

STATEMENT BY

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BEFORE THE

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

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THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Dicks, members of the subcommittee; I am honored to appear before you today, representing the nearly 106,000 men and women of our nation's Air National Guard.

Every year at this time, I look back on the accomplishments of our Air National Guard and every year I am humbled by professionalism, dedication, patriotism, and hard work of the men and women who make up the Air National Guard family, including the Guard Airmen, their families, and their civilian employers. This past year was no exception, as our Guard Airmen -- supported by their families and employers -- have continued to defend and protect our nation and its citizens both at home and abroad.

An Operational Force for Overseas and Domestic Missions

The men and women of the Air National Guard continue to work as both an operational force, augmenting the Active Duty Air Force on operational missions, and a reserve force, providing combat-ready surge capabilities to respond to increased demands. The Air National Guard also continues to fulfill its dual-role as both a Reserve Component to the US Air Force (federal mission) and Air Component to the National Guard (state mission).

Federal Mission

The men and women of the Air National Guard continued to serve their nation in record numbers – primarily as volunteers. Last year the Air National

Guard filled 54,000 requests for active service in support of the Air National Guard's federal mission. Of those Guard Airmen filling the requests, 91% volunteered to service on active duty. This makes a total of 510,408 filled mobilization requests since 9/11.

Air National Guard responsiveness and adaptability was clearly demonstrated a year ago. On 17 March 2011, as the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1973 authorizing a no-fly-zone over Libya, Air National Guard KC-135s from the 134th Aerial Refueling Wing (Tennessee) and 168th Aerial Refueling Wing (Alaska) were diverted en route to forward operating bases and began flying operational missions in support of OPERATION Odyssey Dawn 48 hours later.

In addition to those serving in support of Overseas Contingency Operations, Guard Airmen continue to serve the nation on nearly every continent around the globe including Antarctica.

Homeland Defense and Support to Civil Authorities

Last year National Guard Airmen spent over half a million man-days performing domestic civil support missions, a third of it on State Active Duty. This included assisting local authorities with explosive ordinance disposal, helping with security at special events such as the Arkansas Governor's Inauguration and the Boston Marathon, helping victims of floods and other natural disasters, and helping to save lives by assisting in search and rescue

efforts. Air National Guard C-130s equipped with Aerial Modular Fire Fighting Systems dropped over 675,000 gallons of fire suppressant assisting the U.S. Forestry Service in fighting wild fires across the country. Whether it is something small such as four Guard Airmen helping local officials responding to a major car accident in remote Wyoming or 30,000 man-days assisting flood victims last April, the men and women of the Air National Guard prove their value to America every day.

In addition to supporting civil authorities, Guard Airmen spent an additional million man-days in Homeland Defense. This includes helping to defend U.S. airspace in Aerospace Control Alert, assisting U.S. Customs and Border Protection on our southwest border, and supporting America's Counter-Drug program.

The Air National Guard's accomplishment of its Homeland Defense and Support of Civil Authorities missions continue to be accomplished primarily on the "dual-use" assumption, *i.e.*, using equipment and training for its federal mission, thus avoiding additional costs for the states or Air Force. However, this also means that changes in equipment or manpower for the Air National Guard's federal mission may affect the Air Guard's Homeland Defense and Civil Support capabilities.

National Guard & Reserve Equipment Account (NGREA)

The Air Guard has used National Guard & Reserve Equipment Account (NGREA) funding to fulfill its federal and state missions. Air National Guard F-16 and A-10 squadrons deployed to Afghanistan with LITERNING Gen4 targeting pods for the first time as a direct result of NGREA funding. FY2011 NGREA funds were also used to procure and install equipment for a Cyber Critical Infrastructure Range allowing Air National Guard cyber units to train and develop tactics, techniques, and procedures for cyber warfare without disrupting networks used to accomplish day-to-day missions.

In response to Congressional concerns about management of the NGREA, the Air National Guard developed process improvements to enable longer-term, higher-confidence planning by Program Management Offices (PMOs), thus helping the Air Guard meet the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) obligation rate standards for procurement funds. Each fall, three-year investment plans are developed using ranges of potential funding levels, based on NGREA appropriations in recent years. Prioritizing procurement requirements in funding bands (highest likelihood of funding, significant likelihood of funding, and potential likelihood of funding) will enable program management offices to accomplish advanced planning to incorporate NGREA into planned contracts and separate NGREA-funded equipment purchases. Specifically, procurements with the longest contractual lead times will be prioritized in the band with the highest likelihood of funding. In this way, PMOs will plan for NGREA as if it was

budgeted, and they can have confidence that resources invested in advance planning and preparation will not be wasted

Support for Airmen and Families

The men and women of the Air National Guard serve with pride and distinction, but 20 years of combat have taken a toll on our Airmen and their families. In 2011, the Air National Guard had 17 members die by suicide. While a lower rate than in 2010, the overall rate has been slightly upward since 1992. The Air National Guard launched its Psychological Health Program last year by placing licensed mental health professionals in each wing, a peer-to-peer “Wingman Project,” and other suicide awareness and prevention initiatives. The goal of the Wingman Project is multifaceted. First, the Air National Guard will ensure our Airmen and their families are prepared psychologically for the traumas and stress of combat deployments. Following their deployments, we need to ensure our Guard Airmen are welcomed home as the heroes they are and received the appropriate recognition for a job well done. Finally, we must make sure that the member and their families are aware of the potential after affects and the resources available to help them cope.

The Future of the Air National Guard

I have seen two major post-war draw-downs in my career. 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, the threats to national security and interest 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 that 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 numerous humanitarian crises around the world including Pakistan, Japan, Haiti, and here at home.

The Air National Guard’s priorities in preparing the FY13 budget were:

- Funding readiness accounts to include flying hours and Depot Purchased Equipment Maintenance
- Mission conversions included in the FY2013 President’s Budget
- Modernization

Closing Remarks

I believe that working together we can emerge from these times a stronger, more capable Total Air Force. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today, I look forward to your questions.

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