

Rebuilding America's Reserves

by *Phillip Carter*

America's military reserves¹ face unprecedented strains. These vital components of our national security, consisting of citizen soldiers who deploy for crises ranging from domestic natural disasters to overseas combat, have been misused and overstretched by an administration that failed to plan adequately for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. As a result, the National Guard and Reserve are increasingly unable to carry out their core missions.

The overuse of these resources in Iraq and Afghanistan has created a great strategic risk for the United States, with consequences that can be felt from Kandahar to Kansas. Simply put, we have nothing left in reserve—nothing with which to respond abroad to threats from our enemies, and only exhausted and ill-equipped troops at home for governors to call upon during state-level emergencies like this year's tornadoes and wildfires.

More than 500,000 reservists have been mobilized and deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, costing billions of dollars² and resulting in depletion of personnel, including recruitment and retention problems. Equipment has been taken from reserve units and sent overseas, leaving stateside units without the gear they need to carry out their varied responsibilities.

Every National Guard combat brigade has deployed at least once. Many specialty units—such as military police, civil affairs and medical units—have deployed multiple times since Sept. 11, 2001. Other reserve units have been shattered entirely, their members allocated to other units. If mobilized today and asked to deploy on a moment's notice to Korea or some domestic contingency, America's reserves could not answer the call.³

The overstretch of the reserves—and particularly of the National Guard—raises profound questions about whether our military can continue its operations in Iraq and meet its most basic function of providing for America's common defense.⁴ In broad-brush terms, President Bush's wars have made America less safe by spending our strategic reserve—leaving

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the cupboard bare for contingencies such as North Korea, Iran, Darfur, or homeland-security response at home.

Between December 2005 and November 2006, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) conducted a major study of National Guard readiness in four states—California, Florida, New Jersey, and West Virginia—to gauge how current operations were affecting the Guard’s readiness to execute its domestic mission.⁵ The GAO study assessed readiness holistically, looking at objective manpower and equipment statistics, as well as subjective measures of readiness like commanders’ evaluations of their units.

According to the GAO, 20 states and territories said they had an “inadequate capability” to execute 10 core domestic-security missions. The states’ largest area of concern was their readiness to respond to a chemical, biological, nuclear, radiological or high-yield explosive device.

On July 30, 2007, Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius addressed the issue in a speech to the Democratic Leadership Council, saying of the National Guard and Reserve:

[W]e have the situation where they are called upon to be both first responders in the homeland but also part of the troops on the ground overseas, and at one point...as many as 40 percent of the troops were National Guard and Army Reserves. They don’t have the equipment, they don’t have the supplies, they don’t have the training they need, and that is an outrage that we should again insist has to be changed. It leaves you less secure at home and it leaves them ill-equipped to do the job that they have volunteered and have stepped up and are willing to do.

But as Democrats, that is a safety and security issue we have to take enormously seriously. And when the terrible tornado swept through our town of Greensburg, Kansas, it gave me an opportunity to repeat a message that I have been talking about for two years, which is that we have to insist that the equipment be put back on the ground at home. It’s a homeland-security crisis—(applause)—and we shouldn’t tolerate it anymore.

America cannot wait until the next terrorist attack or natural disaster, nor the next major war, to respond to this crisis. We must act now. The mishandling of the reserves represents a breach of faith and a misallocation of crucial strategic assets, including military manpower and equipment. The next administration must restore the National Guard and Reserve to their proper place in the American military, and this paper offers four broad policy prescriptions to do just that:

1. Restore the “strategic” reserve role.

The shift for America’s reserves from a “strategic” reserve to an “operational” force has been presented to Congress and the people as a fait accompli, but in reality this marks a radical shift in mission, one that could impede our long-term readiness. In truth, the nation can ill-afford to do without a strategic reserve of ground forces. This diminution of the strategic reserve must be addressed.

2. Address the military’s overall lack of sufficient manpower.

Much of the difficulty facing the Guard and Reserve derives from a larger problem: The nation does not have enough active-duty forces to fulfill its global

obligations. The Pentagon has made ends meet in Iraq and Afghanistan only by mobilizing hundreds of thousands of reservists. Therefore, shoring up our active-duty forces is one of the most obvious ways to relieve the strain on the Guard and Reserve.

3. Give our volunteers the equipment they need. If called on today to fight overseas or respond to an emergency in an American city, the reserves would have to scrape together trucks, radios, and other critical gear to do their mission because so much of their equipment is overseas or missing entirely. It is unconscionable for a wealthy superpower to deny its volunteer soldiers the tools they need to do their job and to let its citizens suffer for lack of emergency-response equipment. It is time for us serve those who serve us by giving them the equipment they require.

4. Expand the National Guard and Reserve by broadening opportunities for Americans to volunteer—and by ensuring that the nation provides the proper care and benefits for its veterans. America should consider expanding opportunities for citizen service, both military and civilian. Today's reservists serve shoulder-to-shoulder with their active-duty brethren, but they do not receive equal benefits for their service, and they must face the additional challenge of reintegrating into their civilian jobs and communities. America can—and should—do more for these citizen soldiers.

The “Total Force” Concept

How did America's reserves get to where they are today, stretched by two medium-sized conflicts and unable to respond at home or abroad? Like so many aspects of our modern military, the reasons for the current situation can be traced to the hard lessons of the Vietnam War.

