



Transcript

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NATIONAL GUARD ON-THE-RECORD TELEPHONIC MEDIA ROUNDTABLE

November 4, 2022

TOPIC	SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS
National Guard Cyber Forces Domestic Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Air Force Major General Rich Neely, Adjutant General, Illinois▪ Army Major General Todd Hunt, Adjutant General, North Carolina National Guard▪ Air Force Brigadier General Gent Welsh, Assistant Adjutant General, Washington National Guard▪ Air Force Colonel Paul Perron, Cyber Chief, Louisiana National Guard▪ Army Colonel Joed Carbonell, National Guard Bureau Cyber Chief

Introduction:

The National Guard provides critical cybersecurity and information technology support to the Department of Defense and the 50 states, three territories and the District of Columbia. The domestic operations cyber support the Guard brings to the table is another critical capability that allows us to remain fully interoperable with the Joint Force. National Guard Cyber Forces domestic support ranges from mission assurance, network assessment and protection and risk mitigation.

More than 2,200 Army and Air National Guard personnel serve in 38 cyber operations units, and an additional 2,240 Guard members provide cyber and IT support to the DOD, the states, territories, and the District of Columbia.

Earlier this year, the National Guard provided cyber support to eight states during May and June primaries and will provide cyber support to fourteen additional states during the November mid-term election season.

It is part of vision of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau General Daniel Hokanson to employ modernization to keep our Soldiers and Airmen on the leading edge of contemporary technologies. The National Guard will use modern and interoperable equipment, systems, and processes that are deployable, sustainable, and that overmatch current and future threats.

As we are Always Ready and Always There, partnerships remain at the forefront of our service. For Cyber Forces Support, our units coordinate with interagency partners that enable a Unity of Effort, a Common Operating Picture, and Shared Situational Awareness during election cycles each year.



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Here today to talk about these capabilities are the Adjutant Generals from Illinois, Air Force Major General Rich Neely, North Carolina, Army Major General Todd Hunt, the Assistant Adjutant General from Washington, Air Force Brigadier General Gent Welsh, from Louisiana, Air Force Colonel Paul Perron, head of cyber for the Louisiana Joint Staff and our National Guard Bureau resident Cyber Chief, Army Colonel Joed Carbonell.

All bios were provided in the media release, and at the end of this media round table, if we have any open questions or anything, we will follow up with you, and provide the information as requested.

The on-the-record telephonic media roundtable was held Friday, November 4th, from 11-1145 a.m. (ET).

Dialogue:

[Name]

[QUESTION/RESPONSE]

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

Good morning and thank you for joining us for National Guard Media Roundtable to discuss National Guard Cyber Forces Domestic Support. The National Guard provides critical cybersecurity and information technology support to the Department of Defense and the States. Three territories in the District of Columbia. The domestic operations. Cyber support the guard brings to the table is another critical capability that allows us to remain fully interoperable with the joint force. National Guard cyber forces, domestic support ranges from Mission Assurance, network assessment and protection and risk mitigation. More than 2200 Army and Air National Guard personnel serve in 38 cyber units, and an additional 2240 Guard members provide cyber and I.T. support to the DOD, the states, territories and the District of Columbia. Earlier this year, the National Guard provided cyber support to eight states during May and June primaries and will provide cyber support to 14 additional states during the November midterm election season. It is part of the vision of the chief of the National Guard Bureau, General Daniel Hokanson, to employ modernization, to keep our soldiers and airmen on the leading edge of contemporary technologies. The National Guard will use Modern and interoperable equipment, systems and processes that are deployable, sustainable and that overmatch current and future threats. As we are always ready and always there partnerships remain at the forefront of our service. For cyber forces, support our units coordinate with interagency partners that enable unity of effort, the common operating picture and shared situational awareness during election cycles each year. Here today to talk about these capabilities. Are The Adjutants General from Illinois. Air Force Major General Richard Neely, Washington, Air Force Brigadier



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General Jim Welsh, North Carolina, Army Major General Todd Hunt From Louisiana, Air Force Colonel Paul Perron and our head of cyber for the National Guard Bureau, Resident Cyber Chief Army Colonel Joed Carbonell. The Media Roundtable will last approximately 45 minutes. This should allow time for you to have at least one question. And if time permits, we'll have additional. You may also submit your questions in writing, in the chat, and if time runs short, we'll do our best to get you the answer. So with that, we'll go ahead and start going around the room and we'll start with Steve Bannon from Military Times.

