



Major General Edward R. Fry, President, NGAUS

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### THE GUARD AND THE GOVERNORS: A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

We have some fine neighbors located just down the street from our NGAUS Headquarters. Even their initials have a very familiar ring—NGA. Their building's name has a familiar sound as well—the Hall of States. But this NGA happens to be the National Governors' Association. In addition to being good neighbors, the individual members of this organization have good reason to share some common interests with us. As the commanders-in-chief of the National Guard, in peacetime, the governors have more than passing interest in the efficiency of the Guard.

The National Governors' Association, founded in 1908, for many years was known as the "National Governors' Conference". Its purpose in banding together as a national forum is to enable the governors to "collectively influence the development and implementation of national policy and apply creative leadership to state problems."

The NGA operates through an executive committee and eight standing committees. Of the latter, we at NGAUS work closely with the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Protection, which is chaired by Governor Robert F. List of Nevada. The overall leader of the NGA is Governor George Busbee of Georgia, the 1980-81 chairman. NGAUS is invited to attend their summer Governors' Conference and it was my good fortune to participate in this year's activity at Atlantic City.

It was gratifying to be on the sidelines of someone else's conference and to hear an important statement of support for the requirements of the Guard. And that is, indeed, what took place. Following the hard work by the Criminal Justice and Public Protection Committee, assisted by an ad hoc committee composed of eight adjutants general, the NGA—as a body—called upon Congress and the Administration "to insure the availability of sufficient funds and personnel to overcome obstacles to readi-

ness and rapid mobilization of Guard units; to seek the commitment of funding for the procurement of modern equipment needed by the Army and Air National Guard . . . and to secure funding needed to obtain the authorized levels of fulltime unit support needed to enhance the ability of Guard units to respond effectively in the event of state and national emergency situations."

Such across-the-board support from the governors is welcome music to our ears. It is clear recognition that the states' leadership recognizes the role of the National Guard in our current national strategy. It also clearly states that all the governors, regardless of political persuasion, speak with one voice on this issue.

The NGA has a long history of addressing matters of concern to the National Guard on a unified basis. We would hazard the observation that only those who have served as governors truly appreciate the full meaning of the dual role status of the Guard as a state and federal force. We recall that Dr. Otis R. Bowen, when he was governor of Indiana and chairman of NGA, once told this magazine that, "even a new governor who thinks he knows nothing about the Guard becomes a fast learner the first time he picks up the phone and learns that he has a genuine, first-class emergency on his hands in some part of the state."

"We (governors) are absolutely committed to the position that the force structure of the Guard now and in the future, must continue to provide every governor with the forces he needs to be sure he will be able to cope with any state emergency," Bowen said.

The National Governors' Association's 1981 policy position takes this to still another level of importance, emphasizing as it does that "Guard units should be provided appropriate and necessary resources . . . The National Guard must be properly equipped, effi-

ciently trained and fully manned to meet (its) responsibilities."

In a letter that transmitted the NGA policy position to President Reagan, Governor List concluded that "the ability of the Guard to carry out wartime missions is jeopardized by the consistent failure of the Federal Government to provide the necessary resources."

The List letter reviewed the "facts which no governor can overlook" with respect to the Guard—its importance when the states have to deal with the crisis of natural disasters, civil disorders and the like. He noted that in this state service the Guard was frequently performing a duty in the national interest since, without the Guard, it "would otherwise probably require the diversion of active U.S. forces . . ."

We think it is especially meaningful and important that in his closing comment, Governor List stated that, "Governors recognize that the federal mission of the National Guard takes precedence over the state mission. There is no question about the availability of the Guard troops to respond to federal orders upon mobilization in accordance with laws and procedures relevant to mobilization."

There is nothing new in an expression of strong support for the National Guard by the National Governors' Association. But two things prompt us to use this space to report the NGA policy.

First, no matter how many times the significance of the dual role of the National Guard is explained, we have learned the hard way that this is not nearly as widely understood as we would like. Second, it seems like a good idea to remind ourselves, from time to time, of the special bond between the governors and the Guard. It is, indeed, a "special relationship." It is a special relationship which has flourished because of a long record of mutual understanding and respect.

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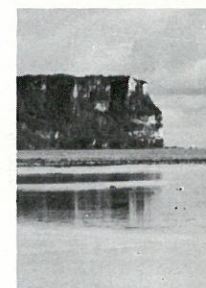
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COVER: A CF-4 team member surveys a runway for specifications. Cover design by Tom Powers of Bill Duffy and Associates.

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