In the wake of that debacle, Army Chief of Staff Creighton Abrams restructured the Army Reserve and National Guard. Abrams believed that the Johnson and Nixon administrations had lost the Vietnam War partly because they failed to mobilize the nation—opting to fight that war more or less exclusively with active-duty forces, without any large-scale reserve mobilizations. After the war, Abrams shifted large parts of the Army's support structure into the reserves in a way that would mandate their callup for any future wars. This turned the reserves into a kind of political tripwire that would require national mobilization any time a president decided to commit U.S. troops to combat.⁶ The Pentagon came to call this distribution of forces the “total force” concept, counting active, Reserve and Guard troops as part of the total manpower it could call on to fight America's wars.⁷

Gen. Abrams' plan worked—perhaps too well. Reserve units deployed for the first Gulf War and participated as combat and support troops. During the peacekeeping missions of the 1990s in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia and Kosovo, reservists played a significant role, largely because these missions relied heavily on specialties like civil affairs and military police, which were concentrated in the reserves.

Though small by today's standards, these deployments taxed the military force structure, which had remained organized for conventional war in Central Europe, even though the Cold War had come to an end. The U.S. armed forces were not yet configured for the new era of smaller expeditionary deployments.⁸ This awkward transition phase during the 1990s affected the reserves the most, because of their disproportionately large role in these specialty missions. Ironically, when George W. Bush was running for president in 2000, he sharply criticized these “nation-building”

deployments because they degraded the readiness of two Army divisions.⁹

In the current war in Iraq, reservists initially played a modest supporting role. This was largely because Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld limited the number of troops there to keep the invasion force light, and refused to deploy large numbers of support troops to build a lasting infrastructure in Iraq.¹⁰ The reservist role grew, however, as the nature of the mission changed from invasion to counterinsurgency. During the second rotation in Iraq, in 2004-2005, reservists constituted 45 percent of the total uniformed strength in Iraq at one point. This share dropped during 2006 and 2007, but remains high. Today, more than 80,000 Army Reserve, National Guard and Marine Corps Reserve troops serve on active duty—mostly in Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan.¹¹ As the “surge” stretches on, there are indications that even more reservists will be called up, as the Army and Marine Corps stretch to make ends meet for a mission that has seen every active-duty brigade deployed at least twice.¹²

Senior Army leaders describe this use of the reserves as part of a larger paradigm shift. America’s weekend warriors are no longer a “strategic” reserve to be husbanded carefully and used only in time of great national crisis. Today, they represent an “operational” force to be used on a regular, recurring basis to augment and supplement the active-duty force.¹³

This shift has radically altered the social contract of the reserves. Soldiers used to join expecting to serve one weekend a month, plus two weeks a year for annual training, believing they would only be called up for “the big one.”

Now, reserve leaders tell their troops they can expect to be mobilized one year out of every five, and more frequently in times of crisis like today. Combat mobilizations often last 18 months—12

months with “boots on the ground” in Iraq, plus three to five months of pre-deployment training and leave at the tour’s end.¹⁴ The effects of this change on soldiers, families, civilian employers, and communities cannot be overstated.

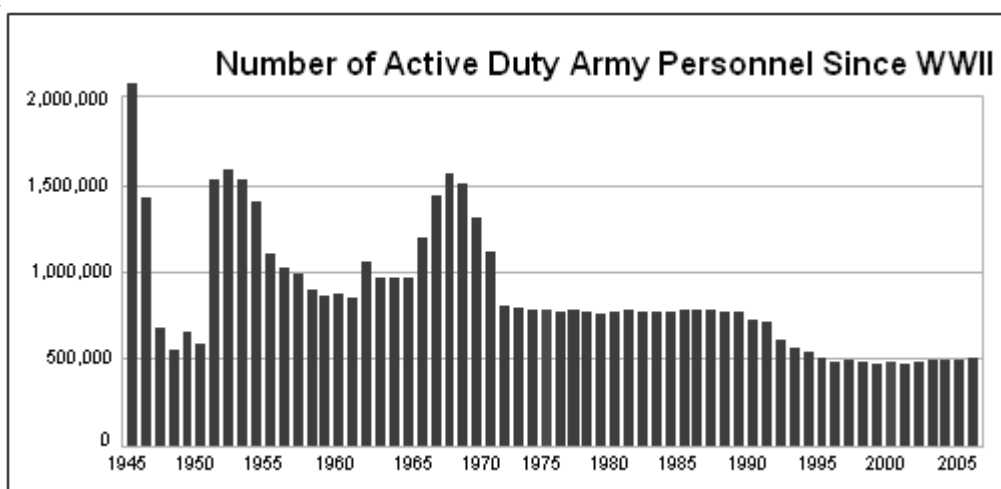
We need to restore the “strategic” reserve role of the National Guard and Reserve, and break the still-new habit of seeing these entities as just another part of our regular “operational” forces. The following policies would allow us to do just that:

- ❑ Expand the Army Reserve and National Guard by 75,000 to 100,000 members to create the end-strength required for an additional corps¹⁵ that would serve as America’s strategic ground-force reserve;
- ❑ Carve out specific reserve units to serve as the nation’s strategic reserve on a rotating or permanent basis and link this designation to Army deployment and resourcing decisions. The callup and deployment of this reserve should require explicit congressional action or notification;¹⁶
- ❑ Rebalance the reserve force structure to place more critical support functions (such as military police, civil affairs and logistics) in the active force, balancing the allocation of combat brigades between the state National Guard and federal Army Reserve;
- ❑ Require the Pentagon to report reserve readiness for both its wartime and domestic response missions; and
- ❑ Draft a Strategic Homeland Security Plan that clearly establishes the Defense Department’s role in homeland security—and designates specific units and agencies to carry out this mission.

The Root of the Problem: A Manpower Crisis in the Active-Duty Force

It is impossible to address the present strains on the National Guard and Reserve without understanding the manpower crisis facing our active-duty forces. After all, the primary reason for the increased callup of Guard and Reserve units is the relative lack of available active-duty troops. It is worth taking a moment to look at the historical roots and present scope of the active-duty shortage.

Following the first Gulf War, the first Bush administration ordered a reduction in Army force structure to realize a “peace dividend” from the Cold War’s end, cutting the number of Army divisions¹⁷ from 18 to 10. The graph below depicts the overall end strength of the Army since World War II.



