

STATEMENT BY

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BEFORE THE

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE

FIRST SESSION, 113TH CONGRESS

ON

THE FISCAL YEAR 2014 GUARD AND RESERVE BUDGET

APRIL 17, 2013

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THE SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

Chairman Durbin, Ranking Member Cochran, members of the subcommittee; I am honored to appear before you today, representing the men and women of our nation's Air National Guard.

I wish to take this opportunity to update you on status of your Air National Guard, specifically, the status of the men and women that are the foundation of the Air Guard, the condition of their equipment, the Air National Guard's support to civil authorities, the impact of current fiscal uncertainty, and finally, a look to the future and how the Air National Guard can help secure our nation.

Personnel

The men and women of the Air National Guard (ANG) continue to prove their value to America and remain our priority together with their families and employers. As of last week, the ANG has filled over 562,000 Overseas Contingency Operation positions since 9/11, with an 87% volunteer rate. Currently there are 2,290 Guard Airmen deployed around the globe performing a myriad of tasks including Overseas Contingency Operations, counterdrug, support to the National Science Foundation expeditions in Antarctica, and routine operational missions supporting our nation's global interests.

At home, Guard Airmen have responded to countless local and national emergencies. Whether helping in local search and rescue operations, securing vital infrastructure, or assisting civil authorities in the national response to Hurricane Sandy, your Guard men and women can be relied to answer any call for help with a dedicated, professional, organized and resourceful force.

As of 8 March 2013, ANG end-strength was 104,204—1,496 under authorized. Throughout FY2013, Air Guard recruiters met or exceeded monthly enlistment and officer accession goals, but monthly losses were higher than expected resulting in the current under-strength. Fiscal uncertainty, force structure changes and mission turmoil, combined with

the drawdown of the war in Afghanistan, are the primary causes of the increased loss rate. In response, the ANG implemented a number of short and long-term programs. First, recruiting goals were increased to account unexpected losses. To assist the local recruiters, the ANG increased the number of career fields eligible for bonuses or incentives and expanded the pre-qualified officer database to streamline the recruiting process. Long-term programs include providing state leadership with local recruiting and retention production statistics for accountability, as well as introducing the Career Motivation Program for commanders, thus allowing unit commanders to utilize Unit Career Advisors and periodic interviews/surveys to identify loss trends. These tools will help the local commanders focus their recruiting and retention efforts on their greatest needs. Overall, I am very confident in our ability to not only meet end-strength but to recruit and retain the skill sets necessary to perform the missions the nation asks of its Guard Airmen.

Beyond recruiting and retention, the ANG struggles with many of the same personnel challenges as the active duty Air Force and the other Services, including the tragedies of suicide and sexual assault.

The stresses of deployments, combat, the economy, and civilian and ANG employment uncertainty have taken a toll on our Airmen and their families. Last year, the ANG had 22 members take their own lives, the highest suicide rate since 1992. Every loss is a tragedy and affects the entire ANG family both personally and professionally. At the forefront of our suicide prevention initiatives is the evidenced-based Air Force Suicide Prevention Program. This program is a public health approach with eleven overlapping elements that enhance the capacity to identify and respond to personnel in distress across multiple levels. In addition to the Air Force Program, the ANG engages in community capacity building both on and off base. This network coordinates the activities of the various military and non-military assistance agencies to produce a synergistic problem-solving environment within the

community to help resolve individual, family, military, and community issues that adversely impact the quality of life for Airmen and their families and by extension the readiness of the force.

In 2010, the ANG also launched its Psychological Health Program. The Program places licensed mental health professionals in each wing to consult with leadership on psychological health issues, promote early help-seeking behaviors, and provide mental health referrals and case management. Preliminary findings indicate the wings with a Director of Psychological Health in place longer than one year show statistically significant decreases in Adverse Actions taken and TRICARE costs for healthcare, and an increase in medical readiness for deployment. At the end of the day, we are trying to ensure our Airmen and their families are prepared psychologically for the traumas and stress ahead and are appropriately assessed after deployments and they and their families are connected to the services needed for successful reintegration.

