

Maintaining an Operational Reserve: A Case for Combatant Command Assignment

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Abstract

The Army Reserve has shifted from a strategic to an operational reserve since 9/11. An effective way for the Army to achieve national defense and national military end states is for Combatant Command (COCOM) to assign United States Army Reserve (USAR) forces to Combatant Commanders. While the concept of regionally aligned Army forces begins to address this pursuit, a formal relationship, such as assignment, has not been established. Legislation, such as Goldwater-Nichols, Total Force and Total Army policies, and both Army and Joint doctrine support COCOM assignment while granting Operational Control to the Army Service Component Command. Evidence of successfully executing a proper formal relationship is the assignment of the 351st Civil Affairs Command (CACOM) to US Pacific Command. Assignment of the remaining CACOMs should happen at the earliest opportunity. Foregoing the Army Reserve Engagement Team concept at the Geographic COCOM and focusing efforts on the Army Reserve Engagement Cells will better integrate assigned USAR forces into Joint, theater activities. Assignment of additional USAR commands gives Combatant Commanders the tools they need when they need them.

Maintaining an Operational Reserve: A Case for Combatant Command Assignment

The future requires ongoing support to theater cooperation missions. By aligning and integrating with Army Service Component Commands and Combatant Commands, we can remain ready and relevant--leveraging our respective resources and strengths.

—Lieutenant General Jeffrey W. Talley¹

Since the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, more than 300,000 United States Army Reserve (USAR) Soldiers have mobilized and deployed worldwide, to include combat zones in Iraq and Afghanistan. Despite decreasing numbers of combat deployments, the steady demand for Army Reserve capabilities remains and has created a new paradigm where the Army Reserve plays a critical role for the Total Army and Total Force. The evolution into an enduring operational force requires the Army Reserve to provide forces for planned and emerging missions both at home and abroad.²

Prior to 9/11, the Army Reserve performed a strategic reserve role, but became operational out of necessity with no formal plan to do so. The operational reserve is a relatively new construct resulting from continuous mobilizations and deployments as part of an integrated force package with the Active Component in support of the Global War on Terror (GWOT). As cuts to Active Component forces are likely, reliance on reserve capabilities will remain.³

At the height of the GWOT deployments in 2007, the reserve component constituted nearly 30 percent of deployed forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. As of 2015, the Army Reserve provides half of the Army's combat support. More specifically, substantial portions of the Army's enablers reside in the Army Reserve: 90 percent of civil affairs capabilities, 65 percent of supply and maintenance units, 60 percent of

medical service professionals, 40 percent of transportation units, 35 percent of engineers, and 24 percent of military police.⁴

As the Army Reserve continues to play a vital role around the globe, the Combatant Commander (CCDR) should have Combatant Command (COCOM), Command Authority, of those forces in order to more effectively and efficiently achieve national defense and national military strategy end states. While the Army touts regionally aligned forces as the way to best support Geographic Combatant Commands (GCCs), the precedent has already been set with USAR units COCOM assigned to the GCC with Operational Control (OPCON) granted to the Army Service Component Command (ASCC). This paper will show that policy, Joint and Army doctrine, legislation such as Goldwater-Nichols, and recent GWOT experience support COCOM assignment of USAR forces. A case study for COCOM assignment, based on the 351st Civil Affairs Command, will illustrate the precedent and give an indication of how the process works. Lastly, specific recommendations for managing COCOM assignment will be provided.

Background

The GCCs are responsible for large geographic areas of responsibility (AOR) as assigned in the Unified Command Plan (UCP). They are responsible for conducting operations and accomplishing missions under the direction of the President and Secretary of Defense (SecDef). The UCP divides the globe into six geographic commands: U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM), U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM), U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM), U.S. European Command (USEUCOM), U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM), and U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM).⁵

The GCCs align activities across the range of military operations and all elements of national power. They share some common responsibilities regardless of location, such as detecting, deterring, and preventing attacks against the U.S. and its territories. They carry out assigned missions, and plan for and execute military operations within their AOR. Additionally, GCCs are responsible for force protection and personnel recovery of assigned or attached forces, and must protect U.S. citizens. GCCs conduct Security Cooperation (SC) activities with partner nations. Later in this paper, the author will address in more detail Security Cooperation, due to the land force required and the Army's role in accomplishing those missions.⁶

The GCCs follow common operating guidelines to establish and maintain unity of effort within and between Joint Forces, other government agencies, international and other partners. To do this they integrate joint capabilities in a complementary vice duplicative manner, while avoiding unnecessary complexity. The GCC commanders focus on operational objectives that support achievement of national strategic ends. They do this through ensuring freedom of action, flexibility, and unity of effort.⁷

The GCCs exercise COCOM of assigned forces, and like all Joint Forces, have subordinate service component commands. Service components consist of the Service Component Commander and Service forces assigned to the GCC. The Army Service Component Command (ASCC) plans for utilization of Army forces in support of combatant command requirements.⁸ The primary role of the ASCC is to fulfill the service support function; however, they may also receive OPCON of forces.⁹ According to Army Regulation 10-87:

All operational Army forces are assigned to combatant commands. CCDRs exercise COCOM over these forces. The CCDR normally

delegates operational control (OPCON) of Army forces to the ASCC. ASCCs are generally delegated ADCON by the SA [Secretary of the Army] for Army forces assigned to the CCDR; however, select Army units may be ADCON to an ACOM, DRU [Direct Reporting Unit], or both, as well as the ASCC.¹⁰

While the above quotation clearly articulates the desired relationship of Army forces to the ASCC and GCC, it is not necessarily the case in practice. Operational Army forces are not all assigned to combatant commands. This author will address why assignment is optimal, at least in the case of Civil Affairs Commands, and possibly for other commands as well.

