

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

THE ABRAMS DOCTRINE: IS IT VIABLE AND ENDURING IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY?

By

Timothy I. Sullivan  
United States Army National Guard

Colonel Andrew C. Grimes  
Project Advisor

This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

U.S. Army War College  
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

# Report Documentation Page

*Form Approved  
OMB No. 0704-0188*

Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.

1. REPORT DATE <b>18 MAR 2005</b>	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED -			
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE <b>The Abrams Doctrine Is It Viable and Enduring in the 21st Century?</b>		5a. CONTRACT NUMBER			
		5b. GRANT NUMBER			
		5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER			
6. AUTHOR(S) <b>Timothy Sullivan</b>		5d. PROJECT NUMBER			
		5e. TASK NUMBER			
		5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER			
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) <b>U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, PA, 17013-5050</b>		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER			
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)		10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)			
		11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)			
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT <b>Approved for public release; distribution unlimited</b>					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT <b>See attached.</b>					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES <b>21</b>	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT <b>unclassified</b>	b. ABSTRACT <b>unclassified</b>	c. THIS PAGE <b>unclassified</b>			



## ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Colonel Timothy I. Sullivan

TITLE: The Abrams Doctrine: Is It Viable and Enduring in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 18 March 2005 PAGES: 21 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

This research paper will seek to determine whether the Abrams Doctrine is still viable and flexible enough to endure and serve the National Security Strategy appropriately in the twenty-first century. The intent is to review the influences that this doctrine and the total force policy were purported to address and determine if those same influences are applicable in the United States Army today and in the future. This issue has gotten a lot of attention due to the current Global War on Terrorism especially since the war is expected to last into the foreseeable future or at least several more years as it enters its fourth year of conflict. Secondly, the press consistently reports on the use of the National Guard and Reserve Component and its soldiers' roles in Operation Iraqi Freedom and the Global War on Terrorism with little regard to the 30 year old doctrine which sets forth the use of these soldiers. By reviewing the facts of the past and the ways the Reserve Component was utilized in the past, this paper will review the historical context of the Abrams Doctrine. This historical data will be especially important to understand the context in which the Abrams Doctrine was formulated and the objectives the doctrine's authors were trying to accomplish through its implementation. These objectives were threefold in scope and this paper will establish whether those same influences or objectives apply to the current environment and if they are still applicable to the United States Army of today and the future.

This is especially important at this time as the United States Army transforms into a modular force. This modular force will change the authorizations and positions of over 100,000 soldiers with the goal of making the force more deployable, increase combat power, as well as optimize and balance the force. Other goals include relieving the stress on the Army which has felt the strain of the long conflict of the Global War on Terror. By reviewing the historical and current perspectives of the current doctrine this paper will make recommendations and conclusions as to the viability and endurance of the Abrams Doctrine in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT..... iii

THE ABRAMS DOCTRINE: IS IT VIABLE AND ENDURING IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY? ..... 1

**HISTORICAL USE OF THE ARMY RESERVE AND NATIONAL GUARD..... 1**

**FORMULATING THE ABRAMS DOCTRINE ..... 2**

**OVER UTILIZATION OF THE ACTIVE COMPONENT ..... 4**

**PUBLIC SUPPORT OF MILITARY ENDEAVORS ..... 4**

**READY AND RELEVANT ARMY RESERVE AND NATIONAL GUARD ..... 6**

**APPLICABILITY FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY AND THE ARMY OF TODAY ..... 7**

**CAN WE OVER UTILIZE THE ACTIVE FORCE IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY? ..... 7**

**PUBLIC SUPPORT OF THE MILITARY IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY ..... 8**

**RELIABLE AND RELEVANT RESERVE COMPONENTS IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY ..... 9**

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ..... 9**

ENDNOTES ..... 13

BIBLIOGRAPHY ..... 15



## THE ABRAMS DOCTRINE: IS IT VIABLE AND ENDURING IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY?

For over thirty years the United States military and particularly the United States Army has operated under a Total Force policy informally known as the "Abrams' doctrine." Due to the extensive use of the Army Reserves and National Guard in the Global War on Terrorism this doctrine has been under close scrutiny. The current and future operating environment demands that the nation's National Security and Military Strategy be solidly supported a viable and yet flexible doctrine. Additionally the modular Army transformation needs to be assured that a thorough review of doctrine has been performed to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This review will be performed by examining the tenets of the Abrams' doctrine as it was formulated years ago. It will be reviewed historically as to the use of the Army Reserve components as well as its context in today's environment of a long term conflict. The goal is to determine the flexibility and viability of the doctrine to deal with the National Military strategy both now and in the future.

