



as we see it...



DIG UNDER THE SURFACE

A CONGRESSIONAL subcommittee is expected to start hearings this month to find out how things are going with the National Guard and other Reserve Forces.

We can anticipate that the Services already are set with their canned statements, putting the brightest possible face on things.

But we suggest that astute investigators dig under the surface. They will uncover some developments and trends which raise uneasy questions.

They might get an explanation why current thinking and actions point to cutting the Army's reserve components, whereas less than a year ago C/S Maxwell D Taylor was saying: "... really we should view our Army as a combination of the Active Army and the two reserve components. As one goes down presumably the others should go up."

Of at least equal importance should be a development of the implications of the new Troop Basis for the Guard and the USAR. The general pattern is beginning to emerge. Contrary to what General Taylor was saying on 4 Feb 1957, his Staff appears to be thinking in terms of cutting the Guard on the same basis as to the Active Army—about 20% of its units. That would mean we would lose five or six Divs, and a proportionate number of our nondivisional combat and combat-support type units. Supposedly, the same would apply to the USAR. There, however, the setup is more complicated. It has fewer combat-type Divs than the Guard, but along with them it has Replacement Training Centers and Maneuver Area Commands. Though bearing a different designation, and technically having a different mission, they follow the same organizational structure. To all intents and purposes, they could be translated into combat-type divisions by the issuance of a General Order and the assignment of fillers to pad-out their cadres—the same device the Army used only a few years ago with its "Training" Divisions.

Under the guise of broadening the "mobilization base," there's a likelihood of increasing, rather than decreasing, the aggregate number of these actual or potential combat-type Divs in the USAR. At the same time, by establishing a system of priorities, these outfits would rate higher than most Guard Divs and non-divisional organizations, in the Army's planning. Barely concealed is Army thinking that the latter should be relegated to Home Guard-type missions.

A host of questions arise out of this thinking, and the subcommittee headed by Rep Overton Brooks of La might well demand honest answers from the Army

—not generalities obscuring the facts behind a pretext that "security" precludes full discussion.

The entire National Guard is in Ready Reserve status; only parts of the USAR are in such status. The law defines the Guard as being the first-line reserve component. We've been told, time and again, that the Guard—not just certain "elite" parts of it—must be ready for prompt mobilization and deployment. We've been told that the thought of giving us a civil defense or home guard role is unacceptable.

Against this background, how come the thinking seems to be that only a few Divs are needed promptly? Who's going to be doing the fighting while the Replacement Training and Maneuver Area and presumably other Station Complement-type outfits, are processing new fillers and new organizations? How does this concept jibe with the supposition that a future war will be sudden, short, of unprecedented violence?

Or is the high priority a guise for a quick shift of the RTCs and MACs to a combat role, ready-made for Regulars to take over, while leaving Guard outfits high and dry?

The subcommittee well might ask why the Army policy is to push the Guard down to 400,000 strength while trying to pull the Reserve up to 300,000.

It might demand detailed, comparative facts on the assigned participating strength of the Guard's 21 Inf and six Armd Divs, and nondivisional organizations, as against the USAR's counterparts—and make sure the Army doesn't try to count-in the "obligors" assigned on paper to the latter. It might compare records of professional qualifications, Service school attendance, extension course participation, armory and field training inspection ratings, degree of self-sufficiency without Active Army "overhead" support in Military District Hq, USAR Training Centers, and field training sites.

Getting right down to the heart of the matter, it might inquire why the Army is trying to reinforce weakness rather than strength; why it is trying to down-grade the one vital, organized, self-sustained force in being. Could it be that despite its pious proclamations, what the Army really wants is to be rid of a National Guard that speaks its mind freely, in order to concentrate on a wholly Federal force which it can control absolutely?

If the Army ever does get its inept way in the unimpeded juggling of its Reserve Forces, from that day you can start measuring the decline of the citizen-soldier and a fatal weakening of this Nation's defenses.



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DEAR GUARDSMEN: There's the story of the pious printer in Medieval days who devoted his life to the hand-setting, decorating, printing and binding of a unique book which would be beyond price: an absolutely flawless, typographically-perfect Bible. He was old and doddering when this matchless enterprise finally was completed. Before setting off for the Vatican to hand it personally to His Holiness, the aged artisan reverently opened his unique edition of the Holy Writ and read: "In the beginning, God *crated* the Heavens and the Earth." Silently, he tottered outside, muttered a prayer, and dove headfirst, imperfect Book clutched to his breast, off a towering precipice onto rocks far below.

The tale points-up a problem familiar to all writers, editors, printers, and publishers: trying to catch every "bug" that can creep into printed matter. We try hard, but we bobble, too; and we had a beaut last month which probably has confused many readers. For on a page of pictures, we identified Maj Gen Leo M Boyle as Secretary of the NGAUS and Brig Gen George R Dodson as Treasurer (crediting him with a second star, incidentally, which we're sure he hopes the Finance Officer will honor). On the opposite page, we got it right, and we note here for the record: General Boyle is Treasurer of the Assn, and General Dodson is Secretary.

Now, where's the nearest cliff?

THE STAFF

OUR COVER: What *was* the "weapon of the future" is the horrendously destructive war tool of today. Illustrative of the Armed Forces' emergence into the era of the Guided Missile are the USAF's THOR and the US Army's HERCULES Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles, forerunners of intercontinental missiles to come.

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