

Airmen participate in convoy training



U.S. Air Force (Kenny Holston)

**T**his article is intended to stimulate discussion and provide ideas for building a viable U.S. military—one that can be refocused, reconstituted, and recapitalized while remaining operationally engaged without exhausting people or resources. It is also intended to assist policymakers in examining the recent history, current challenges, and likely future of the Reserve Components.

During the past 30 years, circumstances have driven Total Force policies well beyond their original intent, which was primarily to sustain a large garrison force by leveraging capabilities in the Reserve Components. Although the guidelines in this article are focused on the U.S. Air Force in particular, many apply throughout the Department of Defense (DOD). They may serve as a starting point for policymakers to begin developing a force concept that would allow the Services and DOD to move beyond current Total Force thinking to a new vision that better captures the essence of an operationally centered Reserve Component.

Too often in addressing the pressing problems of the day, we do not take time to consider the next horizon. Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force General T. Michael Moseley, in his vision document “Heritage to Horizons,” challenged us to contemplate the future during these turbulent times. Following his lead, we provide the following to discuss what we see as the next horizon—building a viable force.

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T H E N E X T H O R I Z O N  
**Building a Viable Force**

By JOHN A. BRADLEY, GARY L. CRONE, and DAVID W. HEMBROFF

U.S. Air Force (Lance Cheung)



C-130 ready for takeoff at Sather Air Base, Iraq

## Understanding Active Duty

A simple observation sets the tone for the future: the term *Active duty* is no longer the purview of the Regular Service Component. Thousands of Reservists are on Active duty every day. In June 2007, for instance, the Air Force awarded its first six Air Force Combat Action medals, recognizing Airmen who distinguished themselves while engaged with hostile forces, at a ceremony dedicating the new Air Force Memorial. One of the six recipients was Master Sergeant Charlie Peterson, an Air Force Reservist.

Indeed, the Guard and Reserve are Active Components, too. The contributions of Guardsmen and Reservists over the past decades indicate an operational force. Despite these contributions, we still tend to refer exclusively to the Regular Component as the Active Component. The time has come, however, when we need to accept that a viable force requires *all* components to be Active, not just the Regular Component. What will vary is when and how often each is Active.

## The Challenge

Our future challenge, to repeat, is to determine how to build a viable force—one that can refocus, reconstitute, and recapitalize

forces while remaining operationally engaged, without exhausting people or resources. This concept recognizes that we have evolved past original Total Force thinking. We are no longer talking about sustaining a peacetime garrisoned force, as then-DOD Secretary Melvin Laird first envisioned in 1970. Instead, we are talking about a force that needs to organize and fight with a shared mission and purpose. In the Air Force Reserve, we call this “One Air Force, Same Fight.”

As we move to this next horizon, we should look to a time when we can put the term *Total Force* to rest, not because it is a bad thing, but because it will have served its purpose and it is time to move on. Right now this term is so ingrained in policy and doctrine that it is difficult to remember that it was first imposed on the Services by civilian leadership within DOD to overcome biases regarding component programming and budgeting.<sup>1</sup>

Secretary Laird used the term *Total Force* because, at the time, we tended to view the Guard and Reserve Components as if they were from a different planet than the Regular Component. In the Air Force, we would say “the Air Force, and the Air Guard and the Reserve” as if the Guard and Reserve were not part of the Air Force.

The term *Total Force* made the Services and DOD consider all components together when making planning and programming decisions. It put us on the same planet and tried to move us toward a better planned and programmatically integrated force. In regard to the Air Force, we have moved beyond planning integration and are well into operational integration at all levels, and our programs are as integrated as allowed by law. In short, we are well on our way to becoming *one Air Force*.

## Uniqueness Is Strength

For us, understanding that we are all one Air Force does not mean we ignore the unique and vital distinctions of each component’s identity. Like three strands woven together to make a stronger cable, the uniqueness of the various components makes the Air Force stronger than any of its parts.

The Reserve and Guard are distinct from the Regular Component because their members have civilian occupations, which are an important source of their members’ financial support in addition to their military careers. The Air National Guard has a purpose and identity separate from the Air Force as defined in each state mission. It is the dual purpose of the Guard that gives it the flexibility to perform

*the term Total Force made the Services and DOD consider all components together when making planning and programming decisions*

both state and Federal missions—resulting in a uniquely prepared force that effectively serves both governors and the President.

