EDITORIAL

THE GAP BETWEEN PLANS AND ACTUALITY

IT never would make a "best-seller" list. It's "heavy," it lacks a flashy dust-jacket, and it contains no illus-
trations. But, for the man who's interested in gaining a
comprehensive view of the Space Age, the printed state-
manship of Secretary Robert S. McNamara to the
Home Armed Services Committee on "The Fiscal Year
1964-65 Defense Program and 1964 Defense Budget" is
highly-informative and illuminating.

The reader who will take the time to pore over its
132 pages of text and nine supporting financial tables
will get a comprehension of the inextricably vast number
and variety of programs which make up an enormously
complicated and costly package. He will gain sympathy for
Secretary up against the superhuman task of making momentous decisions between and among programs.

But the statement is not complete in itself. The pro-
gram it sets out is one thing. The actual product is un-
other. Unfortunately, there is an enormous gap between
the two—at least for the Air Guard and the Air Guard.

True, in its context of a five-year period, the outlook
is bright and hopeful. But Guardsmen have been told of
other pie-in-the-sky programs, for years and years, while
contended with harsh reality. And this is so once more.

It makes superficially pleasant reading to find that plans
and call for an index of readers equipment for the Active
Army, of which unspecified quantities of some specific
items will be pegged for "a portion of the Guard's high-

ority programs. But scant solace is offered when one learns that the sce
schedule being worked-on at the Indian level in the
Pointo is geared to deliveries in 1985 and later. And
that this can be upset by another emergency cry for
material delivered to India, Viet Nam, or wherever.
It's nice to know that the "realignment" and discard
of four Divisions supposedly is balanced by elevation
of six Divisions among those remaining, to an "elite" status.

But it's disquieting to learn that even those priority
Divisions are to be bob-tailed—each of them short of
Aviation or HONEST JOHN units. It's even more cause
for concern, to learn that justifications for the bob-tailing
is lack of aircraft and missiles. And that it's impractical
to count on getting the use of Active Army aircraft for
training once in a while.

It doesn't boost morale to be told that the gap be-
 tween "haves" and "have-nots" is to be broadened by a
redistribution of what minimal matériel already is on
hand, taking from "low-priority" units to fatten-up the
"high-priority" outfits.

It makes a good public impression to justify reorgan-
ization on the basis of creating self-propelled Artillery
Battalions in place of "obsolete" towed Battalions. But
it's hard to reconcile that against the knowledge that many
of the Guard's newly-designated "Self-Propelled" outfits
must continue to tow their WW II model pieces behind
"sleevy"s.

It's quite a compliment—and well-earned by perform-
eance in the Berlin Crisis—to know of the Defense Dept.'s
reliance upon the Air National Guard. But Guardsmen
who left their craft behind in Europe for the Active AF
wonder how they're to respond if the whistle blows in
the next 18 months—the earliest estimated time until they
start getting replacement jets.

It makes one wonder what happens to plans for higher
training levels, and four- to eight-weeks readiness for
deployment, when things like this happen: Service school
funds cut by $4,000,000 in the face of reorganization, and
its consequent re-training requirements, no funds provided
for "Van Fleet Plan" weekend staff sessions on mobiliza-

tion planning; an elaborate 25-vehicle small arms range
program laid-on—without money to support it.

FACTS such as these have to be fitted between the lines
of the Secretary's statement and the numerous Madison
Avenue-style press releases periodically issued through
DoD, in order to gain a balanced appraisal of the actual
situation.

They need to be known in order to avoid letting our-
sehves—and Congress and the public in general—in for
a nasty surprise in the event of another major emergency.

They need to be known in order to support efforts to
obtain the funds necessary to remedy weaknesses which
otherwise might be camouflaged behind catch-phrases in-
dicating combat-readiness.

We're all for a fully-adequate Defense program for the
long haul. But we also are for a thorough knowledge of
hard facts—not glib Press releases—upon
which to base one efforts toward closing the gap between
plans and actuality.

MARCH, 1963

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Publication Office

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FEATURES:

DEAR GUARDSMEN: We hate to think how long ago this was, but, any-
way, in our younger days our outfit had what was known as "The Back-
bone Club." Members were the NCO's and the same stemmed from the
fact that the noncoms were regarded as the backbone of the unit—and
they still are, by anyone who has the perception to recognize the fact. This
semi-formal, quasi-official organization spawned many a constructive idea
for the good of the Regiment, and it contributed immeasurably to the
cultivation and maintenance of high esprit.

The general idea, if not the name, is carried on today in some units, as it
is proven by a letter we received recently from Sgt Clyde E. Chapman,
President of the NCO Club of Brev B, 21 AW BN (SF), 2034 Artillery, in
Easley, SC. He sent us a check covering 20 subscriptions to "THE NA-
TIONAL GUARDIAN," adding that the Board of Directors had voted to
include our magazine as one of the benefits of membership in the Club.
"We felt that our members needed this in order to stay abreast of happen-
ings in the National Guard," Sgt Chapman added.

That's a point on which we heartily agree, and we sincerely welcome
Sgt Chapman and his comrades to our circle of dedicated readers. We're
sure they won't mind at all—and neither will we—if other units imitate
their good example.

OUR COVER: If you haven't already seen it, you will, on posters, car
cards, etc.—the National Guard Bureau's representation of kinds of Guards-
men who exemplify the recruiting slogan, "The Home Team Is Ready!"

MARCH, 1963

EDITORIAL

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