

**THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**Resolution on the Role of the Military in Disaster Response**

Resolution Summary

During the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the President and Congress have questioned the appropriate role of the active military in disaster response. Some have even called for a greater response role for the military post-disaster. However, the nation's Governors have direct Constitutional authority and legal responsibility for the protection and safety of their citizens. Governors also have the authority to call on their state's National Guard when necessary. These roles represent the federalist powers to the states.

Congress is investigating the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and will be finalizing reports calling for changes and improvements to the nation's response system in February 2005. One of the key topics of study in these investigations is the role of the active military. Additionally, these same issues were raised in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew in 1993, and the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) issued a report that did not support an increased role for the active military.

This resolution verifies that the active military should not have an increased role in disaster response. The resolution also recommends improved procedures that allow civilian authorities to request assistance and support from the active military in a timely and efficient manner for rare catastrophic circumstances that require support from the Department of Defense. This is consistent with the Department of Homeland Security as the lead agency for response in the National Response Plan and the Department of Defense as a supporting agency.

The National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) recently passed a similar Policy Position. NEMA is an affiliate of The Council of State Governments (CSG), and represents the state and territorial emergency management directors who are responsible to their governments for all hazards emergency preparedness, mitigation, response and recover, including acts of terrorism. Additionally, the NEMA policy position is consistent with a recent National Governors' Association statement on "Federalizing Emergencies" issued on October 13, 2005.

Resolution Management Directives

- Management Directive #1: The Council of State Governments staff will disseminate this resolution to the other state and local constituency organizations.
- Management Directive #2: The Council of State Governments staff will send the resolution to the House of Representatives and the Senate leadership. Additionally, the resolution will be sent to the House Select Committee on Katrina Response and to the Senate Homeland Security Government Affairs

Committee and any other appropriate Committees with oversight of emergency management.

- Management Directive #3: The Council of State Governments will share this resolution with the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Director of the Office of State and Local Coordination and any other appropriate leaders at the Department of Homeland Security.

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**Resolution on the Role of the Military in Disaster Response**

**WHEREAS,** in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina the issue has been raised to whether there should be an increased role for the active military in disaster response;

**WHEREAS,** the nation's governors have direct Constitutional and legal responsibility for the protection and safety of their citizens;

**WHEREAS,** the appropriate role for the active military is to provide assistance in support of civilian authorities;

**WHEREAS,** the National Response Plan identifies the Department of Homeland Security as the lead coordinating agency for disaster response and the Department of Defense as a support agency in disaster response;

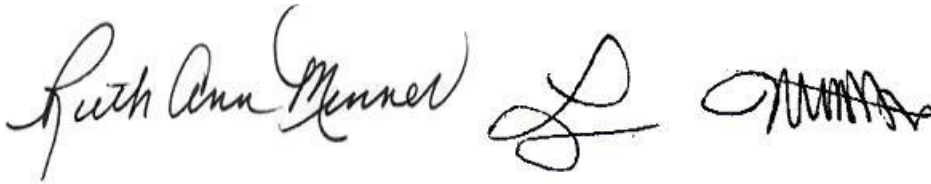
**WHEREAS,** the issue of the role of active military in disaster response was raised following Hurricane Andrew in 1993 and a National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) report issued that year did not support an increased role for the active military stating that the primary mission for the Armed Forces is to prepare for war and fight if necessary; and

**WHEREAS,** the National Governors' Association released a statement regarding "federalizing emergencies" on October 13, 2005 that supports maintaining the current role of the military in support of disasters.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** that The Council of State Governments does not support an increased role for the active military in disaster response; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, The Council of State Governments supports the National Emergency Management Association's recommendation for improved procedures, and a greater understanding by state and local officials of those procedures, that allow civilian authorities to request assistance and support from the active military in a timely and efficient manner in those rare and catastrophic circumstances that require response capabilities of a magnitude only the Department of Defense can provide.

Adopted this 3<sup>rd</sup> Day of December, 2005 at the  
CSG Annual Meeting and State Trends Leadership Forum  
In Wilmington, Delaware.

The image shows three handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature on the left is 'Ruth Ann Minner' in a cursive script. The middle signature is a stylized, large letter 'L'. The signature on the right is also in cursive and appears to be 'Lynn Hettrick'.

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Governor Ruth Ann Minner  
2005 CSG President

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Assemblyman Lynn Hettrick  
2005 CSG Chair