

Testimony of Maj Gen John F. Nichols to the NCFE on 10 Jul 2015

Members of the Commission, welcome to Texas and good morning. I am Maj Gen John Nichols the Adjutant General of Texas. Thank you for taking your valuable time to visit the Texas Army National Guard today.

America's total Army is composed great citizens from all walks of life across our country. We are all dedicated, devoted patriots who are ready to serve in the defense of America, whether we are in the Active, Guard or Reserve component. The National Guard also brings extra value to the fight. When the Guard goes to war, we bring a broad array of military and civilian skills and competencies, combat experience and the full support of over 2600 communities of our families, neighbors, and friends.

You are here today because America's Army is faced with the conundrum of defending America while being challenged by real budget constraints. How does America organize our Army so that it can defend our country both at home and abroad in a manner that preserves our freedom while balancing readiness, sustainability and **modernization** of our forces?

All discussions concerning the proper composition of America's Army need to keep in mind our mission, to keep America safe. When we are faced with difficult decisions we must put the American family at the center of the dialogue. We must put an end to parochial, biased, misinformed rhetoric and focus on our duty to defend America. We must ensure that the decisions have the safety and freedom of the American family in mind, not the size of "my or their component". Focusing on this "first thing" will keep the discussions concentrated on the right force mix for America's Army to keep America safe.

Today, under the Budget Control Act, America cannot afford a standing full-time force in the Army large enough to meet all of America's defense requirements. US Army leadership has stated that the requirements cannot be met without the National Guard. The Guard offers a value proposition to ensure the success of this "no-fail mission." We must capitalize on the fact that the ARNG provides 39% of the Total Army Operating Force for 13% of the Department of the Army's budget. When considering the budget constraints and the other requirements that must be met to keep America's Army in balance, I propose that you will find cost savings by investing in Guard forces. The savings realized can be invested in readiness, sustainability and modernization.

We certainly need an active force that can respond rapidly and decisively ("fight tonight") with some active regeneration capability. The deployment of these forces will utilize nearly all of our lift and transport capabilities and take some time. During this time the country can capitalize on its strategic hedge and mobilize the National Guard.

The Guard is accessible and available. The Guard can be maintained in a warm readiness, cost effective, posture, as it is today, with combat structure available when America needs it. The Guard can then mobilize and be ready to deploy when America is ready with lift and transport. The nation can rely on this force, when needed, and keep it in a less costly readiness state when it is not. The nation can afford this mixture of active and guard forces and do so in a manner that will ensure America's safety now and well into the future.

If the Army places the bulk of its combat forces in the active component, it leaves the country without a battle tested, highly experienced combat reserve, both on the ground and in the air. The National Guard formations need to be identical to the Active Army formations. We

fight and employ using the same doctrine. It is not logical, for instance, to place all of the Apache fleet solely in the active component. Where will the active Army go to replace their force in the future if it is all in the active duty? Where will it find the strategic depth that the Army National Guard provides to the nation today? Once this National Guard force is gone, America has no reversibility and no alternatives. The only reasonable method to unfailingly defend America is also to rely on America's strategic hedge the battle tested, Combat Reserve, the National Guard.

Accessibility

The TXARNG has never turned down a mission we have been asked to perform since 9/11. Our Governor wholeheartedly supports the combat deployments of the TXARNG. Our nation's Governors always have and always will support us in the defense of America. We have no impediments to deploy our national guard from Texas to wherever America needs us. Actually, our fill rate for deployments is 99.7%. We always answer the call of America both at home and abroad. Texas has deployed 32,000 soldiers since 9/11. During this same period we also answered the need of our citizens at home, responding to 190 emergencies. We answer the call, be it: combat, national security initiatives, building international partners, disaster response, homeland security, and most recently wide spread flooding. We do all of this at the same time and we have never failed our Governor or our citizens.

Interchangeability

There have been some misinformed statements made about interchangeability with the regards to the Active and Guard components. I am sure you are all familiar with the acronym, RIPTOA (Relieve in Place, Transfer of Authority). When the Guard deploys it performs a

RIPTOA with the Active Duty. When the Active Duty deploys it performs a RIPTOA with the Guard. We perform the same mission in the same AOR with the same effectiveness as our Total Force partners.

In 2011, the TXARNG 36TH Infantry Division was in command of the Total Force in Southern Iraq, specifically, the region south of Baghdad to the southern Iraq border. The division commanded Active Duty, Guard and Reserve Forces in (full spectrum) combat and nation building operations. That is, we replaced an active duty division headquarters and when our deployment was complete, we were replaced by an active duty division headquarters. Numerous other examples exist from every state's National Guard units, when they deployed in support of combat operations overseas.

In June 2015, the 36th ID completed a War Fighter Exercise at Fort Hood. The supporting organization included Active, Guard, and Reserve Forces. The Senior Mentor Lieutenant General Le Moyne said, "This was the best division Warfighter I have ever seen." There were numerous firsts, not the least of which is that they defeated the OPFOR.

I think America certainly needs an interchangeable combat force available to it and that force resides in the National Guard, your cost effective, accessible hedge for America's defense.

Homeland Defense and DSCA

Homeland Defense and Defense Support to Civil Authorities are priority missions that our Governors and citizens rely upon us to perform as we also defend America abroad. We are the nation's first responders in the homeland. We are a force that is connected to the community, our civilian first responders and community leaders. The Army National Guard is up to the task. Recently the Governor of Texas activated the TXNG on state active duty (fully state funded) to

deploy to the Texas Southern Border to secure it. Three thousand TXNG Soldiers and Airmen volunteered for this mission and we deployed 1000 of them. We still have TXNG members on the border today, while we have another 1000 deployed overseas.

The National Guard is not tired. Our people actively seek opportunities to serve their state and nation. Our employers enthusiastically support our forces, especially in Texas. They are collectively “all in.” As the Chief of the National Guard said on behalf of the National Guard, “We are all in,” both home and abroad. Our Governors support us, our fellow citizens, and families support us and we are “Always ready, always there”. We are the Guard.

Conclusion

I thank you for your time today. I did not mention the State Partnership Program and other capabilities nested in the National Guard because I know you are fully informed of their added value the National Guard brings to America.

I wish you luck and hope you can solve the dilemma of protecting America in this environment of budget challenges and rising threats to America and its allies.