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Foreword

It is my pleasure to introduce the first Air War College monograph in the new Maxwell Papers series.

During the last few years, the United States Air Force has been involved in an unparalleled number of peacetime contingency opera-tions. Air National Guard (ANG) tanker and airlift assets have been heavily engaged in these operations. However, the authors of this study point out that the same level of activity is not found in the ANG fighter force even though many of these units have demonstrated a willingness to participate.

Lieutenant Colonels Lucas and Johnson argue that US reliance on the Air National Guard will in crease as declining defense budgets, a shrinking active fighter force, and a vigorous National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement characterize the future. As a result, the authors contend that it is imperative to explore new options for increas -ing the availability of the Guard fighter force for peacetime contingency use.

Air National Guard Fighters in the Total Force examines current "work arounds" used to increase guard fighter availability and then explores a method to provide a long-term solution. The study presents and analyzes the pros and cons of three possible options: (1) increasing active duty manning in all Guard fighter units, (2) increasing active duty manning in only a few select Guard fighter units, and (3) moving most, if not all, of the fighters out of the Guard and into the active duty force.

If current trends play out, the US military will benefit from having thought about, discussed, and debated this problem. In their insightful study, Lieutenant Colonels Lucas and Johnson provide a fresh approach to finding a solution.

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About the Authors

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Air National Guard Fighters in the Total Force

Over the last few years, the United States Air Force has found itself involved in an unparalleled number of peacetime contingency operations. At one time, Air Force personnel were supporting five different contingency operations including Provide Comfort, Deny Flight, Uphold Democracy, Provide Promise, and Support Hope. How much longer the USAF can continue to support this level of activity without negatively impacting readiness and morale is unknown.

With the Air Force downsizing from a 38 fighter wing equivalent (FWE) force to a 20 FWE force, there is little doubt of problems ahead if the current pace of operations continues. Already there are signs of trouble. One United States Air Force Europe (USAFE) fighter wing commander blames an increased operations tempo for his wing's 20 percent rise in child abuse cases, 9 percent rise in spousal abuse reports, and an 11 percent rise in alcohol abuse.[1] While these figures represent only one fighter wing, they highlight some of the potential problems that may be encountered by other active duty units as they too struggle under an ever increasing workload. These problems and a growing belief that long-term readiness may soon suffer if the workload is not reduced, convinced Defense Secretary William Perry to direct a greater role for the Air National Guard in peacetime contingency operations.[2]

The Air National Guard is no stranger to peacetime contingency and wartime operations. Guard tanker and airlift aircraft, along with hundreds of other guard personnel, are already heavily engaged around the world supporting contingency taskings. In fact, it would be difficult for the USAF to support these operations without the active involvement of Guard tanker and airlift assets. The contributions of these Guard aircraft and people, in many ways, substantiate the importance the Air Force has long placed in the total force concept. Unfortunately, the same level of activity cannot be found in the Air National Guard fighter force, even though many of these units have demonstrated a willingness to participate. In fact, the contributions of these fighter assets to peacetime operations are rather small considering there are over 800 fighter aircraft in the Air National Guard system.[3] For instance, in 1993 the entire Air National Guard deployed only 22 fighters to support peacetime contingency operations. In 1994 only 26 Guard fighters deployed overseas for contingency support.[4] Even though the level of Guard fighter involvement grew in 1994, the total number of fighters deployed points to a serious

lack of Guard fighter involvement in the total force concept. While this level of activity may have been adequate in the past, the time is rapidly approaching when the same level of support will no longer suffice in meeting our national security needs.

The Bottom-Up Review fighter force of 13 active and seven reserve (six Guard and one reserve) FWEs will lead to a greater role for Guard fighters in peacetime contingency operations.[5] A 1994 RAND study estimated that by 1999 the Guard may operate up to half of the US-based fighter force.[6] In addition, by the year 2000, almost 49 percent of the overall total force end strength will reside in the Guard and reserve components, a jump of almost 14 percent from the height of the cold war.[7] With this projected mix rapidly approaching, it becomes imperative to explore new options for increasing the use of Guard fighter assets in peacetime operations.

This paper explores some of the options for increasing the availability of Guard fighter units for peacetime contingency use. To gain a better understanding of the availability issue, this paper first provides a brief historical background on the evolution of the Guard fighter force along with an overview of the rules and laws which govern access to the force. Examining the historical contributions of this force sets the stage for introducing some of the changes needed if the Air National Guard is to better support a National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement.

Next, the paper examines two issues which limit the availability of the Guard fighter force: the traditional manning structure found in most Guard fighter squadrons, and the impact of frequent military service on the traditional or part-time force. In addition, this chapter also briefly discusses four Department of Defense and National Guard Bureau "work arounds" designed to improve the availability of the Guard fighter force.

Finally, this paper ends with an examination of three possible options for increasing the availability of Guard fighters for peacetime use. The pros and cons of each option are addressed along with a prediction of the anticipated political and military support. While there are no "silver bullet" solutions, these options at least present three possible alternatives for addressing and solving this complicated issue.

