions. Moreover, according to a recent study by RAND's National Defense Research Institute,² the Guard over the last decade has used only a small percent of its total personnel to meet state requirements.

The Army is studying alternatives to redesign the Guard's combat structure to meet critical shortages that the Army has identified in its support capabilities. DOD's Commission on Roles and Missions concluded in its report that reserve component forces with lower priority tasks should be eliminated or reorganized to fill shortfalls in higher priority areas. It specifically cited the Guard's eight combat divisions. The

¹Our reference to state support and missions will encompass assistance to the Governors of Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico and the President of the United States in the District of Columbia.

²Assessing the State and Federal Missions of the National Guard, RAND, (Santa Monica, CA: 1995).

Commission also reported that, even after filling the shortfalls, the total Army would still have more combat spaces than required and recommended these should be eliminated from the active or reserve components.

Guard Combat Structure Far Exceeds War Requirements

In March 1993, DOD initiated a comprehensive bottom-up review to assess the nation's defense strategy, force structure, and budgets to counter regional aggression in the post-Cold War environment. DOD judged it prudent to maintain the capability to fight and win two nearly simultaneous major regional conflicts. To execute the two-conflict strategy, DOD determined that the Army must maintain 10 divisions in the active forces augmented by 15 reserve enhanced brigades and associated support forces.

The bottom-up review report stated that the reserve component must adapt to meet new challenges. Accordingly, this means making smarter use of reserve component forces by adapting them to new requirements, assigning them missions that properly use their strengths, and funding them at a level consistent with their expected missions during a crisis or war.

The bottom-up review concluded that the Army's reserve components should be reduced to 575,000 personnel by 1999—a 201,000 decrease since fiscal year 1989. The review specified that the reserve components' combat structure would be about 37 brigades, 15 of which would be enhanced. A group of senior officers of the Army, its reserve components, and organizations that represent Army component issues was tasked with providing a recommendation to the Secretary of the Army on the allocation of the 575,000 personnel between the Guard and the Army Reserve. The group allocated 367,000 personnel to the Guard and 208,000 to the Army Reserve. In addition to the 15 enhanced brigades specified in the bottom-up review, the Guard, in concert with the Army, determined that it would retain 8 combat divisions, 3 separate combat units, and numerous support units.

The Guard's eight combat divisions and three separate combat units are not required to accomplish the two-conflict strategy, according to Army war planners and war planning documents that we reviewed. The Army's war planners at headquarters and at U.S. Forces Command stated that these forces are not needed during or after hostilities cease for one or more major regional conflicts. Moreover, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have not

assigned the eight combat divisions or the three separate combat units for use in any major regional conflict currently envisioned in DOD planning scenarios. The missions for these divisions and units, according to the bottom-up review, include (1) providing the basis for rotation when forces are required to remain in place over an extended period after the enemy invasion has been deterred, (2) serving as a deterrent hedge to future adversarial regimes, and (3) supporting civil authorities at home. According to Army officials involved in the review, there was no analysis to determine the appropriate number of forces required to perform these missions.

The Guard's 15 enhanced brigades are the principal reserve component ground combat forces. The bottom-up review report states that one important role for these brigades is to supplement active component divisions, should more ground combat power be needed to deter or fight a second major regional conflict. Although the bottom-up review specified a need for 15 enhanced brigades and the Joint Chiefs of Staff have made all 15 brigades available for war planning purposes, the planners have identified requirements for less than 10 brigades to achieve mission success in the war fight.³ However, these plans are evolving and the number of brigades required may change. This lesser number of brigades is generally consistent with the required reserve combat forces included in the Army's current Total Army Analysis process. That process projects the Army's future support needs based on the future combat force.

According to U.S. Forces Command planners, the enhanced brigades that are not required to achieve mission success in the war fight are considered to be strategic reserve that can either be used for occupational forces once the enemy has been defeated or for other missions. Other roles would be to replace active forces stationed overseas or engaged in peacekeeping operations should the replaced forces be needed for a regional conflict.

Guard Combat and Support Structure Exceeds State Mission Needs

The Guard has a wide range of state missions. These missions include the defense of states or other entities from disorder, rebellion, or invasion; emergency and disaster relief; humanitarian assistance; and community support activities.

