The Force Structure Agreement deserves the entire Army's support.

Over the past 12 months, the Total Force Structure Agreement has been working to resolve the issue of how to apportion forces between the active Army, the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve. To this end, GEN Gordon R. Sullivan, the chief of staff of the Army, authorized a dialogue between the three entities of the Army family in an attempt to arrive at a suitably and ultimately, approved by the president. An agreement was reached, which became the basis for proposals to the Congress on end-strength and force structure for the Total Army.

One of the key elements of this agreement is the Army National Guard's ability, in the foreseeable future, to provide forces, which, in addition to war fighting, can be used to fulfill the nation's domestic needs as the first responders.

During the same 12-month period, Guard members were utilized throughout the country in a wide variety of activities in direct support of emergency response activities. In many cases, they were used to augment law enforcement as citizen-soldiers, which is a fundamental part of the republic's delineation between the militia and the active Army in exercising control over the civilian population. Many nations throughout this history have discovered the folly of allowing the government to use active military forces to impose its will on its citizens.

The use of the National Guard in this role has many salutary effects. We emphasize the need for a close bonding between the citizens involved in the emergency and their National Guard neighbors who have come to their aid. The use of Guard members and their role in such events is universally well accepted. The need for such support nationwide continues to increase. Today, the missions, in many respects, is the National Guard's call-up to six states in response to the Mississippi River floods.

There are those in the active force who, in spite of the agreement reached, still insist that some of the National Guard forces that form a part of the agreement are unnecessary and add unjustified expenses to the Defense budget. The basis for this insistence stems from the procedure for identifying military forces required to support the national military strategy.

The national military strategy is a document prepared by the joint staff and, ultimately, approved by the president. It provides the road map for the military forces needed in the future and is updated to reflect changes in the potential threats throughout the world. One of the major contributors to the national military strategy's development is the National Intelligence Estimate, a document that forecasts potential trouble spots and forces with which our own military could be required to respond to in a national emergency.

While the nation is blessed with an effective intelligence program, forecasting the future even with such a program can generally be agreed is not an exact science. Nevertheless, the national military strategy is an informed attempt to forecast the external threats and subsequent military forces required to meet that threat for the coming years.

The forces required to meet the national military strategy are then allocated to the services and reserve organizations, including the National Guard. Throughout this process, there is no attempt to address the dual mission requirements of the National Guard. Potential interagency agreements, such as civil unrest, natural disaster, etc., are not considered valid justification for specific force identification. Thus, the inference of surplus forces is born. The needs of the states and territories to have forces to provide valuable assistance during domestic emergencies increases annually.

The military police, engineers, transportation and infantry/airlift combat units with strong command and control, and support equipment are invaluable in dealing with such problems.

At the same time, they provide very significant assets to a potential future external threat because of their war-fighting capabilities. However, the actual process of determining force mix and assignment, since by design it does not address the National Guard's dual mission, leaves a given state's legislature having adequate forces to address domestic emergencies to an extent the result of the process. This situation results in political pressure, after the process is completed, to hold a force structure in the National Guard that the joint staff and others say is superfluous.

We believe that the fundamental aspect of the nation's heritage is out for a modified approach to national military strategy. Instead, viewing the Guard's dual mission requirements as external to the planning process for determining U.S. needs, the planners should better allocate forces to perform the dual mission early in the process rather than viewing adequate Guard forces to perform the dual mission as superfluous, the planners should view the dual mission requirement of the nation as a whole.

It should be recognized that the Guard's dual mission forces serve a critically valuable insurance policy against the inaccuracy of the official forecast. The National Guard has repeatedly required the utilization of forces beyond those in the official forecast and when isn't it extremely difficult to believe a future holds anything except a portion of that same forecast?

We believe that the agreement reached in the Total Force Structure Agreement deserves the support of the entire Army and staff. It provides a balanced approach available to deal with the problems of national military defense, and fulfills the important role and responsibility of the National Guard both in war and peace.