Background

Since its inception in 1946, the Air National Guard has participated in every major regional conflict, including several contingency operations. This

section examines three of those conflicts—the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and Desert Storm—which influenced the evolution of this unique force.

The section also reviews the three basic options for gaining access to the Guard force in both peace and war. The options are a declaration of a national emergency that leads to a full mobilization, an involuntary call-up (200,000 personnel), and the use of volunteers.

Korean War

During the Korean War, 66 of the Air Guard's 92 tactical flying units were called to active duty.[8] While most of the units remained within the United States or Europe, two fighter wings deployed to the Far East where they saw extensive service. This first-time mobilization of the Air Guard was not without problems. For the most part, the lack of modernized equipment, sufficient funding, and training support limited the effectiveness of the federalized force. However, the war highlighted several of the deficiencies inherent in the mobilization policy surrounding the use of the Guard fighter force. Foremost among these deficiencies was the absence of rules governing partial mobilizations. The lack of mobilization guidance led to many guardsmen "being activated on an ad hoc basis to fill critical skill shortages" without regard to the combat capability or morale of the affected Guard units.[9]

After the war, Congress enacted several measures to correct training and mobilization shortfalls. The Armed Forces Reserve Act of 1952 addressed partial mobilization concerns by creating three reserve classes, ready, standby, and retired. These reserve classes provided for different levels of readiness and training based on their specific mobilization requirements. In addition, between 1950 and 1960 appropriations for the Air Guard more than doubled, helping the Air Guard to increase its training and exercise tempo.[10] The increased funding also allowed the Air National Guard to begin upgrading many of its units into modern aircraft like the F-100 and F-104. By 1960, all Guard fighter aircraft were jet powered.[11]

Vietnam War

The Vietnam War once again found the Air National Guard deployed to Southeast Asia. Guard units from Denver, Sioux City, Albuquerque, and Niagara Falls flying F-100 aircraft flew 24,124 sorties and 38,614 combat hours in the theater.[12] Unlike previous Guard actions which served to highlight shortfalls in training and equipment, Vietnam demonstrated the growing capabilities embedded in this militia force. Gen

George S. Brown testifying before the US Senate stated "those [Guard] were the best F-100 squadrons in the field. The aircrews were a little older, but they were more experienced, and the maintenance people were also more experienced than regular units."[13]

While it is shortsighted to define the role of the Air Guard in the Vietnam War with this one quote, it is important to note that this was perhaps the first time senior Air force leadership had publicly recognized Guard fighters as being on par or better than their active duty counterparts. The Vietnam War proved that a well-trained militia force, flying modern aircraft, could perform just as well as the active duty force. What is interesting to note is that another Air Force general echoed these same sentiments almost 17 years later in Southwest Asia.

Desert Storm

Although Desert Shield and Desert Storm involved the largest Guard mobilization since the Korean War, only a few Guard fighter units were called to active duty. Two F-16 close air support units and one RF-4C reconnaissance unit were federalized and deployed in support of Desert Shield/Storm. The performance of these Guard fighters during the war served to highlight just how far the Guard fighter force had progressed since the early days of the Korean War. Lt Gen Charles Horner observed that the Air Force Reserve and Guard "did not lose a single plane to enemy fire and proved a match for their active duty counterparts. They performed very well. I'm absolutely truthful about this, I cannot tell the difference between active, Guard, and reserve. And that's the way it's supposed to be."[14]

The previous three conflicts trace the evolution of the Guard from what was once considered a "flying club" to the efficient, well-trained force of today. It is a force that has become an important element of the total force policy. It is also a force that will play a greater role in meeting this country's future security needs. As their role grows, it becomes increasingly important for planners to understand the rules which govern the access and employment of these fighter forces in both peace and war.

Accessibility

How does the Air Force gain access to the Air National Guard in peacetime contingency and wartime situations? The answer comes in three parts.

The first part is a declaration of a national emergency which leads to a full mobilization. The second is the involuntary or 200,000 personnel call-up. The third is volunteerism.

Full Mobilization

The simplest option for gaining access to the Guard is a declaration of a national emergency which leads to a full mobilization. Both the president and Congress have legal, vested powers to activate reserve and National Guard forces in a national emergency. Declaring a national emergency gives the commander in chief the option of utilizing all of this country's military forces with regard to federal-state agreements.

However, a declaration of war or the declaration of a national emergency carry very serious consequences that may not be appropriate for operations in the post-cold war environment, as seen by the absence of a declaration during Desert Storm. The Department of Defense and the Congress recognized and addressed the limited use of the full mobilization option in two separate statutes. The first addresses an involuntary reserve call-up and the second governs the use of reserve volunteers.

