



Major General William E. Ingram, President, NGAUS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A CREDIBLE DETERRENCE AIDS FOREIGN POLICY

It has been said many times that the best way to insure we won't have to fight the next war is to prepare properly for it. That is perhaps the most important implication of the theme of the 104th General Conference of the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS), "The National Guard and the Nation's Foreign Policy."

As I began my term as NGAUS president at the 104th Conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico, it was starkly apparent that this preparedness plus being able to demonstrate we are ready for mobilization are the most important goals for this Association during the coming two years. As the theme of the conference suggested, being combat ready and making that readiness credible to our potential foes are our major missions.

Most of our distinguished speakers addressed the issue of readiness and its implication for foreign policy in one way or another. Three specifically linked the combat readiness of the Guard with the perceptions and image we project to the Russians. Dr. Edward J. Philbin, deputy assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs, put it this way:

"Obviously the National Guard contributes to the nation's foreign policy through its potential for employment in an armed conflict. The very act of calling up the Guard—mobilization—would demonstrate an unmistakable message of determination to our adversary of our resolve to use the military instrument...and our nation's support for the president's decision..."

"The Army and the Air Guard are a credible force. They are repeatedly mobilized for emergencies and continually deployed overseas on successful training exercises... You are a force to be conjured with by our adversaries. You know it, and I know

it, but more important, the Soviets know it."

General Charles A. Gabriel, chief of staff of the Air Force, emphasized the Guard's role in the Total Force Policy. "There's no Army without the Army Guard, and there's no Air Force without the Air Guard," Gabriel said. "All of our planning is based on the Total Force Policy. Since the 1970s we've organized, equipped and trained our forces as a total force. If we're called again, we'll fight as one force."

"No longer do we distinguish between the active and reserve components. There's no need to."

Secretary of the Army John O. Marsh, Jr. and Gabriel both noted that a conventional conflict remains a more serious threat than a strategic nuclear exchange between the United States and the Soviet Union, or even the use of tactical nuclear weapons.

"The most likely type of conflict in which we find ourselves engaged will be either in unconventional or conventional warfare," Marsh said, "(so) it is absolutely essential that we press for strengthening the conventional resources of the Army because conventional strength—I am convinced—will enable us not only to stay off the conventional battlefield, but indeed to stay off the nuclear battlefield."

Gabriel added: "The most likely happening around the world today would be conventional war... I think we can get a big payoff in the conventional area, and that is where the Guard should be the most interested."

To which Philbin added:

"The very existence of the National Guard must cause the political and military leaders of the Soviet Union to have serious second thoughts about any moves they might make. How could they possibly not weigh the existence of the world's ninth largest armed forces... They must question the advisability of any confrontation

with the United States when you raggedy militiamen, individually and in units, consistently prove your prowess by winning service-wide combat-skills competitions and demonstrate your superb fighting ability in major exercises.

"There must be torrents of querulous questions on Red Square about the fact that the United States entrusts a major portion of its defense of the nation to Guardsmen. I expect the Soviets are not as confident of arming their citizens as we are of arming ours."

While praising the Guard for its contributions, none of the San Juan speakers overlooked the need to make improvements over the next few years. Some, like Gabriel, emphasized the need for equipment modernization and the best use of existing systems while waiting for the new issue. Others, like Marsh, talked more about individual training and physical fitness. Both sides of the issue must be addressed by Guard leadership and by defense and congressional leaders in my two years of NGAUS leadership if the Army and Air National Guard are to truly serve as a credible deterrent to the Kremlin and to other potential enemies of the United States.

To make progress in achieving full combat readiness for the Army and Air Guard, this Association will double its efforts to correct the equipment shortfall and to fill the Guard's ranks to wartime requirements. When that is accomplished, the National Guard will truly be a commanding factor in the nation's foreign policy image with friends and foes alike, and the National Guard Association of the United States will have done its best job of achieving the charter set out in the preamble to this Association's constitution: "...to promote the national security of the United States."

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1982

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DECEMBER 1982

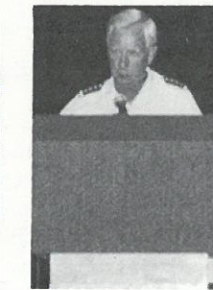
NATIONAL GUARD

Official publication of the National Guard Association of the United States

December 1982 Volume XXXVI, Number 12



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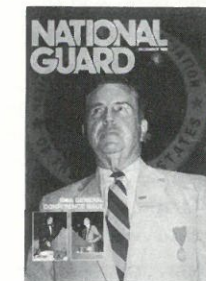
During the final session of the 104th General Conference, delegates adopted 57 resolutions.

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COVER: Congressman Bill Nichols (D-AL), was the keynote speaker at the 104th General Conference of the National Guard Association of the United States at San Juan, Puerto Rico in September. General Charles A. Gabriel (left inset) and John O. Marsh, Jr. (right inset) were the keynote speakers for Air and Army.

NATIONAL GUARD, December 1982. The NATIONAL GUARD Magazine (ISSN 0163-3945) is published monthly, by the National Guard Association of the United States, with editorial and advertising offices at One Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. Telephone (202) 789-0031. Second class postage paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing offices, Copyright 1982 by the National Guard Association of the U.S. All rights reserved. All members of the NGAUS receive NATIONAL GUARD. Nonmember subscriptions: \$4 per year domestic; \$5 per year foreign. Bulk rate for 100 or more copies of one issue to the same address: 25¢ each. Single copies 50¢. The Editor welcomes original articles bearing on national defense, with emphasis on application to or implications for the National Guard. Manuscripts and artwork must be accompanied by return postage; no responsibility is assumed for safe handling. Opinions expressed by authors do not necessarily represent official NGAUS positions or policy. Likewise, publication of advertising cannot be deemed an endorsement thereof by this Association or its members.