

Bill Would Give President New Power to Use Reserves

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The President, without declaring war or a national emergency, could call up National Guardsmen and other reservists for 90 days under a bill that started its way through Congress yesterday.

Such a call-up could include going into combat, but the President still would have to abide by the War Powers Resolution of 1973, which requires him to consult with Congress "before introducing United States armed forces into hostilities" and to submit detailed reports on the action shortly afterward.

Pentagon officials in testimony before a Senate Armed Services manpower subcommittee stressed that their request for more legislative authority to activate reservists was not an attempt to end-run the war powers law.

Instead, said William K. Brehm, assistant secretary of defense for manpower and reserve affairs, the idea is to make reservists a more usable addition to servicemen on active duty.

As the law stands now, Brehm said, in the absence of a war or national emergency, the governors have to approve activation of National Guardsmen, and other reservists can be put on active duty for only 15 days.

The Pentagon wants the authority to activate up to 50,000 reservists on a selective basis for no more than 90 days. Key personnel—like reserve pilots needed for a sudden airlift to supplies—could be called up a unit at a time, for example.

"We cannot afford to spend \$5.5 billion annually on a force oriented solely toward a lengthy mobilization of the type envisioned in the past," Brehm said of the reserve forces.

"The reserves themselves," he added, "must perceive that they can, and will, be called upon when needed. Their morale, training and sense of purpose depend on it."

Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger, who made a brief appearance before the subcommittee before Brehm testified, said the extra au-

thority over reservists would increase the viability and flexibility of the armed forces.

Subcommittee Chairman Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) said in an interview after the hearing that he favored the Pentagon proposal and might get the legislation reported to the floor this year if no strong opposition arises. The House hearings have not started on the proposal.

Because of what he called "the Vietnam syndrome," Nunn said, active duty officers

are reluctant to give money and equipment to the reserves in the belief that political considerations would prevent them from being activated.

President Johnson rejected requests from the military Joint Chiefs of Staff to activate reservists for the Vietnam War. Nunn said the call-up authority the Pentagon is now seeking would make military leaders more willing to invest in reserve forces in the belief that reservists could be activated.