



## **The Adjutants General Association of the United States**

As the President of the Adjutants General Association of the United States, representing a body comprised of the 54 Adjutants General from each state and territory, I am reaching out to you in an attempt to set the record straight on the development of the Army's proposed budget for the Army National Guard and some of the provisions now before you.

And at this moment, our nation is counting on all of us to 'get it right'. We need an honest, unbiased broker. We need an independent National Commission to review our Army and recommend the best structure for America's future security and Army force.

The first misconception is that the National Guard is unwilling to accept budget cuts. This is simply not true. No service or component wants its budget reduced, but as the leaders of community-based forces, we are acutely aware of the threats posed by our nation's fiscal problems. Many of us have seen our state or territory budgets cut. All of us have Soldiers and Airmen who have been hurt by the sluggish economy and who will bear the future burden of our country's mounting debt. The Guard must make reductions. We accept that.

In fact, we supported the plan the National Guard Bureau offered last summer to cover the Army National Guard's original \$1.7 billion share of cuts required by the Budget Control Act. The plan minimized personnel turbulence, which translates into reduced retraining costs and other risks to readiness. Unfortunately, this and all other input from the National Guard was rejected by Army leadership in favor of the proposal now before you that creates significant personnel turbulence - requiring more than 55,000 soldiers having to be retrained for new careers, years of readiness problems, and includes more than \$1 billion in non-programmed costs.

Another fallacy is the implied savings from the Army's plan to transfer the entire Army National Guard AH-64 Apache fleet to the active component under the Aviation Restructuring Initiative (ARI). Army National Guard attack-helicopter battalions, on average, can be maintained for 42 percent of the cost of their active-component counterparts. You simply do not save money shifting aircraft from the former to the latter. ARI also fails to include the significant retraining costs associated with such a transfer. Just as important, it squanders strategic depth and hundreds of the Total Army's most experienced Apache pilots and maintainers, and it eliminates a readily available place to serve for Apache pilots and maintainers who leave the active component.

Equally deceptive is the Army argument that the states and territories would be better off with UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters than Apaches. Governors do not agree. The reason for this is two-fold: 1.) The National Guard does not have a quantitative Black Hawk shortage, and 2.) The implications of removing attack aviation from the force structure. They fear, as do we, that this is a first big step to taking away the Army National Guard's historic combat role, and it is the experience gained through the command and control of combat units that makes the Army National Guard so successful in large-scale domestic operations.

Army officials also are telling less than the whole story on end-strength reductions. Congress authorized the active component to temporarily grow to 570,000 during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It was already scheduled to return to about 490,000 personnel, yet officials often cite the higher figure to artificially inflate the size of their cuts relative to the reductions for the Army National Guard. The Army National Guard end-strength has remained constant at approximately 350,000 since before 9/11.

Army statisticians also appear to be using end-strength cuts to mask rather dramatic force structure changes that have been occurring over the last decade and a half. In 2000, the Army National Guard had 42 combat brigades, while 33 such units resided in the active-component Army. Over the last 14 years, the Army National Guard shrunk to 28 brigades and is scheduled to grow even smaller. Meanwhile, the active component grew to a high of 45 brigades and is now down to 32. But this, too, is deceptive. Active-component brigades have gone from two to three maneuver battalions; Army National Guard brigades were not authorized to increase in size. This makes Army comments about the Army and Army National Guard not being “interchangeable” a self-fulfilling prophecy. It also makes the Army National Guard role in combat, which helps connect America to the front lines of the war fight, increasingly smaller.

What we are witnessing is rapid, revolutionary change in the Total Army that will continue under the Army’s new five-year budget plan. While it is true that Army National Guard leaders were involved in the process, we have been told that our active component counterparts did not consider the risk to our Nation's security by presenting plans that drastically cut our National Guard to an ineffective force.

The Army is now attempting to sell its plan on the Hill with a communication campaign that uses blatant falsehoods to devalue the Army National Guard’s ability to contribute to the Army of the future. We hear that the Army National Guard is inaccessible, yet the force has never missed a call. We hear that the Army National Guard takes too long to get to the fight, yet it is the active component that sets training standards and schedules. We hear that the Army National Guard trains only 39 days a year, yet most of our officers and non-commissioned officers are budgeted to spend 92.5 days a year in uniform. We also hear that the Army trains 365 days a year, yet our Soldiers sit idly at mobilization stations on weekends because their active-component trainers take Saturdays and Sundays off.

Even worse, Pentagon officials have allowed all of this to happen and now even seem to be silencing the Chief of the National Guard Bureau to the point that he has difficulty fulfilling his statutory responsibility as a channel of communication from us to you in an open hearing.

We are not shocked that any of this is happening. This is history repeating itself. Every time resources become constrained, Army officials target the Army National Guard. We had hoped that 12 years of war—fighting and winning alongside our active-component brethren—would make this time different, but that has not happened.

What is at stake is the Army—Active, Guard, and Reserve—of 2020 and beyond. The Nation is counting on all of us to get it right. We have time for an independent review of how to best structure America’s Army. We need a National Commission on the Structure of the Army.