Unlike the Guard, however, members of the Reserve only have the same mission as the Regular Component: to deliver sovereign options for the defense of the United States and its global interests—to fly and fight in air, space, and cyberspace. This alignment provides for participation opportunities unique to the Air Force Reserve, such as individual mobilization augmentees, who are assigned to the Regular Component.

The mission of Air Force Reservists under Title 10 (the Federal law that authorizes the Armed Forces) is the same as the Regular Component. This alignment with the Regular Component opens the door to a variety of “associate” options that allow the Regular and Reserve Components to work together in cre-

Air Force Reserve is increasingly becoming an integrated operational force adopting the warrior ethos



U.S. Air Force

ative and effective ways. Practically any combination of Regular and Reserve Component force alignment is now possible—given the resources and time to organize them.

The Regular Component is also unique in that its members are on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Members of the Regular Component remain the backbone of our professional Air Force, providing a central focal point for performing Air Force missions and operating and sustaining the air expeditionary force. Moreover, they are citizen-Airmen, too. Many are active in their communities. Many of their family members have civilian employers, and many Regular Component families rely on their communities for support and income. For the Air Force Reserve, then, the future is best and brightest when we see ourselves as vital partners banded together into one Service performing the same mission as the rest of the Air Force. This force by its very nature is a more operational force than initially envisioned by Secretary Laird.

The idea of “one Service” with the same mission is important. We have worked extremely hard in the Air Force Reserve over a number of years to be good partners in the Air Force. All of us—officer and enlisted, traditional Reservists, Air Reserve technicians, Active Guard and Reserves, and those of us who were recalled to Active duty—are part of the same Air Force.

Last year, the Air Force Reserve published a vision of the future and a plan to achieve it. We call that vision “One Air Force, Same Fight—An Unrivaled Wingman.” One of the responsibilities of Unrivaled Wingmen is that they cannot be Airmen just part of the time. We believe they are *always* Airmen in the U.S. Air Force.

### Tradition of Operational Service

Over the years, the Air Force has also made big changes in how it uses its Reserve Components. We are an operational Air Force Reserve today compared to the past. When we began almost 60 years ago, and for the next 40 years, we were seen as a strategic Reserve. For almost 20 years now, we have been an operational Reserve. We still have a strategic component because we could all be mobilized. On the whole, however, we are an operational force—one used every day.

The Air Force Reserve is relied on in everything the Air Force does. This does not mean 100 percent of us are engaged all the time. But daily there are thousands of Reserv-

ists involved in air mobility, strategic airlift, tactical airlift, air refueling, special operations, pilot training, advanced flying training, space operations, air operations centers, airborne warning and control systems, command and control, fighters, bombers, rescue operations, and weather operations—to name just some of our missions.

We probably have the most diverse

*one of the responsibilities of Unrivaled Wingmen is that they cannot be Airmen just part of the time*

major command in the Air Force when it comes to missions. Every part of the Service needs us frequently. As a result, we are not only training 1 weekend a month, 2 weeks a year. Members of the Air Force Reserve are out there every day performing a significant part of the Air Force mission.

The Air Force has developed the expeditionary air force model for training, deploying, and presenting air forces to the combatant commanders, and we have been using it successfully for several years now. The Air Force Reserve is a vital part of that force, and we are proud of that. Since September 11, 2001, more than 60 percent of Air Force Reservists have been deployed as volunteers or under mobilization authority. By *deployed*, we mean serving away from home. Some of these people have been mobilized for periods of 1 to 2 years, yet

our retention and recruiting numbers remain high. We participate because we are needed, and our Airmen are doing fabulous work.