Involuntary Call-Up

The involuntary call-up, created in 1976 under Title 10 United States Code (USC), is the second option for gaining access to the Guard.[15] The initial law authorizes the president to call up 50,000 reservists in response to crisis situations without a formal declaration of war. The time limit for the activation was initially set at 90 days with the president having the option of extending the call-up for an additional 90 days in the interest of national security.[16] Subsequent legislation changed the authorization to 200,000 and the time limit to 270 days.[17]

While the call-up authority is specifically vested in the president, the Congress has the authority under the War Powers Act to override the call-up and order the withdrawal of the forces within 60 days.[18] Since its passage, the only time the involuntary call-up option has been used was when President George Bush ordered 200,000 reservists to active duty for 180 days in support of Desert Shield/Storm.

Volunteerism

The third and most used option for gaining access to the Guard, especially in the Air Force, is volunteerism. During the early stages of many contingency operations, many of the critical skill positions needed to support the operation are filled with reserve volunteers. Desert Shield is

a perfect example as most of the early reserve support was based on volunteers. During peacetime, the governor of a state is the commander in chief of the state's guard units. Title 10 USC 672(d) states "the Army National Guard or the Air National Guard may not be ordered to active duty under this subsection without the consent of the governor or other appropriate authority of the State or Territory, Puerto Rico, or the District of Columbia, whichever is concerned."[19] The Montgomery amendment added in subparagraph (f) the following: "The consent of a governor described in subsections (b) and (d) may not be withheld (in whole or in part) with regard to active duty outside the United States, its territories, and its possessions, because of any objection to the location, purpose, type or schedule of such active duty."[20] The amendment has been tested and upheld in the US Supreme Court.[21] The governor still has the option of refusing to release volunteers for federal service, however, that refusal must be on the basis of state militia requirements. The major drawback to the volunteer approach is the potential loss of unit critical occupation specialties and the subsequent impact this loss could have on units if they are called to active duty either through a full mobilization or an involuntary (200,000 personnel) call-up.

In September 1993, a senior working group chaired by Deborah Lee, assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs, addressed the major issues involved in gaining access to the reserves in the post-cold war environment. One of the results from this working group was a policy statement defining how the Department of Defense would gain access to the reserve forces. The policy stated that for major regional conflicts or domestic emergencies, access to reserve component units and personnel would be through an involuntary call-up. For lesser emergencies and peacetime contingencies, maximum consideration would be given to voluntary access before seeking an involuntary call-up.[22]

This section provides a brief overview of how the Air National Guard fighter force has evolved into the effective force of today. The performance of the force during Desert Storm is indicative of the level of capability found throughout the Guard fighter community. While there are three basic options for gaining access to the Guard force, two of the options—a declaration of a national emergency which leads to a full mobilization, and an involuntary call-up—will play little if any role in peacetime operations. The question remains, will a volunteer force composed primarily of part-time personnel be available to meet this country's peacetime contingency needs.

Availability

Declining defense budgets, a shrinking active force, and a vigorous National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement will all combine to increase this nation's reliance on Air National Guard fighters. Indeed, the issue of availability is rapidly developing into one of the single greatest problems facing the Guard in the 1990s.

For this paper, the availability issue is narrowly defined around the question of how to increase the level of Guard fighter involvement in peacetime operations without negatively impacting the unique makeup of this predominantly part-time force. The first step in addressing the availability issue is an understanding of the barriers which have combined to limit the availability of this important fighter asset. Foremost among these barriers are the limitations associated with the traditional guardsman or the part-time manning structure found in most Guard fighter squadrons, and the problems associated with tasking a force composed primarily of personnel with full-time civilian jobs.

Manning Limitations

The Guard's reliance on a traditional workforce, which includes approximately 75 percent of Guard personnel, is one of the primary barriers to increasing fighter availability.[23] For the most part, the Guard's traditional manning structure is more suited to the demands of a cold war environment rather than the contingency demands of today.

During the cold war, with the exception global warfare, the Air Force expected to meet most contingency operations with its large standing fighter force.[24] Beyond an air defense role, there was little need to involve Guard fighter assets in day-to-day peacetime operations or regional contingencies. Without heavy mobilization demands, Guard fighter units could operate quite effectively with only about 32 percent of its workforce on full-time status.[25]

While this type of arrangement worked well in the past, it may prove inadequate in meeting the demands of the future. A fighter force composed primarily of traditional guardsmen with full-time civilian commitments has and will continue to create challenges for peacetime use.

Impact on Traditional Guardsmen

The second barrier to increasing the availability of Guard fighters involves striking a balance between increased military service and civilian employment responsibilities. There is a limit to how often the Air Force can task a force composed primarily of traditional personnel before it

begins to affect their livelihood in the civilian community. During the Gulf War, 55 percent of the traditional members reported an income loss during their mobilization period.[26] Tasking these traditional members with more military service, with a corresponding loss of civilian income, will inevitably lead some to "vote with their feet." Maj Gen John J. Closner, chief of the Air Force Reserve, expressed similar concerns during congressional testimony in 1993. Major General Closner stated, "I'm concerned that we may be demanding too much—not just from reservists, but also from their family members and civilian employers. If we commit our people to more than they can reasonably provide, retention could drop drastically."[27] Maj Gen Phil Killey, past director of the Air National Guard echoed these same sentiments when he stated, "any shift in magnitude of the active duty structure changes should be done in an orderly fashion to avoid damaging or destroying the capability we are trying to preserve."[28]

