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EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF EQUIPMENT SHORTAGES ON THE NATIONAL GUARD'S READINESS FOR HOMELAND SECURITY

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON MANAGEMENT, INVESTIGATIONS, AND OVERSIGHT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF EQUIPMENT SHORTAGES ON THE NATIONAL GUARD'S READINESS FOR HOMELAND SECURITY MISSIONS

Thursday, May 24, 2007

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MANAGEMENT, INVESTIGATIONS, AND OVERSIGHT
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 11:02 a.m., in Room 311, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Christopher Carney [chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Carney, Thompson, Clarke, Perlmutter, Christensen, and Rogers.

Mr. CARNEY. [Presiding.] The subcommittee will come to order.

The subcommittee is meeting today to receive testimony on examining the impact of equipment shortages on the National Guard's readiness for homeland security missions.

I welcome our four distinguished witnesses.

My first witness is Lieutenant General H. Steven Blum, the chief of the National Guard Bureau. In this capacity, he is the senior uniformed National Guard officer responsible for formulating, developing and coordinating all policies, programs and plans affecting more than half a million Army and Air National Guard personnel.

Prior to his current assignment, General Blum served as chief of staff, United States Northern Command. General Blum has commanded at every level, including a special forces operational detachment, a light infantry battalion, an infantry brigade and a division support command.

He received a bachelor's degree from the University of Baltimore, a master's degree from Morgan State University and is a graduate of the Army War College.

Our second witness is Major General Roger P. Lempke. General Lempke is the adjutant general of the Nebraska National Guard. In this capacity, he commands the state military forces and also directs the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, or NEMA.

General Lempke is also president of the Adjutant General's Association, which represents the senior leadership of the Army and Air National Guards of 50 states, the District of Columbia and the territories of Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

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He is a graduate of the United States Air Force Academy, and logged over 1,600 flying hours while in the Air Force. He also graduated with honors from the Air Force Institute of Technology.

Our third witnesses is Major General Mark Bowen, the adjutant general of Alabama. General Bowen first joined the Alabama Guard at age 16 as an enlisted man, and served more than 44 years in the military before becoming adjutant general in 2003.

During his career, he has served as commander of an engineering company, a transport battalion, a mechanized infantry battalion and ordnance group, as well as in a number of staff positions.

General Bowen earned a pharmacy degree from Auburn University in 1965, and later attend the Command and General Staff College as well as the Air War College.

Our fourth witness is Major General Robert P. French, the deputy adjutant general of the Army of Pennsylvania National Guard. He has served in each of the three major components of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard: the Pennsylvania National Guard joint headquarters, the 28th Infantry Division and the 213th Area Support Group.

In 1997, he was mobilized in support of Operation Joint Guard, the U.N. peacekeeping effort in the Balkans.

General French served as an enlisted man before attending Officer Candidate School. He was born in Mount Pleasant, Pennsylvania, and is a graduate of Mansfield State College. In 2001, he earned a master's degree in strategic studies.

The chair now recognizes the ranking member of the subcommittee, the gentleman from Alabama, Mr. Rogers, for an opening statement.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Chairman Carney. Thank you for calling this hearing on National Guard equipment needs.

I want to thank our panel for being here, and taking time out of their busy schedules.

And I particularly want to welcome General Bowen, the only guy on the panel who talks like me. So we are proud to have you here.

The folks in Alabama are grateful for the outstanding service provided by the nearly 14,000 dedicated men and women of the Alabama National Guard. Members of the Alabama National Guard are serving with distinction in Iraq and Afghanistan and they have provided valuable service after Hurricane Katrina.

Today's hearing will address the state of the readiness of the National Guard and will focus on specific equipment needs. While the war in Iraq has diverted a good bit of the Guard's equipment, it is important to remember that the dual role of the Guard envisions this mission.

Under existing law, the National Guard is double-hatted for state and federal roles. The governors may call up the Guard for domestic emergences, including natural disasters. The Guard also may be called for federal service, such as mobilizing for war, under the command of the president as commander in chief.

For these federal functions, the Department of Defense funds 90 percent of the Guard's budget. Guard divisions played key roles in major conflicts overseas, including World Wars I and II, Vietnam War, and now Iraq and Afghanistan.

In fact, the Alabama National Guard already has mobilized more than 13,000 soldiers and airmen in the global war on terror.

In light of the Guard's dual role, we look forward to hearing from our witnesses about a number of key issues, including how the adjutants general balance these two dual roles in times of emergencies, how the Guard is meeting its new mission to back up Border Patrol on the southwest border, how the role of the National Guard is evolving to confront the terrorist threat, and what additional equipment the National Guard will need to fulfill its mission.

With increasing demands made on the National Guard, both overseas and here at home, it is essential that the dedicated men and women who serve in the Guard have the support and equipment they need to get the job done when called into action.

And thank you, Mr. Carney. I yield back.

Mr. CARNEY. I thank the gentleman from Alabama. He has shown great leadership on this issue, and it is a pleasure working with him.

I will read my opening statement before turning this over.

The Management, Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee is meeting today to examine the impact that National Guard equipment shortages are having on the readiness for homeland security-related missions.

The recent tornadoes in Kansas have brought this issue to the front pages, but this has been an ongoing problem over the past several years.

As a lieutenant commander of the Navy Reserves, I know all too well the importance of Reserve and Guard units. Aside from their brave service with active units in deployments all over the world, Guard units serve at the pleasure of their respective governors and stands ready to assist their fellow citizens in a time of crisis.

In nearly every major large-scale events or natural disaster that has occurred stateside, Guard soldiers are a welcome sight for those in need. They are able to bring the incredible capabilities of our military to assist in the rescue of our citizens and the recovery of our communities.

Unfortunately, National Guard readiness has been compromised by rotations abroad, most notably as part of the global war on terror. It is standard operating procedure for units to deploy with their equipment.

In the past, equipment has returned with the Guard, but recently, their equipment has stayed in-theater to be used by replacement units.

Our current military commitments around the world have proven to be quite a burden on these Guard assets.

Current production and refurbishments schedules, not to mention budgets, are simply inadequate to effectively equip the Guard for its dual role.

While equipment readiness was not 100 percent pre–9/11, it has plummeted in the years since. Today the Guard has roughly 50 percent readiness. Unfortunately, we have already seen these numbers translate when it comes to domestic deployments.

Our Guard members are ready and willing to respond to domestic events, but in some cases, are simply unable to do so.

During the Katrina response, such a large contingency on the Louisiana Guard and their equipment was deployed overseas that many states responded with a significant portion of their assets that would have otherwise been needed. Should there have been another disaster in one of those states during the Katrina response, the Guard response would have been significantly diminished.

Closer to my home, recent snows and flooding in Pennsylvania led to Governor Rendell calling up the Guard. In fact, a member of my own staff deployed twice in the last few months with his unit.

In many cases, he deployed in equipment nearly twice his age. These vehicles, no matter how well they are maintained and cared for, cannot last forever.

Additionally, while the Guard effectively utilizes the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, or EMAC, to share equipment, in cases of natural disaster, an hour or 2, or the 24 hours that it takes to fly a helicopter from New Jersey or Ohio or New York to Pennsylvania may be the difference between life and death for someone waiting to be rescued from rising waters, encroaching fire or whatever the threat.

I look forward to hearing from the distinguished witnesses who agreed to join us today. And I hope that Congress can work to find some solutions to these readiness issues.

Now, I will turn to Mr. Thompson, chairman of the full committee, for his opening comments.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I am happy to be here. I welcome our witnesses for the hearing today.

The subject before us today, ensuring that the National Guard is equipped and ready for its homeland security mission, is not just of interest to certain geographical regions, political affiliations, religions or creeds.

As Hurricane Katrina taught us, disaster happens often without much warning, and they do not discriminate in their destructive nature. Katrina taught us tough lessons that are not easy to admit.

Even the best planning and preparedness may never be enough to safeguard every innocent human life. And the loss of life in any emergency is never acceptable.

Our emergency managers and responders carry a heavy burden that all too often goes unrecognized. So do the men and women of the National Guard.

Today the members of this subcommittee will hear testimony from some of our nation's most trusted and admired public servants, the men and women of the National Guard, our first military responders.

I would like to take a moment to commend General Blum and his staff for their commitment to our nation's security, and in particular for working as a partner with this committee to better secure America.

Today's hearing is the second in a series that this committee will hold to examine the relationship between military organizations such as the National Guard and the homeland security missions they are increasingly being relied on to support.

We have already heard from previous testimony that the National Guard today finds itself at a very tough crossroads, pursuing two very important but very different missions, one overseas, one here at home.

No matter what your political beliefs are about the wars in Iraq or Afghanistan, certain facts are undeniable. The conflicts abroad have left our citizen-soldiers at home without enough working equipment and stretched far too thin.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on this committee to empower our first responders, regardless of the uniform they wear. Men and women in camouflage, FEMA windbreaker, civilian clothing and fire gear all have something in common: They all come from our communities, serve our communities, and they deserve our support.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CARNEY. I thank the gentleman, and for his leadership.

We need to ask for unanimous consent for Mrs. Christensen to join us today.

Without objection, so ordered.

Thank you for your attendance, Mrs. Christensen.

Other members of the subcommittee are reminded that under committee rules, opening statements may be submitted for the record.

Without objections, the witnesses' full statements will be inserted into the record.

I now ask each witness to summarize his or her statement for 5 minutes, beginning with General Blum.

STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL STEVEN H. BLUM, CHIEF, NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU

General BLUM. Good morning, Chairman Carney, Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Rogers, other distinguished members of the subcommittee. I am honored to appear before you today and address concerns—your rightful concerns, I might add—about the impact of equipment shortages of the National Guard and their readiness to perform homeland security and homeland defense missions at the call of the governors.

Under the federal statute, the Army and Air National Guard are, first and foremost, reserve components of the Army and the Air Force. As the chief of the National Guard Bureau, my primary task is to channel federal resources to all of the states and territories so that their states and territorial National Guards can provide units that are trained and ready and equipped to perform military missions for our Army and Air Force.

But in addition to that, in addition to being a federal reserve for the Department of Defense, your National Guard also performs missions under the command and control of our nation's governors in times of emergency, right here in your ZIP Code, in your homeland and in your districts.

So we are a dual-use force. And we rely on dual-use equipment.

Since the hearing today inquires about the impact of equipment shortfalls on the National Guard missions, it is most appropriate that I am joined today by three genuine experts on this matter. They are adjutants general from three different states: from Penn-

sylvania, Alabama and Nebraska. So we have a wide geographical difference. And we also have differences in perspective because of the fact that some are Air National Guard and some are Army National Guard. But they are the joint National Guard commander in their state that serves their governor.

Nationwide, I can tell you that the National Guard prior to September 11th, 2001, had approximately 75 percent of the equipment that it was required to have against a validated requirement that was set by the Army and the Air Force to perform our federal combat missions abroad.

At the beginning of this year, that number was down to as low as 40 percent. It today stands at 53 percent, if you are talking about homeland defense/homeland security-essential equipment. If you are talking about the full spectrum of equipment that we require, it is only 49 percent. So roughly half of what we need is in our hands here at home.

The Department of Defense is taking strong, decisive action to address the equipment shortages of the National Guard. The budget request now before this Congress includes $22 billion for Army National Guard equipment over the next 5 years.

If this money is provided, and if it gets to where it was intended to go, these funds would bring the Army National Guard only back to its pre-9/11 equipment levels. We are in a post-9/11 world, and I am not certain that those levels match today's requirements.

This increased level of equipping will improve the military combat readiness of our units in the Army National Guard and will make them better able to respond in domestic emergencies here in the homeland as more equipment becomes available over the years.

I am grateful for the opportunity to appear before the subcommittee this morning, and welcome your questions. Thank you, sir.

[The statement of General Blum follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT FROM LIEUTENANT GENERAL STEVEN BLUM

Chairman Carney, ranking member Rogers and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today about military support to civil authorities during disasters. While the Army and Air National Guard are engaged with our active duty counterparts in combat operations around the world, the National Guard also maintains capability to help state governors to respond to disasters and other threats to American people here at home.

The Army and Air National Guard are reserve components of the United States Army and the United States Air Force. As such, our reason for existence is to provide units ready to be called to active duty to meet the Nation's military needs.

While the National Guard actively provides units to be mobilized for duty in combat operations overseas, we also recognize that the Nation's governors rely on their National Guard forces here at home to provide needed capability to respond to natural disaster or other threats inside the homeland. At the National Guard Bureau, we have made a commitment to the governors that our goal will be to manage National Guard mobilizations and overseas deployments to the degree that we can so that no more than 50 percent of any particular state's National Guard forces are absent from the state at any given time. The intent is to meet the Nation's military requirements overseas and, at the same time, to have capability remaining in states here at home to help Governors meet domestic emergencies which might arise. In general, we have been successful in meeting this goal. In those few instances where it has been necessary to mobilize more than 50 percent of a state's National Guard, we have worked closely with those governors to help them to identify and, if needed, to access National Guard capabilities in other states through interstate loans under the Emergency Management Assistance Compact.

The Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), which was quite effective in the response to Hurricane Katrina, is a proven means of redistributing equipment from state to state in order to address unfulfilled equipment requirements. As we work to improve our domestic equipping posture, the EMAC will play a major role in our domestic response capability. When a disaster overwhelms the capability resident in a state, that state may obtain equipment and forces from neighboring states in this way but that, of course, takes time.

At the beginning of this year, the Army National Guard had on-hand approximately 40% of the equipment which it is required to have. When equipment is needed but not on-hand at a particular location, it is necessary to bring in equipment from farther away either from other units within a state, or from other states under EMAC.

The Department of Defense is taking strong decisive action to address the equipment needs in the National Guard. The budget request now before Congress includes $22 billion for Army National Guard equipment over the next five years. If provided, these funds would bring the Army National Guard up to approximately 76% of the equipment its stated requirement. This increased level of equipping will not only improve the military combat readiness of our units in the Army National Guard but will also decrease response times to domestic emergencies here in the homeland as more equipment is available in the states.

I am grateful for the opportunity to appear before the committee today and welcome your questions.

Mr. CARNEY. Thank you, General.

I now recognize General Lempke to summarize his statement for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF MAJOR GENERAL ROGER P. LEMPKE, ADJUTANT GENERAL OF NEBRASKA, PRESIDENT, ADJUTANTS GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

General LEMPKE. Good. Thank you very much, Chairman Carney, Chairman Thompson—good to talk to you again—and Ranking Member Rogers. Thank you very much for holding this hearing.

Again, I am here today to really represent and to try to convey to you as best I can the overall feelings and attitudes of the 54 adjutants general from our states and territories.

The loss of National Guard equipment due to fighting terrorism has caused two issues for us.

First the equipment often most valued for disaster response has been that most often left behind overseas. We are talking Humvees, trucks, communications equipment, engineering equipment, helicopters, just to name a few items.

And secondly, the equipment shortages have become more uniform and widespread throughout the nation. Whereas previously, before 9/11, there might have been pockets where there was sufficient equipment, pockets where there was deficient equipment, what I see now and sense is throughout the nation a general reduction in levels in every single state.

I did a quick poll of the adjutants general prior to this hearing, asked them some key questions with regard to their ability to go to war and their ability to serve their state in times of disaster.

When you talk about the go-to-war situation, as General Blum pointed out, with 50 percent of our equipment generally available to us, it is very difficult to train and guarantee readiness if we are indeed called back to the theater of operations.

When it comes, though, to supporting our homeland security needs within each state, opinions somewhat differed. Most TAGs feel that they can have just as sufficient equipment to handle those disasters that we have experienced in the past.

So to characterize our equipment shortage, I would say that we are generally equipment shallow throughout the nation. And let me just talk about that for a moment.

First, it is important to, again, understand how this is measured. Typically, the measurements that you hear about are those compared against our wartime task listing. We have a list of equipment that we need to go to war, and we are measured, at the national level, about how close we are to having all that equipment. That is the 50 percent number that you hear about.

The next item that we look at, as a general, is how much equipment do we need to train? We don't need everything we have to go to war for to train, but we need some of it. And though there is always—that struggle, is, "Do we have enough equipment without out states to conduct efficient and effective training?"

And then the last factor we look at is, do we have sufficient equipment in the state to cover what we see as foreseeable disasters that can occur in our individual states. And there, we have to look at both quantities of equipment, but also geographic dispersment of that equipment for rapid response.

I will point out that there are measurements for the number one wartime item. I am not aware of actual measurements out there for what our in-state needs are. And, perhaps, that is something that needs to be developed.

Let me give you an example about Nebraska. I have a truck company out West in Chadron, Nebraska. Overall in the state, we are supposed to have 324 five-ton trucks throughout the state of Nebraska. Some of those go to that company out in Chadron. Of that number, I have 147 in the state.

When you take a look at my wartime readiness, that is about 50 percent. But when I take a look at having 147 five-ton trucks in Nebraska for emergency operations, I am dispersed throughout the state well enough where that is fine. So whereas my wartime readiness is down, at least in that item, I am sufficient.

When I take a look at helicopters, where all our helicopters are UH–60s and deployed overseas, I have a couple of loaders and some CH–47s, we are on the ragged edge in Nebraska.

So those are the kinds of things that we look at.

I would like to conclude here by just making some recommendations.

Fixed-wing or rotary-wing aircraft, UH–60s, CH–47s, the quantities have gradually diminished due to wartime losses and so forth. There are programs before Congress that will restore our rotary-wing aviation. That needs to continue and proceed at full vigor if we are going to support large disasters such as Katrina.

Guard Empowerment Act: It is important that we place responsibilities in DOD to support our homeland security needs in that portion of DOD that needs to support homeland security. The Guard Empowerment Act, which is H.R. 718, would provide that mechanism to make our boys that much stronger within DOD to accomplish that.

And finally, joint cargo aircraft. BRAC caused a loss of some key tactical airlift capability within the United States to the National Guard. The joint cargo aircraft will help restore that capability.

And it is vital to restoring that capability. And it is vital that that program stay on schedule.

Recently, language that was inserted into H.R. 1518, which is the authorization bill from the House, would restrict that program until certain conditions are met from the Air Force. I would simply ask that that issue be looked at very closely, because the schedule for fielding that aircraft is vital.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak this morning.

[The statement of General Lempke follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MAJOR GENERAL ROGER P. LEMPKE

Representative Carney and members of the House Committee on Homeland Security Subcommittee on Management, Investigations, and Oversight, I am Major General Roger P. Lempke, Adjutant General for Nebraska and President of the Adjutants General Association of the United States (AGAUS). Thank you for inviting me to testify in my capacity as President of the AGAUS representing the Adjutants General of the 50 states, three territories, and District of Columbia. As the nation enters hurricane season, tornado season, flooding season, and fire season the timing is perfect to review the capability of the National Guard to support civil authorities in responding to the full array of disasters that can bring significant harm to citizens and infrastructure.

The title of this hearing, "Examining the Impact of Equipment Shortages on the National Guard's Readiness for Homeland Security Missions," appropriately summarizes a situation that concerns all Governors and Adjutants General. The National Guard has always been under equipped. Prior to 9/11 the equipment situation varied widely. Designated units received priority on certain equipment items while other units trained on substitute equipment and some units had little to no equipment. Overall, the equipment level for the National Guard stood in the seventy percent range of designated critical items, but in reality many units had barely enough equipment to train with.

The loss of National Guard equipment to fighting terrorism overseas has caused two issues. First, the equipment most valued for disaster response has been that most often not returned from overseas—HUMVEES, trucks, communications equipment, engineering, and helicopters to name a few items. Secondly, equipment shortages have become uniform and widespread. No state can claim to be in good shape when assessing its equipment situation and each Adjutant General worries that other states may not be able to make up for shortfalls within their individual states if a large disaster, or series of disasters, occur.

My quick poll of the Adjutants General prior to this hearing revealed most states hovering in the forty to fifty percent of equipment required to "go to war." While most Adjutants General believe they have sufficient equipment to deal with single disasters common to their states, they fear insufficient quantities to deal with multiple disasters in their states or having to send equipment to support a regional disaster such as Katrina. I would characterize the national situation as being "equipment shallow" among the states. My testimony will expand on what I mean by "equipment shallow."

First, it is important to understand how equipment readiness is reported. Units in each state have standard lists of equipment needed for their wartime mission. Readiness is reported against these lists. The commonly reported equipment fill in the National Guard of fifty percent or less measures the readiness of National Guard units to accomplish their wartime mission. To my knowledge no similar measurement has been developed to uniformly assess the capability of National Guard units to support homeland security needs.

Adjutants General assess three factors with regard to equipment. The first is the capability of units to accomplish their wartime mission. A system exists for reporting the status of units for qualified personnel, training, and equipment to National Guard Bureau and ultimately the Army. The second factor is having sufficient equipment to train with. Typically, training can be effectively accomplished when less than fully equipped, but at some point the capability to effectively training diminishes due to equipment shortages. Finally, Adjutants General assess the quantity and location of equipment to provide disaster response and recovery in their states. It is this last factor that has no consistent set of guidelines and is often confused with wartime readiness. On one hand every Adjutant General responding to my query reported severe shortages in equipment on hand for their wartime missions; but on the other hand they generally reported sufficient equipment for re-

sponding to typical disasters in their states, with some exceptions, such as helicopters in those states whose aviation units are deployed.

Let me use a Nebraska example. The Army National Guard in Nebraska should have 324 five-ton trucks to equip all our transportation units for their wartime missions. Yet, I have only 147. For wartime mobilization Nebraska could field only half the units available because of this shortage (some of our trucks are old model substitutes which could not be sent overseas). But having 147 five-ton trucks positioned throughout the state has certainly been sufficient to respond to disasters in the state which have included a major tornado which destroyed a town about one third the size of Greensburg, Kansas; the largest wild fire in about ten years in western Nebraska; a major ice storm which knocked out power in central Nebraska and became the most costly natural disaster in Nebraska history. I could repeat this same story for most equipment on Nebraska equipment lists. If called upon to support EMAC requests as we did for Louisiana and Mississippi when Hurricane Katrina struck I would have to think longer and harder before recommending to my Governor that Nebraska send equipment out of the state.

With an understanding that a system for assessing National Guard capability to support homeland disaster response is lacking let me provide a summary of the comments received from my fellow Adjutants General regarding equipment.

- Rotary wing aircraft are at a premium because losses from war and accidents have depleted the CH–47 and UH–60 fleet. Additionally, for the first time a National Guard aviation brigade deployed to Iraq last year which depleted the number available for homeland security needs. The 36th Aviation Brigade will return this fall and time will be needed to restore its aircraft. In the mean time a second National Guard aviation brigade is preparing to deploy.
- Engineering equipment was at a premium before the war and much of it that was shipped overseas has stayed there. Earth moving equipment is needed for most major disasters and priority in replacing this equipment is important to restoring our overall capability to meet homeland security needs.
- Many Adjutants General pointed to communications, and specifically interoperability, as major concerns. Modern Army communication equipment is often left overseas. When coupled with rapid improvements in local and state communications systems the National Guard is falling behind in its ability to quickly attach to a local area communications grid set up to deal with a disaster.
- Chemical detection and protection gear and equipment. This has been a chronic problem for the National Guard. Although many Chemical units exist they are usually chronically under equipped for their critical mission.

Hopefully, I have adequately explained the problem. What we now seek are solutions. Congress has already acknowledged the severe equipment shortage facing the National Guard and taken action to direct several billon dollars to fix the problem. However, specifying funds and actually having them wind up where needed to fix the problem are two different things. Funding has been promised before only to be diverted once in the hands of the Department of Defense to other priorities. First and foremost legislation is needed that will direct the Department of Defense to embrace homeland security needs and establish mechanisms to ensure these needs are addressed along with its mission to fight the nation's wars.

The National Guard Empowerment Act of 2007 introduced as H.R. 718 by Representative Tom Davis (R–VA) and Gene Taylor (D–MS) contains provisions to specifically deal with National Guard equipping issues. Section 7 of this legislation calls for specific reporting by DoD that will ensure funds intended for equipping the National Guard actually result in equipment arriving at units. It will also provide Congress the information needed to assess whether sufficient National Guard equipment is available for homeland security needs. It also elevates the Chief, National Guard Bureau, to four-star rank and assigns the responsibility of chief advisor to the Secretary of Defense on National Guard matters, particularly those related to supporting civil authorities during domestic emergencies. Other sections of the legislation also seek to strengthen the National Guard's ability to support homeland security needs.

The information I have shows that Representatives Carney (D–PA), DeFazio (D–OR), Perlmutter (D–CO), and King (R–NY) on this subcommittee are co-sponsors of H.R. 718. I would recommend that all members of this subcommittee review this legislative initiative and become co-sponsors. The equipping problem will take a long time to resolve and legislation that will keep the Department of Defense focused on this issue is vital to success.

The next recommendation is to fully fund critical helicopter procurement and modernization programs. The UH–60 Blackhawk and CH–47 are workhorses in Afghanistan and Iraq and essential capabilities for responding to disasters in-state and regionally. In total, the National Guard is short approximately 130 UH–60

Blackhawk and 30 CH–47 Chinook helicopters. The Army plan to restore its helicopter fleet to full strength must be given top funding priority. Along with this modernization programs that bring National Guard helicopters to the latest configurations are also important. Nebraska used borrowed UH–60's to fight wildfires last fall. These helicopters had engine and transmission modifications that Nebraska's deployed helicopters do not have. With these modifications the "loaners" were able to carry larger water loads with faster turnaround times. Finally, the procurement of the UH–72 light utility helicopter begins in fiscal year 08. This aircraft brings a unique combination of versatility and lost operating cost that will prove vital to enhancing the National Guard's ability to respond to homeland security needs.

My final recommendation concerns the Joint Cargo Aircraft, or JCA. The National Guard's tactical airlift flight of C–130's is smaller now, due to BRAC and other reasons, than when Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005. The JCA is slatted to fill the gap. The program will field an off-the-shelf aircraft for the Army and Air Force to meet short haul battlefield needs while also serving as a primary asset for moving National Guard assets quickly to disasters nationwide. The program cannot afford a delay.

