



**Testimony before the
Commission on the National Guard and Reserves**

**“The Future of the National Guard
and Reserves”**

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A Statement by

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Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on the results of the CSIS study on the future of the National Guard and Reserves. It is a pleasure to share our work with you as we believe the health of the Reserve Component is critical to the overall health of the U.S. military, and we welcome the spotlight this Commission will shine on these issues in the coming months.

In the interest of time, I will focus my comments this morning on how we conducted the study and highlight some of our major recommendations. We plan on releasing our final report in a few weeks, which will discuss these recommendations and others in much more detail.

Our study on Guard and Reserve issues is a part of the larger and ongoing CSIS Beyond Goldwater-Nichols project. Congress directed CSIS to undertake this study in the FY05 Defense Appropriations Act with funding from the Department of Defense. We also are fortunate to have received support for this project from the Smith Richardson Foundation and the McCormick-Tribune Foundation.

The Guard and Reserve team at CSIS began this study about 18 months ago. Our intent was to explore what the National Guard and Reserves should look like in the 21st century and provide practical, actionable recommendations to the Department of Defense to help shape the Guard and Reserves along these lines. While we were very mindful as we conducted the study of ongoing operations and the specific challenges facing the Reserve Component today, we tried to think at least 10-15 years ahead to avoid the “fighting the last war” problem.

To conduct the study we formed three major working groups. One focused on Reserve Component roles and missions, another focused on how the Reserve Component should be organized, trained and equipped, and the last group focused on what we call “social compact” issues – meaning the tangible and intangible elements of the implied contract between the Department of Defense and RC members, their families and their employers that governs service as a citizen-soldier. We used the working groups to frame issues, consider options and vet possible recommendations. Working group members included think tank and academic experts; former military and DoD officials from both the active and RC side; CBO, CRS and GAO analysts; and representatives from employer groups and the National Governors Association. We also met numerous times with the many different staffs inside the Pentagon - in OSD and within the military services – to collect information and exchange ideas. Finally, as you noted in your 90-day report, there are many other studies in this area that are ongoing, and even more that have been done in the past, so we tried to canvass all of that previous work to leverage the many good ideas that have come out in other reports that are still be relevant as we look to the future.

With that overview of how we conducted the study, I will move on to outline some of our major findings and recommendations.

- Demand for military forces in the future will remain high. Our study concluded that while the demand for military forces is not likely to remain as high as it is today with the operations going on in Iraq and Afghanistan, the security environment is complex and there will likely continue to be a lot on the military’s plate. The United States is almost certain to continue to need to maintain forces in Iraq and Afghanistan for many years, in addition to other deployments in the former Yugoslavia, Guantanamo, the Horn of Africa

and elsewhere. Moreover, the military will need to be prepared to respond to potential catastrophic events here at home, and unforeseen events that might happen overseas that might require U.S. action. This finding has important implications for the Guard and Reserves and drives some of our other recommendations.

- The Guard and Reserves need to remain multi-mission capable, but put less emphasis on conventional campaigns. The demand for military forces will not only remain high, military forces in the future will also need to be able to perform many kinds of missions. In this context, we think it is important to continue to have a Reserve Component that can contribute across the range of military missions. We do not think it makes sense to focus the Reserve Component on one or two missions and nothing else. At the same time, just as the active duty military needs to broaden its focus to include irregular warfare and preparing for catastrophic or disruptive challenges, the Reserve Component needs to make that shift as well. So much of the historical focus of the Reserve Component, particularly the Army Guard and Army Reserve, has been on fighting “the big war.” We think that needs to change. The Guard and Reserves should be placing as much emphasis on things like stability operations and homeland defense and civil support as it is on more traditional missions like major combat operations.
- Moving to use of the Reserve Component as part of the operational force is mandatory, it is not a choice. One of our major findings is that DoD cannot meet today’s operational requirements without drawing significantly on the Reserve Component. Because we think the demand for military forces will remain high, and because we do not believe the

active military can expand dramatically for a range of demographic and budgetary reasons, DoD will have to continue using the RC as part of the operational force to get the job done. This is particularly true for the Army and Air Force. While this paradigm shift away from a purely strategic reserve model is an imperative, it is by no means a risk-free endeavor.

- The Army needs more combat structure, not less. The Army today is already stretched thin, and given what we see in terms of the level and complexity of future demand for military forces, we recommend that the Army needs at least 43 active BCTs and 34 Guard BCTs in the near-term, and ideally would grow an additional 4-5 BCT on the active side over the longer term. A larger Army would provide a greater ability to surge to meet future requirements without immediately breaking force management policies, and provide a hedge against risk if the transition to a more operational Army Guard and Reserve does not go as smoothly as planned.
- DoD must resource the transition to ARFORGEN and AREF or they will not succeed. The study applauds the Army's decision to move to rotational model that will generate RC forces that are much more ready to deploy, but we are concerned that the program is under-resourced. Even with the funding that is in the current FYDP, we believe that DoD needs to provide at least \$13 billion more over the next six years to reset Army Guard and Reserve equipment from ongoing operations, to modernize the equipment they received under the "tiered readiness" strategy of years past, and to cover all of the costs of creating the new modular BCTs and multifunctional support brigades. We also are

concerned that the additional training days in the rotational program may not be enough to produce validated units. It is not clear how much post-mobilization training will still be needed under the new approach, but this will be an important issue if DoD is to succeed in keeping overseas deployments under one year in the future.