Increasing military demands upon the traditional workforce could also lead to a lessening of employer support within the business community. Deborah Lee, the assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs, has already reported an increase in calls from employers complaining about "excessive duty" rising from 2.3 percent pre-Desert Storm, to 11 percent in 1993.[29] According to the Reserve Officers Association, employers' reactions to increased use of National Guard and reserve troops are a major worry. One official stated, "there is a genuine fear that employers will find ways to fire employees who are absent too often for reserve duty."[30] Unless changes are made, the Air Force and Air National Guard can expect to see the impact on the traditional force get worse as the role of the Guard fighter force grows in peacetime operations.

A heavy reliance on a traditional workforce more suited to a less demanding operations tempo and the negative impact frequent military service has on the traditional guardsman have both combined to limit the availability and involvement of Air National Guard fighters for peacetime use. Reacting to these two barriers, the Air National Guard is exploring several different work arounds designed to increase the level of peacetime Guard fighter support while at the same time minimizing the impact on the traditional workforce.

Work Arounds

In this paper, a *work around* is a legal means of getting the job done under existing statutes and agreements. The result will supply the Department of Defense with the forces needed, but the avenue for achieve-

ment may be cumbersome or have ramifications that may have to be addressed in the future.

The Department of Defense and the Air National Guard have implemented or proposed the following four work arounds to improve Guard fighter availability during peacetime operations. They are the development of rainbow units, greater reliance on full-time personnel, better use of annual training to support real-world taskings, and steps to relieve the financial impact on the traditional guardsmen and their civilian employers.

Rainbow Units

Unlike airlift and tanker aircraft which normally fly short time frame, single-ship missions out of home station, fighter units usually deploy with more aircraft and personnel for longer periods of time. The increased length of these deployments makes it harder to include the traditional guardsman in peacetime fighter contingency deployments without creating undue hardships on their civilian jobs. Based on this limitation, the Guard has supported some contingency fighter taskings by relying on rainbow units composed of volunteers from several different fighter groups. For example, to support a Reserve and Guard deployment of 12 A-10s to Aviano, Italy (Deny Flight), the Guard used personnel from seven different fighter groups.[31] The Guard also used personnel and equipment from four different fighter groups to support an F-16 deployment for Operation Provide Comfort II.[32] Supporting contingency taskings with rainbow units gives the Guard the luxury of spreading the burden of support among several different fighter groups. Spreading the support allows the Guard to garner a greater number of volunteers and full-time personnel to man these units, effectively minimizing the overall impact on the traditional workforce.

While rainbow units have had some limited success, they are not without problems. Some of the problems associated with these units involve the establishment of clear command lines and relationships, the selection of maintenance and aircraft resources, and legal problems stemming from the mixing of Reserve and Guard personnel and equipment in an active duty command structure. Finally, and most importantly, a rainbow unit is not the way the Guard should be organized for war.

As demonstrated during the Korean War and Desert Storm, a Guard fighter squadron operates best when it trains together, deploys together, and fights together. Taking volunteers and equipment from several different organizations to form a rainbow unit is a way of business the National Guard Bureau has fought against for years, but apparently succumbed to

out of necessity. Given the fact some of these peacetime operations could escalate into open conflicts, this type of organization is not how the Guard should be prepared to fight. While rainbow units did a good job supporting Provide Comfort II and Deny Flight operations, the fact remains they are an ad hoc arrangement that can be cumbersome to organize and difficult to maintain.

Increased Use of Full-Time Personnel

Another work around designed to improve availability is placing a greater reliance upon the full-time work force to meet some peacetime taskings. Two areas within the Guard fighter force have seen particular emphasis. One is the rainbow units just discussed and the other is in the level of full-time manning found in the 124th Fighter Group (FG), Boise, Idaho. In the 124 FG, only one of two organizations still flying the F-4G Wild Weasel, almost 44 percent of the pilots are on full-time status compared to about 25 percent for the rest of the Guard fighter force.[33] The high percentage of full-time personnel has not only increased the 124 FG's availability but has also reduced the impact of increased military taskings on its traditional guardsmen. When the 124 FG deployed six F-4Gs to Southwest Asia in 1993, 73 percent of the deployed personnel were full-time personnel.[34] Given the length of the deployment (six months), it is highly unlikely the 124 FG could have supported this mission without such a large percentage of full-time personnel. The high level of full-time manning gave the 124 FG commander much greater flexibility in fulfilling mission requirements.

Increased full-time manning in the 124 FG had a definite impact on the makeup of the personnel deployed to Southwest Asia in 1993. However, for a variety of reasons, the same percentage of full-time manning is not available to other fighter units. While the Air National Guard B-1 squadron at McConnell AFB, Kansas, does have 100 percent of its aircrew force on full-time status, this is the exception rather than the rule. While the contributions of the full-time workforce are important and critical to the availability issue, that workforce still only constitutes approximately 32 percent of the personnel assigned to a Guard fighter squadron.[35] If significant progress is expected on the availability issue, the Air Force and the Air National Guard must find some way to increase full-time manning and the involvement of the traditional workforce while at the same time limiting the impact on civilian jobs and responsibilities.