Steve Beynon – Military Times Steve Beynon, Military.com: Appreciate you all for doing this. Just ahead of the midterms, can you give us a rundown on is there any specific threats to any sort of cybersecurity apparatus? And can you kind of give us just the scope of any mobilizations around that site? Title 32 or sad orders or anything like that? Thank you.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

Major General Neely, would you like to start off?

Maj Gen Neely - IL

Well, sure, I'll just try to hit a few of those things. I think Col Carbonell probably has the details on the particular units, but what we're what we're seeing really is just a continued partnership across the across the National Guard, partnering with our emergency managers our state board of Elections, and that to ensure that we continue to have secure elections. You know, we saw the challenges that came out of the 2016 election. And for us in Illinois, that's really something that caught our attention when we really started to address the issues of the election systems, and particularly when election systems were were part of that became part of the critical infrastructure. And so we're this year, we're in place to ensure that if there's any assistance that's needed, we're working proactively with our State Board of Elections, not just on the day of elections, but really prior to to do security analysis checks and look into the the network to make sure it's as secure as possible. And we're really that that third party that comes in is just assisting them to give them a different look so that on Election Day we can all have confidence in our election systems. And I'll turn over to Colonel Carbonell really to talk about maybe the numbers that we're seeing across the nation as those different states that are supporting elections this year. Joed.

Col Joed Carbonell - NGB

Thank you, sir. So we started partnering with CSISA cyber security infrastructure security agencies and U.S. Cyber Command earlier this year to really start the flow of information that national say, down to the state and local level at the state and local level, up to the national level, really



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serving as a bridge across the 54 early before reaching out to the states and saying how many we're going to participate or plan to provide National Guard support through the elections. And as major murphy mentioned earlier, 14 states that are that are have participated or plan to participate on state active duty and supporting the governor and adjutants general for election security right now.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

Thank you, sir. Jim Leach.

Jim Leach

Thank you. I'm sorry I came in late to this. This is dealing primarily with election security. And you may have already covered this. I apologize, but are you dealing with specific threats or is this primarily precautionary?

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

I'll turn this question to Col Paul Perron from Louisiana.

Col Perron - LA

Right now, we're not dealing with any specific threats. As General Neeley indicated, this is just another opportunity for us to partner in particular for Louisiana, to partner with our secretary of State and just help to ensure that they are in the best secure posture possible. It's just a continuation of what we do on a day-to-day basis throughout the year. And in addition to that, as General Neely also indicated, our partnership with CSISA, the Cybersecurity Information Infrastructure Security Agency, it just enhances those types of partnerships.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

Thank you, Sir. Jeff Selden from Voice of America.

Jeff Selden

Thank you very much for doing this. I'm just wondering what types of things Are with the midterm elections are You looking at? What type of things have you. Been asked to look at in terms of Cybersecurity? And as part of cybersecurity? Obviously, there's a lot of. Disinformation, misinformation in cyberspace. To what extent are you looking at influence operations? We've heard CSISA talking about those being used to incite violence. Are you guys keeping an eye out for any of that stuff?

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

Jeff, first off, we're talking about cyber forces Support to domestic operations. General Hunt from North Carolina, Would you like to address that?

MG Hunt - NC

So thank you for the question. Yes. When it comes to some of the cyber threats, malicious, we leave that to our state and federal law enforcement partners. Our main goal and our main objective with our cyber team. Let me explain. Our cyber team was composed of about ten people by our



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force structure, which is the Army's plan for how many personnel that we can have. we've created our own cyber team in concert with the National Guard in North Carolina to include emergency management, some federal partners. And we have a steady state operation of about 31 personnel. We've been doing election monitoring of the network since we had the first discussions in 2018. So like some other colleagues we do, this is a steady state type of operation. However, we will surge during the election to ensure that we have 24 hour coverage throughout this whole process. And I will say that from a National Guard standpoint, we treat this like we do any kind of domestic operations, the partnerships, because we are citizens, soldiers, we live in the state and we do have a vested interest in our state elections along with the federal elections. Thank you.

