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The Adjutant General, State of Minnesota**

**Before the  
National Commission on the Future of the Army**

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Chairman Ham, Executive Director Ray and staff of the National Commission on the Future of the Army (Commission), I am Major General Rick Nash, the Adjutant General of Minnesota and I appear before you today on behalf of the men and women of the Minnesota National Guard.

I would like to begin by thanking the Commission for visiting Minnesota today to observe some of the elements of *Vigilant Guard 2015*. The dual-status mission of the Army National Guard to support our state and federal partners is essential.

I want to express my appreciation on the Commission's efforts to seek Adjutants General input during your examination of Army force structure and are pleased that several fellow Adjutants General are able to join us today.

Along with the National Governor's Association, our nation's Adjutants General strongly advocated for the creation of this Commission and we recognize the challenge you face in weighing the concerns of all stakeholders involved.

The Commission's thorough and thoughtful consideration of the Army National Guard's (ARNG) value to states and the nation will help ensure our Guard continues to have access to the personnel, aircraft and resources necessary to fulfill its dual-mission at home and abroad.

## **Overview**

As the leader of 13,500 citizen soldiers and airmen, I recognize the need to reorganize, restructure and modernize today's military to meet new threats and economic realities. The U.S. Army's proposed cuts, however, would return the ARNG to a strategic reserve, create turmoil across the states and waste 14 years of investment into the nation's most cost-effective force.

As Adjutant General of Minnesota since 2010; Commanding General of Multinational Division South in Iraq in 2009-2010; Special Assistant to the NORTHCOM Commander from 2004 to 2007; and as the Commander of Multinational Brigade North in Bosnia from 2003 to 2004, I have witnessed the critical role the National Guard plays both in my state and for our nation.

Since 9/11, Minnesota National Guardsmen have performed more than 26,000 deployments – some numerous times -- on behalf of our nation and state to thirty-three different countries, including Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

These mobilizations have clearly demonstrated the operational readiness the National Guard maintains to across all critical military capabilities to support national contingency operations. In 2009, the 34th Infantry Division headquarters assumed Multinational Division South responsibility from the 10th Mountain Division and provided command and control over all multinational forces operating in the nine southern provinces of Iraq until relieved by the 1st Infantry Division in 2010. I had Command of over 16,000 US Forces and respective battle space in which we responsible for the full range of operations.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 34<sup>th</sup> Armored Brigade Combat Team has answered the nation's call twice to perform critical security operations throughout Iraq and Kuwait during the surge period of Operation Iraqi Freedom and the final retrograde period of Operation New Dawn.

In fact, Congress has proclaimed that the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade's deployment – 16 months in combat, and 22 months away from home – was the longest deployment of any unit, of any branch, and of any component during the Iraq War.

Minnesota's 34th Combat Aviation Brigade has mobilized twice to provide theater aviation as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom and US Central Command's Operation Spartan Shield.

Today, Minnesota Guardsmen are providing aviation and aviation maintenance units in support of US Central Command's ongoing Operation Spartan Shield. Minnesota Guardsmen continue to remain ready and have been notified to prepare for mobilization to provide engineering capacity to US Central Command operations in Kuwait as well as detainment operations in Guantanamo Bay.

During this same time period, Minnesota Guardsmen have provided over 22,000 man-days of responsive and effective support to civil authorities across the 10 essential domestic operations capabilities in 67 state disasters. These include major responses to spring flooding in the Red River Valley, including the recent three successive floods experience from 2009 to 2011.

The Minnesota National Guard stood up a dual status Joint Task Force to provide military support to the 2008 Republican National Convention National Special Security Event (NSSE). We are prepared to do the same for an anticipated 2018 NSSE: Super Bowl LII.

Guardsmen were called and efficiently supported the State in ensuring the security, safety and health of vulnerable Minnesota citizens jeopardized by a 2001 healthcare provider strike. Minnesota Soldiers and Airmen have also supported civil authorities in five federal disasters since 2001 including Super Storm Sandy in 2012, Hurricane Ike in 2008, and Operation Jump Start on our nation's southwest border in 2006 and Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. I was personally involved as the Special Assistant to the NORTHCOM Commander during Katrina and Rita and witnessed the tremendous response capabilities of our Nation when all components work effectively together.

As of this morning, there are Minnesota Army National Guard citizen soldiers deployed in Washington State assisting that state's first responders fight devastating wildfires through an Emergency Management Assistance Compact.

