



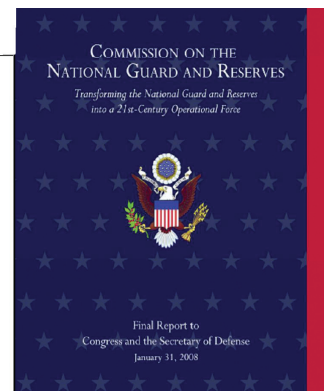
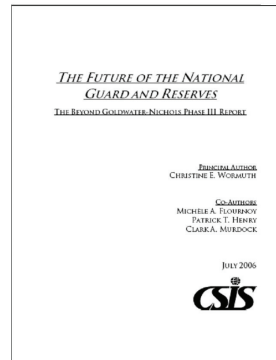
# Reexamining the Role of the Guard and Reserves in Support to Civilian Authorities

## *The New Criticality of the National Guard Bureau*

BY PROFESSOR BERT B. TUSSING

On 28 & 29 May 2008, the United States Army War College conducted the 7<sup>th</sup> annual *Reserve Component Symposium* at the Center for Strategic Leadership at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. The series began in 2000, and is dedicated to examining issues of critical importance to the Services' Reserve Component and the United States National Guard. Following 9/11, the preponderance of these symposiums have been devoted to issues surrounding the vital role of the Reserve Component in homeland security, homeland defense and civil support. The trend continued in this year's forum, which was devoted to examining the evolving role of the Guard and Service reserves in support of civilian authorities. In the wake of studies, new legislative directives, and executive initiatives devoted to those ends, that role is undergoing remarkable change.

Two specific initiatives have led the research focused on these issues in Washington. The first of these was the Phase III Report of the Center for Strategic and International Studies' *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols* series, *The Future of the National Guard and Reserves*,<sup>1</sup> which devoted significant attention to the role of the reserve component in homeland defense and civil support. Likewise, the congressionally mandated *Commission on the National Guard and Reserves*<sup>2</sup> looked upon the reserve component as the Defense Department's key asset in "homeland operations," and called for new legislative initiatives to make civil support a "statutory responsibility." Along side the studies' recommendations, Congress has launched new authorities and accompanying responsibilities towards these efforts, contained in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2008, and especially as embodied in the National Guard Empowerment Act therein. The Executive Branch in the meantime has laid out a series of challenges to the reserve component mission by way of the new *National Strategy for Homeland Security*, *Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8* (National Preparedness), and a host of other initiatives. These will task the United States military in general, and its reserve component in particular, with measures designed to support national efforts to prepare and protect the American people against manmade and natural calamities. Moreover, should calamities occur, they will cast the Guard and reserves as the primary military support mechanism to civil response and recovery operations.



1. Christine Wormuth, et al., *The Future of National Guard and Reserves: The Beyond Goldwater-Nichols Phase II Report* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, July 2006).
2. *Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, Transforming the National Guard and Reserves into a 21st Century Operational Force* (Washington, DC)

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The military will have many responsible entities and commands devoted to the missions that will flow from these still emerging requirements. Among the most important of these will be the National Guard Bureau (NGB). The mission and status of this organization has changed substantially under a new Department of Defense directive,<sup>3</sup> which (among other things) established the Bureau as a joint activity and delineated the Chief of the NGB as a principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense on matters involving non-federalized National Guard forces. In addition, the directive made the Bureau the strategic focal point for National Guard matters not under the authority and direction of the Secretaries of the Army and Air Force, including joint, interagency, and intergovernmental matters. As in its previous charter,<sup>4</sup> the NGB will remain the channel of communications on all matters pertaining to the National Guard between the Departments of the Army and Air Force and the states and territories.



All of this portends a greater role for the Bureau, but does not address a fundamental question: Is the Bureau properly configured to take on these new responsibilities? On the basis of that question and similar concerns, members of the symposium were asked to assess whether, and to what degree, the NGB is postured to meet the requirements directed and implied in the aforementioned studies, executive directives, and legislation.