### **HISTORICAL USE OF THE ARMY RESERVE AND NATIONAL GUARD**

Before we explore the issues and importance of the Abrams Doctrine, we must first examine the historical use of the Reserve Components and how that usage was relevant to best understand the influences which shaped the doctrine. Historically, with the exception of the Viet Nam conflict, the Reserve Components have had a major role in every major war or conflict in modern American history. In World War I seventeen of the forty-three Divisions of the American Expeditionary Army, almost forty percent of the combat divisions, were from the Reserve Components.<sup>1</sup> In World War II, of course, the entire nation was mobilized for the war against Japan and the Axis powers of Europe and again the Reserves although one hundred percent mobilized were a major contributing factor. As an example of their usage, eighteen National Guard divisions and twenty six Reserve divisions were part of both the European and Pacific Theaters. These divisions participated in all major campaigns to include General MacArthur's island hopping campaign in the Pacific. While in Europe the Reserve components served in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, the Normandy invasion, the Battle of the Bulge, and the final campaign to conquer Germany.

The next major conflict was the Korean War from 1950 to 1953, when one hundred and thirty-eight thousand six hundred National Guard soldiers and a total of two hundred thousand Reservists' saw action.<sup>2</sup> These soldiers served in every position from Combat Arms, Combat Support and Combat Service Support with great success. While the Korean War was only a

three year conflict, the next major endeavor was the Viet Nam War. This ten year long conflict saw a dramatic change in the utilization of the Reserve Component.

Viet Nam was the first time in modern history that the Reserve components were not a major effort in the total force to fight a war. During the Viet Nam War it is estimated that only three thousand reservists were mobilized and deployed. These numbers reflect the use of only thirty six units from the National Guard, and they were not utilized until after the Tet Offensive in January 1968 five years into the long term conflict. These extremely small numbers comprised less than one percent of the total force of six hundred thousand servicemen who saw action in that ten year conflict.<sup>3</sup> Of significant importance is the fact that at the same time this major conflict was being conducted the military, especially the Army, had a very large force forward deployed as part of the Cold War deterrence effort in Europe. The results of this lack of use of the Reserves even in their strategic reserve role were to have a major impact on the actions of the man the doctrine is named for, General Creighton Abrams. The lack of use of the Army Reserves in Viet Nam and the minimal use of the National Guard was so influential that the Abrams doctrine would be formulated and the Army designed to assure the Reserve Components would not be overlooked in future conflicts of the United States Army.

#### **FORMULATING THE ABRAMS DOCTRINE**

The lack of use of the Reserve Components during the Viet Nam war was considered by many senior officers to be the most fateful decisions by then President Johnson. All the Joints Chiefs but especially General Harold K. Johnson, the Army Chief of Staff, found this a traumatic event. General Johnson even came close to resigning in protest over the policy of the Johnson Administration. General Abrams as Vice Chief of Staff during the Viet Nam buildup had to cope with the disabilities induced by the lack of mobilization of the Reserves. These disabilities include corruption of the officer's code of honor through the numbers game of body counts, a dilution of the quality of the noncommissioned commissioned officers, and a hollowing out of conventional forces in Europe and the United States.<sup>4</sup> When he became the Army Chief of Staff, General Abrams appeared determined to ensure a President would never again be able to send the Army to war without the Reserves.

With the experience of Viet Nam, Korea, and World War I and II as well as the context of the Cold War, Melvin Laird, the Secretary of Defense announced the Total Force Policy in August 1970. This concept was to become part of a post Viet Nam era strategy for dealing with changing national policies that called for reductions in military spending and the end of conscription into military service. Total Force policy had an additional affect of initiating a

clearer understanding of the respective roles of the Active and Reserve components.<sup>5</sup> Due to his work in crafting this concept it came to be known as the Abrams Doctrine after the Chief of Staff of the Army in the 1970's General Creighton Abrams.

