

CHIEF, NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU



**STRATEGIC DIRECTION**  
to the **NATIONAL GUARD**

## To the Citizen-Soldiers and -Airmen of the National Guard,

The National Guard has maintained the peace and security of our Nation for over 376 years. Today, we find ourselves at a strategic inflection point. In the years ahead, we must transition from combat operations, adjust to new fiscal realities, and prepare to face a new and challenging security environment both at home and abroad. Taken together, these are no small tasks. Successfully adapting for the future will be important, not just for the Guard but also for our Nation and States.



**GEN FRANK J. GRASS**  
Chief, National Guard Bureau

At a time when there are many competing voices in our country and across the globe, we must rely upon our values for clarity. The National Guard's values are those of our Services, the Army and Air Force. While these values are not expressed identically, they share much in common and their underlying themes are clear and undeniable. Guardsmen must demonstrate the highest standards of personal conduct, and agree that, "it is always the right time to do things right." This includes not only eradicating the scourge of sexual assault from within our ranks, but also not tolerating sexual harassment or the inappropriate relationships that often lead to this kind of unacceptable behavior. Those of us entrusted to wear our country's uniforms must do our utmost to represent the best of America. We are accountable for all we do, and what we fail to do.

The Department of Defense is embarking on a course of significant change over the next decade and has placed its trust in the National Guard's operational capability. Trust was earned through the blood and sweat of war, and in response to domestic missions. While we remain justifiably proud of these successes, we must reckon with the institutional damage done to some units by focusing on contingency specific missions and in rapidly generating readiness in others. As a result, the National Guard must again embrace a culture of readiness across the force. We will focus on posturing to rapidly and competently expand the Army and Air Force to help guide our readiness decisions.

To ensure we move forward in the right direction, the National Guard community must critically and candidly reexamine our organization from top to bottom. I began this process by meeting with our strategic partners, Adjutants General, and many Guardsmen to gather information and gain a better perspective on the challenges and opportunities ahead of us. These frank discussions helped provide the insight to formulate my initial Strategic Direction to the National Guard.

My vision for the National Guard:

- By 2023, the nation recognizes the National Guard is an indispensable, resourced, and missioned operational force fulfilling Service requirements in support of worldwide Combatant Commander' priorities and supporting partners abroad. At home, the National Guard fully postures leaders and units to respond to a complex catastrophe on the worst night in America. Simultaneously, we deliver a sense of purpose, worth, and well-being to Guardsmen, their families, and employers thereby connecting Main Street America to national security objectives.

To realize this vision, I see our mission going forward as:

- **The National Guard provides ready forces for the defense of our nation and its interests, and to States for missions directed by the Governors.**

In partnership with States, Services, DoD, and interagency, the National Guard will:

1. **Provide trained and ready operational forces**
2. **Act as effective stewards of our resources**
3. **Sustain the National Guard community**
4. **Forge and maintain partnerships**

I have the utmost confidence in our National Guard forces and our ability to remain relevant and effective while forging a more adaptive, responsive, and capable operational force for the future, as we continue our commitment to be *always ready, always there!*

# INTRODUCTION

**O**ur Nation and our force face a strategic transition from adequate to constrained resources, and a focus on Iraq and Afghanistan to a renewed and expanded view of the world at-large. All of these transitions impact the National Guard. We must proactively confront each by identifying priorities that will position the Guard for continued success both at home and abroad, today and into the future.

The National Guard has not faced such a profound time of change since the end of World War II. As we return home to our armories and communities after more than a decade of war, we embark into a very different era. Now is the time for the Guard to reflect, reassess, reexamine, and in certain areas reshape who we are as a force, to best fulfill our responsibilities to our Nation and States.

Since 1636, we have met these responsibilities through voluntary service to our Nation and States. I am confident about our future because of you: the Soldiers, Airmen, and civilians of today's National Guard. The diverse all-volunteer force is a great source of our Nation's strength, and people are the very heart of our armed forces. The American people know they can count on you, no matter what the mission, because you remain *always ready and always there*.



