FORCE MIX: THE BIG QUESTION FOR THE LATE 1990s

The proper mix of forces between the active services and the Guard and Reserve remains one of the big questions for the future. We at the NGUSA are not in the force structure business, so we won’t be telling readers in this column how many Army Guard divisions or Air Force wings there should be in 1995, or where they should be. This essay will be more general in nature and more political.

We published an interesting short article in this regard in this issue, "The Reserve Component Role in Future Force Structure," by COL Ralph A. Kehlan, the National Guard Board advisor to the commandant of the US Army War College.

Among other things, Kehlan makes the very valid point that there is to be a 20-division Total Army, and two contingency corps in the active Army, there simply won’t be enough active duty forces to fund to fill this force structure.

Without reciting from his article, speaking from the Capitol Hill perspective, we would like to assert that many force structure decisions will be driven more by the resources available than anything else. The "right" mix, whatever that turns out to be, will not be determined by the national strategy and President George Bush’s "New World Order.

From a surprising source, confirmation of this conclusion comes from Admiral David Jeremiah, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

What about the threat of the future? When the collapse of the Soviet Union, the European Theater obviously is vastly changed. The notion of the Red Army attacking through the Bulged Gap into the north German plain, studied for generations at command and general staff colleges, is the threat of the past. Or at least, it is a threat that today carries with it a much greater planning entail.

The political facts are that Congress will decide now large the active Army and active Air Force will be upon the completion of the Iraqi operation. The concept of the New World Order will have something to do with that. Whatever comes of Crisis Response and Reconstitution will have something to do with it. But, when the bottom line is computed, it will have more to do with what the ruling members of Congress conclude is the real requirement than anything else.

For those of us at the NGUSA, this is more or less where the argument begins, not where it ends. Several assumptions and presuppositions seem obvious. First, the active services will not be as large as their uniformed leaders want or advocate. Some misgivings traditionally reposed in those services will have to shift to the Guard and Reserve.

With a much less threat in Europe than before the end of the Cold War, the requirement for fighter units will decrease. As GEN Merril A. McPeak, chief of staff of the Air Force noted, the Persian Gulf War was fought with only 25 percent of the Total Air Force.

The Army’s force structure in the Persian Gulf War was basically two corps and seven divisions. There are, today, 24 divisions in the Total Army 18 in the active Army and 10 in the Guard—not including rounds.

Given the six months of logistics time required to put the two corps and seven divisions in place, even our critics would concede that—had it been necessary—the DoD had time to mobilize, preposition, train and deploy Army Guard combat units. If airlift and sealift continue to be the factors constraining deployment, not combat readiness levels, then there is little valid argument for maintaining two contingency corps in the active Army or dozens of fighter wings in the active Air Force. Our two F-16 units mobilized, deployed and fought in the war, which proved that our Air Guard units are able to accomplish their mission when called. Dozens others could have done the same the had been called.

We in the Guard can continue to make the valid argument that our Guard units range from 20 percent of the cost of an active duty unit, that Congress should see the Guard and Reserve as the combat and support force strike need for nearly any national emergency. The nondeployment of our rapid deployment brigades has nothing to do with this; indeed, the delays in getting them to active duty and the additional training to which they were subjected were an arbitrary decision of the DoD that could affect because it had the forces it could deploy.

The fact that these three operations or several of the Army Guard’s divisions could have been called deployed and fought in combat does nothing to wane, if not two statements by active Army generals. LTC Calvin Waller, GEN H. Norman Schwarzkopf’s deputy, last fall that the Army was moving from being combat ready, he moved those units already deployed to even more training. That is said about our rapid deployment brigades.

As late as February, the commander of the 3rd Armored Division said his unit still needed more mass movement training. That’s what is about our rapid deployment brigades.

When Guard members tell members of Congress about the history of the Army and Air Guard and the Guard and Reserve structure, they should point out that the Guard has plenty of equipment. Except where there is postwar equipment, there is no need for active duty forces that maintain a level of readiness. The time it takes to train that equipment is long enough for the Guard unit to conduct mobilization training and fly to the theater.

That means the cost savings that the National Guard has demonstrated through mobilization and service in the Persian Gulf and Somalia could be a cost savings to the Army as well as an Arab for the Gulf War.

CGI: Lessons Learned From Just Cause

The US Army Combined Arms Command at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, analyzed Operation Just Cause. Sharing intelligence, processes security and the proper mix of light and fight forces are the lessons learned.

Social Operations Fires Electrons

The Army一National Guard joint-venture electrical training program, FM 3-33, Special Operations, has helped thwart Iraqi command and control during the Gulf War.

The New Minuteman Express

With the latest surge in intercontinental ballistic missile forces, the Guard or active units for their roles in support of Operation Desert Storm.

Gulf War Recollections

Guard magazine’s managing editor, CPT Patric R. Bower, published for the 3rd Armored Division's 373rd Military Police Battalion, active National Guard.

Missouri MPs Are Called . . . Again

Like most Guard units, the 113th Military Police Company, Missouri Army National Guard, found themselves serving in two fronts—one in Panama to interdiction and Reserve service. The Group 1st Lt. W. B. Horne, Jr. for Operation Just Cause in Panama and the other in Saudi Arabia for the Gulf War.