The Army is comprised of an Active Component (AC) and Reserve Component (RC). The RC refers to both the USAR and the Army National Guard. The scope of this paper is restricted to the USAR. Lieutenant General (LTG) Jeffrey Talley serves as both the Commander of the USAR Command (USARC) and as the Chief of Army Reserve (CAR). The primary mission of USARC is to meet Department of the Army contingency operations and/or mobilization requirements.¹¹ The USARC contains 15 commands defined as either Operational Commands or Functional Commands. Operational Commands are fully deployable as either headquarters, individual units, or both. Functional Commands have deployable individual units, but the headquarters are not deployable. Operational and Functional commands may have units of the same or similar functional capabilities or a mix of units with different capabilities. Additionally, there are seven Supporting Commands within USARC. Supporting Commands provide capabilities such as base operations, and administrative, personnel, logistics, retention and liaison support. According to the U.S. Army Reserve website, USARC commands all USAR units.¹² However, the 351st Civil Affairs Command (CACOM) case study

contained within this paper shows that this is not always true, as the 351st CACOM is COCOM assigned to USPACOM with OPCON to U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC).

The USARC is subordinate to U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) and similarly serves as a force provider to meet requirements of combatant commanders and ASCCs. In most cases, USARC commands USAR forces based in the continental U.S. (CONUS) except for those assigned to a combatant command or based outside CONUS.¹³ It is Department of Defense (DOD) policy to manage the USAR as an operational force while maintaining strategic depth. The USAR must be trained and ready to meet assigned missions, and considered for sourcing CCMD requests for forces.¹⁴ According to LTG Talley in a November 2012 interview, the USAR can expect demand to increase in Africa, South America and the Asia-Pacific. The demand could be as high as 25,000 USAR Soldiers per year and must still be able to handle an increased surge demand if called upon.¹⁵

The USAR contains the majority of Army combat support and combat service support capabilities, and has some unique skills that are not found in the Active Component, National Guard, and in some instances sister Services.¹⁶ In order to ensure these unique capabilities are integrated into the Joint Force plans, operations and activities, the USAR regionally aligned theater commands to ASCCs and GCCs. Army Reserve Engagement Cells (AREC) operate at the ASCC headquarters, while Army Reserve Engagement Teams (ARET) reside within the GCC headquarters. These forward stationed full-time planners provide staff planning support to their respective staffs while providing reach back capability to subordinate theater commands. The AREC and ARET planners educate the staff on USAR capabilities and integrate them

into ASCC and joint exercises. The intent is to support planned, scheduled, and forecasted requirements of an ASCC or GCC, in addition to being responsive to contingency.¹⁷ This is a cost effective way for the Army to support the Joint Force due to the USAR comprising 20 percent of total Army manpower for just 6 percent of the total budget.¹⁸ The AREC and ARET concept is a step in the right direction, but as will become evident COCOM assignment is the next logical step to achieving full integration within the ASCC and GCC.

Law

There are specific laws, policies, and Army and Joint doctrine that define command relationships and logically point to COCOM assignment as the most efficient, and effective way for USAR forces to integrate into Total Army and Total Force operations. As written in 10 U.S. Code 162, it is clear that Service Secretaries shall assign all forces under their jurisdiction to unified combatant commands. There is an exception for those forces required to carry out functions of the Secretary of a military department, or those assigned to multinational peacekeeping organizations. The SecDef directs the number and type of forces to be COCOM assigned, but the Service Secretaries select the actual forces to fulfill that direction.¹⁹ The Secretary of the Army also has the ability under 10 U.S. Code section 12304b to order RC units to active duty under certain conditions such as preplanned and/or named operations and missions.²⁰

Perhaps the most well-known and influential piece of legislation for the Joint Force is the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, more commonly known as Goldwater-Nichols. Goldwater-Nichols reorganized the DOD and placed clear responsibility on CCDRs for accomplishing their assigned missions. It gave CCDRs more authority and autonomy and specified that military departments shall

assign forces to those commands, except for those required to carry out Service specific functions. Because of Goldwater-Nichols, CCDRs now have the full authority of command over all subordinate forces, separate from Service influence. This act also established Service Components within the command of the CCDR instead of the Service chief.²¹ Both 10 USC 162 and Goldwater-Nichols make it clear that Service forces should be assigned to combatant commands. It begs the question, therefore, of why USAR forces remain under the command of USARC and FORSCOM and are not COCOM assigned.