## **PRIORITIES:**

*To meet the challenges we face today, and those we will face in the years ahead, we must guide our efforts and effectively manage our resources to meet an environment of ever changing security threats. After reviewing our strategic environment, meeting with our Adjutants General and consulting other key leaders, I have identified four priorities:*

- 1. Provide Trained and Ready Operational Forces**
- 2. Act as Effective Stewards of Our Resources**
- 3. Sustain the National Guard Community**
- 4. Forge and Maintain Partnerships**

# 1: PROVIDE TRAINED and READY OPERATIONAL FORCES



**T**he National Guard is manned, trained, and equipped as part of the Joint Force to fight and win our Nation's wars. We learned over the past decade the important link to our communities Reserve Component (RC) forces provide to generate and sustain the support of the American People. It is vital we maintain this critical connection between our citizens and their armed forces, particularly if we must conduct large or long-term overseas contingency operations.

## Maintain the Ready Force

After more than a decade of war, the National Guard has proven its value and importance as an integral part of the Joint Force. Looking to the future, our formations must support Joint Force 2020. We must take advantage of reductions in deployments to prepare our Soldiers and Airmen for the future, while at the same time staying ready to support Federal and State missions on short notice. To do this, we must adapt our force for the future while maintaining readiness across personnel, equipment, and training. Maintaining operational deployments and engagement

are critical to this effort and must remain an important part of our readiness plan.

In *Strategic Direction to the Joint Force*, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff envisions a Joint Force that is versatile, affordable, and smaller, yet able to expand rapidly and serve as a hedge against uncertainty. The National Guard will be a critical element of this force. In conjunction with the Services, we must size and structure the Guard to best support the Nation's current needs and anticipated future challenges.

The most important part of the National Guard is our people. Professionalism is at the heart of who we are and what we do; and we must continue to recruit and retain the next generations National Guard leaders. As the economy changes, we must be proactive in offering our Soldiers and Airmen reasons to continue serving their Nation and State, through challenging training, innovative professional development opportunities, and relevant tasking in the US and overseas as part of the Joint Force. Our professionalism is an overarching competency that requires we prepare our leaders for the future.



**Rebalance end strength and force structure:** We must ensure the National Guard remains relevant across the U.S. Armed Forces' primary missions. The National Guard must be part of the process when our Nation's leaders' determine the best size and structure of the future Joint Force. With the National Guard's unique role of supporting both Federal and State missions, determining the right Active Component (AC) to RC ratio and maintaining National Guard capabilities is of critical importance. A rebalance toward greater emphasis on the RC is part of the solution to today's defense requirements.

**Regenerate and maintain readiness:** The National Guard, like the rest of the Joint Force, performed magnificently during the last decade of combat. As we move into an environment of decreased operational tempo and funding, the Guard must reexamine how we generate and maintain readiness as part of the Joint Force to develop a sustainable readiness model that fits the new environment.

**Recruit and retain the Nation's Best Service Members:** Today's National Guard formations are filled with combat veterans, many with multiple deployments. We must have Guardsmen not only with the right experience, but also with the right values, knowledge, and abilities to operate in today's and tomorrow's complex environments.

We must continue to recruit the next generation of leaders. These leaders should reflect the diversity of the American people, for our strength and adaptability are enhanced through inclusion.



**Recapitalize and modernize equipment and facilities:** Years of war have taken their toll on our equipment and facilities. We must refurbish and modernize to remain the best equipped force possible. It will take years to properly recapitalize and modernize, especially in an austere fiscal environment.

**Redirect our training focus:** The excellent training provided by our generating forces is one of our great advantages. Over the past decade, frequent rotations supporting combat operations necessitated mission-focused training. Now is the time to expand the scope of our training so we are postured to rapidly meet the requirements of globally integrated operations. As we move forward with fewer resources, we must get the maximum benefit from training with an eye toward increasing our versatility.



## **Provide Relevant Forces for Today's Wars and Tomorrow's Global Challenges**

Deficit reduction is a national security imperative. Consequently, today's fiscal challenges are straining resourcing throughout the Joint Force. Additionally, uncertainty driven by the Arab Spring in the Middle East and Africa, increasingly stresses the rebalancing of focus from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Europe to the homeland and Pacific. Many uncertainties and challenges remain not just in Asia, but at home and across the globe.