Better Use of Training Time

One work around designed to increase the involvement of the traditional workforce is changing the way Guard fighter units train and deploy for peacetime operations. The first step in the process is to combine, whenever feasible, peacetime taskings with annual training requirements. Better use of training time has become a key ingredient to Department of Defense efforts to improve Guard training realism and readiness. According to Secretary Perry, "instead of drilling at home in simulated scenarios, citizen soldiers would fulfill their annual training requirements by participating in real-world missions."[36] Using the two weeks of annual training to support real-world operations will not only increase the involvement of the traditional workforce but may, in many instances, improve the overall quality of annual training. For example, at a theater equipment and maintenance site at Fort Kobbe, Panama, Guard personnel are using their annual training to repair engineering equipment and to order essential supplies.[37] These personnel, according to Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) commander in chief (CINC), Gen Barry McCaffrey, are "highly motivated and well-trained" and "bring unique capabilities we depend on."[38] Accomplishing these real-world tasks during their annual training not only allows these Guard personnel to put their job skills into practice but also provides valuable mission support to an overseas CINC.

The second step is to provide Guard units with as much advanced warning as possible for real-world deployments. Providing sufficient notice of deployments will enable civilian employers and traditional members to better plan and prepare for their absence. Having sufficient time to prepare for a deployment will also allow units to tailor their training programs to meet the expected tasking. It also gives units greater flexibility in planning and scheduling training days to either prepare for the deployment or to "husband" for use during the deployment. Finally, increased warning time will give Guard personnel the opportunity to arrange for family support—support that may not be available without adequate prior notice.

The last step is the implementation of a flexible and liberal rotation policy during peacetime deployments. Allowing fighter units to rotate traditional personnel every two to four weeks during peacetime contingencies will help decrease the impact long deployments have on the traditional workforce.

Creative scheduling of annual training requirements, increased notice of planned deployments, along with a frequent and liberal rotation policy will help reduce the negative impact contingency support can have on

the traditional workforce. Unfortunately, the unique training requirements of the fighter force, coupled with the unpredictability of contingency operations, can combine to reduce the effectiveness of the proposed changes.

Increased use of annual training to support contingency taskings and changing the way Guard units are deployed may not be as painless or as easy as it appears. The above changes do not address problems associated with operations that provide little, if any, advance notice like the unexpected movement of Iraqi troops into southern Iraq in October 1994. Nor do the changes address those operations in which it is not feasible to rotate personnel every two to four weeks due to a lack of airlift, prohibited cost, in-country training time, or force integration requirements.

In addition, using annual training to support peacetime operations may not be the best long-term use of this valuable training time for some fighter organizations. For instance, the operating requirements of some peacetime contingency operations may severely limit a fighter squadron's training opportunities. For example, the redundancy in meeting a continuous air-to-air contingency may impact a pilot's currency in air-to-ground training. As a result, many pilots have returned from contingency deployments less combat capable than they were before they deployed.

While an active duty squadron has the time and opportunity to "spin back up" after a deployment, a comparable Guard squadron is somewhat limited in its ability to recoup lost training opportunities due to the limited availability of its traditional force. Over time, the continuous use of annual training to support peacetime operations could negatively impact the overall combat capability of some fighter units.

Civilian Job Considerations

The last work around for improving Guard availability involves several proposed programs designed to reduce the financial impact on the traditional guardsman and his or her civilian employers during times of military service. Even though there are several laws protecting Guard personnel from job discrimination during times of military service, there are no laws addressing the financial penalties many traditional guardsmen and businesses incur during this time. For some small businesses, it can be a serious financial burden to support an employee's increased military commitment. To alleviate some of this burden, the Department of Defense is proposing a tax credit for civilian employers and self-employed Guard personnel. During times of military service, individual

businesses could be eligible for a tax break for up to two consecutive calendar years.[39] This tax credit would help offset the financial penalty many businesses incur when their employees are called to active duty service.

A second program designed to alleviate financial burdens involves developing an insurance program to offset individual income lost during extended periods of active duty. The insurance protection would provide between $1,000 and $5,000 per month to participating personnel during their periods of active duty service.[40]

In summary, a manning structure suited for limited use, coupled with the civilian obligations of its traditional workforce have combined to limit the availability of the Guard fighter force. The development of rainbow units, increased use of full-time personnel, creative scheduling and use of annual training, and initiatives designed to relieve the financial impact on both traditional members and their civilian employers are all work arounds designed to improve Guard fighter availability. While there is some immediate benefits from these work arounds, they are in many respects short-term measures that do not provide any permanent solutions to the availability issue. The long-term solution may involve more than just changing the rules by which the Guard operates and deploys its fighter force. It may in fact involve a fundamental shift in the way the active Air Force views and supports its Guard forces.

