

STATEMENT BY

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THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

Opening Remarks

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Visclosky, members of the subcommittee; I am honored to appear before you today, representing the nearly 356,000 Soldiers in the Army National Guard. For 376 years Citizen Soldiers have been central to how the nation defends itself at home and abroad. Through resolve and readiness, Army National Guard Soldiers deliver essential value to our nation and its communities.

The men and women of the Army National Guard contribute immeasurably to America's security. They have been an integral part of the active Army, supporting the National Military Strategy and Army commitments worldwide. In more than a decade of fighting two wars, the Army National Guard has demonstrated the capacity to conduct every mission assigned. Since September 11, 2001, Guard Soldiers have completed more than 514,000 mobilizations in support of federal missions. Currently, more than 23,000 members are mobilized at multiple locations around the world defending our national interests.

At the same time, the Army National Guard continues to fulfill its centuries-old obligations to the communities in which we live and work. Guard Soldiers live in nearly every zip code, playing a vital role as the military's first responder. In fiscal year 2012 Army Guard members served over 447,000 duty days under the control of the nation's governors responding to domestic emergencies – and that was, historically, a slow year. This current fiscal year, which began with

Hurricane Sandy, will likely post far higher numbers. The training and equipment used to ready the Guard for overseas service has paid dividends here in the U.S.; it is the Guard's preparedness for war that has made it so effective in responding to domestic emergencies.

Whether at home or abroad, the National Guard lives up to its motto – Always Ready, Always There.

The Army National Guard of 2013 is the best-manned, best-trained, best-equipped, best-led and most experienced force in its long history. This is a direct result of the resourcing and legal authorities that Congress has dedicated to this purpose over the past decade-plus of conflict. The Army Guard has used those resources wisely, and is an operational force that provides capabilities and strategic depth to meet U.S. defense and homeland security requirements. The Army National Guard complements the active component, ensuring the Total Force remains capable of providing trained and ready forces in support of the Nation's security strategy. As an operational force, the Guard is resourced, trained, ready, and used on a continual basis, conducting the full spectrum of military operations in all environments as a part of the Total Force.

If there is a single message I could deliver to you today, it would be this: it would be a terrible waste of effort and resources to let this superb operational force, built at great expense in blood, sweat and treasure over a decade of conflict, atrophy as a result of across-the-board cuts

that fail to take into mind the value relative to its cost of the Army National Guard in meeting America's national defense and domestic response needs.

It only takes a continued modest investment to maintain an operational force when compared to the strategic reserve the nation had prior to 9/11. But that investment is more than made up for in the added responsiveness, flexibility and readiness resident in a reserve component where 84 percent of the personnel serve in a part-time status.

The past decade of conflict has done much to dispel many of the myths associated with the National Guard, its role, capabilities, costs, and limitations. As the military enters a period of constrained resources and the Services conduct their analysis of the proper mix of active and reserve forces needed to accomplish national strategic goals, the Army National Guard as an operational force offers an effective and efficient solution to a wide variety of mission sets.

Status of the Force

One persistent false impression is that the Army National Guard is a "tired force" whose Soldiers, families and employers are worn out from the strain of more than a decade of conflict. No doubt, there has been strain. However, the Guard's Soldiers continue to show a strong appetite for service, and the Guard's appeal as a winning team that embodies selfless service to both nation and community continues to draw

America's youth to its ranks. The Army National Guard recruitment rate is 102% of goal, while the retention rate stands at 94.6% (as of March 5, 2013). Every member of the Army Guard has either enlisted or re-enlisted since September 11, 2001. This is a key point, as today's Guard differs from that of the pre-9/11 period in that today's Soldiers anticipate being deployed abroad in service to their country.