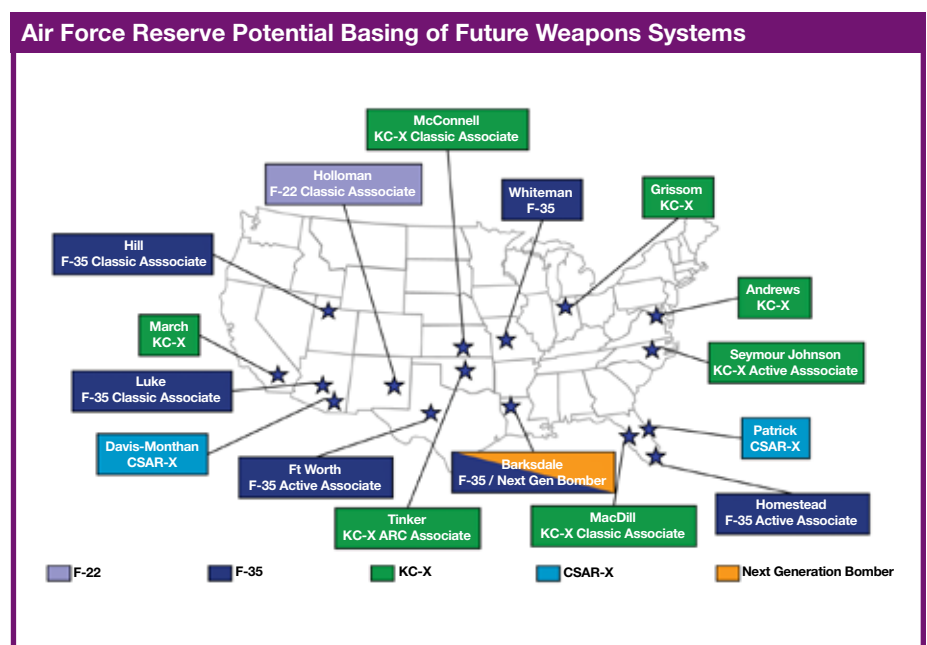
Because of our success in sustaining daily operations, along with our superb performance in the air expeditionary force and the war on terror, General Moseley is giving us more opportunities to continue participating in daily operational missions. The Air Force refers to this as Total Force integration (TFI).

### Increased Integration

During a recent ceremony at Maxwell Air Force Base, General Moseley announced additional TFI initiatives, which are part of efforts to unite over 680,000 men and women who comprise the Regular Air Force, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, and civilians into a *seamless* force. These included plans for Active associations and community basing with units around the country, such as:

- 169<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing, McEntire Joint National Guard Base, South Carolina, fully manned by Spring 2008 (Air National Guard)
- 482<sup>d</sup> Fighter Wing, Homestead Air Reserve Base, Florida (Air Force Reserve)
- 301<sup>st</sup> Fighter Wing, Naval Air Station Fort Worth Joint Reserve Base, Texas (Air Force Reserve)
- 158<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing, Burlington, Vermont (Air National Guard).

Under these Active associations, the Reserve and Guard units will continue to have



Source: *One Air Force, Same Fight—An Unrivaled Wingman*

principal responsibility for the unit's fighters, but the wing will also incorporate Regular Component Airmen to serve side by side with their Reserve and Guard counterparts.

In Vermont, for instance, the Air Force plans to expand the community basing effort. In the city of Burlington, Regular Component Airmen are stationed at an Air National Guard location without traditional support functions provided on a military installation, such as housing, medical care, a commissary, or a military exchange. Instead, provisions are made so that Airmen can access these services in the local community, integrating the Airmen into the populace they have sworn to defend. This is a move from the traditional garrisoned force to one living and working in a community in the same way that the Guard and Reserve have from the beginning.

Also, to enhance seamless training among its components, the Air Force has consolidated all Air Force Reserve Command commissioning programs with the officer training school at Maxwell Air Force Base.

General Moseley has said that these recent actions will help ensure the Air Force's ability to continue fulfilling its mission to defend the country. He added, "Our efforts to revolutionize

our service are critical to forging an Air Force with the capability and capacity to dominate all its war fighting domains across the spectrum of 21<sup>st</sup> century conflict."<sup>2</sup> These recent decisions mean more associations in the future with the Regular Component and the Guard. This is not a passing trend; it is a fact of life.

### A Force in Being

These recent announcements reflect the latest in decades of Total Force evolution. In 1970, Secretary Laird first articulated the original concept, which was based on the assumption that lower peacetime sustainment costs of Reserve Component units can result in a larger Total Force for a given budget. Secretary Laird intended to produce a maximum Total Force capability through an optimum mix of Regular and Reserve forces in the context of a primarily peacetime garrisoned force. The waypoints below articulated in the 1970 memo constituted our first detailed Total Force navigational map. They were intended to:

- strengthen and improve the readiness, reliability, and timely responsiveness of the combat and combat support units of the Guard and Reserve and individuals in the selected Reserve

- support and maintain minimum average trained strengths of the selected Reserve as mandated by Congress

- provide and maintain combat standard equipment for Guard and Reserve units in the necessary quantities