The second significant personnel issue is sexual harassment and assault. The ANG has joined the Air Force in a multifaceted campaign of zero tolerance for inappropriate behavior in the Total Air Force. In January, the Air National Guard launched its *Take A Stand—Make A Difference* campaign by bringing together all Air National Guard wing commanders and educating them on the need to change the culture within their Air Guard units. Commanders were made aware of unprofessional behavior and unhealthy workplace environments which, as General Welsh said, “are leading indicators of sexual assault and other behavior and performance issues.” The January meeting was followed with unit-level assessments of their work places. The overall intent of the Air National Guard’s campaign is to build on the distinctive heritage of the ANG while countering outdated practices of unprofessional behavior that have negatively marked its history.

Airmen of my generation joined the National Guard with the expectation of training one weekend a month and two weeks during the

summer, and possibly being mobilized once during their careers. Today's paradigm of service is very different, and yet, the ANG continues to recruit and retain the very best of our nation, and they continue to raise their hands to volunteer for whatever the nation asks of them.

Air National Guard Equipment

We owe our Airmen the best equipment—the right equipment for their jobs, properly maintained to ensure operational readiness, and modernized to meet tomorrow's challenges both overseas and domestically.

Currently, the ANG has 91 percent of all authorized equipment, *i.e.*, the equipment the Air Force determined is necessary for the ANG to fulfill its federal mission— this is comparable to active-duty Air Force levels. Approximately 88 percent of all the authorized ANG equipment has a valid use in both federal and domestic support operations— what is termed “dual-use” equipment. ANG unit readiness also benefits from the Air Force's general guidelines to use mostly active-duty Air Force equipment in support of overseas contingency operations (OCO). Currently, 1.6 percent of ANG equipment is deployed in support of OCO. Another 0.7 percent of ANG equipment is deployed throughout the 54 states, territories and the District of Columbia in support of domestic operations.

Having the authorized equipment is only a part of the combat ready calculus—the ANG must also have the funds to maintain the equipment, and Congress has been especially helpful in this area for FY2013. For example, the additional \$282,000,000 in Weapon System Sustainment in H.R.933 will fund Depot repairs for 31 aircraft, 32 aircraft engines, and 12 Advanced Targeting Pods.

There is, however, an important distinction between equipping levels, maintenance or sustainment and modernization. Though equipping levels for the federal mission remain high, the quality and

sustainability of the equipment is rapidly decreasing as the ANG possesses the oldest equipment in the Air Force inventory. The Air National Guard maintains the oldest “block 30” variant of the F-16 and has the preponderance of the C-130H fleet while the active duty is recapitalizing to an all C-130J fleet. The ANG also operates unique aircraft such as the RC-26 for counterdrug operations. These and other major weapon systems risk irrelevance if not modernized or recapitalized to address obsolescence issues, meet combatant commander requirements, and keep pace with global airspace navigation and control requirements.

The funds that Congress provided directly to the ANG via the NGREA have made a significant impact on our ability to support both the war fighter and civil authorities. We strive to use these funds as efficiently as possible by pursuing lower cost 80 percent solutions to the immediate needs of our war fighters at about 25 percent of the cost—needs that are identified directly by our war fighters and first responders out of our weapons and tactics classes. Your investments through NGREA have been a critical component to the Air Guard increased readiness. For example, without NGREA, the Block 30 F-16, the backbone protecting America's skies, would be irrelevant today.

For the past three years, the ANG has emphasized modernization, upgrades, and procurement in two broad areas, communications and firefighting. These efforts were focused in both combat operations and domestic operations. In communications, the ANG sought to leverage networks and data links to bring current information and data directly to aircraft cockpits and our Battlefield Airmen in the field. (Combat Control Teams (CCT)/Tactical Air Control Party (TACP)/Pararescue Jumper (PJ)). By rapidly testing and fielding innovative communication solutions, our airmen provide improved situational awareness for air defense operations, a common operational picture for Joint Force Headquarters-

State, and the capability to bridge communications between military and civil authorities.

ANG Support to Civil Authorities

I am frequently asked, “why does a governor need fighter planes?” The simple answer is that the governors do not need fighter aircraft, the nation does, specifically at home, to defend the US homeland. The governors need the people and equipment that go along with the fighter aircraft. As mentioned earlier, approximately 88 percent of all equipment has valid uses for both the ANG’s federal and domestic support missions; and 100 percent of the Air Guard men and women are “dual-use.”

