

**STATEMENT BY**

**LIEUTENANT GENERAL HARRY M. WYATT III**

**DIRECTOR, AIR NATIONAL GUARD**

**BEFORE THE**

**HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY READINESS**

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**ON**

**AIR FORCE AND ARMY NATIONAL GUARD TRAINING,**

**OPERATIONS, AND MAINTENANCE**

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UNTIL RELEASED BY  
THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

## **Opening Remarks**

Chairman Forbes, Ranking Member Bordallo, and distinguished members of the subcommittee; I am honored to appear before you today on behalf of the outstanding men and women serving in our nation's 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 an Air National Guard that is responsive to our domestic needs as well as providing operational capabilities critical to the success of our Total Force. As we face increasingly limited resources and shifting budget priorities, we must accentuate the strength of the Air National Guard—our cost effectiveness.

## **Air National Guard in National Defense**

Facing a need to reduce the Defense budget in response to domestic priorities and the need to sustain defense capabilities in light of growing foreign challenges, Secretary of Defense Melvin B. Laird put his faith in the Reserve Components. Secretary Laird wrote in 1970, "Within the Department of Defense...economics will require reductions in overall strengths and capabilities of the active forces, and increased reliance on the combat and the combat support units of the Guard and Reserves."<sup>1</sup> He understood that by increasing the readiness of the Guard and Reserves and then relying upon them "to be the

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<sup>1</sup> Melvin B. Laird, Memorandum to the Secretaries of the Military Departments, Subj: Support for Guard and Reserve Forces, August 21, 1970.

initial and primary source for augmentation of the active forces in any future emergency”<sup>2</sup> the nation would maintain its defense capability and capacity while decreasing the overall costs.

The US Air Force leadership at the time recognized that as the nation’s first military responder, increased reliance on the Reserve Components meant the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard must be ready to respond quickly and integrate seamlessly into any operation; they would require equipment and training comparable to the regular, active duty Air Force. The ANG, with significant help from Congress, traded in its obsolete Korean War vintage equipment for newer, and in some cases brand new aircraft. The ANG also received additional funds for training, including modern flight simulators, and full-time Guard Airmen (Active Guard & Reserve (AGR) and Technicians) to oversee the increased training regimen.

Improved operational readiness brought with it a rejuvenated desire by Guard Airmen to do more than just train – a desire to demonstrate their capabilities. ANG units began volunteering to augment the Regular Air Force by participating in on-going operational missions around the world. To the customer, the Air National Guard became indistinguishable from the Regular Air Force. This was done within the fundamental framework of a part-time professional force operating modern compatible equipment. It was the second generation of Secretary Laird’s Total Air Force that fought in Operation DESERT SHIELD, Bosnia, Kosovo, responded to the attacks on 9/11, maintained the no-fly zones in Iraq (Operation NORTHERN WATCH and SOUTHERN WATCH), Operation

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

IRAQI FREEDOM and ENDURING FREEDOM. Last year (CY2010), Guard Airmen filled 48,538 manpower requests, and 89% of these Guard Airmen responded to the call voluntarily, without the need for “involuntary mobilization.” On 17 March this year, as the United Nations Security Council passes the Libyan no-fly zone resolution, Air National Guard aircraft and air crews were at Forward Operating Bases awaiting orders.

The world is a very different place today than when Secretary Laird established the Total Force, but the underlying principle of the Total Force remains true: the nation can maintain defense capabilities at less total cost through careful balance of Active and Reserve Component forces.

Secretary Gates charged the Department “to generate efficiency savings by reducing overhead costs, improving business practices, or culling excess or troubled programs.”<sup>3</sup> While our leadership is making tough decisions, we know the Air National Guard is well situated as a cost-effective answer in both our defense and domestic response roles.

The Air Guard provides a trained, disciplined, and ready force for a fraction of the cost. The Air National Guard savings are due to our part-time business model. Approximately 70% of our Guard Airmen are traditional part-time professionals, meaning that they are only paid when serving on active duty or training. Also, the Air National Guard seldom pays subsistence or housing allowances, or for permanent change of station moves for the members and their families.

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<sup>3</sup> Robert M. Gates, Statement on Department Budget and Efficiencies, January 06, 2011.

