

STATEMENT BY

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BEFORE THE

**HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE**

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ON

THE FISCAL YEAR 2013 GUARD AND RESERVE BUDGET

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THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

Opening Remarks

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Dicks, distinguished members of the subcommittee; I am honored to appear before you today, representing more than 460,000 Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen in the Army and Air National Guard, an organization that is historically part of the foundation of our great democracy. America's National Guard remains ready, reliable, and accessible. As members of an operational force that's a critical piece of our nation's military response both overseas and here at home, the Soldiers and Airmen of the National Guard contribute daily to our nation's overseas and domestic security objectives.

The National Guard: Security America Can Afford

For 375 years, the National Guard has played a significant role in maintaining peace and security for our states, territories, the District of Columbia and the nation. I am very proud of our rich heritage and our present-day resolve as we continue our role preserving the ideals upon which our country was established.

Today, we are faced with a historic opportunity as we stand at the confluence of a new fiscal environment, the transition from combat to stability operations and a new military strategy. This convergence is leading to new defense-wide budgetary realities and challenging our decision makers as they formulate difficult spending choices that are sustainable and keep America safe and secure.

Today's global security environment is characterized as having asymmetric threats which pose danger to the United States. In light of this, we

must remain vigilant and capable. The United States faces greater security challenges today than at the end of the Cold War, the last time the military was significantly downsized. Therefore, we must look beyond simple cost accounting methods calling for across the board spending reductions. This method was used in the past and it did not serve us well. The result was widely characterized as a hollow force. Our new military strategy ensures we will not risk a hollow National Guard in the future.

An Operational Force for Domestic and Overseas Missions

The National Guard is well-suited to provide support to our new military strategy. The past ten years brought vast improvements in the overall training, equipping, and readiness of our force. This reality, combined with significant combat experience, has created a “dividend” in the National Guard. We have the most proficient, capable, accessible, and battle-tested National Guard in the history of the United States. Failure to continue the reliance on, and modernization of, the National Guard would squander a decade’s worth of progress and result in an enormous loss of experience and capability.

As a ready and rapidly deployable force, the National Guard has proven its value over the past decade. Both the Army and Air National Guard have contributed thousands of soldiers and airmen to Iraq, Afghanistan, the Balkans, Guantanamo Bay, Djibouti, the Sinai, and other locations across the globe. In 2011, over 29,000 National Guardsmen were mobilized for operations around the world. An example of our ability to rapidly project United States power occurred on March 17, 2011. As the United Nations Security Council debated the Libyan

no-fly zone resolution, Air National Guard aircraft and air crews were already en route to Forward Operating Bases to await orders. The National Guard offers America not only affordable defense, but also a “reversibility” option -- a strategic hedge for unforeseen world events which could dictate a change of course for our nation’s military strategy. At any time, the National Guard can augment the active duty to surge and regenerate forces.

The National Guard is also a crucial component of the Department of Defense primary mission to provide support to civil authorities and defend the homeland. Each year, the National Guard responds to a myriad of domestic emergencies. Last year alone, the Army National Guard performed more than 900,000 duty days (459,724 in State Status and 447, 461 in Title 32 Status) in response to wildfires, tornadoes, floods, Hurricane Irene, and other alerts and emergencies. Air National Guardsmen also fully participate in these missions including protecting American skies through the Aerospace Control Alert mission, critical infrastructure protection and assisting their local communities with disaster recovery.

The National Guard also brings innovative response capabilities to respond to major disasters including weapons of mass destruction incidents. The National Guard is home to 70% of the Department’s capability to respond to weapons of mass destruction. By the end of the 2012, the National Guard will fully establish 10 Homeland Response Forces. These forces are part of an escalating capability that complements the National Guard’s 17 Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear Enhanced Response Force Packages and 57

Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Teams. Most importantly, time and distance equal lives saved. The National Guard is fully integrated into over 3,000 communities across the country and the innovative response task forces are within 250 miles of 80% of the U.S. population.

The National Guard Counter Drug Program (CDP) is leading the effort to engage in funding based on measurable metrics and threats. The implementation of the Threat Based Resource Model budget will strengthen the National Guard's national security capability by allocating resources to all states and territories based on the severity of the narcotics threat faced by each state. In an era of ever-changing global challenges, the CDP provides critical support to Law Enforcement Agencies and Combatant Commanders with full spectrum capabilities that helps our nation detect, interdict and disrupt transnational criminal organizations. CD personnel helped LEAs seize almost \$18.5 billion in drugs, property, weapons, and cash in FY11. The CDP also operates five Counterdrug Training Centers located in Mississippi, Florida, Iowa, Pennsylvania, and Washington; these centers trained 5,836 military personnel, 56,093 law enforcement officers and 9,792 interagency partners in 2011.