This doctrine involved a change of force structure that requires mobilization of the Reserve Component even at the low end of the spectrum of conflict.<sup>6</sup> General Abrams' vast experience in every war from Bastogne in World War II to the Commanding General in Viet Nam led to his formulating doctrine that would have a major influence on the United States Army in conflicts of the future. This influence was intended to address the woes of the Viet Nam War in the areas of over utilization of Active Forces, public support of military endeavors and the lack of reliability of the Reserve Components. General Abrams, with his many years of experience, perceived that these affects were due to the minimal use of the Reserves in the ten years of the Viet Nam War. During which time, only three thousand reservists primarily National Guard support units, were mobilized and deployed while over six hundred thousand active component soldiers were utilized.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore General Abrams was in a unique position to observe the difficulty and issues of relying only on the Active Force and conscripted force to prosecute a war effort. At the end of 1964 the Army's end strength was about 965,000. Two and a half years later it was at more than 1,442,000 and by the end of 1968 there were 1,527,000. More significant than these numbers was that these new members consisted entirely of draftees and volunteers. The results of this action were that in order to support the war effort in Viet Nam over 800 units were sent in 1965. 600 of these units were organized from scratch with no cohesive unit integrity and very little collective training<sup>8</sup>. This resulted in units with little confidence, revolving leadership, and skills gained only by action. This fact was further exacerbated by the in country (Viet Nam) annual individual replacement policy that was in effect at this time. These negative experiences during a major conflict without the Reserve Components would affect actions and decisions made by General Abrams in his future position.

When General Abrams became the Chief of Staff of the United States Army he was faced with pressures to meet budgetary constraints. He further wished to fix the negative effects that the long conflict in Viet Nam had on the Army of his time and maintain a viable force structure. In order to meet maintain thirteen divisions and with a plan to expand to sixteen divisions to meet the Cold War Threat General Abrams proposed moving authorizations for large numbers of soldiers and units into the National Guard and Reserves. This idea was not only to make the process feasible under the budgetary constraints but also to maintain the viable force that he felt the Army needed to make missions.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore it would help to fix the three areas vital to the

Army that General Abrams were lacking during the Viet Nam conflict. To reiterate, these three areas were over utilization of the Active force, the lack of public support for military endeavors, and a ready, relevant Reserve Component.

#### **OVER UTILIZATION OF THE ACTIVE COMPONENT**

As the new Chief of Staff of the Army, General Abrams was to encounter one of the woes of the Viet Nam era. Over utilization of the Active component caused a major problem with the readiness of the Army. As described by Lewis Sorley, when Abrams took over as Chief only four of the thirteen divisions were combat ready.<sup>10</sup> No where in the Army were the problems more amplified than in the former premier forward deployed units of the Seventh Army in Europe. Early in his tenure, General Abrams visited these units. Trying to support the war in Viet Nam with only Active duty soldiers, draftees, and without the mobilization of the Reserves had created dire effects on the readiness of the Active component in terms of personnel and resources. Personnel turnover annually and the subsequent lack of adequate training time and without proper budgetary resources, those dire affects were exemplified upon the Seventh Army. While once the premier example of a forward deployed, deterrent force General Abrams found the Seventh Army units unready, transitory, and undisciplined and destroyed as a fighting unit.<sup>11</sup> This unit reflected what the entire Army had experienced during the Viet Nam conflict when the Active component was over utilized due to the lack of mobilization of the Reserve Component to support the war or deterrence effort. The Abrams doctrine and thus the Total Force concept was crafted to make sure this over utilization and its devastating consequences on readiness would not occur in the future. The Seventh Army examples, as well as the lack of readiness by over three quarters of the Active Divisions, were proof positive of the over utilization of the Active force. At a time when the Army was at some of the largest numbers at approximately 1,500,000, the American high command had failed to balance the requirements of war fighting with that of maintaining a ready Cold War military establishment.<sup>12</sup> By integrating the Reserves more closely into the Total Force, General Abrams hoped to fix this readiness issue through resources, personnel and thus readiness without the need of a large standing Army with larger resource needs.

