

STATEMENT BY

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THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

Opening Statement

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Visclosky, members of the subcommittee; I am honored to appear before you today, representing the men and women of our nation's Air National Guard.

I wish to take this opportunity to update you on status of your Air National Guard, specifically, the status of the men and women that are the foundation of the Air Guard, the condition of their equipment, the impact of current fiscal uncertainty, and finally, a look to the future and how the Air National Guard can help secure our nation.

Personnel

The men and women of the Air National Guard (ANG) continue to prove their value to America and remain our top priority together with their families and employers. As of last week, the Air Guard had filled over 562,000 Overseas Contingency Operation positions since 9/11, with an 87% volunteer rate. Currently there are 2,290 Guard Airmen deployed around the globe performing a myriad of tasks including Overseas Contingency Operations, counterdrug, support to the National Science Foundation expeditions in Antarctica, and routine operational missions supporting national security. Even as the war in Afghanistan draws down, the men and women of the Air Guard continue to volunteer to serve.

At home, Guard Airmen have responded to countless local and national emergencies. Whether helping in local search and rescue operations, securing vital state infrastructure, or helping orchestrate the national response to Hurricane Sandy, your Guard men and women can be relied upon to bring manpower, dedication, professionalism, organization, and resourcefulness to any call for help.

As of 8 March 2013, ANG end-strength was 104,204 – 1,496 under authorized. Throughout FY2013, Air Guard recruiters met or exceeded monthly enlistment and officer accession goals, but monthly losses were higher than expected resulting in the current under-strength. The ANG is implementing a number of short-term and long-term resolutions. First, recruiting goals have been increased to account for the increased unexpected losses. To assist the

local recruiters, the ANG has also increased the number of bonus/incentive-eligible career fields and expanded the pre-qualified officer database. Long-term initiatives include providing state leadership with local recruiting and retention production statistics for accountability, and the introduction of the Career Motivation Program for commanders to utilize Unit Career Advisors and periodic interviews/surveys to identify loss trends and facilitate retention of critical skill sets. Overall, I am very confident in our ability to not only meet end-strength but to recruit and retain the skill sets necessary to perform at the level the nation asks of its Air Guardsmen.

Unfortunately, the ANG struggles with many of the same personnel challenges as the other Services, including the tragedies of suicide and sexual assault. The Air Guard family is united in their efforts to overcome these challenges.

Since 2010, the ANG has implemented the ANG Psychological Health Program, which places Wing Directors of Psychological Health at 89 wings to support wing personnel resiliency efforts, including Comprehensive Airman Fitness, suicide prevention, and wingman culture. ANG has implemented the ANG Community Action Information Board (CAIB) and integrated Delivery System (IDS) to provide a forum for the cross-organizational review and resolution of individual, family, installation, and community issues that impact the readiness of the force and the quality of life of our Airmen and their families.

The Air National Guard has joined the Air Force in a multifaceted campaign of zero tolerance for sexual harassment and assault in the Total Air Force. In December, at the direction of the Secretary of Air Force, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force conducted a meeting with all Regular Air Force wing commanders with the intent of focusing their awareness on creating an environment for our Airmen to work in that enables them to accomplish the mission “with honor and distinction.” This meeting was followed with an assessment of all work areas throughout the Air Force to discover, correct and deter conditions detrimental to proper standards of readiness and to ensure military fitness and good order and discipline.

In January, the Air National Guard followed suit with its own initiative mirrored after the steps taken by the Air Force. The *Take A Stand – Make A*

Difference campaign began with bringing in Air National Guard wing commanders and refocusing them on changing the culture within the Air National Guard. Commanders were made aware of unprofessional behavior and workplace environments which, as General Welsh has said, “are leading indicators of sexual assault and other behavior and performance issues.” The January meeting was followed with a request for wing commanders to conduct an assessment of their units, similar to the one ordered throughout the Air Force. The overall intent of the Air National Guard’s *Take A Stand – Make A Difference* campaign is to build on the distinctive heritage of the Air National Guard versus bringing forward outdated practices of unprofessional behavior that have negatively marked its history. The Air National Guard leadership views sexual assault to be as detrimental to mission effectiveness as shortfall in equipment readiness and modernization