Findings by the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves (CNGR) indicate that current laws are insufficient and that Congress should specifically address the RC's role. The last decade has demonstrated that the U.S. requires an operational reserve. However, there is no formally adopted definition of operational reserve, and the DOD and Congress have not held a serious public discussion or debate on the matter. Laws and policies governing the RC need reform in order to sustain an operational reserve force.²² Former Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird originated the idea of a Total Force in 1970.²³ Sixteen years later, Goldwater-Nichols did not specifically address the RC. Developments since 9/11 strongly suggest that now is the time to formalize the operational reserve.²⁴

Policy

While there is still work needed to realize fully an operational reserve with strategic depth, the first major step came by way of the CNGR final report on January 31, 2008. The report identified almost 100 recommendations on how to create and sustain an operational reserve.²⁵ In response to the CNGR report, DOD published DOD Directive 1200.17 entitled *Managing the Reserve Components as an Operational Force*

in October 2008. This was the Department's attempt to define operational reserve and to direct Service Secretaries to manage their respective reserve forces as an operational versus strategic reserve. Part of this definition includes the RC participating in a full range of missions in an "established cyclic or periodic manner that provides predictability for the combatant commands, the Services, Service Members, their families, and employers."²⁶

The Army and Joint Force recently updated policies about the use of USAR forces. A January 26, 2012, Administration Major Budget Decision Briefing outlined the need to retain a ready and capable RC. The briefing also advocated the need to sustain increased readiness prior to mobilization, and maintain key combat-support and combat service support capabilities.²⁷ In September 2012, the Secretary of the Army issued the Army Total Force Policy. It is somewhat surprising that even though the Total Force Concept was originally put forth in 1970, and became policy in 1973, it took until 2012 for the Army to have a formal corresponding policy. The Army Total Force Policy requires that the AC and RC are "organized, trained, sustained, equipped and employed to support combatant commander requirements as force packages tailored to achieve anticipated objectives."²⁸ In order to meet GCC requirements, the ASCC must ensure the predeployment readiness standards of assigned forces are the same between RC and AC. In addition, the policy calls for streamlining voluntary and involuntary call to active duty procedures so that Total Army capabilities are rapidly available and sustainable.²⁹

There are policy gaps similar to the legislative gaps previously outlined. Specifically, a continued operational use of the RC requires a consensus definition of

“operational reserve.”³⁰ Even though an operational reserve has been adopted in response to deployments and both the DOD and Department of the Army Total Force policies, there remains no formal plan or definition of what that means, how it should be resourced, etc.³¹ The strategic reserve model used during the Cold War period assumed that AC forces would meet a crisis and that RC forces would have time after mobilization to train and deploy for the remainder of the crisis.³² This Cold War model was in place and used during Operations DESERT SHIELD/STORM in 1991 and during RC contributions in places like Haiti, Somalia, Bosnia and Kosovo in the 1990s. However, conflicts since the events of 9/11 have made this model obsolete.³³ An operational reserve provides a host of benefits such as:

- strategic depth and operational flexibility;
- expanding the Army’s capacity to meet operational requirements
- a fully integrated Total Force that is trained, manned and equipped;
- enhanced response capabilities by having a manned, equipped and trained RC;
- deployment predictability and maximum dwell time for RC Soldiers, families and employers;
- preservation of unique RC skills that the AC may not possess;
- and preservation of the all-volunteer force.³⁴

The RC can play a greater role in connecting the community with the military, and helping the American public’s understanding of the military’s need for a global posture that assures allies and deters potential foes. The connection is not nearly as effective with the AC. Additionally the RC can play an important role in shaping operations and engagement activities by combining their civilian and military skills.³⁵

LTG Talley suggested that units could partner with private companies to conduct overseas training that supports local population and diplomatic and development objectives during steady state operations.³⁶ Using the RC as part of the Total Army is ideal, but the use must be at a lower level than that experienced during the past 15 years of war.³⁷ Giving the RC feasible missions, proper training, and equipment will keep their skills sharp and allow them to retain capabilities earned during the most recent conflicts.³⁸

There has been some policy progress made, however. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued two reports to congressional committees that emphasized the need for more planning and funding: GAO-09-720, *Army Needs to Reevaluate Its Approach to Training and Mobilizing Reserve Component Forces*, and GAO-09-898, *Army Needs to Finalize an Implementation Plan and Funding Strategy for Sustaining an Operational Reserve Force*.³⁹

Assignment of USAR forces enhances the Army Total Force Policy by providing unique capability to both AC and sister Services. Likewise, it strengthens jointness and reinforces the Total Force Policy by conducting preplanned, predictable activities nested with GCC theater campaign and SC objectives. LTG Talley has advocated for alignment of functional commands to ASCCs and GCCs in order to provide routine, consistent, real world training that directly contributes to GCC success.⁴⁰ Alignment to a GCC could just as easily be assignment and would meet his intent without the GCC and ASCC having to request forces routinely. The benefit to USAR Soldiers could be immense. While the AC typically views an operational reserve as in support of AC during combat-

related missions, the RC views operational reserve as any real world mission, to include steady-state shaping operations.⁴¹

