



Major General William E. Ingram, President, NGAUS

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### MORE, BETTER CONVENTIONAL DEFENSE

Times are changing... and they are changing fast. For those of you who aren't aware of it, let me be the first to inform you: The National Guard is moving rapidly from being the poor cousin of the national defense effort to becoming an integral part of our nation's conventional force structure. CAPSTONE, Roundout, Rapid Deployment Force-Army, Abrams tanks, Bradley Fighting Vehicles, Black Hawk helicopters... these are concepts and pieces of equipment that the Army National Guard would never have considered as part of their vocabulary five years ago and they are now a part of our everyday lives. These changes, and many others that are still to come, are part of the process of changing the concept of the Total Army from fiction to fact.

This is something that the more senior officers of the National Guard have been working for since the late '60s, and its time has now arrived. The potential of the Guard has been recognized by the Congress as well as our fellow soldiers in the active component forces. You will note that the term I used is "potential." Before the National Guard (collectively) can be termed anything other than a potential conventional armed force, two things must be accomplished. These are:

- *We must be properly equipped.* Currently the Army National Guard is equipped at about 69 percent of its wartime requirements. The Air Guard, while ostensibly fully equipped, frequently finds its flying squadrons authorized fewer aircraft than active Air Force squadrons that are otherwise identical (18 instead of 24 fighters; eight instead of 12 or 16 airlifters or tankers). The Air Guard faces block obsolescence of the F-4 and A-7 fleet in the 1990s, with the nation procuring fewer new fighters each year than the Air Force loses through attrition for various reasons. Department of Defense (DoD) officials estimate it would take about \$17 billion to fully equip the reserve components with deployable equipment to meet war-

time requirements. That doesn't even take into account creating some sort of war reserves to replace equipment destroyed in combat. These deficiencies must be corrected for the National Guard to assume a proper role in our national defense posture.

In a related sense, General Bernard Rogers, commander in chief of NATO, has made a series of speeches around the United States saying that in case of Warsaw Pact attack in Europe, NATO could hold out using conventional arms only a few days before having to employ tactical nuclear weapons. Not a cheerful prospect, and one certain to further horrify those Americans who advocate a nuclear freeze.

While it is true that comments like Rogers' are meant to deter any Soviet inclinations to attack West Germany and deterrence has been NATO's policy for 38 years, there also could be a conventional deterrence if a decision were made to provide it. Conventional deterrence, however, costs more than nuclear deterrence. It costs much more to buy conventional military equipment—tanks, fighters and the air and sealift to make it work and to logistically support such an effort if war ever broke out. However, conventional force can and does deter. Further, conventional forces would be much more useful in the Middle East.

Conventional combat readiness and deterrence is what the National Guard is all about. We will leave it to others to be experts and advocates of intercontinental missile systems, strategic bombers, submarines and diplomacy. What we do feel certain of, however, is that the National Guard would provide a much more deterrent effect if it were fully equipped than it does being only partially equipped.

There are many Army Guard units that attain a combat readiness rating of C-4 (the lowest—"not ready") primarily or solely because of lack of deployable equipment. In our view, none of the nine Army Guard combat divisions can ever be better than C-4 if for

no other reason than lack of deployable air defense weapons in their air defense artillery battalions.

Communications equipment, particularly in division signal battalions, is obsolete and cannot net with that found in active Army units or with some other Guard signal battalions. The list goes on and on.

- *We must prove ourselves.* Of the two things to be accomplished, this is the most difficult, and it must be done first. The upgraded equipment and increased responsibilities for national defense we are now receiving are being viewed by many as a test to determine if the National Guard is deserving of the commitment of resources on a scale necessary to resolve our shortfalls. I am confident the National Guard can meet this challenge but it will be no easy task. It's going to require hard work by every member of the National Guard, but especially hard work at the company/battalion and flight/squadron levels. There are no radically new tasks to be accomplished; however, the level of expectations of those watching us will be much higher. You must develop well thought-out year-round training programs and execute them vigorously during the year. The individual Guardsman must be fully trained in his military skill during inactive duty training periods so that the unit can undergo effective collective training during annual training. Every unit must be fully prepared to mobilize in accordance with its mobilization mission and Guardsmen must be physically fit to meet the stress of combat. As you can see, these are tasks that must be accomplished at the company/battalion and flight/squadron levels, and it is at those levels our greatest emphasis must be placed.

Earlier in this message, I highlighted the use of the word "potential" in reference to the National Guard as a conventional force. I am confident that it is in fact a force well capable of fulfilling its assigned mission. Now is the time to prove it.

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COVER: A mortar crew from the 42d Infantry Division, New York Army Guard, gets off a round during Annual Training at Fort Drum, N.Y. Photo, MSG Frank Bryson, 101st PAD. Design, Johnson Design Group.

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