Recent language inserted into the House National Defense Authorization Bill for fiscal year 08 would restrict funds for the JCA program until certain reports and other actions are accomplished by DoD. The Adjutants General certainly appreciate the frustration Congress must feel in not being able to review studies and reports that address the situation with the nation's airlift fleet. We would only ask that the JCA not become the pawn in dealing with this issue.

If the JCA is not fielded as currently scheduled several negative impacts will result. First, the Army National Guard will not be able to replace the aging C–23 Sherpa aircraft. Second, the Air National Guard will not be able to place the JCA at locations the BRAC legislation directed the removal of current mission aircraft and replacement with new mission aircraft. Third, the National Guard tactical airlift fleet available for disaster support will be diminished in numbers and breadth of national coverage.

On behalf of the Adjutants General I ask the subcommittee to consult with colleagues involved with the authorizations process to seek way to obtain their information with jeopardizing the JCA schedule.

It has been said that a rising tide raises all boats. So it is with National Guard equipment. Funding already identified for National Guard must result in the consistent flow of equipment to units of all kinds to all states throughout the nation. We need this equipment to be ready for the next fight to defeat terrorism for certain. Achieving reasonably high equipment levels for the war fight will also ensure sufficient equipment is available to support civil authorities responding to disasters. Thank you for your interest in this topic vital to the safety of Americans.

Mr. CARNEY. Thank you for your testimony.

I now recognize General Bowen to summarize his statements for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF MAJOR GENERAL C. MARK BOWEN, ADJUTANT GENERAL OF ALABAMA

General BOWEN. Thank you, Chairman Carney, Congressmen Rogers, Thompson, distinguished members of this committee. I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you, particularly about military support to civilian authorities during a disaster.

While the Army and Air Guard are engaged in combat operations around the world, we also respond to the governor's call for disasters there in Alabama.

I am proud to say that Alabama is number one in troops deployed to OIF. We have sent over 13,000 soldiers mobilized since 9/11.

My comments today apply only to the Alabama Guard.

The Army National Guard has never been fully equipped, as General Lempke said. Pre-9/11, we generally hovered somewhere around the 60 percent range. Well, those states with combat units, you know, we do some cross-leveling, and we give them additional units and we move from one unit to another to get ready to deploy.

Because of the war in Iraq, we left a lot of equipment over there in the first two rotations. So our levels dipped below 50 percent. And we are still below 50 percent.

The thing about the equipment, it does improve your impact, the speed you respond and how much flexibility you have got to respond.

We do cross-leveling, I will show in this chart later. But also, as General Lempke was talking about, the readiness reports and the National Guard's federal mission do not necessarily apply directly to the readings in each state in order to support homeland security.

And he talked about, if I have my engineering units, my M.P. units, my aviation units, my transportation units deployed, then I am short personnel and equipment for a hurricane.

We try our best.

And General Blum at headquarters has been real good in making sure that all my M.P.s are not deployed at one time. But as I say, some of these units may be more critical for homeland security than an EOD unit, for example.

When the equipment and the capabilities have been depleted in the Guard for whatever reason, then the state officials have fewer options to what we can do. And we certainly have a myriad of potential disasters.

Well, as Congress, you all have appropriated a significant amount of money to deal with equipment shortfalls, but it is going to take a long time to catch up. The $22 billion that General Blum is talking about will only take us back to where we were.

I would like to mention also that, Mr. Carney, you talked about the EMAC agreement. The EMAC agreement has been good. It is not broke. Let's don't fix it.

It does take a little time to fly a UH–60 from Pennsylvania, but when we start seeing a hurricane coming, we start working our EMAC agreements with our adjacent state right quick like. So we will them on ground before they start.

I also brought—and I gave you a handout here—an answer to those questions that you asked.

Have I alerted my governor about specific equipment shortages? Yes, I have. I try to build three task forces. I have three task forces because sometimes I sent to Mississippi and one to Louisiana. Katrina, I had one in Mobile, one in Mississippi, and one in Louisiana. So I am talking about equipment to support.

Just recently, just yesterday and the day before, I got 100 Humvees for FORCECOM to help support this. Now, this is not equipment I can use for training, but I can use it to respond to national disasters. So I got those this week.

Alabama has enough equipment right now to manage up to a Cat 4 hurricane, so I am in pretty good shape there. On my chart, you will see where I am authorized 699 Humvees. I am required 344 for my disaster. I have got 244 on hand but I got 100 that just came in this week from FORCECOM, and that is the first time we have ever done anything like that, so that is a big for that.

Forklifts I am okay on.

I was short a generator, but in Alabama, we try to use other than military generators. The governor has been real good about

that, and we don't want to get the military the generators too much.

The next question, "How is your state National Guard going to be able to respond to change?" Well, we haven't change a whole lot. We are relatively the same as we were, but it is the first year of FORCECOM.

This equipment alone does not satisfy my requirement for training equipments that General Lempke talked about. If I am going to war, it takes a lot of time at the mob station if I am not training on new equipment, Blue Force Tracker or something like that. We need training sets of the kind of equipment that we are going to operate on in Iraq, and that is what we really need. So we are short equipment. There is no doubt about that.

For hurricanes, I am okay. As I said, my estimate on the general situation, I am good. We accomplished it by transferring it from one unit to the other and we are good there.

I noticed one thing they sent in here, General Blum. You know, you gave us this joint incident site communications van, but you didn't give us anything to pull it with.

[Laughter.]

I am going to have something. It will take about a Ford 350—

General BLUM. Thank you for bringing that up at the hearing.

[Laughter.]

General BOWEN. I thought it would—

General BLUM. You can be assured you are going to get something to pull it with pretty quickly.

General BOWEN. All right. Thank you, sir.

Any questions?

[The statement of General Bowen follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MAJOR GENERAL C. MARK BOWEN

1. *Have you alerted your Governor of specific equipment shortages that could hinder the ability of the AL ARNG to adequately respond to disasters?*

—We have and notified NGB of critical equipment shortages required to support three (3) TF elements. (JTF Alabama, JTF North, JTF South). Specific shortages contained in next slide.

—Delivery of requested HMMWVs (100) to support critical shortage. 50 each delivered 22 May 07, remaining 50 ea scheduled next week.

—Alabama has enough equipment to manage up to a CAT 4 hurricane without outside assistance.

2. *How has your state National Guard's ability to respond to disasters in the state changed over the last year or so?*

—Stayed relatively the same. We had to forecast equipment loan last year just as this year. This is the first year FORSCOM has actually loaned us needed equipment.

—This equipment loan does not satisfy the shortage of equipment for training units and mobilization of units.

—Equipment returns from mobilization and in many cases lateral transferred to other units that are mobilizing.

—We lateral transfer HMMWVs, weapons systems, communications systems, constantly to maintain units at appropriate equipment levels to conduct DSCA support, Training, and Mobilization of units. We are short equipment.

3. *From your best estimate how would you characterize the general equipment situation in your state?*

—As stated, AL ARNG can handle equipping up to three (3) DSCA TFs.

—This equipment level was accomplished by lateral transfer to TF units from other units and loan of critical equipment from FORSCOM during the hurricane season.

—We are able to support DSCA requirements by loan and cross level; however we are short in training equipment and mobilization equipment.

4. *Describe any specific equipping issues beyond shortages that you believe the subcommittee should know about.*

—We were fielded the Joint Incident Site Communications Center (JISC) without a vehicle to pull it. Commercial trailer requiring at least a 350 series heavy duty truck with bumper hitch. Not conducive to military vehicles.

ATTACHMENT:

Task Force Equipment Required to Support Hurricane Operations

Nomenclature	Authorized	Req/ O/H	TAG Short
HMMWV	699	344/244	*100
Loader, 2.5 Cy	7	7/6	1
Fork Lift	15	15/5	**10
60 KW Gen	24	8/5	***3
5K Gal Tanker	60	20/17	3

(Req) Required task force equipment to fully equip TF elements for hurricane support.
* Loaned to AL ARNG by FORSCOM
** 3 ea scheduled for new delivery by FORSCOM
*** 2 ea scheduled for new delivery by FORSCOM

Supplemental Information:
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Mr. CARNEY. No. Thank you for your statement, General Bowen.

I now recognize General French to summarize his statement in 5 minutes. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF FRENCH, DEPUTY ADJUTANT GENERAL, ARMY, JOINT FORCES HEADQUARTERS, PENNSYLVANIA NATIONAL GUARD

General FRENCH. Chairman Thompson, Chairman Carney, Ranking Member Rogers and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for allowing me to speak to you today.

At home, the Guard functions as a modern militia, as we already have talked about, under the support of the governor for the domestic emergencies. And the National Guard is rightly called America's home team.

I can tell you that our governor, Governor Rendell, takes great pride in his role as commander in chief.

In recent years, our Guard has experienced an unprecedented operations tempo like everyone else, performing federal missions around the globe.

Since 9/11, more than 16,000 of our Army and Air Guard members have deployed in active federal status to support the global war on terror.

I mention these deployments because of their impacts on homeland security responsibilities. Pennsylvania is fortunate to have

one of the largest National Guard forces in the United States, and we have been able to respond effectively to domestic emergences, even as we have large numbers that are deployed around the world.

For example, in September of 2005 when we had a brigade overseas in Iraq, the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, we deployed another brigade to assist with Hurricane Katrina down in Louisiana. The response was accomplished through EMAC.

Even though our Guard has responded effectively in the past to various domestic emergencies, I must tell you that our senior leadership has concerns about equipment readiness to respond to an emergency of extended duration or widespread impact.

For example, in June of 2006, as the chairman mentioned, we had a flood in northeastern Pennsylvania. There were over 1,000 water rescues made by the Pennsylvania Guard.

Our worry is, what would happen if that were a wider-spread emergency throughout the commonwealth and beyond our borders? EMAC is a tool to use, but, as has been mentioned earlier, the timing becomes an issue as to the availability of equipment.

The bottom line is that equipment shortages in the Guard result in a slower response time than if we were fully equipped.

In terms of equipment, Pennsylvania is again fortunate in that the Guard was the only reserve component that was selected for the new Stryker Brigade Combat Teams. This means that our 56th Stryker Brigade is getting the latest equipment. But even with that new equipment, our Guard still faces a significant equipment shortage in categories of equipment vital to homeland security.

For equipment identified for use in performing these tasks, we currently have 44.5 percent of our requirement. What we really need is 100 of the equipment authorized.

Also of concern is the age and the condition of the equipment. As an example, our deuce and a halves and five-ton trucks are 35 to 40 years old—well-maintained, but they are old.

Let me make one point clear, though. When we send our soldiers and our airmen to deploy in combat, they are always prepared, with the best equipment and the best training.

They are the best Guard airmen and soldiers that we have ever had in the Pennsylvania Guard. However, it would be far better for our units if they had the same equipment at home, not just to enhance the training but also to increase readiness for emergency preparedness—the same equipment at home as they would have when they would deploy.

We don't just need to respond effectively in domestic emergencies. We need, also, to have facilities from which to mount that response. The ability to respond effectively is always one that is joint. And it often involves nongovernment and nonmilitary agencies as well.

Governor Rendell, with outstanding support from our congressional delegation, has advanced the plan so that Willow Grove Naval Air Station will become a model in joint interagency basing.

This will provide a regional strategic response capability in the Northeast region.

We don't know what kind of emergencies or what kind of contingencies may arise in the future. We do know that the current lack of equipment degrades our ability in certain catastrophic scenarios.

As we have in the past, the Guard stands ready to perform both its warfighting and homeland security missions. We need the same commitment to equipping our units for homeland security that we have to sending our units to war.

Thank you.

[The statement of General French follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MAJOR GENERAL ROBERT P. FRENCH

Chairman Thompson, Chairman Carney, ranking member Rogers and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today about the impacts of equipment shortages on the National Guard's readiness to respond to homeland security missions. I am appearing on behalf of Pennsylvania's Adjutant General, Major General Jessica L. Wright, who regrets that she was unable to be here today. General Wright asked me to convey her thanks to you and the subcommittee for undertaking this inquiry into this important subject. General Blum has given you a national perspective on these issues, and I will focus on the impacts on the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania Army and Air National Guard.

The National Guard is the only military force shared by the states and the federal government. The soldiers and airmen of Pennsylvania Army and Air National Guard perform vital missions abroad as members of reserve components of the Army and the Air Force. At home, the Guard functions as the modern militia responding to the Governor in times of domestic emergencies. Except when performing active federal service under the direction of the President, the Guard remains a state military force under the command and control of the Governor. The National Guard is rightly called America's home team, and I can tell you that our Governor, Ed Rendell, takes great pride in his role as commander-in-chief of the Pennsylvania National Guard when it is not in active federal service.

In recent years, the Pennsylvania National Guard has experienced an unprecedented operations tempo performing active federal service in Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia Kosovo, and elsewhere around the globe. Since September 11, 2001, we estimate that more than 16,000 of the over 19,000 men and women who serve in the Pennsylvania National Guard have been deployed in an active federal status in support of the Global War on Terrorism. The duration and location of these deployments have varied, but we have had major combat units deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan for tours of up to 12 months on the ground plus six months training in mobilized status. In September 2005, we had more than 6,000 Pennsylvania National Guard soldiers and airmen on active duty under Titles 10 and 32, United States Code. Today, the number of mobilized and deployed soldiers and airmen is smaller, with about 650 in an active federal service status. These numbers are expected to grow in the future. I mention these deployments because of their potential impacts on homeland security responsibilities.