#### **PUBLIC SUPPORT OF MILITARY ENDEAVORS**

Integrating the Reserve components deeply in the Total Force would accomplish another major concern important to General Abrams' vision. This concern was the need and use of public support for military endeavors. This area was severely lacking in Viet Nam when the war effort and specifically the draft became very unpopular with the American public. Two

individuals important to the formulation of the Abrams doctrine and also key to its implementation were James Schlesinger and General John Vessey. These two key individuals were quoted in regards to General Abrams' desire to link the Armed Forces to the nation as to assure their proper use and not how they had been utilized in Viet Nam. The first General Vessey, who would become Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staffs, made two poignant statements as to Abrams' thinking. The first was a response to a question on whether the integrating of the Reserves so deeply in the total force structure would make it difficult for the President of the United States to deploy significant forces without calling up the Reserves? His answer "that is it, without malice aforethought, the whole exercise." He went on to say in his second statement that General Abrams believed the Armed Forces were an expression of the nation they served. "Taking them out of the national context would likely screw them up. It was (General Abrams') lesson from Viet Nam."<sup>13</sup> The other key individual was Secretary of Defense, James Schlesinger. Secretary Schlesinger expressed his view on General Abrams' integration of the Reserves in the Total Force this way. "Abrams was deliberately integrating the Reserves and Active Forces." Not only to act as a forcing function, but because Abrams "had the view that the military must defer to the civilians, even to an extraordinary degree. I speculate that the military sought to fix incentives so that civilians would act appropriately."<sup>14</sup> These quotes of some of the highest level policy and decision makers at the time of the formulation of the Abrams doctrine, confirm that the doctrine was designed to assure public support for the use of the Armed Forces. Furthermore it provides insight into why the integration of the Reserve Component was an important aspect of the Abrams doctrine.

While the Abrams doctrine need for public support was eloquently pointed out by Secretary of Defense Schlesinger and General Vessey another author also succinctly pointed out General Abrams' view in regards to public support. General Abrams' firm belief in this concept was evidenced by his quote in regards to the total force structure, "they're not taking us to war again without calling up the reserves."<sup>15</sup> "They" were the politicians. Eliot Cohen points out that this was not just a matter of efficiency but a way of forging a bond with the American people. This way there could be no more wars without the popular support of the American people.<sup>16</sup>

These aspects show the need for the Army to reflect the views of those they protect, the American public. The Reserve Components through their citizen soldier role provides to the Total Force that national context and the connection to the American public which Secretary Schlesinger spoke about so eloquently. When the Army Reserve and National Guard are mobilized it also mobilizes the American public and the national will. The mobilization of the

American public did not happen during Viet Nam and as such was a lesson learned as a much needed aspect of military endeavors. This was pointed out by some of the highest ranking and most influential policy makers of the Abrams doctrine and Total Force policy. Lastly this mobilization of the public via the Reserves would serve as a balancing of the power that civilian leaders have over the Armed Forces. By integration of the Reserve Component as an integral part of the Total Force the civilian leaders would have their power over the military checked by the American public. As stated by the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, Lieutenant General Blum, "when you call out the Guard, you call out America."<sup>17</sup>

### **READY AND RELEVANT ARMY RESERVE AND NATIONAL GUARD**

The final woe of the Viet Nam era that General Abrams hoped to fix was to create relevant and ready Reserve Components. The lack and minimal use of the Reserve and National Guard in Viet Nam had left these components even more hollowed than the over utilized Active Component. The Reserves were equally affected by the draft and the short term enlistments created to sustain the war effort. Many members of their ranks were persons who only joined to avoid the draft or who had enlisted and now were serving their mandatory reserve time. By integrating the Reserve and moving large authorizations to the Reserves, the Army could maximize budget constraints and have a more relevant force. It would take years to overcome the hollowing out of forces in Europe and the United States and some speculate it did not occur until the 1980's,<sup>18</sup> both in the Reserves and Active forces. Shortly after this time, the active military force was cut by approximately one third, with the majority of that occurring after Operation Desert Storm.<sup>19</sup> Despite these large cuts occurring after Operation Desert Storm the Reserve Component still took on a major role in this conflict. As the first major deployment since Viet Nam this operation saw over sixty-two thousand members of the National Guard and eight thousand, two hundred and fifty six Reservists mobilized for this Middle East conflict.