Doctrine

In addition to law and policy, Joint and Army doctrine explain how forces should operate, to include assignment. Doctrinally, units and individuals participate in missions in an established cyclic or periodic manner that provides predictability for CCMDs, Services, Service members, families, and employers.⁴² While this concept may work in theory, it is difficult to execute in reality if units are not planned for as assigned forces. This appears to be the intention of how assigned forces should be employed if CCMDs closely followed doctrine. This concept maintains operational capability and predictability while the CCMD accomplishes objectives. When not employed, RC forces can train based on ASCC guidance for future missions. Those not employed provide strategic depth. Mobilization is not necessarily required when the RC is ordered to active duty for training.⁴³

According to doctrine, CCDRs are responsible for identifying capability requirements of assigned RC forces and providing theater specific on-the-job training when assigned forces are not on active duty or when they are on active duty for training. CCDRs normally exercise training and readiness oversight (TRO) over assigned forces through Service Component Commanders.⁴⁴ The CCDR can provide guidance on operational requirements and priorities for training and readiness programs. The CCDR also coordinates and approves participation by assigned RC forces in joint exercises and training when on active duty for training, or performing inactive duty for training. In addition, the CCDR can review readiness and inspection reports on assigned RC forces, and coordinate and review mobilization plans developed for assigned RC

forces.⁴⁵ Doctrine outlines exactly how and why CCMDs should have assigned RC forces and the corresponding TRO responsibilities.

The Global Force Management Implementation Guidance (GFMIG) is one part of Global Force Management. It focuses on unity of command, and is the tool that assigns units to a GCC. The GFMIG is authoritative for assignment and designates all units as either COCOM assigned or unassigned. Services retain administrative relations for assigned units. COCOM assigned is a much stronger relationship than allocation (temporary loan) which generally only brings OPCON.⁴⁶ The Forces for Unified Commands Memorandum (Forces For) is the second part of Global Force Management. The GFMIG and Forces For are published in alternating years. Together they form the Assignment Tables and Apportionment Tables.⁴⁷

The GCCs without assigned forces must request them on an annual basis to meet directed, planned, and emergent requirements. The allocation process begins with the supported CCDR identifying the forces and capabilities necessary to execute missions.⁴⁸ Requiring a CCDR to ask for forces every year does not allow for adequate planning in support of Theater Campaign Plans (TCP) and campaign support plans that are looking five to seven years into the future.⁴⁹ Additionally, this defeats the purpose of law and policy regarding what GCCs should have at their disposal in the form of assigned forces.

Assignment of USAR forces mitigates a cumbersome, bureaucratic process. GCCs use assigned forces to perform missions in their AOR. If they need additional forces, they request them via the Global Force Management allocation process. This requires GCCs to request forces that require Joint Staff validation and then tasking the

appropriate Joint Force provider, Service provider, or supporting combatant commander to develop sourcing requirements. The Joint Staff consolidates all recommendations and staffs them out to the Services, GCCs and DOD agencies. They then present sourcing recommendations to the SecDef for approval. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff then orders deployments via the published Global Force Management Allocation Plan (GFMAP) and attached annexes. The GFMAP directs force providers to provide forces to the GCC.⁵⁰ This resource intensive process is only required when GCCs do not use, or do not have assigned forces. These layers of bureaucracy would seemingly make responding to crisis more difficult. If forces are assigned to a GCC they can be ordered without asking. This is different from deliberate planning when courses of action for war plans and troop deployment tables are established.

Planning for and using USAR forces requires accounting for certain considerations, however. DOD Directive 1235.10 makes several stipulations about how to activate, mobilize, and demobilize the Ready Reserve. First, it says that individuals being activated should give consent whenever possible and that involuntary activations should be for the shortest possible time. Second, RC members should be notified up to 24 months in advance of an activation and an involuntary mobilization can be for a maximum for 1 year at a time. It goes on to say that defined operational cycles provide advance notification and reduce stress on the individual. Lastly, the directive states that it is incumbent on GCCs and ASCCs to identify as early as possible when RC forces will be needed.⁵¹ Once again, this is much easier when the ASCC campaign support plan is developed with a known force structure that can be incorporated into the planning.

An operational reserve provides capabilities to CCDRs across the range of military operations. Joint Publication 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, clearly explains the roles of GCCs. The CCDRs execute SC daily as part of their steady state operations. They build relationships and partner capacity as a proactive measure to avoid conflict. In order to conduct SC, CCDRs require forces. An operational reserve used in a predictable, planned way provides unique capabilities that the Active Component may not be able to provide.⁵² An operational reserve can contribute to a GCC's mission accomplishment.

