

UNCLASSIFIED

STATEMENT BY

**LIEUTENANT GENERAL HARRY M. WYATT III
DIRECTOR OF THE AIR NATIONAL GUARD**

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Chairman Ortiz, Ranking Member Forbes, and distinguished committee members, I thank you for this opportunity to provide a few remarks on behalf of the outstanding men and women serving in the Air National Guard. I would like to begin by expressing my sincere appreciation to the Committee for its tremendous support to the Air National Guard. Your work ensures America continues to have a ready and reliable Air National Guard, responsive to our domestic needs and homeland security as well as providing operational capabilities critical to the success of our Total Force in winning the fight overseas.

America's Exceptional Force, Home and Away

The Air National Guard anchors the Total Air Force team, providing trained and equipped units and personnel to protect domestic life and property; preserving peace, order, and public safety; and providing interoperable capabilities required for Overseas Contingency Operations. The Air National Guard, therefore, is unique by virtue of serving as both a reserve component of the Total Air Force and as the air component of the National Guard.

Upon founding in 1947, the Air Guard served primarily as a strategic reserve for the U.S. Air Force. Increasingly and dramatically, the Air National Guard has become more of an operational force, fulfilling U.S. Air Force routine and contingency commitments daily. Since 9/11, over 146,000 Guard Airmen have deployed overseas. A snapshot of U.S. forces at any time shows Air Guard members in all corners of the globe supporting joint and coalition forces in mission areas such as security; medical support; civil engineering; air refueling; strike; airlift; and Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance.

By any measure, the Air National Guard is accessible and available to the Combatant Commanders, Air Force and our nation's governors. Currently, the nation

has over 13,000 Air National Guard members deployed in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other overseas regions. At 16 alert sites, three air defense sectors, and Northern Command, 1,200 Guard Airmen vigilantly stand watch over America's skies. Amazingly, 75-percent of our deployed individuals are volunteers, and 60-percent are on their second or third rotations to combat zones. Percentages like these speak volumes about the quality and sense of duty of America's Air National Guard force!

The Air National Guard supports state and local civil authorities with airlift, search and rescue, aerial firefighting, and aerial reconnaissance. In addition, we provide critical capabilities in medical triage and aerial evacuation, civil engineering, infrastructure protection, and hazardous materials response with our Civil Support Teams and our Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and high-yield Explosive (CBRNE) Enhanced Response Force Packages (CERFPs).

In the past year, Air Guard members helped their fellow citizens battle floods, mitigate the aftermath of ice storms, fight wild fires, and provide relief from the devastating effects of a tsunami. Early in the year, Guard members from Kentucky, Arizona, and Missouri responded to debilitating ice storms, which resulted in the largest National Guard call-up in Kentucky's history. Last spring, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota Air National Guard members provided rescue relief and manpower in response to Midwest flooding. In September, the Hawaii Air National Guard sent personnel from their CERFP, a command and control element, and a mortuary affairs team, to American Samoa in response to an 8.4-magnitude earthquake-generated tsunami. These are just a few examples of how the Air Guard provides exceptional expertise, experience, and capabilities to mitigate disasters and their consequences. Within the Total Force, the Air National Guard provides extraordinary value in terms of delivering the most immediately available capability for cost in meeting America's national defense needs. In its domestic role, the Air Guard provides capabilities to support local emergency responders with life and property saving capabilities and expertise in consequence management not usually found elsewhere in the Total Force.

Best Value in Personnel, Operations, and Infrastructure

During the past year, the Air National Guard has deployed 18,366 service members to 62 countries and every continent, including Antarctica. The Air National Guard provides a trained, equipped, and ready force for a fraction of the cost. We provide a third of Total Air Force capabilities for less than seven percent of the Total Force budget. In all three areas – personnel, operations, and facilities – the Air Guard provides the “Best Value for America.”

A key Air National Guard efficiency is the part-time/full-time force structure mix. The predominantly part-time (traditional) force can mobilize quickly when needed for state disaster response missions, homeland defense, or when we need to take the fight overseas.

We have the ability to maintain a stable force with considerably fewer personnel moves than the Regular Air Force, which is a critical factor in our cost-effectiveness. Traditional National Guard members cost little, unless on paid duty status.

