



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
HARRISBURG

THE GOVERNOR

February 14, 2006

The Honorable Francis J. Harvey
Secretary of the Army
The Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310

General Peter J. Schoomaker
Chief of Staff, United States Army
The Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310

Dear Secretary Harvey and General Schoomaker:

Thank you for the letter of February 1, 2006, which explained your plans for force structure changes affecting the Army National Guard. It appears that the Army proposals are evolving rapidly, and I urge you to work closely with the governors on this matter. In this spirit of collaboration, I want to share with you my concerns with the proposal outlined in your letter.

I am deeply concerned about any plan that will reduce the number of combat brigades in the Army National Guard from 34 to 28. I understand that the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Report, released on February 6, 2006, showed a requirement for only 28 such brigades in the Guard. However, I am concerned that such findings are short-sighted, and appear to be budget-driven. In your letter, you indicated that just two years ago the Army found that 34 combat brigades was indeed the right number for the Guard. In the interim, our nation's need for these units has certainly not diminished.

The record of the Pennsylvania National Guard clearly demonstrates the need for combat brigades. Currently, our 2nd BCT is serving a one-year deployment in Iraq, more than 3,300 of the 3,700 members of the 55th BCT have deployed in the Global War on Terror, and our 56th SBCT deployed more than 2,500 soldiers to the Gulf coast on short notice in response to Hurricane Katrina. It would also appear that reducing the number of heavy brigades like Pennsylvania's would result in more frequent deployments of the soldiers assigned to the remaining combat brigades.

The Army has promised that, in "rebalancing the force," it will replace these combat brigades with combat service support brigades and other multi-functional units. However, the fact remains that the loss of six combat brigades will diminish combat capabilities and certain equipment of the Army National Guard that is necessary in national and state responses. In Pennsylvania, the loss or conversion of a combat brigade could mean the loss of a number of battalion-size units, which regularly work and train as a combat force. These units are trained for

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on-the-street civil disturbance missions and non-standard requirements such as providing security for national political conventions. Transforming or replacing these units could harm the ability of Pennsylvania to provide protection to three of our five nuclear facilities in the commonwealth. Support units generally lack the tactical skill sets, security training, and operational capabilities of combat brigades, and this will degrade our ability to respond to civil disturbance actions. In addition, since a support brigade will likely not include non-organic units, this change may adversely affect state command and control of forces in central and northeastern Pennsylvania

I am also concerned that the Army's proposal disproportionately places a burden on the National Guard brigades. By converting six of its ten heavy brigades, the National Guard will be responsible for six of the seven brigade conversions in the Army proposal. It would appear that the Guard will be shouldering much of the apparent savings that will be achieved from such a proposal.

As Governor of Pennsylvania, I firmly believe that the three combat brigades and Army aviation units of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard are essential to our ability to respond to domestic emergencies, natural disasters, and various homeland security contingencies. In the event that force structure plans result in proposals that would require changes to the branch, organization or allotment of any units of the Pennsylvania National Guard, I expect that you will seek my approval in advance, as required by law. Any such request should, of course, contain specific information about how the capabilities of the Pennsylvania National Guard to perform its state and federal missions will be enhanced by any proposed changes.

Thank you again for your letter and I, too, look forward to working closely together to ensure that any such proposed changes to the National Guard preserve our national security, but also satisfy the requirements of the states.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edward G. Rendell". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Edward G. Rendell
Governor