

SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF
ADMIRAL JAMES A. WINNEFELD, JR., U.S. NAVY
VICE CHAIRMAN
JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
BEFORE THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
ON WHETHER THE CHIEF OF NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU SHOULD BE A
MEMBER OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
NOVEMBER 10, 2011

SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

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Mr Chairman, Senator Inhofe, distinguished members of the Armed Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

Let me say at the outset, I honor the men and women of our National Guard for their incredible contributions to our nation's defense and security, both abroad and at home, there should be no doubt that I am a huge supporter of and believer in America's National Guard.

When I was nominated to be the Commander of NORTHCOM and NORAD, my first call was to my friend and partner, General Craig McKinley.

While there, I worked closely with my Guard partners on bringing to life the Dual Status Commander concept, and migrating more chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear response capability into the Guard. With the help of the NGB, we brought more Guardsmen into the NORTHCOM headquarters, including, two additional General Officers. When I walked around my NORTHCOM headquarters, I could not have told you who was a Guardsman and who was on active duty, and I liked it that way.

It was not by chance that my first speaking engagement as Vice Chairman was at the National Guard Association of the United States annual conference this past August. During my time as Vice Chairman, we've been successful in bringing the Chief of the National Guard Bureau into more senior-level DoD forums. I have advocated for expansion of the State Partnership Program. I

fully advocate elevating the position of the Deputy Chief of the National Guard Bureau to three star rank, and would happily support a future commander of NORTHCOM and key NORTHCOM component commanders being Guardsmen, though I do not believe the law should go any further than it does in specifying which components hold which billets.

I have put my money where my mouth is on support for the Guard, and they can count on my continued support. Nonetheless, and despite all my support for this great institution, I am concerned about the pending National Guard Empowerment Act legislation provision regarding full membership of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau on the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The spirit of Jointness kindled by the Goldwater Nichols reform legislation is alive, and has served our nation well. I do not believe it needs to be fixed. The service chiefs who serve on the JCS have great responsibility for manning, training, and equipping both the active and reserve components of their services. They also provide Title 10 military advice on strategy and the use of force to the Chairman, the Secretary and the President. The Chief of the National Guard Bureau does not have commensurate responsibility, nor should we send the corrosive signal that we have two different United States Armies and two United States Air Forces.

Second, while the legislation may send a positive message to the terrific men and women in the Guard, I'm concerned that it will send a very negative

message to the remaining 40-plus percent of our nation's reserve component that they are somehow of lesser importance, and that future decisions could be taken at their expense.

Third, some may believe this legislation would provide a tangible benefit by empowering the Guard with a vote on the JCS. Mr Chairman, there is no voting process on the Joint Chiefs. Instead, we all provide our best military advice to the Chairman, who then formulates his advice to the Secretary of Defense and to the President. We already receive fantastic military advice from General McKinley, who is always invited to that table, just as we do from the Commandant of the Coast Guard, who also is at the table. Yes, statutorily we have the right of dissent through the Chairman and Secretary to the President, but that is very, very seldom used.

In the end, however this is resolved Mr Chairman, I can assure the members of the committee that my colleagues and I will do everything we can to prevent this issue—despite having been elevated to this level—from driving a wedge between our fantastic, capable, and brave National Guard and the rest of the United States military.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear this morning, and I look forward to your questions.