

Time to Do Something

Currently, there is increasing discussion about recruiting and retention in the Guard and Reserve forces. We hear that no Reserve Component is meeting goals on recruiting, with few meeting retention. Along with this disturbing trend is an additional issue that has come to light very recently — Guard and Reserve utilization and equipment as it relates to recruitment and retention. Several leaders indicate that increased bonuses will assist in easing these issues. The resources to pay bonuses appear very available. Dr. Chu and other visionary leaders believe that increased benefits for Reserve Components (RC) and Active Components (AC) are “hurting” DoD hardware programs, and research and development programs. We have seen that when left alone, DoD will define the benefit issue and equipment issue more in the favor of what is best for “best-business” practice. This process usually means a resource driven solution.

Recently, Association members and Reserve members in the field have asked some interesting questions: *“We seem to have plenty of vision, and no plans. The implementation of these visionary plans of rebalancing has left me without a billet or the possibility of continuing to serve my country. The Active Component does not want to integrate; they just want to take over our equipment and use us as a “temporary” manpower service. With these new plans of integration, we are losing qualified people; and no one cares.”* I have been approached by many with the idea of why are we still going down a road of total disestablishment of Reserve units, when the Active force is not really interested in using us properly, if we have no equipment. In fact, recent AC briefings indicated that if a Reserve unit is not resourced or equipped correctly, then why have them. It does not matter that the RC was supposed to be resourced by the AC. Neither the Department of Navy nor the Department of Defense will answer this question properly.

PowerPoint briefings and new visionary briefings have yielded us more questions than answers. The culture that we all know needs to change, and must change, is not changed according to many in the field. So, what are we doing? Active/Reserve integration is not integration. Even GAO indicates that

clear data is not being used. What we are doing is decimation of viable and capable war-fighting resources. So, we should just stop kidding the people in the RC. Culture takes more than a generation to change. And, it will never change if just the RC culture has to change. So, why not, in the words of old western movies, “just shoot them, and get it over with.” Get rid of them – as the Active Component has always wanted to do – and move on. I think we need to stop professing that we are saving the taxpayer money. Stop professing that we are rebalancing! Just stop saying we are integrating, since it is not happening anyway! Isn't it somewhat ridiculous to say that there is a savings by keeping active duty units (P-3s) that deploy from Brunswick, ME, to Jacksonville, FL? Yet, since Reserve units do not have the greatest equipment and Active Components do, then we do not need Reserve units?

Is the culture changed? I hear from the field that this is not true. Meaningful briefings of Reserve capabilities are scorned by our Active friends.

Many believe all of this is better-business practices from the civilian sector, and human capital strategy that will lead us to the future force. A more capable force would be something that includes both components. At the same time, few dispute that we are in a protracted, undefined war. Very few are really sure what we need to defeat an undefined enemy. We are in those historical timeframes when the normal can never be normal. Very few believe that status quo is the best solution. Yet, it is a real mystery, if you want to save the taxpayers money, that you would decrease a most capable force that has proven itself with any equipment. But, it is time to do something for the people, and stop giving PowerPoint briefs. It can not be that hard to understand that people (real human capital) deserve the truth.

So, the solution lies with what? Taxpayers understand what the Reserve force provides, and many understand what the Active force provides. Many of our taxpayers and Congress are wondering about all the hype about technology transformation of our forces. And, why shouldn't they? If the Reserve force is less expensive and the Active force is more expensive, why are we

saving taxpayers resources through cutting Reserve forces? If we are in a protracted war and cannot define our foe, does any of this make sense?

Therefore, is it resources that we are saving our taxpayers? Is it lack of resources for future equipment for our Active Component? Through all of these questions and actions discussed, one real source of power has been ignored by leadership. People!

The people and families of the Reserve force know what is going on, and know what the end game is. Few leaders appear concerned about Reserve members' end game. What about transition benefits for those who have less chance of promotion due to a questionable unproven transformation policy? What about the families who have given so very much? Yes, Reserve families give a lot. According to the leaders, more benefits take away from equipment programs. So, take the Naval Reserve Forces \$3 billion already. What new toy can really be gained with this resource? I think it is time to give the people a break. Since the people are not needed and the new equipment is, what we need to focus on are the people of the Reserve force who have given a lot. The people of the Reserve force deserve better. They all have been a part of the Active force at one time, and they are not playing games when they volunteer to be a part of the Reserve force. So, it is time to treat them better. The culture is not changing according to those in the field. The resource chain is being reduced the Navy way. The equipment is not coming, since the Active believes it can do better. So, it is time to level with the highly capable people of the Reserve force.

I believe many of our members want to do something! If you think we should at least fight for really saving the taxpayers some resources, then, let your Congressmen and Senators know that you have had enough of the flashy briefings and current transformation. Write them <www.house.gov> or <www.senate.gov>. If you are not involved, then the Departments will answer the questions their way. I hope our country can make a better decision for our military than the “best-business” practice! Resource-driven answers to military questions have rarely answered the question! Our history is full of flawed, resource-driven answers to hard questions. ☹