

STATEMENT BY

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**BEFORE THE
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE**

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HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

Opening Remarks

This past fall, I passed my 46th year in uniform and during that time, I have witnessed extraordinary change – change in our military and change in the security environment in which we live. The challenge of maintaining a capable, accessible, and affordable operational National Guard comes at a pivotal time in our history, where the actions we take now will set the course for future generations.

As I visit with our citizen soldiers and airmen in our states, territories and countries where our service members are deployed, I see the most ready, accessible, and capable Guardsmen and units in my 46 years of service. With continued resourcing, I am confident that we will always be ready to fight America's wars, secure our homeland, and continue to forge enduring partnerships.

I visited with Guardsmen forward deployed in Afghanistan, Djibouti, Iraq, Kosovo, Kuwait, Qatar, and the Sinai and enhancing their combat skills at the National Training Center, Joint Readiness Training Center and the Joint Multi-National Training Center in Hohenfels. From Brigade Combat Teams on the ground to expeditionary wings operating in the skies, our Guardsmen help ensure regional stability and security while working seamlessly with our fellow Service members. With nearly 780,000 individual overseas mobilizations since 9/11, the National Guard has proven, time and again, its readiness and warfighting

capabilities.

Building Global and Domestic Partnerships

The leadership, individual and unit skill sets developed from doing complex combat operations enables unsurpassed homeland capabilities and response. As the original homeland security and defense force, our unique array of authorities allows us to respond to the needs of the nation and the states. Whether assisting victims of natural disasters such as wildfires, winter storms, or hurricanes, or working hand-in-hand with state and local leaders and emergency personnel during times of crises, the National Guard is postured in nearly 2,600 communities across America and is the first military force to reach the scene.

Recent cyber intrusions and espionage on our businesses and institutions highlight why cyber is a national priority. The National Guard is at the cutting edge with its cyber capabilities. The skills acquired by our Guardsmen in their civilian capacity is an excellent fit for evolving DoD cyber missions. The National Guard's cyber capacity will play an integral role as we coordinate with state and federal cyber professionals through Army and Air Guard cyber units and continue to grow our cyber forces.

The National Guard enhances its warfighting and homeland capabilities through the partnerships that it builds. We forge close working partnerships with global, federal, regional, and state partners. In

the global sphere, the National Guard's State Partnership Program (SPP), established 23 years ago, continues to flourish and has evolved into enduring partnerships with 76 nations. This program, which pairs individual U.S. states with partner nations, continues to pay huge dividends in establishing long-term security and personal relationships while generating a significant return on investment. For example, 13 SPP partner nations in have achieved NATO membership. Overall, National Guard states have conducted 79 co-deployments with their SPP partners to Afghanistan and Iraq. SPP countries in the Middle East and Africa, with collaboration of National Guard state counterparts, are participating in international coalition efforts to combat terrorist and extremist organizations. In the Western Hemisphere, the National Guard and its partners work closely on counter drug programs to help stem the flow of illegal drugs into this country. A true measure of the program's success is underscored by the successful transition of many of our SPP partners from security consumers to security providers, and the enhanced interoperability with our military.

During this past year, the SPP continued its expansion by formalizing two new partnerships between Kentucky-Djibouti and Massachusetts-Kenya. SPP partnerships stand as some of the strongest and most effective security cooperation relationships in the world. The SPP delivers wide strategic benefits by reducing the staggering costs of the U.S. going it alone. These partnerships are grounded in common

interests and shared values. They develop strong bonds of cooperation, understanding, and trust that enable us to work together effectively to meet the evolving security challenges of this new century.

We look forward to continued expansion of the program and will work closely with the Department of Defense, geographic combatant commands, and the Department of State in addressing future challenges, enhancing capabilities, promoting interoperability, and furthering the progress we have made with our partner nations.

In the homeland, we forge close partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies to prepare for contingencies and disasters that may strike at home. We also work with individual geo-specific consortiums such as those created for the Cascadia Subduction Zone and the New Madrid Seismic Zone. In our communities, our Guardsmen, in both their civilian and military roles, are active with programs and services such as Youth ChalleNGe, Joining Community Forces, and rendering military funeral honors for veterans. These programs provide critical support to families and individuals when they need it the most. For example, Youth ChalleNGe is an alternative program for high-school drop-outs to learn life skills and earn a high school diploma or equivalency. Since the start of the ChalleNGe program in 1993, we had more than 140,000 graduates; better posturing high-school drop-outs to becoming more productive citizens.

