



## The Seventh Annual U.S. Army War College Reserve Component Symposium

### *Assessing the Evolving Relationship of the National Guard to Other Components of Domestic Crisis Response*

BY PROFESSOR DENNIS MURPHY

*“...there is no reasonable alternative to the nation’s continued increased reliance on reserve components as part of its operational force for missions at home and abroad. However...this change from their Cold War posture necessitates fundamental reforms to the reserve components’ homeland roles and missions....These reforms are essential to ensure that this operational reserve is feasible in the short term while sustainable over the long term.”*

—Commission on the National Guard and Reserves (Report to Congress), January 2008.

The United States Army War College’s Center for Strategic Leadership hosted a symposium, “Reexamining the Role of the Guard and Reserves in Support to Civilian Authorities” at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania from 28 to 29 May 2008.

#### **BACKGROUND: WHY THIS SYMPOSIUM AND WHY NOW?**

The new *National Strategy for Homeland Security*, the *Commission on the National Guard and Reserves*, the *National Defense Authorization Act of 2008*, *Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8, Annex 1*, and a host of other initiatives have signaled what could result in significant changes in the roles played by the Reserve Component in domestic preparedness, response and recovery operations. The National Guard Bureau (NGB) in particular may be postured to take on expanded responsibilities in these areas as its Chief assumes a new status as an advisor to the Secretary of Defense. Newly legislated initiatives charge the Guard with greater planning responsibilities in support of domestic crisis response that will translate to expanded interaction with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM). Persistent concerns over identifying and optimizing capabilities for response to either natural or manmade disasters are causing the reexamination of the potential value of the Services’ reserves against these ends, and questioning the institutional obstacles that stand in the way of their employment.



MG Robert Ostenberg (left), Director, Reserve Forces, USNORTHCOM/NORAD, and MG Craig Campbell, Adjutant General, Alaska, were Symposium participants and members of the Blue Ribbon Panel.

The workshop examined the real and potential changes to the Reserve Components’ mission in civil support, emanating from these policy studies, executive and legislative direction, and the new realities imposed on the United

States military through the demands of the long conflict against violent radical extremism. The symposium provided a venue to both identify issues and recommend solutions in order to operationalize these new and pressing strategic concepts.

## **SYMPOSIUM DESIGN**

The event was organized in consultation with the NGB, the Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve, the Homeland Security Committee of the Adjutants General Association of the United States, and USNORTHCOM. In addition to these, the symposium brought together subject matter experts (SMEs) from across the range of stakeholders associated with these concerns, to include the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Americas' Security Affairs, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, the states' National Guard, the Joint Staff, the Department of the Army Staff, DHS and others. The principle objective of the symposium was to contribute to the search for solutions that will provide for more effective support of domestic requirements in times of crises. The symposium was conducted over the course of two days. Day one began with a brief introduction and overview of the symposium. Participants then divided into four working groups. The working group sessions began with presentations by SMEs addressing each subtopic, and proceeded to a series of questions designed to frame the ensuing discussions. On day two, the discussions continued, ending with the production of a series of observations and recommendations presented to a blue ribbon panel of senior leaders.

## **KEY FINDINGS**

These findings represent the significant workshop dialogue of the working group that was assigned the following subtopic: "Assess the evolving relationship of the National Guard to all other components of domestic crisis response." Specifically, the group considered the formal and informal mechanisms that should be developed to facilitate plans, coordination, and operations between the NGB and the states' National Guard, state governments, DHS, local emergency management, and the Service reserves.

### State Government:

- Participants recognized that the NGB has an important coordination role with the states' governments, but that all communication must occur between the Bureau and the states' National Guard. That single line of communication ensures elimination of gaps and seams and precludes multiple reporting chains in crisis which could lead to confusion. That communication chain also allows the alignment of staff section proponents at each level in order to effectively share information during normal operations and requirements and priorities during domestic crises.



**Members of the Blue Ribbon Panel discuss the issues and recommendations developed during the symposium.**

- The "support and enable" mission of the National Guard is fully defined in terms of the required readiness to support overseas missions as part of the operational reserve. It is much less clear with regard to preparedness to support domestic crises response. Participants urged the NGB to act as an interlocutor with the Department of Defense to clarify the readiness requirements to support and enable response to crises in the homeland.
- While participants provided anecdotal examples of various intra-state organizational paradigms and processes to effectively respond to domestic crises, it was determined that no one solution fits all the states, nor should it.
- The Adjutants General Association of the United States (AGAUS) Homeland Security Committee currently offers an important, albeit informal expert and consensus voice regarding the role of the National Guard in the

protection of the homeland and response to domestic crises. Their role should continue as currently structured without any additional formality, but with due consideration of their positions and recommendations.