Pennsylvania is fortunate to have one of the largest National Guard forces in the United States, and we have been able to respond effectively to domestic emergencies even as large numbers of our personnel and their equipment have been deployed overseas. For example, in September 2005, at a time when over 2,000 soldiers from our 2nd Brigade Combat Team were deployed to Al-Anbar province in Iraq, we were about to deploy nearly 2,500 soldiers and airmen to Louisiana in response to the Hurricane Katrina disaster. I believe Pennsylvania deployed the largest Guard force to the Gulf Coast of any state except for those in the direct path of the storm's devastation. This response was accomplished under the auspices of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), which has proven an effective tool for the states to work together to respond to domestic emergencies, with coordination from the National Guard Bureau.

Even though I believe the Pennsylvania National Guard has responded effectively in the past to various homeland security and domestic emergency contingencies, I must tell you that the senior leadership of the Pennsylvania National Guard has concerns about our equipment readiness to respond to an emergency or homeland security contingency of extended duration or widespread impact. For example, in June 2006, the Pennsylvania National Guard responded magnificently to the flooding in Northeast Pennsylvania. Our Army National Guard helicopters participated in nearly 1,000 water rescues, and who can forget the photographs of people being

lifted up from the roofs of their homes or from vehicles stranded in the on-rushing waters of the floods. Our worry is what would happen if an even more widespread emergency arose at a time when the Army National Guard's helicopters were deployed overseas.

The same aircrews that rescued Pennsylvanians from the floods were earlier deployed to Afghanistan. Aircraft that these aircrews flew in Afghanistan were left in country and replaced with other airframes. What if our Governor and our Commonwealth lacked the military assets to respond? Even though the Emergency Management Assistance Compact means that assets from our neighboring states could be made available, it's unlikely they could be on scene as quickly. Interstate movement of personnel and equipment in response to an EMAC scenario will rarely, if ever, result in as prompt a response as use of in-state assets. The bottom line is that equipment shortages in the Guard result in slower response time than if the Guard were fully equipped. These concerns are shared by many states.

In terms of equipment, Pennsylvania again is fortunate in that the Pennsylvania Army National Guard was the only state National Guard force—and indeed the only reserve component force in America—selected for fielding of the new Stryker Brigade Combat Team. This means that, as part of its transformation, our 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team is getting the latest equipment. Even so, our Army National Guard faces significant equipment shortages in categories of equipment that might be vital in response to homeland security and domestic emergency scenarios.

Pennsylvania has only about 50% of its authorized numbers of truck tractors and flatbed trailers. We have only about 45% of our authorized number of Bradley Fighting Vehicles. Our soldiers have only 32% of night vision equipment and 69% of small arms and crew-served weapons on hand. We have only 48% of the authorized number of fuel tankers for our force.

For equipment identified for use in performing homeland security and disaster relief, the Pennsylvania Army National Guard is currently equipped at **44.5%** of its requirement for aviation, chemical, engineer, logistical, maintenance, transportation, medical, signal and security equipment. Of the equipment identified by line item number for homeland security/emergency response needs, **48.8%** are considered critical dual use equipment items. Our goal is to fill 100% of the 342 critical dual use items as ?key enablers.?

Also of concern is the age and condition of our equipment. It is a common occurrence for the driver of a National Guard truck or the pilot of a National Guard aircraft to be younger—sometimes significantly younger—than the equipment he or she is operating. Nearly all our 2.5-ton (deuce and a half) and five-ton trucks are 35 to 40 years old. Our heavier trucks average 20 to 25 years of age.

Let me make one point clear, when our soldiers and airmen deploy to combat, they are provided the best-available up-to-date equipment. Superbly trained and equipped, our deployed Guard soldiers and airmen are ready for battle. However, it would be far better if our units had that same equipment at home, not just to enhance training, but also to increase readiness for the homeland security and emergency preparedness missions.

We don't just need equipment to respond effectively in domestic emergencies; we need the facilities from which to mount our response. The ability to respond effectively to homeland security and emergency scenarios is almost always one that requires a joint response involving both military and non-military government organizations. Governor Ed Rendell, with outstanding support from our Congressional delegation, has advanced a plan so that Willow Grove Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base can function as a joint interagency base and homeland security hub after the Navy leaves the installation. While Navy and Marine units will leave Willow Grove as a result of BRAC, Pennsylvania Air and Army National Guard units, along with the Army Reserve, plan to operate there well into the future. Flight operations are an absolutely essential element of any disaster relief effort facilitating rapid response and recovery in emergency situations. The joint interagency base approach will provide for an installation in a key strategic location with DoD-level security for units and agencies that can respond to a wide variety of scenarios. This represents an innovative approach to provide homeland security response capabilities, and we believe Willow Grove will become a model homeland security installation.

Permit me also to mention an Air Guard equipment issue of importance. The 193rd Special Operations Wing is converting to eight new EC–130J aircraft replacing older EC–130Es. The DoD had planned to outfit six of the new aircraft with special mission equipment to conduct the unit's one-of-a-kind "Commando Solo" mission—airborne broadcast of multimedia programs in support of information operations. The 193rd is the only organization in the DoD that conducts this important tasking. Its C–130s could play a major role in disaster response scenarios. To date, only three of the required six aircraft have been modified to perform the mission,

and we have learned that DoD does not plan to fund Commando Solo equipment for the final three aircraft.

General Blum has told you about Department of Defense action to address the equipment needs in the National Guard, and this is certainly a positive development. As long as the Guard is competing with the active forces for available funds and equipment, and as long as homeland security and emergency preparedness are viewed as secondary concerns, the Guard will have difficulties in obtaining the numbers, quality and types of equipment we need to best respond to emergencies. We don't know what kind of contingencies or emergencies may develop in the future. We do know that the current lack of equipment on hand could degrade our ability to respond in certain catastrophic scenarios. We also do know that the National Response Plan and state emergency response scenarios give the National Guard an important role to play in addressing various emergency support functions.

As we have in the past, the Pennsylvania National Guard stands ready to perform both its war-fighting and homeland security missions. We need the same commitment to equipping our units for homeland security and emergency response missions that we have when we send our units on war-fighting missions overseas.

Thank you again for looking into this very significant issue.

Mr. CARNEY. Thank you, General.

The chair would also like to recognize the letter of support that the committee received from the National Guard Association of the United States in support of this hearing today.

I would like to ask unanimous consent to enter it in the record.

Hearing no objections, so ordered.

I would like to thank all the witnesses for their testimony.

And I will remind each member that he or she will now have 5 minutes to question the panel.

I will go out of order and recognize the ranking member, Mr. Rogers from Alabama, for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROGERS. I thank the chairman for that.

I want to start with General Lempke. You made reference to the Guard Empowerment Act. Tell me more about it and why you find it critical.

General LEMPKE. A major issue that it addresses is a voice for homeland security within DOD. And within that, it does a number of things. Number one, it would elevate the chief of the National Guard Bureau to a four-star level and be the primary adviser to the secretary of defense on homeland security matters.

And when you take a look at the Air Force charter and the Army charter, neither of those have homeland responsibilities in those charters, but yet the National Guard reports to both, and we do.

There needs to be a voice, a joint voice within DOD, to represent these concerns, so when you start talking dual-use equipment and other special-use equipment, that voice gets heard at the DOD level.

It also offers provisions in there for reporting equipment needs, for reporting the status of the states through DOD to Congress. So it has a number of features in it that go directly to the readiness of the National Guard in the individual states to perform their state mission.

That is why that legislation is so critical right now.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you.

General Bowen, you made reference to cross-leveling. What is that?

General BOWEN. That is whenever I have a—and I deal with people and with equipment. Let's say a unit is only filled to 50 percent of the Humvees. When they go to war, I have got to pull 50 from

some other units to put them in that unit so when they go to war, they have got everything they are supposed to have.

And that is what we have been doing now for about 4 years, is moving equipment from one unit to another unit for deployment.

And then I do the same thing for hurricanes. These three task forces I have got, I have to shuffle equipment around so they have everything they are supposed to have.

Mr. ROGERS. Okay.

And General French, you made reference to being at 44 percent of your authorized equipment. And this, I guess, is not only you, but for any member of the panel, were any of you at 100 percent of your equipment needs prior to 9/11?

General FRENCH. Sir, in our case, prior to 9/11, we were about at 68 percent of our authorized equipment. So we have never been at 100 percent for my knowledge ever.

Mr. ROGERS. Is there any other—

Yes, sir?

General LEMPKE. We had some priority units prior to 9/11 that were very close to 100 percent, because they were a high-priority unit. But otherwise, no.

Mr. ROGERS. General Bowen, you talked about, you are roughly at 66 percent now. How long would it take you to get to 100 percent if the funding level that we are talking about for next year continued?

General BOWEN. Well, Congressman, that is a little bit above my level, because I am not sure what the production capacity of our industry is. Because, you know, we have been producing up-armored Humvees. That is one of the items I am short, and I don't have any of them.

But, you know, we really haven't been—and it is a knock on the country—we haven't been on a war-fight mentality, manufacturing-wise or anything else.

So this is echelons above me. But you have got to get the manufacturing lines going again before you can produce all these things, even if you had the money to pay for it.

Mr. ROGERS. Well, again, I guess I am trying to get a feel from any of you how long you think it would take.

General Blum?

General BLUM. I am rather confident that provided the additional resources that would be required, you could accomplish this in the next 5 years. And you could do it sooner if enough resources were applied.

So it is a matter of money against time. This equipment is readily available. The industrial base can produce it. If the resources are there, this country can produce the type of equipment that we are talking about in pretty short order.

So I would say you could do it as quickly as 2 to 3 years if enough money were put there. And you could take it as long as you want to take, if—it depends on how much resources are applied to the problem.

Mr. ROGERS. And General Bowen, you might be familiar with the article that was in the Tuscaloosa News April 23rd. It talked about Guard equipment in Alabama.

And the gist of the article, as I understand it, was that you were training on different equipment than your troops were having to use in-theater. Could you expand on that problem in your state?

General BOWEN. Yes, sir. Whenever we deploy, the Army gives us the latest equipment that is out there. An example would be, I mentioned Blue Force Tracker, for example, which is a system where you go, you can monitor where you are, where your buddies are, combat reports and all of that, but we really don't have many of those in Alabama.

If it is a Jeep—any kind of new equipment, whether it is a radio gear or what, if you don't have it at home to train with, then it takes additional time when you get to the mob station to train on that—it is called NET training, new equipment training. And that is where we are.

If we had it at home, just training sets, it would shorten the mob time at the mob station.

General BLUM. It would also improve our ability to respond domestically. What General Bowen is talking about is a system that allows us to know where every vehicle and where critical nodes of logistics are and where our personnel are.

Consider having that level of knowledge, that level of knowing and seeing where your assets are, in transit, and which ones are there in a disaster response. It really makes the response more effective, more timely.

It keeps us from sending things that are not necessary to places where they are already being addressed. And it lets us clearly know where we are not able to get the water and food and shelter materials and the medical materials to the people in need because we think they are there, but we don't have a way to positively know they are there.

This Blue Force Tracking is very much what a cutting-edge industry uses today, such as FedEx and UPS, to know where their in-transit critical items are. We need the same thing when we respond here in the homeland.

Mr. ROGERS. Right. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CARNEY. I thank the gentleman from Alabama.

I will now recognize myself for 5 minutes.

General French, you know, I am a Pennsylvania guy, too, and I was impacted by the floods last June, pretty heavily, up in Susquehanna County where I am from.

And actually they occurred on my anniversary, and my wife still hasn't forgiven me for having her and the kids drive through floods. So, anyway, I am very interested in your responses here.

Was your ability to respond to those floods, and, in fact, the snowstorms, impacted by equipment shortages that we have heard about?

General FRENCH. Sir, because of the fact that it was a regional type of emergency, rather than a state-wide emergency, we were able to marshal the resources we needed to put 1,000 people out on the street in very short order.

And the responses that were made, equipment-wise, in Pennsylvania, we have got our three brigade combat teams that are dis-

persed throughout the commonwealth. And so that, of course, allows us to have equipment on-station to meet those regional needs.

It is the broader scope that concerns us.

Mr. CARNEY. Understood. Thank you.

You did a fine job up there, by the way. I have to commend you. They were on the ground quickly.

My little village actually was surrounded. We couldn't leave, once I got in.

General Lempke, in your prepared statement, you state that, "Specifying funds and actually having them wind up where needed to fix the problem are two different things."

You go on to say that the promised funding had been diverted by the Department of Defense. Can you elaborate on that point and provide us with some examples on what has happened and how it has impacted your readiness?

General LEMPKE. The most recent example I can provide it what is going on right now with military construction. Currently, everybody realizes that there is an overrun condition encountered with BRAC. And so, we are seeing important projects that we had identified, the adjutant generals had identified, for the states—and these projects are important because the geographic factor was mentioned before—those projects being delayed and deferred because of this funding going elsewhere to support BRAC. That is one example.