Indeed, nearly 50 percent of the Soldiers in the Army Guard today are veterans of a deployment, many having served multiple tours. Retaining this core of experience is critical to maintaining an operational force, and this year and the next present a particular challenge as the large cohort of enlistees that grew the Army National Guard in 2007-8 comes due for re-enlistment. While bonuses and incentives play an important role in deciding to stay in the Guard, the desire for relevant training and utilization at home and abroad drew many of these men and women to enlist in the first place, and will play a role in their decisions to stay. A key component of the operational reserve is that it is a force that sees regular use, through a progressive readiness model – such as Army Force Generation – that prepares Soldiers and units for deployment every five years. This gives Soldiers, their families and civilian employers the predictability they need to plan their civilian lives and careers, while developing critical military skills exercised through tough, realistic training or operational employment.

Accessibility

In the 2012 National Defense Authorization Act, the Congress wisely increased the degree of access that the military services have to their reserve components for both domestic emergencies and preplanned operations. Because the dual federal-state status of the National Guard makes it fully accessible to the states, the additional authority granted in Title 10, section 12304a for domestic emergencies will likely not be exercised for the Army National Guard. The authority granted in Title 10, section 12304b, however, increases the ways Services can access the reserve components for preplanned and budgeted missions to meet combatant commander requirements. This authority removed one impediment from maintaining an operational reserve that can be flexibly employed by combatant commanders as required. An additional benefit to this access is the honing of the operational reserve through continued employment. There remain no significant statutory barriers to accessing the Army National Guard or any of the other reserve components for either domestic or overseas missions.

While the National Guard takes great pride in its militia heritage and the service it renders to local communities while under the command of the nation's governors, this dual status has never limited the federal government's access to Guard units for any mission. By established law, the federal government takes priority over the states

whenever there is a need for Guard forces. The needs of domestic response are assured through the careful apportionment of essential capabilities to each of the states. This, coupled with the proliferation of Emergency Management Assistance Compacts among the states, assures that the nation's governors have access to essential capabilities should their own National Guard be deployed or otherwise unable to meet the demand for a particular capability during a disaster. By way of example, 21 states provided National Guard forces to the effected region when Hurricane Sandy caused massive damage to coastal New York and New Jersey late last year.

When needed, the Army National Guard has always answered the call – both at home and abroad.

An Operational Force for Domestic and Overseas Missions

The most immediate advantage of an operational force is its readiness to conduct the full spectrum of missions, overseas and domestic, when called upon. The Army National Guard has demonstrated this capability in full during the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, mobilizing units ranging in size from 2-3 man teams to 3,500-man Brigade Combat Teams to Division headquarters exercising command and control over multiple Brigade Combat Teams and supporting forces. Guard BCTs performed every mission in Iraq and Afghanistan that their active component counterparts performed, to

include security force, advising and training of host nation military and police forces, and full-spectrum operations in both countries.

In fiscal year 2012, nearly 25,000 Army National Guard Soldiers were deployed in support of a multitude of ongoing missions around the world. The vast majority, over 21,000, served in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, with others serving in the Horn of Africa; in support of Operation Joint Guardian in Kosovo; in support of the Multinational Force and Observers in the Sinai; in Honduras; the Philippines; and mobilized for operational missions within the United States.

While this contribution is noteworthy, there is significantly more capacity within the Army National Guard should the nation require. By way of recent example, at one point during 2005 over 100,000 were deployed and eight of fifteen Brigade Combat Teams in Iraq were Army National Guard. Later that same year, with 80,000 Soldiers still mobilized overseas, the Army Guard surged more than 50,000 Soldiers in the space of a week to deploy to the Gulf Coast in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. In summary: in the year in which the Army National Guard experienced its largest mobilization since the Korean War, it also experienced the largest domestic response in its history. This capacity and capability continues to reside in today's Army National Guard, with the ability to respond with appropriate notice for overseas missions – or no notice for domestic emergencies – when it is resourced as an operational force.

