

STATEMENT BY

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NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU

BEFORE THE

HOUSE HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

FIRST SESSION, 111TH CONGRESS

ON

EXAMINING PREPAREDNESS AND COORDINATION EFFORTS OF FIRST

RESPONDERS ALONG THE SOUTHWEST BORDER

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THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

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Opening Remarks

Chairman Cuellar, Ranking Member Rogers, distinguished members of the subcommittee; I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the activities of the National Guard (NG) in helping to secure our Nation's borders. National Guard support to border security today is provided through the National Guard Counterdrug program and through our use of Innovative Readiness Training.

The National Guard Counterdrug Program

The National Guard Counterdrug Program is governed by Section 112 of Title 32 of the United States Code. This authority is the foundation for the National Guard Counterdrug Program that has operated in the 54 States and Territories for nearly twenty years. The law limits the program to 4,000 personnel on full-time counter-drug program duties. At present it is funded and staffed for just over 2,500 Army and Air National Guard personnel. These federally funded programs are developed by the respective governors and approved by the Secretary of Defense. They are developed within the context of the National Counterdrug Strategy of the White House's Office of National Drug Control Policy with supporting direction from the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Counternarcotics, Counter-proliferation, and Global Threats.

I am pleased to inform you that these federally funded state centric programs are built in response to Federal, State and local law enforcement agency counterdrug operational requirements. They fully consider State and local threats and vulnerabilities. At all times National Guard counterdrug resources are employed in support of law enforcement counterdrug operational requirements or community based organizations focused on drug demand reduction programs.

Our efforts in market disruption support law enforcement agency operations in marijuana suppression and eradication, enhance information sharing networks, provide linguistic support, and conduct ground and aerial reconnaissance, among others. Community based organizations benefit from our drug demand reduction programs such as "Stay on Track". Our criminal analysts work closely with the Directors of the 28 High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTAs) and other information fusion centers to develop drug case-related information that continues to facilitate law enforcement operations. An example of such continuing support can be found in the HIDTA supported Denver Colorado Metro Gang Task Force where NG Counterdrug Program

assets provide full time criminal analysts and regularly conduct aerial reconnaissance missions for this Federal, State and local LEA endeavor

In Fiscal Year 2008, our contributions can be measured through data provided by law enforcement agencies and community based organizations. Law enforcement agencies attribute the seizure of 21,603 weapons and \$382.4 million in United States currency to our support efforts. The seizure of over 5.3 million cultivated marijuana plants and 903,000 pounds of processed marijuana are directly attributed to National Guard support of marijuana eradication operations. In Fiscal Year 2008, nearly 530,000 pounds of cocaine were seized in state operations with National Guard support of law enforcement agencies. Community based organizations report that we have provided demand reduction programs for 6.2 million students, and nearly 60,000 participated in the Stay on Track Program in Fiscal Years 2007 and 2008. We project 120,000 students by the end of Fiscal 2009. Our Counterdrug Program also provided nearly 40,000 flying hours supporting various law enforcement counterdrug operations over public lands, border missions, and extensive marijuana eradication operations.

The National Guard Counterdrug Program has made similar impacts over the last twenty years. The credit for these accomplishments goes to the Governors and the Adjutants General for an efficient and focused application of authorized and appropriated funds. But we must remain vigilant in the application of those resources as threats and vulnerabilities change. Our program accomplishments do not go unnoticed by drug trafficking organizations. They shift and adjust their tactics and trafficking networks to counter our strengths and those of law enforcement. The Mexican drug cartels are in conflict over control of production and distribution within their own country as well as the market place in the United States. Their conflicts as we know have developed into intense violence in northern Mexico near the U.S. border. Each of the four Southwest Border states are experiencing increased drug-related violence and are concerned with the potential "spill-over" of that violence from Mexico into our sovereign States and Nation.

For the last twenty years we have supported law enforcement operations along the Southwest Border with National Guard Counterdrug personnel and equipment. We have long-standing operational and interagency models employed every day in ground and aerial observation, information sharing, and linguistics. Today, we have over 300 National Guard Counterdrug personnel on duty in Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas working in direct support of Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies conducting counterdrug operations along the border. The majority of our support efforts are focused on ground and aerial observation, case analysis, engineer work and communications support.

Innovative Readiness Training

Recently, we have successfully employed the use of "Innovative Readiness Training" (IRT) with specialty units such as engineers and aviation, among others. IRT is a Department of Defense (DOD) program governed by Section 2012 of USC Title 10

and DOD Directive 1100.20. The program's objective is to train soldiers and simultaneously provide a benefit to the community. Missions supported by IRT are based on requests from thirteen pre-approved organizations, or a Federal, State, and local government agency. We are currently supporting the Department of Homeland Security's United States Customs and Border Protection with engineering work on border roads and vehicle maintenance. The National Guard has conducted IRT events along the Southwest Border in support of CBP's Border Patrol, which includes activities such as engineering, medical/dental, and transportation support. Annual IRT events along the Southwest Border have involved an average of 3,250 Guardsmen. Recent IRT events from July 2006 to July 2008 provided support through Entry Identification Teams, aviation and ground observation, medical, and engineering in support of the "Operation Jump Start" (OJS) initiative. We are capable of assisting through other support to civil authorities based on situational needs.

Recent Activity of National Guard Bureau

In regards to possible National Guard support along the Southwest Border, we, through the Department of Defense, are working with the Southwest Border states and with the Department of Homeland Security to determine if any new requirements exist and whether enhanced National Guard support is appropriate.

The Strategic Context

Mr. Chairman and members of committee, I would close by saying that, in addition to accomplishing its federal mission to be a reliable reserve component to the Army and the Air Force in combating America's enemies overseas, the National Guard has also been the first military responder to nearly every public disaster, manmade or otherwise here inside the homeland, providing vital capabilities in support of and alongside civilian first responders. We have exemplary citizen-soldiers and airmen who are in touch with the communities in which they live and work. The resultant networks only enhance our ability to provide immediate and thoughtful responses to a myriad of challenges. The Southwest Border challenge is no different. We have and will continue to serve those in need; our communities, our States and our Nation.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today, I look forward to your questions.