

Executive Memorandum

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Giving the National Guard What It Needs for the Future

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Recent demands on the National Guard have been extraordinary by historical standards. For example, the Army National Guard has mobilized 85 percent of its force since September 11, 2001, and provided nearly half of U.S. ground forces in Iraq during 2005. From flying civil air patrols and providing airport personnel after 9/11 to responding to Hurricane Katrina to ongoing counterdrug operations and now augmenting the Border Patrol, the National Guard is continuously supporting state security and overseas missions. It is essential to any large-scale domestic emergency response. The Army and Air Force simply could not fulfill their Title 10 responsibilities without the National Guard.

The National Guard is tasked with missions that include the global war on terrorism, homeland defense, and disaster relief, but for years it has been slighted on resources and equipment and as a partner in decision making with the active Army and Air Force. One vivid example occurred as the Army and Air Force were preparing their fiscal year 2007 service budget requests. The Army cut its National Guard personnel levels by nearly 17,000 soldiers and the Air Force cut personnel levels by almost 14,000 airmen without first consulting with the National Guard Bureau, state adjutants general, or state governors.

Recent Congressional Action. In April 2006, Senators Christopher S. Bond (R–MO) and Patrick J. Leahy (D–VT), co-chairmen of the Senate National Guard Caucus, and Representatives Thomas M. Davis (R–VA) and Gene Taylor (D–MS), co-chairmen of the House Guard and Reserve Components Caucus, introduced the National Defense Enhancement and National Guard Empowerment Act (S. 2658 and H.R. 5200). The legislation was endorsed by the National Guard Association, the Enlisted Association of the National Guard, and the Adjutants General Association.

The Senate Armed Services Committee leadership accepted a modified version of the bill as part of the annual defense authorization act during floor consideration. The revised legislation contained four major provisions: promoting the Chief of the National Guard Bureau to the rank of general (four stars); designating the Deputy of U.S. Northern

Congress should:

- Promote the National Guard Chief to the rank of general,
 - Designate the Deputy of Northern Command as a National Guardsman stationed in Washington, and
 - Permanently establish a separate procurement account for National Guard equipment.
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Command as a member of the Guard; redefining the Guard as a joint bureau of the Department of Defense (DOD); and tasking states to identify emergency response gaps. However, all four provisions were dropped from the final defense authorization bill. The bill instead directed the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves to study the feasibility of the proposals.

What Congress Should Do. Congress should carefully consider the National Guard's needs when deciding policy and provide adequate funding for equipment, personnel, and training. Specifically, the 110th Congress should:

- **Elevate the position of National Guard Chief to the rank of general.** Under current law, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau reports to the Secretaries of the Army and Air Force, but not directly to the Secretary of Defense, even though the National Guard has nearly 450,000 citizen-soldiers and airmen—nearly 40 percent of the U.S. military's total force. Further, while the active Army and Air Force have 106 senior general officers, the National Guard has only three, all of them three-star generals.

Given the number of National Guard troops and its mobility and strike assets, the Guard should have a reasonable share of high-ranking positions to put its leaders on par with other branches when making important defense decisions that will affect the Guard. The Guard's unique role in homeland defense missions, which require an integrated civil-military response, also bolsters the argument for elevating the position of National Guard Chief to a full general.

- **Designate the Northern Command Deputy as a Guardsman stationed in Washington, D.C.** The National Guard is essential to domestic disaster response, especially with over half of state adjutants general also serving as state emergency managers. The Pentagon's response to Hurricane Katrina highlighted U.S. Northern Command's deficiencies in coordinating Guard troop deployments. The House, Senate, and White House reports on the Katrina response reiterated the National Guard's unique qualities. The Senate committee report specifically noted the absence of any established process

for the large-scale, nationwide deployment of National Guard troops for civil support.

U.S. Northern Command, responsible for homeland defense, keeps only a small liaison office in the Pentagon. Requiring the Northern Command deputy commander to be a National Guard member stationed in Washington, D.C., would greatly facilitate effective coordination with the Department of Homeland Security and other federal agencies.

- **Establish a separate procurement account for Guard equipment.** The Guard's high operational tempo and increased missions have not yielded substantial additional funding and resources, especially in regard to equipment. Overseas missions have badly depleted the Guard's domestic supply of vehicles, weapons, and communications gear, leaving Guard units with only one-third of the equipment needed to fulfill their homeland defense missions. DOD policy requires the Army to replace Guard and Reserve equipment transferred to the active Army for longer than 90 days, but many transfers were never properly recorded, and the Army has prepared virtually no plans to replace the equipment.

The Guard's domestic missions in addition to combat operations dictate that it should receive an adequate supply of equipment, a proper mix of capabilities, and the most recent technologies. While the military services should continue to direct the training and organizing of the National Guard as a federal Reserve Component of the Army and the Air Force, the National Guard should have its own equipment budget. Specifically, the National Guard should have a separate account for equipment procurement within the annual defense spending bills.

Conclusion. Congress has been attentive to the needs of the National Guard over the past five years, and the 110th Congress should continue these efforts by making these three legislative changes to enhance the National Guard's role in the 21st century.

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