The threats we face at home and abroad today are unprecedented in their scope and variety. The recent terror events of Paris and San Bernardino, Calif., the rise of China and its ambitions, the regional challenges posed by a resurgent Russia, cyber attacks on our homeland, and an exploding migrant and refugee situation that has engulfed the borders of many nations around the world are just some of the issues we see in the headlines on every major newspaper around the world.

These global realities are intertwined with changes in our society that come at extraordinary speed, have undefined borders, and coincide with a modern American public that has higher expectations of its military. We face these realities within a daunting fiscal environment that requires us to balance the need to keep Americans safe against budgetary constraints and increasing national debt.

Within this security backdrop, it is more important than ever to ensure America has a resourced National Guard that can be a critical component of the solution during these uncertain times. The Guard is a cost-effective, scalable, operational force that preserves capability and capacity, rather than forcing the nation to choose between them. Resourcing the operational National Guard leverages the tremendous value the Guard provides America with a force ready to meet our domestic and overseas requirements.

The National Guard is also setting an environmental example within the DoD. Embracing the motto to “make training lands accessible to Soldiers,” the Florida and Minnesota Army Guard environmental programs earned DoD-level recognition. Florida’s Camp Blanding Joint Training Center was lauded for their natural resources conservation efforts to protect 39 threatened and endangered animal and plant species. The endeavor provided the four military services and state agencies access to the 73,000-acre training installation. Minnesota’s Camp Ripley earned DoD’s highest award for their sustainability initiative to install solar panels, reducing their installation’s energy consumption by 45 percent. Such money-saving efforts help combat the reduction of programmed resources and enable greater readiness.

The Army National Guard and the U.S. Army are making the readiness of the “Total Army” a top priority. The Director of the Army National Guard established four lines of effort designed to enhance that readiness: leader development; ready forces; operational forces; and resilient communities. Leader development seeks to mold competent leaders of character who inspire, plan and execute our dual-mission. Ready Forces is an effort to ensure we continue to recruit and retain quality, deployable Soldiers. As an Operational Force, it’s imperative that our resourcing and policies allow the Army Guard to seamlessly blend with the Army to perform any mission assigned. Finally, our Soldiers and their families are part of a Resilient Community because of substantial

investments made to programs that support their needs and recognize their service. As part of each line of effort, accountability is integral to ensuring our success. Accountability demands ethical decision making, transparent processes, thorough oversight and fiscal responsibility.

We need to ensure our Soldiers are trained to project land power anywhere our nation requires, within appropriate timeframes. Units across all three components of the U.S. Army must remain interoperable. Our military and civilian leaders require and deserve a full range of options to address the threats and instability our nation faces today, both at home and abroad.

The Air National Guard continues to make significant contributions to our national security at home and abroad. Overseas, the Air National Guard provides both operational combat and support capabilities to warfighters that meet our nation's defense objectives. Guard Airmen supported more than 9,000 deployment requirements to 56 countries and on every continent last year. At home, the Air National Guard secures America's skies as the primary force supporting the North American Aerospace Defense Command. Simultaneously, Guard Airmen respond daily to requests from their local communities for assistance during emergencies and times of need. The Air Guard will continue to answer our nation's call by adapting to the nation's 21st century security needs.

Closing Remarks

The National Guard mirrors the communities that it serves and our people are its foundation. We will continue to embrace diversity and inclusion to ensure we tap into our entire reservoir of talent. As the National Guard strives to become a model of fiscal stewardship within the Department of Defense, we must also continue to do more in eliminating abuse, harassment, and discrimination. Suicide prevention will always be a priority and we must do all that we can to ensure we have the proper education, training, and availability of mental health professionals to create resilient soldiers and airmen. We must ensure that we assist returning soldiers and airmen, wounded warriors, and veterans reintegrate into their communities and honor our fallen service members. We will continuously examine our actions and progress through candid and critical assessments from top to bottom. The National Guard greatly appreciates the resources our nation invests in our wide array of effective programs.

It is inspiring to see what the men and women of our National Guard do for our states, territories, and our nation. Our soldiers and airmen continue to show great valor in combat. Our people continue to leave their jobs and families and report to their armories and bases, and bring calm after storms, fires, and floods have devastated communities. And, our Guardsmen strengthen and stabilize regions around the world while we develop meaningful security partnerships.

As we face the challenges of this new century, the National Guard is ready to carry out its missions through the capable men and women who serve. They are part of a proud heritage dating back to 1636 – nearly 400 years of protecting our nation. I am proud to serve with each and every Guardsmen. Their dedication and professionalism is truly remarkable.

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