

STATEMENT BY

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Opening Remarks

In this time of uncertainty where national and global security challenges are intertwined with fiscal constraints, the National Guard stands ready to meet these challenges and open a new chapter in its long and proud history. This new chapter begins with a National Guard that is accessible, responsive, and capable.

A strategic transition is underway – a necessary transition driven by constrained resources after over 13 years of sustained combat operations. While we must deal realistically with budget limits and a volatile global landscape, we must always ensure that we are ready to do the three things we do extraordinarily well: fight America’s wars, respond in the homeland, and build partnerships.

Fight America’s Wars

Since 9/11, the Army National Guard and Air National Guard have met every deployment requirement assigned to them, with the broadest mission sets possible. From Brigade Combat Teams conducting counterinsurgency operations and Combat Aviation Brigade deployments, to expeditionary Wings operating around the world, as well as non-standard units such as Agribusiness Development Teams, we have worked seamlessly with our active component counterparts. With nearly 770,000 individual overseas

mobilizations, the National Guard has proven, time and time again, that we are and will remain ready if properly resourced.

Our ability to meet all contingencies at home and abroad while enabling security around the world is no small task. For more than a decade of combat, our Guardsmen have fought alongside our active component counterparts with distinction and valor. Their capabilities are a testament to the years of training and investment America has put into the National Guard to be a vital part of the on-demand force for the nation. Our Guard has gained the trust of the American people. This trust was earned through hard work and sacrifice of our Soldiers and Airmen.

Responding in the Homeland

The National Guard has a special role as the original homeland security and defense force. Using our unique array of authorities, we respond to the needs of the nation and the states. The National Guard is positioned in nearly 3,000 communities to provide an immediate response to local, state, and national emergencies as well as ongoing domestic missions. Close ties with the states and local communities enable the National Guard to play a significant role in domestic emergencies.

Whether responding to natural disasters such as severe storms, wildfires, and hurricanes or man-made threats to the homeland, the National Guard is the first military force to reach the scene, working hand-in-hand with state and local leaders and emergency personnel when called by the governor.

Building Global and Domestic Partnerships

The National Guard also strengthens and sustains partnerships on a daily basis. One of our greatest strengths is our close cooperation, built on trust, with our local, state, federal, and global partners. Programs such as the State Partnership Program (SPP), pairing individual U.S. states with partner nations has paid huge dividends in establishing long-term security and personal relationships. These enduring partnerships stand as some of the strongest security partnerships in the world. For a small cost to our taxpayers, the SPP delivers strategic benefits by providing training, sharing military and homeland defense expertise, and encouraging partner nations to participate in coalition operations. Beyond budget pressures, SPP has contributed to the U.S. efforts to counter anticipated and unanticipated global threats as they emerge and has fostered personal relationships with defense leaders around the world.

These partnerships and personal relationships in strategic regions around the world have proven invaluable. Whether conducting co-deployments with state partners on coalition operations or foreign defense leaders reaching out directly to state partners during contingencies or times of crises, the strategic impact of the SPP has been remarkable.

With the ongoing success of the SPP, we look forward to expanding the program beyond the current 74 countries. The National Guard will continue to collaborate closely with the Department of Defense, combatant commands, and the Department of State in addressing future challenges, and maintaining the goodwill we have established with our partner nations.

Proven and Cost-Effective Force

The Department of Defense faces tough decisions in this time of limited budgets and must rethink its strategies and make decisions on how to balance readiness with force capacity. The National Guard is a proven option that allows for rapid, cost-effective and seamless expansion of active component forces. This scalability preserves capability and capacity rather than forcing the nation to choose between them. As the military draws down, the advantages of the National Guard become obvious. We stand as a hedge during this time of uncertainty and provide reversibility when needed in the future. The National Guard provides this capability while saving the nation significantly on personnel costs – costs that can be reinvested for modernization and readiness.

I am confident in the National Guard's ability to meet the nation's demands in wartime and peacetime, at home and abroad. However, retaining all of the advantages of today's National Guard into the future requires maintaining the readiness of the National Guard. This is accomplished through operational use, relevant training, and continued investment in modernization and recapitalization. Preserving a fully operational Army and Air National Guard is imperative to meet the future challenges our nation faces.

As the combat reserve of the Army, we must ensure that our Army National Guard maintains a balanced force that is organized to conduct the full spectrum of missions and has the level of support to maintain base line levels of readiness. To maintain these levels of readiness the National Guard must

conduct dynamic training, such as Combat Training Center rotations and exercises. We must also employ units to achieve the necessary operational experience and leadership development. This includes predictable, rotational deployments that enable us to maintain the combat tested proficiency we have gained over the past decade.

The Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, and U.S. Air Force continue to work together to create the Total Air Force capable of meeting our domestic and global security requirements, both today and in the future. The Air National Guard's part of the Total Force plan includes hosting active component Airmen in active associate organizations to help build the Total Force experience base. It also includes transitioning units to a broader range of high-priority missions in Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) such as Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) as well as cyber missions.

Choosing to resource the National Guard leverages the tremendous value that the Guard provides America, with a force ready at a moment's notice for domestic missions and proven, capable Soldiers and Airmen for overseas combat operations. When not activated, this immense capacity comes at about one-third the fully burdened and life-cycle costs, per capita on average, of an active component service member.

Closing Remarks

The foundation of the National Guard is our people – its units, families, communities, and employers. It has been our families and communities that

have sustained us over the past decade of multiple deployments and sacrifices. We must continue to keep faith with our force, our families, and our neighbors. We will honor our fallen patriots and wounded warriors by supporting their families and helping them reintegrate into their communities.

The National Guard will strive to continue to foster positive environments that are free from abuse, harassment, and discrimination and develop resilient Guardsmen and families. We must ensure that we are moving in the right direction. The nation's investment in developing healthy Guardsmen and families through a wide array of resourced, accessible, and effective programs is greatly appreciated.

Our nation will undoubtedly face significant domestic, global, and fiscal challenges in the future. The National Guard will strive to meet these challenges by providing our nation an accessible, responsive, capable, ready, and affordable force. We will continue to bring needed capabilities to both the nation and to communities through our unique array of state and federal authorities. The National Guard is woven into the fabric of our nation through communities everywhere, ready and willing to transform from civilians to Guardsmen on a moment's notice.

I want to thank this Committee for your continued support of our Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen. I look forward to your questions.