

POLICY POSITION

BASE FORCE AND RECONSTITUTION STRATEGY FOR THE NATIONAL GUARD

BACKGROUND

The Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff have presented the Base Force and Reconstitution Strategy as the new post-Cold War National Defense Policy. The Strategy not only alters the balance between the Congress and the President of the United States in times of war, but also reduces the American taxpayers' tangible return on their National Defense investment and portends a significant economic impact on many southern states.

Members of the National Guard differ from other services in that they take oaths to both state and nation. Constitutionally based, the National Guard is a state force in peacetime, providing southern states trained and disciplined military forces for use in the War on Drugs, disaster, emergency and civil relief, and social betterment. In its peacetime role, the National Guard is a natural resource--a peacetime benefit and return on the taxpayers' investment in national defense.

National Guard units are a major economic force in local communities. A 150-person armory brings \$2 million into the local economy annually. The Base Force Strategy calls for the elimination of 830 of these units nationwide, with the resultant loss of thousands of paid full and part-time National Guard members in the South.

In North Carolina alone, the Strategy calls for the elimination of 2,361 National Guard personnel between Fiscal Years 1993-95, resulting in a negative economic impact of almost \$21 million to the state and the local communities involved. Oklahoma is targeted to lose 3,928 personnel during FY 1992-93; Texas is to lose 2,411; Alabama 1,983; and Georgia 1,224 during the same period. The social and civic impacts resulting from these cuts cannot be given a dollar value.

RECOMMENDATION

The Southern Legislative Conference urges the Congress to oppose the drastic Department of Defense Force Structure Reduction which would change the fundamental structure of national defense by relying on a costly professional army for all but the largest wars, and ignores our nation's traditional and philosophical reliance on the citizen-soldier.

Further, the Southern Legislative Conference encourages members of Congress to strongly consider the historical relevance and the economic, social, and civic benefits the respective states derive from maintaining our National Guard units--as they currently exist--in any future proposal to deactivate the military of the United States.

Adopted by the Southern Legislative Conference, August 11, 1992, Miami Beach, Florida.

Sponsored by: Representative Robert C. Hunter, N.C., SLC Past Chairman

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