While this was a major conflict it pointed out the need for relevant Reserve components. With the thirty percent cut in Active forces the Reserves were relied upon more heavily than ever starting in the 1990's. There were numerous examples where the Reserves were utilized in minor operations. Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti and Operation Endeavor/Guard in Bosnia saw significant uses of the Reserves.<sup>20</sup> While today and all through the 1990s National Guard and Reserve soldiers served in all the Combatant Command Regions throughout the world.

The Reserve Component of today's Army is just as relevant and ready. Today fifty-three percent of the Combat Forces (8 Divisions and 15 Separate Brigades), thirty-eight percent of the

combat support and thirty-four percent combat service support units are in the National Guard. The Army Reserve comprises twenty-six percent of the combat support units and thirty-four percent of combat service support units of the Army. Additionally, the Army Reserve capabilities include one hundred percent of railway units and ninety-eight percent of Civil Affairs units. By sheer numbers, the Reserve Component is relevant to the success of the Army and the National military strategy just as the Abrams doctrine intended in to be. It is no longer just a strategic reserve but part of the integrated Army not just a concept. The Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staffs, General Richard B. Myers said it best in an article in December 2003. "I want to affirm that the Total Force is alive and well. We can't do it without you. Any transformation can and will include a transformation of the Reserve Components, so that we stay on the cutting edge"<sup>21</sup>

### **APPLICABILITY FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY AND THE ARMY OF TODAY**

Can we over utilize the Active Force in this day and age as we did during the Viet Nam era from which many of the objectives of the Abrams' doctrine were formulated? Is the same public support envisioned by the formulators of this doctrine needed by the Army of the 21<sup>st</sup> century? And is it necessary to have a relevant Reserve Component force today when we are in a prolonged conflict as during Viet Nam? At the present time the United States Army is involved all over the world but specifically in Afghanistan and Iraq. It is obvious by viewing the 2004 Presidential debates and campaigns that public support for and the use of the military were among the top issues. The next few paragraphs will try to bring this issue of the Abrams' Doctrine and the three major goals of the doctrine into the twenty-first century.

### **CAN WE OVER UTILIZE THE ACTIVE FORCE IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY?**

As of February 2005 there are over 625,000 soldiers currently serving on Active Duty, while the Active Army's total end strength is only 530,000.<sup>22</sup> These excess numbers reflect the number of Reserve Component soldiers on Active Duty in support of the Global War on Terrorism primarily in Iraq and Afghanistan. Additionally there are requirements for approximately 2000 soldiers in the Balkans and 25,000 soldiers remain in Korea as part of the deterrent in that region. None of these operations appear to have a short term goal of being culminated and ended. With this high operational and deployment tempo the Active Component will be taxed heavily. While the total authorized strength of the Active Component is approximately 500,000 the actual deployable strength is only about 320,000.<sup>23</sup> Combine this number with the potential number slots to be filled in all theaters of Korea, Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq and Kuwait the total number needed could be as high as 225,000 deployed soldiers. Even

considering, the total added strength of Army National Guard, (350,000) and the Army Reserve (205,000) that amounts to almost one fourth of the entire Army.

As a result of the tremendously high operational tempo it is easy to predict that the Active force could be over utilized in the current conflict of today as well as the future environment. There are estimates which point out that the typical Active duty soldier in a deployable unit could spend the majority of the next three to four years deployed overseas. In 2004, 26 of the 33 Active Brigade Combat Teams were to deploy overseas in the year or in 2005.<sup>24</sup> With seventy-eight percent of the Active Combat Brigades deploying abroad in such short time periods, a scenario of one year in a combat zone and one year at home before returning is surely a realistic possibility for an Active duty soldier. This deployment schedule could easily affect every aspect of a soldier's life from family issues to professional development. Over utilization of the Active Component and its consequences of lack of readiness to meet future requirements, poor retention, and all the affects that the Abrams' doctrine were trying to prevent could easily occur in the Army of today and the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **PUBLIC SUPPORT OF THE MILITARY IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