## WHAT KIND OF JOINT ACTIVITY?

While the new NGB charter recognizes the organization as a “joint activity,” the recognition leaves open the question of what kind of joint activity the Bureau shall become. Participants noted that there are several models for the Bureau to follow, including the Combatant Commands, the Joint Staff, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), standing Joint Task Forces, and more. None of these automatically recommended themselves as solutions for the NGB, but selected characteristics from several of the models were deemed essential. Among these was an ability to control funding and resources to fulfill both the Bureau’s and the state National Guards’ requirements. Reflecting the tenor of legislative and executive directives, to include the Bureau’s new charter, participants opined that the NGB might best affect these requirements by following the Combatant Commanders’ Integrated Priority List (IPL) model. The Bureau’s IPL mechanism could follow the Combatant Commander’s process and timing for submission and review. This process would either reinforce or suggest amendments to the Army and Air Force program budgets, in deference to the Guard’s requirements for domestic and overseas requirements.

Of equal importance to the participants was a robust, integrated planning mechanism in the Bureau. In this regard, the process was considered at least as essential as the structure exercising it. The workshop members noted that there was an absolute necessity for the NGB to serve planning requirements along at least three venues: first, as a component of military response alongside of the Service reserve and active components; second, as a primary mechanism for shared planning with and between the states; and third, as a member of federal interagency planning efforts. Participants suggested that the Bureau may be uniquely suited in this latter role from their position as a conduit for the military component of states’ plans that should parallel the federal effort. To capitalize upon the integration of efforts that could be enjoyed from this perspective, participants held that a deliberate planning process protocol should be developed, headed by a “military coordination group” consisting of representatives from the various states’ Guards, the Bureau, and the United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM). Having offered this course of action, however, members of the workshop voiced a recurring theme that any planning that took place would be in support of civil plans, whether those plans emanated from the federal government or the individual states and territories.

## DEVELOPING, INTEGRATING, AND EXERCISING THE PLANS

In fact, participants in the workshop held that the single greatest service the NGB could provide to homeland defense, homeland security and civil support efforts centered on the military’s core competency of planning. These planning efforts, however, would transcend single agency concerns. To begin, the participants held that great benefits could be accrued by offering planners to reinforce federal interagency efforts. These planners would certainly find

3. U.S. Department of Defense, National Guard Bureau (NGB), Department of Defense Directive 5105.77 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 21 May 2008).

4. Dated 1 September 1995 and promulgated by Army Regulation 130-5/Air Force Mission Directive 10, 30 December 2001.

fruitful employment in the Department of Homeland Security, but should also be considered to support deliberate planning efforts in other Executive Branch departments that bear significant domestic security responsibilities, to include the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of the Interior, and the Department of Transportation. On an entirely different plane, the NGB could continue interagency cooperative efforts with representation on the National Security and Homeland Security Councils' Policy Coordinating Committees. On occasion the Bureau's concerns in given areas of interest covered by these committees may be well served by Joint Staff and OSD representation; but there may be other occasions when the unique tie from the states to the Bureau could add clarity to the interagency efforts, thus recommending a separate "seat at the table" for the NGB. Members of the working group suggested that both ends of this interagency spectrum may be served by establishing within the NGB's Joint Staff an interagency body, modeled along the lines of either USNORTHCOM's Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG) or the U.S. Southern Command's Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF). Such a body would serve to establish relationships between the agencies that could reap extraordinary benefits in times of crises.



**Colonel Mike Chesney, a Defense Coordinating Office for FEMA Region V, offers his perspective during the Symposium's Plenary Session.**

Equally important in the minds of the forum's participants was a role envisioned for the Bureau surrounding collecting, consolidating, and (as necessary) integrating states' response plans into a larger, federal effort. The NGB Joint Staff J-5 was recommended as the depository for states National Guard's plans in support of the civil effort. Such a collection would always be contingent upon the states' desire to share the same; but it would automatically make available a secondary review of the plans, and would also provide for a "best practices" exchange in areas of mutual concern across the regions and across the nation.