Another key factor to our cost effectiveness is the infrastructure savings inherent in the Air National Guard basing model that not only allows us to operate efficiently, but also allows us to be a part of, and contribute to, communities across the country. With some of our leases costing as little as one dollar annually, the Air Guard is able to realize even more cost savings through its supporting infrastructure. In fact, for less than \$4 million annually through Joint Use Agreements, the Air National Guard provides stewardship to approximately \$12 billion in infrastructure.

### **Domestic Operations**

A third element to Air National Guard cost-effectiveness is its contribution to homeland defense and support to domestic civil authorities. As an example, on July 6, 2011, there were 2,516 Guard Airmen actively engaged in homeland defense and support to civil authorities including protecting American skies through Air Sovereignty Alert, assisting with critical infrastructure protection, and assisting their local communities with disaster recovery in North and South Dakota, Missouri, and Nebraska. This also includes 570 Guard Airmen supporting local and national counterdrug programs and 130 Airmen assisting the US Border Patrol on our southwest border. On July 6<sup>th</sup>, Air National Guard Modular Aerial Fire Fighting (MAFFS) units dropped 7,208 gallons of fire retardant supporting the National Forestry Service in New Mexico.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> ANG MAFFS units have flown 127 missions, 133.9 flight hours, and dropped 320,195 gallons of retardant since the beginning of the 2011 fire season.

Many are unaware of the contributions and skills our Guard Airmen provide to domestic support to civil authorities. The Air National Guard has particular core capabilities for which we are uniquely trained and equipped.

Many have been used in the past year alone, to include:

- Air Defense (Air Sovereignty Alert)
- Air Traffic Control
- Airlift (transportation, supply, & evacuation)
- Civil engineering
- Specialized medical care & evacuation
- Incident awareness & assessment
- Aerial firefighting
- Search and rescue (aerial & ground)
- Communications

The Air National Guard's support to civil authorities is based upon the concept of "dual-use," *i.e.*, equipment purchased by the Air Force for the Air National Guard's federal, combat mission, can be adapted and used domestically when not needed overseas. For example, an Air National Guard F-16 wing contains not only F-16 fighter aircraft but fire trucks, forklifts, portable light carts, emergency medical equipment including ambulances, air traffic control equipment, explosives ordinance equipment, etc., as well as well trained experts – all extremely valuable in response to civil emergencies. However, if the F-16 wing converts to a non-flying mission or even a Remotely Piloted Aircraft mission, much of this dual-use equipment may leave with the F-16 aircraft. As

the Air Force proceeds with its recapitalization and modernization plans, we need to ensure our citizens are not left without essential disaster response capabilities.

### **Future of the Air National Guard**

Our National Guard Airmen want nothing more for the future than to continue to serve their country, state, and local community. These are men and women who are very proud of the National Guard's 375 years of service, but they also understand that the nation's needs are changing and are dedicated to ensure the Air National Guard remains an essential element of the Total Force, and at the same time, is cost-effective. But we also know that in today's uncertain world cost alone is not sufficient; the Air National Guard must also be ready and accessible if it is to be effective

For the Air National Guard to be effective, it must have equipment capable of performing the mission and able to integrate seamlessly into joint operations. Our Airmen must also be capable of performing the mission through training and professional education.

And finally, effectiveness requires accessibility. The proposed changes to Title 10, Section 12304 will improve the accessibility to the Air National Guard as a rotational, operational force to augment the Air Force as well as providing support to local, state, and federal civil authorities during emergencies. Furthermore, the provision requiring manpower costs be included in the budget will help ensure that the funding is available for using the Reserve Components. If the nation is to continue to rely upon the Reserve Components, as we believe it

should, then the Reserve Components must be equipped and trained commensurate with the Regular Components and the Department must budget for their use.

### **Closing Remarks**

Our National Guard Airmen have proven themselves to be ready, reliable, and accessible in recent actions here at home and overseas. Every dollar spent on the Air National Guard provides our nation an unmatched return on investment. Given adequate equipment and training, the Air National Guard will continue to fulfill its Total Force obligations and seamlessly integrate into the Joint theater operations and respond to domestic emergencies.

We need your help to ensure that the Air National Guard of tomorrow is as a ready, reliable, accessible, and cost effective as it is today.

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