Maj Gen Neely - IL

Matt, if I could just pile on a little bit a word as an excellent answer by general Hunt. You know, I think it's really that here we all should really just highlight the fact that as each of the participants talked about is it's really about a whole of community coming together. It's the federal agencies. It's the state agencies that are securing these elections, all working together in the National Guard, as we do in many other aspects of in the homeland, whether it was with COVID or whether it's with a hurricane. The National Guard is always there to support both our citizens and and here in the homeland, as well as the National Guard certified America's wars. And so, again, we're using these unique skills that that we have as military members and some equipment really just, again, to partner with with our state agencies and our federal agencies. And really, it's a it's a whole of government approach. And a lot of times as as we did in COVID, we're just there is an extra set of hands to to assist. And the professionals in the law enforcement area are the ones that are looking at some of these these threats closer than we would. Thank you.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

General Welsh would you like to add anything?

Brig Gen Welsh - WA

You bet. Yeah, I would say I completely agree with everything else that this panelist said, but I sort of say on the influence piece, really not our not our business, not our scope. You know, that's that's one that we get asked a little bit about in that state as well. Just a little bit interesting. I mean, one of the things that that really is making a lot of this cyber participation possible are states that have just decided to do it. What you notice is that 54 states and territories, not everybody is doing it. And those that are have invested in cyber talent at cyber missions for years. So if you don't have a cyber unit in your state, chances are you're not in a good position to help out that state for some of the elections security issues that we've got. I also



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sort of say that, I mean, you know, ever since, you know, I mean, nationally and internationally, we've gotten to this place where in public reporting will back this up is just that you've got a military great adversary and adversaries coming after election, cyber critical infrastructure in the United States. How do you get after that? You know, you don't train people and corporations and and, you know, the state public sectors to do this kind of work. Most of the security is built around making sure maybe the walls are higher and the lights are blinking green But one of the unique things here is, is you have the National Guard, who's whose mission it is, and in a lot of cases to to do cyber missions, you know, against other military structures. So kind of that military grade adversary, military grade kind of helper really makes a lot of sense here.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

Thank you, sir. Just a quick reminder, we do have B-roll and some handouts in the biographies of all of our speakers in the chat. So if you aren't seeing that, we'll make sure that we get them to you after the MRT. We'll go to Sean Lingus at CNN.

Sean Lingus - CNN

Yes, Thanks for doing the call. Have any of you had requests to do incident response from state or local election officials this midterm cycle? And the second question is, what are you expecting on Election Day? Are you expecting another day on the Internet? Are you expecting a an increase in cyber activity aimed at election infrastructure?

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

We'll start with North Carolina.

MG Hunt - NC

Sean, thank you. Again, we're not able to share operational data on what we do day in and day out. But I will tell you more than the positive things that our cyber task force team in NC does is we go out and educate local and state officials on the network as a preemptive measure to prevent some of these instances of malicious attacks onto our networks. And that's something unique. We have 100 counties in North Carolina. Each one has their own election system, an election process. But our team has gone out from a cyber standpoint and done cyber hygiene and training for each not all of our counties yet, but the majority of them to help shore up the network as we move to the election cycles.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

General Neely, would you like to add?

Maj Gen Neely - IL

I think General Hunt hit it spot on. I mean, we don't really want to talk about operational issues. And again, that gets back to law enforcement. What we're doing is really focused on both that education piece and that



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pre game day piece where we can ensure that the the networks as secure as possible. And then on that, on game day, we have support to our security operations center to the stages so that they're augmented. We have a lot of great professionals in in our state security operations center, but the National Guard brings in additional hands to assist with that. And so we're continuing, you know, cyber is that that new domain? It's the domain that it's a manmade domain. So it's different than land, sea, air space. And because of those uniqueness, I think each of these that each of our states, our nation, entire world is really, you know, trying to get their arms around security and what that means. General Welsh brought forward the you know, the point of, you know, nation states. We can see attacks from nation states. And we've had to have in the past. And, you know, our goal is really to make sure we have as secure elections as possible. And and the National Guard brings, you know, some unique skills and abilities, although I would continue to say that we we were at the really beginning stages of this, and we hope to see a continued growth of cyber capabilities across our across our National Guard forces, because, as General Walsh said there, there are many there are few states that really have enough capability out there. And we're seeing a continued growth in this area and the need for additional security capability within the National Guard. So I hope that helps. Thank you.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

Col Carbonell, anything you'd like to add?