Even plans that have been reviewed by an external source, however, may hold weaknesses that go unnoticed until execution. Accordingly, the workshop suggested that the Bureau should also be tasked to establish a robust Exercise Group/Function to bring together the plans' stakeholders, exercise their initiatives, and validate their strengths and weaknesses. Participants noted that these exercises need not be extensive or expensive. While the benefit of "boots-on-the-ground" is always desirable in testing a scheme, occasionally simply bringing the principals together around a tabletop exercise can result in substantial gains in confidence and proficiency. Workshop members would also note, however, that the envisioned exercise capability resident in the Bureau should come with a significant analytical depth to allow a search beneath the surface value of "going through the motions."

## **VISIBILITY OF CAPABILITIES AND RESOURCES**

Along a similar vein, the participants held that there may well be times when the states and territories are faced with catastrophic incidents which, at least temporarily, outstrip their means to meet the needs of their citizens. In those times, when other state's National Guards respond in accordance with Emergency Management Assistance Compacts (EMAC), or combined elements of the active and reserve components enter as a part of a larger federal effort, success or failure will begin with situational awareness. Identifying and providing for additional requirements cannot be effectively accomplished until respondents at all levels of government realize "where the gaps lie." In that regard, the forum suggested that the NGB, in cooperation with USNORTHCOM and U.S. Pacific Command, should build upon current databases (such as the Joint Capabilities Database [JCD] and those held by the FEMA Regional Defense Coordinating Officer [DCO]), to ensure shared visibility of all military assets that could be applied to domestic civil support operations. The body suggested that special analytical means should be inserted in the combined databases, like those contained in the Defense Readiness Reporting System (DRRS), that will provide for the dynamic nature of requirements and resources. Such a system would not only "source" resources and capabilities, but would note levels, availability, and restoration cycles.

The forum's participants were almost unanimous in their belief that any regulatory obstacles to sharing this kind of information should be immediately removed. Moreover, artificial obstacles which keep any Reserve component from reasonably responding to a major disaster, whether natural or manmade, should be expunged.

## THE BUREAU AND USNORTHCOM

This brief issue paper has described only in passing the essential partnership between the NGB and USNORTHCOM that was reiterated throughout the two days' discussion. Workshop members frequently described the benefits of the partnership. They noted, for instance, the benefits to be gained by USNORTHCOM from the Bureau's traditional relationship with the states; and, in another instance, the absolute requirement for the states to align their augmentary means of defense with USNORTHCOM in the event, however remote, that the combatant commander should have to rise to his ultimate lead function. These two examples, and hundreds of potential requirements between them, led to a call for expanded liaison, even beyond the appreciable levels that exist today. Participants from both agencies noted difficulties that will have to be overcome to attain a desired level of exchange—from voluntary dislocation and all that it portends for individual Guardsmen, to ensuring the proper degree of experience and qualifications to fill key billets. Whatever the case, the workshop members pointed confidently to interaction that has already been enjoyed between the two entities—from regular video teleconferences, to quarterly conferences initiated by the combatant commander, to the aforementioned liaisons currently taking place. The will to synchronize federal and non-federal responses between USNORTHCOM and the NGB could not be clearer. What remains is to institutionalize that commitment.



Participants concluded that the NGB was indeed postured to meet the evolving challenges that lie ahead, but only in terms of an initial readiness. The anticipated growth of the Bureau's Joint Staff from 700 to 1200 personnel is indicative of the structural reinforcement that will be needed to answer the call sounded by both the Administration and Congress; but a process will have to accompany, and even lead that structure, if necessary capabilities are to be realized. Serving as a foundation for both structure and process, however, will be the relationships between the Bureau and its partners in these endeavors—across the Department of Defense, across the interagency, and across the country. No single element will have command of the efforts. Cooperation and coordination will remain paramount.

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