As a result, units can do a better job of planning for annual training. When the planning effort receives the attention it should, the execution of training has an infinitely better chance of success. Ultimately, the evaluation of that training will prove to be of more value since the standards to which we will train are defined more clearly.

To return to my opening statement on the progress we have made, this highlight of the combat readiness exercise we have attributed to CAPSTONE also has its affect on when units mobilize. The Total Force Policy assures all Guard and Reserve units will deploy to a combat zone or be employed within the continental United States. In past mobilizations, while such deployment was the goal for all units at some time, most Guard units did not foresee deploying to a combat zone in the early days or even levels. Survival and early success on the battlefield will require commanders to bend every effort and mold everything possible for realistic training in an operational environment. This mobilization imperative brings me to the final point. Mobilization and deployment schedules are classified, but should be known to all commanders and senior individuals at the unit level. Deployment times have accelerated considerably in recent years, bringing the mobility and combat readiness that has improved and because the defense establishment support system, training bases and airlift and sealift have improved to support them. However, that doesn’t mean we don’t have a long way to go to further upgrade this nation’s conventional forces as a means of deterring any future threat of war, or ending such a war on terms favorable to the United States, if war could not be prevented.

In the end that I look forward with anticipation to the General Conference of our Association in October.

As we move toward Indianapolis, for the 105th General Conference, we should anticipate the opportunity to listen to those national defense leaders who will address us. And we should listen critically and prepare those proposals proposed to keep the National Guard headed in the right direction. We also should anticipate the opportunity for participation in the democratic procedures of our Association, particularly in the action of the preceding process that drives the actions we and our National Guard staff in Washington take in securing continued improvement to the National Guard and our overall defense posture.

It is this process, because it represents the united views of our 56,000 members, that provides us with the kind of force needed for the Department of the Defense and the Congress in achieving combat readiness as our part of the Total Force Policy.