## **Total Force Partnership**

I believe that the National Guard has embraced a total force partnership, and has exceeded the Army's expectations for interoperability, interchangeability and unity of effort forged over fourteen years of war.

While Adjutants General understand the Army faces difficult budget challenges ahead, we believe that recent efforts to cut ARNG force structure are a step backwards and would make lasting, irreversible changes to the ARNG to meet short-term budget challenges. The proposal to cut ARNG end strength and force structure along with the transfer of ARNG AH-64 Apaches to the active component is not in the best interests of states, the Army or the nation in the long-term.

It would undo years of progress by returning the ARNG to a pre-9/11 role and fail to leverage its cost-effectiveness in retaining mission capability at home and overseas, and starts to erode the very basis of the National Guard and that is we are and must continue to be a combat reserve of the Army and be trained and equipped to be the operational surge.

As the Commission conducts its review, Adjutants General recommend that the following principles guide its work:

- The National Guard must continue to serve as an operational force and the combat reserve for the Total Force;
- The National Guard is a highly trained, battle tested asset that should continue to be properly resourced and equipped to meet the needs of both the federal government and states; and
- The National Guard's cost-effectiveness should be leveraged to the fullest extent to meet the fiscal and operational challenges confronting the Total Army.

The National Guard's is the solution to the current resourcing financial resourcing crisis. I would suggest that more of the active component force structure and end strength be assigned to the states until our financial situation has improved.

## **Adjutants General and the Defense Budget**

Working together, state and federal partners found early success through the Council when they reached an historic agreement on the role of a Dual Status Commander during emergency response. This agreement resolved a long-standing dispute regarding command and control of federal and state forces during domestic operations and brought fundamental change to how the country prepares for and responds to emergencies. We are in fact exercising this capability during *Vigilant Guard 2015*.

After the release of the FY 2015 budget, DoD leadership updated Adjutants General on Army budget planning in a reexamination of the Army's Aviation Restructuring Initiative (ARI) by the Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation (CAPE) office. Despite this effort to improve engagement with states, Adjutants General are frustrated that DoD and the Army have pressed forward with their original plans virtually unchanged, despite reasonable alternatives that addressed some of Adjutants General ' concerns.

It is essential that the Guard maintain force structure. History has shown that when forces are taken away, they do not grow back easily. With sufficient resources at the right time the Guard can build upon their readiness, in order to meet deployment requirements based upon air, sea, land transportation availability after the initial "Fight Tonight" Active Component deploys.

## **Maintaining the Guard as an Operationally Capable Force**

For well over a decade, the men and women of the ARNG have worked interchangeably with their active duty counterparts in Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Kosovo. That combat and peacekeeping operations experience overseas has paid dividends here at home as the number and severity of domestic missions has also grown. Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the ARNG has evolved into an operational force that is better trained, led and equipped than at any time in its history. I firmly believe that these capability gains and the taxpayer investment they represent must be maintained.

Last year, the Army released ARI, which consisted of three major components: (1) divesting three types of aging, single engine aircraft across the Army components (Jet Ranger training helicopters and two models of OH-58 Kiowa armed scout/reconnaissance helicopters); (2) transferring all ARNG Apache helicopters to the active component to replace the Kiowas; and (3) transferring about 110 active Army UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters to the ARNG. Adjutants General recognize the need to restructure Army aviation, but oppose consolidating the Apache mission in the active component. We believe this plan not only undermines the ARNG's ability to augment the Army as its combat reserve, but also fails to leverage the Guard's cost-effectiveness to retain additional manpower, expertise and attack aircraft at a reduced cost to taxpayers. It is true that Apaches have limited application for the homeland mission; however, Adjutants General value and recognize the broader, long-term importance that strategic depth for the total force provides to their states and the nation.

And it should be noted that Guard soldiers are an integral part of the combat readiness of the Army, and have in general more experience, maturity and combat flying hours.

To try to address the concerns with the loss of Apaches, the Army proposed to provide states with additional L-Model Blackhawks. Trading Blackhawks for Apaches, however, is not an acceptable trade for states. While Blackhawks play an important role in states, there is currently no unmet need requiring additional Blackhawks for domestic response.

Mutual aid arrangements such as the Emergency Management Assistance Compact -- *like the one that has Minnesota Soldiers in Washington State today* -- already provide a means for states to request additional equipment and manpower during times of disaster. States do need modernized Blackhawks to replace aging

aircraft, but it has been left up to Congress to address the Army's continuing lack of investment in this effort.

