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FOR THE RECORD

STATEMENT BY

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

BEFORE THE

**MANAGEMENT, INVESTIGATIONS AND OVERSIGHT SUBCOMMITTEE
OF HOUSE HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE**

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ON

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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.