Col Carbonell - NGB

You know, there's been a lot of questions about specific threats or information like that. The system has done a great job of sharing all the information and getting across the community and with private industry, and we just ensure that that flow of information continues to happen from the Guard Bureau perspective. And as of right now, what they are sharing in the public is they expect this to be another another normal day on the internet as this goes. But this is giving us an opportunity in the states that have already spoken right on building those enduring relationships with their state and local officials because that's that's critically needed in order to respond in the future if there were to be attacks in America on the cyberspace.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

Thank you. We'll go to Mark Hensh, National Guard magazine.

Mark Hensh – NG Magazine

Yes. I thank you for your time today. How do you see the efforts that you're doing in your individual corners of the National Guard as improving citizen trust in institutions like elections?



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Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

We'll start with general Welsh from Washington.

Brig Gen Welsh - WA

And that's a great question. I think if you look back, you know, as crazy as the last couple of years have been, the United States military and certainly the the National Guard is still one of the most respected and trusted institutions across the United States. So not to say that the National Guard going in, you know, and doing cyber work in the election space is giving it the I would say the US seal of approval. But it does add a layer of credibility to to what's being out, you know, to what's out there. It's, it's a nonpartisan structure. Sometimes you have partisan elections, you know, offices here and there, you know, you know, Democrat, independent, Republican, whatever. But the National Guard is is like anything in the military, extremely nonpartisan. And it does give that extra sense of hey we took a look at this thing. We took a look at it from this perspective, with everything that we've been trained on and everything that we do and all the trust and credibility we've earned from from our population over the years. And this is what we saw and this is what we didn't see.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

Col Perron, do you have anything to add?

Col Perron - LA

I'd echo what General Welsh said. I think another aspect of this is that communities are used to seeing the National Guard after an incident such as a hurricane or flood, tornado or something of that sort. This is an opportunity where they see the National Guard more in a proactive state, providing more of a defense of the nation-type support for the community. And as General Welsh indicated, it's just another opportunity for communication, that things are secure. And we are looking at things very rigorously and standing by for in the event that something does happen.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

Thank you. We'll go to Kevin Collier from NBC. Kevin.

Kevin Collier - NBC

Appreciate your doing this call. I just want to ask I don't think I heard anything to this effect CSISA does on Election Day and is doing this midterms as well. A series of calls throughout the day where they say either all quiet on the western front or we're doing X, Y and Z, we're seeing X, Y and Z at 1 to 9 and one at noon or One of four, you know, that sort of thing. Can you commit to doing something along those lines is so frankly, just speaking as a reporter and I'm sure I speak for some of my colleagues here, it can be really overwhelming trying to keep up with who's seeing what in a very fast moving Election Day. So that sort of thing is extremely helpful.



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Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

Col Carbonell, can you address that?

Col Carbonell - NGB

That's something we'll look into. I mean I'm sure the information that we receive is coming from the CSISA itself or from other federal agencies or unreadable. But we'll follow up with major incidents to see what, if anything, we are able to do to make.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

Thank you. We'll move on to Justin Doubleday from Federal News Network.

Justin Doubleday - FNN

I was wondering, you know, it sounds like it's a pretty busy time For you all Are you dealing with any specific cyber and I.T. recruiting challenges and retention challenges? Do you have any numbers you can share and any strategies for dealing with that?

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

General Neely, would you like to start?

Maj Gen Neely - IL

Well, recruiting is always one of our highest priorities. And you know, one thing about the National Guard, many times people find an opportunity to do some unique bring unique acquired civilian skills and bring them into the military or vice versa. A lot of times we'll actually, you know, many of our new soldiers will an airman will go off to get cyber skills and then be picked up by industry or may come off active duty to the National Guard. And and so times that is the interest to continue to serve. The interest to do something very unique in the military is a big draw for us. And so we're continually and constantly looking for talent out there that that we can we can bring in. And it's great to have those those skills, you know, those members that go off to industry and bring those unique skills back and help us in the military. So many times we will have the people that may join for one reason or another and and stay in you know, they may be a truck driver, but during the week, they may actually work at Microsoft and bring those skills back to the National Guard, and we're able to use them in these unique missions. I think Major-General Hunt mentioned that earlier about how we sometimes build our own cyber teams out of not just out of the structure that we have, but out of some of our civilians, some of our folks who bring those skills from industry back to the National Guard. So we're continually we're always looking to recruit. It's always a priority for us. And we know that it's a it's a skill sought out there by many industries. And we're we're always out there trying to make sure that they understand they can serve part time in the military and full time in the civilian sector. So hopefully that helps out a little bit.