Giving the Guard older-model Blackhawks that are not required for an Army war-time mission will only reduce the Army's incentive to fund their maintenance and modernization in the future. Unlike Apache units, Blackhawk units have been broken down into smaller detachments and spread over multiple states which reduces the additional personnel and affiliated support, logistics and communications capabilities that our Governors can draw from to conduct domestic operations.

While only nine states have ARNG Apache's, their transfer to the active component will affect many more and the Total Army will experience a considerable and irreversible loss of combat experience.

While Minnesota does not have Apaches, the 34th Infantry Division headquarters and the 34th Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) stationed in Minnesota provide Mission Command to the 1-189th Attack Helicopter Battalion located in Idaho. Additionally, the 834th Aviation Support Battalion in the 34th CAB has Apache maintainer skill sets that under ARI will be eliminated. The removal of the Apaches and these skills from the National Guard diminishes the depth and reversibility of our Army. Our CAB becoming a new doctrinal CSSB puts CABs at risk in the future, in that their structure and type of organization does not exist in the Active Component.

Furthermore, the loss of Attack Aviation in the National Guard will make Apache Air Ground Operations training much more difficult to facilitate. I am concerned this lack of training may impact National Guard CAB, BCT, and Division Headquarters relevance. This is one more example of the superficial analysis used to develop ARI. By eliminating the Apache mission in the Guard, the ARNG risks losing combat experienced pilots, and highly skilled maintenance crews developed over the last 12 years, while the Army simultaneously loses the only means available to retain its own combat experienced air crews, maintainers and leaders upon separation from active duty service. From a purely Minnesota perspective, a potential direct effect is the loss of aviation force structure to the state as the National Guard rebalances their reduced aviation force structure. The notion that Apache pilots only train 39 days a year is a truly uninformed, biased opinion and needs to be discounted in that the facts are they train to the same standard as the Active Component.

The second and third order effects of ARI once the transfer of helicopters is complete will be of significant concern to the long-term sustainment of ARNG equipment and strategic depth for the Total Army in the

future. A CAPE study of both ARI and a National Guard Bureau (NGB) counterproposal, acknowledge that the NGB plan would provide 20 percent more capability for the Total Army at a relatively modest 2-3 percent (\$90-\$170 million) additional annual cost. I believe Congress would accept their minimal increase to have a strategic cushion for unforeseen conflicts.

## **Resourcing the Guard's Dual Mission/Unity of Effort**

In addition to ARI, the Army has also proposed reducing ARNG end strength to its lowest level since the Korean War. While it makes sense to increase or decrease active duty personnel depending on our engagements overseas, our Governors rely on a stable and consistent ARNG force to serve their needs in states.

Our Governors routinely rely on the National Guard to respond to both natural and man-made emergencies. National Guard personnel, equipment and capabilities are key resources built into states' emergency response plans and the federal National Response Framework. The National Guard also has the unique ability to perform law enforcement functions that have proven valuable in the response to natural disasters, recent episodes of civil unrest and other national special security events. These capabilities are enhanced by well-developed relationships with state emergency managers, homeland security advisors and local law enforcement. In addition, more than 80 percent of the Army's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive (CBRNE) response capability resides in the ARNG, with every state possessing at least one CBRNE team. Both the Federal Emergency Management Agency and state and local law enforcement rely on these key capabilities during hazardous materials response.

And still using the Korean War as a reference, consider the sheer size of our national population between 2015 and 1950, and the complexity of threats that were not on the horizon then. Things like: more natural disasters; terrorism at home; civil unrest; climate change; mega-city expansion; world-wide demands; more peer competition; cyber threats; asymmetrical warfare; more small nation and sectarian unrest.

Cutting National Guard personnel risks stripping states of critical capabilities, weakening partnerships and upending years of carefully crafted emergency response plans at a time of growing domestic need. End strength reductions of 8,200 personnel proposed in FY 2016 coupled with 7,000 soldiers in FY 2017 would bring the ARNG's size to its lowest level in decades. The unique structure of the ARNG means that proposed cuts to end strength will affect nearly every state and degrade ARNG readiness nationwide.

Ensuring a minimum level of readiness across all states in order to meet state mission requirements will require an estimated 15,000 positions be retrained and shifted. To fully implement such changes could take three to five years, creating instability and uncertainty for states and undermining the ARNG's ability to support emergency response requirements, including its critical CBRNE mission.

