STATE OF ARIZONA

JANICE K. BREWER
GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

March 11, 2009

The Honorable Robert M. Gates
Secretary, U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon, Room 3E880
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Gates:

After considering a variety of options, I write this letter to ask for increased military presence on the border with Mexico. Specifically, I believe an increase of approximately 250 National Guard soldiers under the mandate and control of the Joint Counter Narco-Terrorism Task Force (JCNTF) using federal Title 32, Section 112 funding would be the optimum step at this time.

As you are aware, Arizona and other U.S./Mexico border states continue to be confronted by a number of unique and/or disproportionate challenges relative to other states. We bear significant unreimbursed costs in the public, non-profit and business sectors associated with border-related challenges. Our communities are negatively affected by the impacts of illegal drug trade and illegal immigration, and enforcement agencies in all jurisdictions are stretched way too thin trying to address the enormity of the problems.

I believe that supplementing the existing JCNTF personnel to bring the total to approximately 400 Army and Air National Guard soldiers and airmen makes the most sense at this time. The support these additional soldiers can provide to law enforcement agency operations would prove invaluable. While I am extremely sensitive to the demand on our Guard, Reserve and Active Duty forces associated with operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, I believe the personnel count I am proposing and the JCNTF method I am requesting is appropriate and workable. I am open to higher troop strength numbers, however, I want to ensure we can effectively deploy more than 250 additional personnel and that the missions to which such additional personnel will be assigned are both meaningful and valuable.

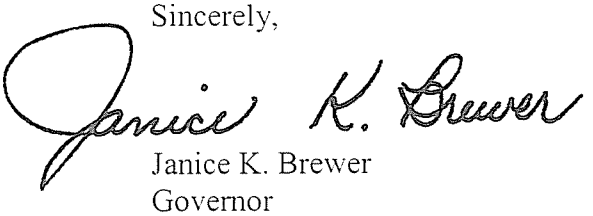
I will not use your time to summarize the current and possible duties/roles of National Guard personnel working within the JCNTF – I know you and your Pentagon Staff are familiar. I will emphasize, however, that Arizona on its own cannot and should not face the prospect of sustaining additional forces to address this federal matter. Additional support provided pursuant to Title 32 of the United States Code for National Guard activities along the border is both a lawful, justified and prudent step to take at this time.

1700 WEST WASHINGTON STREET, PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007
602-542-4331 • FAX 602-542-7602

Before closing, I want to add that I am taking some time to examine whether our National Guard forces are fully equipped to meet the greater demands associated with an increased JCNTF commitment. Specifically, our aerial reconnaissance assets seem limited to meet the challenges posed by our nearly 400-mile long border with Mexico. Before making any requests of you, I want to study the matter further. I did, though, want to bring the matter to your attention since my first reaction was that we did not have the right quantity of air assets to most effectively address border threats.

Thank you in advance for an expedited review of this request. I certainly hope to be adding additional thanks in what I hope will be a positive response to this correspondence.

Sincerely,



Janice K. Brewer
Governor

JB:bcm

cc: The Honorable Janet Napolitano, Secretary, Department of Homeland Security