



Major General Edward R. Fry, President, NGAUS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

GUARD AND RESERVE ROLE GETS INCREASED ATTENTION

We are impressed that in the very highest circles in Washington there is renewed interest in the role of the National Guard as an important element of the U.S. national defense team. It seems to us that this probably stems from two factors: first, there is a growing awareness of the likelihood that the range of military options which lay open to the U.S. in the years ahead are more likely to involve conventional rather than nuclear forces; second, the fact that in a resource-constrained environment the National Guard represents a highly cost-effective alternative.

This turn of events was signalled by several interesting and unrelated instances which came to light just as this column was being prepared. In a Brookings Institution paper which provides an analysis of the 1982 budget, William T. Kaufmann, a professor from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, concludes that in several different warfighting scenarios the U.S. would find itself short by at least four combat divisions and six tactical fighter wings—or worse.

Quite properly, in our view, he points out that the deficits could be overcome by the mobilization of reserve (meaning Army Guard) divisions, the Marine Corps Reserve division and Air National Guard squadrons. He caveats this proviso, however, with the "big if". If the Army would bring these forces to a high state of readiness and if the Pentagon would buy better equipment for the highly-trained Air National Guard.

Meanwhile, in the more pragmatic environs of Capitol Hill, Senator John Tower (TX), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, unveiled S.815, the Fiscal Year 1982 DoD Authorization Bill, with a strongly supportive statement. His colleague from across the aisle, Senator John

Stennis (MS) was equally supportive of the bill which—like its counterpart which emerged from the House of Representatives—clearly enunciated the serious commitment of the 97th Congress to get on with the business of building a strong national defense.

Stennis directed a series of significant comments to the status of the National Guard and Reserve. He started out by noting, "One way to make the defense dollar go further is to rely more fully on units in the reserve components. In this time of shortage of talented manpower, I believe we will be driven in that direction."

He spoke of the requirement for "a real plan and a real consideration" to get equipment into the Guard and Reserve. He also described, "as a first step," a committee plan for \$400 million "to equip the best-manned two divisions and the eight best-manned separate brigades of the Army National Guard."

The challenge which is inherent in the senator's startling proposition is crystal clear, and it is precisely the sort of opportunity which is likely to appeal to the competitive nature of the National Guard leadership. It is interesting—and exciting—to reflect upon the possibilities which start to emerge from a proposed Congressional mandate to fully-equip two combat divisions and eight separate brigades of the Army National Guard.

For one thing, it would provide the conduit for a highly visible demonstration of what can be done in the Guard when appropriate resources are provided. Few remain in the active force who fully comprehend the significance of what the Guard accomplished in the onsite air defense program of the 1950's and early 1960's. Two showpiece divisions and eight ready-to-go separate brigades would provide a graphic demonstration—

and would add significantly to the combat capability of the United States Army.

Such a plan would provide a hedge against massive obsolescence. A series of division and brigade equipment "packages", phased out over an extended (i.e., ten-year) period, would insure that the force would not "age" simultaneously. Furthermore, if positioned on a regionally coherent basis, this new and modern equipment could be shared with others during the training year—while remaining earmarked for instant acquisition by assigned units in the event of mobilization. If units were to be rotated in high-priority/early deployment status (as a way to share the responsibility), regionally-situated "CONUS POMCUS" could be easily and cost-effectively redistributed.

After all, what matters is not availability of 100 percent of equipment fill in peacetime—but the assurance that it is available in wartime. The Stennis "first step" would be a *giant step* forward for the National Guard—and one which would put real teeth into the Total Force Policy. It might even enable us to give rise to some new thinking with respect to the interface of manning, equipping and training—the three vital essential ingredients of a combat-readiness program.

The senator himself noted he believed that "...good equipment in good units with good training and a real mission will do much to attract and recruit the best young people in this country. . . Now is the time. . . to upgrade the real capability of the reserve units that have talented manpower."

This establishes, beyond any question, the correlation of modern equipment, quality training and a mission in the nation's defense—to the manning of the force. It is something we can contemplate with enthusiasm.

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