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Unknown

Major Murphy, can I add to that?

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

Yes, please.

Unknown

That's one of the unique advantages that we have in the National Guard, the reserve component, but specific the National Guard is being able to capture that talent that is coming off from active duty like general Neely mentioned service members from all the service is going to train through their time. And so the nation will want to continue to serve, but they want to go explore other opportunities. They can do that with us in the National Guard. They can be close to home wherever home is for them. If the force structure is there for them to return to and provide that that service to the community, service to the nation then and also the service to private industry and why it's so important in the National Guard versus perhaps other components of being able to have that dual mission and support to state and local and then the reserve brothers and sisters aren't able to do.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

Thank you. Any of the other states have anything to add?

Unknown

I'll just add people love these kind of missions. I mean, one of the unique things about the National Guard is you do get to serve your community and you get to serve that state and domestic peace of things. So for the for the 13 folks that we've got on our mission here, we probably have triple that in terms of volunteers that want to do this mission. So people actually join the National Guard to do things like this, things that they can't do on active duty, things that they can't do in their civilian career. And missions like this actually add to their professional credibility quite a bit. So, again, best of both worlds. That's one of the unique things about the guard. So I was saying earlier is just that, you know, you can have your cake and eat it too. Cake and pie. You can you can have a great civilian career and you can have a great career in cyber. And he can live in the same house and not have to move. So it's a it's a great thing. And these are great missions for our guys and gals to get into.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

Thank you.

Maj Gen Neely - IL

If I could just highlight one more thing that, you know, General Welsh really, really highlighted is, you know, and I don't think we talked about it early on. As you know, most of you on the on air are probably aware of this. But, you know, it's only the National Guard that can work in these unique missions. The National Guard is tied to our states where we work



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very closely with our emergency managers. We work very closely with with the civilian sector. We have that day to day interaction, but we also have that ability to understand what's happening at the national level. We have security clearances that allow us to understand the bigger picture on the security of of the nation. And many of those things, we wear multiple hats. That state hat, which is really kind of a homeland security hat we wear that federal have that it allows us to do defend the nation national security type of work. And there's really no other organization in the world really especially in DOD, that is able to go between local to national level. And so in this mission, it makes us very, very unique to not only have that capability, but also to understand and to work between CSISA and the state level, between DOD and the local level, and to really kind of close some of those gaps that we have in our system. So I hope that helps a little bit as well to add to the conversation.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

Thank you, sir. We'll go to Megan Myer.

Megan Myer

Thanks. This question was sort of asked earlier, but I just want to try to get at it again. Were there any specific threats that the National Guard responded to during the primaries for this election cycle and beyond that on Election Day, if there is a threat? What does it look like when the National Guard response? Is the National Guard able to get a network back online or set up a backup network? Given that you all are at the whim of the state entities that are taking the lead.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

Col Carbonell, I'll let you lead with that.

Col Carbonell - NGB

You know, as was mentioned for the question, you can't go into any specific operational information. But but in general, as our teams go in and respond, it's if they're called and invited in like any other incident responder is to help mitigate the threat and share information with the law enforcement partners. Everything done at the state and local level and my colleagues online can really address that is done in an agency type matter, but they're not there, as I.T. professionals to get network systems to back up. They rely on the ... mission To take care of that is to help provide expertise and information to get that organization back up and running. And then they rely on the information that's provided by the various (unreadable) and agreements that exist for sharing of assets information.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

Thank you, Sir. We'll move on to Benjamin Freed from State Scoop.

Benjamin Freed – State Scoop

Thanks. Thanks for your service. And this call is more of a physical



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security question. But if as expected, it takes some states several days or weeks to tabulate the results and certify are National Guard units Are you making any preparations in case we see incidents similar to what we saw in 2020?

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

General Hunt...