The Army manages deployment cycles and readiness through the Army Force Generation Model (ARFORGEN). The ARFORGEN rotates units through reset, train/ready, and available phases, which provides a predictable and structured progression for building trained, ready, and cohesive units.⁵³ By 2017, the Department of the Army will replace ARFORGEN with Sustainable Readiness. This includes both the Sustainable Readiness Model and its corresponding Sustainable Readiness Process. The Army's Sustainable Readiness force generation concept seeks to maintain the highest possible unit readiness while minimizing risk to operational demands.⁵⁴ Ideally, Sustainable Readiness will keep RC units at a high state of readiness intended to be more responsive to the combatant commanders. Sustainable Readiness shortens the time required to move through the readiness phases to provide capabilities to GCCs. The RC forces will go through training and reset phases but not all will go into the available phase. Those not moving to the available phase become part of a "strategic reserve" which ultimately saves money by not having to fund unit training and equipping through the entire process. Those units entering the available pool will go

through a 60-month preparation cycle to include a focused training and build up. Depending on the assigned mission, they may not require combat mission training such as those designated for homeland defense and civil support activities.⁵⁵

ARFORGEN, and subsequently Sustainable Readiness, will provide strategic flexibility to meeting security requirements and for a continuous presence of available forces. The design of both concepts is to allocate forces in the available pool to a CCDR.⁵⁶ We can add predictability by having ASCCs provide relevant training guidance along the readiness models so when units enter the ready stage they are regionally focused on a specific mission and prepared for employment. The troop strength of the AC is set to drop from 490,000, at the beginning of 2016, to 450,000 by the end 2018, with a possibility of dropping to 420,000 by 2021.⁵⁷ One can anticipate that reliance on the RC will remain due to decreasing AC numbers. In response, the USAR will use “progressive readiness” to ensure select units are ready while others are in varying stages of readiness. Units will follow a five-year model. Year 1 is individual training. Units will then go through train/ready 1, 2, and 3 with increasing focus on more complex collective training. Year 5 is the available year for those units designated to enter the available pool.⁵⁸

According to doctrine, the Army is intrinsically joint and trains to provide ready forces to combatant commanders worldwide. In addition to operational deployments, the Army trains through joint exercises and activities in support of ASCC campaign support plans and GCC TCPs. When an ASCC provides regional training guidance to assigned forces and integrates them into joint operations and activities there is potential for increased relevant training opportunities.⁵⁹ Joint interdependence is the integration of

each Service's complementary capabilities at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels.⁶⁰ The Army provides capabilities to the GCC through regionally aligned units and headquarters. These regionally aligned formations adapt training and contingency planning to their particular area of responsibility. In addition, regional focus builds familiarity and interoperability among multinational partners.⁶¹ This type of doctrinal information underpins the argument for assigning forces instead of having them merely "on loan."

Current Arrangements and Initiatives

The deactivation of Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) in 2011 has contributed to difficulties in how Army forces are either assigned or allocated to a GCC. The JFCOM, as a functional combatant command, provided forces to GCCs and developed joint operations concepts. The FORSCOM was the ASCC for JFCOM and for all CONUS based Army conventional forces. The FORSCOM retained control of CONUS based forces not assigned to a GCC when JFCOM deactivated.⁶² This arrangement does not meet the intent of law, policy, or doctrine. It was appropriate to have forces assigned to JFCOM as a functional combatant command. However, arrangements need to be updated so that all CONUS based forces are once again assigned to a combatant command. Under the current arrangement, units are assigned to FORSCOM instead of a combatant command with no Joint oversight. The FORSCOM is providing training guidance to Army units when that guidance should be coming from the CCDR thru the ASCC. The FORSCOM exercises TRO of all RC forces previously assigned to JFCOM.⁶³ This creates a condition where a GCC has to ask FORSCOM for forces that they and their ASCC should have at their disposal.

There is currently no system in place to institutionalize, direct, or require joint tactical training. Goldwater-Nichols did not resolve this issue down to the tactical level, despite being effective at joint operational level training. When GCCs do not have assigned forces, they have no authority to task individual Service organizations to support training. Maintaining habitual joint interdependence as a capability is better than deconflicting ad hoc joint operations because it reduces redundancies and gains efficiencies. Without JFCOM, combatant commanders are the only ones capable of directing and developing training guidance for multi-component, jointly interdependent forces.⁶⁴ The Army has not adapted since JFCOM went away.

The Army has a vital role to play for the Joint Force. The CCMDs prepare campaign plans and establish intermediate military objectives. The ASCCs develop Army Campaign Support Plans to focus activities towards achieving those objectives. Essentially the CCMDs establish the ends and the Army supports the ways. Much of this activity revolves around SC. The USAR provides unique skills to the Army for SC activities. Because no official doctrine at the Joint level exists to facilitate planning, resourcing and assessing SC activities it complicates the Army's ability to synchronize efforts, risking the efficiency and effectiveness of those activities.⁶⁵ If ASCCs had the means to accomplish what they need to do without having to request forces this could be mitigated. The ASCC has to put resources against assigned tasks by the GCC. They have to build a forward-looking plan to address capability gaps by country within a given region. This is especially important so that the ASCC can follow Army doctrine and the five principles of SC: requirements-based, accountable, long-term, coordinated, and

defined.⁶⁶ Imagine the challenge of not having known forces to plan with, provide guidance to, and habitually work with.