Response time is a critical consideration when determining the right mix of forces to meet planned or unanticipated contingencies. The past dozen years of war has demonstrated that even the largest Guard formations can be trained to standard, validated and deployed well within the timelines required by Combatant Commanders. The experience of deploying, and deploying repeatedly, over the past decade has honed this training regimen and reduced post-mobilization training time considerably since 2003. Many companies complete their post-mobilization training in approximately 30 days; Army National Guard BCTs, large units required to achieve a collective training standard on more complex tasks, take a little longer, averaging 50-80 days of post-mobilization training. Predictability of scheduled deployments is preferable for Soldiers, families and civilian employers, and is key to maintaining an operational force in the reserve component. The ability of the Army National Guard to respond to worldwide contingencies provides tremendous flexibility to the nation as we seek to achieve defense goals with a constrained budget.

Domestic Operations

In the 2012 calendar year, Citizen Soldiers responded to floods, wildfires, tornadoes, hurricanes, and snow storms. The biggest storm of 2012, Super Storm Sandy, devastated communities along the east coast. Guard members from 21 states responded and many remained on duty

for several weeks. Many who responded live in the communities hardest hit by the storm.

Just a few weeks into 2013, National Guard Soldiers were called up to help dig out people in the northeast, where up to 40 inches of snow fell during a weekend storm. Our Citizen Soldiers were needed to help clear roads of snow and tree limbs and to transport people for medical treatment. Guard personnel also assisted crews to restore electric service to the 650,000 customers who lost power.

During 2012, the Army National Guard also provided 44,327 duty-days of support to special events. Most notably, the Guard served during both the Democratic and Republican National Conventions, as well as the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit and the NATO Summit.

The Army National Guard's support of the Southwest Border mission was much lower in 2012 than in previous years. Still, their work spanned the 1,933-mile border of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. The current Southwest Border support focuses on criminal analysis and aerial detection and monitoring.

Army National Guard aviation was particularly active in the domestic arena, flying more than 7,880 hours supporting Customs and Border Protection and assisting in 13,780 apprehensions and the seizure of 82,471 pounds of marijuana. Throughout 2012, Army Guard helicopters flew more than 30,880 hours for domestic operations,

transported 6,554 personnel, moved 201,731 pounds of cargo, and dropped nearly 6 million gallons of water while extinguishing wildfires.

Support to Security Cooperation and Building Partner Capacity

In 2012, the Army National Guard provided approximately 18,575 Soldiers to support 69 military exercises in 104 countries. The Guard's dual mission capability, combined with Soldiers that possess a wide variety of civilian, professional, and educational experiences along with grass-roots community support, ideally positions it to play a significant role in global security cooperation.

Army National Guard partnership capacity-building activities serve to deepen and strengthen a foreign nation or region's positive perception of the United States as a valued partner, serving to prevent future conflicts. Army National Guard's participation in security cooperation programs is unique because the relative stability of a Guard Soldier's career, in most cases in a single state, allow that Soldier to forge enduring relationships with their foreign counterparts over long periods of time. In some cases, the crucial bonds have been cultivated and maintained for more than two decades.

In 2012, 4,200 Army National Guard Soldiers participated in the National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program (SPP) that includes 65 partnerships and two bilateral agreements with a total of 67 partner countries. This program promotes security cooperation activities for

military-to-military training, disaster response, border and port security, medical, and peacekeeping operations.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of this innovative and highly beneficial program, which has yielded immense benefits for the United States and partner nations. Administered in cooperation with the US Department of State and working hand-in-hand with the Air National Guard in each state and leveraging funding from other DOD programs, SPP is not strictly an Army program. Nevertheless, the Army Guard's extensive experience with the State Partnership Program, and the worldwide bonds that it has forged, are a vital element of the Army's Regional Alignment of Forces concept.

The commitment of SPP partner countries has been sustained and durable - throughout the past decade of conflict. Twenty-seven SPP partner countries have deployed alongside Guard Soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan. At the close of fiscal year 2012 there were 20 SPP partner countries contributing more than 8,500 troops in Afghanistan.

