PRESIDENT Kennedy’s message, delivered to a Joint Session of the Congress on 25 May, was one of particular significance to the National Guard. This is so, not only because he gave added emphasis to the military threat which continues to confront this Nation and the whole Free World, but because he detailed some far-reaching changes in the structure of both the Active Army and its Reserve Components, for which he forecasts a critical role in defense with his announcement that the Army is developing plans to make possible “a much more rapid deployment of a major portion of its highly-trained Reserve Forces.”

The President, while he did not spell out these plans, did say that when they are completed and the reserve is strengthened, two combat-equipped Divisions, plus their supporting forces, a total of 50,000 men could be ready in an emergency for operations with but three weeks’ notice. He added that two more Divisions could be ready with but five weeks’ notice, and six National Division and their supporting forces could be deployable with less than eight weeks’ notice.

His aim with this new plan is to permit doubling the combat power of the Army in less than two months, which compares, he added, to the nearly nine months heretofore required.

This announcement of the reorganization of the Reserve Components to achieve an optimum readiness was produced by his revealing that he had directed the Secretary of Defense to recompose and modernize the Army’s divisional structure “to increase its non-nuclear firepower, improve its tactical mobility in any environment, to enhance its flexibility to meet any direct or indirect threat, to facilitate its coordination with our major allies, and to provide modern Mechanized Divisions in Europe and new airborne brigades in both the Pacific and Europe.” Into this framework went nearly five-year-old Posture structure in revealing these proposed reorganizations and in commenting on “a further advancement of our own capacity to deter or resist non-nuclear aggression,” the President said, “there is no present need for large new levies of men. What is needed is an ability rather than a change of position to give us still further increases in our flexibility, our adaptability.”

Following the President’s message, the Army announced the Washington press corps to a briefing on the new Divisional organization. It was of considerable disadvantage that in this briefing it did not reveal any details of the proposed reorganization of Reserve Components or discuss how it hoped to achieve the tremendously-increased readiness of the ten priority Divisions. The following day, Secretary of Defense McNamara held a press conference, ranging over a wide variety of defense matters, including questions related to the reorganization of the Reserve Components, with particular interest expressed among the press in the ability to develop the necessary resources ready for the President in the ten priority Divisions. No details were forthcoming from these conferences, with the press believing that the Defense Department was preparing plans to make possible “a much more rapid deployment of a major portion of its highly-trained Reserve Forces.”

At this writing, the plan for the reorganization of the Reserve Components has only been pecked in the tightest secrecy. The Army Section 5 Committee has been briefed, but there is no evidence that all of the details of the plan have been worked out or all of the problems in connection with retaining a higher degree of mobilization-readiness for the priority Divisions overcome. It was estimated that most, if not all, of the ten priority Divisions would be Army National Guard Divisions. It is anticipated that some announcement will be made with respect to the reorganization before the issue is in circulation.

The President’s proposal to increase the readiness of the Reserve Components, particularly of having ten super-ready Divisions with supporting forces in a matter of eight weeks, is a proposal that must be studied, in conjunction with the proposed force reorganization, in the greatest detail. I do not believe that any hostile public reaction or comment is in order. There are many factors to be considered. As the President and other high Government officials have reiterated, these are perilous times—the threat to World freedom continues and it seems to grow. The President continues to call for forces to be trained in the midst of a great man, the enemy, has failed to spell out just what is demanded of ur. Perhaps this is necessary, knowing as much as we do of the threat and what is required to overcome it. Obviously, the sacrifice of any National Guardsman in a greater effort to achieve the current readiness for which the President has called. We must be mindful, however, and safeguard all those always within the limits of time available to the civilian-soldier in the Army National Guard, that the time allotted to these many weeks in each year the National Guard already has attained a higher level of mobilization-readiness than ever believed possible. Now we are being called upon to do even better. Any sacrifice necessary, I feel confident, National Guardsmen are prepared to make, but there are practical matters necessary to translate a spirit of sacrifice into action.

To gain what the President is seeking will require cooperation and dedication all the way down the line. In the National Guard it will require not only the support and

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