

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

**LIEUTENANT GENERAL H STEVEN BLUM
CHIEF, NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU**

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Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to update you on our continuing efforts to meet the challenges of the 21st century national security environment.

The National Guard is a fully integrated member of the Joint Force team, firmly resolved to play its role in defending freedom here at home and abroad. As the members of the committee are well aware, the National Security environment has changed dramatically in a very short period of time. Working in concert with the Army and the Air Force, we are determined to make the changes necessary in order to meet this rapidly evolving environment head on.

The state level Joint Force Headquarters represent a comprehensive structural command and control response to the evolving requirements of the post 9/11 security environment.

Joint Force Headquarters - State represents the centerpiece of

the National Guard effort to transform in response to a changing security environment. These Headquarters allow for a coordinated response that cuts across local, state, federal and joint military lines in ways that were simply not possible before. For example, these organizations provide Northern Command with state based organizations capable of acting as an essential interface with local governments; a key capability in meeting national Homeland Defense needs.

Though the Joint Force Headquarters concept is still new, it has already achieved notable successes. These headquarters, acting in their new role, successfully managed operations supporting both the Democratic and Republican national conventions. Joint Force Headquarters have proven highly successful in facilitating the interagency, state and local communication and coordination requirements associated with Operation Vigilant Guard. They provide the capability to enhance the Weapons of Mass Destruction Civilian Support Teams (CST) with consequence management capabilities (CERFP). They provide a ready made headquarters for the

coordination of existing joint National Guard activities including Counter-drug operations and other types of military support to civil authorities. In a very real sense, the Joint Force Headquarters represent a revolution in the ability to exercise effective command and control from the national to the local level.

The Joint Force Headquarters represents the structural transformation of the Guard at the State and local level. Recent reforms in the Title 32 language represent the statutory changes essential to allow the Joint Force Headquarters construct to reach its full potential.

The changes enacted in the statutory language by the 108th Congress provide a host of improvements that facilitate the use of state National Guard personnel in meeting the needs of the Homeland Defense mission. The new authority allows the states to react to a federal emergency within hours, rather than days or even weeks. Missions of interest to national security can be accomplished at the state and local levels, where

flexibility, rapid decision making, and decentralized execution are the keys to successful mission accomplishment. Full implementation of the new Title 32 authority will also represent a significant economy of force, as states can make more effective use of their own Guard personnel and assets, thus raising the bar for commitment of federal troops. Taken together with the Joint Force Headquarters concept, the reformed Title 32 language represents a real transformation in Guard capabilities at the state and local levels, and we are anxiously awaiting implementation guidance.

While emerging missions, changing force structure and equipment requirements are all pressing, our primary focus remains on the men and women who make up our organization. The National Guard is working aggressively to address the growing end-strength issues associated with the continuing stress on the force. We have deployed over 1,400 additional recruiters across the nation, with an additional 500 to be deployed by September 30th. This will significantly enhance our ability to attract and process new accessions. At the same time,

Congress has supported the development of greatly enhanced enlistment bonuses, which will positively affect our strength numbers. Of particular note is the authority included in the FY05 supplemental, which provided for a variety of enhanced bonuses, including bonus increases for prior service soldiers contracting for six year enlistments. Other bonus enhancements, including increased bonuses for non-prior service enlistments and similar incentives for re-enlistments and extensions will have significant beneficial effects on the Guard's ability to meet our end strength goals.

We are already beginning to see some signs of a turn-around in our recruiting and retention numbers, though we have a long way to go in achieving our year-end strength goals. With the initiatives currently in place and the continuing support of Congress, the National Guard will continue to recruit and retain high quality men and women in the months and years ahead.

Even as we take the necessary steps to meet our strength goals, we also recognize that soldiers are only as good as the training

and equipment they receive to accomplish their missions. We are working closely with the Army and Air Force leadership to ensure that our individual and collective training needs are known and that our equipment requirements are clearly understood.

Equipping needs for the National Guard fall into three broad categories, including general equipment modernization requirements for the Army and Air National Guard, the Army National Guard requirement for equipment reset, and implementation of the Army Modular Force. Army National Guard equipment modernization shortfalls for the period FY06-FY11 total approximately \$14.589B and include HMMWVs, small arms, night vision devices and tactical radios (SINCGARS). Air National Guard equipment shortfalls over the same period total approximately \$4.934B over the same period, including F-16 Pods, A-10 Pods, C-130H2 APN Radars, and the F-15 Joint Helmet Mounted Cueing System.

Army National Guard participation in the Army Modular Force initiative represents a critical component in the seamless integration of the Active and Reserve component force structure. The Army has included Army National Guard Brigade Combat Team costs in their funding strategy. This plan outlines \$3.0B in resourcing requirements for the Army Modular Force from FY05 through FY07.

Reset costs associated with Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operations Enduring Freedom represent another critical resource requirement for the Army National Guard. At present, \$855 million in reset costs were included in the FY05 supplemental request. Reset costs of approximately \$850M annually will result in a total reset resourcing requirement of approximately \$2.55B from FY05 through FY07.

I am tremendously proud of the men and women of the National Guard and the superlative job they are doing for this nation. I am optimistic that with your help, our organization will emerge

from the Global War on Terror stronger and more vital to the defense of freedom than at any time on our nation's history.

Thank you.