



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

July 10, 2015

National Commission on the Future of the Army
2530 Crystal Drive
Taylor Building, Suite 5000
Arlington, Virginia 22202

Dear Commissioners:

As you continue your important work examining America's largest military service branch and formulating recommendations to Congress and the President relating to the future of the Army, I would like to express my support for both the citizen-soldiers of the Texas Army National Guard (TXARNG), and the active duty Army troops that call Texas home.

The TXARNG has a proven track record of providing cost-effective, highly capable combat reserve forces whenever called upon for the national security of America. Since 2001, the citizen-soldiers of the Texas National Guard have repeatedly answered the call to deploy overseas and will continue to do so. During this period, more than 32,000 Texas National Guard members have deployed to 35 countries, and the TXARNG accounts for a large portion of these deployments. Additionally, these same soldiers have responded to nearly 200 emergencies at home, including wildfires, ice storms, floods, and hurricanes. Many of these missions that directly support civil authorities throughout the state have only been possible because of the Guard's training, equipping, and experience as a combat-ready reserve force.

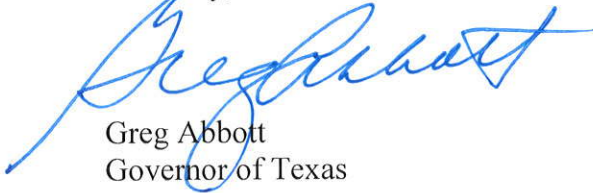
One integral aspect of the TXARNG's ability to provide effective assistance and leadership consistent with a "total force" concept is the AH-64 Apache helicopter. Transferring all Apaches from the National Guard to the active component would significantly undercut the value of the National Guard by eliminating a strategic combat aviation capability. In Texas, units such as the 1-149th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, from Ellington Field near Houston, would be eliminated. This exemplary unit was awarded the Valorous Unit Award, as well as 12 Distinguished Flying Crosses and 39 Air Medals, for actions in Iraq.

A strong National Guard tied in closely with active-duty units, as we currently have in Texas, will effectively and strategically serve our nation. Texas' location within the country and the hemisphere directly benefits the Army's mission and the efficient deployment of resources throughout our nation and across the globe. Active duty and TXARNG units have unparalleled training and maneuver access at Fort Hood, Fort Bliss, and Camp Bullis. The TXARNG also has excellent training areas at Camp Swift, Camp Bowie, and Camp Maxie. These training and maneuver areas provide opportunities for joint training between active duty and the TXARNG.

Furthermore, Texas has invested nearly \$2 billion since 2005 in road and infrastructure improvements to aid in the deployment of soldiers and supplies and improve access to our installations. The Governor's Texas Military Preparedness Commission (TMPC) has awarded over \$32 million in grants directly to military communities for infrastructure projects, and the state legislature recently allocated \$30 million more for these grants over the next two years. The community support for troops stationed in Texas is unrivaled by any other state. Low costs of living, affordable off-base housing, and state-funded support to military families and retirees make Texas the gold standard in supporting our nation's warfighters; active, guard and reserve.

I encourage you to closely consider these factors as the Commission develops its recommendations on the future of the Army. The State of Texas looks forward to working with the Commission, the Department of Defense, and all other interested parties to help maintain an operational force that can continue to serve the citizens of Texas and protect the national security of the nation.

Sincerely,



Greg Abbott
Governor of Texas