

William J. Perry, Chair

Madeleine K. Albright  
Graham T. Allison  
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**THE  
NATIONAL SECURITY  
ADVISORY GROUP**

August 1, 2006

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Democratic Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Democratic Leader  
United States Senate  
The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader Pelosi and Leader Reid:

We are writing to express our deep concern about the U.S. Army's current state of readiness and to urge you to take immediate action to address this urgent problem. We have recently learned that:

- Two thirds of the Army's operating force, active and reserve, is now reporting in as unready.
- There is not a single non-deployed Army Brigade Combat Team in the United States that is ready to deploy.

The bottom line is that our Army currently has no ready, strategic reserve. Not since the Vietnam era and its aftermath has the Army's readiness been so degraded.

This is particularly dangerous at a time when the United States is engaged in a global war on terrorism and is facing numerous crises in Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Iran and North Korea. The lack of a ready strategic reserve in our Army weakens our ability to deter undesired actions by these nations, as well as our ability to respond effectively to such actions.

This degraded readiness condition stems from the heavy deployment of combat forces the Army has sustained these past four years. Predictably, this has resulted in accelerated wearout of large quantities of Army equipment, disruptions in training

schedules, and strains on meeting recruitment and reenlistment goals. We called attention to this looming problem in an earlier report (ref.), but that report was met with indifference and denial by the administration. This problem can no longer be denied.

Restoring the Army's readiness requires additional funding, but, inexplicably, the administration is underfunding the Army. It has not requested funding adequate to support the roles and missions envisioned for the Army by the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review, nor has it provided adequate funding to support the operational demands being placed on the Army today. Remarkably, the Office of Management and Budget recently cut the Army's request for FY06 supplemental appropriations by \$4.9 Billion, undermining the Army's efforts to "get well" after substantial equipment degradation and losses in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. We believe this constitutes a serious failure of civilian stewardship of the military.

The administration's willingness to put our nation at such strategic risk is deeply disturbing. And its failure to adequately support the soldiers who are risking their lives for this nation is unacceptable. The readiness degradation that has already occurred could lead to a downward spiral that will take years to correct unless promptly addressed. Under these conditions, it is important for the Congress to step forward to exercise its oversight responsibilities for equipping and training the Armed Services.

Therefore, we call on you to take all necessary steps to address this situation on an urgent basis, including increasing funding to restore the Army's readiness to the levels needed to safeguard this nation's interests at home and abroad. The most immediate opportunity is the FY07 defense appropriations bill that will soon come to the floor of the Senate. We urge you to offer an amendment to increase funding to address the Army's readiness shortfalls. We also suggest that the Armed Services Committees hold hearings to determine the full depth of the readiness problems already manifested in the Army and possibly looming for the Marines. These hearings may well indicate the need for an emergency supplemental spending request.

Sincerely,

William J. Perry  
Chair, National Security Advisory Group

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