Air National Guard Equipment

The preponderance of equipment in the ANG can be used for both state domestic missions and support for civil authorities as well as federal missions. The Total Force relationship between the Air Force and the Reserve Component has resulted in similar equipping levels. Currently, the ANG has 91 percent of all authorized equipment. Though there has been a reduction in authorized equipment due to mission changes and unit associations, approximately 88 percent of all the authorized ANG equipment has a valid use in both federal and domestic support operations – what is termed “dual-use” equipment.

The ANG also benefits from the Air Force’s general guidelines to use mostly active Air Force equipment in support of overseas contingency operations (OCO). Currently, 1.6 percent of ANG equipment is deployed in support of OCO. Another 0.7 percent of ANG equipment is deployed throughout the 54 states, territories and the District of Columbia in support of domestic operations.

The advancing age of some ANG equipment could result in difficulties meeting ANG domestic support responsibilities. In addition, greater than 25 percent of ANG vehicles have exceeded or will soon meet the end of their useful economic life, including aircraft maintenance vehicles, refueling trucks, firefighting, heavy maintenance and snow removal vehicles.

There is, however, an important distinction between equipping levels and the modernization required in order to remain relevant in today's changing environment. Though equipping levels for the federal mission remain high, the quality and sustainability of the equipment is rapidly decreasing as the ANG possesses the oldest equipment in the Air Force inventory. The Air National Guard maintains the oldest "block 30" variant of the F-16 and has the preponderance of the C-130H fleet while the active duty is recapitalizing to an all C-130J fleet. The ANG also operates unique aircraft such as the RC-26 for counterdrug operations.

Basic ANG equipment requirements are determined through a Total Force process to determine standard support equipment requirements for federal missions. Once valid requirements have been established, those requirements are filled based on the mission priority of the unit and weapon system. Most funding comes from the annual Defense budget process, with other funding coming from Air Force central agencies for support items that are interchangeable across the Air Force enterprise, such as personal protective equipment, communications equipment and some vehicles. The ANG has been aggressive in seeking other funding sources to replace items that have been expended supporting federal and domestic missions, or to modernize equipment to ensure its reliability and interoperability.

The procurement funds that Congress provides have made a significant impact on our ability to support both the war fighter and civil authorities. We strive to use these funds as efficiently as possible by pursuing lower cost 80 percent solutions to the immediate needs of our war fighters at about 25 percent of the cost -- needs that are identified directly by our war fighters and first responders out of our weapons and tactics classes.

The Air Guard used National Guard and Reserve Equipment account (NGREA) funding to modernize the Block 30 F-16, the backbone protecting America's skies.

Specialized missions such as Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team (WMD-CST), Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear High Explosive (CBRNE) Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP), and the Homeland Response Force (HRF) use equipment and other non-dual-use equipment for emergencies or response to major disasters. Their funding is based on using a

combination of Army, Army National Guard, Air Force, and ANG appropriations, along with Defense Department appropriations (e.g., the Chemical and Biological Defense Program (CBDP) funds. The National Guard Bureau continues to work with the Department of Defense to pursue modernization for equipment used by domestic response teams as technology evolves.

For the past three years, the ANG has emphasized modernization, upgrades, and procurement in two broad areas, communications and firefighting. These efforts were focused in both combat operations and domestic operations. In communications, the ANG sought to leverage networks and data links to bring current information and data directly to aircraft cockpits and Battlefield Airmen Joint Terminal Air Controller/Tactical Air Control Party/Parachute jumper (JTACs/TACPs/PJs), improve situational awareness for air defense operations, provide a common operational picture for Joint Force Headquarters-State, and provide capability to bridge communications between military and civil authorities. In firefighting, the ANG brought aboard an improved Mobile Airborne Firefighting System (MAFFS-2) in time for the CY2012 wildfire season and purchased upgraded and newer firefighting vehicles, protective equipment, and equipment for rescue operations.