Perhaps the most compelling evidence explaining the Army's acquired jointness and justification as to why Army units should be COCOM assigned is found within the recent U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command publication, *The U.S. Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World (AOC)*. The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command explains how the Army depends on other Services for support, and how the Army, in turn, supports other Services, combatant commands, multinational forces, and inter-organizational partners. The AOC describes forward presence and sustained engagement with allied and partner land forces, which creates synergy and multiple options for combatant commanders and national leaders.⁶⁷ The Army engages regionally to build interoperability and relationships while assuring partners and deterring adversaries. Regionally aligned forces shape the security environment and conduct theater SC activities. The RC units can sustain long-term relationships with host nation forces while applying unique civilian military skills.⁶⁸ This recent concept of how the Army operates sounds appealing as long as ASCCs and GCCs have access to forces when and where they need them. They must be able to plan in a forward-looking, predictable manner to do what the Army claims. A consideration for multi-component collective training is the difference in planning horizons. The USAR units often plan annual training periods two years out, while the AC might plan collective training one year out. ASCCs that plan long-term opportunities in accordance with their campaign support plans can help to mitigate this challenge.⁶⁹ The COCOM assignment would make these claims realistic.

The Army's Regionally Aligned Forces (RAF) concept requires further illumination much like an operational reserve does. The RAF is intended to give combatant commanders what they need when they need it and is only possible with an adaptable, flexible and agile Army. The RAF units are defined as units assigned or allocated to combatant commands, and Service-retained capabilities aligned with combatant commands.⁷⁰ The intent is that units are better prepared to operate within a specific theater, and more culturally attuned in general.⁷¹ The concept is to have AC Division headquarters with their separate brigades habitually aligned so that each GCC has at least one Joint Task Force (JTF) capable headquarters. The CCDRs are dictating the training and readiness levels for designated RAF units, along with specific mission guidance. Utilization will be shorter than what became the normal 6 to 12 month Brigade formation deployments since 9/11. Depending on the mission, it could last a week to a few months.⁷² It is these shorter rotations that USAR forces could execute if properly planned. It makes sense that if GCCs are exercising TRO and providing specific guidance they should have forces assigned. If habitual RAF relationships are the goal, why not formalize it as law, policy and doctrine intended?

The RAF will, ideally, give the GCC and the supporting units greater certainty in terms of employment timing and mission readiness.⁷³ An important issue is that unlike assigned, allocated, or apportioned, regionally aligned is not a recognized and defined relationship under Global Force Management. It could appear to some that the Army is avoiding legal and doctrinal relationships in order to retain forces that law, policy, and doctrine say ought to be assigned to a combatant commander. As post Operation ENDURING FREEDOM and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM force requirements are likely

to diminish, the Army will have forces available to support other GCCs. The Army's response is to regionally align and allocate forces to support accomplishment of GCCs Theater Campaign Plan objectives. Revisiting the temporary relationship of allocation each year hinders long term planning and relationship building, which are all imperatives in a GCCs AOR.

Counterarguments

In a resource constrained environment cost is usually an area for concern and this pertains to COCOM assignment of USAR units as well. This cost, however, should not be a limiting factor as far as the Army is concerned. Most funding will come from Title 22, Combat Commander funds, joint exercise funds, and special authorities. If GCCs are willing to pay, the Army should be willing to provide capabilities. The Army will still pay some Title 10 money for security cooperation activities, but using USAR forces for those missions for which they are best suited will be cost effective.⁷⁴ Those Soldiers cost the same as AC Soldiers when they are on active duty orders. For USAR Soldiers, supporting the GCC means actual missions in exciting places. To CCDRs, having forces assigned would mean many of the USAR capabilities in the CONUS, in effect, would reside in their areas of responsibility. Strategically, this offers a way for the USAR and Army to shape the operational environment on land, and provide more consistency with our strategic partners.⁷⁵

There should not be a significant concern about placing too much stress on the USAR by using it operationally as an enabler to, or in lieu of the AC. The Reserve Forces Policy Board serves as an independent adviser to provide advice and recommendations to the SecDef about the reserve components.⁷⁶ Data from their 2014 report suggests that RC members intend to continue their service. It also states that

their families and employers are supportive of their participation, and that the members are willing to serve on domestic or overseas missions.⁷⁷ Using the USAR operationally has clear benefits for all involved. For Soldiers, it helps maintain the experience, skills, and readiness they have gained. The AC can focus on no-notice contingency and warfighting requirements. Lastly, it reduces AC deployment tempo and aids in preserving the All-Volunteer Force.⁷⁸ The USAR should be used for predictable, enduring missions where forward presence, reinforcing allies and building partner capacity are the goals.⁷⁹ This can be done in conjunction with the AC, sister Services, or alone. All of this becomes significantly easier if COCOM assigned.

