

STATEMENT BY

THE HONORABLE RONALD J. JAMES  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY  
MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS

BEFORE THE

COMMISSION ON THE NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVES

12 April 2007

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

UNTIL RELEASED BY THE  
COMMISSION ON THE NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVES

Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members of the Commission, it is a pleasure and an honor to appear before you today. In the short five months I have been the Assistant Secretary for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, I learned how vital the National Guard and Reserve are to the Army and the Nation. Their professionalism, dedication and sacrifice are impressive. Although I am responsible for a number of very important areas, to include recruiting, the Army's Equal Employment Opportunity Program, the National Security Personnel System, and many other critical personnel matters, I view my responsibilities to the men and women of the Army's two Reserve Components (RC), the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve, as one of my most critical responsibilities.

I have been asked to address the three challenges the Army faces as it continues to meet the demands of the Long War, while sustaining itself as the Nation's essential land force for contingencies around the globe. Specifically, you wish to hear my views regarding efforts within the Department of the Army to "transform the Reserve Components;" to "reduce stress on the RC caused by the current high operational tempo" (OPTEMPO); and to "make the operational reserve a sustainable force for the Long War." Additionally, your invitation anticipated significant positive influences presented by the Secretary of Defense's announcement in mid-January regarding the "Utilization of the Total Force," which among other things emphasized new prudent planning goals and objectives for mobilization and employment of the RC.

It is interesting to note that Secretary Gates' "Utilization" announcement was bracketed by the Army Chief of Staff's testimony to you on December 14, 2006, and the Secretary of the Army's appearance before the Commission on January 31, 2007. The "Utilization" announcement cements the conditions upon which the Army is diligently building plans and practices. These conditions rely heavily on the National Guard and the Reserve as operational forces, fully integrated into long-term training,

equipping, and manning strategies that are at the core of the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) model.

Preceding the “Utilization” announcement, General Schoomaker said in his December testimony that one of the fundamental tenets of the Army’s ability to sustain its highly regarded performance in the Long War against terrorism was “recurrent, assured, and predictable access” to the RC. Up until that point, such access was not only difficult to define but also limited based on existing Defense policies that directed RC mobilizations were not to exceed twenty-four cumulative months. This “cumulative” boundary was exacerbated by the necessity to mobilize most RC units for as much as eighteen to twenty months. This length of activation was necessary to ensure first-rate post-mobilization training period that sent no Soldier or unit to the theater less than fully trained. It also guaranteed the Combatant Commander with twelve months in-theater employment (known best as “boots on the ground,” or “BOG”). Combined, the “cumulative” rule and the “BOG” requirements created the circumstances where RC units (and the Soldiers in them) could only be expected to involuntarily serve once or what became known in the vernacular as “One and Done.”

At the end of January you heard from Dr. Harvey that the new “Utilization” policy announcement would “provide the access we need” to enable consistent recurrent, assured and predictable access to the Army RC. This change in policy is essential to the long war, global contingencies, and homeland defense.

I wish to reinforce that the Army is committed to the six-point policy set down in the “Utilization” announcement, and it is in the Army’s interest to do so: twelve-month mobilization periods coupled with the mobilized-to-nonmobilized ratio goal of “1 to 5” greatly reduce the stress on the RC Soldiers, their families, and their employers. Indications from the field and from Army planners are that the policy is welcome. While there may be a period in which the exception is the rule (a “1 to 4” dwell time between mobilizations, for example), we are dedicated to not let the exception become the rule.

How does this new policy, and all the actions that will follow it, effect the transformation of the Army RC? The answer is that with predictable access to the RC come the conditions for orderly and deliberate planning for its transformation and utilization. It let's us implement ARFORGEN across the entire force, Active Component (AC) and RC. Assured access to the RC also relieves some of the intolerable stress building on the AC. In addition, it makes the RC more operational and the total force – truly “Total.”

You asked if these and other changes support the long-term vision of an operational reserve as envisioned by ARFORGEN. The answer is yes, predictable access is a key in ARFORGEN. Predictability is also an incentive for our Guardsmen and Reservists if we expect them to stay with us over the course of a career. Predictability is also very important to families and employers. ARFORGEN will use the predictability and lead time that maintaining an Operational Reserve will demand. In the mean time, the Army will also leverage the other positive aspects of this policy and, as the Secretary of Defense's memo directed, “plan accordingly.” This means that the momentum gained over the past year or so can be maintained and prioritized to rebalance, re-fit, and transform the RC at the same pace and with the same objectives as the AC.

However, these policy changes alone will not make an operational reserve. The resources necessary to make ready units will have to continue and be sustained. There are three critical readiness components to operationalizing the Guard and Reserve on a sustained basis – personnel, training and equipment. A critical component of personnel is medical readiness. We need to find ways to make sure when a unit reports for active duty everyone is ready to train. In a 12 month mobilization we should not have to take time away from collective training for medical or dental work. To the extent possible medical and dental readiness should be accomplished at home station.

We need to execute as much training as possible prior to mobilizing a unit. This will shorten the post mobilization training time and optimize operational time.

The Army is well on its way to making equipment readiness a reality. We have fenced \$21 billion for National Guard equipment and \$1.9 billion for the Reserve. The equipment is beginning to flow and the unit status reports indicate that we are already seeing results in unit readiness. I make these points about ARFORGEN and an operational force to show that it will take more than briefings and policy changes to make the RC truly operational.

How will these changes and new policies affect the sustainability and utilization of the National Guard and Reserve? Emerging policies and practices will go far to reduce the stress on the AC and RC by reducing inequities in equipping the RC, decreasing turbulence and turnover in the RC, and enhancing the confidence and predictability afforded to RC Soldiers, their families, and their employers. Bonuses and incentives continue to be helpful in sustaining the National Guard and Reserve. More work exists, but great progress has definitely been made.

I offer one more caution. We are not currently achieving our short term rotation goals of 1:2 in the AC and 1:4 in the RC. We are closer to 1:1 in the AC and 1:3 in the RC, a long way from our ultimate goal of 1:2 for the AC and 1:5 for the RC. This obviously stresses the entire force and brings into question how long we can sustain this pace. To counter this we are growing the Army by 67,000 Soldiers. The National Guard has done a great job increasing strength by nearly 17,000 Soldiers in less than 18 months. The Army Reserve is also making progress obtaining their end strength. This will not relieve the stress over night but it will in the future.

You asked about rebalancing and we are. Our rebalancing is within both the AC, the RC, and between all three components. We are building more Civil Affairs, MP, transportation, and intelligence units in both the Active and Reserve. We are transforming some artillery and other units in both components to these needed capabilities. We are also in the middle of transforming the force to a modular force, which will make RC units look just like AC counterpart units making training, equipping and manning easier for all. In these modular units we are placing intelligence, signal, engineer, and support packages so they are more self-sufficient. Overall, these changes

will produce a more ready rotational force in both the AC and RC. We expect to maintain the pace of rebalancing even in this current period of high OPTEMPO. In the long run this will add readiness and depth to the entire force.

The Army – an Army of three components: Active, Guard and Reserve – has never failed this Nation. America’s Soldiers, regardless of their circumstances or level of affiliation, have always answered the call and have always served with honor. We now have before us an opportunity to balance the field on their behalf-- to facilitate their wishes to serve and to abide their willingness to be called. This is noble work, and I can think of nothing that makes me more proud, or that I am more conscious of, as I go about my duties in the Pentagon.