Hearing on Active Army and Reserve Force Mix  
April 8, 2014  
Senate Armed Services Committee, Full Committee  
Dirksen Senate Office Building, G-50  

Witnesses  
1. General Raymond T. Odierno (USA), Chief of Staff, United States Army  
2. General Frank J. Grass (USA), Chief, National Guard Bureau  
3. Lieutenant General Jeffrey W. Talley (USA), Chief, Army Reserve and Commanding General, US Army Reserve Command  

On April 8, the Senate Armed Services Committee held a hearing on the Active Army and Reserve Force Mix. Topics discussed included but were not limited to: effects of sequestration on Army, ARNG and USAR end strengths and readiness, Aviation Restructure Initiative and National Guard counterproposals, National Guard Counterdrug Program, Army mental health programs and the A-10 divestiture.  

Testimony  

General Odierno stated that modest end strength cuts to the Guard and Reserve were necessary in order to maintain their readiness. He also felt that an independent commission on Army force structure was unnecessary and that ARI was done in an open, collaborative and transparent manner following months of detailed analysis.  

General Grass expressed concern that military capacity in the Guard cannot be easily replaced once it is taken away. He also stated that should FY16 see a return of sequestration numbers, the National Guard would lack the funds to repair aging facilities with exception of those that have health and safety issues.  

Chairman Levin  

- ARI: Asked for clarification on the National Guard’s counterproposal. General Grass did not elaborate on the counterproposal and stated that he must prepare for implementation of ARI.  
- Independent Commission: General Grass cited the Air Force Commission and stated his approval, asking “who wouldn’t want an independent look?” LTG Talley stated it wasn’t clear to him that there was a current need for such a commission at this time and cautioned that if Congress deemed a commission necessary that they not draw conclusions from the AF Commission findings.
Ranking Member Inhofe

- AC/RC interchangeability: Cited General Odierno’s and General Grass’ comments at the National Press Club regarding interchangeability of Active and Guard units. Asked for clarification. General Odierno stated that the bottom line was that the AC had co-location of units and facilities and could sustain a significantly higher level of readiness; the National Guard is not interchangeable but complimentary. General Grass disagreed with this characterization.

- Cost effectiveness: Asked what should be critical factors in assessing cost effectiveness balanced with readiness and demand. General Odierno stated that flexibility, agility, future demand and cost were all critical factors in determining the future force mix. Stated this was why 70% of the FY15 cuts came from the Active Army.

Senator Reed

- Readiness of AC units: General Odierno stated that readiness is being rebuilt with the help of funds from the Balanced Budget Act. Stated that the Active Army has 14-16 brigades that would be ready to be sent “immediately” by the end of the summer*. General Odierno stated that the Active Army routinely trains at battalion and brigade level while the ARNG does not (they must go through a CTC rotation and do not have time or the facilities to routinely train at higher echelon proficiencies). Senator Reed asked General Grass if the National Guard could deploy any brigades without additional training by the end of the summer. General Grass stated he could not.

*Senator Reed asked if Army brigades would be available immediately based on training standards and specifically stated that General Odierno’s response should not take into account transportation and logistical factors associated with deployment.

- ARI: Senator Reed stated that Apache gunners have to fire their weapons more frequently and that the Active Army has easier access to gunnery ranges and the ability to conduct large-scale combined arms training. General Odierno agreed with this characterization.

Senator Udall

- ARI: Asked what effects a freeze of aviation asset transfers would have on the Total Force. General Odierno stated that a freeze would result in $1 billion in lost savings a year, which would have to come out of readiness accounts and would exacerbate readiness issues across all components.

- Would moving Apaches out of the Guard make it a strategic reserve? General Odierno stated that it would not and pointed out that UH-60s have flown more combat hours than any other aircraft in the Army inventory. ARI would allow for a reinvestment in RC readiness. General Grass stated that many TAGs had expressed concern about not being able to sustain the Guard as a combat force.

Senator McCain

- A-10: Stated the A-10 was the best CAS platform and questioned the Air Force’s gap in finding an adequate replacement. General Odierno stated his preference for the A-10 as a CAS platform, but emphasized the Air Force had aircraft that could fulfill the CAS mission.