- provide necessary controls to identify resources committed for Guard and Reserve logistic support through the planning, programming, budgeting, procurement, and distribution cycle

- implement the approved 10-year construction programs for the Guard and Reserve subject to their accommodation within approved tables of allowance, giving priority to facilities that will provide the greatest improvement in readiness levels

- provide adequate support of individual and unit Reserve training programs

*Secretary Laird intended to produce a maximum Total Force capability through an optimum mix of Regular and Reserve forces in the context of a primarily peacetime garrisoned force*



C-17 Globemasters await de-icing on flightline

U.S. Air Force (Abner Guzman)

- provide manning levels for technicians and training and administration Reserve support personnel equal to full authorization levels

- program adequate resources and establish necessary priorities to achieve readiness levels required by appropriate guidance documents as rapidly as possible.

In effect, the Total Force concept was a central feature of the national security strategy of “realistic deterrence.” Its objective was to maintain the selected Reserve of the National Guard and Reserve as a “force in being,” able to deploy rapidly and to operate beside Regular Component units.<sup>3</sup> As a result of this approach, the Air Force, along with other Services, began to consider better ways to organize, train, and equip their Reserve Components.

Since Secretary Laird’s first pronouncements, Total Force policy development has steadily evolved from sustaining a large peacetime garrisoned force comprised of separate components to deployable and integrated Reserve Component forces performing sustained operations every day.

### “Homogenous Whole” Policy

The shift toward increased integration began in earnest in 1973, when then-Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger<sup>4</sup> further institutionalized Laird’s thinking by stating that Total Force was no longer a concept; it was a policy that required action by DOD and the Services. The objective of the policy was to integrate the Regular, Guard, and Reserve forces into a “homogeneous whole.” The waypoints that Secretary Schlesinger established to achieve this whole stated that the Services should:

- move as much postmobilization administration as possible to the premobilization period and streamline all remaining postmobilization administrative and training activities

- produce selected Reserve units that meet readiness standards required for wartime contingencies

- emphasize and strengthen selected Reserve management.

By shifting the Total Force from a concept to a policy, Schlesinger forced the Services to rethink how they programmed and budgeted for Reserve Component missions. In a 1982 memo,<sup>5</sup> Secretary Caspar

Weinberger identified additional planning and programming guidance to achieve Total Force goals, including the ideas that the current imbalance of old and new equipment within and between the Regular, Guard, and Reserve Components must be rectified to produce a force that is compatible, responsive, and sustainable throughout *all* components; and a long-range planning goal must be set to equip all units within the Regular, Reserve, and Guard Components to their full wartime levels.

ning for future requirements, having flexibility in training and employing Reservists, and programming the funding to meet these requirements, including capitalizing on already funded training.

### Era of “Reserve Dependence”

By the time Secretary William Cohen released his Total Force memo in 1997,<sup>7</sup> policymakers were recognizing the increasing reliance on Reserve Components and requesting that DOD leaders address any remaining barriers to achieving a fully integrated force.

C-17 practices evasive maneuvers during simulated missile attack



U.S. Air Force (Rick Bloom)

The shift toward a more operationally centered Reserve continued as the Reserve Components increased their readiness levels and the Cold War drew to a close. In 1995, budget realities led Defense Secretary William Perry to recognize that increased reliance on the Reserve Components “is prudent and necessary in future policy, planning, and budget decisions.”<sup>6</sup> In doing so, he set waypoints that directed the Services to establish Total Force objectives that would further operationalize the Reserve

Secretary Cohen stated, “By integration I mean the conditions of readiness and trust needed for the leadership at all levels to have well-justified confidence that Reserve Component units are trained and equipped to serve as an effective part of the joint and combined force within whatever timelines are set for the unit—in peace and war.” He went on to state that the goal was a seamless Total Force that provides the President and Secretary of Defense the flexibility and interoperability necessary for the full range of military operations.

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Components to capitalize on their capabilities to accomplish operational requirements while maintaining their mission readiness for overseas and domestic operations, and to increase integration by identifying and plan-

Secretary Cohen underscored this idea in his concluding statement: “We cannot achieve this as separate components.” He further acknowledged the degree of dependence on Reserve Component support when

he stated, “Today, we cannot go to war, enforce peace agreements or participate in humanitarian missions without calling on Guard and Reserve forces.”

Secretary Cohen articulated four main areas that remain relevant today to achieving a seamless force:

- Quality of life programs are needed to recruit and retain Reserve Component forces. We must work together to address employer concerns and provide family support programs.