During America’s major wars of the past 60 years—World War II, Korea, and Vietnam—Army end-strength increased to meet demand. It remained high during the final phase of the Cold War. After the Gulf War cuts, however, it dropped to approximately 500,000 troops, where it has remained despite operational demands from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

To a large extent, the Army has made ends meet with a smaller force by keeping 50,000 to 160,000 reservists on active duty for the six years since September 11—first for homeland-security missions, now for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Pentagon has also bridged the gap by outsourcing a wide array of defense functions, from major construction work to diplomatic security, deploying hundreds of thousands of contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan to do jobs that would have been done by soldiers in previous wars.¹⁸

Active-duty recruiting and retention have suffered greatly as the war in Iraq has dragged on. The active-duty force has met its recruiting targets, but only by doubling advertising budgets,¹⁹ tripling recruiting bonuses, raising the maximum age for recruits to 42, quadrupling the number of “moral waivers”²⁰ allowed, changing medical

standards, reducing educational standards,²¹ and shrinking basic training. The service academies and ROTC programs have struggled to recruit officers as well.

The active-duty force has managed to retain personnel only by offering lucrative bonuses—as high as \$150,000 for special-operations troops—and postings that take the re-enlisting soldier out of the deployment

cycle.²² To retain junior and mid-level officers, the Army is offering a \$35,000 bonus or free graduate school.

Even with these incentives, the Army continues to hemorrhage officers. About 35 percent of the West Point class of 2000 opted to leave the Army when its obligation expired in 2005; 46 percent of the class of 2001 opted to leave the service in 2006; and 58 percent of the class of 2002 opted out at the same point in 2007.²³ These figures are mirrored by ROTC graduates and represent a 30-year high in attrition.

In 2006, the Army projected an officer shortage of nearly 3,000 for the following year. The most serious shortfall is among captains and majors with 11 years to 17 years of experience, who represent a crucial slice of present and future military leadership. The Army projected it would have just 82.6 percent of the majors it needed in 2007. Officer shortages in excess of 3,000 (out of a line-officer population of 52,000) annually are projected to persist through at least 2013.²⁴ A recent survey of officers leaving the Army found that 48 percent were leaving due to lengthy family separations, and 42.1 percent felt there were too many deployments.²⁵

Ripple Effects

The manpower crisis in the active force has begun to reverberate into the National Guard and Reserve. The Army National Guard has failed to meet its recruiting targets since 2005 by wider margins than any other service or component.²⁶ In 2005, the Army Reserve recruited 19,400 of its 22,175-soldier goal, and in 2006, it recruited 25,378 of its 25,500-soldier goal, but only by pouring resources into advertising and bonuses; doubling the number of recruiters; doubling or tripling bonuses; and reducing standards for new soldiers.²⁷ By January

2007, Army Reserve strength had dipped to 188,287, out of 205,000 authorized positions.

In certain critical ranks and specialties, the situation was far worse, with the Army Reserve reporting that it had just 58 percent of the Sergeants First Class (paygrade E7) it needed, 53 percent of its required captains, 74 percent of its required majors, and 65 percent of its required warrant officers.²⁸ The Individual Ready Reserve (IRR), the Army's third string of reservists who do not participate in regular training but who can be called up in a pinch, retains just 22,372 out of the 91,797 soldiers it counts as fit for overseas deployment.²⁹

These personnel shortages hurt the reserves' ability to defend the nation. Units with inadequate personnel must often integrate last-minute replacements³⁰ prior to deployment who are "cross-leveled" from other Reserve units, or from the IRR. When such units go to war, they require months of reconstitution and training in order to forge a cohesive, competent unit, often adding months to the total length of their mobilization. This cross-leveling further hurts units that remain stateside, often leaving them manned at levels of 50 percent and below, unable to fight or respond to domestic emergencies. Army Reserve leaders pledged to end this practice in early 2007 but remain unable to do so because of current demands for military manpower that have been exacerbated by the current surge in Iraq.

Empty Armories

The Iraq War has created a shortage not only of personnel, but of equipment—and here, too, the problems of the National Guard and Reserve are inextricably linked to those faced by the active-duty force.

Combat chews up equipment at an alarming rate. Battle damage from improvised

explosive devices and rocket-propelled grenades—along with the standard accidents and mishaps that occur when massive vehicles are driving at widely varying speeds along dangerous roads—has put thousands of Humvees, trucks, and armored vehicles permanently out of action. In Iraq and Afghanistan, soldiers are putting six to 10 times the mileage on their vehicles that they would during peacetime training operations. These vehicles require extensive maintenance to continue running, but many will reach the end of their service life long sooner than expected due to their extended use under combat conditions.

The military practice of using one large pool of equipment for operations in Iraq exacerbates matters, as trucks, machine guns, radios, and night-vision goggles are handed from one unit to the next, without time for rest or maintenance between rotations.³¹ And because the military has a finite quantity of up-armored Humvees, tactical radios, and other key items, it means that many stateside units lack the gear they need to train or be ready for a fight somewhere else. This problem is particularly acute in the Guard and Reserve, long the lowest priority for equipment and manpower readiness for the U.S. military.

On March 27, 2007, Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, told a Congressional committee that the Army National Guard had *only 40 percent of its required equipment on hand*, with an additional 11 percent of its equipment either deployed with units or left in theater for other units to use.³² This appalling equipment situation has hindered the Guard's ability to train for war, and seriously degraded its ability to respond to domestic emergencies like Hurricane Katrina, the Kansas tornadoes, or a future terrorist attack.

The GAO study mentioned earlier looked at the nation's stocks of "dual use" equipment

—gear identified by the Army and National Guard bureau as important for both warfighting and domestic response. As of November 2006, stateside Army National Guard forces nationwide had roughly 64 percent of the dual-use equipment they needed for their warfighting missions, though inventory levels varied widely by type of equipment.

