

STATEMENT BY  
GENERAL MAXWELL D. TAYLOR  
CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES ARMY  
BEFORE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
JULY 11, 1955

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Senate Armed Services Committee:

I am very happy that my first appearance before this Committee allows me to express my views on a subject of capital importance to the Army. I am sure that you all appreciate that the development and maintenance of strong Reserve Forces are essential to the effectiveness of our Active Army in time of limited or national emergency. In a limited emergency, they are necessary to bring rapidly to full strength the expeditionary forces needed overseas to counter local aggressions and to provide the initial replacements for combat losses there. In general war, they must be ready to meet the needs arising between M-Day and the time when new units are organized, trained, and readied for combat. Let there be no mistake, however, about one important point - Reserve Forces augment the Active Forces; they do not substitute for them. It is a dangerous fallacy to believe that Active Forces can be replaced to any considerable degree by Reserves. The initial impact of hostile aggression can only be met by forces in being. Adequate security requires both a strong Active Army and an effective Ready Reserve.

The readiness of the Army for limited emergencies is a continuous requirement. At the same time, our mobilization plans must be geared to the exigencies of total war. As the Active Army will always be a small part of the ground strength needed in the early months of general emergency, the reserve system must be capable of providing the trained individuals and units to meet our overseas commitments. In such a contingency, speed is essential. If we are slow in sending our reinforcements overseas, our troops already fighting there may be destroyed along with our allies before help arrives. We must be able to reinforce in time.

If we can obtain an effective reserve bill, it is entirely possible to mobilize our strength at a rate consistent with our overseas requirements. Our present Reserve Force structure has been developed to support our basic war plans. It contains 37 combat divisions, combat and service support units, antiaircraft units for continental defense, mobilization and training base units, and a reinforcement pool. These forces will be organized into three major groupings possessing varying degrees of readiness in order to provide the necessary balance and flexibility to meet the requirements of either a limited or an all-out war.

The present weakness of our Reserve Forces is the shortage of trained participating enlisted men. My study of this problem has led to the conclusion that fully manned and adequately trained Reserve Forces cannot be achieved or maintained on the present basis of voluntary participation. The Army needs legislative action to provide an effective system based on compulsory basic training and active participation of non-veterans supplemented by a hard core of former service men. Such a system should provide not only the numbers but the right combination of skills and specialties to support the ever increasing needs of the Army for highly trained technicians capable of manning and maintaining its modern equipment.

As for the legislation before you, it represents an important forward step toward a vitalized reserve. As you are aware, it differs in a number of respects from the original legislative proposal made by the Department of Defense. From the point of view of administering the provisions of the bill as now drawn, the most difficult feature would derive from the procurement of non-prior service personnel on a voluntary basis. This feature makes it impossible for the Army to determine in advance the numbers of this category to be trained at any given time. Hence, we cannot be sure of our requirements for additional camps, facilities, funds, and personnel. Whatever the ultimate personnel requirement to train these reservists, it should be met by an equivalent increase in the authorized strength of the Army as no provision has been made thus far for the additional manpower needed.

The omission of the National Guard from the provisions of the present legislation would establish a dual system of procurement and training of non-prior service personnel, one for the Army Reserve and another for the National Guard. Training of all non-prior service personnel should be uniform and should be conducted by the best qualified and experienced trainers available. The Regular Army and the reserve components must be governed by common standards of training in order to reach common standards of combat readiness. The possibility should never exist for our troops to enter battle without being fully prepared to meet that stern test in accordance with the highest standards of training.

The Army would prefer to have HR 7000 modified in accordance with the foregoing comments. However, regardless of the action on these modifications, the Army supports this legislation and will do everything in its power to get the most effective Reserve possible in accordance with the provisions of the bill in its final form.

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