

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 21, 2007

The Honorable Michael W. Wynne
Secretary of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330

General T. Michael Moseley, USAF
Air Force Chief of Staff
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330

Dear Secretary Wynne and General Moseley:

The Air Force, under the pen of General Moseley, recently wrote to the Commission on the National Guard and Reserve and laid out a laundry list of ideas for the commission to explore that we find ill advised and that reflect a gross misunderstanding of the significance and purpose of the National Guard. We would have preferred that the Air Force work directly with Congress to develop plans to move the Total Force into the future, instead of asking an unelected commission to expend precious time and energy on poorly thought out proposals.


Three main policy proposals were set forth in the letter. The most troubling, and extreme, would morph the Air National Guard's organizational structure into a mirror of the Air Force Reserve. This change would be tantamount to ending the Air National Guard as we know it, removing the essential qualities of the force that make it an indispensable asset to the nation. Gone would be the tight connection with the State and local communities and with it, the community's understanding of the needs of the Air Force. Just as inadvisable is the notion that there should be two Adjutants General in a state, which runs counter to the whole notion of unity of command and creates another layer of unnecessary bureaucracy. Finally, elevating the chief of the Air Guard to four-stars will be unnecessary, once the Chief of the National Guard Bureau billet is elevated to the four star rank, an action that will reflect the increased authority and responsibility placed upon that post since 9-11.

General Moseley's proposals do not provide a reasonable or practicable model for transformation, which involves harnessing-not eviscerating-the unique capabilities of the Air National Guard including its geographic reach and its essential connection with the states. Instead of pursuing an antiquated, and costly, model that moves Guard units to active bases or seeks to make the Air Guard a mirror image of the Reserve, the nation would be better served by expanding community basing programs that bring active service-members to stand-alone Guard bases. We suggested this approach to transformation in our February 13th letter to you.

We look forward to your response to these letters, as well as working with the Air Force to improve, rather than hinder, the mutual benefits of the Total Force, including the active Air Force, the Air Reserve, and the Air National Guard.

Sincerely,


PATRICK LEAHY
Co-Chair
U.S. Senate National Guard Caucus


CHRISTOPHER S. BOND
Co-Chair
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