Options for the Future

This paper developed options for increasing Guard fighter availability based on two specific questions. First, does the option increase the number of full-time personnel within a unit with a corresponding increase in capability, and second, does the option improve the utilization of the traditional guardsmen while limiting the impact on their civilian responsibilities?

While the first two options deal directly with changes within the Guard system itself, the last option takes a different approach. It poses the question, should all fighters be transferred out of the Guard into the active force?

Option One

The first option would increase full-time manning within deployable unit training codes (UTC) by increasing the number of active duty personnel assigned to Guard fighter units. In addition, each fighter

wing/group would be scheduled for an extended period of active duty (45 days) every two years for contingency operational support.

The central theme of this option is the increased use of active duty personnel in deployable UTCs. The objective is to enhance availability by reducing the number of traditional Guard positions and replacing them with active duty personnel. In addition, scheduling an extended period of active duty every two years allows for greater flexibility in meeting real-world taskings while giving the traditional workforce and civilian community advance notice of service.

Pros. The benefits associated with this option are threefold. First, the option increases the number of full-time personnel (Air Force active duty) without appreciably increasing personnel costs to the Guard. For every active duty position added to a unit, one traditional Guard position would be eliminated. The Guard would support all training requirements and costs to include the additional flying time required for maintaining combat capability. Within a fighter squadron, the additional active duty personnel would be used to fill deployable UTC combat positions. These additional personnel also give a commander the flexibility of moving other wing or group full-time personnel into deployable positions traditional guardsmen may not be able to fill. For instance, if a traditional Guard flight commander is unable to deploy due to civilian job constraints, he could now be transferred to another position and replaced by a full-time member. In a 15-primary-assigned aircraft fighter squadron, this option could provide up to five additional full-time pilots to supplement the approximately six full-time instructor pilots normally assigned to a squadron. This same augmentative approach could also be applied to deployable positions within the enlisted/maintenance work force.

The second benefit associated with this option is that with a larger percentage of full-time personnel, the reliance on the traditional workforce for contingency support will naturally decline, thus giving units greater flexibility in meeting contingency needs. This option is not designed to end the involvement nor the role of the traditional guardsman. Many traditional members would still volunteer and help meet contingency taskings. However, the option will help to alleviate some of the deployment burden traditional members are now shouldering.

Finally, the assignment of more active duty personnel to the Guard will help to increase the level of understanding and knowledge among the active duty force. A certain amount of friction and parochialism exists between the Guard and the active duty. Within the active duty force, this friction is often driven by a lack of knowledge or a misunderstanding of Guard capa-

bilities and availability. Future fiscal constraints will only increase this friction as both forces compete for scarce resources. Exposing more active duty personnel to the Guard system will help in educating the active duty on what the Guard can offer in both peace and war.

For this option to work effectively, an active duty assignment to the Guard must not be viewed or perceived by senior Air Force leadership as undesirable. The negative connotations associated with a Guard assignment are deeply ingrained in the active duty. Even the assignment system treats Guard assignments as second-rate. For instance, only individuals selected by a Return To Fly Board (RTFB) can be assigned as an Air Force advisor to an Air National Guard fighter unit. Because these assignments are not looked upon as career enhancing, provisions are made for RTFB selectees to turn down Guard assignments without prejudice. If only Guard jobs are left in the assignment system, RTFB selectees may opt to meet the next RTFB to compete for an active duty assignment. This action only fosters the negative perceptions associated with Guard assignments. For this option to succeed, a Guard assignment must be treated as fulfilling requirements for command.

Rotating a large number of active duty personnel into the Air National Guard was accomplished once before under a program called Operation Total Force (OTF). Under the OTF program, two or three active duty pilots, usually young captains, were assigned to Guard fighter squadrons for a period of two to three years. These young pilots were used in a variety of positions and proved invaluable in helping Guard units transition into newer aircraft. While the program was officially ended in 1994, the influence of the program will be felt for years as these young pilots return to the active force with a better appreciation and understanding for the Guard force.

The United States Army is also involved with a program that places a large number of active duty personnel in the Guard. The United States Army will soon have up to 5,000 active duty soldiers in various Army National Guard units. The objective is to increase the readiness and training efficiency of selected Army Guard units, particularly those units with a rapid deployment requirement.

As noted above, there are precedents for placing increased numbers of active duty personnel within the Guard system. Under this option, the specific number of active duty personnel assigned to a Guard unit would depend upon individual unit requirements and UTC needs. For instance, an air defense fighter squadron that seldom deploys outside the continental United States (CONUS), may need little if any active duty augmentation. However, a highly deployable unit may need several addi-

tional active duty personnel. Whatever the case, these additional personnel will enable units to better meet a requirement of an extended period of active duty.

Scheduling an extended 45-day period of active duty every two years for each Guard fighter unit will ensure a dedicated fighter force is prepared and on call for contingency support tasking. Whether or not that unit deploys would depend upon the specific need for contingency fighter support. The bottom line is that the unit is available and responsible for meeting a 45-day window of military service.