In the past, when we have had equipment identified that was supposed to come down to the Guard, other priorities would be set up and it would go elsewhere.

Now, admittedly, more recently, some of that has been directly overseas to the war. No arguments about those conditions.

But as the situation changes and everybody realizes that the Guard must rebuild, we must assure that that equipment does flow through and reach the National Guard.

The Guard Empowerment Act, again, has provisions for reporting those kinds of numbers, so that you, Congress, can see that your intentions are met—when you allocate money for the Guard, it actually shows up in equipment for the Guard.

Mr. CARNEY. Thank you.

General French, another question: In your prepared testimony, you state that, "As long as homeland security and emergency preparedness are viewed as secondary concerns, the Guard will have difficulty in obtaining the numbers, quality and types of equipment we need to best respond to emergencies."

Could you elaborate on this, please? Where and by who is homeland security and emergency preparedness viewed as secondary concern?

General FRENCH. What I meant by that is that all of our equipping is based upon our warfight, on our TO&E units. And so, thereby, we develop the needs based off our our go-to-war mission.

We have always said that when we are ready to go to war, we are also ready to take care of our communities. And so, because our soldiers are well trained, the equipment that we need to do the wartime mission in many ways lends itself to homeland security.

So, as has been mentioned a bit earlier, what happens today because of the war effort is equipment is going to the right place. We

want to make sure our soldiers and airmen have the best equipment, so that when they go into battle, they are ready, fully trained and fully equipped.

What that does is, by shifting the resources, it leaves us with either substitute items at home or no equipment at home.

Mr. CARNEY. Was there somebody in Homeland Security that you know about that says this is a secondary concern?

General FRENCH. No, sir, there is not.

Mr. CARNEY. Okay, thank you.

General LEMPKE. Congressman, could I chime in on that one?

Mr. CARNEY. Absolutely.

General LEMPKE. I am not going to put words in his mouth, but the issue here goes back to mission. When we take a look at our requirements on the DOD side and what our needs are in the state, again, it is the federal mission that is looked at by the Army and the Air Force, as it should be and as they were chartered to do.

It is up to us, then, to try to match that up with what our real needs are. One initiative in that area has been the critical 10 that General Blum and the National Guard Bureau have generated, trying to get 10 critical capabilities into each state.

That is a National Guard initiative. That has not been a DOD initiative.

So we need more attention at the DOD level on these state needs, if you will.

Mr. CARNEY. Thank you, General.

General Blum, quickly, can you put the current situation in a historical perspective? How do you compare the shortages we have heard about today with, say, 40 years ago?

General BLUM. Well, for the last 40 years, the National Guard has been underequipped, and it is underequipped today. The difference is, the National Guard is no longer a strategic reserve that will be used only in the late innings of World War III.

What we are talking about is an operational force that is used every single day. Today, while we are talking at this hearing, 20 governors have their National Guard called out.

Eleven thousand citizen-soldiers from all over our country are doing the kind of things you saw in your district when the floods occurred. Some of them are fighting fires, some are fighting floods, some are dealing with other natural disasters, guarding critical infrastructure around this country at the command and control of their governors.

Last Saturday, when we had the Joint Chiefs of Staff exercise and the National Guard exercise in Indiana, testing our response to a nuclear detonation, if, God forbid, that were ever to occur, we had 25 governors—one-half of our state governors had their Guard called out. It had no relation to their exercise, a real world response in their states.

For them to feel comfortable to respond, they have to have more than one-half of the equipment that is required to be in those units.

Now, who sets the requirement? The requirement is set by the Army and the Air Force and the Department of Defense.

So it is their requirement. It is not the National Guard's requirement. And we are only equipping that force to meet one-half of that

requirement. In a post-9/11 world, we have to seriously evaluate whether that is enough.

You were talking about a flood. We can handle a flood, even a regional flood, if it comes at us one at a time, if we have one disaster at a time.

Take what you are describing and have it come coincidental with a hurricane or two and perhaps an earthquake or a tornado and also fires in the Midwest and mudslides in the western coast that occur all the time, and then suppose either a domestic or a foreign terrorist should attack our nation, something to the scope of what we were practicing for last week.

If those things happen, either near or simultaneously, we would be overwhelmed and 50 percent would be far less than what would be required. We would need 100 percent of what we were supposed to have and probably then some. And that would probably perhaps fall short.

But in a post-9/11 world, I think we need to seriously reevaluate whether the way we resource, the strategy, the way we supply and equip the National Guard to do what we expect it to do today, which is different than what we expected it to do 40 years ago—we now are doing far more things than we were ever expected to do.

If I could call up chart 5 on your flat screens, I will show you exactly what we are doing right now. We are doing every single mission that we could possibly be doing, and we are doing it simultaneously.

And yet we are trying to do this with only 50 percent of the equipment back here in the United States to ensure that everybody overseas that is working on the right side of that chart you are looking at, that are federalized and overseas and working for the Department of Defense and the combatant commanders, have every single thing that they need to do their mission.

We need to make sure that the troops that are back here have everything they need to do, that if they get called, no notice, today, to respond, they are able to respond.

I will tell you that if Omaha, Nebraska, needs to be evacuated, General Lempke will change his earlier testimony that 150-some trucks are enough. He is going to want all 300 that he is authorized, because, if he only tries to do an evacuation with 150 trucks, it is going to take him at least twice as long, which means some people are not going to get evacuated, which means lives are going to be lost.

And those lives are going to be American lives.

This nation can afford to equip, this Congress can authorize and appropriate enough money to make sure that we have the tools we need to do the job we have been asked to do and the American people expect us to perform.

Mr. CARNEY. Thank you, General.

The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Mississippi, the chairman of the full committee, Mr. Thompson.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

And I appreciate the service of our witnesses to our country.

General Blum, for the record, a lot of us have gone on record in support of your position being a full general position, and that four

star is absolutely important. It speaks volumes for your position but it also signifies the fact that that mission has changed substantially from what it used to be, and so, therefore, there should be additional recognition because of it.

The other thing, I think, what I am hearing, both from the witnesses and the little sidebars going on, is we recognize the good job that is being done in spite of the difficulty.

But I think what we need to do is get as much on the record, to say that if our men and women in the Guard had more equipment available to them for domestic response, that response time could be shortened and potentially lives could be saved.

So I will give another opportunity, General, for you to go on the record and reflect on that.

General BLUM. Sir, that is absolutely fact. If we had more equipment, we could respond more effectively, more quickly, and hence, more lives could be saved. That is an absolute fact.

And every time that we?if we have a predictable event, we can take measures to mitigate that and to buy time, so to speak, by repositioning equipment. But many of the things that go bad in our country are unannounced.

Tornadoes give you very little warning. Earthquakes give you even less warning. Flash floods, no warning. Winter storms often take tracks and cripple and paralyze areas of our nation with very little or no warning.

It doesn't allow you—a hurricane is the easiest natural disaster to deal with because we usually get at least some predictability of some track the hurricane is going to take. And we have a few days to get ready and that time is precious.

When you have a few minutes or hours to get ready and respond, you must have the equipment you need in your hand. You cannot go looking for it and you can't—again, as you said, 24 hours is a quick response time, but not if you are standing in water that is coming up over your head. That is a long time to tread water.

So we have got to have the essential tools we need, and we are trying to be reasonable with this as much as we possibly can. We are conceding we do not need all of the tanks and armored personnel carriers and lethal systems—artillery and mortars and those type of weapons systems.

We need enough to train with to be ready when we are called for our federal mission, but we must have the equipment we need to be able to respond to the American people here at home, and that is generally engineer equipment, metal equipment, communications equipment, general purpose aviation like helicopters and transport aircraft, trucks.

Let me just talk about the trucks for a minute. We have talked about trucks and we have talked about 40-year-old trucks, and we have kind of glossed over something very important. Those 40-year-old trucks are here in the United States because they are not good enough to go to war. They are here in the United States in the hands of the National Guard because they are not good enough to give or sell to our allies.

But someone thinks they are good enough to be used to save American lives in an emergency. Nobody on this committee is riding around in a 40-year-old vehicle. There is a reason for it. It

doesn't make economic sense. They are too unreliable. They are too expensive to maintain and repair. And every minute we waste training on how to maintain a 40-year-old truck, we could be using that time and energy to learn how to maintain modern equipment that we are going to have to operate in time of crisis overseas and should have in our hands right here at home now, today.

And I don't think there is any disagreement on this committee with that position.

I guess the other response to your comment, General, is that have you prepared a minimum readiness equipment list that you need to get back up to in order to feel comfortable with having the ability to respond to any disaster here at home?

General BLUM. Yes, Mr. Chairman, we have.

It is 342 clearly identified items of equipment that are absolutely essential to be in the hands of soldiers and airmen in the Army and Air National Guard when they are called upon to respond here at home.

And it falls into 10 major categories, called the essential 10. And if I could have chart six come up on the flat screen, you would see what those big categories are.

And you can see that those are the essential things for maintenance, aviation, engineer, medical, communications, transportation, security and logistics and power generation. It is exactly those things that the Department of Homeland Security and the governors expect the Department of Defense to provide: defense support to civil authorities, military support to civil authorities when our local and state and federal civilian responders are overwhelmed.

Mr. THOMPSON. Last question, General. To what extent have you put a percent readiness on these items as to where we are? Or can you get back to us—

General BLUM. Can I show chart one to the chairman, please?

Mr. THOMPSON. Please tell them we hadn't rehearsed this in terms of the charts and all of that.

[Laughter.]

You just come prepared.

General BLUM. Well, no, actually, I happen to be, fortunately, prepared because there are other people that are concerned about this as well. And I have come from another place, this morning, that is very concerned about this.

Mr. THOMPSON. Good.

General BLUM. This happens to be, in, basically, Louisiana, because we are very concerned that Louisiana has what it will need, as well as Mississippi and the other hurricane states.

There are about 20 states that we have these charts on right now, that tell—so that, if they were hit with a hurricane, you know, down the left hand side, you can see on the chart, there are the 11 essential functions that we just talked about.

And then across the top of the chart, we are tracking if it is a Cat 1 hurricane, a Category 2 hurricane, all the way up to a Category 5 killer hurricane—what would be able to be provided and who would have to provide it?

And you can see that we show that, in a Category 1 hurricane, Louisiana National Guard has what it needs to do the job. But as

soon as it reaches a Category 3, it doesn't, and they have to rely on Emergency Management Assistance Compact assistance from the National Guard.

And then you can track onto the right side of the chart and see exactly who the states are that already have agreed they were going to send what specific capabilities, whether it is aviation engineers, trucks, or whatever is needed, to Louisiana.

What I am illustrating is, we are doing the very best job we possibly can to do the finest job we can with the 53 percent of the equipment we have.

If we had more equipment, a lot less of this would have to go on. And states could be much more self-sufficient.

And let me say another thing. We are the strategic reserve of this nation, even today.

And for our adversaries overseas to see a strategic reserve, the only strategic reserve that this nation has, with an all-volunteer force, so there is no draft, the only place we are going to get trained and equipped soldiers is going to be out of the National Guard, in the combat formations. And to have them equipped at 50 percent sends a signal that could be miscalculated by our adversaries overseas.

And what it would cost to respond if they miscalculate would be far greater in 3 months—what we would have to spend for that miscalculation would pay to prevent the miscalculation and provide the increased response here at home.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

I appreciate your indulgence, Mr. Chair.

Mr. CARNEY. I thank the gentleman from Mississippi. And thank you for your leadership on this committee, sir. It is inspirational, frankly.

I now recognize my good friend from Colorado, Mr. Perlmutter, for 5 minutes.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And, General Blum, and I appreciate your comments. I have taken some time to read through the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves. And then, looking at your charts today, coupled with the fact that, you know, we have reduced our general forces, both active and reserve—and I am especially struck by that first chart you had us look at, your chart number five, with all of the different functions and responsibilities of the National Guard, just here.

And remember, we are the Homeland Security Committee, and that is really where my bias is, my concern is. And my belief in terms of the mission of the National Guard was to protect our country here and to respond to disaster, natural and manmade.

And we have been talking about equipment, quite frankly, but my concern goes to the men and women who are serving us. And all of you gentlemen, obviously, and everybody in the National Guard, they are going to fulfill their mission to the best of their ability, come hell or high water, no question about that.

But my concern is—and this was something you said, General French. You were concerned, I think your language was about the—it was a question Mr. Carney asked you, and you said, well,

we handled—"It was a regional matter. But the broader scope, that concerns us."

A category 5 hurricane, hundreds of thousands of acres of wildfires in Colorado, you know, some kind of a tornado, you know, a major system going through Nebraska.

I am concerned that we are just stretched to the breaking point, equipment and manpower. I mean, can you react to that?

General FRENCH. Well, sir, simply put—and General Blum had stated it a little bit earlier in a different way—the fact is that when you have just 50 percent of your equipment and you have a very well-trained force, you still can only respond with 50 percent of your capability.

And so, in a regional circumstance that we spoke about earlier, that we had about 1,000 water rescues by magnificently trained Guardsmen, Army and Air, but if that were a broader scope and you needed more vehicles, more helicopters in order to provide that same capability for the citizens of the commonwealth or the nation, we just simply reach a point of no return, we can't do that.