351st Civil Affairs Command Case Study

The 351st CACOM provides a case study of the successful COCOM assignment of a CONUS based USAR unit to a GCC. In 2013, the SecDef, via Global Force Management, assigned the 351st CACOM to USPACOM. The USPACOM subsequently delegated OPCON to U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC). The primary arguments USPACOM used for COCOM assignment during the Global Force Management process were the same as those posed within this paper. The USPACOM commander understood the need for dedicated Civil Affairs units with their specialty skills that support the security cooperation and steady state activities of the Joint Force.⁸⁰ There are four CONUS based CACOMs, each commanded by a USAR brigadier general. They are regionally aligned to USPACOM, USEUCOM/USAFRICOM, USCENTCOM, and USSOUTHCOM. The primary mission of the CACOM is to provide theater level Civil Affairs planning, coordination, policies, and programs in support of the GCC. Subordinate brigades function as the regionally focused, expeditionary, operational level Civil Affairs capability that supports an ASCC, corps headquarters, or JTF.⁸¹

The COCOM assignment of the 351st CACOM is just one of the many changes USARPAC experienced around that time. The USARPAC commander was upgraded from a three-star to four-star command and the assigned forces increased by approximately 40 percent to include the 351st CACOM from Mountain View, CA. General Vincent Brooks, the USARPAC Commander developed Pacific Pathways as a means to improve USPACOM's regional engagement objectives. Pacific Pathways uses COCOM assigned units such as I Corps, the 25th and 2nd Infantry Divisions, along with assigned enablers to deploy for about 90 days while executing three major exercises. Pacific Pathways additionally utilizes joint air and sea assets during execution. This increases readiness of both partner and U.S. forces. In addition, it provides mission and fiscal predictability, allows units to focus pre-mission training, and forces real world integration and deployment during a training exercise. The missions performed directly nest under the USPACOM theater campaign plan. Going forward, USARPAC has the objective of completing three 90-day rotational pathway deployments per fiscal year. Pacific Pathways provides a unique opportunity for integrating USAR and Joint Forces.⁸²

In getting the 351st CACOM assigned, USARPAC and USPACOM planners understood that establishing habitual relationships through planning, exercise, and engagement would allow the staffs to become familiar with each other, the theater, and associated plans. Long-term repetitive involvement of the same companies and Soldiers with the host nation can build relationships with their forces, and provide an opportunity to work with interagency partners to better synchronize efforts.⁸³ With over 90 percent of

Civil Affairs capability residing in the USAR it is imperative that the GCC and ASCC have that enabler available on a predictable routine basis.⁸⁴

The USARPAC staff has proven it is capable of integrating USAR forces. The 9th Mission Support Command (MSC) is a 3,500-member 1-star command assigned to USARPAC. It receives operational mission taskings from USARPAC, but many resources come from USARC who has “shared administrative control.”⁸⁵ Even though USARC provides resources, OPCON, as a defined joint relationship, trumps “shared administrative control.” The USARPAC involves the 9th MSC and 351st CACOM in ordinary subordinate unit planning sessions and meetings. Full-time support personnel can attend when other USAR personnel cannot. Different planning timelines can sometimes create friction that the USARPAC’s AREC is tasked to handle. An effective AREC can be a USAR synchronizer with the ASCC headquarters.⁸⁶

Having the 351st CACOM COCOM assigned meets LTG Talley’s intent. He touts the Army Reserve as a tailorable and accessible force that is integrated and in support of every ASCC and CCMD. His “Plan, Prepare, Provide” readiness model is designed to maintain an operational force. Plan refers to regional alignment to ASCCs and GCCs, to include the AREC and ARET. Prepare is training as part of the Total Force--Theater exercises and overseas deployment training are captured as part of the prepare function rather than the provide function which refers to contingencies. Provide is the deployment of personnel in response to both domestic and foreign requirements.⁸⁷ This very logic allowed USPACOM and USARPAC planners to secure assignment of the 351st CACOM.

The USARPAC G9 civil-military planners use the USPACOM theater campaign plan to develop a campaign support plan with a two to three year time horizon. They identify engagement and training opportunities, provide training guidance, and identify force requirements to the 351st CACOM well in advance so that USAR Soldiers have the ability to plan. Once USARPAC outlines requirements, the 351st CACOM can task their subordinate brigades to fill those requirements. Once identified, companies and teams can begin training and preparing for missions. Officers assigned to the AREC are the primary synchronizers of USAR support to USARPAC. On paper, there is an ARET at USPACOM tasked to perform a similar function for the GCC. The assigned officers, however, are scattered throughout the headquarters occupying the joint billets that they filled prior to the ARET concept introduction. Essentially, there is no ARET at USPACOM.

A challenge that planners must contend with is tracking and managing the limited number of training days available to USAR units. Typically, Soldiers can use no more than 48 Unit Training Assemblies in a given fiscal year. That equates to 24 days of Inactive Duty Training (IDT). In addition to the 24 IDT days, units will serve on Annual Training (AT) at least 14 days (exclusive of travel time) during each training year. Arrival and departure days count as a training day. Except for overseas deployment training, CONUS based units or Soldiers cannot serve more than 17 days of AT each year (including travel time) without prior approval of the USARC Commanding General (CG). In addition, AT can be granted for up to 29 days when mission dictates.⁸⁸ As previously mentioned, the Secretary of the Army can mobilize Soldiers under 12304b authority for specific, preplanned mission or operations. With appropriate funding and prior planning,

the 351st CACOM can support USPACOM and USARPAC activities whether in an IDT, AT, or 12304b status.