Equipment levels also varied significantly by state for National Guard units, with aggregate equipment levels below 40 percent in New Mexico, Virginia, and the District of Columbia, and above 60 percent in Georgia and Colorado. For certain key dual-use items, the Guard had less than 15 percent of its authorized equipment. The items in short supply included urban secure radios (0 percent); GPS receivers (5 percent); satellite radio terminals (10 percent); and cargo Humvees (15 percent).

The Guard's precarious equipment situation has worsened considerably as the Iraq War has dragged on. In May 2004, the Army National Guard had transferred more than 35,000 pieces of equipment to ready units for deployment, a process similar to the "cross leveling" of personnel.³³ By July 2005, the number of equipment items transferred among Army National Guard units had grown to more than 101,000.³⁴

At the same time, the Guard reported that it had shortages of more than 80 percent for certain critical items needed for both warfighting and domestic response, including chemical warfare monitoring and decontamination equipment and night-vision goggles. By May 2005, the number of stateside National Guard units reporting that they had enough equipment to deploy had dropped from a pre-war level of 87 percent to just 59 percent. Senior National Guard officials estimated in September 2006 that National Guard units had less than 30

percent of their essential warfighting equipment.³⁵ And in March 2007, a Congressional commission reported that just 10 percent of Guard units were reporting themselves as “ready” for war, with 90 percent rating themselves as “not ready” because of shortfalls in equipment worth billions of dollars.³⁶

Between September 2001 and April 2005, the Army Reserve transferred 236,000 pieces of equipment worth about \$765 million to fill equipment shortages among deploying units, leaving stateside units short of individual soldier equipment, unit equipment, and critical items such as tactical radios.³⁷

Without this gear, Army Reserve and National Guard units face significant challenges if they are called upon to respond to any domestic or foreign crisis.³⁸

Then there is the problem of “stay behind” equipment—gear that the Army and Marine Corps have decided to leave in Iraq or Afghanistan, to be transferred between units as they rotate through combat.³⁹ In October 2005, the GAO reported that the Army National Guard had left 64,000 items of warfighting equipment overseas, valued at more than \$1.2 billion.⁴⁰ When the North Carolina Army National Guard’s 30th Brigade Combat Team came home in 2005, it had left 229 Humvees—73 percent of its pre-deployment inventory—back in Iraq for other units to use. Likewise, three Illinois National Guard units left nearly their entire inventory of Humvees in Iraq after their rotations ended. Although Pentagon policy requires the Defense Department to plan for the replacement of reserve equipment when it borrows it for active-duty units, Guard and Reserve units often go months or years before they see replacement equipment because of continuing demand for equipment in Iraq and Afghanistan.⁴¹

Before the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, the Army and Marine Corps planned to rely extensively on “pre-positioned” stocks of equipment around the world—large sets of gear stored on ships or in warehouses in places like Kuwait, Italy and South Korea. Reports from the Pentagon and GAO however, indicate that both the Army and Marines have drawn extensively on pre-positioned stocks to support operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Army has reportedly used almost all of its pre-positioned equipment in Kuwait and Qatar, as well as some stocks in Europe.⁴² The Marines have used both their Maritime Pre-Positioning Force stocks and their pre-positioned gear in Norway to support ongoing operations in Iraq.⁴³

Although the use of the pre-positioned equipment has allowed the Army and Marines to sustain operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, it has further worsened the overall military equipment situation.⁴⁴ By depleting these stocks, the Pentagon has assumed significant strategic risk, should another large-scale conflict break out.⁴⁵ Estimates of the cost to reset these pre-positioned stocks stretch into the tens of billions of dollars and grow with each additional year of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.⁴⁶ Until these stocks are replenished, the Army and Marines will continue to cannibalize stateside Guard and Reserve units for their equipment, further degrading these units’ readiness for war and domestic response.⁴⁷

In response to these problems, the Pentagon has requested more money from Congress to procure new equipment and rebuild damaged or old items. It has also signaled its intent to shift money from other areas to replenish the equipment stocks of the Guard and Reserve.⁴⁸ In addition, the Pentagon has announced a series of organizational changes for the National Guard terrorist attacks, disasters and other domestic emergencies.⁴⁹

Such pledges are a drop in the bucket, however, when compared to the actual costs incurred by the Reserve components in supporting this war. The Army has budgeted \$21 billion for fiscal years 2005 to 2011 to modernize the Army National Guard and its equipment inventory. Most of these funds, however, are aimed at facilitating the Guard's conversion to modular combat brigades⁵⁰ like the active-duty force, and may not provide a great deal of additional domestic-response capability. Furthermore, Army officials have indicated that items procured with these funds may be diverted to Iraq or Afghanistan, since overseas demands in those theaters will always have a higher priority than equipment for non-deployed Guard and Reserve units.

In order for the Guard and Reserve to do its job, both at home and abroad, it needs to have the right equipment. Measures we should take to restore their equipment readiness include:

- ❑ Procure enough gear to bring Reserve units up to at least 70 percent readiness across the board, and 90 percent readiness for critical dual-use items like trucks, communications gear, and individual weapons;
- ❑ Replace equipment as it is borrowed from Reserve units, particularly items needed for domestic response, such as trucks and radios; and
- ❑ Commercially acquire civilian vehicles, radios, and other equipment via emergency contracting to facilitate rapid deployment to domestic emergencies like Hurricane Katrina or the Kansas tornadoes.

Pressure on Multiple Fronts

Perhaps the underlying theme of the growing pressures on the Guard and Reserve is the sense that these entities must do more than ever before, while their individual members face increasing pressure both in their military role and in civilian life.