With the need to fully fund ongoing operations and continued pressure on defense budgets, obtaining adequate funding for procuring equipment and modernization efforts is a challenge. By supporting annual procurement funding requests, the ANG will be able to modernize legacy platforms and equipment to remain an equal and effective partner in the Total Force Enterprise, as well as allow the ANG to provide support to civil authorities. It must also be noted that with ongoing Total Force Integration actions, the overall authorizations and on-hand balances continue to shrink, resulting in fewer equipment items in the availability ratios for ANG support to civil authorities. Despite the shrinking budgets and equipment balances, the ANG will continue to strive to adapt and meet the needs of the combatant commanders for combat and combat support forces and of our states for support of domestic operations. The ANG is fully engaged at all levels in operations in Afghanistan as well as in operations Gatekeeper, Hold-the-Line and Safeguard, directly defending our homeland. We are ready to respond to any tasking with fully mission-ready professionals equipped with capable, yet aging, weapon systems.

Impact of Budget Uncertainty

The current budget uncertainties are having a direct negative impact upon ANG personnel readiness and equipment readiness and modernization.

As the Committee is well aware, since 1 October 2012, the Department of Defense (DoD) has operated under a Continuing Resolution (CR) scheduled to expire on 27 March 2013. The CR distribution of funds is based on FY 2012 levels and did not account for the ANG's higher than normal Weapons Systems Sustainment (WSS) depot-level maintenance inductions in the first two quarters of the fiscal year.

To minimize the effect of the shortfall, the ANG is taking precise, measured steps by reducing flying hours, Base Operating Support (BOS) funding and rescheduling WSS depot maintenance. Meanwhile, the ANG will ensure critical flying missions are funded such as Aerospace Control Alert (ACA), Search and Rescue, Modular Airborne Fire Fighting Systems (MAFFS), and Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) pre-deployment activities.

Separate, but compounding the challenges of the CR, Sequestration will have immediate and significant negative impacts on the operational readiness and capabilities of ANG forces across all federal and domestic missions. The worst case scenario for FY 2013 would be sequestration combined with a continuing resolution that extends through the rest of the fiscal year without a reallocation of Department of Defense funds to the right accounts. Sequestration actions effecting personnel, equipment, training and facilities will all factor in a rapid reduction in combat capability, combat ready forces and, by extension, reduce capability and capacity for homeland defense, homeland security and domestic response.

The effects of the Continuing Resolution and Sequestration will be felt long after the immediate impact. Civilian furloughs reduce manpower available at the unit level to maintain equipment, which in turn reduces readiness. The impact is more acute in the ANG because Title 32 guardsmen in Technician status are civilian employees subject to furlough, unlike their Title 10 Active Component counterparts. Modernization will suffer as funding becomes more competitive to obtain. Delays in WSS will cause a back-log; a back-log which will take a considerable time to resolve given limitation on throughput at the

depots. Similarly, delays in personnel training, especially formal school training, will delay the Air Guard's ability to transition units to new missions for years.

The Future of the Air National Guard

As we build the Total Air Force of the future, it is essential to build capabilities that meet the advanced technologies potential adversaries might bring to a conflict. Futurists predict that the proliferation of technology will mean that US forces will face a plethora of long-range precision weapons and sophisticated air defense networks – the environment in which the B-2, F-22, F-35, and the next generation bomber are designed to operate. I believe it is equally important, even in a world driven by Moore's Law, that we not forget the lessons of the past. History tells us that high technology capabilities are not always the sole solution to security challenges. More often, the answer is capacity in combination with capability. During the Korean War the USAF deployed its newest jet fighters only to learn that what it needed most was large numbers of World War II vintage P-51 Mustangs for close air support. Similarly, during the first Gulf War, the nation marveled at the capabilities of the F-117, but it was the B-52, A-10, F-15, and F-16 that were the workhorses of the effort. The principal lesson of the past is that we cannot predict the future; the best we can do is to instill versatility and flexibility into our planning.