Long-range scheduling of this commitment will give the traditional workforce and the civilian community adequate time to prepare for the commitment. In addition, an extended period of active duty could provide a rallying point for the local community as they pull together to support their local Guard units. Long-range scheduling also gives units time to adjust their training requirements and schedules for the expected deployment. For example, some air defense squadrons who support Coronet Nighthawk operations in Panama begin honing their night operational skills two to three months in advance of the actual deployment.[41] These air defense squadrons can do this because their deployment dates are known at least one year in advance. The same benefits are available to other units if their deployment dates are known well in advance.

Cons. Increasing the number of active duty personnel in the Guard unit will eventually increase the operating cost and the support workload of each fighter unit. The magnitude of the cost and workload increase depends on the number of additional personnel assigned to the unit. The current Guard support structure is not designed for a large number of active duty or full-time personnel. Under the system used to support active duty advisors, a nearby active duty base usually provides records and financial support. With a large contingent of active duty personnel, this same approach may not be feasible or practical.

Any increased costs associated with the option may also prove critical. There are already concerns the Guard fighter force may not be as economical to support as was once thought. In 1992, the Congressional Budget Office estimated it costs approximately $370 million to maintain an active duty F-16 FWE and $300 million for a reserve F-16 FWE.[42] Any action or option which increases the cost of doing business within the Guard fighter community may lead to increased scrutiny.

Finding the required manning for this option may also prove difficult. Many of the active duty personnel affected by the force drawdown will move into critical need positions within the active duty force. Others will

be retrained in other job specialties or retired from the service. The bottom line is that a reduction to a 13 FWE force does not guarantee a surplus of qualified personnel for Guard assignments.

Scheduling an extended period of active duty will have some negative impact on the traditional workforce, even if it coincides with the annual training requirement. The increased active duty commitment might cause a retention problem by forcing some traditional members to separate from their units because of employment or family concerns.

In summary, the feasibility of implementing this first option hinges on cost and the availability of active duty personnel. Any increased operating costs could be justified by an increase in the availability of the Guard fighter force. Under this option, the preponderance of Guard personnel are still traditional guardsmen. They are the cornerstone of the citizen soldier concept that has proven to be viable in the past. If this option is to gather Guard and political support, it must not be seen as an attempt to reduce the role or the place of the traditional guardsmen. For the option to succeed, it must increase the availability of the force without sacrificing Guard autonomy.

Option Two

Option two would increase the number of active duty personnel in only a few selected fighter units. These units would then perform a large percentage of Guard contingency support taskings.

This option recognizes the limitations and added cost associated with the option one requirement of increasing active duty manning in all Guard fighter units. Option two limits the increase in active duty personnel to only a few selected fighter units with the idea these units would then perform the majority of Guard contingency fighter support taskings.

Pros. The smaller number of fighter units affected by this option would not only reduce the overall cost of the option when compared to option one, but would also simplify the task of selecting and sourcing the additional manpower. Once again, the exact number of active duty personnel assigned to a unit would depend upon unit needs and UTC requirements. However, the total number of fighter units tasked under this option might eventually include up to six general purpose fighter units and one or two air-to-air units.

Increasing full-time manning in selected flying units is already an option being used in the Air National Guard. As noted earlier, the 124 FG and the B-1 unit at McConnell AFB have a higher percentage of full-time personnel than most other Guard units. The higher percentage of

full-time personnel has allowed the 124 FG to meet more demanding peacetime taskings for longer periods of time with less impact on its traditional force. It stands to reason other units would also experience these same benefits with a corresponding increase in the number of active duty personnel assigned to the unit.

Once these fighter units are identified and "beefed up," they would then perform the majority of the Guard's no-notice, long duration, peacetime taskings. In fact, these units, with their increased availability, could also be one of the first fighter units to respond to a crisis situation. Once in-theater, these units could serve as core rainbow units providing a stabilized command structure and experience base benefiting other personnel who rotate in and out.

Cons. The biggest drawback to option two is the increased reliance on just a few selected units. During times of tight fiscal constraints, there might be pressure to fund these units at the expense of other Guard units. There might even be a perception that these units represented a first team of elite personnel while other fighter units were relegated to a second team status. This type of perception would certainly lead to a loss of both Guard and political support.

Increasing active duty manning in only a few selected units may also prove inadequate in meeting future requirements, especially if the current active duty drawdown continues past 13 active FWEs. A further reduction in the active duty force structure is a distinct possibility as Secretary Perry has already indicated there might be additional force reductions if a proposed balanced budget amendment is passed.[43] Given this scenario, the level of taskings assigned to these units might prove overwhelming. These selected fighter units would still have a large percentage of traditional personnel. While adding additional active duty personnel will improve a Guard unit's availability, the unit will not have the same capability or availability as an active duty unit. Overtasking these units might cause a backlash of resentment and reduce the level of support within the local civilian community. The importance of which is often overlooked or misunderstood in the active duty community.