Whenever there is a domestic emergency, we hear the public cry, “call out the National Guard” and it is not just the Army National Guard that is “called out.” In fact, last year Guard Airmen are frequently called upon to assist their communities in preparing for natural disasters and in post-disaster responses. Common ANG support to civil authorities includes disaster response planning, helping community preparations from helping to fill sandbags before potential flood to assisting in public information and education efforts. After disasters hit, Guard Airmen are frequently assisting with search & rescue efforts, setting up and manning emergency aids stations, transporting & operating portable power generators, setting up emergency communications systems, coordinating airlift operations, evacuating injured citizens, and helping with cleanup.

The ANG also participates in a number of routine or standing domestic support missions. The ANG operates nearly 100 percent of the air defense system protecting US airspace. Specially trained C-130 air crews equipped with Modular Airborne Firefighting System (MAFFS) flew 570 sorties dropped more than 13.5 million pounds of fire retardant and 1.49 million gallons of water on wildfire across the US in support of the National Forestry Service. Guard Airmen also provide intelligence, civil engineering, communications, and transportation support to US

counterdrug operations. Additionally, the ANG medical, civil engineer, and security forces make up over 20 percent of the nation's domestic Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear High Explosive (CBRNE) emergency response teams.

While our Guard Airmen rely primarily upon federal dual-use equipment when responding to domestic emergencies, there are a few missions that require equipment not in military inventory. Specialized missions such as Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team (WMD-CST), CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP), and the Homeland Response Force (HRF) use equipment and other non-dual-use equipment for emergencies or response to major disasters. Their funding is based on using a combination of Army, Army National Guard, Air Force, and ANG appropriations, along with Defense Department appropriations (e.g., the Chemical and Biological Defense Program (CBDP) funds). The National Guard Bureau continues to work with the Department of Defense to pursue modernization for equipment used by domestic response teams as technology and threats evolve.

In firefighting, the ANG brought on board an improved Mobile Airborne Firefighting System (MAFFS-2) in time for the CY2012 wildfire season and purchased upgraded and newer firefighting vehicles, protective equipment, and equipment for rescue operations.

Impact of Budget Uncertainty

On behalf of the entire Air National Guard family, I thank you for H.R. 933. This legislation will go a long way to ensure our Guard Airmen and their equipment remains ready to respond to either domestic or overseas crises. But, I remain concerned for the long-term as continued budget uncertainties are having a direct negative impact upon ANG personnel and equipment readiness and modernization.

Budget uncertainties add to the anxiety within the entire ANG family. From our civilian workforce, including our Technicians, facing

furloughs to uncertainty over Air Force funding for Guard Airmen performing Title 10 missions on Military Personnel Appropriation (MPA) funding, our Airmen and their families are concerned about their futures. Uncertainty about the future adversely impact unit morale, individual decisions about remaining in the Guard, and relationships within the family.

The Future of the Air National Guard

As we build the Total Air Force of the future, it is essential to build capabilities that meet the advanced technologies potential adversaries might bring to a conflict. Futurists predict that the proliferation of technology will mean that US forces will face a plethora of long-range precision weapons and sophisticated air defense networks—the environment in which the B-2, F-22, F-35, and the next generation bomber are designed to operate. I believe it is equally important, even in a world driven by rapid technological change, that we not forget the lessons of the past. History tells us high technology capabilities are not always the sole solution to security challenges. More often, the answer is capacity in combination with capability. During the Korean War the USAF deployed its newest jet fighters only to learn what it needed most was large numbers of World War II vintage P-51 Mustangs for close air support. Similarly, during the first Gulf War, the nation marveled at the capabilities of the F-117, but it was the B-52, A-10, F-15, and F-16 were the workhorses of the effort. The principal lesson of the past is we cannot predict the future; the best we can do is instill versatility and flexibility into our planning.

Do not misunderstand, I believe the capabilities of the latest air, space, and cyberspace advancements are essential to the future security of the US, but I believe capacity is equally important. It is capacity that permits multiple simultaneous actions in different parts of the world, and it is capacity that allows for extended actions without over stressing

the men and women in uniform and their families. Recognizing capacity is often as expensive as capability, the question becomes, how do we sustain both capability and capacity in an era of austerity? The simple answer is investment in the Air Reserve Components of the Air Force.

