

STATEMENT BY

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Introduction

As the combat reserve of the Army, the 342,000 Soldiers of the Army National Guard are trained and equipped as part of the Total Army to fight and win America's wars. We have stood shoulder-to-shoulder as part of the U.S. Army through every major conflict in our nation's history, from the Revolutionary War to today's global operations. Simply stated, the Army National Guard plays an essential role in our Army's ability to go to war or engage in sustained operations.

Everything we do in the Army National Guard is focused toward building and sustaining readiness. Investments in Army National Guard manning, training, and equipping enable us to respond to the nation's call to service, whether participating in combat operations abroad or saving lives and protecting property at home. Reducing the time it takes for Soldiers and units to be ready for deployment is the primary concern for all Army National Guard leaders, and is a goal toward which we are always focused.

Priorities and Lines of Effort

In my first year as Director of the Army National Guard, I have established five priorities that align our force with General Milley's vision for the U.S. Army. This will ensure that the Army National Guard is ready and responsive to the needs of our Army as well as our nation's governors. These priorities are: Leader Development, Ensuring Operational Capability, Maintaining Resourcing and Modernization,

Ensuring Ready Soldiers and Families, and Maintaining Full-Time Support personnel.

In order to operationalize these five priorities, I have directed the Army National Guard to focus on four lines of effort: Leader Development, Ready Forces, Operational Forces, and Resilient Communities.

Accountability is inherent in these priorities and lines of effort. In order to maintain the trust of the American people; we must remain accountable to the Army profession, our civilian leadership, and to each other. Adherence to Army and Department of Defense standards, fiscal stewardship and audit readiness, provide the foundation for my five priorities.

Leader Development

Leader development is one of my top concerns. Soldiers require years of training, experience and mentoring to develop into effective mid-level and senior Army National Guard leaders. You cannot recruit a battalion commander, sergeant major, or chief warrant officer. Therefore, we must provide Soldiers with the professional educational experiences and leadership development opportunities they need to grow into tomorrow's Army National Guard leaders.

For the Army National Guard, a key component of leader development is experience in real-world deployments and realistic collective training. Army National Guard Soldiers have limited

opportunities to lead in real-world operational environments in comparison to their Active Component counterparts. This is a critical reason why consistent utilization, as well as planned rotations within the Army's Sustainable Readiness process are essential to Army National Guard readiness.

Leaders drive the Army's professional culture. I want to ensure that the Army National Guard develops strong leaders of character. In order to be effective in combat, Soldiers must trust and respect their leaders. As we promote leader development as a readiness principle, we must ensure that accountability and adherence to Army professional standards remain core tenants.

Ready Forces

Because the Army is a people-centric force consisting of Soldiers, Families and Civilians, the first step in building a ready force is to ensure it is properly manned. Our manning efforts are focused to ensure that we continue to recruit and retain quality Soldiers. Because of the nature of attrition and end-strength reductions, we must continue to recruit new Soldiers even as we reduce the size and structure of the force.

A force that is manned but not trained cannot be considered ready. Soldiers that are not educated in their specialties and trained in their missions are not ready for deployment. Initial Entry Training and Military Occupational Skills training are essential for individual Soldier readiness. Individual Soldier training is the foundation for unit readiness

Additionally, units that have not trained together are placed at greater risk when conducting combat operations. Modern warfare requires careful, proficient coordination between units, Services, and allied militaries. Collective unit training is the means by which Soldiers learn to work as a cohesive fighting team – that team includes the Army National Guard.

The Chief of Staff of the Army has emphasized the importance of Army National Guard collective unit training, and he is considering additional Combat Training Center rotations for Army National Guard units. We fully support increases in CTC rotations and other collective training events. Collective training is critical for leader development and unit cohesiveness, both of which can quickly erode without comprehensive unit training events.

Modernized, interoperable equipment is what turns trained Soldiers and units into effective and capable Army formations. In order for the Army to fight and win the nation's wars, the Army's equipment and equipping strategy must provide Soldiers with combat overmatch – the combination of Soldier skills and advanced equipment that far exceed enemy capability and capacity.