Some of this stems from the altered nature of war itself. The battlefields in Iraq and Afghanistan are non-linear and non-contiguous, meaning that there are no relatively safe "rear areas" for support troops to operate.⁵¹ Combat and support units alike must be prepared to fight (and often do) wherever they may be, whether they are raiding a house or driving along a main supply route.

As discussed above, the preponderance of reservists in Iraq and Afghanistan are support troops, reflecting the historical judgment that the services could use reservists for support missions because they were less risky and better suited to part-time soldiers. Today's battlefield, however, has made this decision obsolete. All units—active and reserve, combat and support—face combat in Iraq.

In addition to the increased likelihood of facing combat in the theater of war, Guard and Reserve personnel face challenges when they return home. Federal law provides financial and employment protections for reservists who are called up. However, this law has increasingly been observed in the breach. Approximately 16,000 reservists filed employment-related complaints with the Departments of Labor and Defense in 2005 and 2006—a number four times greater than during the first two years of the war. In a recent survey, 44 percent of employers said they might not hire a reservist over fears of his or her future potential for callup, even though such discrimination is illegal.

To be fair, many employers have themselves suffered as a result of the heavier use of Guard and Reserve. Delta Air Lines reports it has had to hire 90 contract pilots to replace 300 pilots called up since late 2001, at a cost of \$300 million. State and local first responders have been hit hard too, because of the heavy representation of reservists among police, firefighters, and emergency medical technicians.

To some degree, unpredictability and even hardship are part of the deal when someone volunteers for the reserves. Military service, particularly in wartime, often entails a measure of personal risk, sacrifice, and the destabilization of life's normal civilian rhythms.

That being said, it seems obvious that the Iraq war has played havoc with the assumptions of Guard and Reserve duty. Our country needs to provide greater support to the men and women who volunteer for these units—and to broaden opportunities for our people to participate in these increasingly important missions.

Such measures should include the following:

- ❑ Fully fund recruiting and retention benefits to assist the active-duty services in maintaining a larger force of the highest caliber;
- ❑ Mandate a 1:5 deployment-rest cycle for Reserve units to provide for adequate rest, training, and civilian reintegration between deployments, such that for every one year reserve units are mobilized, they spend an average of five years at home training and preparing for their next deployment. (This differs from the 1:3 deployment-rest ratio that is optimal for active-duty troops);
- ❑ Implement fully-funded collegiate and graduate education for reserve personnel;

flexible assignment policies allowing movement between the active and reserve components; and significantly enhanced military-training opportunities for reserve personnel;

- ❑ Ensure that mobilized reservists earn the same GI Bill benefits as active-duty troops;
- ❑ Reform the GI Bill to transform it back into a veteran's benefit, rather than an enlistment incentive, recognizing the return on investment that America will reap from spending money on educational benefits for veterans;⁵²
- ❑ Provide reservists and their families with better medical benefits, including access to military or VA medical facilities for themselves and their families while serving;
- ❑ Review the adequacy of the existing Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA), and bolster their protections against employment discrimination, unfair housing practices, predatory lending, and other abuses.⁵³ Congress and the Pentagon should also explore enhanced programs for civilian education and transition leave for demobilizing reservists as they re-enter civilian life;
- ❑ Develop a new kind of National Guard force structure, modeled on existing state military reserve and militia organizations,⁵⁴ which serves exclusively at home in a domestic capacity;
- ❑ Establish a domestic civilian response corps—similar to the U.S. Public Health Service at the federal level, or the reserve components of many metropolitan police forces—which can provide emergency-

response capabilities at home and an opportunity to serve for those who do not want to deploy abroad;⁵⁵ and

- Create pilot programs for national service which would offer educational incentives, monetary compensation, and other recognition for service,⁵⁶ focused on recent high-school graduates and college students.

More than 50 years ago, Army Chief of Staff J. Lawton Collins said that soldiers—not equipment, organizations, or doctrine—were the heart and soul of American combat power. Tanks and rifles can be bought, units built, bases secured, but America’s sons and

daughters represent an irreplaceable and invaluable resource which must be carefully selected, trained, and husbanded so they are ready to defend the nation when we need them. Today, the reserves face a manpower and equipment crisis of epic proportions, which threatens our readiness both at home and overseas. The most effective way to address this crisis is to replenish the Guard and Reserve, clarify their modern mission, and invest in the men and women who volunteer to serve in their ranks. At a time of unpredictable hazards both within the United States and in the broader world, the Guard and Reserve are more important than ever to our overall security. We should treat them accordingly.

Endnotes

¹ The National Guard and Reserve resources discussed in this paper include the Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Air Force Reserve and Marine Corps Reserve, as well as the Air National Guard and Army National Guard formations in each state. Federal law differentiates between the reserves at the federal level and the National Guard at the state level, on the basis of their funding, leadership, and missions, among other things. The main difference is that the National Guard can conduct “military support to civil authorities” missions including riot response, disaster relief, and domestic law enforcement, while the federal reserves cannot. See 18 U.S.C. 1385; see also 10 U.S.C. §§ 371-378. This paper’s discussion will focus on the reserve components most affected by the Iraq and Afghanistan wars—the Army Reserve, Army National Guard, and Marine Corps Reserve.

² The Congressional Research Service estimates that it costs \$8 billion each year to mobilize reservists in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. This compares with a pre-surge “burn rate” of \$8.6 billion per month for Iraq and \$1.4 billion per month for Afghanistan. The CRS estimates that the surge has increased the Iraq amount to \$10 billion per month. See Amy Belasco, “The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11,” CRS Report RL33110, July 16, 2007.

³ “According to reports, current Army readiness rates have declined to the lowest levels since the end of the Vietnam war with roughly half of all Army units, both active and reserve, at the lowest readiness ratings for currently available units.” See CRS Report RL33110, citing Associated Press, “General Pace: Military Capability Eroding,” USA Today, February 27, 2007.

