



May 14, 2014

The Honorable Robert Work
Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, DC 20318

The Honorable John McHugh
Secretary of the Army
U.S. Department of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, DC 20318

Dear Secretary Work and Secretary McHugh:

As members of the Council of Governors (Council), we thank you for your recent outreach, including our April 10 teleconference led by former Acting Deputy Secretary Christine Fox. We look forward to building upon these discussions as we continue to address the effect of the U.S. Army's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2015 on the Army National Guard (ARNG). We understand the fiscal challenges confronting the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Army, but remain convinced that continued reliance on the National Guard offers a better solution. To facilitate further timely discussion, and in recognition of ongoing Congressional action, we offer several recommendations to ensure we meet the needs of the nation and our states.

Limit turmoil that affects the homeland – Proposals to cut costs should not create unnecessary turmoil that wastes taxpayer dollars and could disrupt homeland missions. The Army's proposed cuts for the next five years would lead to shifts of personnel and force structure across nearly every state. The people and equipment affected by these shifts are relied upon by governors to respond to emergencies. While we appreciate that the Reserves are available to support disaster response efforts upon a gubernatorial request, they cannot be substituted for the National Guard.

Retain a role for the ARNG in combat aviation – The ARNG should maintain a role in the apache combat mission. This will ensure the ARNG continues to serve as a combat reserve force of the active duty Army. Divesting the ARNG of this mission in order to provide the active component with "spare" aircraft creates an enormous increased cost to taxpayers and deprives states of equipment, personnel and experience that would be lost by the ARNG. Last November, the National Guard offered an alternate proposal that would have transferred two of the ARNG's eight battalions to the active component and reduced the size of the remaining battalions. This alternative had the support of the Adjutants General and would produce nearly identical cost savings to the Army's proposal. We encourage you to reconsider this alternative. Incorporating input of the states would demonstrate your commitment to a true partnership and consultative dialogue. If elements of the proposal from the ARNG are not incorporated, we will continue to request that Congress establish an independent commission to thoughtfully examine force structure and ensure that all perspectives are fully considered.

Leverage the National Guard's cost-effectiveness to maintain end strength – DoD's internal review of the National Guard's cost effectiveness found that the National Guard is cheaper to operate than the active component, even when mobilized. As we return to peacetime, it would make better economic sense to capitalize on the ARNG's cost-effectiveness and high level of skill. By maintaining higher end strength for

the ARNG, the nation could preserve experience, additional capability, surge capacity and strategic depth for the military. The ARNG offered an alternative proposal that would have maintained higher end strength over the coming years and prevented the loss of four brigade combat teams, two combat aviation brigades and six attack aviation battalions – critical Total Army force structure – while producing the same amount of savings. We, again, encourage you to reconsider this proposal.

As we continue to assess these and other future proposals, we want to ensure the Guard remains a viable operational force. In addition, we believe the year 2000 should be used as the baseline for all cross-year comparisons. As the nation withdraws from overseas conflicts and returns to a sustainable peacetime posture, it will be most instructive to compare the size and shape of our nation’s military forces to pre-war levels as opposed to the war-time high and doing so would better align to the Pentagon’s strategic plan.

Since its inception in 2010, the Council has proven to be an effective forum for solving challenges involving state and federal military activities. We firmly believe that early and active engagement between governors and DoD and its components will produce solutions that meet federal and state security requirements for current missions and emerging ones such as cybersecurity. We look forward to continuing this dialogue as expeditiously as possible.

Sincerely,



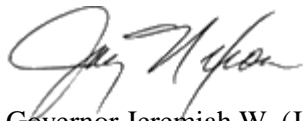
Governor Terry E Branstad
Co-Chair
Iowa



Governor Jan Brewer
Arizona



Governor Neil Abercrombie
Hawaii



Governor Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon
Missouri



Governor Matthew Mead
Wyoming



Governor Martin O'Malley
Co-Chair
Maryland



Governor Dannel Malloy
Connecticut



Governor Pat Quinn
Illinois



Governor Brian Sandoval
Nevada