The National Guard's Value and Unique Capabilities

The National Guard provides a cost effective, proven solution to our country's budgetary crisis while helping to ensure our security. The National Guard allows the nation to maintain a robust military capability at the least possible cost to the taxpayer and is a viable resource for reducing the Department's cost of doing business. In the Army National Guard, more than

50% of our Soldiers are now seasoned combat veterans. The Air National Guard is similarly filled with combat veterans. To ensure reversibility, the experience these Soldiers and Airmen have gained over the past decade of conflict cannot be lost.

As the nation looks for Innovative, low-cost, and small-footprint approaches to achieving our security objectives, the National Guard is providing a blueprint of success. Celebrating nearly 20 years of enduring relationships with 63 countries, the National Guard's State Partnership Program provides unique military-to-military activities with partner countries using National Guard expertise. Participation in SPP events is designed to enhance partner capabilities, advance defense reform efforts and achieve greater military interoperability to support U.S. security cooperation efforts.

Among other benefits, SPP alignments have resulted in joint National Guard and partner country deployments in support of multi-national operations in Afghanistan. These critical partner-country deployments reduce pressure on U.S. forces worldwide and hedge against the need for more direct and costly U.S. military involvement in future contingencies.

The Department of Defense is also currently refining its framework to thwart cyber attacks in the future while defending our critical military networks today. The National Guard has access to a wealth of information technology talent within its ranks, including Guardsmen working in numerous information technology companies. These Soldiers and Airmen have a unique blend of

civilian and military skills across the information technology spectrum, making the National Guard a ready defense asset in the national cyber security mission.

Support Soldiers, Airmen, and Families

Our Soldiers and Airmen are our greatest asset, and that is why we are committed to effectively responding to the needs of National Guardsmen and their families. The Army Guard currently has more than 3,100 wounded warriors in Warrior Transition Units (WTUs) that are focused on healing each injured Soldier as he or she either transitions back to military duty or leaves the military to assume a productive, responsible role in society. WTUs provide non-clinical support, complex case management, and transition assistance for Soldiers of all components at medical treatment facilities on Active Army installations. The Air Guard's Wounded Warrior program provided awareness, identification and information / referral to over 160 wounded Airmen. The program's mission is to provide the best possible non-medical care and professional support from the point of injury to life after separation or retirement.

The National Guard has made suicide prevention a top priority by promoting resilience and risk reduction programs that will enhance coping skills in our Soldiers, Airmen, families, and civilians through leadership awareness, training, and intervention programs. As the foundation of each Soldier's support network, Army Guard families and employers are being trained to assist in identifying high risk individuals. States have capitalized on community-based resources and solutions to provide services outside of military installations.

One of the many challenges that we face today is unemployment for our returning Guardsmen. Based on the Department of Defense Civilian Employment Information database, we estimate that 20 percent of returning National Guard Soldiers and Airmen are unemployed. The rate of unemployed Gulf War-Era II Veterans remains much higher than the national non-veteran rate. Gulf War-Era II Veterans who have left military service in the past have an unemployment rate in January 2012 of 9.1 percent.

The National Guard Bureau has been and remains deeply concerned with the employment status of our Soldiers and Airmen. They are our most important asset and their well-being and retention are essential for the National Guard as an operational force. As early as 2004, the National Guard Bureau funded a unique resource, titled “Program Support Specialist”, at each of the 54 State Joint Force Headquarters. This individual serves as the subject matter expert for the Adjutant General regarding local issues with employers of Air and Army National Guard members.

While initially focused on specific employer support issues and complaint resolution, the duties of the Program Support Specialist expanded to include employment facilitation. In addition to coordinating employment opportunity events and linking unemployed Guardsmen with available resources, Program Support Specialists are serving as case managers for unemployed Guardsmen by connecting them with local resources, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Department of Labor. Last year, Program Support Specialists participated in over 1,000 “Yellow Ribbon Reintegration” events nationwide – supporting units

throughout the country returning from deployment by identifying employment opportunities and providing other requested assistance. We continue to develop metrics to measure the effectiveness of our program.

The Program Support Specialists also work closely with our Transition Assistance Advisors in the State Joint Force Headquarters to ensure our Guard members are registered with Veterans' Affairs (VA) and can access their VA benefits, to include vocational and job training. Both of these programs are essential when developing and establishing community-based program networks in support of Veterans, Service Members and Families.

The Army National Guard Directorate offers several national programs to assist the states with their local employment programs. The "Job Connection Education Program" (JCEP) is a web-based program that interfaces with Facebook and provides the ability for Guardsmen and their families to research, obtain, and retain civilian employment. The "Guard Apprenticeship Program Initiative", in partnership with the Department of Labor and the Department of Veterans' Affairs, continues to build relationships with employers and colleges to facilitate civilian apprenticeship and employment opportunities for National Guard and other Reserve Component members. "Drive the Guard" is a collaborative effort with the Commercial Driver Training Foundation, Inc. which links Guardsmen with training and certification programs in their communities. Once completed, the Guardsman has the potential to begin a career in the truck driving industry.

Closing Remarks

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