MG Charles M. Kiefer, President, NGA

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

THE MIDDLE EAST MобILIZATION

T he small call-up of the Guard and Reserve ordered so far by President George Bush, activating the Guard and Reserve.

The United States considers its reserve forces to be an integral part of our military." —President George Bush

The question is over combatants units and why none of them have been called up and deployed. The original decision to mobilize some Guard and Reserve units was made on August 22, Secretary of Defense Richard B. Cheney intentionally excluded Army Guard and Reserve combat units. No such exclusion was included in the guidance to the secretaries of the Navy and Air Force. We believe it is essential for this policy to be changed. The effect of the decision, at first inexplicable, was to preclude the activation of the 48th Infantry Brigade, Georgia Army National Guard, which is the third brigade of the 24th Infantry Division at Fort Stewart.

The 24th Division was one of the units deployed to Saudi Arabia. The rest of the Division is now there. If roundout is to continue to have meaning, it is essential that this integral element of the 24th be called to duty and deployed with its parent division. This is what the division commander wants. It is what Army Chief of Staff GEN Carl E. Vuono said he wants (when briefing the NGAUS, the Association of the U.S. Army and the Reserve Officers Association).

What is the Army's fall-back solution to provide a third brigade to the 197th Infantry Brigade, the school brigade at Fort Benning. This unit is known to be not combat ready. It has never trained with the 24th Division. We're sure the division commander is aghast at this prospect.

On the other hand, the 48th Brigade is considered by some Army leaders to be one of the most combat ready units in the Total Army.

It should be further added that if DoD or the administration declines to deploy combat units, the Guard will take the brunt of the hit. The Guard, Army, and Air National Guard, is an organization composed of combat units. The Air Guard has most of the fighter squadrons in the Guard and Reserve. The Army Guard has all the combat divisions and some of the roundout brigades.

Using the National Guard in a situation like the Middle East crisis is to call up non-tactical troops. They are standing in line and getting their pay.

How much better it is, now, to keep our combat forces being mobilized based on national security interests and the requirements for their services. This is how we are organized and how we have always planned to go to war. The old World War II slogan, "Join the Guard and go to war with your friends." The mobilization authority cited by the president today was enacted in 1976 exactly for the purpose of keeping the 24th Infantry Division at Fort Stewart, Georgia Army National Guard, available for the Defense Department and the President.

Following the drawdown in active forces after the Vietnam War and further reductions in active manpower during the past five years, this region of the United States has seen a reduction in the number of soldiers in the Guard and Reserve. This has impacted the number of National Guard and Reserve units in support of contingency forces deployed on short notice.

We in the Guard strongly support the mobilization decisions when the national security interests are at stake.

When we enlisted or were accepted into the National Guard, we foreknew that a time of mobilization might come one day. Guard members, such as the National Guard and Reserve, sacrifice their time, energy and often their very enthusiastic way of life.

Unlike 20 years ago, when some politicians mobilized soldiers and soldiers, we predict willing and enthusiastic responses to the call. This is what today's Guard member enlisted to do. When the world situation requires it and the time comes to do it, we will be eager to perform our missions.

COVER:
A US submarine patrols the waters of the Pacific Ocean as a deterrent in the Pacific Theater. It is sometimes called the forgotten theater. This theater has been peaceful and without incident since the end of the Korean War in 1953. Design, Johnson Design Group.

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NATIONAL GUARD
NATIONAL GUARD
October 2000

October 1990 Volume XLIV Number 10

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