

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY

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INTRODUCTION

Chairman Shelby, Vice Chairman Durbin, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, it is a pleasure to be here today with my fellow Reserve Component Leaders.

Today's National Guard is the most relevant it has ever been. I have lived through the transformation of the Guard from a good, reliable, and competent strategic reserve, to a combat-tested and experienced operational force that works seamlessly with the Army and the Air Force. We are witnessing the best National Guard in our history, but there is more to be done as we face challenging times ahead.

As Chief of the National Guard Bureau, my focus every day is accomplishing our three core missions – fighting America's wars, securing the homeland, and building enduring partnerships. This past year, our Guardsmen and women performed these missions magnificently and I could not be more proud of their commitment and dedication.

As the new National Defense Strategy acknowledges, we live in an increasingly complex global security environment where the character of war is changing. We are no longer safe at home as the current threat environment blurs the lines between domestic and overseas threats, with many of these threats transcending regions and domains of warfare. We must compete globally, across the engagement spectrum. We must build a more modern, lethal, agile and resilient force to respond to these challenges and the increasing volatility of our

security environment. Maintaining an operational National Guard, as a part of the joint force, is critical to this end.

WARFIGHT

Fighting America's wars will always be the primary mission of the National Guard. The National Guard supports the needs of the Nation, the Army, and the Air Force as an operational warfighting force providing strategic depth, designed with a balance of combat and enabling units that largely mirror our active Army and Air Force. As the primary combat reserve of the two services, the Guard is a critical element of the joint force.

The nation needs a Guard that is ready, rapidly scalable and accessible with little or no notice for any contingency to meet any need. When mobilized and deployed, the Guard is interchangeable with its active components, providing the joint force highly trained capacity and capability for the fight. Further, today's National Guard Soldiers and Airmen expect to be deployed and then employed fighting and securing America's national security interests.

Thousands of Guardsmen and women serve around the globe on any given day. Today, we average around 20,000 Soldiers and Airmen mobilized in places such as Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, the Sinai, Europe, and South America. However, this is well below our level of mobilizations at the height of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. I believe we have the capacity to increase the number of mobilized Guard units over the next several years to support combatant commands around the world countering threats wherever they exist. Guard utilization can be

maintained indefinitely when mobilizations are recurring, rotational, sustainable, predictable, and resourced.

HOMELAND

Here in America, the National Guard plays a unique role. Our dual-use nature and robust presence in 2,600 communities in our states, territories, and the District of Columbia, gives our National Guard the ability to quickly and efficiently respond to contingencies. Our experience and capabilities, gained from conducting complex combat operations, are utilized in coordinating a unified response across local, state and federal agencies using the dual-status authorities that permit the Guard to be employed under state or federal command during domestic emergencies.

The homeland is part of the global battle space. In the past, America benefited from its favorable geography with friendly neighbors to the north and south and large oceans to our east and west as natural barriers. Today, we no longer enjoy this safe haven as a result of new technologies and weapons that can reach the heart of America with little or no warning. Additionally, our competitors use cyber in various ways that include information campaigns as a means for influence. We must compete every day to safeguard our way of life.

Proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, and high-yield explosive devices has increased the threat of a weapons of mass destruction (WMD) attack on the United States. Delivery mechanisms for these kinds of weapons have also multiplied, and our adversaries continue to probe for weaknesses in our

defense. In any future conflict, space and cyber attacks will be the norm and will have extensive impacts on American civilians and our nation's infrastructure.

In addition to around 20,000 Guardsmen and women mobilized around the world, on average, about 8,000 Guard Soldiers and Airmen conduct domestic and homeland security/defense operations in the United States on any given day. The National Guard Counterdrug Program assists law enforcement with the detection, interdiction, disruption and curtailment of illicit drug trafficking. We support governors and state agencies during emergencies by providing life-saving aid to devastated regions ravaged by disasters such as wildfires and hurricanes. We safeguard our skies by operating from 15 of the 16 Aerospace Control Alert sites within the United States. Guard battalions in Alaska and Colorado protect our citizens from ballistic missiles, a threat that is more immediate now than ever before. The National Guard also provides over 60 percent of the Department of Defense's chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) response forces, capable of responding to a host of CBRN threats to our homeland. National Guard cyber units will grow to 59 units across 38 states by FY19 in addition to the already existing 54 Army National Guard Defensive Cyberspace Operations Elements.