We live in an era with an increasingly competitive security environment, with many emerging and unconventional threats. While no one can predict when and where future conflicts will arise, our armed forces must be prepared to

adapt to any situation. A robust and responsive National Guard offers a flexible and affordable ability to rapidly and competently expand capacity to meet uncertainty.

Guardsmen currently serve in Afghanistan, Kuwait, Qatar, Djibouti, Honduras, Guantanamo, the Sinai, and the Balkans. In addition, 11 ANG air refueling wings from different states supported Operation Odyssey Dawn in Libya, while the Colorado National Guard served as a liaison to the Jordanian Armed Forces. With fewer operational deployments in the near future, participation in overseas missions will become increasingly important to the National Guard maintaining its proficiency as an operational force. Training deployments will again become critical to this effort. Consequently, we must look for opportunities to support the Combatant Commands.



## KEY EFFORTS

### **Finish strong in Afghanistan:**

As long as we have service members in Afghanistan, the National Guard's top priority is to provide the best-trained and ready operational forces and support possible.

### **Rapidly and competently expand the capabilities of the Army and Air Force to support other overseas contingency operations:**

Wherever and whenever the Joint Force fights, the Guard will be there.

### **Support the rebalance towards the Pacific:**

The National Guard currently has seven State

Partnership Program (SPP) countries in the Pacific. These enduring, low cost, small footprint relationships directly support the Combatant Commander's Theater Security Cooperation Plan. These partnerships will play a vital role in the rebalance through integration with regionally aligned forces.

### **Reinvigorate Overseas Duty for Training (ODT):**

Most of the Guard's deployments in the last decade have been for overseas contingency operations. Prior to these contingency operations, the National Guard had a robust and diverse ODT program, especially in Europe, Central, and South America. Now is the time to reinvigorate ODT programs and focus on supporting the Combatant Commanders in Africa and the Pacific.

## Defend and Support the Homeland

Since the colonial era, the National Guard has had a special role as the original homeland defense (HD) force. In addition, we provide civil support at the federal, state, and local level. This support comes in the form of defense support to civil authorities (DSCA) as well as National Guard Civil Support (NGCS). Using our unique array of authorities, the Guard responds to the needs of the Nation and States. The inherent flexibility to operate on a continuum from local through state to federal level is one of the foundational strengths of the National Guard.

The National Guard is normally the first uniformed responder at the local and state level, and our elected officials and citizens rely on us for timely support. The Guard, primarily in a state status, provided more than 506,208 man-days of effort to our communities in 2012 alone. For these types of domestic operations, the National Guard's focus is to support.

We accomplish this through coordination and synchronization of efforts with local governments before, during, and after an incident. Threats to our homeland are both natural and manmade. At a Guard Senior Leader Conference, our Adjutants' General assessed threats to our homeland. They identified the most dangerous threats as: nuclear detonation, widespread cyber attack, a major earthquake, or tsunami. The Adjutants' General also said we must remain ready for an ever-widening range of most likely contingencies such as hurricanes; tornados; floods; wild fires; winter storms; lesser chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosives incidents.

Any of these events could generate a complex catastrophe. Successful mitigation of, and recovery from, complex catastrophes requires accurately identifying gaps, then planning and preparing to overcome them. The National Guard will work to be better prepared, along with our state and federal partners, to deal with these disasters. We will ensure that our plans are up to date and exercised regularly, ensuring we are ready to execute them.







## KEY EFFORTS

### **Provide forces in support of homeland defense missions:**

Protecting our homeland is the Department of Defense top priority. We must ensure HD forces remain trained and ready; our response plans current and regularly exercised, and fully synchronized with NORTHCOM.

### **Accomplish missions assigned by the states' governors:**

For most Guardsmen, their commander-in-chief is their state's governor. The governors best understand a State's needs and can task their National Guard forces to meet these needs. Acting in this capacity, the actions of geographically proximate National Guard forces often preclude the need for federal forces to perform DSCA.

### **Improve multi-state cooperation:**

As Guardsmen, we frequently focus on effects within our state, yet larger contingencies can have widespread impacts. As a result, all government agencies must continually improve their ability to respond to large contingencies. We see joint, integrated, multi-state plans as key to this effort. Together with our federal partners, the National Guard must exercise contingency

plans to ensure we are ready to overcome these contingencies swiftly and decisively.