⁴ See Preamble, U.S. Constitution.

⁵ See General Accounting Office Report 07-60, “Actions Needed to Identify National Guard Domestic Equipment Requirements and Readiness,” Jan. 26, 2007. Significantly, the GAO found that this area of readiness goes largely unmeasured. The Defense Department does not generally measure the equipment readiness of non-deployed National Guard units for their state missions, nor does the Pentagon report this information to Congress. Instead, the Pentagon only measures the readiness of Guard units to perform their *federal* wartime mission, in accordance with federal law requiring the Pentagon to measure the military’s capability to carry out the National Security Strategy, defense-planning guidance, and the National Military Strategy. Until recently, it has been assumed that the National Guard could perform its typical state missions with the equipment it had on hand for its federal missions.

⁶ For a history of the Army’s efforts to rebuild after the Vietnam War, including the reallocation of critical support forces to the reserves, see James Kitfield, *Prodigal Soldiers: How the Generation of Officers Born of Vietnam Revolutionized the American Style of War*, Simon & Schuster, 1995.

⁷ The Pentagon defines the total force as “active and reserve military, civilian, and contractor personnel.” See Quadrennial Defense Review Report, Feb. 6, 2006, available at: <http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/QDR20060203.pdf>.

⁸ The strain caused by the Balkans deployments was best reported by William Langewiesche in “Peace is Hell,” *The Atlantic*, October 2001, available at: <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/2001/10/langewiesche>.

⁹ See George W. Bush, Speech to the Republican National Convention, Aug. 3, 2000, available at: <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2000/conventions/republican/transcripts/bush.html>; see also Condoleezza Rice, “Campaign 2000: Promoting the National Interest,” *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2000.

¹⁰ See Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor, *Cobra II*, Pantheon, 2006.

¹¹ Between September 11, 2001, and November 30, 2006, 230,778 members of the Army and Air National Guard deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. During the same period, 181,437 members of the Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Air Force Reserve and Marine Corps Reserve deployed to those two countries. Tens of thousands of additional reserve personnel were mobilized to support these wars in stateside assignments, or in countries such as Kuwait and Qatar. See CRS Report 22451.

¹² See “No Longer in Reserve,” *Military Officer*, August 2007.

¹³ See Lt. Gen. Jack Stultz, Chief of Army Reserve, Army Reserve Posture Statement for 2007, available at: <http://www.armyreserve.army.mil/ARWEB/NEWS/WORD/20070411a.htm>.

¹⁴ Teri Weaver, “After 22 months in Iraq, ‘home’ is a state of mind for Minnesota Guard unit,” *Stars and Stripes* Mideast edition, Wednesday, June 6, 2007; see also H. Con. Res. 185, 110th Congress, July 13, 2007, Commending the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division of the Minnesota National Guard upon its completion of the longest continuous deployment of any United States military unit during Operation Iraqi Freedom. As part of its decision to “surge” forces to Iraq in early 2007, the Pentagon decided to reduce the combat tour length for reserve units so they would serve a total of 12 months on active duty away from their families. However, this new policy was predicated on additional pre-mobilization training during the years prior to callup, and Pentagon officials said it would take years to fully implement.

¹⁵ A corps is a combined-arms organization comprising two to four divisions plus supporting aviation, logistics and support troops. It is commanded by a three-star general. In both Iraq and Afghanistan, the Pentagon has used corps headquarters and staffs to form the nucleus of a Joint Task Force headquarters as well.

¹⁶ See 10 U.S.C. §§ 12301-12322, relating to reserve mobilization authority.

¹⁷ Divisions are Army and Marine Corps units of approximately 15,000 to 20,000 personnel that are fully integrated “combined arms” organizations including infantry, armor, artillery, aviation, logistics and support units, commanded by a two-star general. In wartime, divisions are often augmented with external units, sometimes doubling their size. Some military commentators use brigades or battalions as their unit of measurement for ground-combat strength because division units are often too diverse to compare. Brigades are units of 3,000 to 5,000 troops containing a mix of combat and combat-support units, commanded by a colonel. Battalions are units of 500 to 1,000 troops, commanded by a lieutenant colonel, which generally contain a single function with fewer support troops, such as an infantry or artillery battalion.

¹⁸ For a more in-depth treatment of the privatization trend in national security, see Peter W. Singer, *Corporate Warriors*, Cornell University Press, 2003; see also Deborah Avant, *The Market for Force*, Cambridge University Press, 2006.

¹⁹ Army surveys studying the “propensity” of youth to enlist have found a decreasing percentage of young Americans interested in joining the military. The survey asked, “How likely is it that you will be serving in the Military in the next few years?” It found significant decreases among white, Latino and African-American youth from November 2001 to June 2006. By June 2006, only 14 percent of white youth, and 9 percent of Latino and African-American youth, answered “definitely” or “probably” in response to this question, down from 27 percent, 14 percent and 12 percent respectively in November 2001. See Renee Finnegan, Brief to Army Reserve G-1 War Council, January 11, 2007.

²⁰ A “moral waiver” is a decision by the military recruiting command to enlist a recruit despite a criminal background, prior drug use, or other disqualifying condition.

²¹ Army Recruiting Command briefings indicate that only a small fraction of American youth—between 25 percent and 35 percent—actually qualify for enlistment under current standards. These youth are frequently also those with the best educational and employment opportunities. Thus, the Army finds itself in direct competition with colleges and vocational programs, and unable to recruit the majority of American youth due to educational, medical-physical, or criminal disqualification. In 2007, the Army estimated that 8.8 million of a total youth cohort of 30.8 million were “fully qualified” for enlistment, and that another 5.2 million youth could be recruited with medical or moral waivers.

See Renee Finnegan, Brief to Army Reserve G-I War Council, January 11, 2007; see also RAND book in Footnote 54.

