



**THE JOINT STAFF
WASHINGTON, DC**

Reply ZIP Code:
20318-0300

08 April 2008

MG Francis D. Vavala, DEARNG
President, Adjutants General Association of
the United States
Delaware National Guard
First Regiment Road
Wilmington, DE 19808-2192

Dear General Vavala,

The Secretary of Defense requested that I respond to your letter to him in which you expressed your concern for the mission assignments of our deployed Army National Guard (ANG) forces. The importance of unity of command and its effect on cohesion is indeed an important consideration when applying a tactical unit to a mission set. While every effort is made to abide by this principle, the unique and diverse nature of the security force (SECFOR) mission requires C2 measures that are the most effective in the assigned operational environment.

In the earlier days of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, the SECFOR mission was sourced through an ad hoc process that was counter to unit integrity and provided less than optimal C2. More recently, a significant amount of effort was expended to allow a unit-based sourcing solution. The ANG is well-suited to accomplish this vital mission.

The nature of the SECFOR mission necessitates a degree of unit dispersal. As such, C2 relationships must be adjusted. As units spread out within their respective areas of operations, the nature of the SECFOR mission demands placement under the local commander of those that are battalion-sized. This allows that commander to better exercise his most important duty, protecting U.S. forces.

I have complete confidence in the Air and Army National Guards' ability to contribute to all facets of our Nation's defense. The Guard Soldiers and Airmen in Iraq and Afghanistan and here at home truly exemplify the very best of America. I am proud of them and I know you stand ready and willing to serve your Nation across the full-spectrum of military operations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Walter L. Sharp".

WALTER L. SHARP
Lieutenant General, USA
Director, Joint Staff