### **Continue NGB support of Emergency Management Assistance Compacts (EMACs):**

Compacts have proven successful for nearly two decades, facilitating interstate response for both small and large disasters. We envision EMAC will remain fundamental to responding efficiently and effectively to future state and multi-state disasters.

### **Ensure continued Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) response capabilities:**

CBRN incidents are among the most serious and most challenging of the threats we confront. The National Guard has a wide range of capabilities to help state and the federal governments mitigate CBRN incidents. We must remain organized and resourced, in order to continue providing the same level and quality of seamless support.

### **Reexamine, and where appropriate, realign, the application of dual-use capabilities:**

My role as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is to enrich DoD corporate processes so that they will address expansion of dual-use capabilities and associated equipment. This includes seeking opportunities in emerging mission areas such as unmanned aircraft systems and the cyber domain.



## 2: ACT as GOOD STEWARDS of our RESOURCES

**O**ur values guide us to be good stewards of the resources the American People give us to accomplish our missions. We also share a great responsibility to be good fiscal stewards. This responsibility will increase in significance in the lean years ahead. While we will demonstrate good stewardship through unqualified audits, we can do more. The Guard must be transparent and above reproach in all we do fiscally.

### KEY EFFORTS

#### **Enhance accountability:**

The National Guard must spend its Federal and State funds wisely, only using them for the purposes intended. We must deliver forces with readiness appropriate to the funding and direction provided. We must maintain strict accountability of Army and Air Force equipment, and work to ensure it is properly

maintained and ready to respond rapidly to crises at home and abroad.

#### **Become fully auditable:**

In an era of declining resources, confidence in the National Guard's frugal execution of taxpayer dollars is essential. Congress has mandated auditability, and the Department of Defense has made audit readiness an agency-wide priority. Therefore, the National Guard will move toward a goal of an unqualified auditability, across all appropriations categories for the states and the National Guard Bureau. To further transparency and ensure accountability, the National Guard is committed to maintaining proper documentation for the funds entrusted to us.

#### **Protect natural resources:**

The National Guard will make efforts to reduce pollution, reverse environmental damage, and embrace energy conservation.



### 3: SUSTAIN the NATIONAL GUARD COMMUNITY

The National Guard was built on a foundation of strong units, strong families, and strong communities. Since 9/11, our families and communities—including those who employ Guardsmen in their civilian jobs—have sustained us over the past decade of deployments and sacrifices. We are grateful for all they have done for our Soldiers, Airmen, and civilian employees. As combat operations end, we must continue to keep faith with our force, our families, and our neighbors. We must continue to honor our fallen patriots and wounded warriors by supporting their families and helping them reintegrate into their communities.

Those awarded the Purple Heart are not the only service members suffering from injuries. Many bear unseen scars. Stress can be a struggle for some to handle. We must continue to reach out to all of those in need, and help them as much as we can. This is our duty, and we will never forget those who served. Tough financial choices in the coming years will require us to do all we can to sustain the National Guard community. Sustaining the National Guard community is truly a “no fail” mission.



## KEY EFFORTS

### **Embrace a culture of total fitness:**

We must build and maintain a resilient force. Our Soldiers and Airmen must remain fit to fight, and fit to serve; not just physically, but mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and socially.

### **Meet the demand for Soldier, Airman, and Family programs and funding:**

Supporting those who serve, have served, and their families must remain a top priority.

### **Decrease suicides in the National Guard:**

We are absolutely committed to addressing the rising number of suicides in the National Guard. The NGB Joint staff is actively participating in a DoD-wide comprehensive strategic approach for suicide prevention, intervention, postvention, and surveillance; to particularly ensure the unique challenges of our citizen Soldiers and citizen Airmen are addressed. In the coming year, we will launch a behavioral health pilot program to build better partnerships with behavioral health providers in our communities to meet the needs of our Soldiers and Airmen.