Option two offers the benefits of reduced costs and lower manpower requirements when compared to option one. While option two would certainly improve the availability of these few selected units, the viability of the option ultimately depends on the drawdown of the active duty force. Further reductions below a 13 FWE force will cause the Air National Guard to assume an even greater share of the fighter peacetime contingency requirements. As such, this option may prove inadequate in meeting future peacetime fighter needs.

Option Three

This option takes a radical approach to solving the availability problem. It recommends transferring most, if not all, of the fighters from the Air National Guard into the active duty force.

Pros. First and foremost, this option eliminates any problems associated with the availability issue. Transferring most, if not all, of the Guard fighters into the active duty force effectively ends any problems associated with the Guard's traditional manning structure and the negative impact increased peacetime taskings has on the traditional workforce. This option provides an increased fighter capability to respond to virtually any peacetime contingency operation for any length of time.

As mentioned earlier, the actual monetary savings between two identical Guard and active duty fighter units may not be as large as once thought. Any additional cost associated with this option might be offset and justified by the increased fighter availability this option offers.

Cons. Moving additional FWEs into the active duty force will not save money. By whatever accounting method used, Guard fighter units are less expensive to maintain and operate than their active duty counterparts. As mentioned in a 1992 RAND Corporation study, the Congressional Budget Office reported a Guard fighter unit is 60 to 70 percent cheaper to maintain than its active duty counterpart. The 30 percent difference equates to savings of about one million dollars for an F-16 squadron.[44] Given the tight fiscal constraints of today, the saving is significant enough to question the viability of this option.

Implementation of option three could also lead to the loss of community and political support. A military structure that relies upon the citizen-soldier concept is responsible for generating a tremendous amount of political and civilian support for the military. Putting these prestigious and highly visible assets into the active duty force could negatively impact future community and political support for military programs. It is support that may in effect outweigh any gains this option may provide.

One last aspect warrants consideration. The converse argument could place all airlift and refueling capability in the Air National Guard and Reserve forces. This in effect would shift the availability problem to the support forces which are every bit as critical as the fighter forces in meeting contingency taskings. The "tip of the spear" could be dulled if total reliance is placed, for any portion of the total team, in either the active duty or Guard force.

Summary

This section outlines three possible options for addressing the availability issue. Both options one and two recognize the increased availability associated with more full-time manning. However, neither option recommends an end to the Guard's reliance on a traditional workforce. The traditional guardsman is still the key component in the Guard force structure. If anything, the first two options recognize the potential impact increased military service can have on the traditional member and attempts to minimize that impact by decreasing reliance on the traditional force. Traditional guardsmen will still participate in contingency operations as witnessed in Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

The third option of moving Guard fighters into the active duty force faces too many political, fiscal, and force structure obstacles to be considered feasible. United States military forces must be reactive and not rely on any one force for all its resources. The citizen-soldier is a complimentary part of the total force—not a single source.

Of the three proposed options, we believe option one has the greatest potential of addressing the availability issues. There are no drawbacks to increasing the number of active duty personnel in the Air National Guard from a readiness perspective. The increase will not only improve fighter availability but will also help to educate the active duty force on the capabilities and limitations of the Guard force. It is a win-win proposition for each group.

It is apparent there are no silver bullet solutions for increasing fighter availability within the Air National Guard. Each of the options has some drawbacks and advantages, cost savings and expenses. There may in fact be other options more attractive than these three or different ideas that could be incorporated into new and more viable options. Whether there is total agreement on these options is not important. What is important is to recognize the need for change and improvement if the Guard fighter force is to meet the challenges of the future.

Conclusion

There is little doubt this nation's reliance on the Air National Guard will continue to grow. Declining defense budgets, active duty force reductions, and a vigorous National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement will all work to increase the involvement of the Air National Guard in peacetime operations. While the Guard stands ready to meet this country's needs during war, an increased peacetime operations tempo may stress the system unless changes are made. The limited

availability of Guard fighter assets for anything other than global warfare is driven not only by a manning structure more suited to the cold war environment but also by the negative impact increased military service has on the traditional workforce. While the Guard has implemented several work arounds to improve the availability of these fighter assets, the work arounds do not address what lies at the core of the availability problem, limited numbers of full-time personnel.

The options discussed in this paper attempt to solve the availability issue by either increasing the number of active duty personnel in the Guard or by eliminating part of the fighter force from the Guard system. Whatever the case, the solution to the availability issue will probably entail a greater role for the active duty force in supplementing and supporting the Guard force.

The US military has often been accused of preparing to fight the next war by using lessons learned from the last war and applying them to a future that has no resemblance to the past. In many respects, this is the problem facing the Air National Guard today. The Air Force cannot assume that a manning structure uniquely suited to the past will continue to meet the needs or demands of the future. If the Air National Guard is to play a greater role in our national security, the Air Force, in concert with the Air National Guard, must be prepared to make changes in the support provided to the Air National Guard. These changes will not be without cost or sacrifice. However, they are necessary if the Air National Guard is to meet the challenges and demands of the future.

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