Today's operating environment is highly complex. The continued technological advancement of our enemies, coupled with the increasingly interconnected nature of equipment and computer networks, requires the Army National Guard to maintain highly modern, interoperable

equipment. With a smaller Total Army, the nation cannot afford to allow Army National Guard equipment capabilities to lag behind those of Active Component formations as we did during the Cold War. Doing so would reduce combat effectiveness and degrade the Army's ability to operate seamlessly on the complex battlefields we will face today and tomorrow.

Congress has invested substantial resources to bring the Army National Guard to equipping parity with the Active Component Army. Today's Army National Guard is the best equipped, most modern force in its history. Yet, fiscal constraints have forced the Army to defer modernization in order to fund readiness, and the impact is very real for the Army National Guard.

For example, the Army National Guard has 556 of the required 826 modernized UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters. Over 66 percent of our HMMWV ground ambulance fleet is modernized, but more than 500 vehicles require modernization. Our armored combat platforms, including the Abrams main battle tank, are behind the Active Component in terms of modernization. The Army National Guard Abrams fleet (with M1A1 variants) is a generation behind the third generation main battle tank (M1A2 variant) in the Active Component. Additionally, the Army National Guard is taking risk with critical mobility systems, such as firefighting, explosive ordinance disposal, and bridging systems.

We request your support of our depot maintenance funding request so the Army Guard is not forced to defer critical depot overhauls,

risking fleet operational readiness rates for vehicles and equipment. This has a direct and significant impact on our war-fighting and domestic response capabilities.

Operational Forces

Today's Army National Guard is a reflection of the resourcing and policy decisions to manage the Reserve Component as an Operational Force. As a component of the U.S. Army, the Army National Guard has transformed into an interoperable and experienced ground combat force capable of performing any mission assigned. Since September 11, 2001, Army National Guard Soldiers have conducted more than 544,000 individual mobilizations in support of federal missions, with more than 320,000 individual Soldier mobilizations to Iraq and Afghanistan during that period. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2015, the Army National Guard mobilized 10,123 Soldiers for service around the world. Today, we have approximately 11,100 Soldiers mobilized both overseas and in the United States for federal missions. Many senior leaders within the Department of Defense, the Administration and Congress have stated publicly that the Army would not have been able to accomplish its combat missions without the use of the Army National Guard – and I fully agree. Our force embodies the spirit of the Army Total Force Policy, and we can ill afford a return to pre-9/11 readiness levels. At home, the Army National Guard remains the military's primary domestic responder. In FY 2015, Army National Guard Soldiers served nearly 453,850 duty days under the command of

the nation's governors, assisting our fellow citizens during domestic emergencies and aiding federal authorities in other critical areas such as counterdrug efforts and security along our Southwest border. At home and abroad, the Army National Guard is and will remain an indispensable part of the Army.

Global instability continues to place our nation's security interests at risk. The Army deployed forces to more than 140 countries last year alone. The threat of a large-scale military conflict with near-peer competitors is growing. Our allies are experiencing increasing pressure in Europe and Asia. Strong transnational terrorist organizations continue to destabilize entire regions and to threaten our security at home.

Within our available resources, the Army National Guard is working to support national theater engagement priorities in Europe and the Pacific. For example, we are conducting Overseas Deployment Training for a battalion task force and engineer forces to support theater deterrence in U.S. Army Europe, and a battalion task force in support of U.S. Army Pacific. This prudent employment of Army National Guard forces can relieve stress on Active Component forces and enable the Army to preserve the decisive action readiness essential for short notice contingencies.

Though major combat operations have ceased in Iraq and Afghanistan, the demand for the Army to perform global missions continues unabated. In order to respond to these growing requirements,

and remain a credible deterrent to transnational threats, the Army National Guard must continue to focus on readiness.

Resilient Communities

Providing support to Soldiers and their families is a critical duty that we fully embrace. Congress and the Department of Defense have invested heavily in programs that build resiliency and ensure that Soldiers and their families get the support they have earned by virtue of their service to the nation.

Much work remains in vital areas such as suicide prevention and intervention. The Army National Guard lost 100 Soldiers to suicide in calendar year 2015, an increase of 23 from calendar year 2014. The impact of this national epidemic on our force continues to be a top priority for Army National Guard leaders. Our efforts to reduce suicides include: increased Soldier training on suicide warning signs and intervention, training Soldiers to direct those contemplating suicide to appropriate healthcare professionals, supporting partnerships with non-profit behavioral health organizations and other community resources, and most importantly, improving the ratio of healthcare providers to Army Guard Soldiers within our force.