In crisis situations, the governors primarily use the Guard to supplement civil agencies after those agencies have exhausted their resources. According to Guard officials at the state level, the state expects the local

³The specific number is classified.

authorities to respond first, followed by county, and then state resources. If the crisis exceeds the state's civil capabilities, the Guard can be called on for added support. For example, needs far exceeded the state's civil agencies' capabilities after Hurricane Andrew devastated south Florida. Therefore, the Governor called up almost 50 percent of Florida's Army and Air Guard personnel for such tasks as providing temporary shelters, removing debris, distributing food and water, and providing security.

For situations beyond a state's capabilities, the Governor can ask the President to declare a federal emergency. When this declaration is made, the Federal Emergency Management Agency becomes the coordinating agency between state and federal agencies. For example, Florida's immediate assistance needs after Hurricane Andrew exceeded the capacity of the state's resources, including its Guard forces. As a result, the Governor requested and received a presidential disaster declaration that entitled the state to obtain federal funding and assistance from federal agencies and the active military.

The federal government has added several domestic initiatives to the Guard's federally funded state missions. For example, newly acquired initiatives include drug interdiction and counter-drug activities, drug demand reduction programs, medical assistance in underserved areas, and the Civilian Youth Opportunities program. Although federally funded, the state governors authorize missions like these under the control of authorized Guard officials.

Given the concerns for potential hardships to Guard members, their families, and their employers, most state Guard leaders plan to rotate Guard members used in state missions lasting longer than 7 days. For example, in both the Midwest floods of 1993 and Hurricane Andrew in 1992, Guard personnel were rotated, which resulted in the use of a greater number of personnel, but for shorter durations.

Guard officials at the state level said that general soldier skills, such as discipline and following a chain of command, are often all that are needed to satisfy state missions. In the specialized skills areas, they said that support skills and equipment such as engineering, transportation, medical support, aviation, and military police are most often needed. In the states we visited, we were told that Guard members were asked to perform a variety of tasks on state active duty. For example, in California, the Guard provided homeless shelters for people displaced by major earthquakes, patrolled the streets of Los Angeles during a riot, and provided support to

firefighters during wild fires. In Kansas and Utah, Guard members filled sandbags to fight flooding.

In the previously mentioned study, which was required by the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1994, RAND reported that the Army and Air Guard in fiscal year 1993 experienced the highest number of state active duty days in over 10 years. The 54 state and territorial Guard entities reported spending over 460,000 duty days on state missions, involving over 34,000 members of the total Guard. This equated to about 6 percent of the total available Army and Air Guard personnel. Almost 50 percent of the Guard's use that year was due to the Midwest floods.

As might be expected, Guard usage for state missions varies from state to state and year to year. For example, RAND reported that the Florida Army and Air Guard were on state active duty in 1992 for Hurricane Andrew for over 80 days, with a peak personnel commitment of some 6,200 out of a total strength of about 13,500, or about 46 percent. RAND also reported that New York, with an Army and Air Guard strength of about 20,000, had its highest Guard usage in 6 years in 1994. During that year, the state used about 6,000 Guard workdays, which amounts to about 1 state active duty day per year for about 30 percent of the state's total Army and Air Guard strength. This latter experience is typical of many states during the same period.

RAND reported that, nationally, state demands on the Army and Air Guard are not significant. Moreover, the Guard's own data do not show sizable demands on its personnel and resources for state missions. As such, RAND concluded that, even in a peak use year, state missions would not require a large portion of the Guard and should not be used as a basis for sizing the Guard force. It also concluded that the Guard is large enough to handle both state and federal missions, even in the unlikely, but possible, event of simultaneous peak demands.

Study of Guard Combat Structure

The Army is studying the redesign of the Guard's combat structure to meet critical shortages in support capabilities. In May 1995, the Army's Vice Chief of Staff chartered a work group to develop alternatives and make recommendations for using the Guard's combat structure to meet critical shortages in support forces. According to the group's charter, the Army has undertaken this effort because it is critically short support forces, but continues to maintain Guard combat units that are excess to war-fighting requirements.

The group is to

- review the Army's future unresourced support requirements,
- review the structure and missions of the Guard combat elements and develop options for changing the structure to meet future Army requirements,
- conduct a resource feasibility assessment of the options to determine whether the Army possesses or is able to program the resources needed to equip and maintain the redesigned structure, and
- refine and prioritize the options for presentation to the Army leadership by March 1996.

The group's charter established certain parameters such as (1) the Guard's planned end strength will not change, (2) the redesign efforts will consider the Guard's need to remain responsive to state missions, and (3) the redesign effort is not intended to reduce the number of Guard division headquarters.