MG Hunt - NC

Thank you. So to answer your question, no, we're not seeing anything. However, the National Guard in the state of North Carolina is postured to increase readiness to respond to domestic events if called upon by the governor. Right now, we are not seeing anything from our standpoint. It is a tiered response.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

General Neely, would you like to respond?

Maj Gen Neely - IL

I'd simply put you know, just add on to what general Hunt said we're always there and always ready, you know and you know that's we're not seeing anything. We're not expecting to see anything. But much like we did after, you know, January six, if the guards called in, the National Guard responds and comes in as soon as needed. And again, nothing's out there to say that. And we're not expecting anything, you know, with within with what we're seeing. So thank you, though.

Maj. Murphy- NGB-PA

We'll move on to Maggie Miller from POLITICO.

Maggie Miller - Politico

Thanks for doing this. I know you've mentioned a few times you're working with CSISA and I think you said NSA as well. Can you talk about what that collaboration is going to look like on Election Day? And, you know, if any threats come up, sort of how each of the agencies will be covering different areas. Thanks so much.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

I'll start with our cyber chief from Louisiana.

Col Perron - LA

So Sister is lead federal agency for cybersecurity, for all intents and purposes. So there is. Colonel Carmen Allard had indicated. They're providing us with a lot of information. As for a direct partnership on on Election Day, it's mainly for that threat Intel, that information sharing NSA. I'm not sure if that was mentioned, but our primary focus is gaining as much insight from CSISA and responding accordingly.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

Col Carbonell, anything to add?



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Col Carbonell - NGB

On the same sort of partnership it's been with, with CSISA predominantly, and then you have Cyber Command as the key lead agency. But as I've mentioned, this is a whole of nation government. We took the lead whole of nation approach taken away from CSISA and then we have the Guard Bureau serving as a conduit of information back and forth between the states and the federal side.

MG Hunt - NC

Matt, I'd like to add to this question as well. This is general Hunt.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

Absolutely, Sir.

MG Hunt - NC

Yes. And answer your question about U.S. involvement in this election process. We have stood up a joint cyber mission center with other state partners, along with federal partners. And in that mission center, we don't just have National Guardsmen. We did have a liaison officer and sister, DHS and some other federal partners that we work with on a continuous basis. So this is nothing new for us in our Joint Cyber Mission Center. Is stood up. It'll be 24 seven here during the election process. We're gonna surge to about 25 National Guardsmen in that as well. But to answer your question, we do have a direct link with CSISA and DHS because they do have personnel in our Joint Cyber Mission Center here in our building. Thank you.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

Thank you, Sir. We'll move on to Lauren Williams from Defense One.

Lauren Williams – Defense One Thank you so much for doing this. I asked it in a chat, but I want to pose it to everyone. Any of the states that are activated for this election cycle, new for this particular cycle, and then also, are there any vulnerabilities or just general states of readiness or lack of lack thereof that you guys are observing with each of the different states?

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

Col Carbonell, would you like to start?

Col Carbonell - NGB

So thanks for the question. I can't answer the latter. There's nothing specific that we've been monitoring in that regards, and then I'll have to get back with you on the new states I didn't come prepared to see what new states have been added from last cycle. But that's something that we'll work through to make a reference to that.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

Thank you. Louis Martinez, did you have a question?

Louis Martinez - ABC

I do. Matt, thanks. Apologies. Can you all describe for. Us the historic



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impact that your previous missions Have had? Broadly speaking, not getting into any specific operational details, but broadly speaking? Have your missions actually had an impact? Have they prevented anything that could have impacted previous election cycles?

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

General Neely, would you like to start?

