

STATEMENT TO THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF THE ARMY

The Reconnaissance-Strike Group Proposal

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The current defense budget is the latest in a series of projected spending plans by the U.S. Army and its sister services to re-equip the Cold War Organization for Combat with new versions of equipment and weapons the force already fields. At the same time, the U.S. Army's high-profile, multibillion-dollar acquisitions graveyard continues to grow with recently canceled programs such as the Ground Combat Vehicle, Armed Aerial Scout, and the sprawling 20 Billion Dollar Future Combat System.¹ In spite of these acquisition failures, it is “business as usual” inside the U.S. Army; an army in which the senior leadership insists the readiness of Army combat forces to deploy and fight is at historically low levels.² It is against this backdrop of the Army's inability to provide ready, deployable combat power and sustainable modernization programs that the RSG proposal must be viewed.

What is the RSG? The Reconnaissance Strike Group (RSG) is a fundamental departure from “business as usual” in Army force development and acquisition. The RSG is about innovation, not invention. Instead of replacing systems inside the Army's existing organization for combat, the RSG involves *full spectrum rapid prototyping* of the operational capability—organizing construct, human capital strategy and equipment—not just the technology. As a prototype formation it is designed to explore new capabilities with smaller inventories of new systems before larger, Army-wide, investments are made.

How is the RSG organized? The 5,500-6,000 man RSG is a new fighting formation with (4) Maneuver battalions, (1) Strike Battalion, (1) ISR Battalion and (1) Sustainment Battalion. The RSG is commanded by a Brigadier General with a Colonel as Chief of staff and Lieutenant Colonels in primary staff positions. The RSG's C2 structure consolidates more combat power under fewer headquarters allowing it to respond directly to a Joint Task Force (TF).

The RSG is designed from the bottom up around *Maneuver* (mobile armored firepower for positional advantage), *Strike* (Stand-off Attack Systems), *ISR* (intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance) and *Sustainment* (logistics).³ Adding maneuver and sustainment to the ISR-strike framework that already exists in the aerospace and maritime forces is a vital step in the evolution of warfare.⁴ It is the key to the integration of capabilities across Service lines in joint,

¹ Joe Gould, “McHugh: Army Acquisitions' Tale of Failure,” *Defense News*, 19 March 2015.

² Michelle Tan, “Army Readiness at Historically Low Levels,” *Army Times*, 12 March 2015, p. 1.

³ 45% of the RSG structure is organic support. Organic support inside the BCT is 30% making it dependent on the division support command for its sustainment. 55% of the Army Division consists of support troops. RSG integrates more sustainment troops (2,426 Soldiers) than an entire Brigade Support BN (1,357 Soldiers).

⁴ Lt Gen (ret) David Deptula, USAF, *Statement to the Senate Armed Services Committee*, “Revisiting the Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces,” 5 Nov, 2015, pp. 15-16.

integrated combat operations. As a One Star-commanded force package, the RSG complements the capabilities of the One-Star force packages that reside in the other services (Carrier Battle Group-CVBG/Air Expeditionary Force-AEF/Marine Expeditionary Brigade-MEB).

Because of the increasingly accurate delivery of munitions (including thermobaric warheads) from proliferating rocket artillery systems dense, static combat formations in land warfare are at high risk of destruction.⁵ The RSG copes with this environment through the use of its organic and Joint ISR and Strike capabilities to detect, monitor, track and destroy enemies inside a 360 degree battlespace while the RSG's dispersed; mobile maneuver elements position to wipe out the opposing force with direct fire and stand-off attack systems. In addition, the RSG's ISR-Strike systems not only afford protection to the RSG's maneuver elements, these systems also magnify the striking power of America's Aerospace and Maritime Forces.

How is the RSG equipped? The RSG utilizes the best, off-the-shelf, state-of-the-art weapon systems to mitigate risk, save money and speed up delivery of new systems to Army Forces. Weapon systems are mounted on a common chassis, the German PUMA, the world's best infantry fighting vehicle. The Puma's 1100 horsepower engine, high power to weight ratio, modular armor plus superior suspension performance allows the mounting of larger weapon systems creating multi-weapon variants on a single Puma chassis. This represents a capability that cannot be achieved with other existing platforms. Moreover, the common chassis is not only a huge logistics force multiplier inside the RSG, the common chassis promises more combat power at lower procurement and life cycle costs. Consequently, the RSG has significantly more firepower, mobility and protection than any existing Brigade Combat Team. The RSG can bypass or punch through all types of enemy resistance to encircle and destroy sub-national groups or nation-state forces. Most important, the RSG can take hits and keep fighting.

Summary. The RSG provides significantly more combat power per metric ton, flattens command and control (C2), and enables Army Formations to plug into Joint Commands without reliance on intervening, large, vulnerable Division/Corps HQTRS. For these reasons, the RSG should be viewed as the vanguard for future Army contributions to Joint Warfighting Operations; structured for flexible mission sets and tight integration with aerospace and maritime power.

These points notwithstanding, only the President and Congress can create the funding path for the RSG. The Army cannot be expected to reform itself. Like many corporations in a volatile, rapidly changing marketplace, the U.S. Army cannot get out of its own way.⁶ One for one replacement of equipment within the same force structure is not the answer for the future. Doing so puts the nation at risk in future wars against formidable adversaries who have been studying our operations for decades.

⁵ Sydney Freedberg, "Ukraine: Sneed Preview of WW III?" *Breaking Defense*, 13 July 2015, p. 1.

⁶ Frances Hesselbein, *My Life in Leadership: The Journey and Lessons Learned Along the Way*, (San Francisco, CA: Josey-Bass, 2011), p. 135.