A key toward building resilient Army National Guard communities is ensuring that Soldiers trust both the Army as an institution, and their fellow Soldiers and leaders. This is why any instance of sexual assault or harassment within our ranks is unacceptable. Sexual assault is a

serious crime that leaves victims permanently scarred and severely erodes Soldier trust and unit readiness. The Army National Guard continues to support Soldiers through the Army's Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program. We have increased training for and maintained a staff of sexual assault response professionals. We are working to encourage reporting by those that experience sexual assault or harassment, while strengthening the support services that victims of sexual assault receive.

The President's Fiscal Year 2017 Army National Guard Budget

The recently passed Bipartisan Budget Agreement of 2015 gives the Army National Guard two years of predictable budgets including overseas contingency funding and military construction starts. We thank Congress for passing this legislation, as budget stability allows leaders to make strategic, forward-looking resource allocation decisions.

The President's FY 2017 budget request for the Army Guard is \$15.8 billion and increases funding levels for both Operations and Maintenance and National Guard Personnel, Army accounts compared to FY 2016. Although the FY 2017 request provides some relief, reductions taken in FY 2015 and 2016 require a continued investment to first restore and then sustain lost readiness. Reductions in funding in FY 2015 and 2016 have challenged the Army National Guard to maintain an operational and ready force. The increased investment in FY 2017 will

continue to ensure that we are able to recruit, retain, and employ high-quality Soldiers for the Army and our nation's governors.

Overall, the President's FY 2017 budget provides the Army National Guard with \$515 million over Budget Control Act (BCA) levels.

At \$232.9 million, the FY 2017 budget request for National Guard Military Construction funds only the most critical facility construction needs for a handful of projects across the Nation. However, many of our facilities are not modernized. Forty-seven percent of Army National Guard facilities are over 50 years old. It is necessary that outyear funding levels increase, as these facilities are in need of extensive modernization and resourcing.

As highlighted in the recently published Reserve Component Transformation Master Plan, if future funding levels do not increase we expect our readiness centers to degrade. Our Facilities Sustainment Restoration and Modernization (FSRM) program and Base Operations Support funding are used to maintain existing facilities at minimum safety and operating standards. Funding for these programs dropped significantly over the last several years, which reduced our ability to replace aging infrastructure and preserve existing facilities. The FY 2017 budget request funds the FSRM program at 72 percent of the DoD Facility Sustainment Model. This level represents moderate risk.

Understanding ARNG Readiness: Full-Time Support Personnel

Institutional Readiness most appropriately describes our ability to perform the mandatory personnel, administrative, maintenance, and supply functions as directed by Title 10 and Title 32, United States Code and Department of Defense policy. The Soldiers and Civilians who deliver Army programs to our force and their families are our Full-Time Support personnel. They operate critical systems, maintain equipment, recruit and retain quality Soldiers, and perform vital administrative tasks such as paying Soldiers on time and training management. Without Full-Time Support staff, the Army National Guard simply will not function at the level the nation requires.

The National Commission on the Future of the Army

I would like to thank the members of the National Commission on the Future of the Army for their recommendations to shape the 21st century Army. I look forward to reviewing and working with Army senior leaders to implement f the Commission's recommendations. We are one Total Army team, and I look forward to continuing to strengthen the bonds between the Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve.

Closing Remarks

Today's complex security environment requires a ready, credible ground force to deter aggression, bolster our allies, and when necessary, to fight and win our nation's wars. The Army National Guard is critical to our national security, and provides vital capabilities to meet the complex

challenges our nation faces at home and abroad. Wherever the Army goes, the Army National Guard must be ready to provide trained Soldiers, leaders, and units.

Congress has consistently provided resources to ensure that the Army National Guard is ready to perform its combat mission. Continued, investment will ensure that the readiness and experience earned through fourteen years of combat will not decay. The Army depends on a fully manned, well-trained and properly equipped Army National Guard, led by leaders of character and experience. Governors need personnel and equipment that are ready to respond every single day, at any hour, in life-threatening circumstances. For the Army, our nation, and our states and territories, Army National Guard readiness is not optional – it's essential.

Thank you for your continued support of the Army National Guard.