The Air National Guard is an operational reserve with surge potential, with 2,200 mobilized and 5,700 volunteering per day. If this force were full-time active duty, the military personnel budget would be \$7.62 billion. Air National Guard military personnel pay in FY09, including military technician pay, was \$4.77 billion, for a yearly cost savings of \$2.85 billion, or a daily cost savings of \$7.8 million.

Whether compared to another major Air Force command, or even to the militaries of other countries, the Air National Guard is an extraordinary value. In direct comparison with the militaries of France and Italy, for example, our Air National Guard members cost only \$76,961 per member, while the bills of those countries respectively run to \$128,791 and \$110,787 per member. Further, compared to the US Air Force, cost per Air Guard member is less than a fifth of that of the Regular Air Force. Comparisons such as these illustrate well the cost savings realized with an operational reserve possessing surge potential.

Operational savings are due to the Air National Guard’s experienced force and lean operating methods. An examination of the Air National Guard’s F-16 maintenance by Rand Corporation last year highlighted the ability of our maintenance personnel to

generate double the amount of flying hours in a one-to-one comparison of full-time equivalents.

Air National Guard Training

As an operational force, the Air National Guard trains to the same standards as the Regular Air Force. The reliability and readiness of our personnel allows for a seamless, interchangeable capability for the Air Expeditionary Force and retains a ready force for our governors to call on when our communities are threatened by natural or man-made disasters.

Over the past several years, our Air Force has undergone a drastic transformation in an effort to sustain its contribution to today's contingencies while securing the capabilities needed to protect our nation from tomorrow's adversaries. This has placed a significant strain on our training pipelines and created backlogs for technical schools in some of our high-demand specialties.

One of the best examples would be our Tactical Air Command and Control specialists. These specialists are increasingly in demand in Afghanistan and Iraq as part of Tactical Air Control Parties, advising our ground commanders and directing air power for them in tactical situations. This critical area is currently 60-percent manned (195 of 324 on board) due in large part to the demands of the career field and the intensity of initial skills training. We face a serious challenge in getting training seats for these Tactical Air Command and Control specialists. In fiscal years 2008, 2009, and 2010, the Air National Guard utilized 100-percent of its allocated training slots, yet the allocations are far below our requirements. Our Air National Guard Tactical Air Command and Control community has stepped in to help improve the training throughput; almost tripling training capacity in fiscal year 2010 and we are exploring other avenues to provide assistance.

Other skills such as aircraft maintenance, crew chiefs, and structures and pavements specialties, are experiencing a backlog of training slots. While we have made some progress in these areas, we expect the problem to persist until we get beyond the numerous aircraft conversions, mission and force structure changes.

Some recent shortages have been partially resolved with the help of the Air Force, but we continue to face hundreds of shortfalls in training slots for a number of reasons. First, I believe the Regular Air Force and Air Education and Training Command, despite their sincere attempts to make out-of-cycle adjustments and redistribute resources among the Total Force partners, are experiencing similar backlogs of their own. Increases in Air Force manning last fiscal year, the growth in emerging mission areas, and the increase in the course length of Basic Military Training from 6 to 8 ½ weeks have compounded the problem. Second, this problem is exacerbated by issues unique to the Guard, such as forecasting of requirements in a decentralized force management system more complex than the Regular Air Force system.

Last year we were able to work with Air Education and Training Command to secure 600 additional Basic Military Training slots for the Air National Guard. This helped immensely with the training backlog in this area, but we are still met with a persistent technical school pipeline problem. Despite the challenges, we will continue to find creative ways to address training resource management by offering various pipeline options to meet state mission needs, and ensure the Air National Guard remains ready.

Air National Guard Recruiting and Retention

Air National Guard Recruiting and Retention programs play a critical role in supporting today's fight and how we posture our force for the future. The commitment of our field commanders and their exceptional recruiters are key factors in recruiting successes. Their partnership with the National Guard Bureau has enabled us to remove barriers that traditionally prevented the ability to meet end strength. The Air National Guard continues to build on that success and has focused its efforts to target critical needs.

As of April 2010, Air National Guard end strength is 108,403. The challenge as we move forward is to strike a delicate balance of remaining close to end strength while strengthening "effective" recruiting. We show troubling signs in specific areas of officer recruiting (currently, 1,500 short) and critically manned mission areas including Health

Care Professionals, Chaplains, Engineers, Intelligence, and Mobility aviators. To compensate for lagging prior service numbers, the Air National Guard increased its emphasis on the non-prior service market. This required increases in advertising to the non-prior service market through radio, theatre, print media and web sites, as well as additional recruiters, community presence with store-front offices and additional advertising dollars. The continued support of the Air Force, Department of Defense, and Congress will undoubtedly shape the foundation of their success.

