THE NONMOBILIZATION OF THE GUARD FOR OPERATION JUST CAUSE

President’s Message

When a Guard or Reserve unit is mobilized, that cannot be kept secret very well. In other words, it is easier to keep a deployment of the 82nd Airborne Division from Fort Bragg a secret than an infantry battalion from the 29th Infantry Division of Maryland/Virginia.

Since no combat units from the Guard were envisioned for Operation Just Cause, this Department of the Army staff rationale falls apart. What was requested by GEN Maxwell Thurman, who is the commander-in-chief/South, was civil affairs units from the Army Reserve.

Three, one reason for not invoking the 6730(b) authority at the time of the Kuwaiti tanker refueling and the resultant call-up of the Navy Reserve mine-sweepers was that then-President Reagan didn’t want to trigger the War Powers Act. In that particular case, this might have some merit (the ships were deployed, the Navy Reserve crews were not called), because the tanker escort in the Persian Gulf was almost certain (as it turned out) to be a much longer duration operation than the original six to 10 days clear was not to be the case in Panama, or was it in Grenada in 1983.

The 6730(b) authority was created as a part of the Total Force Policy just to mitigate such contingencies as Operation Just Cause. It also served as a way of getting early-deploying units on their way in a timely fashion while the requisitioning national defense was being executed.

Finally, if the Total Force Policy means anything, we should insist on the 6730(b) mobilization the next time we send a contingency operation.

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National Guard

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FEATURES

President’s Message

The nonmobilization of the Army Guard for operation Just Cause

How to Avoid Unlawful Command Influence

National Guard Takes Environmental Lead

Nose Top-off RF-4C Pilots

Determining the Role of the Guard

Cover

The Massachusetts Military Reservation on Cape Cod, Massachusetts, was identified in 1982 by the Department of Defense as having hazardous waste sites. Because of the seriousness of the problem, it is one of only two sites that the National Guard Bureau has on the "hazardous" list. Photo: Capt Jean Marie Beall, Design, Johnon Design Group.

Departments

President’s Message 2
Washington Tie-Line 4
Views From the Field 6
Capitol Focus 8
Pentagon Paragraphs 9
Newswaves 11
Leading Edge 38
Enlisted People 40
Posting 42
Publisher’s Notebook 46

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