



## Adjutants General Association of the United States

February 20, 2020

The Honorable Mark T. Esper  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1000

General Mark Milley  
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff  
9999 Joint Staff Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20318-9999

Dear Secretary Esper and General Milley,

We are writing on behalf of The Adjutants General charged with organizing and training the nearly 450,000 Soldiers and Airmen of the National Guard who continue today in their decades-long participation in our Nation's defense at home and abroad; providing the vast majority of the over one million mobilizations since 2001. We believe the reprogramming of Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 appropriations by the Department of Defense (DoD) disproportionately targets the National Guard and risks diminishing our lethal capability proven necessary during these decades of conflict. As you are aware, that capability comes not only from our service budgets but additionally from Congressionally appropriated budgets such as the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account (NGREA) and additional major end item appropriations.

The recent cuts that specifically targeted accounts benefitting the Reserve components place Soldiers and Airmen at greater risk at a time when our service members continue to support the Total Force effort. The amount shouldered by the National Guard was 34% of the total funds reprogrammed. The National Guard provides almost 40% of the combat force structure to the Army and Air Force for less than 5% of DoD's military personnel and operations budgets. Targeting the National Guard for over 30 percent of these cuts unfairly burdens the most cost-effective combat force supporting the total United States military.

In this same budget year, the Air Force is cutting legacy aircraft to realign funds for modernization requirements. While modernization is certainly necessary and welcome, the impact on the Air National Guard is greatest as it fields the largest percentage of the Air Force's fleet of legacy aircraft. Simultaneously reprogramming from C130J procurement and National Guard and Reserve Equipment (NGREA) funds, while retiring legacy aircraft, will have a compounding negative effect on National Guard readiness and, thereby, our nation's warfighting capability.

Similarly, the Army National Guard has worked to economically modernize, rather than replace, its fleet of HMMWV's, providing necessary room for the Army to modernize its troop hauling fleet. This cost-effective alternative, in typical National Guard fashion, substantially contributes

to the readiness of the Total Force at a fraction of the price of alternative programs. In this reprogramming action, the Army Guard and Reserve took 100% of the Army cuts at \$801M, with the Army Guard shouldering 75% of those Reserve component cuts. While every other service cut equitably across the service components, the Army decided it would only reduce the funding for its Reserve component; displaying no total force objectivity whatsoever.

As you are also aware, the National Guard is not able to include unfunded requirements in the DoD budget process. Congress has recognized the continued demands on the Reserve Components and includes NGREA to provide critical warfighting requirements the Department has excluded from the budget process. It is readily apparent the Department of Defense has grown to rely upon NGREA to provide additional readiness to its Reserve Component, yet with one sweeping reprogramming action discounted the entire consultative budget process mandated via the Council of Governors.

During sequestration, when the DoD requested by the Department of Defense for Governors to come out in support of a strong defense and rescission of the BCA caps, we supported the Department's position, because it was in the best interest of our nation and our Soldiers and Airmen. Now when faced with a difficult budget decision, it appears the Department turned its back on the Reserve Component and unfairly levied the burden of the costs on its operational and strategic reserve. We respectfully request restoration of the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account budget, C130J procurement, and HMMWV modernization funding Congress appropriated specifically for our Reserve Component. If this request is denied we respectfully request a meeting to discuss the future of our Guard and Reserve funding.

Sincerely,



Matthew T. Quinn, Montana  
President



Michael A. Loh, Colorado  
Vice President-Air



Timothy P. Williams, Virginia  
Vice President-Army