The USARPAC is developing mechanisms and setting precedents that other CACOMs and ASCCs can follow if they are assigned to their respective GCCs. Prior to the 351st CACOM being assigned to USARPAC, and due to their location in Hawaii, the 322nd Civil Affairs Brigade was assigned to USARPAC. Upon the 351st CACOM assignment to USARPAC, they were given OPCON of the 322nd Civil Affairs Brigade to obtain better unity of effort of the civil affairs function. In addition to steady state shaping operations, the 351st CACOM can respond to a contingency on a limited basis. Because USARPAC has OPCON and does not have to ask for Civil Affairs forces, they can tap into full-time support personnel and short notice volunteers. The first demonstration of improved availability of USAR personnel occurred during the April 2015 Nepal earthquake when Active Guard Reserve (AGR) soldiers were quickly sent to support USPACOM efforts.⁸⁹ As the assignment relationship matures, USARPAC and the 351st CACOM will continue to refine how training opportunities are identified, resourced, and meet statutory requirements regarding USAR Soldier notification and training day limitations. If GCCs and ASCCs request and receive assignment of additional USAR forces, the AREC may become increasingly important to synchronizing efforts. The operational reserve is being exemplified in the USPACOM AOR.

Recommendations

The AREC/ARET concept is the highest operational priority of the USARC CG and will be manned to full operational capability by the 3rd Quarter of fiscal year 2016.⁹⁰ The personnel structure of the USARPAC AREC consists of 13 officers and 4 non-commissioned officers of various specialties. The ARET at USPACOM consists of eight

officers scattered across the staff in various directorates with no real mechanism to synchronize or advocate for USAR equities.⁹¹ Proper support to the GCC comes through the ASCC integrating USAR forces into plans and operations via the AREC. This author recommends that USARC forgo the establishment of ARETs and provide more manning to the AREC so they are better able to handle synchronizing additional assigned USAR assets. The ideal size and composition of the AREC would depend on the number of additionally assigned units, their size, and their specialty.

In addition to expanding AREC capabilities, the USAR should expand AGR billets at the GCC and ASCC. The experience of serving in such a headquarters would be beneficial in promoting USAR integration when those AGRs return to USAR units and staffs. An operational reserve can relieve pressure on the AC at the tactical level, and can augment staffs at the operational and strategic level. The risk of not providing broadening opportunities for USAR Soldiers is that they and the USAR will lag behind in professional development. A way to become a second tier force is not to keep up with evolving Army and Joint initiatives. Integration and joint interdependence demand an increased level of broadening assignments.

The remaining three CACOMs should be COCOM assigned to their respective GCCs at the earliest opportunity. With both a USEUCOM and USAFRICOM focus, the 353rd CACOM serves both GCCs with one of its two brigades assigned to each GCC. Because the U.S. Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command headquarters is not deployable, only the CACOMs are eligible for assignment. The USARC operational commands are deployable and should be examined for assignment. The non-

deployable functional headquarters should have the deployable subordinate commands assigned.

Allowing the USAR to execute engagements of various durations may be the most effective way to balance the Army as a Total Force. There is significant risk in not using USAR forces where and when they can because unit and Soldier competency diminishes if not used. The Army must clarify alignment, allocation, and apportionment to the ASCC and GCC, along with identifying who provides mission taskings, training guidance, and validation, along with resources and programmed usage.⁹²

Conclusion

Since the events September 11, 2001, the USAR experienced a dramatic shift from a strategic reserve to that of an operational reserve within the Joint Force. The Army must continue to codify and plan for an operational reserve as the increased demand for reserve forces is unlikely to subside anytime soon. A way to ensure the operational reserve remains a vital tool for CCDRs is to have them COCOM assigned. The increased efficiency and effectiveness from this formalized relationship will help national defense and national military strategy end states. As the Army continues to develop and implement the RAF concept, it is important to note that the 351st CACOM assignment to USPACOM sets a precedent capable of emulation by all GCCs. Statutes such as Goldwater-Nichols, Total Force policies, and both Army and Joint doctrine indicate support for COCOM assignment of USAR forces.

By forgoing ARET implementation at the GCC level and focusing efforts on the ASCC AREC, the USAR can better integrate assigned forces into both Army and Joint activities. Assigning CACOMs and their subordinate units to USEUCOM, USAFRICOM, USSOUTHCOM, and USCENTCOM should happen at the earliest opportunity. In

addition, the Army should study the remaining USAR commands for assignment as well. Lastly, increased broadening assignments in Joint headquarters will benefit the individuals, the staffs they augment and ultimately the USAR by having experienced, well-rounded Soldiers in the ranks. As the Total Army continues to operate as an agile and integral part of the Joint force, CCDRs must have capabilities readily available. COCOM assignment gives them the tools they need to succeed.

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