



February 11, 2016

National Commission on the Future of the United States Army

Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate, One Hundred
Fourteenth Congress, Second Session

HEARING CONTENTS:

Member Statements

John McCain
Chairman of Committee on Armed Services
[View Statement](#)

Jack Reed
Ranking Member of Committee on Armed Services
[View Statement](#)

Witnesses

Carter F. Ham
Chairman
National Commission on the Future of the Army
[View Testimony](#)

Thomas R. Lamont
Vice Chairman
National Commission on the Future of the Army
No Testimony Available

James D. Thurman
Commissioner
National Commission on the Future of the Army
No Testimony Available

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Raymond F. Chandler III
Commissioner
National Commission on the Future of the Army
No Testimony Available

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The following webcast is a full hearing

[View Webcast](#)

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**Opening Statement on the National Commission on the Future of the United
States Army
Chairman John McCain
February 11, 2016**

The Senate Armed Services Committee meets this morning to receive testimony on the findings and recommendations of the National Commission on the Future of the United States Army. I am pleased to welcome General (retired) Carter Ham, General (retired) James D. Thurman, the Honorable Thomas Lamont and Sergeant Major of the Army (retired) Raymond Chandler.

Gentlemen, this Committee is grateful to you for your many years of distinguished service and your leadership during the conduct of the National Commission's work. We are thankful for the comprehensive and timely report. Today, we hope to benefit from your recommendations.

The focus of this hearing is our Army and our soldiers. Their mission is unequivocal. It is to fight and win our nation's wars. As Army Chief of Staff General Mark Milley said eloquently:

The Army's "reason for being, our very reason for being, at the very core of what it means to have an Army is to win and to win decisively in ground combat against the enemies of our country so that American citizens can enjoy life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Through fifteen years of war, our Army has been tested. But time and time again, our soldiers proved their commitment, courage, and determination. It is our duty to our utmost to provide them the support they need and deserve.

That starts by recognizing that our Army is still at war. At this moment, 187,000 soldiers are deployed in 140 locations around the globe. They're fighting terrorists and training our partners in Afghanistan and supporting the fight against ISIL all while defending South Korea and reassuring our allies in Eastern Europe.

Yet as the demands on our Army continue to increase, our support for our soldiers has not kept pace. In short, our Army is confronting growing threats and increasing operational demands with shrinking and less ready forces and aging equipment.

By the end of the next fiscal year, the Army will be cut down to 450,000 Active-Duty personnel soldiers, down from a wartime peak of 570,000. These budget-

driven force reductions were decided before the rise of ISIL or Russia's invasion of Ukraine. And as the commission notes, a regular Army of 450,000 is the *minimum* sufficient force necessary. We must be clear that when we minimize our Army, we maximize the risks to our soldiers. Those risks will only grow worse if mindless sequestration cuts are allowed to return and the Army shrinks to 420,000 soldiers. On the present course, we are running the risk that in a crisis, we will have too few soldiers who will enter a fight without proper training or equipment.

Given current operational demands readiness must be the first priority of the Army. Yet as our Army shrinks, readiness suffers. Just over one-third of the Army's brigade combat teams are ready for deployment and decisive operations. And the Army has no plan to return to full spectrum readiness until 2021 at the very earliest. As the commission's report makes clear, both the mission and the force are at risk.

Meanwhile, the Army is woefully behind on modernization. The Army must modernize for the harsh realities of 21st century warfare. Our soldiers must be trained and equipped for an increasingly diverse and complex range of threats. They must be able to win against peers in highly lethal, combined arms maneuver; near peers in hybrid warfare conditions; and determined, unconventional insurgents.

Yet our Army is essentially organized and equipped as it was in the 1980s. The main difference is that it is smaller. In fact, many key enabling forces like artillery; armored cavalry; engineers; air defense; chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear response; and theater transport have been reduced to levels that compromise the Army's ability to field campaign-quality forces. Put simply, our ground force is not in balance. We are not sized with adequate capacity or with key capabilities to give our soldiers what they need to win decisively.