Senator Manchin

- Stated that he felt there was a better connection between the Air Force and the Air National Guard/ Air Force Reserve leadership. Asked what efforts were being made to working together.
General Odierno rejected Senator Manchin’s description of the Total Force’s working relationship and stated the three components have been working side by side for 13 years of conflict. He stated that the issues related to ARI were a “family spat” over dwindling resources.

- Stated that such a “family spat” may not have occurred if the Army focused on fiscal waste (gave the cancellation of the GCV and ordering excess Stryker parts as examples). General Odierno postulated that such a spat might not have occurred if Congress was able to produce predictable budgets.

- CTC rotations: Asked what the rotation cycle was for AC and RC units. Generals Odierno and Grass stated that the Active Army BCTs did a CTC rotation once every 2 years, while the National Guard did them every 7-10 years.

Senator King

- End strength and mobilization time: Asked what the cost would be to maintain the ARNG at 354,000 instead of reducing to 335,000. General Odierno stated the cost would be $6-7 billion. Asked how long it took to mobilize an ARNG BCT. General Odierno stated between 95-145 days. General Odierno stated that for the Regular Army’s “top tier” brigades (approximated 8-10), they could be “out the door immediately.”

- ARI: Asked why the Guard need Apaches. General Grass stated that the National Guard historically retained combat capability and that the benefit of having combat-experience leaders in the National Guard was applicable in managing complex domestic response operations.

Senator Graham

- Asked how long it took a National Guard BCT to deploy. General Grass stated that it is 71 days for company-proficient BCTs, 87 for platoon-proficient BCTs. For attack aviation battalions: 71 days for modernized units, 113 for non-modernized.

- ARI/ independent commission: Expressed concern that the ARNG would have no attack aviation capability. Asked if General Grass would support an independent commission on force structure. General Grass agreed and did not see any problem with an independent look. Senator Graham indicated that he would be introducing legislation for such a commission.

Senator Nelson

- Expressed concern that the end strength of individual states were not taken into account when developing the FY15 budget. Felt that end strengths for states need to take into account contingency plans for domestic response.

Senator Lee

- ARI: Asked if the National Guard had a counterproposal. General Grass stated yes and that he wanted to the Army Guard to “look like our Army” and “work closely with our Army.” Senator Lee asked for justification on ARI and whether or not governors had requested more lift capability in their Guard units. General Grass stated that the governors did not ask for more lift. He stated that turbulence to the force structure as well as requiring pilots to requalify on new aircraft/transfer to new units may cause departures of Army Guard aviators.
Senator Vitter
- AC/RC interchangeability: Asked what impact less training would have on interchangeability. General Odierno stated that Guard units would only be able to train at individual and small unit proficiency, though the Active Army would still be able to maintain large unit proficiency at home station.
- Commission: Stated that a commission would be a reasonable idea if budget cuts were not occurring immediately and in the near future. General Grass reiterated his disagreement with the idea of a commission. General Grass referred to the success of the AF Commission. LTG Talley repeated his concerns of drawing conclusions from the AF Commission on restructuring the Army Reserve Command.
- ARI: Asked what was wrong with the National Guard’s counterproposal. General Odierno stated that the NGB proposal would have further reduced the Active Army’s aviation end strength. Stated that the desire of ARI was to take the least amount from the Guard in order to maintain readiness and keep the Guard as an operational reserve.

Senator Blunt
- Guard readiness: Commented that if the force was truly interoperable, there would be a desire to increase the part-time force. General Odierno stated that the Army is looking at ways to better integrate the ARNG in training with Active Duty units.

Senator Ayotte
- A-10: Reiterated concerns from previous hearings on the lack of an aircraft capable of performing the CAS role as well as the A-10. Expressed concern that TTPs would need to be developed for other aircraft filling the CAS role and would incur additional costs (as opposed to maintaining the A-10 in the fleet until a replacement aircraft becomes operational).

Senator Cruz
- Asked about the Army’s efforts to retain combat experience of Active Duty soldiers by finding opportunities for them in the National Guard. General Odierno stated the Army is working on programs to ensure retention of combat skills.
- Independent commission: Asked if each of the generals would support an independent commission on force structure. General Odierno stated he was on the record of being against it and stated that the situation that led to the AF Commission was entirely different from what the Army is facing. General Odierno reiterated that any freeze of ARI would result in $1 billion in costs. General Grass reiterated his approval of a commission. General Talley repeated his opinion that he did not see a clear reason for an independent commission at this time.