As part of this reduction, the Army has proposed to downsize the Guard's full-time staff by 1,700 positions, which are critical to maintaining the Guard's operational readiness for both domestic operations and combat missions overseas. These are professional positions required to manage complex Army manning and equipping systems; work which cannot be performed efficiently by either traditional Guard members or a part-time rotational support staff. Currently the number of full time positions in the ARNG is about 68 percent<sup>1</sup> of the level identified in guidance developed between the Army and NGB in the late 1990s. This guidance was developed prior to the events of September 11, 2001, to ensure the ARNG maintained enough full-time positions to support a strategic reserve. Even while supporting two major wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the ARNG never met 100 percent of the recommended strategic reserve requirement, and now the Army is proposing to reduce these levels even further. These full-time positions are responsible for keeping units ready to deploy in support of Army demands overseas. During domestic emergencies, they provide immediate response capability, organize and deploy response assets and regenerate unit resources after traditional Guard members return home.

As DoD stated in a May 8 letter, it is the department's goal to reduce stress on the force to the maximum extent possible and preserve readiness while reducing costs. The effects of the Army's proposals on the ARNG, however, are turbulence and instability in states without significant cost savings. Unlike other military components, cutting National Guard force structure in one state frequently requires shifting personnel and assets from other states to fill gaps and maintain readiness across the force. It also means removing a capability for up to a decade. While the active component has the ability to replenish units through world-wide reassignment of personnel, ARNG soldiers are connected to their local armories. ARNG units are not created, they are grown in the communities that support them.

The turbulence created by force structure and personnel cuts affects people, readiness, training, equipment and facilities. This all comes with a cost to implement, which NGB estimates would be about \$179 million in its first year. Funding to cover these costs was not included in the Army's FY 2016 budget. The

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<sup>1</sup> FY 2015: 60,185 total authorizations that are funded against 88,263 total requirements. [FIND REFERENCE]

Congressional Budget Office estimates that the cuts to ARNG personnel would save the Army only \$170 million in its first year – \$9 million *less* than the unfunded implementation costs. When these effects and costs are considered, Adjutants General believe it simply does not make sense to implement the Army's proposals. While some reductions to ARNG force structure may ultimately be necessary, they should be done through a collaborative approach that takes the long view, limits turbulence and maintains readiness in the Guard. This can only be done through a collaborative communication process from the senior civilian leadership of the Army, CSA, NGB, TAGs, and Governors with support of our Congressional delegation that can then conclude what is in the best interest of the Army, but more importantly what is best for our Nation and its' defense.

### **Transient, Trainee, Holdees and Students (TTHS)**

On the topic of Transient, Trainee, Holdees and Students (TTHS), I support that there should be a National Guard TTHS account, but not at the expense of MTOE forces. To be clear, we support TTHS, but not at the expense of force structure.

### **Leveraging the Guard to Meet National Challenges**

Time and time again, the Guard has proven itself a critical partner and a value to the taxpayer. According to an analysis of fully burdened lifecycle costs by the Reserve Forces Policy Board and by DoD's Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation Office, a Guardsman costs one-third that of an active duty service member when not mobilized and is still less costly when mobilized. Given that the ARNG also provides 39 percent of total Army capabilities for only 13 percent of the total Army budget, Adjutants General believe more should be done to leverage the National Guard's cost effectiveness, combat experience and ability to provide surge capacity during conflicts.

The State Partnership Program demonstrates the ARNG's cost effective strategic reach. Fifty-four states and territories have established civil-military and military-military relationships with 70 countries around the world.

Minnesota's State Partnership Program relationship with Croatia has yielded measurable dividends. Not only has our nearly 20-year partnership assisted in Croatia ascending to NATO military standards, but also

our Minnesota National Guard soldiers have deployed in combat embedded as Operational Mentorship Liaison Teams with the Croatian Army in Afghanistan.

I am confident that my remarks will echo in concert and further reinforce those purported by each of my fellow Adjutants General regarding the vitally important state partnership program as part of the National Guard's comprehensive approach to security cooperation. The state partnership program is one of many security cooperative enterprises conducted by the Department of Defense, and it is designed not to contradict, complicate, compete or usurp those other programs. Rather, it is predicated to be complimentary and congruent with other activities and is aligned with the Chief of Mission's Integrated Country Strategy as well as the US European Command's Croatian Country Cooperation Plan ensuring a more robust and efficient security cooperative measure is gained. The program directly supports multiple facets of the Diplomatic, Information, Military and Economy model that you are familiar with as it relates to national security.