### **Reduce sexual assaults and sexual harassment:**

From the day each of us raises his or her hand to take the oath, we are told we must support one another, no matter how fierce an enemy we face. Today, we battle internal enemies –

sexual assault and harassment within our ranks – which are profound betrayals of the sacred trust we must have between our Soldiers and Airmen. This is a leadership issue. This is a readiness issue. We will attack this enemy with education and discipline, and eradicate the enemy within our ranks, also providing solace for all those affected. To be clear, there is no place in the National Guard for anyone, of any rank, who would sexually harass or attack another individual.

### **Improve Civilian Employment: For the National Guard employment is a readiness issue:**

We need to continue working with the federal government, state, and local agencies to market National Guard members as highly skilled civilian employees. Although we have shown success, we must continue our efforts to ensure all Soldiers and Airmen are employed.

### **Strengthen community relationships:**

Our unique community-based organization enables us to partner effectively at the local and state levels with both governmental and non-governmental leaders on behalf of Guard service members and families. We formalized some of these partnerships through our “Joining Community Forces” efforts, but we must take care to nourish and expand these relationships. Another outstanding example of the National Guard’s support of our communities is our Youth ChalleNGe Program. This award-winning program leads, trains, and mentors high school dropouts to become productive citizens through unique, military-inspired, and evidence-based youth development that instills youths with the skills and values necessary to become productive members of society. ChalleNGe has 34 sites in 28 states, DC and Puerto Rico, offering a five-month “quasi-military” residential phase and a one-year post-residential mentoring phase for at-risk youth ages 16-18.

### **Reach out to National Guard alumni:**

Many National Guard members have returned to civilian life. They, along with our retirees remain our brothers and sisters in arms. They are a distinct benefit to our communities and we will maintain our relationships with our alumni and offer valuable camaraderie, even after they hang-up their uniforms.

## 4: FORGE and MAINTAIN PARTNERSHIPS

**F**or more than 376 years, the National Guard has supported and partnered with local, state, and federal entities. As a state-based national militia, the National Guard was the original interagency and intra-governmental partner. We have been bridging the gap between the states and the federal government since our country's founding.

As a joint activity of the Department of Defense (DoD), the National Guard Bureau serves as the channel of communications between the Adjutants General and the DoD. In addition, National Guardsmen from the States serving at the Federal level, do so in support of those in the States and around the globe.

We have always worked closely with our parent services, the Army and Air Force. Because of outstanding service to our Nation over the past decade of combat operations, and with the Chief of National Guard Bureau now a full member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, we have become an even greater part of the Joint Force. This includes expanding our contact and cooperation with the Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and other parts of DoD.

Interagency cooperation is one the National Guard's core strengths. Whether in a federal or state status, the Guard works closely with a wide variety of interagency partners. Our relationship with The Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is essential in helping unite federal, state, and local efforts in support of civilian authorities to aid those affected by disasters. The National Guard works closely with National Interagency Fire Center for wildland firefighting. While our interagency ties are often most visible in responding to emergencies, the Guard's cooperation with other departments and agencies spans the gamut of governmental functions. For instance, the National Guard Counterdrug program supports the Department of Justice and the Drug Enforcement Administration, among others, at the national level, along with state and local law enforcement agencies.

Internationally, the Guard works with the Department of State via our State Partnership Program (SPP) to advance the Nation's foreign policy goals.

Among the National Guard's military partners, none is more important than our connection with U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM). We work closely with NORTHCOM on both Homeland Defense and Defense Support of Civil Authorities. NORTHCOM stands ready to bring DoD's federal resources to bear in support of major disasters and we work closely with them to ensure seamless integration of state and federal DoD capabilities.

During major domestic disasters where both State and Federal military forces are needed to support civil authorities, dual-status commanders are ideal leaders. These specially trained commanders unify separate State and Federal chains of command to better integrate the efforts of Federal DoD capabilities with those of State and local authorities. This ensures unity of effort among different military responders. The increased effectiveness and efficiency of the dual-status commanders improves our collective ability to respond more agilely in support of civilian authorities.

The SPP also develops international relationships that support the Geographical Combatant Commands' "Phase 0" or "shaping operations." Our 65 partnerships, fully integrated into theater security cooperation plans, help set the conditions for future American success across the globe. Maintaining and growing partnerships around the world is essential to sharing the burden of regional security and responding to the next global crisis as evidenced by multiple co-deployments with our State Partners over the past decade.