And so, that is the criticality in terms, in my view, of the 50 percent of the fill of equipment.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Let me take it a step further, if I could—and General Blum, you may want to chime in here.

I am looking at the different responsibilities. And you say, really, since 9/11, the responsibilities of the Guard have changed pretty dramatically from a strategic reserve when you had maybe 150,000 more people and you were just the very last backstop, to, now, an operational, almost a standing unit.

And you are taking care of law enforcement, local and state crisis management, consequence management—which I guess is probably the aftereffects, counternarcoterrorism, national security special events, airport security, critical infrastructure protection, border security—which we haven't even talked about, physical or cyber attack on the homeland.

How, with all of those responsibilities—and, again, this comes to the tension of this dual hat, this dual purpose that you serve, protecting here at home and helping in the event of natural and national disasters, and yet having to be in the theater in Iraq, in Afghanistan, in the Horn of Africa, in Bosnia, in Kosovo and who knows where else—how can you do all that?

General BLUM. The good news is, Congressman, we can do it magnificently well. And we could even do it better if we had all the tools we needed to do it. We have the people. If I show you chart three, you can take a look at your state and you can see that—that is the pie chart. There you go?you can see that Colorado has most of its National Guard back in Colorado, Army and Air.

Now, let me show you—

Mr. PERLMUTTER. But they are going out for their third time in the fall.

General BLUM. Absolutely. But they are magnificently committed people that are willing to do this. What they resent is when they come home, that they don't have the equipment that they are used to seeing in-theater and that they are underresourced worse than they were when they left. And it has an effect on morale, it has an effect on training, it will ultimately have an effect on our reten-

tion ability, in other words, the ability to keep our trained and experienced people. And is also has a, no kidding, effect on our ability to respond.

Now, I have talked to you about many, many novel ways and very creative ways that we are mitigating the effects of that. And we will continue to work to do that.

And we are working with our active duty counterparts and at DOD to improve the situation.

But the easiest thing to fix is what is broken in the Guard right now, and that is the equipment level. The easiest thing to fix is buying equipment. We know what the equipment is, we know where it is made, right here in this country, we know what it is, and we know how much we need, and we know how much it costs.

So it is really, now, the job of the Congress, really, to decide whether they want to appropriate and authorize that equipment or accept this level of risk.

The level of risk you are accepting is slide nine. This is what the nation looks like. It is a big red country. Slide nine, please, the red—that is it. That is the nation.

And if you want more detail of that, we will go to slide 10, and then you can look and find your own state, and find out exactly where it stands and what exactly is the situation of equipment in your state.

And there is nobody on there that is to an acceptable level. The highest state on there is 63 percent. And the lowest is 33 percent.

And within those percents are some of these trucks that I am talking about that are so old and so unreliable and so unmodern that we won't take them to war or sell them or give them to our friends. But we leave them in the Guard and say, "They are good enough." And I say they are not good enough.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I have, like, 900 more questions. But I will save those, if you will let us do another round.

Mr. CARNEY. We will certainly do another round. I thank the gentleman from Colorado.

Chair now recognizes Ms. Clarke from New York for 5 minutes or so.

Ms. CLARKE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

And I want to thank Lieutenant General Blum, Major General Lempke, Major General Bowen and Major General French for coming before us today.

I want to thank you for your service to our nation and let you know that we are deeply appreciative of your commitment to our community.

For some time, this committee has been investigating problems facing the National Guard as it adapts to its new types of missions, its scope of service, if you will, or for lack of a better term, that continues to evolve with the complexities of our society providing for the national defense.

Through underfunding and overuse, the National Guard has found itself in a position where a series of disasters in the wrong places at the wrong time could have and could force some very difficult decisions.

Our National Guard is composed of many outstanding women and men who stand ready to jump into action at a moment's notice. However, even the fine soldiers cannot fully protect our country unless we provide them with the equipment they need to perform their jobs.

I would like to ask a question here. I think one of the images that rests in the hearts and minds of most Americans are the image from the Katrina relief effort of the Guard helicopters rescuing our citizens.

Do you believe that we could repeat that performance today?

General BLUM. I think we could repeat that performance today. And we could do it at an improved level.

We have, because of the magnificent support of this Congress, received $1.5 billion since Katrina that was sent specifically to the National Guard to improve its equipment situation post-Katrina.

We testified before the Congress and described exactly what it would take, in terms of equipment, specialized pieces of equipment, communications equipment, transportation equipment, aviation and so forth, what we needed to have an improved response, should we ever have to repeat our last, magnificent response to Katrina.

We have purchased that equipment, fielded that equipment, and I am confident that we would be able to respond faster and better this year than we did even 2 years ago, with no notice, in Katrina.

What does concern me—and General Lempke alluded to it—if we do not replace the aging transport aircraft in the Air National Guard with this joint cargo aircraft, in the future, then 5 years from now, I may not be able to give you the same answer I just gave you just now.

So, this year, we are much better off than we were 2 years ago because we have planned with all of the states.

That chart that I showed you earlier was built by Louisiana, with the people of Louisiana, to include FEMA, to include the Department of Homeland Security, to include Northern Command, to include the National Guard Bureau and the state of Louisiana; and all of those states that are shown in the right hand column, coming in to help Louisiana, know they are coming, know what they are supposed to bring and know what conditions will cause them to come.

So we are far better off than we were last time. Last time, for two days, we operated with no communication. We were blind, deaf and dumb. And we were doing the best we could, playing pinata, trying to hit the target. Because we didn't know what we needed to send and exactly where to send it.

With these new deployable communications satellite systems that we have been able to purchase, that are useful for the Army and Air Force, overseas, for the war fight, but they are equally useful back here at home—this is that dual-use equipment we are talking about—we will now be able, and I already have prepositioned that equipment so that, when and if we were to lose the electrical grid or the communications grid, in any state from Maine to Texas, to include the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, during the hurricane season, we will not operate without the ability to communicate.

Now, we are not going to be able to restore cell service to everybody in that commonwealth or state or territory. But we will be able to have the critical first responders, police, firefighters, emergency services people, National Guard and military, that are coming to the aid—Coast Guard and FEMA—we can all communicate in a way that we could not do 2 years ago.

So that is a good-news story. And that is because the Congress saw the need; provided us the authority and the resources; and then guaranteed, and watched it closely, that that money that was intended to get to the National Guard equipment accounts got there.

And then we bought exactly what we said we needed and came and reported to this Congress, and proved to them that we bought exactly what we said in exactly the amounts that we asked for. And it was greatly helpful.

Ms. CLARKE. General Blum, I just want to follow up with something you just stated, actually. It is about the $22 billion over the next 5 years for equipment. The Army National Guard could meet 76 percent of the required equipment.

Is this the fastest that you think you could reasonably hit that threshold or with more funding sooner, would you be able to acquire equipment faster?

General BLUM. More funding sooner would allow us to acquire more equipment faster. It is a fact.

Ms. CLARKE. Thank you very much.

Thank you, gentlemen.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. CARNEY. I thank you, Mrs. Clarke.

A couple of procedural things. First, I remind everyone in the room to put their cell phones or PDAs on vibrate please, or turn them off.

Secondly, I ask unanimous consent that the charts that were given out be admitted to the record. No objections, so ordered.

Okay, we will start a second round of questions.

General Blum, in recent testimony before the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, you said some very positive things about the capabilities of Stryker brigades and their applicability to the varied states to the National Guard missions. You said that you would love to have a Stryker brigade in Katrina.

Could you elaborate on that statement and explain for the committee why Stryker brigades would be so useful in disaster response and in homeland security missions?

General BLUM. Well, the Stryker is more than strictly the vehicle. It is the whole system of systems that goes with it, and they allow you to see the situation far better, to share that situational awareness amongst your whole formation so that everybody in that Stryker brigade has a much clearer picture of what they are facing.

The communications capability in that brigade is much enhanced to the conventional brigade. The ability to move, the mobility and operate and decentralize self-contained groups is—it is just a much better capability not only in the warfight, as we are seeing, because the Strykers are a very survivable vehicle.

In this very unconventional warfare that we are fighting right now in Iraq and Afghanistan, Strykers are very, very highly rated.

The abilities of those brigades are highly rated. In combat, they, right now, have a very competitive edge.

That same competitive edge as a dual use force, for instance, your Stryker brigade in Pennsylvania would be highly useful because all of those Strykers swim and float. So in a flood condition, the Stryker is a very, very fine vehicle.

If you were in a situation where you had a terrorist or a hostile event going on, say you had terrorists operating in Pennsylvania, the Stryker brigade probably would be called upon again for that because of the protection that that vehicle provides its crew members and the fact that it has rubber tires and can ride down the streets of Pennsylvania without having to rebuild the streets after they have moved through, as heavy armor vehicles tend to tear up the streets; Strykers do not.

So the Stryker is a magnificent vehicle. I would welcome Stryker in the National Guard. If the Army wanted to make that a requirement for the National Guard to stand up more Stryker brigades, we would welcome that and see that as a very positive step in the right direction.

However, just putting Stryker equipment in the National Guard without having it an established requirement, an established unit—and that requirement rightfully gets established by the Department of the Army—the National Guard should not establish that requirement.

I am just saying that the capability of the Stryker in a dual-use capacity, a Stryker-type unit is magnificently suited for overseas use and it is superbly suited for homeland defense and homeland support operations as well.

And if we were to get more in our inventory than one brigade in Pennsylvania, I think most of the states adjutants general would welcome that addition.

Mr. CARNEY. Thank you, General.

General Lempke, you mentioned the JCA aircraft in your remarks. How will acquisition of this aircraft enhance the Guard's readiness and its ability to deliver assets to domestic events?

General LEMPKE. When the BRAC actions were implemented, a number of effects occurred to Air National Guard bases, and we ended up losing a certain amount of our tactical airlift out of the National Guard.

Along with that, though, came promises that new missions would be found for some of those locations.

So, on the one hand, we have lost some airlift capability—and I have been told that about 30 percent of the airlift capability that we used for Katrina is no longer available to the National Guard.

The JCA helps fill that gap. It puts it and disperses that throughout the nation to provide that quick movement, especially of personnel and light equipment, battlefield-type, quickly to an emergency situation.

And when we have talked this morning about regional issues, moving things from one state to another state via EMAC, that is where the JCA fits in.

So as I am sitting in Nebraska, knowing what my limitations are, but also knowing that I can reach out to Iowa, Minnesota, as

far as Pennsylvania, you need something like JCA to assure that you can get those needs to your state quickly.

Mr. CARNEY. Thank you, General.

Well, we may do a round three, but right now I will turn it back over to my friend, Mr. Perlmutter, for more of his 900 questions.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

When I went through the National Guard commission report, going back, again—and this is for any of you gentlemen—one of the concerns they raised was retention of your personnel after serving in Iraq or back or whatever, that it was kind of—again, the mission of the National Guard having evolved and changed over the last 10 years, really, that there was—and they used the long-term viability for both recruiting and retention remains highly problematic.

And they talked about some of your best people are the ones that have served, come back, they are highly trained, very adept, but the retention levels of those folks just seems to be dropping.

Have any of you experienced that?

General Blum?

General BLUM. Well, let me take it on a national scene, and then I will let the adjutant generals talk about it on a more local level.

On a national scene, overall, our retention is superb, and I think it is for two reasons. Congress has appropriated the bonuses and the resources that we need to recruit and retain the highest-quality young men and women that this nation can offer.

The quality of the National Guard citizen-soldier and airmen are second to none. They can compete with the active forces and any of the other reserve component forces in a very favorable manner. In fact, we are number one in quality of what we are bringing in.

We are also second to none in our ability to recruit and grow our force. The National Guard is literally postured to grow and, in my judgment, should grow because we need to overman the force so that we can meet all of the missions that you described earlier, Congressman.

The Congress have been very good and, lately, the Department of Defense has just initiated—January the 11th, the secretary of defense has announced a new policy that makes me extremely confident that we can sustain this all-volunteer force at the same levels that we are enjoying right now.

We grew 14,000 net gain last year in the Army National Guard. Last year was our best recruiting year in the history of the volunteer force which now is about 36 years old.

The reason I am confident we can retain these skilled, experienced soldiers is that Secretary Gates has a new, reasonable policy where we call the Guard up for 1 year so that employers and family members of citizen-soldiers know they are going to be away from home for 1 year and they are coming back 1 year later, and that they will then do the training and equipping and all the things that are necessary in a shorter period of time.

And resources will have to be moved to the National Guard to equip and train and man that force in the year before they go. And then they know with certainty when they are going to go, and they know with certainty when they are going to come home.

I think that this certainty makes the employer, the family and the citizen-soldier comfortable with being able to manage their ca-

reer, manage their lives and still serve their state and nation in a way that will preserve and be able for us to sustain the all-volunteer force indefinitely, even at the rate we are being used today.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Just as a follow-up to that—and, you know, purely anecdotal from my friends from Minnesota, Congressman Walz and Congressman Peterson, said that one of their units—been there a year, was extended as part of the surge. They are there an additional, you know, 4 months, 5 months. They don't know how long they are going to be there.