Maj Gen Neely - IL

Yeah. Let's start. That's a great question. And I you know, I think it goes back to a couple comments made earlier about when the National Guard comes in. I mean, we're we're just one more partner. This is really a whole of whole of government approach in making sure that we're working well together in state of Illinois, just like in North Carolina and Louisiana and other states. We're just another partner that comes to the table that tries to bring skills in. And that and I think you've seen since the attacks in 2016, we've seen, I think, as a nation, a much more solid approach towards security, CSISA has come online, new organizations have come online, and new partners have come to the table to ensure that we have secure elections. And Chris Krebs said that in 2020, that was one of the most it was the most secure election we had. And and I think we continue as a as a nation to continue to build security. As we look at and we've had rigorous debates about our approaches to security as a nation. I think that's continued to make sure that we're we're putting the emphasis in this. The other thing is, is 2017 January 2017, the election systems were then identified as critical infrastructure, and that kind of drove a new approach to ensuring that their security and I you know, and so I can see this across the nation that that, you know, everyone's approach to this is is increased security like the National Guard, as was mentioned earlier, because of things like COVID. In that we also bring a there's an aspect of the confidence of the National Guard, the apolitical nature of the military, that we're here just like we are after a hurricane or during COVID. We were here. The uniform brings confidence to the American public. And so I think there's also an aspect of that as well. So I'll pause there. Thank you.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

General Hunt, would you like to respond?

MG Hunt - NC

I would agree with general neely on what his statements were as well. It's all about partnerships and having been successful. I know that this year we have conducted over 45 missions for assistance, and those assistance might be ransomware, malware, credential harvesting, those type of events to our partners within the state. But I think the real answer to your question and my other colleagues will see is our customers continuously ask us to come back. So if we're not making a positive impact, they would not allow



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us or want us to come back to get back on their system and help shore up their security within their local, state and municipalities.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

General Welsh, anything from Washington?

Brig Gen Welsh - WA

You bet. So maybe a couple of things there. So direct impact. Yes. I'll give you a couple of things to think about. So when we first started our cooperation with our secretary of state back in 2016, we started our cooperation actually with doing an assessment of their whole process. So again, I talked about kind of an another set of eyes, you know, a different a different look at the security piece of this thing, looking at it from maybe a military aspect, really trying to get after that failure of imagination, you know, that we all hear about from from our nine, 11 days. So with that, we took a look at the systems here, and we did find some things that we left them with to improve their systems. Not going to give us specifics, but those recommendations were incorporated and certainly resulted in a much more secure system here. So vote by mail system in our state. So that was four years ago. A couple of years ago, we specifically sent a what we call a cyber nine line cyber command, you know, and that's nothing classified, but it's stuff that we found on a state's network that's of interest to the highest levels of our cyber structure in our country. And that's one of the things going back to a previous question about information flow that exists out there is because you have the National Guard out there, you actually have a what I would call a secure point of presence. So you actually have folks in uniform, folks with security clearances that can pass data, you know, both up to Cyber Command in a very quick way because we do have security clearances in those relationships and get, in some cases, some of the highest levels of security information down to a state that can be filtered through, you know, as appropriate that that cyber team. And the last one is, you know, kind of a more recent engagement. Wasnt during the mid this midterm run but we're absolutely absolutely able to to, you know, from a protect standpoint, get a hold of some of the systems at the state, at it at one location and actually get them transported in a way that kept all the forensic data intact so they could analyze it and the law enforcement folks could analyze that. So, yes, in our case, quite a bit of actual impact, not just the talk piece.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

And our cyber chief from Louisiana...

Col Perron - LA

So I'm not going into direct impact, but I will build off of you know, especially with what general welsh had indicated some of the things that we're able to bring is the fact that due to our exposures and some of the



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responses that we've been involved with, there's a lot of lessons learned. So by us being engaged on the election support, we're able to, as an outside viewpoint, just provide some additional insight, some additional considerations for them to look at and make sure that they're in a more hardened position. Other than that, I think what was previously stated is spot on.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

Thank you. And we're coming up on our time. I know I haven't gotten to Kari Williams. Did you have a question?

Kari Williams

No, not at this time. Thank you.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

Is there anyone else that we missed that didn't have an opportunity to ask a question? We have a couple folks on their phone where we can't see your name and any questions from the folks on the phone. Anyone have a final question for the panel?

Steve Beynon – Military.com

Yeah. If I could get in there real quick, I just kind of want to see where everyone saw it. Where cyber will be in the next maybe decade or two. You know, the guard right now is still very post-GWOT era and focusing on maybe civil disturbance missions domestically. How much does it need to invest in cyber? And then how much do you think it will actually invest in cyber? Like what was this conversation look like in a couple of years?

Maj. Murphy - NGB-PA

Col Carbonell, would you like to lead?