- Our laws, policies, systems, structures, and processes must support a Total Force.

- We must simplify our ability to employ Reserve Component forces when and where needed.

- Commanders need personnel, readiness, training, equipment, maintenance, and construction resources for flexibility and interoperability in joint and combined operations.

As the Services moved to develop more seamless forces, the apparent reliance on Reserve Component members of the selected Reserve grew to such a level of dependence that the department could no longer engage in any significant operational mission without first mobilizing members of the Reserve Components.

To achieve a disciplined force structure, Secretary Rumsfeld set the following goals that the Services are still working toward achieving:

- configure the size and organizational structure of Regular and Reserve forces to reduce need for involuntary mobilization of the Guard and Reserve

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*our course direction is still good, but we probably need a new destination to keep us better focused on the future*

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- eliminate the need for involuntary mobilization during the first 15 days of a rapid response operation or for any alerts to mobilize prior to operation

- structure forces to limit involuntary mobilization to not more than 1 year every 6 years

- establish a more rigorous process for reviewing joint force requirements to improve timely notice of mobilization

- make the mobilization and demobilization processes more efficient and give Reservists meaningful tasks and work for which alternative manpower is not available, retaining them on Active duty only as long as

probably long lasting. In essence, it has become our new destination and should be acknowledged as such.

So what does the future hold for the Air Force Reserve, since we have been integrating operationally for 39 years? We are a leader in force integration—we are proud of it, and it has done good things for the Air Force as well as for the Air Force Reserve. Our performance is good and our future is bright, so it is only natural to prepare for and plan where we are going next.

In short, we think our course direction is still good, but we probably need a new destination to keep us better focused on the future. In reaching many of the objectives outlined above, we are fast approaching—and for some services, have already passed—the original destination of Total Force planning.

### Outlining a More Viable Force

We need a new destination based on the concept of an operationally centered Reserve Component that maintains the ability to surge but is more viable as an operational force. We need one that is more unified in nature. We need a more viable force—one capable of refocusing, reconstituting, and recapitalizing without exhausting its people or its resources while sustaining operations.

To realize and sustain an operationally centered Reserve Component, we must have a framework for a broad review of initiatives and planning guidelines; ensure that we can provide the capabilities that satisfy the requirements of the combatant commanders; and align with DOD rebalancing guidance, which says that the Services should structure their forces to limit involuntary mobilization to no more than 1 year every 6 years.<sup>10</sup>

For the Air Force, an operational Reserve force is predominantly a part-time force, trained to the same readiness standards as the Regular Component, with a portion of the force performing missions and engaged at all times. Members of this operational force are readily available to be voluntarily placed on Active duty to support daily operations or used as a surge capacity to conduct operational missions whenever there are not enough trained and ready units or individuals in the Regular Component.

Again, operational force policy should begin with the recognition that the term *Active duty* is no longer the purview of the Regular Component; thousands of Air Force Reservists are on Active duty every day. Our



Air Force Reserve supports Army paratroopers in Northern Iraq

U.S. Air Force

By 2003, the shift from reliance to dependence was so significant that then–Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said that the time had come when DOD needed to “promote judicious and prudent use of the Reserve Components with force rebalancing initiatives that reduce strain through the efficient application of manpower and technological solutions based on a disciplined force requirements process.”<sup>8</sup>

absolutely necessary.

Today, at both DOD and Service levels, we are actively working to shift our planning and programming efforts from sustaining a peacetime garrisoned force, as originally envisioned by Secretary Laird, to a more operationally centered Reserve force.<sup>9</sup> Given today’s budgets and national security commitments, this shift is both necessary and prudent—and

challenge is to determine how and when Reservists can best perform Active duty while protecting the individual Reservist and the voluntary nature of Reserve service. To succeed, we must improve our ability to forecast, plan, and program participation to produce more assured access to volunteers than our current practices allow.

