



Major General Edward R. Fry, President, NGAUS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

FIXING THE FORCE STRUCTURE: THE GUARD AS A GROWTH INDUSTRY

The major activity of this Association, since our last *Message*, was the meeting of the Executive Council in late January to thrash out the details of the 1981 NGAUS RED BOOK—our blueprint for legislative and executive action for the next 12 months. Like all blueprints, it is subject to further modification by the architects as the situation develops during the year.

The RED BOOK, when it is printed and assembled, will be sent to a mailing list of about 2,000. In addition to major headquarters, it is sent to the Army Guard battalion and Air Guard squadron level so that its contents—and the NGAUS game plan for the year—are available to commanders and other interested parties to assist them in their grass roots efforts to attain National Guard objectives.

There is nothing secret or confidential about the RED BOOK. Unlike the play book of an NFL team, it is an open book to anyone who cares to read it. Copies are provided to many of the Pentagon offices whose responsibilities encompass working with the National Guard and other service reserve components.

As in past years (this is the seventh edition), the 1981 RED BOOK is subdivided into sections which evaluate the Army and Air National Guard in terms of current situation and 1981 outlook; the analysis is accomplished in terms of manpower, equipment, force structure, readiness and fiscal. A second major segment sets forth the legislative program.

The section on "force structure" is largely reportorial—and for good reason. NGAUS rarely seeks to impose its "druthers" in this vital area upon folks who, there is good reason to suppose, know better. In both the Army and the Air Force, we recognize that the force structure is a consequence of a sophisticated decisionmaking process by which the services determine the mix of forces—active, Guard and Reserve—which is required for U.S. military components to carry out the U.S. national military strategy.

Within the end-product framework there are, we recognize, many considerations which must be pumped into the decision as to the mix of units in the force structure. We are not so naive as to believe that we have access to all of the data which are necessary to tailor the troop lists needed for the various military contingency plans.

Nevertheless, we are prompted to make several observations—and recommendations. If we correctly interpret the tea leaves with respect to the direction in which the new Administration appears headed, major new defense expenditures are likely to be in big and probably costly systems improvements. Coupled with the likelihood of increased expenditures for highly sophisticated hardware is the demand by influential conservative groups such as the National Tax Limitation Committee for severe fiscal restraints in the defense area.

How this dichotomy will be resolved, if it can be resolved, is a matter for the new Administration to solve in its own way. But we are prompted to point out that the Army and Air National Guard are habitually and traditionally the most cost-effective elements of the conventional U.S. warfare capability.

Even with the enhanced budget that it would take to upgrade the quantity and quality of equipment issued to the National Guard—and there is currently nothing to indicate that any such enhancement program is under serious consideration—the Army and Air National Guard would still be the greatest defense "bargain" for the nation.

The thought occurs to us that if much of the defense growth is to be counted in terms of sophisticated systems improvements, the organizational growth which may be necessary in order to sustain U.S. forces in conventional warfare could well be programmed for inclusion in the National Guard.

Somehow, since the Vietnam draw down and the end of the draft era, we have ceased to think of the Guard as a "growth industry". We have been satis-

fied with modest growth in the Air Guard and trying to hold our own in the Army Guard.

Looking at the Air National Guard, we believe that with its proven track record of maintaining strength, adapting to the rigorous requirements of active Air Force "gaining commands" and deploying swiftly and efficiently to overseas locations, the Air Guard is a rare U.S. national defense asset. For many years, we have accepted the existence of 91 flying units as the right number and we have accepted the number of non-flying units without much question because we have accepted the USAF/DoD formulation of force structure.

To state it in the simplest possible terms, we do not see that there is anything sacrosanct about the number "91". As the Air Force determines that it needs new units to handle an expanding requirement, the Air Guard should be a leading candidate to get these units.

On the Army National Guard side, we believe that a most worthwhile step would be to take action *now* to authorize the conversion of each State Area Command (STARC) to a TOE headquarters organization with assigned personnel—officers and enlisted—instead of remaining a ghost headquarters dependent upon State HHD personnel "earmarked" for assignment upon the commencement of mobilization.

We further believe it would be prudent to give to the STARCs a secondary mission of training to become wartime combat division headquarters as a hedge against some future conflict when a 24-division force would not be enough for sustained land warfare. This would seem a logical utilization of the STARC after it completed its initial mission and had accomplished the mobilization of Army Guard units.

These are, in any event, two aspects of our analysis of force structure—and but two examples of how the Guard can be a "growth industry" for the nation's good.

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