Col Carbonell - NGB

There's a couple thoughts to leave you with. So first, thanks for that question. It's a perfect way to end the dialog. You know, if you look at the open press and see what's going on around the world, we know that the homeland is no longer a sanctuary. The last several a couple of administrations and strategies have pointed that out. And part of that is really within our critical infrastructure and the networks and cyber terrain that we are relying on in civil society. And so the National Guard is at the nexus of that we serve, as you've heard throughout this discussion, is a kind of bridge between the federal and state side that only we can fill. And so there's definitely an increasing demand signal for utilizing the National Guard across the 50 states, the territories and the District of Columbia to be a partner in that protection of our critical infrastructure beyond just the election side of the House. So what does that look like in the future? I think that's stuff that we're still working through with our policy makers and overseers. But there is a not just a consistent need for our cyber capabilities, but an increased need for military really across hopefully all



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of the 54, not just in the 38 states now.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

Col Perron, your final thoughts?

Col Perron - LA

So I believe General Hayden had made the point earlier that it's about the investment that states are making. And so for Louisiana, in addition to our more formal cyber forces, we've put pretty significant investment in taking it out of hide and building capabilities with our soldiers and airmen, just providing them with training, but also bringing them into a more formal. We've stood up a cyber directorate to support our not only our military mission, but our state mission and being able to be ready and prepared for anything that may come to bear for the state.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

General Welsh?

Brig Gen Welsh - WA

Lots of thoughts on this topic. Quick condensing it. So you're going to have to figure out how to plug this this gap that's out there between the federal government and the states in terms of cyber response. So one of the areas that's that's ripe for for probably 5 to 10 years is, again, some kind of cyber equivalent of a the civil support teams that are out there now in every state and territory looking at the weapons of mass destruction threats. So we've got to get there somewhere on the on the cyber side domestically. Really up until that point, I think we've got some some more exposure for really the states that are the haves and those that are the have nots.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

General Hunt?

MG Hunt - NC

Thank you. I would agree with General Welsh there. The the National Guard is the touch point between the federal and local agencies when it comes to cyber. This field will continue to grow, in my personal opinion, as we see the threats continue to emerge. This is a continuous process for cyber warriors that are out there and for us to continue to secure the networks. We definitely have to stay ahead of the threat, which is a continuous process, because they're changing their tactics, for lack of a better term. So we must stay ahead of them. We must grow our cyber. And again, the National Guard is the number one choice to be the touchpoint like general welsh said between the federal agencies and the state agencies as the conduit. Thank you.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

Thank you, and General Neely, your final thoughts?



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Maj Gen Neely - IL

Now, I appreciate the question. Excellent question. And all the speakers previously had really done a great job teeing it up. And my thoughts on this is kind of as I initially stated earlier, you know, we're in the early days of cyber. It's a manmade domain. It's much different than the other domains. We can quickly move between homeland security and the homeland defense issues. And it's really we're in the biplane era of cyber. And I'd say that from the aspect of we're in their early years funding policy, infrastructure, force structure that we need in the National Guard is all missing at this point. And we've really you've seen states knit together cyber capability where they really don't have that capability in significant force structure. Some of our states do an extremely great job. Washington is one of those that have a pretty robust structure and amazing talent there. But we're all on a journey here as we grow. Much like we need helicopters and and large trucks in every state to support the state, those states in their homeland response capability. We need cyber capability in each state and we need robust structure that we can build around so that when we have threats like we've seen to our critical infrastructure, that we have the right people, the right equipment, the right skills to be able to come and support our states and ultimately the nation as we as we fill in those gaps, as the really that pivot between the state and the federal agencies. And so, again, thanks for being able to join all of you today. It's been a real pleasure. Thank you.

Maj. Murphy – NGB-PA

I'd like to close by repeating some of. General Daniel Hodgkinson, the chief of the National Guard Bureau. His comments, our highly trained Cyber warriors provide our state partners significant capability and expertise to address election infrastructure issues. Our adversaries use cyber activity to target personnel, commercial and government infrastructure. And the effects can be devastating. It is critical we have National Guard cyber professionals available to help our communities whenever or wherever they're needed. And with that, I think the panel and to all of those who joined today, we appreciate your comments. Again, there are some links and some handouts in the chat. If you didn't get them, please email the press box and we'll be sure to get you the information. Appreciate your time today and thank you very much.

[End of Audio]

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