#### The Department of Homeland Security:

- Currently the NGB coordinates with DHS through the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and America's Security Affairs. Participants agreed that this current process provides an appropriate chain of communication. However, the group felt that a National Guard General Officer presence at DHS would further facilitate coordination with NGB, as well as provide advice to the Secretary of Homeland Security on the employment of National Guard forces and lines of state civilian authority. States' National Guards, on the other hand, maintain a natural tie-in to DHS through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's regions with whom that interact routinely.
- Planning and plans: The National Guard brings significant planning expertise to the table, but should assist interagency players in developing national plans to preclude being removed from current duties to act in a lead planning role. This implies development of more robust planning capabilities within the interagency. Subsequently developed plans require visibility and integration at all levels...an area that requires further improvement.

#### Local Emergency Management:

- Interoperability of resources remains an issue that must be resolved (both inter- and intra-state). One example is the common operating picture. Participants agreed that it is critical for situational awareness but note that filters and protocols are not currently standardized. The discussion did not center on a technical solution, but more on a base level recognition that reporting content and processes were not optimized or standardized to capture critical information while avoiding information overload.
- A major domestic disaster could cripple critical communication infrastructure thus hindering response efforts. Recognizing this, participants recommended pre-contracted satellite links be established to guard against this and provide redundant, seamless command and control.

#### Service Reserves:

- Liaison officers are critical to domestic crisis response success. The NGB needs to exchange liaison officers with reserve headquarters, but manning constraints hinder this opportunity. Service reserves' Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officers (EPLOs), on the other hand, are key to the states' Guard/Service interface. The participants felt strongly that EPLOs were indispensable to integration and planning for domestic response, but underutilized.
- Discussion of Service reserves' capabilities surfaced both issues and recommendations. These capabilities could be exploited beyond what current processes, policies and the law allow. Participants indicated that Service reserves' capabilities in states should be "tagged" to support state requirements when like-capability National Guard assets are deployed overseas. Additionally, they felt that it is important to consider changes necessary to exploit Federal Reserve capabilities by allowing them to assume some form of modified Title 32 status. In either case, participants recognized the need for a process that first identifies those gaps and seams in states that can be filled by Service reserves, and then exercises those identified Service reserve forces against state domestic crisis response plans. Barring recommended changes to policy and/or law, participants stressed that "unity of effort" (vice command) works, but requires relationship-building and pre-crisis exercising to ensure integration and coordination.

Common Issues: Several common issues permeated all questions posed to the group. Lack of resources (both people and money) was a recurring theme. These resource shortfalls are exacerbated by unfunded mandates from the Federal government and impact everything from manning to training and exercise support. Relationship building is of the utmost importance to ultimate success in domestic crisis response. This is especially true in a federal system coupled with first responders where consensus is driven by establishing win-win situations and where trust built through relationships is critical to cooperation during crises. Formal education as an enabler of effective crisis response was emphasized. Active Component Service members should be exposed to Reserve Component Service members at all

levels of professional military education. Homeland Defense courses can provide a base level of understanding and commonality across the all levels of government and response agencies. Apprenticeships and fellowships across agencies provide long-term, inter-organization understanding and cross-fertilization. Along with education, multi-level training and exercises put into practice those fundamentals learned in the classroom. The National Incident Management System (NIMS) has forced significant positive improvements by incentivizing compliance through the federal grant process. However, NIMS “compliance” needs a more rigorous definition including objective federal criteria and metrics across the spectrum. The group felt that NIMS was not fully understood by senior military leaders. As a final thought, participants emphasized that all events are local...and that response should always occur at the lowest possible level—an important tenet sometimes lost in the heat of crisis response.

## CONCLUSION

President Bush notes in the *National Strategy for Homeland Security* (October 2007) that: “...Homeland security must be a responsibility shared across our entire Nation. As we further develop a national culture of preparedness, our local Tribal, State, and Federal governments, faith-based and community organizations, and businesses must be partners in securing the Homeland.” The U.S. Army War College Reserve Component Symposium takes a significant step toward addressing both the issues and potential solutions in achieving that culture and developing those partnerships. Our military understands the grave and important responsibility they have to protect the American people. The intense, informed dialog engendered in this forum attests to their commitment to that end, and serves as a springboard to future improvements in process, organization and ultimately, effective crisis prevention and response.

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**The Honorable Thomas F. Hall, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, served as the senior member of the Blue Ribbon Panel.**

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