



OFFICES OF THE GOVERNORS

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July 20, 2013

The Honorable John McHugh
Secretary of the Army
101 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310

General Frank J. Grass
Chief, National Guard Bureau
1636 Defense Pentagon, Rm 1E169
Washington, DC 20330

General Raymond J. Odierno
Chief of Staff, United States Army
200 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310

Dear Secretary McHugh, General Odierno and General Grass,

As you consider your recommendations for the future of Army force structure, locations, equipment and procurement to support emerging threats we urge you to convert the 81st ABCT to a Stryker Brigade. Strategically positioning this second National Guard Stryker Brigade in the Western Coastal States, Washington/Oregon/California, supports the shift in focus to the Asia-Pacific region. Currently there is only one National Guard Stryker Brigade; it is located in the eastern United States, in Pennsylvania.

Key elements of Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta's guidance, Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense and the Army Strategic Planning Guidance 2013 (issued Jan 2012), emphasizes rebalancing forces to address a broader range of emerging regional challenges with mission tailored forces. A western state based National Guard Stryker Brigade Combat Team complements the Army's Regionally Aligned Forces Strategy and bolsters the nation's defense.

Conversion of the 81st ABCT supports the near term action to institute Army Total Force Policy – Active, Guard and Reserve. Further, this force structure decision shifts a modern and vital asset to a more cost effective component where it remains available to deploy or respond to homeland defense missions. Stryker vehicles, capable of traversing commercial roads without damaging existing infrastructure and also operating off-road, can rapidly respond to earthquakes,

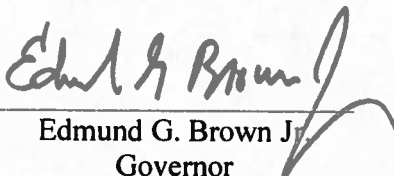
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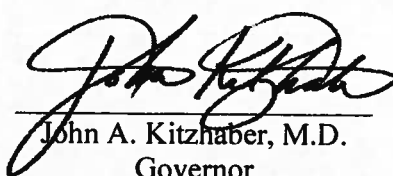
forest fires, floods, volcanic activity or tsunami. Additionally, their superior communications suite provides horizontal and vertical voice/data capability giving incident commanders the real-time common operating picture necessary to maneuver forces where they are needed.

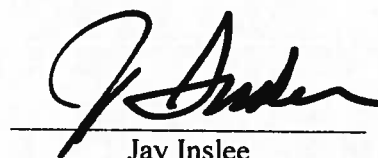
All three western states will be closely aligned with the Stryker Brigade Center of Excellence Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) training locations within Washington (Yakima Training Center), California's National Training Center, Ft Irwin, and Oregon's Umatilla/ Boardman Training Complex. This geographical proximity, along with long established habitual relationships with I Corps and JBLM, is another positive cost factor and multiplier. The 81st ABCT currently aligns cross-state combat formations and the three states possess well established working relationships which will pay dividends during federal or state deployments. All three states mobilization and deployment records are superb.


This proposal enhances our Nation's defense, capitalizes on existing command relationships with I Corps (US) and provides our citizens upgraded capabilities during domestic challenges to the homeland. Most importantly, it provides our soldiers greater survivability and capabilities on current and future battlefields. These are the paramount considerations for each of our state Governors and for the Adjutants General of our National Guard.

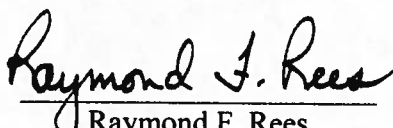
We look forward to working with you in support of this strategic endeavor.

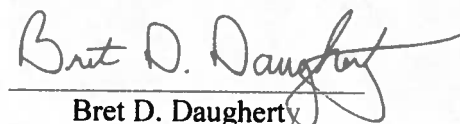

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cc: General John F. Campbell, Vice Chief of Staff of the Army
Lieutenant General William E. Ingram, Jr., Director, Army National Guard