STATEMENT BY

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(LOGISTICS AND MATERIEL READINESS)

BEFORE THE

THE COMMISSION ON THE NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVES

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Chairman Punaro and distinguished members of the commission –

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Commission. Your study of the roles and missions of the National Guard and the other reserve components of the Armed Forces is a matter of great importance. The Department appreciates your efforts on behalf of our citizen-Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines.

With the possible exception of World War II, our nation has never depended on our National Guard and Reserves more. They are no longer in a stand-by mode. They stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our active duty forces fighting the Global War on Terror. They have been fully incorporated into the active forces, and they are also challenged with their traditional civil support mission. We owe it to them and our nation to see that they are properly equipped and funded.

Today, you will hear from my colleagues on the panels about specifics of the President's budget request now before Congress. A request that, in the words of Lieutenant General Steven Blum, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, before House and Senate committees, "…includes an unprecedented commitment and investment by the Army to improve the equipment readiness of the Army National Guard." The President's budget also provides much needed funding for the Air National Guard so they can continue to be a full partner in the Air Force total force.

I share your concerns, as stated in your March 1, 2007, report that:

- "The op-tempo of the reserve component has increased at a far greater pace than resourcing.

- The lack of sufficient and ready equipment is a problem common to active and reserve components, and that equipment readiness of the Army National Guard is unacceptable.
- While the President seeks large increases in the FY 2008 budget for National Guard equipment, historically, projected funding increases have not always been carried through."

We are taking proactive steps to mitigate those concerns. The President has requested funding at significantly increased levels for the Reserves and National Guard, and there are indications that the Congress will support that request. This funding will not cure equipment shortfalls and readiness overnight. As with the rebuilding of the active forces, a significant continuing investment is required to reach the necessary materiel readiness levels.

Due to the Department's concerns about the schedule and funding requirements for re-equipping our National Guard and Reserve forces, I have recently asked the Service Secretaries to report on all existing programs designed to achieve the established minimum required materiel readiness levels for all National Guard units – in each state by 31 May. The same information is to be provided for Reserve component units, including combat, combat support, and combat service support units.

These reports are to include a schedule by year and a table showing the requirements for individual types of items, actual equipment to be on-hand, and the fill rate. It will reflect any changes made or changes being planned to the programs of record in support of cross-leveling requirements. This analysis will include the level of funding required for each unit, and the extent to which those funds are included in the FYDP, or are unfunded operational requirements. The

status of those units will be determined through the Defense Readiness Reporting System.

This reporting and analysis requirement will provide visibility into a coordinated funding approach agreed to by the Department's senior leadership. We will be able to monitor variances from the funding profiles while monitoring the effectiveness of these programs through the Defense Readiness Reporting System.

The new reporting requirements will provide the much needed visibility into the plan for meeting resource requirements and materiel readiness of the National Guard and Reserve components, and it will enable increased oversight – to ensure the materiel readiness improvements are realized.

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman, as you are well aware, the Reserves and National Guard have responded to every call made by our great nation. They are essential piece of our total force. These citizen-Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines deserve our respect, gratitude and support. I am committed to working with the Services to ensure that we meet their needs.

I am grateful for the opportunity to appear before you today. I will gladly take any questions you may have for me.