



Major General William J. McCaddin, President, NGAUS

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### ON MANPOWER GOALS VS. NEEDS: A DESIGN FOR FAILURE

A few years ago, anti-war demonstrators were waving banners that asked: "What if they gave a war and nobody came?"

Some paraphrasing puts that question into a context that fits today's dilemma: What if war came and the U.S. could not muster enough trained fighting men in the early weeks to avert stalemate, or defeat?

That's a very real danger, not a far-out conjecture, as our mobilization posture now stands. If it becomes necessary to mobilize on short-notice to act to protect U.S. national interests, we may not be able to turn out enough trained men, quickly enough, to avert disaster, given the present manpower situation.

For the better part of a decade, since we left Vietnam, Americans have been striving to redefine the nation's role in the global arena, and reach some kind of consensus on the size and kind of armed forces we require. As part of that process, the decade has brought the end of the draft and the advent of all-volunteer force, and Total Force with its heavier defense burden for the National Guard and Reserves. It also has brought year-after-year reductions in real-dollar defense spending.

The Selected Reserves, which includes more than half our war-fighting force, has shrivelled from 978,000 to 789,000 in the past seven years. That's 190,000 short of the stated wartime requirement!

The Army Guard and Army Reserve, whose units would deploy to the scene of combat in a very few weeks, have fallen to 350,000 and 191,000 respectively, a combined loss of more than 100,000 since the advent of all-volunteer manning. That's 160,000 below war strength.

The Individual Ready Reserve (IRR), critically important as the designated source of M-Day fillers for understrength units and combat casualty replacements, plummeted

from 1.3 million in 1973 (all Services) to 356,000 by the end of fiscal year 1979. Most seriously depleted was the Army IRR, with 177,000 on its rolls against a declared need for more than 700,000!

The Standby Reserve dropped from 550,000 to 183,000 in the same seven-year period.

The Selective Service System has been "deep frozen" almost out of existence. From its present skeleton status, it would require months to rebuild—and seven months would elapse after M-Day before the first man could be sent to a unit!

In the face of that shocking array of ever-worsening mobilization deficiencies, official Washington has displayed little real sense of urgency in the need for corrective action. The Administration finally produced a grab-bag of proposals this year, for restoring Guard/Reserve/IRR strength. In all honesty, however, most of them could only be described as stopgaps. They can do little more than halt further deterioration of our mobilization posture until national leaders are prepared to make some tough and possibly politically-unpalatable decisions.

The General Accounting Office (GAO) recently reminded the Administration and Congress of the need to maintain "strong and viable" reserve forces because that was the assumption that made it possible to reduce the Active forces when AVF manning was introduced. GAO outlined the rationale accurately and succinctly when it pointed out that "because of the reduced size of the Active forces, the Selected Reserve has assumed a major role for meeting a Warsaw Pact attack on Western Europe."

Two Administrations and several Congresses have failed to provide the resources and the policies, however, that would permit us to maintain the desired Guard/Reserve forces. Let us

quote GAO once more, in illustration, where it is critical of the Army and DoD for pegging ARNG/USAR strengths and recruiting objectives to attainable goals rather than to their real needs. Said GAO: "While Army officials reported to Congress that their reserves achieved 92.5 percent of the recruiting objective for fiscal year 1978, (they) had in fact recruited less than 50 percent of their manpower needs." (Emphasis ours).

GAO was fully justified in calling such a technique a "design for failure." It could only produce a steadily increasing shortage, and it was misleading even to the responsible officers directly involved.

The nation's mobilization capability must be restored and can be restored. Not without additional cost; but security always costs. Guard/Reserve elements can be brought back up to acceptable levels with a reasonably secure mobilization posture—

—If the Administration, Congress, and defense leaders will make up their minds that such a restoration is essential for the nation's security—and convey their concern to the American people in forthright terms.

—If influential national figures and decisions-makers put themselves openly behind such unwelcome measures as resumption of draft registration and judicious increases in defense funding.

—If the Reserve forces are given increased resources to support large-scale recruiting/retention programs, and Selective Service funding is increased to permit a rebuilding and modernization.

—If defense leaders decide, for once and all, to give total support to Total Force!

If those changes are brought about, we could soon stop "blowing smoke" to cover failures, and start restoring our ability to field a respectable fighting force on some future M-Day.

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COVER: The dilemma of insuring that the Guard is not the "X" factor in solving the Mobilization Manpower dilemma is portrayed in a design by Tom Powers of Bill Duffy Associates.

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