Through this synergy of assurance, we will be able to preposition our Reserve force for future mission requirements and reduce the need for activating Reservists without their consent. The Air Force has already achieved considerable success in crafting its organizational constructs to fully support an operational Reserve through its current

*any discussion of how we operationalize our forces must be part of a larger discussion of a viable force*

force integration policies. To build on this success, an operationally engaged Reserve force policy should:

- define the inherent attributes of a volunteer operational force to ensure that Air Force Reserve force management policies, organizational constructs, and participation models support volunteer operational force participation
- identify and remove existing barriers to volunteer participation that are breaking or impeding the ability to provide volunteers to fight the war on terror, increase Reserve participation in the air and space expeditionary force, and provide more contingency support
- embrace study, experimentation, and testing in areas where demand for Reserve participation is either outpacing pre-9/11 expectations or is exceeding the ability to perform the mission exclusively with volunteers

- develop and implement volunteerism concepts that include future participation requirements scheduled in advance for multiple-year periods to accommodate Reservists and their civilian employers

- address the four-way relationship that protects the Airman, maintains family support, provides a framework for employer support and involvement, and meets Air Force needs to satisfy growing combatant commander requirements

- identify and develop tailored incentives, when needed, to maximize volunteerism in areas where demand is exceeding the ability to perform a mission exclusively with volunteers

- develop and utilize tools that will accurately forecast a threshold of maximum voluntary participation efforts, so that we can predict when we will need to resort to activation without member consent

- comprehensively review the existing full-time support force development system

U.S. Air Force (Daniel St. Pierre)



Reservists unload Army emergency response equipment at March Air Reserve Base to assist in fighting California wildfires

and adopt, expand, and utilize the best construct to support an operational Reserve.

### Sustaining Volunteerism

Our initial viable force goal for attaining an operationally engaged Reserve should be sustaining operational support with volunteers at or near the levels of participation we have provided the Air Force and its joint partners for the past 3 years of near steady-state operations through both volunteerism and mobilization. We should also focus special attention on advocating and implementing authorities, policies, and practices that improve our component's capability to provide greater certainty in voluntary participation levels across fiscal years.

Planning and implementing our operational force and manpower policies will be based on the two main tenets of Reserve service. First and foremost, we are a *volunteer* force. Second, we are *not* a full-time force. We should keep those two tenets in hand along with the following planning guidelines as we develop, implement, and sustain new Reserve operational force policies. These policies should:

- ensure that our selected Reserve is ready to go to the fight within 72 hours of mobilization notification or sooner, and explore operationalizing all the other Reserve subcomponents; this requires fundamentally rethinking how the Air Force resources, organizes, trains, equips, and accesses individuals not in the selected Reserve

- retain the same training and equipping standards in the selected Reserve as in the Regular Component

- ensure that voluntary participation contracts among Reservists, DOD, and Reservists' employers protect the individual Reservist and ensure the volunteer nature of their service

- follow personnel management policies that enable and identify the force most suited to meet mission requirements, along with personnel and information management systems that allow varying levels of participation and seamless duty status changes

- ensure that utilization policies recognize that current practices of a 15- to 18-month activation of Airmen without their consent may not be sustainable in the long run for Servicemembers, their families, or their employers.

Clearly the steps outlined above are specific to the Air Force, but many of the planning

objectives should resonate beyond. As each Service defines the path for making its Reserve Component more operational, it must do so in the larger context of a force policy that applies to the entire Department of Defense—a viable force policy. Therefore, any discussion of how we operationalize our forces must be part of a larger discussion of a viable force.

There are three fundamental reasons why DOD needs a viable force policy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century:

- Today's military must be able to sustain and reconstitute while engaged in multiple cyclic operations lasting for several years, without exhausting its people or resources.

- Shifting budget priorities over time combined with higher operating costs to meet growing national security commitments at home and abroad have yielded a smaller standing force.

- Force downsizing has created a dependence on the Reserve Component's participation to conduct sustained daily operations.

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### *every day thousands of Air Force Reservists and Air National Guardsmen are on Active duty performing Air Force missions*

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With that in mind, we provide some ideas on a way ahead. Unlike the operational waypoints outlined above, the waypoints below may apply broadly to other Services and should be factored in when considering any new viable force policy. To achieve a fully viable force, we must first embrace the following principles:

- Viable force policy is one for all components, not only the Reserve Components. Building a viable force requires maximizing capabilities regardless of assigned component.

- Even in an all-volunteer force, there must remain assured access to the Reserve Components for operational and surge participation that is consistent with Reserve service.

- Clear service expectations are imperative for all members whether we are at peace or war—and whether the war is long or short.

- The term *Active duty* is no longer the purview of the Regular Component; thousands of Reserve and Guard members are on Active duty every day.

- The whole force mobilizes and the whole force surges; mobilization and surge capabilities are not the sole responsibility of the Reserve Components.