Guardsmen possess a range of valuable professional skills and expertise acquired as civilians. Within the ranks of the Army National Guard are first responders (firefighters, law enforcement, emergency medical technicians, and analysts), medical professionals, legal professionals, engineers, agricultural specialists, educators, mechanics, and plumbers. The combination of these skills civilian acquired skills with individual and collective military expertise uniquely postures Guard

formations to accomplish missions requiring smart power skills. A prime example is the innovative Agribusiness Development Teams (ADTs) currently employed in Afghanistan.

Agribusiness Development Teams provide training and advice aimed at supplementing current Afghan farming practices by introducing advanced techniques and new, profitable crops. These teams are making significant contributions to Afghanistan's economy and achieving sustainable, yearly growth of the nation's economic output. As a result of the ADTs, Afghanistan has increased harvests of apples, grapes, pomegranates, cherries, almonds, wheat, corn, alfalfa, and saffron.

Since the ADT program was implemented, 49 teams, consisting of 2,995 personnel, have contributed to more than 680 agriculture projects generating more than \$42M for the people of Afghanistan. Currently, seven ADTs, are serving in Afghanistan. These teams are comprised of Soldiers from Kentucky, Indiana, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Georgia, Mississippi, and South Carolina – all states with large agricultural sectors.

Maintaining the Operational Force: Resourcing

Resources remain the principal reason why the Army National Guard is now an operational force, and will determine whether it stays that way. Resources have allowed the Army Guard to reach its authorized end strength levels and retain valued experience in the ranks.

Resources have allowed us to take care of families, promote resiliency, and provide post-deployment reintegration services. Resources have permitted the Guard to achieve individual and unit proficiency with advanced training devices and simulations, attend Army schools, and participate in live and constructive exercises at the Army's premier training centers. They have allowed the Guard to surge personnel on active duty in order to better prepare units for scheduled deployments. They have equipped the Guard to a higher level of modernized equipment on hand than at any time in its history.

Quite simply, the Army National Guard can only be as ready as it is resourced to be. The Guard will achieve desired levels of responsiveness if properly resourced – and it will do so by maximizing taxpayers' investment in programs directly contributing to Army National Guard readiness and a laser-like focus on proper stewardship of those funds.

Maintaining the Operational Force: Medical Readiness

Medical Readiness is a crucial requirement to maintaining the Army National Guard as an operational force. Every Soldier in the Guard, by law, must be assigned to a position in a unit. The Army Guard does not have a holding account similar to the active Army's to manage a significant volume of non-medically ready Soldiers. Nonetheless, the Army National Guard has made great strides in improving medical

readiness. Fully medically ready Soldiers are the key to ready and relevant units. The Army Guard improved from a fully medically ready percentage of 41% in 2007, to 77% by the end of FY 2012. That's the highest percentage of medical readiness ever recorded. However, this is an area where readiness will rapidly slip as sequestration will make it challenging for the Army Guard from performing 115,000 annual health assessments this year.

Maintaining the Operational Force: Support to Soldiers and Families

Soldiers join the Army National Guard for many reasons. One thing they all have in common is the desire to serve ... a desire to be part of a winning team, a force for good in this world. The National Guard represents this.

Adequate pay, benefits, training and other incentives play an important role for those deciding to enlist or reenlist in the Army Guard. Important benefits include Tri-Care Reserve Select, educational assistance, commissary access, legal assistance, life insurance, Thrift Savings Plan, home loans for veterans, and morale programs such as recreation facilities and Space Available travel.

People are the Guard's most precious resource. Nowhere can the Guard demonstrate this principle more strongly than in the effort it devotes to suicide prevention. This has been a persistent challenge for the Army Guard, since leaders typically only see the majority of their

Soldiers during a single drill weekend each month. This limits a leader's ability to intervene in a crisis. That's why the Army Guard is focusing on training and programs to increase resilience, reduce risk and increase leadership awareness. These programs are intended to enhance coping skills in Soldiers, their families, and the civilian work force – skills with an application to everyday life as well as the military.