This past year, the National Guard responded to Hurricanes Irma, Harvey, and Maria where a total of approximately 45,000 Guardsmen and women supported recovery efforts. Simultaneously, the National Guard supported wildland firefighting efforts across several states. The nation had to galvanize its efforts and resources to provide resiliency and stability to the communities affected

by these disasters. The National Guard was there every step of the way, and I could not be more proud of our Soldiers and Airmen. Further, we supported all of these events while we continued to meet our deployment requirements. We will utilize the experience we gained in responding to these recent disasters and benefit from lessons learned as we continue to improve and increase coordination with our partners in order to achieve unity of effort within a whole-of-government response.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

In today's security environment, threats are increasingly global and multiregional. As the National Defense Strategy outlines, our alignment with allies and partners provide a durable and asymmetric advantage over our adversaries.

Twenty-five years ago, the National Guard began its State Partnership Program (SPP) to assist the countries of Eastern Europe reform their defense sectors, improve preparedness, and develop leaders. With the recent signing of the Malaysia -Washington State partnership, the SPP has grown to include 79 nations, roughly one-third of the nations in the world, and more partnerships are planned for the future. We have seen the fruits of these relationships, which are built on trust, the exchange of ideas, and mutual respect. Our partnerships are located in strategic regions around the world and support the transition of many nations from security consumers to global security providers.

The SPP provides a low-cost mechanism that bolsters U.S. security by, with, and through allies and partners. By building these enduring partnerships, we secure partnerships and commitments and help develop new ones.

The National Guard's emphasis on partnerships did not begin with the SPP. Throughout our history, based on our state mission, the National Guard had the responsibility to safeguard our citizens. This naturally led us to build partnerships with state and local agencies and officials. Today, we are part of multiagency integrated playbooks that governors use in planning for and responding to crises. States can call on us to augment their organic response as we bring what the Department of Defense brings, such as manpower, training, leadership, organization, logistics, and communications to help rebuild communities after a catastrophe. Developing cooperation and long-standing partnerships over time is a core competency of the Guard.

The National Guard is a community-based force with many of our members working and serving where they live. We're integral to the life of our local communities. Whether partnering with local chapters of Youth ChalleNGe and Joining Community Forces, or assisting local responders after a heavy snowstorm, the saying is quite appropriate – when you call out the Guard, you call out America.

THREE PRIORITIES

This past year saw a confluence of factors shaping our security environment. Near-peer competitors continue to test longstanding international norms and engage in activities that are just short of conflict, yet whose actions provoke, disrupt, and destabilize the global order. Other nations such as North Korea and Iran not only threaten regional territories, but also our citizens here at home as

they continue to fund terrorism and develop increasingly sophisticated ballistic missile technology. Catastrophic disasters such as hurricanes and wildfires challenged the limits and capacity of our responders.

In light of these challenges and those that lie ahead, I have laid out three priorities to respond to our current threats and capture my vision for the Guard's future - provide ready forces to the President and our Governors, take care of and develop our people, and innovation.

PRIORITY #1: READINESS

The past 17 years of continuous combat experience has instilled focused discipline into our training process. We are part of the Nation's operational force which regularly and routinely contributes to the warfight. Consequently, I believe we have the best relationship in our history with our active components.

In building a more lethal Joint Force as directed by the National Defense Strategy, the National Guard must ensure readiness. Readiness begins with our force structure and the Guard must have a balanced array of combat and enabling forces that largely mirrors the Army and the Air Force. Readiness also includes resourcing the National Guard through appropriate levels of full-time support, modernization and recapitalization of equipment, replacing and upgrading Guard facilities, and recruiting and retaining the best men and women to enhance the readiness of our force. Investment in high-level collective training opportunities, such as Combat Training Center rotations and Red Flag exercises, builds the readiness of the National Guard, develops leaders, preserves readiness in the

active components for contingency operations and supports critical joint force requirements. Increased combat readiness also enhances our ability to respond quickly and effectively, saving lives and property in the homeland.

The Army maintains readiness as its top priority. The Army National Guard (ARNG), which comprises nearly 34 percent of the Army's manpower and provides approximately 39 percent of the Army's operational force, continues to provide rotational forces for named operations, enabling active component forces to support contingency plans. In addition, the Army Guard always remains responsive to governors in supporting civil authorities with such disasters as hurricanes, floods, wildfires, and tornadoes – just as we did this past year.

