

STATEMENT BY

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BEFORE THE

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ON

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THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

Opening Remarks

Chairman Bartlett, Ranking Member Reyes, and distinguished members of the subcommittee; I am honored to appear before you today on behalf of the outstanding men and women serving in our nation's Air National Guard. I would like to begin by expressing my sincere appreciation to the Committee for its tremendous support to the Air National Guard. Your work ensures America continues to have a ready, reliable, and accessible Air National Guard, responsive to our domestic needs as well as providing operational capabilities critical to the success of our Total Force. As we face increasingly limited resources and tight or declining defense budgets, we must accentuate the strength of the Air National Guard—our cost effectiveness.

Air National Guard in National Defense

Facing a need to reduce the Defense budget in response to domestic priorities and the need to sustain defense capabilities in light of growing foreign challenges, Secretary of Defense Melvin B. Laird put his faith in the Reserve Components. Secretary Laird wrote, "Within the Department of Defense...economics will require reductions in overall strengths and capabilities of the active forces, and increased reliance on the combat and the combat support units of the Guard and Reserves."¹ He understood that by increasing the readiness of the Guard and Reserves and then relying upon them "to be the initial and primary source for augmentation of the active forces in any future

¹ Melvin B. Laird, Memorandum to the Secretaries of the Military Departments, Subj: Support for Guard and Reserve Forces, August 21, 1970.

emergency”² the nation would maintain its defense capability and capacity while decreasing the overall costs.

The US Air Force leadership recognized that as the nation’s first military responder, increased reliance on the Reserve Components meant the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard must be able to respond quickly and integrate seamlessly into any operation; they would require equipment and training comparable to the regular, active duty Air Force. The ANG, with significant help from Congress, began trading in its obsolete Korean War vintage equipment for newer, and in some cases brand new aircraft. The ANG also received additional funds for training, including modern flight simulators, and full-time Guard Airmen (Active Guard & Reserve (AGR) and Technicians) to oversee the increased training regimen.

Improved operational readiness brought with it a rejuvenated desire by Guard Airmen to do more than just train – to demonstrate their capabilities. ANG units began volunteering to augment the Regular Air Force by participating in on-going operational missions around the world. To the customer, the Air National Guard became indistinguishable from the Regular Air Force. This was done within the fundamental framework of a part-time professional force.

Today’s National Guard Airmen have been fighting alongside our regular, active duty and Air Force Reserve brothers and sisters since Operation DESERT SHIELD in 1991, and they have proven to be equal partners in our nation’s defense. Last year (CY2010), Guard Airmen filled 48,538 manpower requests, and 89% of these Guard Airmen responded to the call voluntarily, without the

² *Ibid.*

need for “involuntary mobilization.” They have served honorably in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also in Bosnia, throughout Africa, South America, Europe (including countries of the former Soviet Union), Korea, and, under Operation DEEP FREEZE, New Zealand and Antarctica.

The world is a very different place today than when Secretary Laird established the Total Force, but the underlying principle of the Total Force remains true: the nation can maintain defense capabilities at less total cost through careful balance of Active Component and Reserve Component forces.

Secretary Gates has charged the Department “to generate efficiency savings by reducing overhead costs, improving business practices, or culling excess or troubled programs.”³ While our leadership is making tough decisions, we know the Air National Guard is well situated as a cost-effective answer in both our defense and domestic response roles.

The Air Guard provides a trained, disciplined, and ready force for a fraction of the cost. The Air National Guard savings are due to our part-time business model. Approximately 70% of our Guard Airman are traditional part-time professionals, meaning that they are only paid when serving or on active duty for training. Also, the Air National Guard seldom pays subsistence or housing allowances, or for permanent change of station moves for the members and their families.

Another key factor to our cost effectiveness is the infrastructure savings inherent in the Air National Guard basing model that not only allows us to operate efficiently, but also allows us to be a part of, and contribute to, communities

³ Robert M. Gates, Statement on Department Budget and Efficiencies, January 06, 2011.

across the country. With some of our leases costing as little as one dollar annually, the Air Guard is able to realize even more cost savings through its supporting infrastructure. In fact, for less than \$4 million annually through Joint Use Agreements, the Air National Guard provides stewardship to approximately \$12 billion in infrastructure.

Domestic Operations

This year the Air National Guard began a process to better define and prepare for its role in domestic operations. In CY2010, 3,739 National Guard Airmen performed domestic missions under Title 32 including US air defense, border security, counterdrug operations, and search and rescue. Many other Guard Airmen were called to State Active Duty by their governors to augment local police forces and help with disaster relief.

Many are unaware of the contributions and skills our Guard Airmen provide to domestic support. The Air National Guard has particular core capabilities for which we are uniquely trained and equipped. Many have been used in the past year alone, to include:

- Air Defense (Air Sovereignty Alert)
- Air Traffic Control
- Airlift (transportation, supply, & evacuation)
- Civil engineering
- Specialized medical care
- Law enforcement
- Aerial firefighting
- Mortuary affairs
- Urban search and rescue

- Communications

The Air National Guard's support to civil authorities is based upon the concept of "dual use," *i.e.*, equipment purchased by the Air Force for the Air National Guard's federal, combat mission, can be adapted and used domestically when not needed overseas. For example, an Air National Guard F-16 wing contains not only F-16 fighter aircraft but fire trucks, forklifts, portable light carts, emergency medical equipment including ambulances, air traffic control equipment, explosives ordinance equipment, etc., as well as well trained experts – all extremely valuable in response to civil emergencies. If the F-16 wing converts to a non-flying mission or even a Remotely Piloted Aircraft mission, much of this equipment may leave with the F-16 aircraft. As the Air Force proceeds with its recapitalization and modernization plans, we need to ensure our citizens are not left without essential disaster response capabilities.

Looking to the future, the Air National Guard recognizes the growing importance of its domestic response capabilities and the many threats to domestic peace. Our Airmen are working closely with the National Guard Bureau, USNORTHCOM, the Department of Homeland Security, as well as other local, state, and federal agencies to help identify and fill capability gaps in the US regional response framework.

Closing Remarks

Our National Guard Airmen have proven themselves to be ready, reliable, and accessible in recent actions here at home and overseas. Every dollar spent on the Air National Guard provides our nation an unmatched return on investment. Given adequate equipment and training, the Air National Guard will continue to fulfill its Total Force obligations and seamlessly integrate into the Joint theater operations and respond to domestic emergencies.

We need your help to ensure that the Air National Guard of tomorrow is as a ready, reliable, accessible, and cost effective as it is today.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today, I look forward to your questions.