A recent study based upon Air Force Total Ownership Cost data examined the total costs of active duty (AD), Air Force Reserve (AFR), and Air National Guard (ANG) F-16 and C-130 units. The study concluded that while the cost of employing the three components was similar, the cost per aircraft and the cost per flying hour were significantly less in the reserve components (RC).

C-130		Cost per PMAI	Cost per Flying Hour
	Active Air Force	\$18,770,349	\$24,179
	Air Force Reserve	\$9,394,071	\$21,365
	Air National Guard	\$8,427,894	\$20,926
F-16			
	Active Air Force	\$8,398,198	\$29,190
	Air Force Reserve	\$6,356,380	\$22,406
	Air National Guard	\$4,626,238	\$22,296

There have been two major post-war draw-downs in recent history. The first occurred in the 1970's as the Vietnam War was drawing to a close. The second was in the 1990s at the end of the Cold War. In 1970, Secretary of Defense Melvin B. Laird put his faith in the Reserve Components and created the Total Force that served the nation through the end of the Cold War.

In 1990, our Air Force faced challenges not unlike those of today. And, threats to our national security and national interests had not gone away with the fall of the Berlin Wall, in fact, the future looked just as unknown and ominous as it does today. First, there was a new strategy shifting focus from the Soviet Union to major regional conflicts. There was growing concern about the security implications of a possible breakup of the Soviet Union; economic, political, and geographic expansion of China; and, new challenges in the Middle East. The U.S. was trying to get the budget deficit under control—at that time it was sequestration under the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985. Faced with significant budget cuts and amorphous but growing threats abroad, Secretary of the Air Force Donald Rice decided to follow Secretary Laird’s lead from the 1970s. As Secretary Rice wrote in his 1990 Report to Congress:

The Air Force Total Force policy, formalized in 1973, has evolved to the current policy for a mix of Active and Reserve component forces, using all available assets, to ensure that maximum military capability is achieved at minimum cost. We intend to allow as much force structure growth in the Air Reserve Component (ARC) as possible while maintaining a realistic balance between the ability of the Guard and Reserve to absorb that growth and the ability of the Active force to meet peacetime and contingency tasking.¹

It was the Air Force Secretary Rice built that maintained Northern and Southern Watch after operation Desert Storm. This Air Force, built upon heavy reliance on the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard, also responded to the crisis in Bosnia and Kosovo, fought Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Air Guard KC-135s were the first on the scene for Operation Odyssey Dawn protecting Libyan civilians. Secretary Rice’s Total Air Force also responded to

¹ *The United States Air Force Report to the 101st Congress of the United States, Fiscal Year 1991*

numerous humanitarian crises around the world including Pakistan, Japan, Haiti, and here at home.

The future of the Total Air Force is not just about aircraft and other equipment; it is about people—our most valuable asset. As the Air Force adjusts to post-Afghanistan and fiscal realities, we in the ANG urge Air Force leadership to remember that its Reserve Components are not only warehouses of combat ready equipment but combat ready personnel as well. We need to ensure that as highly educated, trained, experienced men and women leave active duty they have somewhere to go; somewhere to continue to serve their nation. In FY2011-2012, 777 pilots, most with combat experience and all with many years of service ahead of them, separated from active duty. One-third of them chose to continue serving their country as Guard Airmen. What if there was no place for them to go? What if the ANG and Air Force Reserve had no place for those leaving active duty to continue to use their skills in service of the nation?

May pundits have warned that we not repeat the mistakes of previous post-war drawdowns. However, the mistake of the drawdowns following World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Cold War, was not that the Services did not plan for the future, but that they failed to recognize that the future may be very different than their projections. The real lesson of past drawdowns is the need to put in place the structures and systems for versatility and flexibility. The Reserve Components, since before our nation was founded, have been the underpinning of versatility and flexibility in military response.

Closing Remarks

The entire Air National Guard family—the men and women in uniform, their families, our Technicians and Title 5 civilians, contractors, and the employers of our traditional, part-time Airmen—have borne the brunt of over twenty years of continuous deployments and have held up

very well. I believe they are our nation's next "Greatest Generation."
Working together, we can keep faith with these incredible men and women and continue to build a Total Air Force equal to all the challenges our nation faces.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts with you, and for allowing me the honor to represent the outstanding men and women of your Air National Guard.