

**Opening Statement of Chairman Tom Davis
Government Reform Committee Hearing
“Transforming the National Guard: Resourcing for Readiness”
April 29, 2004**

I would like to welcome everyone to today’s hearing on the emerging operational roles of the National Guard and its overall state of readiness.

How proud are we of the people of the National Guard these days? It seems that every United States military mission abroad and at home is filled with dedicated Guard personnel. 25 percent of the 460,000 soldiers and airmen in the Army National Guard and Air National Guard are now on Title 10 active duty, 37 percent of the troops now on the ground in Iraq are in the Army National Guard and 80 percent of all Army Guard and Air Guard personnel will be called up at least once in the next three years for active duty.

And what of their Title 32 and state missions at home? Isn’t it about time Congress considers rewriting Title 32 to reflect the operational and resourcing realities of the Guard today? Just how many Guard units are listed as critical homeland defense and security assets of our states? I am sure Governor Pataki will be able to tell us how important the Guard is to New York.

The purpose of this hearing is to examine if we are preparing the Guard with everything it needs to perform its emerging operational missions. At a moment’s notice call of the President and the Governors, the Guard is truly a critical part of our national and homeland security. In Washington we distinguish between homeland defense and homeland security, but as we will hear today, I am sure that distinction back at home is hairsplitting at best. I am sure the Adjutants General of Texas, Washington and Maryland, who are on the front lines of balancing their Guardsmen and resources between Title 10, Title 32 and state emergency missions, will tell us of the complications.

The Guard has many masters and many federal and state departments and organizations that need to come together to task and manage the Guard in a consistent and well-defined manner. I know that General Blum of the National Guard Bureau, as liaison between the states and the Department of Defense has many short and long term ideas for reforming the Guard.

Does the Guard have enough manpower to perform missions abroad and at home? That subject is certainly up for debate here on the Hill. Does the Guard receive the equipment and training it needs to perform these missions? We have all heard the “poor-stepchild” tales of DOD shortchanging the Guard when it comes to equipment funding. How and when will this be changed to reflect changing needs and current military strategies? How much money is in the 2005 Defense Budget to replace or maintain Guard equipment being used in Iraq? How much maintenance funding is taking care of aging Air National Guard planes used abroad and in Operation Noble Eagle? We look to Secretaries McHale and Hall of the Department of Defense to let us know which direction our

national military strategy is going to take in terms of the National Guard operations and resourcing and how and when we are going to get there.

And how about training? How does the Department of Defense judge the training readiness of the Guard for active duty and homeland defense missions under constantly changing operational responsibilities and derivative deployed units? Do training tasks reflect lessons learned abroad and at home? Does the Guard participate in major active-duty exercises or participate in homeland exercises with first responders? Who is gathering these lessons learned and are they being incorporated into training and equipping? What operational plans and training does NORTHCOM Commander General Eberhart foresee for the National Guard for homeland defense missions? His special assistant, Major General Love will let us know today.

The Committee on Government Reform seeks timely and comprehensive answers to these questions, and we look to the Department of Defense to cement its operational plans for the Guard and fund it adequately for the first time in its long history. We look to new, more effective channels to resource the Guard, and we seek input from the States on their current and future plans for Guardsmen. They too are responsible for the security of our citizens. We look for active coordination of management resources between DOD and DHS, and more than just interagency task force reports.

The General Accounting Office will testify today regarding Guard transformation and rebalancing, and the tension between the increased reliance on reserve components in the war on terrorism and the increased responsibilities of Guard units to their state's governors to provide forces for homeland security emergencies and other traditional state missions.

Call it transforming or rebalancing, call it funding or resourcing, but we should not wait any longer. Ensuring the National Guard is prepared and ready in this decade and beyond should be an immediate priority of the Administration, Congress and the individual States. The time to ensure the brave and dedicated men and women of the National Guard receive the management, training and resources they need to fulfill missions of safety and security for the people of the United States is now. We wait at their peril and our own.