- DoD needs to accept civil support as a central mission and act accordingly. Almost five years after the September 11 attacks, DoD continues to hold the civil support mission — responding to catastrophic events whether natural or man-made — at arm’s length. If protecting the homeland is really the top priority, DoD needs to start planning, programming and budgeting for the mission. And this includes determining where the Guard and Reserves fit into the picture and what kind of training and equipment they need.
- Leverage the National Guard to form the backbone of regional Civil Support Forces. The response to Katrina made clear that the nation is not yet prepared to respond to a no-warning catastrophic event. The National Guard, as the state militia in the 54 states and territories, provides an infrastructure on which to build and is one that is controlled in most scenarios by the state governors – a key issue. We believe a crucial missing piece in our national preparedness system is regional planning, training, and exercising. We recommend dual-hatting one of the existing Guard state joint force headquarters in each of the ten FEMA regions as the headquarters for what could ultimately become an interagency regional headquarters responsible for organizing and coordinating regional planning, training, and exercising. This headquarters would work with state and local

governments, other RC regional commands, FEMA, NORTHCOM, the ARNORTH DCOs and so on. These ten civil support forces also would have response forces assigned to them, drawn from the state Guards in each region. In peacetime they would work, as they always do, for their state governors, but in a crisis, they could deploy and work for any governor in the region who has been attacked. A critical piece of our recommendation is that these CSFs would come from forces in the middle of the ARFORGEN rotation cycle and would not be eligible during that year to deploy overseas. These personnel and their equipment would be totally focused on being ready to respond to a catastrophic event here at home. This would not turn the National Guard into an exclusively homeland defense force, it would not even permanently focus certain units only on homeland defense, and it would not break the overseas rotation base. It would ensure that there would always be trained, ready and equipped forces who know the landscape on-call to respond to a catastrophic event here at home.

- New approaches to recruiting and retention are needed. In the recruiting arena, we recommend that all reserve components consider offering a two year protection from deployment to individuals who are leaving the active military that want to join the Guard and Reserves. We also recommend shielding college students who join the Reserve Component from deployment during school in exchange for a longer service obligation. We recommend that all members of the Reserve Component who are permanent residents of the United States be eligible for accelerated citizenship. In terms of retention, we strongly recommend that DoD do everything it can to limit mobilizations to one year or less. Long tours are hurting retention and eroding family and employer support for the

Reserve Component. We also recommend that education benefits for RC members be transferable to spouses. To ensure RC members can access the benefits and support programs that are an important part of retention, we would like to see at the deployable unit level a coordinator who act as a TRICARE liaison, advise on family support programs and other benefits, and generally act as a retention coordinator.

- Need to implement the Continuum of Service approach. The old “one size fits all” approach no longer works. DoD needs a much more flexible system to bring RC members on to active duty, access RC members more easily and make it easier for more people to serve in new and different ways. To do this, the Services need to establish integrated pay and personnel systems for active and RC personnel within the next two years. The Marines have the right idea here. It simply has to be done. Simplifying duty statuses would make developing these types of systems much easier. We also endorse the concept of allowing DoD to sign contracts with RC members that are willing to be deployed more frequently or with less notice than the typical RC member. We support offering additional compensation to people who would sign such contracts. OSD calls this the variable participation of reservists at the unit-level concept; the Army calls it the Intensive Reserve. We think this kind of approach has merit and should be explored aggressively.
- Do not expand TRICARE Reserve Select further and retain the existing retirement system. Last year Congress expanded the health benefit program so that all members of the Selected Reserve, regardless of mobilization status, have access to TRS. While we

recognize and honor the tremendous contribution that members of the Reserve Component make, data linking expanded health care benefits to improved recruiting, retention and medical readiness is scant. We recommend that the existing benefit - which is very costly for DoD - not be expanded further, at least until more data can be collected to understand fully the costs and benefits of such changes. Every dollar we spend enhancing the existing health care benefits further is a dollar we don't spend on equipment and training — equally important pieces of the social compact with RC members. We also recommend that the existing retirement system, which allows RC members to begin drawing retirement pay at age 60, be retained. I note that the Defense Advisory Commission on Military Compensation endorsed this approach in its final report that was issued publicly last week.

These recommendations represent some of the more significant initiatives we will outline in our final report, which will discuss them and many others in much more detail. We plan on releasing our report in a few weeks and we hope to remain engaged with the Commission to support your efforts over the next year to address many of these important issues. Thank you for the opportunity to share the CSIS study with you and I would be happy to try to answer any questions you might have.