STATEMENT OF

GENERAL MARTIN E. DEMPSEY, USA

CHAIRMAN

JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

BEFORE THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

ON WHETHER CHIEF OF NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU SHOULD BE A

MEMBER OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

November 10, 2011

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Chairman Levin, Ranking Member Inhofe, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the proposal to make the Chief of National Guard Bureau a statutory member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I would also like to thank my colleagues at the table. We share a bond of trust with each other and the nation that will be sustained regardless of how today's question is answered.

Let me be clear, I am both an admirer and an advocate for the National Guard. Our entire Reserve Component makes an indispensible contribution to our national security. Throughout our Nation's history, and certainly in the decade since the September 11th attacks, we have depended on our citizen soldiers and airmen to help defend us, our allies, and our interests. At home and aboard, the National Guard serves with courage, discipline, skill and distinction.

I am proud to be their Chairman—the Chairman of our total Joint Force—active and reserves, civilian and families. I take seriously my responsibility to give voice to their achievements and needs. I ensure their voice—including the voice of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau—is heard.

This said, I join the Secretary of Defense and the Service Chiefs in counseling against making the Chief of the National Guard Bureau a statutory member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. There is no compelling military justification to support this historic change. Two primary concerns lead me to this conclusion—representation and accountability.

First, our success as a Joint Force is due in large measure to our ability to integrate the active and reserve components—they are indistinguishable on the battlefield. I believe this is because the Service Chiefs of the Army and Air Force are the single voice for their respective branches. With the Service Secretaries, they bear sole responsibility for making the resource decisions that

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produce an organized, trained, and equipped force. This includes the National Guard and Reserve Components. The proposed change could undermine this unity of effort. As you know, each of our Services has a Reserve Component but only the Army and Air Force have a National Guard. This proposal will also create a situation among our Reserve forces whereby two of the six Reserve Components would be represented differently creating at least a perception of inequity.

My second and more important concern is one of accountability. Each of the Joint Chiefs is subject to the civilian oversight of a single appointed and confirmed Secretary. The CNGB has no such oversight. Elevation to the JCS would make him equal to the Service Chiefs without commensurate accountability. This proposal runs counter to the carefully crafted organizational and advisory principals established in the Goldwater-Nichols legislation.

The argument to change the composition of the JCS is simply not compelling. It's uncertain to me what problem we're trying to solve.

Here is what I do know with certainty. The Chief of the National Guard Bureau has and will continue to attend meetings of the Joint Chiefs that I chair. I want and need him in the Tank. The Chief provides valuable insight and experience for matters of importance to the National Guard and the Nation. This advice is also carefully considered when the Army and Air Force Chiefs make decisions that affect their service. The CNGB has a voice and it is heard.

Over the last 10-years, the relationship between our active and reserve components has grown into a well integrated fighting force. You can't spot the difference between active and reserve component soldiers or airmen—we are and will remain one force.

Again, I would like to thank the Committee for its continued support to ALL our men and women in uniform, as well as their families. I look forward to answering your questions.