The quality of Air National Guard recruits has not declined and their retention rate remains strong at 96.9-percent. The Air National Guard saves on average \$62,000 in training cost for every qualified member retained or recruited. Our focus in this area allows us to retain critical skills lost from the active component and save valuable training dollars.

In 2009, through the use of our 14 In-Service Air National Guard recruiters strategically placed at active duty bases, the Air National Guard garnered approximately 896 confirmed accessions of a total of 5,309 accessions. The bonuses and incentive programs are a key component to that success.

Our Air National Guard incentive program is a critical component in our Recruiting and Retention efforts and serves to motivate and support manning requirements in units with skills that are severely or chronically undermanned. It is established to encourage the reenlistment of qualified and experienced personnel. Stable funding for the Air National Guard Recruiting and Retention program is critical to our success.

Regarding incentives, I'd like to make an interesting point concerning the Tactical Air Command and Control specialists I referred to earlier. In a recent testimony before the Senate Appropriations Defense Subcommittee, I introduced a traditional Guard member with the Washington Air National Guard, who recently returned from a fifth deployment overseas in Afghanistan. This Airman is a tactical air control party journeyman who directed close air support in Kunar Province.

He led 19 close air support missions for nine operations, spent more than 135 hours outside the wire on combat patrol, and successfully prosecuted 18 precision strikes on enemy positions that saved American lives under fire.

In the Air National Guard this skill set is in such great demand we offer a re-enlistment bonus of \$15,000, but only for re-enlistments of six years. If the same skill set were to re-enlist in the Regular Air Force, it would qualify for a \$90,000 bonus to re-enlist for three years.

This is just one example of how critical the incentive and bonus program is to Air National Guard recruiting.

Airman and Family Readiness Programs

In focusing on the readiness of our Airmen we must also focus on the most important people in their lives—their families. The Air National Guard is a Wing-centered organization. Our 92 Wing Family Program Coordinators around the nation are at the center of our efforts to ensure our Airmen and their families receive the support they need.

In past year we were successful in having these coordinator positions upgraded from GS-9 to GS-11. However, we still may not have enough resources devoted to this area for a force with our operational pace. Our coordinators are one-deep positions for us, so most of the effort is done through part-time support.

This is one area where we differ dramatically from our Regular Air Force counterparts. The Air National Guard does not have Airman and Family Readiness Centers as they have on active duty bases. In a culture that does not believe in saying “no,” our program coordinators have more and more piled onto their plates, thereby threatening the overall quality of service. If the Air National Guard maintains its pace as an operational force, we will need to increase our investment in this critical area. Programs like Operation Military Child Care have been very helpful, so we should continue to fund them, and improve and add others. Also, military and community partners like Military OneSource, Military Family Life Consultants, and Operation Military Kids, just to name a few, are extremely beneficial in meeting the needs of Guard

Airmen, especially while deployed. Youth Development Camps like Air Force Teen Aviation, Air Force Space Camp, and the Air Force Reserve/Air National Guard Leadership Summits are huge successes as well. Additionally, this year we are conducting training such as Community Healing and Response Training, which is part of the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program, and essential in our suicide prevention efforts.

For the Air National Guard, we believe maintaining strong family support programs are critical to ensuring the overall health of our force and our Guard Airmen.

Training Facilities and Military Construction

Training and personnel readiness are also impacted by facilities and equipment. The Air National Guard has four designated Combat Readiness Training Centers in Alpena, Michigan; Savannah, Georgia; Gulfport, Mississippi; and Volk Field, Wisconsin. These as well as several other specialty training sites operated by the Air National Guard allow us to provide integrated, realistic training environments critical to the readiness of our Total Force. We are always prepared and willing to offer additional training venues and opportunities to ensure our Total Force and the Air National Guard remain reliable and ready at all times.

