President G. W. Bush's Message

Defending the Nation

To begin the new year, it is important that you know what I have been doing during the first three months of my presidency. In telling this story, you also will know that your Association has done too.

Early in October, I attended my first off-site meeting. The meeting, which was attended by GEN John Tillich, the vice chief of staff of the Army, the chief of the National Guard Bureau, the director of the Army National Guard, the chief and deputy chief Army Reserve, and the leadership of the Adjutants General Association of the United States, the Association of the U.S. Army, the NGAUS and the Reserve Officers Association.

I then met with the staff director of the Senate Armed Services Committee, the Senate Appropriations Committee's minority chief, and with Mr. National Guard himself, Representative G. V. (Sam) Montgomery. During each of these visits, we discussed three issues: Air National Guard force structure, full-time maintenance and operational tempo (OpTempo).

Air Guard force structure is indeed a doury issue, but the position taken by the NGAUS on this issue was received very warmly. The open discussions revealed that Air Guard Downing was viewed with concern, and we were told that the issue would receive careful consideration. All of these people were well aware of the capabilities problem presented by downed planes in the fighters, tankers, airlift and support units. We will continue to vigorously defend our force structure resolution.

To this same group, full-time maintenance presented an even greater challenge. We briefed the DoD position concerning the 20 percent across-the-board reduction of all civil service personnel, including our military technicians, to each of them.

You will recall that the NGAUS, with tremendous grassroots support, got a one-year moratorium placed on this technician cutback, which only applies to FY95. So, we expect to fight this again. We will be prepared. Plus, we are encouraged by the strong interest shown by everyone on this issue. My feeling is summed up quite handily in the NGAUS position statement.

"Protecting America: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. Rather than cut the military technician program, the administration should be using it as an example of how to get maximum utilization from minimum resources. Any program that can support and maintain a force with only 10 percent full-time members, whose average manpower, should be expanded or expanded to improve government efficiency. When that same force is able to provide a dual benefit by being prepared to respond to the calls of our nation's governors during time and local disasters, it is even more important to preserve that force and maintain that capability."

Finally, the lack of resources to maintain OpTempo continues to threaten readiness. Decreased tank running hours means in nearest units will be unable to meet training requirements and readiness suffers. Lack of training ammunition for artillery units means exactly the same thing. Reducing training time for tank units so essential to combat capability, has been cut to the bone, with some avioars reduced to 12 AFTPs per year from 40. Further, some units could not pay the AFTPs while the avioars required to maintain readiness are only paid when they are used. Given our nation's status not only changing but reduces readiness, it also creates service conflicts. Again, the leaders are surprised and asked that we provide informational information. We will be back.

The Secretary of Defense recently announced his department's intention to restructure DoD's reliance on the National Guard. We welcome this kind of attention. We can only hope that the services are adequately resourced. Enhancing the National Guard's role in our nation's defense is a concern which we're already resourcing. The NGAUS position statement is a point of departure for the future of the National Guard. We will continue to push the issue of our nation's defense and work together, every way we can.

"Enhancing the National Guard's role in our nation's defense makes eminent good sense. For the nation, it's a good decision economically, and it's a good decision politically. We can do the job for less dollars. Together, we can and will meet these challenges head-on."

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Cover:
National Guard volunteering has been on the increase. With only five days notice, Tennessee's 118th Airlift Wing put out a call to gather a squadron of six aircraft from four states. The squadron provided 75000 pounds of humanitarian supplies to refugees in Africa. Story on page 32. Photo by Col Hooper Petroski. Cover by Dennis and Sackett Design

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Features

Understanding Future Threats
The pace of world change in the late 20th century has been rapid and profound. With the demise of the Soviet Union, there is uncertainty as to where America's future threats lie. Dr. Robert L. Flaherty Jr., professor of international security studies at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, discusses future threats to the security of the United States.

North Dakota at Target at William Tell
The Air National Guard hit a bull's-eye and split the apple this year at the prestigious William Tell air-to-air competition. North Dakota's 118th Fighter Group "Happy Hollidays" placed first. The competition tests the weapons firing skills of the best military snipers in the total Air Force. Not only did Air National Guard units best their competition, but they did it using older T-34D-O aircraft. The Happy Hollidays are as sharp as ever.

Army Guard Champions in Moscow
In the shadow of the Kremlin, Army National Guard pilots competed with the world's best in the World Tournament Championship. No longer foes, pilots from the United States, Russia and six other countries, competed for the prize. The competition tested an aviator's skills in precision flying, navigation and inrope maneuvers. The All Guard American team performed magnificently at the competition and walked away with silver medals.

Wyoming on the Cutting Edge
Wyoming's 118th Field Artillery Brigade falls itself on the cutting edge of battlefield technology. The 118th was the first brigade-sized element in the world to be assigned and trained with the new field fire support automated system (FFAS). This 25-pound digital computerized system, which replaces its 80-pound predecessor, allows digital direction information to be set down and down and the battlefield quickly and accurately. "The stable pencil" days are over for the gunners of the Guard.