General BLUM. You are exactly right. And that is the 1st Brigade of the 34th Infantry Division from Minnesota, primarily—other states are in there as well, but mostly from Minnesota.

And they were deployed before Secretary Gates established the new policy. They were already in-theater. And they had to be extended. And, frankly, the fact that they were extended was a testimony to how good they were. Because they did not want a seam—because they were so proficient, they didn't want a seam at that critical time, and they unfortunately were extended.

That unit will be receiving special attention when it gets home. Because it will be the longest serving combat unit in Iraq of all the units. Active, Guard, Reserve, Marine Corps, Army, you name it, this unit will have spent more time in combat than any other unit in the United States Army.

And when it gets back, the United States Army has committed resources and capabilities, working hand in hand with the state of Minnesota and the other states that are involved in that deployment, to make sure that these soldiers come back, get reintegrated and re-brought back into their jobs and their families in a way unprecedented before.

And we are going to put every single thing we can to make sure that they get compensated—and I am not talking about compensated in terms of cash, I am talking about, we show—

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Compensated for their time away.

General BLUM. Exactly. So that we do what we can to ensure that they keep their jobs, they get fully reintegrated into their civilian jobs again. And those who cannot, we find one for them.

And those that need special training or they need special circumstances with their families or their employers, the United States Army has made an unprecedented commitment to helping the National Guard with that.

That is a giant step in the right direction, in the recognition that it is one Army, one team in this case, and we are addressing it that way.

But you are right to be concerned. We are all unsure as to what the long-term effects will be to that brigade.

I am very optimistic. I think that after they come back and are reassimilated and we do what we are supposed to do for them and their families and their employers, probably a year later they are going to be in a pretty normal state again.

And I feel pretty optimistic that we are going to retain most of the experience in there, because they have invested so much and they are so proud of what they have done, rightfully proud because they are making a very big difference over there.

They are an outstanding unit. They are an incredibly proficient and good unit. They are really the symbol for the citizen-soldier in Iraq.

So when they come back, I think it is going to be very hard for them to walk away from this life-altering experience and this investment of time and energy and sweat and blood of their comrades, and I think they are going to stay with the team.

But we have to do everything we can to make it easy for them.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Thank you.

Mr. CARNEY. Ms. Clarke?

Ms. CLARKE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

My questions are for the adjunct generals.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Adjutant.

Ms. CLARKE. Thank you, Mr. Perlmutter.

In your experiences, when you have sent equipment to other states through EMAC, how quickly can you recover the equipment once the situation has subsided?

General BOWEN. I guess I have probably sent more troops under EMAC than anybody else. During Katrina-Rita, I had a thousand task force in Mobile. And then I sent 2,000 to Mississippi, and we took everything from Mobile to the Gulfport-Biloxi area. Then I had two battalions over in Slidell. And then I sent another task force to Louisiana.

When I send them as a task force—and I send them—and how we do that is pretty unique. We send a task force that consists of search-and-rescue, a security force, an engineering—because we have to cut our way in there. And that is one reason that Alabama was into the Gulf Coast before Mississippi was, they couldn't get through the highways.

So we literally—we are equipped with chainsaws, so I take that, plus I take a communications unit—Air and Army. The Air gives me the long range and the Army gives me the short range, so I can communicate between Humvees.

And when I get a truck for this communication trailer he gave me, I will be able to talk to all the local law enforcement agencies, also.

But I take that, and I also take a medical unit.

So I take a complete task force that is self-sustained for about 10 days. And that way I don't have to have fuel, anything. I am good for 10 days.

However long I stay—and what I do in Mississippi is I resupplied for 10 days. We stayed 30 days. But when I come out at 30 days, I bring everything with me.

So when you get me, you get all of me. But I take care of myself. So I don't leave anything back there.

Ms. CLARKE. Imagine a situation where disaster hits somewhere and you need a great deal of equipment to support the response. While the equipment is used in response to that disaster, there is another catastrophe, this time in your own state.

How well prepared is the National Guard to handle this? Would the equipment be there to support the second mission?

General BOWEN. Yes, ma'am.

My governor was real concerned about that. He was concerned when I sent the first one to Mississippi. He was really concerned

when I sent one to Louisiana, because, you know, we had a little one forming off of Panama or Cuba at the time, and he wanted to know, "Do you have enough to take care of Alabama?"

I said, "Yes, sir, I have enough to take care." At the same time, I had 1,800 deployed to OIF.

And I told him, I said, "I have enough, but I also have the EMAC," because Kentucky and Tennessee and Georgia were not affected and they were prepared to move in to assist me if I needed any help, even though my soldiers were in other states.

Ms. CLARKE. Thank you very much.

And then, my final question is to General Blum: As you know, the secretary of defense issued a memo on May 10th, which directs that a few recommendations made by the Commission on the National Guard and Reserve be implemented at the Defense Department.

In the memo, the secretary refers to a working group he commissioned to assess how the National Guard might be arranged differently to meet the national security requirements of the United States better.

What was the Guard's involvement in the preparation of this memorandum and the working group?

General BLUM. We are deeply involved in that. Secretary Gates, as secretary of defense, is very serious and committed to restructuring whatever needs to be restructured to make sure that the Guard is a full partner in the Department of Defense. I think he is very seriously committed to this and he has the National Guard, and our equities are involved in all of those negotiations, decisions and recommendations.

Ms. CLARKE. Thank you very much, gentlemen.

And thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. CARNEY. I thank the gentlelady from New York.

We will begin a third round of questions.

First, General Blum, I am thrilled to hear that Minnesota is going to receive the help. It is certainly well-deserved. I hope other states will get the same kind of help, that it is not just Minnesota.

General BLUM. Actually, Chairman, what we are doing is using Minnesota as our straw man or our prototype for how we do a better job of doing this with other units as they come back. So I think your wishes will be fulfilled. I think Minnesota is setting the gold standard for how we should be treating our returning citizen-soldiers and how we reintegrate them.

There is a significant commitment by the Department of Defense and the Department of the Army in particular to assist the National Guard, working hand in hand with us, and actually putting significant resources against this, meaning money and people to make this happen. And they understand that we need to do this not only for Minnesota, we need to do it for the other states as well.

Mr. CARNEY. Thank you. Any of you gentleman care to respond?

General French? Your head was shaking. You were nodding in agreement, I hope.

General FRENCH. I am nodding in agreement. You know, both at the state and the federal level, we have received great support from our elected officials because there is a general understanding, I be-

lieve, that the great sacrifice that is being made is being made by not only the soldiers and their families, but by the employers for the National Guard.

And it is because of when they return and the effort that is being made to recognize that service that I think our soldiers are, in fact, extending their enlistments.

Mr. CARNEY. General Bowen?

General Lempke?

General BOWEN. Well, what I am seeing, my 1st Engineer Battalion went over there. Average age was 48.5 years. They deployed. At this time, it was still 12 months boots on the ground.

I lost a good many of my older soldiers that were in the 50 to 55 range that had already deployed once or twice somewhere else, in Desert Storm probably. So when I got back, I lost them, but they had 30 years.

I noticed the other day when I looked at that unit, the average age now is about 30 years of age, so that is good and bad. It is good I had the soldiers with experience, but also it created upward mobilities. The young soldiers want to get promoted, so when I lose some of these older soldiers, then I have got young ones ready to take their place, and they are good, sharp, smart soldiers.

So, yes, we went through a little bit of a downer there, but, again, it was older soldiers that could easily retire. I was not necessarily losing those because of the war. It just was the right time in their life and career.

Probably if I were to do any one thing, I might look at a reenlistment bonus for somebody that has got 20 years in, because some of that expertise I would like to keep. That is one thing that makes the Guard really strong—an operations sergeant, for example, that has been an operations sergeant for 20 years, or an aircraft mechanic.

I think our rate will compare with anybody and one reason is the same guy has been working on the same airplane for 20 or 30 years, and I would like to retain those people because they have got special skills.

So if I—

Mr. CARNEY. It is certainly not the same airplane.

General BOWEN. Probably so. I am afraid so. My KC–135 are 1960 models, the refuelers. So probably the same airplane. But I would like to tell you that I was in Romania this week and sat in the cockpit of a MiG–21 that was also built in 1960, so it is everywhere.

[Laughter.]

Mr. CARNEY. Thank you.

General Lempke?

General LEMPKE. I guess there is a caution here, I believe, as we take a look at the motivations and the health of our force. And General Bowen alludes to it a little bit.

And that is, those that are approaching the vested 20-year point in retirement, when you take a look at our officer corps in the Guard, by and large, they are prior enlisted. So they have a certain amount of enlisted time before they become an officer.

So, many times, you are talking, a National Guard officer that has 20 years of service that may be a senior captain or a major and

has had one deployment. Now they are at risk of another deployment.

And they are also at that time in their professional career where they may have to make some decisions with regard to strengthening their civilian career or dividing that time up, as they have in the past.

I have seen soldiers, now, officers and senior enlisted, that, instead of staying in the Guard and playing it out as far as you can go, deciding to hang it up when they have reached that point of retirement. And we are losing, in that happening, a very valuable, talented resource.

I think that is an area that needs to be looked at more strongly, with incentives, to hang onto those seasoned officers and enlisted that are needed to then, later on, move into senior leadership positions.

Mr. CARNEY. I certainly agree. And that kind of segues into my next question. There was an informal poll done by Workforce Management Magazine, on its Web site.

And it asked a question—and you may be aware of this: "If you as an employer knew that a military Reservist or a National Guard member could be called up and taken away from their job for an indeterminate amount of time, would you still hire a citizen-soldier?" the poll asked.

Of the 409 respondents on this April 4th poll, 52 percent answered no; 32 percent answered yes; 17 percent answered, "I don't know."

Are you aware of these numbers, gentlemen?

General BLUM. Yes, Mr. Chairman, I am. And they are of great concern to me. And that is why we need to strengthen the employer support to the Guard and Reserve program. It is a DOD program that is under-resourced for the need today.

What we are talking about threatens the ability or the viability of the all-volunteer force. And what I am most concerned about that poll is that probably 52 percent of those answers were brutally honest. And there are probably others in there that were not.

So the magnitude of the problem, in this case, is probably greater than half of those that responded. And that is of grave concern because soldiers will now be reluctant to disclose they are in the Guard or the Reserve before they seek employment. And then those that come back from a deployment may find it harder for re-employment.

And I think that the Congress of this nation needs to do whatever it can to set conditions that are favorable for Guardsmen and Reservists to be advantaged in the civilian workplace, and certainly not disadvantaged.

And if they are disadvantaged, we ought to take some pretty significant measures, such as we have with the USERRA act and other things, and put some teeth into that. But we also need to make sure that the Department of Defense employer support for the Guard and Reserve apparatus is as strong as it possibly can be, because they really are our ombudsmen, our representatives, our ambassadors with the nation's employers.

I know the adjutants general deal with this on a local level every day and they may be able to give you some more perspective.

Mr. CARNEY. I understand. And it seems to me that this is truly a malignancy for the Guard and Reserve, that you can't detect it, because, to be quite honest, if an employer said that, they come under USERRA guidelines and they are going to be in trouble. But if it is truly there, I don't know how we fight this, certainly.

General BLUM. We may want to look at how do you incentivize an employer to hire a citizen-soldier.

Mr. CARNEY. In my own experience, I was a professor at Penn State while serving in the Reserves, and Penn State, to their credit, was very, forgiving of my time when I had to be deployed overseas, many times.

Yes, it is something that really causes me to lose some sleep.

We have just gotten a call for a 15-minute vote. We do have a few more minutes, Mr. Perlmutter, if you have any further questions.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Just on that same line, and then we will end. The same polls and all the graphs are in the commission's report, but they questioned spouses. They were asking young people whether they are interested.

And, General Blum, you know, it is great that you had the, you know, the outstanding recruiting year. But, you know, you have got employers who are beginning to have questions about sort of this new mission, if you will, of the National Guard, from something that is the final backstop to, really, front line: front line on the borders, front line in the war on drugs, front line in the war on terror.

And spouses, you know, the effect on families, you know, saying, "Wait a second, Dad, is this what you really signed up?" Or, "Mom, is"—you know, "you are going to be gone for a year to Iraq or to Afghanistan?"

And you know, it is a much bigger question, obviously. There has been the decision to transform the military to the one military. But I fear—and again, any of you gentleman can react—but I fear two things.

One, it is a drastically changed mission for the Guard, a much broader mission—I mean, just that one graph, with all of the responsibilities that you have given to your men and women.

But, you know, my fear is that the protection of the country and the response really is secondary, which is the word you used, General French.

How do we change that?

General BLUM. Well, it depends on who "we" are.

[Laughter.]

Mr. PERLMUTTER. "We" would start with this Homeland Security Committee, I think.

General BLUM. I think it is clearly in your authority to change it. I think it needs to be job number one. I think we are the military first responders in this nation. We are the first to fight, yet we are not resourced as the first to fight. We are still resourced as we were set up 40 years ago.

It is time to change the strategies and the policies and the laws and the resourcing stream for how the National Guard is resourced to do what the National Guard clearly has been asked to do by its nation's governors and its nation.

