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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A SEA OF CHANGE IN AMERICAN POLITICS

As spring turned to summer, and as the 1992 political season continues to surprise and amaze America, what is becoming obvious from a variety of sources is that this year's congressional elections will be unlike any for several decades, at least. A variety of factors contribute to our premise.

• The House bank scandal seems to have splattered on nearly every member of Congress, even senators. Although it is unfortunate, even members of the House who didn't write bad checks are tarred, as was Secretary of Defense Richard B. Cheney, who from all accounts was "innocent" in the sense that he was victimized by the sloppy administration and accounting practices permitted to exist and continue over a long period of years.

• There is growing disgust over official Washington's inability or unwillingness to address the budget deficit, which is leading to truly serious efforts to pass a balanced-budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

• H. Ross Perot had a dramatic effect early on in the presidential election.

• And finally, a topic to which we return month after month, the Department of Defense is adamant on cutting the Army Guard and Reserve by a third, notwithstanding the overwhelming opposition at the local level.

This makes the 1992 election a very volatile and very uncertain event. In recent congressional years, 98 percent or more of the incumbents who sought reelection were returned to Congress. Indeed, the incumbency lock made the NGAUS business in Washington fairly predictable because the turnover in Congress was relatively small. We grew to know who our allies and adversaries were and we were fairly effective in dealing with that.

This year, more than 60 members of the House already have declared they either are running for something else or retiring. What primary elections in congressional races also are showing is that incumbents are being defeated by challengers. Further, the challengers often are novices at politics, not the local elected officials or members of legislatures who traditionally have moved up when congressional seats changed hands.

In this election year, it is imperative that all National Guard members get involved at the grass roots level. Ask questions and only accept straightforward answers.

This situation will provide both an opportunity and a challenge for the National Guard family. It will be a challenge, particularly if we find—as seemingly is being indicated—that we have upwards of 200 new members of Congress in January 1993 rather than the handful we have had in recent years.

A freshman class of 200-plus will be a volatile mix. It will be composed of men and women with few allegiances, certainly not the allegiances to special interests promoted by the fact that political action committees (PACs) often have donated the lion's share of a successful incumbent's campaign war chest in the past.

Such a change also can be a great opportunity for the National Guard. Unlike whatever adversaries we have in the nation's capital, the National

Guard's success in the political realm always has had its greatest strength at the grass roots level. Thus, the November 3 election provides a mission for the National Guard's leaders: Get involved at the local level. Find out who your candidates for Congress are.

Ask them questions.

"Do you favor or oppose the DoD's proposal to deactivate units in your state?"

"Do you favor or oppose closing one third of the armories in your state and this district?"

"Do you favor or oppose increased reliance on the Guard and Reserve in a time of lessened international tensions and global threat?"

All candidates for House and Senate offices, as well as for governor, should be asked such questions, plus any others you can think of. You should keep track of the responses. Don't settle for generalized support for a strong national defense. Force candidates to be specific. If they are incumbents, ask them whether they favor or oppose Secretary Cheney's cut list?

Ask them if they have communicated that support or opposition to Secretary Cheney and GEN Colin L. Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the chief architect of this national strategy.

And finally, talk to your colleagues and your subordinates. If they believe in the future of a strong National Guard, the 1992 election is one they, too, will want to become involved with. That includes getting involved with driving the policy formulation, as well as voting and encouraging everyone you know to get out to vote on November 3—and tell those same people how their vote will affect your local National Guard unit.

National Guard

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FEATURES

Air Guard Hands Off Last Fighting F-4s 14

The 122d Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW), Indiana Air National Guard, recently handed over the last F-4E Phantoms in the Air National Guard to our allies, Germany and Greece, as it completed its conversion to the F-16 Falcon. The 122d TFW's conversion from the F-4E to the F-16 was the smoothest to date and marks the end of an era in American aviation history.

Training to Achieve Army Guard Readiness 20

Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM shed new light on the effectiveness of the Army's training and evaluation system. It isn't working. If the 48th Infantry Brigade, Georgia Army Guard, was deemed not combat ready once mobilized, despite the fact the commander of its parent division, the 24th Infantry, declared it ready before the Iraqi invasion, then the training system has failed.

The 32d ID Battled for Buna in 1942 26

The battle for Buna in the Pacific Theater during 1942 was fought by Wisconsin and Michigan National Guardsmen from the 32d Infantry Division. The Red Arrow Division was one of the first shipped overseas to fight the Japanese in the Pacific. It was a long, tough and costly battle, but when it was over, the tide had turned and they continued to march forward.

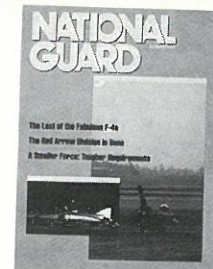
What Does It Take to Be Promoted? 30

With force structure changes and reductions in force, getting promoted becomes tougher because the competition gets stronger. This article discusses how to create an impressive package, from your official photograph to your education, both military and civilian, for the Army and Air Force promotion boards. What becomes a discriminator when it comes to retention?

Bladensburg Battle Didn't Stop the War 34

The battle of Bladensburg, Maryland, during the War of 1812 left the nation's capital unprotected. The American Militia and Army tried in vain to thwart the Redcoats' efforts to burn Washington, but were unable to stop the red tide from sweeping across the countryside.

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COVER:

An era came to an end recently when the 122d Tactical Fighter Wing, Indiana Air National Guard, became the last Air Guard unit to convert from the F-4E Phantom, inset, to the F-16 Falcon. This completed a transition that brings the Air Guard into the 21st century. Photo, MSgt Glenn E. Brendel. Design, Johnson Design Group.

DEPARTMENTS

President's Message	2
Washington Tie-Lines	4
Views From the Field	6
Capital Focus	8
Newsbreaks	11
Leading Edge	42
Posting	46
Guard Stars	48
Publisher's Notebook	50

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