

U.S. Congressman
Nick Rahall
WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 16, 1990

CONTACT: STEPHEN SPINA

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RAHALL WARNS CHENEY: CHECK FACTS BEFORE CUTTING GUARD

WASHINGTON, D.C.-- U.S. Rep Nick Rahall (D-WV) today warned Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney to hold off on proposed cuts to the West Virginia National Guard until a sound Defense cut strategy can be formed.

"I do not believe that the cuts are necessary," said Rahall. "West Virginia is prepared to absorb its fair share of Defense cuts, but only if those cuts are in line with other states' cuts and if it is what is best for the nation as a whole. As far as I can tell, that is not the case."

"Under the proposal", said Rahall, "the 1st Squadron, 150th Armored Cavalry, will be cut in Fiscal Year 1993. That will mean that 1,040 personnel, or 25% of the authorized strength level of the West Virginia National Guard would be eliminated. Rahall added that from the information that he has obtained, no other state will receive such drastic cuts.

"These units provide \$7 million annually to the economy of West Virginia by means of annual payroll, procurement and construction. If we were to lose them, it would have a devastating impact upon the people of West Virginia," said Rahall. "Many other States proposed reductions are well below 25% of their authorized strength levels, and their strength levels are far below that of West Virginia. Therefore, we are talking about cuts that are more devastating to our area than to any other."

Rahall vowed to continue the fight to save the Guard, "The Guard has served West Virginia well, and I do not intend to let it go without a fight."

Rahall has also written Les Aspin (D-WV), Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, and asked him to review the proposal.

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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ELEMENTARY, SECONDARY
AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The Honorable Dick Cheney
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Mr. Secretary:

It has come to my attention that proposed troop reductions in the National Guard, which will occur over the next several years, include significant reductions in the West Virginia Army National Guard, which would adversely affect its readiness. I am opposed to this reduction, and would appreciate your efforts to halt this plan.

The recent events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union will no doubt result in troop reductions in every facet of our Armed Services. West Virginia is prepared to absorb its fair share of cuts in the realignment of our defense needs, if such cuts are demonstrated to be prudent and necessary. However, I do not believe that the cuts proposed meet these requirements.

I have two objections to this proposal. My first objection is that this proposal is premature. In the FY 1990 Authorization Act, Congress directed the Secretary of Defense to thoroughly review the total force structure and the mix of Active, Guard, and Reserve forces, and to provide a comprehensive report by December 1990. Any cuts in force strength should be deferred until a comprehensive review of our total defensive requirements is completed.

My second objection is that these cuts are far higher than those proposed in many other States. It is my understanding that under the proposal, the 1st Squadron, 150th Armored Cavalry, will be cut in Fiscal Year 1993. This will mean that 1,040 personnel, or 25% of the authorized strength level of the West Virginia National Guard would be eliminated. These West Virginian Squadron Units are manned at more than 90% full strength. Of the 10 armories that house these units, 8 are modern armories constructed in the 1960s. Since these units provide approximately \$7 million annually to the economy of West Virginia by means of annual payroll, procurement and construction, these reductions will have a significant adverse impact upon the economy of West Virginia.

It is my understanding that proposed reductions in many other States are well below 25% of their authorized strength levels. Further, proposed reductions for many other States are not significant real cuts, since they are manned well below 90% full strength.

The Honorable Dick Cheney
Page 2
February 14, 1990

Finally, since armories in many other States are not as modern as those found in West Virginia, cutting greater forces in West Virginia would result in a greater waste of taxpayer's money.

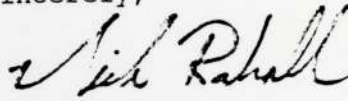
In short, I do not understand the rationale for the proposed reductions in the West Virginia National Guard. If cuts must be made, they should be done only after careful evaluation of our total defense needs. In addition, to the greatest extent possible, cuts should be made equitably among States to maintain appropriate readiness in each State, and to minimize the impact on the local economy. When units are no longer required because of their mission, consideration should be given to retraining the unit to meet needed mission requirements. This will maintain the overall strength of the Guard within the State. Further, any reductions should maximize readiness and cost efficiency by retiring obsolete facilities and weaponry first.

Since the proposed cuts do not appear to balance these considerations, I respectfully request that you reevaluate the necessity and prudence of reductions as currently proposed, and take the necessary steps to halt this plan.

Thank you very much for your consideration. I look forward to your early response.

With warm regards, I am

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Nick Rahall". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "N" and "R".

NICK J. RAHALL, II
Member of Congress

NJR/mg

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The Honorable Les Aspin
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

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The recent events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union will no doubt result in troop reductions in every facet of our Armed Services. West Virginia is prepared to absorb its fair share of cuts in the realignment of our defense needs, if such cuts are demonstrated to be prudent and necessary. However, I do not believe that the cuts proposed meet these requirements.

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Since the proposed cuts do not appear to balance these considerations, I respectfully request that you evaluate the necessity and prudence of reductions as currently proposed, and take the necessary steps to halt this plan.

Thank you very much for your consideration. I look forward to working with you on this important matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, or Michael Goulding of my staff at X53452.

With warm regards, I am

Sincerely,



NICK J. RAHALL, II
Member of Congress

NJR/mg

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