In terms of Military Construction and Sustainment, Restoration, and Modernization, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Committee for recognizing the impact facilities has on training and supporting the budget request over the years. Last year, the budget request included \$128 million for Air National Guard Military Construction. In addition to fully funding that request, House and Senate Military Construction appropriations conferees agreed to include in the fiscal year 2010 bill a unique "Guard and Reserve Initiative." This measure provided \$200 million in additional funding to address urgent unfunded requirements in reserve component military construction. The flexibility of these additional funds was extremely helpful and allowed us to fund emerging critical project needs which otherwise might have been severely delayed or perhaps lost altogether. We are grateful to the Congress for this additional help for our reserve components.

We are equally appreciative of the \$75.8 million Congress included as part of the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. We have already begun putting this money to work in 20 different communities around the country. It is our view that all military construction funding for the Air National Guard is a direct stimulus to the American economy precisely because the Air National Guard is embedded in over 177 communities across our great nation.

The fiscal year 2011 budget request addresses critical requirements in recapitalizing our plants and facilities. Due to operational requirements of recent years, the Air Force has been accepting risk in infrastructure to invest in other areas of vital importance. The Air National Guard currently has over \$14 billion in physical plant replacement value. With the average age of our facilities exceeding 35-years old, our Sustainment, Reconstruction, and Modernization has been critically important.

Equipment Readiness

Air National Guard equipment readiness presents greater challenges as long-term costs in operating and maintaining older aircraft continue to rise due to more frequent repairs, fluctuations in fuel prices, and manpower requirements. The cost of aircraft maintenance continues to rise significantly as we struggle to extend the life of our aging fleet. These rising maintenance costs are not solely confined to aircraft.

One example would be the Air Support Operations community. These activities are in the beginning stages of modernization, but continue to experience incompatibilities and lag behind their active duty counter parts in critical mission areas. The continual technological advances in vehicles resistant to improvised explosive devices have made the selection of a standardized tactical vehicle extremely difficult and the lack of a decision has led to a non-standard fleet. Shortfalls with the primary communications system leave many units unable to fill all mission requirements in support of Army mission areas. Lastly, industry-wide shortages of approved body armor have all organizations scrambling to equip their Tactical Air Command and Control Airmen with the best available protective equipment before deploying.

Some of our most critical aircraft modernization needs continue to be improved voice/data communications for enhanced situational awareness, self-protection equipment (such as the Large Aircraft Infrared Countermeasures System), missile warning systems, upgrades to advanced targeting pods to give them fourth generation capabilities, and radar systems to distinguish small targets from friendly aircraft in a dense air traffic environment.

For example, to maintain the F-15's air-to-air advantage in the beyond-visual-range arena, we are modernizing the fleet with the Active Electronically Scanned Array radar to provide the capability to detect, track, and kill asymmetric threats, such as drones. This state-of-the-art radar is flexible enough to be continuously upgraded, allowing the Air National Guard operated F-15s to meet future threats and new mission sets that were not previously possible. The Active Electronically Scanned Array radar completed flight test, and fielding has begun; the first operational Air National Guard operated aircraft flew at the beginning of April. This upgrade allows Air National Guard units to provide constant 24/7 Homeland Defense vigilance, while simultaneously seamlessly integrating into the Air and Space Expeditionary Force construct to meet wartime and Combatant Commander taskings.

The age of the Air National Guard aircraft fleet is also a concern. Aircraft and equipment in both the regular Air Force and the Air National Guard are quickly wearing out. The average age of Air National Guard aircraft is now over 26-years, with KC-135s being the oldest at 50-years. The high operational tempo since 1990 has added flying hours that have accelerated this aging process.

Modernization of our equipment and training platforms is based on capabilities needed by the Air Force. As the Air National Guard moves increasingly into the worlds of command and control, intelligence, reconnaissance, surveillance, remotely-operated systems, and cyberspace, the process has expanded to include expert warfighters in these areas.

Closing Remarks

Changing the force structure and orientation of units away from airborne platforms to remotely-piloted systems and capabilities is a difficult, yet necessary transition. Our nation's Air National Guard is definitely up to the challenge, and with the continued support of the Committee and Congress in ensuring our personnel, training, and equipment are prepared for the fight—*Guarding America and Defending Freedom*.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today. On behalf of the men and women of the Air National Guard I thank you for the genuine concern you have shown in training and equipping them to protect our citizens and defend our country at home and overseas. I am grateful for your support and look forward to working with you as we face the challenges of the 21st century.