Previous Studies Recognize Need for Change

Previous studies have also recognized the need for changes to the Guard's combat structure. In December 1992, we reported that opportunities existed to break up some Guard divisions and convert some combat units to support units.⁴ In March 1995, we reported that the Army would be challenged to provide sufficient numbers of certain types of support units for two major regional conflicts because it had difficulty providing such units in the single conflict Persian Gulf War.⁵ We suggested that an option for augmenting the Army's support capability is to use existing support capability in the eight Guard divisions that DOD did not include in the combat force for executing the two-conflict strategy. We recommended that the Secretary of the Army (1) identify the specific unresourced support requirements that could be met using Guard divisional support units and the personnel and equipment in these units and (2) work with the Guard to develop a plan for employing this capability. The work group is considering this recommendation as one of the options.

In accordance with the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1994, DOD established a Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces, which looked at, among other things, the better use of reserve

⁴Army Force Structure: Future Reserve Roles Shaped by New Strategy, Base Force Mandates, and Gulf War (GAO/NSIAD-93-80, Dec. 15, 1992).

⁵Force Structure: Army National Guard Divisions Could Augment Wartime Support Capability (GAO/NSIAD-95-80, Mar. 2, 1995).

forces. The Commission determined that the Army's combat structure exceeds the requirements for a two major regional conflict scenario and concluded that reserve component forces with lower priority tasks should be eliminated or reorganized to fill shortfalls in higher priority areas. In its report, the Commission cited the example of the Army's eight Guard divisions that were required for possible war with the former Soviet Union, but are not needed for the current national security strategy.⁶ The report noted that the bottom-up review did assign the eight Guard divisions secondary missions such as serving as a deterrent hedge to future adversarial regimes; however, it also said that eight divisions is too large a force for these secondary missions. The Commission's report also noted that at the same time, the Army estimated that it is short 60,000 support troops for a two regional conflict strategy. The Army's most recent Total Army Analysis process also projects a shortage of 60,000 support troops, primarily in transportation and quartermaster units. The Commission report also stated that, even after the support shortfalls were filled, there would still be excess combat spaces in the total Army and recommended eliminating these spaces from the active or reserve components.

Recommendations

The end of the Cold War and budgetary pressures have provided both the opportunity and the incentive to reassess defense needs. Because the Guard's combat forces exceed projected war requirements and the Army's analysis indicates a shortage of support forces, we believe it is appropriate for the Army to study the conversion of some Guard combat forces to support roles. Therefore, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense, in conjunction with the Secretary of the Army and the Director, Army National Guard, validate the size and structure of all of the Guard's combat forces and that the Secretary of the Army prepare and execute a plan to bring the size and structure of those combat forces in line with validated requirements. If the Army study suggests that some Guard combat forces should be converted to support roles, we recommend that the Secretary of the Army follow through with the conversion because it would satisfy shortages in its support forces and further provide the types of forces that state governors have traditionally needed. Moreover, to the extent that there are Guard forces that exceed validated requirements, the Secretary of Defense should consider eliminating them.

⁶Report of the Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces, Department of Defense (Arlington, Va.: 1995).

Agency Comments

DOD agreed with our findings and recommendations. It stated that before its review is finalized, all shortfalls will be validated against requirements set forth in the national military strategy. It also stated that until ongoing studies are completed, it is premature to restructure or eliminate Army National Guard units. DOD's comments are shown in appendix I.

Scope and Methodology

To determine the federal and state roles and missions of the Guard's combat units, we interviewed cognizant officials and obtained and analyzed documents from DOD, the Army, the Army National Guard, and RAND in Washington, D.C.; U.S. Army Forces Command, Fort McPherson, Georgia; and State Area Commands and combat units in Alabama, California, Kansas, South Carolina, Utah, Virginia, and Washington.

To determine the efforts by DOD and the Army to redesign the Guard combat divisions, we interviewed cognizant officials and obtained and analyzed documents from DOD, the Army, the Army National Guard, U.S. Army Forces Command, and the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command's Force Development Directorate, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

We conducted this review from February to November 1995 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

We are providing copies of this report to appropriate House and Senate committees; the Secretaries of Defense and the Army; the Director of the Army National Guard; and the Director, Office of Management and Budget. We will also provide copies to other interested parties upon request.

Please contact me at (202) 512-3504 if you or your staff have any questions concerning this report. The major contributors to this report were Robert Pelletier, Leo Sullivan, Lee Purdy, and Ann Borseth.