- Viable force planning and programming require a crystal-clear understanding of the purpose and best value of every component: Regular, Reserve, Guard, and civilian.

- Individual participation expectations must be consistent with force planning constructs to ensure that actual participation meets the combatant commander's expectations.

The need for an operationally engaged force requires that the Services execute realistic programming decisions based on sound planning guidelines. These include:

- instituting measurable force policies that maximize return on investment while mitigating the risks inherent in the current global security environment

- building a force that can rapidly rebalance capabilities within Service components as well as between Services, when necessary

- placing capabilities in the Reserve Component whenever their participation is cost effective and access is assured, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of the force

- adjusting incentives to reward participation and provide supplemental compensation to mitigate mandatory service beyond prescribed DOD and Service expectations

- ensuring that DOD can commence a rapid response to any threat worldwide without first resorting to unexpected Reserve mobilization.

To ensure that force policy guidance is clearly understood at all levels of planning, key terms need to be clarified and redefined:

*Viable force:* A force capable of refocusing, reconstituting, and recapitalizing without exhausting its people or its resources, while remaining engaged in the full spectrum of operations across all domains.

*Reserve operational force:* An Air Force Reserve operational force is predominantly a part-time force, trained to the same readiness standards as the Regular Component, a portion of which is performing the mission and engaged at all times. Members of this force are readily available to be voluntarily placed on Active duty in support of daily operations or used as a surge capacity to conduct missions whenever there



are not enough trained and ready units or individuals in the Regular Component.

*Assured access:* When the Services plan for Reserve Component participation consistent with Reserve service, combatant commanders will be supported as planned.

*Integration:* Integration refers to the conditions of readiness and trust necessary for leadership at all levels to have confidence that Reserve Component units are trained and equipped to serve as an effective part of the joint and combined force within whatever timelines are set for the unit or individuals in peace and in war.

Implementing all of the above will not be easy. It requires cross-component solutions. Unlike previous attempts at Total Force solutions that were applied to all components or that considered all Service components, cross-component solutions necessitate involving all components of the Air Force as integral parts of designing implementations for these changes.

The Air Force has already achieved many of the goals outlined in past and present Total Force policies. As a Service we remain on the cutting edge of Total Force integration. Every day thousands of Air Force Reservists and Air National Guardsmen are on Active duty performing Air Force missions—working side by side with, following, and leading their Regular Component counterparts.

We think many of the planning and programming considerations for a viable force based on the concepts outlined above are relevant to other Services and may assist them as they move to their next horizon.

Because the Air Force is so well integrated across its components, we are already looking ahead to our next horizon of building a viable force capable of refocusing, reconstituting, and recapitalizing without exhausting its people or its resources, while remaining engaged in the full spectrum of operations across all domains.

In the future, these discussions need to include more than Reservists talking to Reservists. Real solutions to real force integration challenges are best addressed at the Service level with full participation of all components and with full recognition of the unique capabilities each component brings to the fight.

Together the Services can reach the next horizon if we keep focused on policies that make us not only more integrated but also a more viable force. **JFQ**

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Melvin R. Laird, “Annual Report of the Secretary of Defense on Reserve Forces for Fiscal Year 1971,” memorandum, February 26, 1972.

<sup>2</sup> T. Michael Moseley, speech delivered at Maxwell Air Force Base, September 13, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Laird.

<sup>4</sup> James R. Schlesinger, “Readiness of the Selected Reserve,” memorandum, August 23, 1973.

<sup>5</sup> Caspar W. Weinberger, “Equipment Shortages in the Guard and Reserve,” memorandum, June 21, 1982.

<sup>6</sup> William J. Perry, “Increased Use of Reserve Forces in Total Force Missions,” memorandum, April 7, 1999.

<sup>7</sup> William S. Cohen, “Integration of the Reserve and Active Components,” memorandum, September 4, 1997.

<sup>8</sup> Donald H. Rumsfeld, “Rebalancing Forces,” memorandum, July 9, 2003.

<sup>9</sup> We use the term *operationally centered* to contrast the current participation paradigm with the Cold War “train to be ready for the big one” mindset that controlled Reserve expectations during the 1980s and 1990s. An operationally centered Reserve is still capable of surging, but it assumes significantly more Reserve forces are on Active duty every day than during the Cold War period.

<sup>10</sup> Rumsfeld.



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