As evidenced by the above paragraphs the United States Army is being deployed frequently and throughout the world for deterrence and the Global War on Terrorism. Observing the Presidential election process from the campaigning to the debates leading to the election in November 2004, it was obvious that public support for the military and the use of the military an issue of highest importance. Public support is garnered by enhancing military and civilian connections. With the large percentage of the United States Army having to deploy for many years to come the need for public support will continue. The need for this support not only lies in the issues of readiness, morale, retention, and patriotism but also in resources. The military relies on the civilian chain of command from the President to Secretary of Defense to the service secretaries for support. These entities prepare budgets, lobby Congress and sell the case for military funding. From 1955 to 1990 the military budget never dropped below five percent of our Gross National Product.<sup>25</sup> Since that time the percentage of GNP has remained at 3.5 to 4.0 percent. A highly trained, adequately manned, and modern equipped military depends on public support.

Secondly in the area of public support, just as envisioned by the formulators of the Abrams' doctrine, public support is a limiting factor on the civilian chain of command's power. By enhancing military and civilian connections it is possible to garner public support. The Chief of the National Guard Bureau put it quite succinctly and eloquently, "the country should never go

to war ever, at any time, and any place without the National Guard; because when you call up the Guard you call up every community, every town, school, church, factory and retail store. For families this is huge. That is why this country is so behind our soldiers, because 4 out of 10 of the soldiers on the ground in Iraq are National Guard and Reserve. I don't want my son or daughter in an expeditionary operation without the support of the American people behind them.<sup>126</sup> As evidenced by this statement and the need to balance the power of the civilian chain of command, as well as for the resources the military needs to be viable, the need for public support of the military may be more important than ever before in our modern history. The National Guard and Army Reserves are a large part of that equation as envisioned by the formulators of the Abrams' doctrine and Total Force policy. This leads to the importance of a relevant and ready Reserve component in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **RELIABLE AND RELEVANT RESERVE COMPONENTS IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

The Army Reserve Components are more reliable and relevant than at any time in the Total Force military. In sheer numbers alone the Reserve Component makes up fifty-four percent of the combat arms, sixty-four percent of combat support, and seventy-eight percent of combat service support personnel in the United States Army. That statistic alone in the high operational tempo of this century makes this component relevant. As noted by the Chief of the National Guard Bureau forty percent of the soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan are from the Reserve component. This number shows the reliability of the Reserves in this current long term conflict. Furthermore the operational tempo of the Army is more than twice what it was in the 1990's.<sup>27</sup> This trend is expected to continue for at least the next three to four years as the global war on terror is expected to continue. Afghanistan and Iraq stability and stabilization operations will require a United States led land force. With the National Guard and Reserve making up such a large portion of the Army, combined with the critical roles that they undertaken in Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, and the Balkans shows these components to be a ready and relevant force for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In December 2003, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Richard B. Myers, stated "the Reserve components are not separable from the Active components. With a long tradition of excellence and service, the Reserves are an integral part of today's war on terror. A healthy Total Force is necessary to meet the challenges of today, while we prepare for the threats of tomorrow."<sup>28</sup> While this statement was made just months into the Global War on Terror it still applies today and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In 2004/2005 over forty percent on the

Army soldiers on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan are from the Reserve components. This statement and these facts point to the reliable and ready Reserve components of today's Army. Has the long term conflict of the Global War on Terrorism stressed the Army's Reserve Components? Absolutely! The Chief of the Army Reserve, LTG James R. Helmsley, sent an internal memo through channels in January 2005 warning that his forces were nearing a breaking point.<sup>29</sup> This memo expressed the concern of the Reserves that current policies and deployments were hampering the ability to deploy soldiers. The National Guard has also expressed concerns about the long term consequences of the deployments to the force. Recruiting has taken the most visible lumps with neither the Guard nor Reserves meeting quota in this year or last year. Of course, the Active Component has not escaped this stress as previously discussed with the majority of the combat brigades being or have been deployed in some cases on their second rotations to Iraq and Afghanistan. Without the Reserves the Active Component would be extremely over utilized and the affects would be disastrous unless the Army consisted of a million Active soldiers. Yet at the same time public support of soldiers and their military endeavors are at some of the highest levels in modern history. The civilian chain of command has developed a great affinity for soldiers' needs and the difficulty of mobilizing and deploying soldiers for a long and enduring conflict in support of National Security Strategy.