Richard Davis
Director, National Security
Analysis

Comments From the Department of Defense



RESERVE AFFAIRS

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1500

16 FEB 1995

Mr. Richard Davis
Director, National Security Analysis
National Security and International Affairs Division
U.S. General Accounting Office
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Davis:

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the General Accounting Office (GAO) draft report, "ARMY NATIONAL GUARD: Validate Requirements for Combat Forces and Size Those Forces Accordingly," dated January 18, 1996 (GAO Code 701052), OSD Case 1084. The DoD concurs in spirit with the draft report, but with several comments.

The Department, in harmony with the Secretary of the Army and the Army National Guard, has already been working on the recommendations identified by GAO prior to the publication of this draft report. The Army has been reviewing all Army National Guard force structure to include: divisions, smarter use of enhanced brigades, and separate brigades/scout groups. The study is scheduled for completion in late February 1996. After the Secretary of the Army and Chief of Staff of the Army approves the results of the study, it will be presented to the DoD Reserve Component Steering Group along with Studies being conducted by OSD (PA&E) and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). The Reserve Component Steering Group will then present the recommendations to the Secretary of Defense in March 1996.

Before our review is finalized, all shortfalls will be validated against requirements set forth in the National Military Strategy. Until the ongoing Studies are completed, it is premature to restructure or eliminate Army National Guard units. The Department is confident that this study process will help the Army and DOD in identifying needs and parameters to make decisions that enhance our capabilities.

The detailed DoD comments on the draft report are enclosed. Additional technical corrections were separately provided. The DoD appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft report and commends the professionalism of the GAO for working with us to ensure the accuracy of the draft report..

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Deborah R. Lee".

Deborah R. Lee

Enclosure:
As stated

GAO DRAFT REPORT - DATED JANUARY 18, 1996
(GAO CODE 701052) OSD CASE 1084

“ARMY NATIONAL GUARD: VALIDATE REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBAT FORCES
AND SIZE THOSE FORCES ACCORDINGLY”

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMENTS

* * * * *

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of the Army, in conjunction with the Army National Guard, validate the size and structure of all of the Guard’s combat forces, including the enhanced brigades and the three separate combat units, and prepare and execute a plan to bring the size and structure of those combat forces in line with validated requirements. (p. 16/GAO Draft Report)

DOD RESPONSE: Concur, with comment. The Department in harmony with the Secretary of the Army and the Army National Guard have already been working on the recommendations identified by GAO prior to the publication of this draft report. This has been ongoing since August 1995. Based on the Commission on Roles and Missions (CORM’s) recommendation the validation process is being accomplished at the Office of the Secretary of Defense level with parallel inputs from various sources within the Department including the Secretary of the Army, the Joint Staff and the Secretariat. Included in this process is an investigation of the increased roles the Reserve Components can play in Operations Other Than War (OOTW) and providing peacetime support to the CinCs through our Increased Use initiative. The Secretary announced this in his letter of August 24, 1995, to the Congress with his initial findings on the CORM’s recommendations. This review does not address the Enhanced Readiness Brigades which the Department considers as one of several high priority enhancements necessary to successfully execute our Strategy. However, under the Army’s Redesign Study the Army has been reviewing all Army National Guard force structure to include: divisions, smarter use of enhanced brigades, and separate brigades/scout groups. This study is scheduled for completion in late February. After the Secretary of the Army and Chief of Staff of the Army approves the results of the study, it will be presented to the DOD Reserve Component Steering Group along with Studies being conducted by OSD (PA&E) and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). The Reserve Component Steering Group will then present recommendations to the Secretary of Defense in March 1996.

Now on p. 9.

Appendix I
Comments From the Department of Defense

Now on p. 9.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The GAO recommended that if the Army study suggests that some Guard combat forces should be converted to support roles, the Secretary of the Army should follow through with the conversion because it would satisfy shortages in its support forces and further provide the types of forces that state governors have traditionally needed. (p. 17/GAO Draft Report)

DOD RESPONSE: Concur, with comment. The DOD is currently in the process of reviewing the Army's support unit shortfall as suggested by the CORM. Before our review of National Guard combat structure is finalized, all shortfalls will be validated against requirements set forth in the National Military Strategy. Until the ongoing Studies are completed, it is premature to restructure Army National Guard units at this time.

Now on p. 9.

RECOMMENDATION 3: The GAO recommended that to the extent that there are Guard forces that exceed validated requirements, the Secretary of the Army should consider eliminating them. (p. 17/GAO Draft Report)

DOD RESPONSE: Concur. Again, DOD is waiting on the results and recommendations of the ongoing studies, however, the DOD will continue to eliminate any and all force structure determined to be excess to validated requirements.

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