The Army National Guard established a Master Resilience Trainer (MRT) Course at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin in July 2011, later adding a second course, in order to quickly increase the number of fully qualified MRTs able to serve their fellow Soldiers. By establishing these courses, the Army National Guard expects to meet the base requirement of 3,532 by the end of this fiscal year. This base requirement represents one MRT for every company across the Army Guard. Through this program, we touch every Soldier and teach fundamental resilience skills to the force.

The Army National Guard also trained 334 Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) program trainers in FY11. An additional 150 ASIST trainers were trained in FY12. These trainers will train approximately 35,000 gatekeepers in advanced intervention skills.

In late 2011, the Army National Guard teamed with the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, as well as the Air National Guard, to launch a highly successful peer support line, Vets4Warriors. The peer support line serves all Army National Guard and Reserve Component members nationwide. As the foundation of each Soldier's

support network, Army National Guard families 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.

The Army National Guard has been, and remains, deeply concerned with the civilian employment status of its Soldiers. The ability of Guard Soldiers to gain and maintain civilian employment is essential to the Army National Guard as an operational force. Furthermore, employment challenges extend beyond returning mobilized Soldiers; the Guard continues to work diligently to find solutions to assist its geographically dispersed population.

The Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) Act of 2011 mandates the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) for all Soldiers separating from a Title 10 active duty tour of more than 180 days. The Army National Guard is working closely with the Department of the Army and OSD, including on the Veterans Employment Initiative Task Force to implement the transition mandates set forth in the legislation. The goal is to enhance and increase participation of Guard members in an array of employment assistance programs made available by the Army and the Department of Defense.

Additionally, the Army National Guard offers several national programs to assist the states with their local employment programs. The National Guard Employment Network helps states that need resources to

people find employment, and to help companies hire outstanding candidates for success. The Network partners with private companies, and also helps Guard Soldiers and family members write resumes, develop interview skills and dress for success.

Similarly, the Job Connection Education Program assists Guard Soldiers and family members in researching, obtaining, and retaining civilian employment. It provides support services such as job skills training, workshops, and job search assistance with positions offered by more than 400 established business partners. This started as a pilot program in Texas, but has expanded to Iowa, Wisconsin and Tennessee. The program has helped 2,100 Army Guard Soldiers or family members secure employment, including 55 last month in Texas alone. Many of these jobs are in the financial and information technology sectors, and offer professional positions that feature good salaries and benefits.

Maintaining the Operational Force: Equipping the Force

The Army National Guard has received significant investments in its equipment over the last few years, increasing Equipment on Hand (EOH), Critical Dual-Use (CDU) equipment, and the overall modernization level.

Army National Guard EOH for Modified Table of Organization units is currently at 88 percent, an increase from 85 percent two years ago. Overall CDU EOH is 90 percent, an increase from 86 percent two years

ago and a significant increase from 65 percent at the time of the Hurricane Katrina response in 2005. Of the 88 percent EOH, 83 percent is currently at home station (not mobilized) and considered available for domestic operations. Of the total quantity of equipment authorized, 70 percent is on-hand and considered modernized, while 18 percent of the on-hand equipment is not modern.

While modernization levels overall are good, and within 1 percent of active component levels, there are nevertheless areas of concern. The Army Guard's UH-60 Blackhawk fleet is the oldest in the Army. HMMWV Recapitalization and general engineering equipment are additional areas of concern for modernization. Some of the items under consideration for potential purchase with procurement funds include Decontamination Trailers and Radiological Protection Kits, Virtual Convoy Operations Trainers and Close Combat Tactical Trainers, Hydraulic Excavators and fuel systems to extend the range on CH-47 and UH-60 helicopters.