In FY17, the Army National Guard supported 68 exercises worldwide. Additionally in 2017, more than 150 Army Guard units participated in collective training exercises at Combat Training Centers which resulted in increased mission readiness. Beginning in 2018, the Army National Guard Combat Training Center rotations double, from two to four per year, for our Brigade Combat Teams.

At the forefront is maximizing unit readiness in order to reduce post-mobilization timelines. The ARNG recognizes the importance of modern facilities for today's Soldiers and their equipment. As we continue to invest in developing and improving installations and facilities for optimum training and efficient mobilization, we will develop leaders for the total force and, as always, maintain proper stewardship of our nation's resources.

The Air National Guard continues to utilize its multi-component dual-use capability at home and abroad. We work seamlessly with the Air Force and maintain the same standards of operational readiness and cross-component operational capabilities. Guard Airmen, comprising approximately a quarter of the Air Force's total manpower, supported deployment requirements in 56 countries in FY17. At home, our Airmen responded to raging wildfires and provided lifesaving support and comfort for victims of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. In addition, the Air Guard continues to protect our skies as the primary force provider for the North American Aerospace Defense Command. The Air National Guard is focused on readiness for today's fight while simultaneously developing 21st Century Guard Airmen and preparing for tomorrow's fight.

PRIORITY #2: PEOPLE

Our three core missions cannot be accomplished without our most important weapon system, our citizen warriors, symbolized by the Minuteman. They provide the foundation on which all our capabilities reside.

Our Guardsmen and women have been answering the call since the first militia regiments were organized in Massachusetts in 1636. While the underlying principles of the Minuteman remain constant, ready to defend our communities and our nation, the Minutemen of the 21st century are a premier force that is a key component of the joint force. They are adaptive and innovative, often bringing diverse and new ideas on how to accomplish different missions.

In order to maintain this unique and talented force, we have to ensure the well-being of our Guardsmen and women, including support for our families and employers.

Respect throughout our ranks must be second-nature and we will always strive to be the most diverse force we can be. We will not tolerate acts such as sexual assault, sexual harassment, and any forms of social media that degrade or demoralize unit cohesion and readiness. We must ensure all victims receive our utmost support and care.

With respect to suicides, any Soldier or Airman who takes his or her own life is one too many. We must ensure our service members look out for one another. Every first-line supervisor, battle buddy and wingman should have the requisite training that equips them to look out for fellow Soldiers and Airmen. We are emphasizing mental health and resiliency for our units and leaders as we strive to prevent suicides.

Our families also faithfully commit to our nation, states and communities when a Guard member serves. We must take care of our families by ensuring they are aware of family readiness programs, employment assistance programs, and where to turn to when they need help.

Although the increased demand that is placed on the National Guard will add stress to the Guard's part-time force and our business model, we will continue to adapt. Guard Soldiers and Airmen offer employers a culture of selfless service, an immeasurable benefit brought to the job through their military training,

experience and leadership. At the same time, the National Guard benefits from the civilian skills our men and women bring from their employers. To protect this business model, we must do our best to provide as much predictability as possible as we train our forces to answer our nation's call. We owe this measure to our dedicated service members, their families, and our employers.

PRIORITY #3: INNOVATION

Innovation is inherently in the DNA of the National Guard. National Guardsmen and women bring unique solutions to different problem sets using their dual-life military and civilian experiences. For example, many of the scientists, engineers, and technology experts we see in the private sector, are also members of the National Guard.

I have created the National Guard Innovation Team which gives me a direct conduit to Soldiers and Airmen of all ranks who can lend their diverse expertise in tackling some of the most challenging issues we face as an organization. However, every Guard Soldier and Airmen should be empowered to be innovative. We all need to work together to find solutions for issues that can have wide implications for the Guard such as more effective organization, recruiting, communications, and employing social media more effectively. Looking at the spectrum of threats at home and across the world, we need innovative minds more than ever.

We need to harness the intellectual capital resident in the Guard. By developing imaginative solutions and inspiring our culture to be more willing to

evolve and change, we will become a stronger, more efficient and effective National Guard.

CONCLUSION

I am proud to represent the 450,000 Soldiers and Airmen who serve in the National Guard. We are an organization steeped in history and tradition.

However, I believe the best is yet to come.

Thank you for your continued support of the members of the National Guard and their families.