And I don't think this is going to change and go back to 40 years ago. I think what we see today is what we are going to see tomorrow. And we will see even more of it tomorrow, frankly, because of one magnificent thing. We are extremely good at it, and we do it much cheaper than anybody else.

We maintain a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week, 365-day, superb, world-class capability, for about 27 cents on the American taxpayer's dollar, when we are not being used.

And when we are being used, it is not a free lunch. And it does come at a price with employers—

Mr. PERLMUTTER. —spouses—I mean, it is a changed approach—

General BLUM. But I would maintain, it would be a big mistake, in my view, not to employ the Guard. Any time that we have young men and women in harm's way around the world, you should in fact send the National Guard as part of that force, because when you call out the Guard, you do, in fact, call out America.

And if you send an all-active force, you don't necessarily have every community and every town and members of this Congress as interested and as aware and your constituents as interested and aware and supportive of their successful outcome as if you didn't use the Guard.

So I would say it would be a fatal mistake not to use the Guard. And I think that this dual-use force is the best bargain for the defense of this nation, both here at home and abroad, that we could possibly provide the American citizens.

The only thing we need to do now is to make sure they have the tools in their hands to do the job, so that we don't have magnificent people with magnificent training and commitment with empty hands, they have what they need to do the job—not half of what they need, all of what they need.

That, to me, is what needs to be fixed.

And then we very carefully have to watch and make sure we can keep the force healthy. Because it is a three-legged stool, as you say, it is the employer, it is the citizen-soldier, it is their family. And we have to watch all three legs of that stool. And that is why I cautioned the strengthening of the employer support in the Guard and Reserve apparatus, because that survey worries me.

That survey worries me more than al-Qa'ida worries me, if you want to know the truth, because al-Qa'ida is going to force patriotic citizens into service. But employers that don't support our citizen-soldiers may drive them out of service or keep them from joining a magnificent organization like the Guard.

So I am more concerned about what you talked about, Mr. Chairman, in that survey than I am in some terrorist thinking that they are going to take this country down and that we are not going to defend this nation.

Americans will defend America. But they have to be able to do it in such a way that they can maintain a job and a family or they may not choose to be part of that organization or remain part of that organization.

Mr. CARNEY. Thank you.

General FRENCH. Is there time for one more comment on that?

Mr. CARNEY. There is, briefly, please, yes.

General FRENCH. Okay, our soldiers want a voice. They want to think that they are being represented and that the fact that they are militia is being understood. The Guard Empowerment Act is a part of that. The Reserve Forces Policy Board, which has not been used for the last 2 years, is a part of that.

One of the greatest frustrations that I hear back from our soldiers and the families and employers is that "We are just being called up without the real unique features that need to be accounted for when those calls are made." It goes to predictability. It goes to many other factors.

So to the extent that we can become more integrated and have a larger, a stronger voice within the planning apparatus for both our national mission and our state mission is the direction that we need to go.

They are motivated. They just want to feel like their concerns and their situations are being understood and accounted for.

Mr. CARNEY. Well, I want to thank the witnesses for their valuable testimony and the members for their questions. It is likely members will have further questions of you, and I would ask a response in writing quickly. You know, don't let it drag out.

And, on a personal note, I want to thank each one of you for your service to this nation and for your advocacy of your respective organizations. Thank you, gentlemen.

This committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:45 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

Appendix I: For the Record

LETTER SUBMITTED BY THE HONORABLE CHRISTOPHER P. CARNEY, CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON MANAGEMENT, INVESTIGATIONS, AND OVERSIGHT

NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES, INC.

ONE MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, NORTHWEST WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001 (202) 789-0031 FAX (202) 682-9358

May 22, 2007

The Honorable Bennie Thompson
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
H2-176 Ford HOB
Washington, DC 20545

Dear Chairman Thompson,

The National Guard Association of the United States is pleased to support your committee's upcoming hearing on the state of equipment readiness in the National Guard. Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts with you.

Since September 11th, the National Guard's role in active deployments has drastically increased. When the Pentagon was attacked, the first responders from off-site were Guardsmen from the National Guard Readiness Center; in many ways, a sign of what was to come.

When we needed to ease public safety concerns at our airports, it was the National Guard who provided security under the command of their governors. This action helped ease the transition to a coordinated security system overseen by the Transportation Security Agency. Since then, the Guard has continued to be forward-looking in many ways. Recognizing the need for every state to maintain disaster response capability, at least one National Guard Civil Support Team has been established in each state. This is an acknowledgement that the National Guard is our nation's firstline provider of military assistance to civil authorities. Without this National Guard capability, the rapid, large-scale response and recovery from Hurricane Katrina and other natural disasters would never have been possible. This is also true for Operation Jump Start, which is taking place on our southern border: use of the National Guard in support roles is the fastest and most effective way to bolster our Border Patrol agents until an adequate number can be trained.

All of this has occurred at the same time that the National Guard has changed from a cold war strategic reserve to a fully operational force. The Army and Air Guard now deploy regularly alongside their active duty brethren to fight the Global War on Terrorism. In 2005, over 55% of the troops fighting the war on terrorism were National Guardsmen. In just the last few weeks those who remain at home or have already returned from overseas missions have responded to wildfires in California, Florida, Georgia, and Minnesota, tornado damage in Greensburg, Kansas, and massive flooding in Southern Iowa and Northwestern Missouri.

This new dependence upon the Guard as an operational force has had an impact on the mission at home. Prior to Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom, the Army Guard had, on average, 70% of its authorized

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equipment on hand at home station. Then, as Army Guard units began heading overseas in combat roles, they deployed with their mission equipment sets. Units brought trucks, HMMWVs, helicopters, combat and engineering vehicles. Because of the high operating tempo and equipment attrition in Iraq, more of these vehicles were needed than expected, causing the Army to require units returning home to leave their equipment for follow-on units.

By 2007, the National Guard Bureau reported that on average, Army National Guard units in the states now had less than 40% of their authorized equipment on hand. This critical situation is not due to action in Iraq and Afghanistan alone, but can also be traced to under funding and equipping by the Army. Much of the equipment shortage in the Army National Guard has evolved over the years as risk assessment by the Army led them to make decisions forced upon them by constrained budgets. The Air National Guard has equipping issues as well, but not nearly as severe as the Army National Guard.

Significant change must be effected if this situation is to be remedied. LTG Blum, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, has outlined the "Essential 10" capabilities concept as the most expedient way to alleviate the homeland defense equipment gap. By concentrating on these 10 "dual use" areas, the intent is that governors will have what is needed to ensure proper response for state missions as well as allow units to do as much of their pre and post-mobilization training in-state as possible, reducing the need to spend additional months in a mobilized status. The National Guard Association of the United States believes the National Guard Bureau and the Army have a good plan. They now need the funding for equipment and training to execute it.

Once again, thank you for holding this hearing and your committee's leadership on these issues. We are pleased that your committee is taking an interest in the National Guard's role in homeland defense. We look forward to addressing these and other issues with you as the legislative session continues.

Sincerely,

Stephen M. Koper
Brigadier General, USAF (Ret)
President

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Appendix II: Additional Questions and Responses

QUESTIONS FROM THE HONORABLE MICHAEL T. MCCAUL, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

RESPONSES FROM STEVEN BLUM

Committee: HHSC, Subcommittee on Management, Investigations, and Oversight
Hearing Date: May 24, 2007
Hearing: "Examining the Impact of Equipment Shortages on the National Guard's Readiness for Homeland Security Missions"
Member: Michael T. McCaul (R-TX)
Witness: LTG H. Steven Blum

Question: #1

Question: The National Guard Association and a number of Governors have expressed support transforming some Army Guard infantry brigades into Stryker brigades. The House Armed Services Committee recently included language supporting this concept in the Defense Authorization Bill. What do you think about having several additional Stryker brigades in the National Guard?

Answer:
I do not advocate Congressional action to place several additional Stryker brigades into the Army National Guard.

Question: #2

Question: In recent testimony before the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee you said some very positive things about the capabilities of Stryker brigades and their applicability to the many varied states missions of the National Guard. You said you would have loved to have a Stryker Brigade in Katrina. Could you elaborate on that statement and explain for the Committee how Stryker brigades could help the Guard with its state missions of disaster response, border security, and homeland security?

Answer: When the National Guard was facing the challenge of responding to a truly extraordinary catastrophe after Hurricane Katrina, we faced challenges of inaccessible areas due to flooded streets, occasional incidents of violence involving firearms, and a disrupted civilian communications system. The Stryker is a highly capable vehicle which forms the centerpiece of a highly capable organization. Stryker brigades have extraordinary protection, mobility and networked command control and communications capabilities. Katrina was an extreme case, however, and I absolutely would not advocate for the addition of Stryker brigades for the National Guard based strictly on the potential utility just for state missions. The National Guard is a reserve component of the Army and the Air Force. We receive federal resources largely for the purpose of helping to meet Army and Air Force mission requirements. It is the prerogative of the Army to determine what types of forces it needs to be resident in its reserve components to meet its global mission requirements. We use federal military resources to build brigades in the National Guard in order to meet federal military mission requirements as identified by the Army and the Air Force not to perform state missions. Although built for a federal combat-related purpose, we find that our forces possess great capability to support civil authorities but we do not design our forces with that as our purpose.

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Question: #3

Question: With only one Stryker Brigade in the National Guard, is the Guard really able to take maximum advantage of the capabilities offered by a Stryker Brigade? Wouldn't additional Brigades make sense in terms of responding to natural disasters here at home and with the one year in six deployment strategy for National Guard combat brigades?

Answer: The purpose of the Army National Guard is to provide trained units and qualified persons available for active duty in the armed forces, in time of war or national emergency, and at such other times as the national security may require, to fill the needs of the armed forces whenever more units and persons are needed than are in the regular components. The National Guard is able to take advantage of the capabilities offered by the one Stryker Brigade to achieve that purpose. Those capabilities are also available not only to the state of Pennsylvania where our Stryker brigade resides but also to all other states, should the need arise, through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact. It would not make sense to place additional Stryker brigades in the Army National Guard for the purpose of responding to disasters.

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QUESTIONS FROM THE HONORABLE MICHAEL T. MCCAUL, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

RESPONSES FROM ROBERT P. FRENCH

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
BUILDING S-0-47
FORT INDIANTOWN GAP
ANNVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA 17003-5002

June 22, 2007

Honorable Bennie G. Thompson
Chairman
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Thompson:

I am writing today as a follow up to your letter of June 18, 2007, regarding additional questions from the hearing entitled "Examining the Impact of Equipment Shortages on the National Guard's Readiness for Homeland Security Missions" that I testified at on Thursday, May 24, 2007.

Enclosed you will find my prepared responses to your questions. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.

Sincerely,

ROBERT P. FRENCH
MG, PAARNG
Deputy Adjutant General – Army

Enclosure

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Questions from the Honorable Michael T. McCaul

1. General French, please tell us about your experience with Stryker as you continue to field the Guard's only Stryker brigade? What do your officers say about the Stryker and its capability? More importantly, what do your Sergeants say about it?

Answer

The transition to our Stryker BCT is in full swing. Beginning last month (May 07), our units began to receive their vehicles. In fact, during the week of June 18th, we started to station a number of Strykers at our SBCT armories. Up to this point, a large portion of the brigade's training has focused on new equipment training that supports the Soldiers, e.g. digital capabilities, etc. As they have worked with the new equipment, officers and Soldiers alike are excited because they are on the cutting edge of the Army's transformation plan. The increased survivability, improved mobility, and greatly enhanced situational awareness of the SBCT systems are greatly improved over the legacy equipment in the previous brigade equipping package.

2. Based on your experience to date with Stryker, what do you think about the applicability of Stryker Brigades to the state missions of the Guard, missions like disaster response and homeland security? Can you give us some examples of how Stryker would be used to respond to disasters in Pennsylvania or other nearby states?

Answer

The same characteristics that make the Stryker a superior combat system also make it extremely valuable in disaster response. Virtually all vehicles will be able to be used for this purpose and it will improve response capabilities due to the digital systems. These will enhance command situational awareness and provide a mobile, satellite-capable EOC on wheels. Our decision to station Strykers across the Commonwealth, from Philadelphia to Erie, gives us the ability to employ the Stryker's capabilities in support of civil authorities virtually anywhere within Pennsylvania. Tracked vehicles organic to Legacy brigades were not usable assets for a variety of reasons. PA is subject to all natural disasters, but is most prone to flooding, tornado and snow emergencies. The vehicle is a better all-terrain vehicle with increased fording capabilities due to the higher physical profile of the vehicles. They also give us an over-the-road capability should it be needed for Interstate emergencies.

3. General French, in your personal opinion would additional National Guard Stryker brigades are a good investment for the Congress to make? Wouldn't additional Stryker Brigades reduce the risk of repeated and extended deployments for your unit in Pennsylvania? Wouldn't that in turn reduce the burdens on Guardsmen and their families in your state?

Answer

I think increasing the number of SBCTs has merit for the reasons mentioned above. However, any additional Guard formations would need to be consistent with the Army's overall transformation plan because our deployed formations are based upon certain combinations (mix) of brigade formations. Predictability of deployments is a prime concern not only for our Soldiers, but also for their employers and Families. Increasing dwell time at home is obviously a huge plus.

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