These facts point to the tenets of the Abrams Doctrine, which in principle are the same in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as they were in the 1970's. Over utilization of the Active Component is a distinct possibility in today's environment, the need for public support of military endeavors is a part of our history and should remain a part of our future, and the need for a relevant and ready Reserve Component is probably more important than ever in an Army that only has a million soldiers including all components. While the Reserve Components remain an important mechanism between the military and American civil society<sup>30</sup> as envisioned by the Abrams doctrine there needs to be more done to aid in the endeavors of the United States Army. The contemporary operating environment has changed drastically in the last thirty years. The Reserve Components make up as much as fifty percent of the Army yet it contains many units that have been replaced by contractors while other units such as military police, military intelligence and civil affairs units are needed well beyond their current status.

Transformation, while not mentioned in this paper, is expected to directly affect up to 100,000 soldiers and hopefully provide more deployable and expeditionary units. Additionally this new modular force will be affective across all components. While this is certainly a positive change, when combined with the recent authorization for another 30,000 Active Component

soldiers, more needs to be done to examine the exact roles of the Reserve Components as well as the Active force. Stability and security missions, as well as peace keeping missions, and homeland defense have sprung to the forefront in the new environment. These type missions require more time abroad or more active duty time by all soldiers especially when the design of a major conflict was that of Operation Desert Storm of the 1990s which took less than a year. Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom have and will continue to stress our Army today, so will major operations in the future. It is essential to the well being of the United States Army that our doctrine in regards to Total Force policy and the Abrams doctrine come under close scrutiny and examination to assure it will meet the challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century by being viable and flexible.

In the words of James Jay Carafano, "junking the policies justified by the Total Force Concept and the Abrams Doctrine may be a prerequisite for rethinking how the reserves are organized, employed and resourced".<sup>31</sup> The three principle tenets of the doctrine in regards to the over utilization of the Active Component, public support for military endeavors, and a relevant and ready Reserve Components are just as important as over thirty years ago. However as the Army moves forward in to a new contemporary operating environment one in which the Army and thus the Reserves are going to be more expeditionary and more modular it is time to review and rethink the Abrams Doctrine. No longer can we look to the Reserves as being just part time soldiers. It is time to recognize them as part time professionals. Policies, programs, benefit plans must be revamped and resourced to increase the capacity of these part time professionals to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and help carry out National Security Strategy. That starts with a doctrine on how to best utilize these soldiers and how to integrate them effectively into the National Defense Strategy. The three principle tenets of the Abrams doctrine are still sound in this regard but they need to be updated to reflect our 21<sup>st</sup> century Army of a million soldiers with almost twenty-five percent of the force contentiously deployed all around the world in often hostile environments. The civilian chain of command, active and reserve leaders, and elected officials need to take action to study and implement a new doctrine that meets our future challenges in the same manner that they have developed an affinity to respond to soldiers needs in combat.

WORD COUNT=5251



## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> *How the Army Runs: A Senior Leader Reference Handbook 2003-2004* Chapter 7, Page 95-97

<sup>2</sup> IBID

<sup>3</sup> Center for Strategic Leadership, Issues Papers 11-02, November 2002, page 1

<sup>4</sup> Eliot A. Cohen, *Supreme Command*, (The Free Press, 2002, New York, NY) page 185

<sup>5</sup> Kahil, page 10

<sup>6</sup> Lewis Sorley, *Thunderbolt: General Creighton Abrams and the Army of His Times*, (First Brasseley Edition, 1998, Washington, D.C.) page 363-364

<sup>7</sup> Center for Strategic Leadership, *Issues Papers 11-02*, November 2002, Page 1

<sup>8</sup> Sorley, Page 186

<sup>9</sup> Sorley, Page 365

<sup>10</sup> Sorley, Page 365

<sup>11</sup> Sorley, Page 346

<sup>12</sup> Cohen, Page 184

<sup>13</sup> Sorley, Page 364, (Direct quotes of General Vessey while briefing the "round out" concept to the Reserve Forces Policy Board.)

