The serious purpose of the 104th NGAUS General Conference is to examine the role of the National Guard as a component of the foreign policy of the United States. At this stage, it appears as though the 104th NGAUS General Conference will provide a U.S. president with an important tool. At one time it was postulated that European alliances would read our steadfastness as allies in terms of our willingness to maintain a NATO military. This is a fact that is of great importance to Europe and other allies is the potential rapid mobilization and deployment capability, which is inherent in the National Guard System.

As we look forward to the 104th General Conference, scheduled to take place in Montreal, Puerto Rico, September 20-22, we have announced that it will be very close to the 200th anniversary of the participation of the Army and Air National Guardsmen who served in the Berlin Crisis. It is frequently recalled that the late President John F. Kennedy characterized the mobilization of the Berlin Crisis as a call-up to "prevent war, not to fight one." In 1960, a book was published that was never quite a best-seller. The "Penkovsky Papers" resulted from papers smuggled out to the west by a Russian war hero who grew up in the Soviet regime, Colonel Oleg Penkovsky. The papers were a remarkable insight into the U.S. intelligence community and publication of his efforts as a volunteer agent came about only after Penkovsky was arrested, convicted and shot in Moscow in the spring of 1963.

We subscribe to this viewpoint, and we believe that this is a view sustained by a majority of Americans. It is an outgrowth of the manner of diplomacy encouraged by the influental Teddy Roosevelt who coined the phrase: "Walk softly but carry a big stick." However, the more we have thought about this subject, the more convinced we have become that there is still another phase in the process of maintaining the peace. This is the phase in which 20-footies and allies alike must be concerned with the nation's resolve.

It is our contention that having a strong and capable Army and Air National Guard provides a U.S. president with an important tool. At one time it was postulated that European alliances would read our steadfastness as allies in terms of our willingness to maintain a NATO military. This is a fact that is of great importance to Europe and other allies is the potential rapid mobilization and deployment capability, which is inherent in the National Guard System.

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