The Dilemma: Are We Trying To Prove The Unproveable?

Our National Guard and reserves have invariably played in American defense down through the centuries. After the memories of a war come to fade, Americans tend to forget that military reserves are an absolute necessity for effective Guard and reserve forces, is indeed a continued and important responsibility of the Guard and Reserve, particularly its leaders. Assistant Secretary White made somewhat the same observation but with a slightly different focus. He said: "We really do have a serious problem. The national leadership and the Secretary of Defense are required to make decisions to allocate resources as they do every year. In order to be continued, they must allocate more of what are truly scarce resources to the Guard and Reserves, and we are in a situation where we have to display to them that...the Guard and Reserves are a good investment.

Dr. White is all too correct in his reading of our dilemma. We must prove that we will make good use of the resources they will be allocated, but we must be given additional resources before we can prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that we can make good use of them.

And we have learned from our charges that empirical judgments by senior leaders of reserve forces, based on evidence, mean little in this computerized, systems analysis-oriented age. It has an impact on the thinking and expressed in statistics, it's not a valid evidence. This suggests that equal importance to making American citizens better informed about reserve forces is a companion responsibility, that of making public officials in the Pentagon, in the White House and on Capitol Hill more aware of just how much military capability and readiness past investments already have been produced in the reserve forces through resources already expended. Even in units that are not as ready as we'd like them to be, in terms of military capability and readiness, exist. In most cases, a completely acceptable capability and readiness, N.W. ready. Not achieved with only relatively small additions in resources and manpower.

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