



Major General William J. McCaddin, President, NGAUS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

...TOWARD A TIME OF CONTINUING POTENTIAL CRISIS

As we started work on the business agenda for the first NGAUS General Conference of the 1980s, we had an opportunity to read a paper by the Army Chief of Staff, General Edward C. Meyer. General Meyer's thoughtful analysis concludes that, "the decade of the 80s, beginning as it does with evident hazard to critical national interests, looks to be a time of challenge, a time of continuing potential crisis."

This so-called "White Paper" also carries the more elaborate title, "A Framework for Molding the Army of the 1980s into a Disciplined, Well-Trained Fighting Force." It is recommended reading for all who have a serious interest in the state of our strategy.

The paper is especially interesting because it goes beyond the sterility which is sometimes associated with governmental position papers and says quite openly that it is General Meyer's "vision" of the Army of the 1980s.

Though the National Guard is not mentioned by name, there is, nevertheless, much in this paper which highlights the integration of the Guard into the strategic thinking of the Army leadership. It also provides proof positive that there are few scenarios in which forces from the Guard do not play a vital part in any assessment of overall Army capability.

It is extremely important that this is so clearly recognized and so sharply defined by the nation's No. 1 soldier.

There is no way that we can do full justice to this document in this limited space. But we will, at least, highlight several of the observations which substantiate the Army's sense of commitment to the Total Army/Total Force.

First, there is the assessment by the Chief of Staff of several key areas in which it is essential that we enhance readiness. He points out, "Reserve units reinforcing NATO must continue to focus on readiness in order to improve their capability to meet the

requirements for rapid mobilization and deployment."

Meyer warns, however, that while the present 24-division structure (16 Active and 8 Army National Guard Divisions) remains "a prudent force," it must constantly be reexamined in order "to avoid having to go to war with a pickup team..." He further emphasizes the importance of the alignment of major forces toward providing "separate force packages for NATO and non-NATO contingencies". This will be welcome news indeed to many who have long been concerned that we had all our eggs in the NATO basket.

The Army Chief of Staff makes the following comment which is right down our alley: "What is true for the Active Army is equally true for the reserve components. To meet their unique situation, they need clear linkage to their wartime missions, planning and command relationships for those missions and hands-on skill training with that equipment which they will be assigned upon mobilization. Such a linkage recently has been developed."

This would appear to show, if we assess these comments correctly, that General Meyer has come to share a belief we have had for several years as to the urgency for modernization of the Army National Guard. "Come As You Are War", sounds great as a public relations statement, but it leaves a lot to be desired in the war-fighting arena if it sends troops into battle with worn-out, old equipment. This, after all, is tantamount to being asked to fight with one's arm tied behind one's back.

Another message for the Guard is found in the fact that: "A program designed to align reserve component units in peacetime with their wartime chain of command is being introduced and should improve the mission orientation, readiness and transition of all reserve component units."

We are struck by the extent to which

General Meyer's major points of emphasis reflect the subjects which have been chosen as the theme of the 102d General Conference of NGAUS at Las Vegas next fall: "Manpower, Modernization and Mobilization."

We finished reading this "White Paper" just as we helped to launch "Project 40"—the NGAUS proposal for state commemoration of the 40th Anniversary of the last total Guard mobilization in peacetime, one year and three months before Pearl Harbor.

To an extraordinary extent, General Meyer's excellent paper seems to point up the maturity of the relationship between the National Guard and the Active Forces. The role envisioned for both the Army and Air Guard in today's planning would have been unthinkable, if not impossible, in 1940-41.

What remains now is to insure that the Guard—the entire National Guard along with the Reserves—can fill the role which began to take shape in 1970, with then Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird's call for "increased reliance upon the Guard and Reserve."

The "Mobilization" cornerstone of this triangle which we envision depends for its success upon the legs captioned "Manpower" and "Modernization." General Meyer is far more restrained in his comments than many of us who, admittedly, do not share his vast area of responsibility.

We cannot resist the temptation to paraphrase the words of the inimitable Winston Churchill who—about 40 years ago this month—challenged the United States, as the last bastion of the free world following the disaster at Dunkirk, to "...give us the guns... and we will do the job!"

We say to the Pentagon and to the Administration, "give us the support needed to plug the gaps in our ranks—and give us the first-line equipment that soldiers and airmen need on a modern-day battlefield—and we will do the job."

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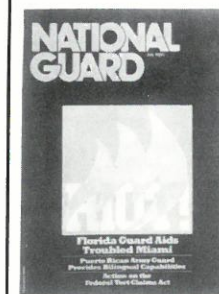
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COVER: The Miami riots presented memories of the late sixties, which were quickly abandoned, when the Florida National Guard came out to keep the peace. Cover design by Tom Powers of Duffy and Associates.

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