Do not misunderstand, I believe the capabilities of the latest air, space, and cyberspace technology are essential to the future security of the US, but I also believe capacity is equally important for it is capacity that permits multiple simultaneous actions in different parts of the world, and it is capacity that allows for extended actions without over stressing the men and women in uniform and their families. Recognizing that capacity is often as expensive capability, the question becomes, how do we sustain both capability and capacity in an era of austerity? The simple answer is investment in the Air Reserve Components of the Air Force.

A recent RAND study by Al Robbert examined the total costs of active duty (AD), Air Force Reserve (AFR), and Air National Guard (ANG) F-16 and C-130 units. The study, while still in draft, concluded that while the cost of

employing the three components was similar, the cost per aircraft and the cost per flying hour were significantly less in the reserve components (RC).

C-130		Cost per PMAI	Cost per Flying Hour
	Active Air Force	\$18,770,349	\$24,179
	Air Force Reserve	\$9,394,071	\$21,365
	Air National Guard	\$8,427,894	\$20,926
F-16			
	Active Air Force	\$8,398,198	\$29,190
	Air Force Reserve	\$6,356,380	\$22,406
	Air National Guard	\$4,626,238	\$22,296

There have been two major post-war draw-downs in recent history. The first occurred in the 1970’s as the Vietnam War was drawing to a close. The second was in the 1990s at the end of the Cold War. In 1970, Secretary of Defense Melvin B. Laird put his faith in the Reserve Components and created the Total Force that served the nation through the end of the Cold War.

In 1990, our Air Force faced challenges not unlike those of today. And, the threats to national security and interest had not gone away with the fall of the Berlin Wall, in fact, the future looked just as unknown and ominous as it does today. First, there was a new strategy shifting focus from the Soviet Union to major regional conflicts. There was growing concern about the security implications of a possible breakup of the Soviet Union; economic, political, and geographic expansion of China; and, new challenges in the Middle East. The U.S. was trying to get the budget deficit under control – at that time it was sequestration under the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985. Faced with significant budget cuts and amorphous but growing threats abroad, Secretary of the Air Force Donald Rice decided to follow Secretary Laird’s lead from the 1970s. As Secretary Rice wrote in his 1990 Report to Congress:

“The Air Force Total Force policy, formalized in 1973, has evolved to the current policy for a mix of Active and Reserve component forces, using all available assets, to ensure that maximum military capability is achieved at

minimum cost. We intend to allow as much force structure growth in the Air Reserve Component (ARC) as possible while maintaining a realistic balance between the ability of the Guard and Reserve to absorb that growth and the ability of the Active force to meet peacetime and contingency tasking.”¹

It was the Air Force that Secretary Rice built that maintained Northern and Southern Watch after operation Desert Storm. This Air Force, built upon heavy reliance on the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard, also responded to the crisis in Bosnia and Kosovo, fought Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Air Guard KC-135s were the first on the scene for Operation Odyssey Dawn protecting Libyan civilians. Secretary Rice’s Total Air Force also responded to numerous humanitarian crises around the world including Pakistan, Japan, Haiti, and here at home.

The future of the Total Air Force is not just about aircraft and other equipment; it is about people – our most valuable asset. As the Air Force adjusts to post-Afghanistan and fiscal realities, we in the ANG urge Air Force leadership to remember that its Reserve Components are not only warehouses of combat ready equipment but combat ready personnel as well. We need to ensure that as highly educated, trained, experienced men and women leave active duty they have somewhere to go; somewhere to continue to serve their nation. In FY2011-2012, 777 pilots, most with combat experience and all with many years of service ahead of them, separated from active duty. One-third of them chose to continue serving their country as Guard Airmen. What if there was no place for them to go? What if the ANG and Air Force Reserve had no place for those leaving active duty to continue to use their skills in service of the nation?

Closing Remarks

I believe that working together we can build a Total Air Force equal to all the challenges our nation faces.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts with you, and for allowing me the honor to represent the outstanding men and women of your Air National Guard.

¹ *The United States Air Force Report to the 101st Congress of the United States, Fiscal Year 1991*