<sup>14</sup> Sorley, Page 364, (Direct quote of Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger.)

<sup>15</sup> Cohen, Page 185

<sup>16</sup> Cohen, Page 185

<sup>17</sup> *National Guard Magazine*, "Another Conversation with LTG Blum, Chief National Guard Bureau", August 2004

<sup>18</sup> Cohen, Page 184

<sup>19</sup> Feaver, Peter D. and Kohn, Richard H. Editors; *The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security*, (MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2001) Page 256

<sup>20</sup> *How the Army Runs: A Senior Leaders Handbook 2003-2004* pages 95-97

<sup>21</sup> Myers, Richard, "Total Force for Today and Tomorrow", *The Officer*, Volume 79, Issue 9, December 2003, Washington, D.C.

<sup>22</sup> Congressional testimony by the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, General Cody, February 2005

<sup>23</sup> Michael O'Hanlon, "The Need to Increase the Size of the Deployable Army", *Parameters*, U.S. Army War College Quarterly, Volume XXIV, No. 3, Autumn 2004, Carlisle, Penna.

<sup>24</sup> IBID

<sup>25</sup> Feaver & Kohn, Page 255

<sup>26</sup> *National Guard Magazine*, August 2004

<sup>27</sup> O'Hanlon, Page 6-7

<sup>28</sup> Myers, Richard, December 2003 as part of a speech.

<sup>29</sup> Graham, Bradley, "Reservists May Face Longer Tours of Duty", *Washington Post*, January 7, 2005. Page A01, Washington, D.C.

<sup>30</sup> Noonan, Michael P., "The Future of the Reserves and National Guard: A Conference Report" *Foreign Policy Institute*, Philadelphia, Pa. January 19, 2005

<sup>31</sup> Carafano, James Jay., "Total Force Policy and the Abrams Doctrine: Unfulfilled Promise, Uncertain Future", *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, Philadelphia, Pa. February 3, 2005

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Cohen, Elliot A. *Supreme Command*. New York: The Free Press, 2002.
- Carafano, James Jay. "Total Force Policy and the Abrams Doctrine: Unfulfilled Promise, Uncertain Future". Foreign Policy Institute, Philadelphia, February 2005
- Dillon, Colonel Dick, Kieviet, Professor James, Murray, LTC Thomas. "Portraying the Army Reserve Components in Army War Games and Exercises". Issues Paper 11-02, Center for Strategic Leadership. Carlisle Barracks, PA. November 2002
- Feaver, Peter D., Kohn, Richard H. Editors. *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press, 2001
- Graham, Bradley. "Reservists May Face Longer Tours of Duty", *Washington Post*, January 7, 2005. Washington, D.C.
- Khalil, Gary, Rehberg, Carl. "W (h)ither the Abrams Doctrine: Good or Bad Policy?". *The Officer*, Washington, D.C. December 2003, Volume 79, Issue 9.
- Meyers, General, Richard. "Total Force for Today and Tomorrow" *The Officer*, Washington, D.C. December 2003, Volume 79, Issue 9.
- Noonan, Michael P., "The Future of the Reserves and National Guard: A Conference Report", Foreign Policy Research Institute, [www.fpri.org](http://www.fpri.org), January 19, 2005. Accessed March 2005
- O'Hanlon, Michael. "The Need to Increase the Size of the Deployable Army", *Parameters*. Carlisle, Penna. Autumn 2004. U.S. Army War College Quarterly, Volume XXXIV, Number 3.
- National Guard Magazine*, "Another Conversation with LTG Steven Blum, Chief National Guard Bureau". Washington, D.C. August 2004.
- Sorley, Lewis. *Thunderbolt: From the Battle of the Bulge to Vietnam: General Creighton Abrams and the Army of his Times*. Washington, D.C. First Brassey's Edition. 1998.
- U.S. Army War College, "*How the Army Runs: A Senior Leader Reference Handbook 2003-2004*". Carlisle, Penna. Department of Command, Leadership, and Management.