²² In interviews, two sergeants major told me their most valuable reenlistment incentive for single soldiers was the bonus, particularly when offered in a combat zone, where it was tax-free under IRS rules making income earned in a combat zone exempt from federal income taxes. However, these sergeant majors reminded me of the maxim that “you enlist the soldier, but reenlist the family,” and said it was often much tougher to retain older soldiers with families who had weathered multiple deployments. For these troops, they said that guaranteed assignments to non-deployable recruiting and drill-sergeant positions were the best reenlistment incentives in their arsenal.

²³ Prior to the Iraq war, the historical average for West Point attrition at the five-year mark was 28.8 percent. See Charles Henning, “Army Officer Shortages: Background and Issues for Congress,” CRS Report RL33518, July 5, 2006.

²⁴ See Charles Henning, “Army Officer Shortages: Background and Issues for Congress,” CRS Report RL33518, July 5, 2006.

²⁵ See U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, “2005 Survey on Officer Careers,” June 30, 2005.

²⁶ See Department of Defense press releases announcing recruiting and retention numbers, 2005-2007, available online at: <http://www.dod.mil/news>.

²⁷ See Renee Finnegan, Briefing to Army Reserve G-I War Council, January 11, 2007.

²⁸ See Mark Cogburn, Chief, AR G-I STRATCOM, Army Reserve Manning Strategy, Briefing to Army Reserve G-I War Council, Winter 2007.

²⁹ See Melvin Fleming, Acting Mobilization Operation Branch Chief, Army Reserve G-I, “What’s Left”—Mobilization and Deployment,” Briefing to Army Reserve G-I War Council, Winter 2007.

³⁰ One reason for this personnel turbulence was the Army’s old policy of not involuntarily mobilizing soldiers for more than 24 “cumulative” months in support of the same operation. As hundreds of thousands of reservists rotated through Iraq and Afghanistan, often on 18-month mobilizations (six months in training and processing, plus 12 months overseas), this put a larger part of the reserves off-limits to military planners. If they continued to serve in the reserves, and their units were called up, the military had to either compel them to volunteer or replace them with a new soldier prior to deployment. Pentagon officials signaled in late 2006 that they could not make ends meet in 2007 if this rule remained in place. So, in early 2007, despite vocal objections from senior military commanders and members of Congress, the Pentagon changed the 24-month rule from a “cumulative” limit to a “consecutive” one, opening up the possibility for hundreds of thousands of reservists to be called up again to serve in Iraq or Afghanistan. See Associated Press, “Reserve, Guard Time Limit Lifted,” Jan. 12, 2007.

³¹ The Army and Marine Corps have chosen these pieces of “stay behind” equipment on the basis of supply and demand. For example, the Army does not have enough up-armored Humvees to equip every unit in the Army—only those units currently fighting in Iraq, plus a small overage for training and replacements. Therefore, it keeps this pool of equipment in Iraq, with units handing vehicles off during the week or two of overlap they have between rotations. The same situation exists for many other critical pieces of equipment, including but not limited to heavy machine guns, secure radios, night-vision goggles, and automation equipment. Many units retain their original warfighting equipment from before the Iraq war began—such as tanks, heavy armored vehicles, and unarmored Humvees—but leave most of this gear behind when they deploy. The cross-leveling of equipment and permanent deployment of many items to Iraq hits reserve units particularly hard, according to the GAO, because reserve units often stand last in line to keep equipment while not deployed: “[S]ome Guard units, particularly in the Army National Guard, may be less ready for domestic missions than they were 2 or 3 years ago because, as we have previously reported, large quantities of equipment have been sent overseas to support operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, decreasing the supply of equipment available to nondeployed units.” See GAO 07-60, at p. 20.

³² Lt. Gen. Steven Blum, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Readiness on Readiness of the Army and Air National Guard, March 27, 2007.

³³ General Accounting Offices, “Reserve Forces: Actions Needed to Better Prepare the National Guard for Future Overseas and Domestic Missions,” GAO Report 05-21, Nov. 10, 2004.

³⁴ See Government Accountability Office, Reserve Forces: Plans Needed to Improve Army National Guard Equipment Readiness and Better Integrate Guard into Army Force Transformation Initiatives, GAO-06-111, October 2005.

³⁵ See Janet A. St. Laurent, Director Defense Capabilities and Management, Testimony Before the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, “Army National Guard and Army Reserve Readiness for 21st Century Challenges,” GAO-06-1109T, Sept. 21, 2006.

³⁶ Commission On The National Guard And Reserves, Second Report to Congress, March 1, 2007, available online at: <http://www.cngr.gov/resource-center.CNGR-reports.asp>; see also Ann Scott Tyson, “Majority of National Guard Units

Rated ‘Not Ready,’” *Washington Post*, March 1, 2007.

³⁷ See St. Laurent Testimony, GAO-06-1109T.

³⁸ For a discussion of how unready units with poor equipment readiness can be delayed in their response to domestic emergencies, see Lt. Col. Christopher M. Schnaubelt, “Lessons in Command and Control from the Los Angeles Riots,” *Parameters*, Summer 1997, pp. 88-109.

³⁹ For more background on this issue, see CRS Report—Andrew Feickert, “U.S. Army and Marine Corps Equipment Requirements: Background and Issues for Congress,” CRS Report RL33757, June 15, 2007.

⁴⁰ GAO-06-111, October 2005.

⁴¹ Department of Defense Directive 1225.6, *Equipping the Reserve Forces*, April 7, 2005.

⁴² See Testimony of Brigadier General Jerome Johnson, United States Army, Director for Plans, Operation and Readiness, Department of the Army, et al., “Hearing on the Pre-Positioned Equipment Programs of the United States Army and the United States Marine Corps,” Hearing of The Readiness Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, March 24, 2004.

