



NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES, INC.

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July 1, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Joe Biden  
Vice President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20501

Dear President Obama and Vice President Biden:

On behalf of the nearly 470,000 members of the National Guard, let me first say that it continues to be a distinct honor and privilege for the National Guard to serve you; our states, territories and the District of Columbia; and our great nation.

However, as you are aware, the National Guard remains hindered fiscally and operationally by a lack of representation in final decision making at the Pentagon. Thanks to legislation you both co-sponsored while in the Senate, the chief of National Guard Bureau today wears four stars. He is now in the room with the Joint Chiefs of Staff for some discussions, but he does not have a vote, which means he is not truly at the table.

You had the foresight to recognize that the Guard Empowerment advances of 2008 did not go far enough to serve the type of Guard the nation needs in the 21st century. That is why you included making the NGB chief a member of the Joint Chiefs in "The Blueprint For Change: Barack Obama's Plan for America." It is also why then-Sen. Joe Biden committed your Administration to providing the Guard with a seat at the table when he spoke to us at the 130th NGAUS General Conference in Baltimore in September 2008.

We know change often takes time, and we have waited patiently for Congress to develop and to send you the legislation required to make into reality our shared objective for the Guard. The National Guard Empowerment and State-National Defense Integration Act of 2011, introduced May 17 by Sen. Patrick Leahy and Sen. Lindsey Graham, includes a provision that would make the NGB chief a full member of the Joints Chiefs of Staff. Unfortunately, press accounts of the Senate hearing last month to consider Leon E. Panetta to be secretary of defense indicates he does not favor giving the Guard a seat at the table.

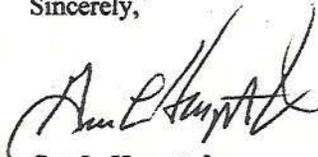
Secretary Panetta's position, as communicated in the press, leaves us extremely concerned. At a minimum, it could derail a legislative initiative that has already won approval in the House and has been gaining significant momentum in the Senate. It also has us wondering if there has been some evolution in your Administration's thinking and position on this matter.

I can assure you that from our perspective, nothing has altered the need for the NGB chief to be a full participant at the table. The Guard may not be a separate service, but it is the only component of the U.S. military with a state/territory mission as well as a federal mission. Under the current paradigm, the needs of the Guard are represented by the chiefs of staff of the Army and Air Force, two force-providing generals who can make the case for the Guard's federal combat mission, but who have little background in the critical and ever-increasing homeland security missions Guard men and women undertake each day across this nation.

There should be no confusion, without the NGB chief on the Joint Chiefs, not only is the Guard not at the table, homeland security and the nation's governors are not at the table.

The members of the National Guard, in general, and our Association, in particular, would greatly appreciate a clarification of your 2008 commitment to making the NGB chief a permanent voting member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Sincerely,



Gus L. Hargett Jr.  
Major General (Ret.), AUS  
President

cc:

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
The Honorable Lindsey Graham  
The Honorable Leon E. Panetta, Secretary of Defense  
The Honorable Elizabeth L. King, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs  
Mr. David L. McGinnis, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs



CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20318-9999

12 September 2011

Major General Gus L. Hargett, Jr., AUS (Ret)  
President, National Guard Association  
of the United States  
One Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear General Hargett,

The President has asked me to respond to your letter, which explains the merits of expanding the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) to include membership of the Chief, National Guard Bureau (CNGB).

The National Guard unquestionably provides vital elements of the Joint Force and executes its Army, Air Force, and domestic missions superbly. The CNGB advises the Army and the Air Force Secretaries on the National Guard's federal roles, and the Secretary of Defense through me in its unique, domestic role. These advisory functions are sufficiently fulfilled without the CNGB having JCS membership.

Since being elevated to four-star rank in 2008, the CNGB has routinely been included in JCS meetings and contributes valuable perspectives on the National Guard, particularly its critical homeland defense mission and forces. In that regard, I have not seen the National Guard disadvantaged either fiscally or operationally. Quite the contrary, the CNGB has been an active voice at the table.

Adding the CNGB as a JCS member would disrupt the lines of authority of the Army and Air Force Chiefs of Staff and introduce redundancies in Service representation. Such a move would also result in inequity in overall Reserve Component representation, with National Guard issues seen as being prioritized over those of the federal Reserves. The CNGB should not be put in a position that creates real or perceived independence from the leaders of the National Guard's parent Services.

I believe the work of the Council of Governors addresses in part your concern over proper representation of National Guard and state interests. The White House and the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security have gained valuable insights into very significant domestic security issues through their growing relationship with the Council. Based on my personal

observations and participation, I find our dialog and efforts make this relationship mutually beneficial. The Council has the added benefit of being able to consider issues from perspectives external to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and promises to continue as an effective forum for resolution of issues crucial to the states and their National Guard.

I appreciate your commitment concerning the CNGB's role. It is with deep respect that I extend the President's gratitude for your loyal service to the Nation and to the State of Tennessee, and to the Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen of the National Guard.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. G. Mullen", followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

M. G. MULLEN  
Admiral, U.S. Navy