Equipment reset – field and depot level maintenance – is another area of concern. Currently, the Department of the Army is developing strategies and plans for the way forward as it copes with cuts in maintenance due to sequestration. As it currently stands, approximately 1,000 pieces of Army Guard equipment will not enter Automatic Reset Induction during FY13. At this time the Guard has eight brigades and 450 units expecting reset. The brigades impacted hail from Minnesota, Oklahoma, Ohio, Hawaii, New York, Missouri, and two from Texas. The

Army's reset priorities are driven by the readiness requirements of units that are next to deploy, the global response force, and forward-deployed units. Since Army Guard units can only fall in the "next to deploy" category, there is the potential over time that Guard units would not receive reset equipment until it is time to deploy. As fewer units deploy, the equipment reset backlog increases over time.

Maintaining the Operational Force: Aviation

In the broader category of equipment, sustaining the Army National Guard as an Operational Force depends upon having the same equipment as the active component, including rotary wing aircraft. The Army National Guard currently has 1,277 rotary wing aircraft against an authorized fleet of 1,394 aircraft. The inventory includes a mix of the most modern capabilities (AH-64D Block II Longbow Apaches, CH-47F Chinooks, UH/HH-60M Black Hawks and UH-72A Lakotas), older but capable airframes (AH-46D Block I Apaches, CH-47D Chinooks, UH-60A/L Black Hawks, and OH-58D Kiowa Warriors) and 98 legacy aircraft (OH-58A/C Kiowas and AH-64A Apaches).

Programmed Army procurements will ensure the Army National Guard fleets are modernized on pace with the other components, except in the case of the Black Hawk fleet. Even in 2020, only 25% of the Army National Guard Black Hawk fleet will be equipped with the new UH/HH-

60M. Rotary wing aircraft remain a Critical Dual-Use asset whether mobilizing for the warfight or responding to domestic emergencies.

Due to the fiscal environment, the Army will accelerate divestiture of the C-23 Sherpa by 15 months, with a likely completion in September 2013. The C-27J was originally scheduled to replace the C-23. In 2009 the Department of Defense transferred the aircraft and cargo direct support mission to the USAF. Subsequently, the Army determined there was no longer a requirement for the C-23 and began divesting the aircraft in 2011.

To date the Army Guard has divested 8 of 42 aircraft. This month the Army determined that accelerating the divestiture will yield roughly \$34M in cost savings through 2014 that could then be applied to other priorities. Though losing this capability is difficult, recognition of the current fiscal environment causes the Army Guard to accept the C-23 divestiture.

Maintaining the Operational Force: Installations

The Army National Guard has facilities in more than 3,000 communities. In many towns and cities these facilities are the only military presence, with the Guard serving as the most visible link between hometown America and the nation's armed forces. Providing quality facilities across 50 States, three Territories and the District of Columbia has been an on-going challenge. While the Army National

Guard transformed from a strategic reserve to an operational force during more than a decade of deployments, many facilities have not been updated in several generations. Currently, more than 46 percent of Army Guard readiness centers are over 50 years old. Many fail to fully meet the needs of a 21st century operational force, cannot easily accommodate modern equipment and technology, are poorly situated, and are energy inefficient. Facilities are critical to readiness and support unit administration, training, equipment maintenance, and storage. They serve as platforms for mobilization during times of war as well as command centers and shelters during domestic emergencies.

This wide array of use makes Military Construction and Facilities Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization funding a critical matter directly impacting unit readiness and morale, continuity of operations and interagency partnership, and community awareness.

Closing Remarks

With our nation operating during an era of budgetary pressure, the Army National Guard is structured for success in the future. With committed Citizen Soldiers as our foundation, the Army National Guard presents tremendous value to the nation at large and within American communities where we live, work and serve. A flexible force serving our citizens for 376 years, the Guard's history shows that it has always adapted to change in America and around the world and risen to the

challenge. The last decade-plus of war has demonstrated these traits in full: we are ready; we are accessible; we are capable; we are eager to serve.

We stand ready, as always, to take on any mission.