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August 27, 2015

General Carter Ham (ret)
Chairman
National Commission on the Future of the Army
2530 Crystal Drive, Suite 5000
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Ham:

Thank you for the National Commission on the Future of the Army's (Commission) outreach to states, particularly the participation of Commissioners Thomas Lamont and LTG (ret) Jack Stultz at the National Governors Association's recent meeting in West Virginia. Governors found the conversation valuable and appreciated the opportunity to share our perspectives on the importance of the Army National Guard to our states and the nation.

Attached please find responses to the questions included in your July letter. The responses represent a variety of states' input and are intended to provide a national perspective on the issues raised.

Thank you for your leadership in this important endeavor. We look forward to continuing to work with you as the Commission completes its review.

Sincerely,

Governor Jay Nixon
Chair
Homeland Security & Public Safety Committee

Governor Asa Hutchinson
Vice Chair
Homeland Security & Public Safety Committee

Governor Terry E. Branstad
Co-Chair
Council of Governors

Governor Dannel P. Malloy
Co-Chair
Council of Governors

Attachment: Response to Commission Questions

National Governors Association – Council of Governors
Response to Questions from the National Commission on the Future of the Army
August 2015

1) *What concerns you the most if the Army reduces or closes federal and/or Army National Guard facilities in your state?*

The Army National Guard plays a critical role during a variety of emergencies and the loss of force structure diminishes the ability to respond quickly to save lives and protect property. Any change to National Guard force structure will have a negative effect on its readiness for state and federal missions and it can take years to rebuild capabilities.

During major disasters, governors can enlist the help of neighboring governors' National Guard forces through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact; however, this takes time to implement and is not appropriate for no-notice or short-notice events.

If changes to the Army National Guard are necessary, they should be done through a detailed planning process involving states rather than a unilateral decision based on quick fixes to short-term challenges.

Loss or reduction of what capabilities would cause you the most concern?

The loss of any capability is a concern because of the National Guard's role responding to emergencies. Every emergency is different and calls for different capabilities.

2) *How important to you is the Army National Guard's combat role?*

The Army National Guard should continue to serve as the combat reserve of the Army because it provides a cost effective surge capacity for national security and supports emergency response capabilities here at home.

The National Guard's presence in American communities helps ensure public support for overseas conflicts. Removing the Guard from its combat reserve role would also shortchange the nation by eliminating our most cost-effective combat force.

Here at home, combat units are manpower intensive and trained to operate in complex environments such as those inherent in natural disaster response. As such, combat units are a valuable resource for governors when responding to emergencies.

Would you accept larger Army National Guard forces even if that meant their readiness for short notice combat was somewhat diminished?

Governors believe more should be done to leverage the National Guard's cost effectiveness and combat experience to maintain military capability while still reducing costs.

A Guardsman costs one-third that of an active duty service member when not mobilized and is still less costly when mobilized. The Army National Guard also provides 39 percent of total Army capabilities for only 13 percent of the Army budget.

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- 3) *Do you think the number of deployments for Army National Guard and Army Reserve units in your state are too frequent, too few or about right?*

The men and women of the National Guard are committed to serving their state and the nation. They want to be operationally engaged in the broad spectrum of national security and homeland security missions. Governors believe the National Guard can effectively manage the operational tempo that the Chief of the National Guard Bureau has presented to the Department of Defense and Army leaders.

- 4) *What is your assessment of the Army's (active and reserve) ability to provide defense support to civilian authorities in your state? Do you feel there are gaps in response capabilities or shortages in your essential 10 missions¹?*

Governors do not have concerns about the current ability of the Army National Guard to provide defense support to civil authorities when necessary. The proposed reductions to Army National Guard force structure and personnel, however, would likely create significant uncertainty and gaps in the availability and readiness of these capabilities.

During most emergencies, speed of response is necessary to save lives and protect property. While federal military forces from the active Army and the Army Reserve may be available to assist, they cannot substitute for the National Guard.

Using federal military forces requires a Stafford Act declaration and the subsequent federal approval process takes time. The National Guard's dual-role also provides it greater flexibility to assist in a variety of missions, such as law enforcement support, that federal forces cannot provide.

- 5) *Given the current and projected fiscal constraints facing the Army, what are the biggest challenges for the Army units (active, Guard, reserve) in your state?*

The turmoil created by the uncertainty of resources is a challenge and affects training, morale and the confidence of soldiers in their leadership. Despite this, our National Guard soldiers continue to quickly volunteer for missions and serve when called. The need for certainty and stability is one reason governors urge the Army to leverage the National Guard's cost-effectiveness to preserve greater mission capability for the Total Army while still reducing costs.

- 6) *Do you have any recommendations for improving the Council of Governors/Department of Defense meetings?*

Congress created the Council of Governors (Council) to serve as a forum for dialog on National Guard matters. Several years ago the Council agreed to a budget consultative process that committed the Department of Defense to discussing budget and resource allocation matters with governors in advance of formally requesting or implementing any changes affecting the National Guard.

The Department of Defense should adhere to federal law and the commitments made to the Council to discuss Army National Guard force structure matters with governors before they are submitted to Congress or otherwise implemented.

¹ The National Guard's 10 essential capabilities include: aviation; command and control; chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, explosive (CBRNE) response; engineering; medical; communications; transportation; security; logistics and maintenance.