⁴³ Statement of General Michael W. Hagee, Commandant of the Marine Corps before the House Armed Services Committee Hearing on Army and Marine Corps Strategies for Ground Equipment and Rotor Craft, June 27, 2006, p. 6.

⁴⁴ See United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) Testimony Before the Subcommittee on Readiness, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, “Military Prepositioning: Observations on Army and Marine Corps Programs During Operation Iraqi Freedom and Beyond,” GAO-04-562T, March 24, 2006, p. 11.

⁴⁵ Phillip Carter, “Hollow Force: Has Iraq Stretched the U.S. Military to its Breaking Point,” *Slate*, April 23, 2004, available at: <http://www.slate.com/id/2099408/>.

⁴⁶ GAO Testimony Before the Subcommittee on Readiness and Tactical Air and Land Forces, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, “Defense Logistics: Preliminary Observations on Equipment Reset Challenges and Issues for the Army and Marine Corps,” GAO-06-604T, March 30, 2006, pp. 15-16; see also Kris Osborn, “U.S. Army: Prepositioned Stocks at 5-Year Low,” *DefenseNews.com*, April 11, 2007. Army reset is estimated to cost \$12 billion to \$13 billion a year as long as the conflict lasts at the current level, and “for a minimum of two to three years beyond.” Testimony of Brigadier General Charles Anderson, U.S. Army, House Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness and Subcommittee on Air and Land Forces Hold, transcript, “Joint Hearing on Costs and Problems of Maintaining Military Equipment in Iraq,” January 31, 2007, p. 6. Marine Corps reset costs equal approximately \$5 billion per year. Testimony of General Michael Hagee, Marine Corps Commandant before the House Armed Services Committee, “Army and Marine Corps Reset Strategies for Ground Equipment and Rotor Craft,” June 27, 2006, p. 41.

⁴⁷ Significant challenges exist for reset as well: “The Army cannot track or report equipment reset expenditures in a way that confirms that funds appropriated for reset are expended for that purpose. . . . The Army cannot be assured its reset strategies will sustain equipment availability for deployed as well as non-deployed units while meeting ongoing operational requirements.” William Solis, Director, GAO Defense Capabilities and Management, “Preliminary Observations on the Army’s Implementation of Its Equipment Reset Strategies,” Testimony Before the Subcommittees on Readiness and Air and Land Forces, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, Jan. 31, 2007. In one example, the Army is spending \$455 million to recapitalize its Humvee fleet, putting 7500 Humvees into depot-level recapitalization. But these are not armored Humvees; they are old cargo Humvees which canvas and aluminum hulls. The Army plans to use these to equip stateside units, including Guard units with a homeland-security mission, but it will not be able to use this equipment in Iraq because these Humvees aren’t survivable enough.

⁴⁸ The Pentagon plans to use \$900 million of its funding from the 2006 Department of Defense Appropriations Act to procure “dual use” equipment for the National Guard, and \$290 million from the 2007 Appropriations Act to procure replacement equipment for the National Guard and Reserve.

⁴⁹ These plans include establishing (1) a joint force headquarters in each state and territory to provide military command and control capabilities; (2) maintaining 12 National Guard teams ready to deploy within 6 hours to respond to domestic chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or high-yield explosive incidents; (3) 10 detachments—one for each FEMA region—to assess critical defense-related infrastructure; and (4) at least one joint interagency training capability for National Guard personnel conducting domestic missions.

⁵⁰ Since 2000, the Army has transformed itself from a force built around 10 large divisions comprising approximately 0,000 troops each to more than 40 independent brigade combat teams, comprising approximately 5,000 troops each, which are designed to be more deployable and flexible than the divisions they replaced.

⁵¹ See Phillip Carter, “When the Front Lines Come to the Rear,” *N.Y. Times*, December 12, 2004. In December 2004,

then-Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld held a town hall meeting in Kuwait where he angered troops and families by glibly responding to a question about vehicle armor and telling the troops: "As you know, you go to war with the Army you have. They're not the Army you might want or wish to have at a later time." Many in the U.S. responded by criticizing the Pentagon for failing to get sufficient vehicle and individual armor to Iraq. However, such criticism was partly misplaced. The Army's allocation of armor reflected its anachronistic concept of the battlefield as a linear space where support troops would be relatively safe in the rear.

⁵² Economists estimate that for every dollar the country spent on GI Bill benefits for returning World War II veterans, the country earned seven dollars in return. See Edward Humes, *Over Here: How the GI Bill Transformed the American Dream*, Harcourt Press, 2006.

⁵³ About 16,000 reservist complaints were filed between 2004 and 2006, and the average wait time during that period was 619 days for resolution. See Amy R. Gershkoff, "Saving Soldiers' Jobs," *The Washington Post*, August 4, 2007, Page A15.

⁵⁴ See, e.g., the California State Military Reserve, "the State Defense Force of California authorized by United States Code and the California Military and Veteran's Code . . . which assists the [National Guard] in its Homeland Security Mission by providing individual soldiers and airmen as well as rapid response teams to Military Assistance to Civil Authorities in the preparation, prevention, deterrence, preemption, defense, and mitigation of natural and man-made threats to California." More information available at: <http://www.calguard.ca.gov/casmr/>.

⁵⁵ For more on the U.S. Public Health Service, a uniformed service of the United States, see: <http://www.usphs.gov/>. For more on reserve law-enforcement agencies, see the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department reserve organization at: <http://www.lasdrreserve.org/whatisareserve.htm>.

⁵⁶ For an excellent discussion of how the U.S. military transitioned from a conscription-based force to an all-volunteer force, containing many lessons for how a voluntary national service might be created, see Bernard Rostker, *I Want You: The Evolution of the All-Volunteer Force*, RAND, 2006, available online at: <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG265/>.

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