The National Guard has a vital role to play in these shaping efforts as a force provider to the Combatant Commands and Service Components for theater security cooperation. Through security cooperation activities the National Guard helps create more ready, willing, and able partners around the globe. We succeed when we build and maintain these important and enduring relationships.

## KEY EFFORTS

### **Analyze future threats and opportunities:**

In a world that can change quickly, the National Guard must constantly evaluate the environment and determine how best to contribute to the security and safety of our Nation. We must stay abreast of change and continually adapt to challenges in close cooperation with our partners. Assessing our processes, performance, and effectiveness in an ongoing and comprehensive way will help ensure we are both doing the right things and doing things right.

### **Serve as the DoD's bridge to civil authorities for domestic challenges:**

The Guard's state mission develops an emergency management skill set based on the National Incident Management System. The key to this skill set is the National Guard's unique responsibilities and repetition of the tasks, and the long-term relationships with local and state officials that produces confidence with our civilian partners.

### **Facilitate the Consultative Process:**

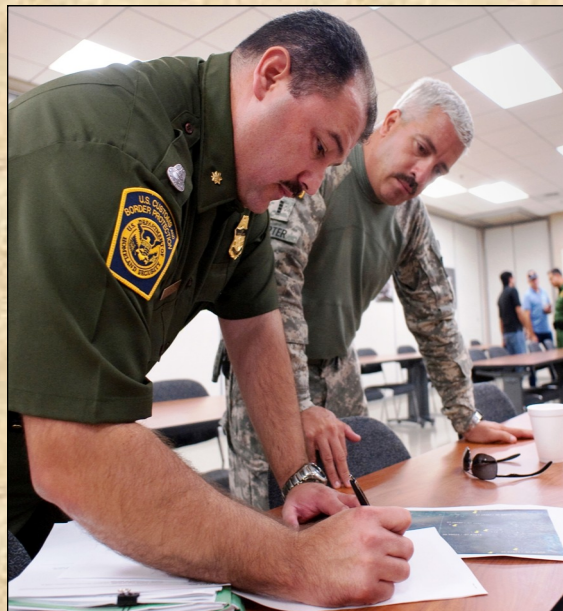
DoD and the Council of Governors agreed to a consultative process in order to improve communications and cooperation between the federal government and the states. CNGB serves as the channel of communication between DoD and the Governors for departmental processes affecting the Guard. The consultative process will help the Guard transmit State DSCA requirements, expressed in terms of signed and approved contingency plans.

### **Support Geographic Combatant Command theater security cooperation (TSC):**

The geographic combatant commands (GCC) establish TSC requirements and plans, and all SPP events are in support of these plans. As GCC demand increases, we will grow SPP partnerships to ensure they are in direct support of their strategic priorities.

### **Leverage the Counterdrug Program (CDP):**

The National Guard's CDP helps law enforcement agencies battle and mitigate the drug



threat. The CDP activities support both supply and demand interdiction efforts. The CDP also helps confront emerging threats. The National Guard should continue to link local, state, and federal efforts to combat transnational criminal organizations and support counter threat finance efforts.



## CONCLUSION

**A**s it has since 1636, the National Guard will continue to undertake important roles in defending our Nation and supporting our States. Hard choices lie ahead, not just for the Guard, but for our entire Nation.

The National Guard will continue to provide efficient and effective options for our Federal and State leaders now and into the future. We will continue to do this by building upon our successes over the past decade. Our actions abroad and at home have shown our value as an integral part of the Joint Force to our Nation, our States, and our local communities.

We must ensure the actions we take today continue the National Guard's proud tradition of service to our Nation and State. True to our values, we will provide trained and ready operational forces, be good stewards of our resources, sustain our communities, and forge and maintain partnerships.

I have the utmost confidence in our National Guard Forces and our ability to remain relevant and effective while forging a more adaptive, responsive, and capable operational force for the future, as we continue our commitment to be *always ready, always there!*

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION



## to the NATIONAL GUARD

### **NATIONAL GUARD PRIORITIES**

- 1. Provide Trained and Ready Operational Forces**
- 2. Act as Effective Stewards of Our Resources**
- 3. Sustain the National Guard Community**
- 4. Forge and Maintain Partnerships**