Moreover, from my vantage point the National Guard serves as an indispensable point of entry within each State Partnership country for establishing and enhancing national efforts and strategies and serves as an example of the citizen Soldier as a global ambassador for the state and nation.

This partnership has been successful; in fact, Minnesota is actively seeking another State Partnership Program nation.

Additionally, I am pleased to report that the Minnesota National Guard continues to enjoy the longest standing NATO reciprocal troop exchange with the country of Norway. Over the past 42 years the Minnesota National Guard has successfully maintained a profound and remarkable exchange program which continues to evolve through the incorporation of inter-agency state and local law enforcement partners with that of the Norwegian Rapid Reaction Force. This exchange directly contributes in a complimentary manor to the readiness of the National Guard. Programs like the Norwegian Exchange teach our Soldiers intercultural communication skills which will be indispensable in a future when U.S. deployments are increasingly elements of multinational forces. They also expose junior leaders to NATO allies and create confidence in both parties operational structure.

The National Guard's international relationships add to the rich traditions within each state.

Preserving ARNG force structure will ultimately save taxpayer dollars, preserve additional military capability and facilitate the retention of highly trained soldiers who would otherwise leave military service.

The growing cybersecurity mission is an important example of the National Guard's ability to meet both federal and state needs. As the federal government and states take action to improve the nation's cybersecurity posture, the National Guard can be an important asset to fill capability gaps for defense of government networks and critical infrastructure. Both the Air Force and the Army have recognized the benefits of the Guard's ability to tap into private-sector skillsets and leverage its dual-status role to support both federal and state cybersecurity missions.

Minnesota has submitted a request the National Guard Bureau to have an Army Cyber Protection Team assigned in the state to augment our capabilities and leverage the technical civilian skills that our service members have.

We urge the Commission to consider the ARNG's value to this critical mission for both DoD and states.

## **Establishing Common Goals for the Future of the Army**

As the Army is forced to evolve in the wake of declining budgets and continuing global instability, Adjutants General hope this Commission will help bring the Total Army together to address these challenges in partnership. Our Nation and elected officials expect us to work out our differences through professional dialogue and respect in order to leverage our collective resources and experiences as an Army.

Two years ago, we opposed similar efforts to cut personnel and equipment from the ANG. Congress subsequently chose not to impose the cuts as proposed and called for a National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force. The Air Force Commission's final report reflects the notion that the Guard is a cost-effective and invaluable force that should be part of an active and reserve component mix that meets the needs of the Total Air Force. The work of the Air Force Commission, combined with the superb and transparent leadership of Air Force Chief of Staff General Mark Welsh and Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James, contributed to a positive shift and greater collaboration between the Air Force and the ANG.

We hope that the work of this Commission and a renewed commitment from senior civilian and military leaders across the Army components can strengthen collaboration and communication in a similar fashion. This will take a cultural shift within the Army, but we've seen this pay dividends in the Air Force in recent years as additional restructuring has been proposed.

Given the role of the Guard and the presence of our armed forces in states, Adjutants General want to be active partners with DoD and the military services to find solutions that are in the best interests of all involved.

Adjutants General understand the real impacts down the road, not only for the National Guard, but also for the active duty installations and defense-related industries within our states. Army restructuring will affect communities throughout every state and territory, leading to job loss, economic turbulence and potential uncertainty in the ARNG's ability to respond to emergencies.

Today's Guard is accessible, available, and has accomplished every mission that it has been assigned over the last fourteen years of war.

Instead of parsing the three components of the Army, perhaps the commission should consider embedding active component NCOs and officers with the National Guard. Multi-component, integrated formations will assist in bridging the current level of understanding of the Guard, and create a foundation that ensures the Guard and Reserves value to the Total Force.

Today's dynamic economic and national security environments put a premium on the concept of reversibility. That key strength is why we urge this Commission to consider recommendations that will preserve the ARNG's role as the combat reserve of the Army, resource and equip the ARNG to meet both federal and state needs, and leverage the Guard's cost-effectiveness and operational capability as part of a Total Army solution going forward. To do otherwise would risk wasting billions of dollars invested over the past decade in making the ARNG an experienced, globally deployable and combat-ready force.

Adjutants General will continue to advocate for a strong Guard that is "Always Ready – Always There." The Commission is an important voice in this endeavor. On behalf of the nation's Adjutants General and the Council, I thank you for the opportunity to address you today.