Part of that is the legacy of the Army's acquisition record, which former Army Secretary McHugh said is "too often a tale of failure...too many underperforming or cancelled programs, too few successful fieldings of developmental designs, and far too many taxpayer dollars wasted." And while we have struggled, adversaries such as Russia have been investing billions in modernizing their armies. The result is that America's capability advantage in ground combat weapons is not nearly as great as it once was.

Another challenge to the Army's balance has been its failure to operate as a "total force" composed of the regular Army, the Guard, and the Reserve. Yet while the

Army is intended to operate as one force, the commission identified major gaps, including a lack of a focus on multicomponent units, the absence of an integrated recruiting force, and the inability to manage pay and personnel across the entire Army with a single system. The commission's recommendations for developing a Total Army, as well as those related to the critical issue of Army aviation, are worthy of the committee's consideration.

Our Total Army needs a major change of direction. This will not be easy, but it has been done before. Army leaders like General Abrams transformed the Army before. They restored the discipline and morale of the force in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. They transitioned the Army to an All-Volunteer Force while revolutionizing training doctrine. And they built an Army that won the Cold War and removed Saddam Hussein from Kuwait.

We need this kind of transformation again today because, as the commission has made clear, our Army is in trouble. The increasing velocity of instability combined with continued reductions in defense spending will inevitably lead to depleted readiness, chronic modernization problems, and deteriorating morale. We can and must do better. And I am grateful to the commission for its important contribution to helping us find a better way forward.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF U.S. SENATOR JACK REED
RANKING MEMBER, SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

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**To receive testimony on the
National Commission on the Future of the Army
(As Prepared for Delivery)**

Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for holding this important hearing on the future of the Army. After nearly 15 years of continuous military operations, it is critical that we take a step back and assess the current state of the regular Army, the Army National Guard, and the Army Reserve. As such, our witnesses this morning each bring a unique and valuable perspective on these issues. I look forward to their testimony and exploring in greater detail the recommendations that the National Commission on the Future of the Army has put forth for consideration.

First, let me begin by thanking all the Commissioners, as well as the Commission's staff, for their hard work and willingness to undertake this important endeavor to examine the size and force structure for the U.S. Army. The comprehensive study the Commission produced is thorough and thoughtful. In particular, I applaud the Commission's efforts to reach out to all stakeholders including senior leadership in the Department of Defense; leadership within the regular Army, the Army National Guard, the Army Reserve; numerous elected officials both in Washington and the states; and most importantly the soldiers currently serving in uniform. I commend the Commission for their inclusive process, and their willingness to hear from a variety of different viewpoints.

As the final Commission report illustrates, the Army is faced with a number of challenges and tough choices for the foreseeable future. The threats facing our nation are not diminishing, and it underscores our need for a well-trained, properly equipped military force that can deploy

at a moment's notice. The Army has made increasing readiness levels a top priority. However, in a constrained budget environment, augmenting funding for readiness oftentimes comes at the expense of other Army priorities including investments in modernization and recapitalization. Furthermore, the problem is compounded by the fact that the Army has had a poor track record with their modernization efforts resulting in programs that have been truncated or cancelled.

I look forward to hearing from our witness on their thoughts on how the Army can continue to improve readiness, as well as your views on how the Army can improve its acquisition processes.

Another issue the Commission considered is the Aviation Restructure Initiative (ARI), and the transfer of all Apache helicopters from the Army National Guard to the regular Army. The Commission recommended allowing the Active Component to retain twenty battalions of Apaches, each equipped with 24 aircraft, while providing the Army National Guard with 4 battalions of Apaches, each equipped with 18 aircraft. In light of the vigorous debate the ARI proposal has generated in Congress, I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on how the Commission developed this recommendation.

Finally, the Army continues to draw down its end strength with a final goal of 450,000 in the Active Army, 335,000 in the Army National Guard and 195,000 in the Army Reserve. The Commission noted that this level of uniformed military personnel "provides the Army a minimally sufficient capability and capacity across a range of near-term challenges." In light of the evolving security environment, and unanticipated global challenges, I would welcome your comments on whether you believe the U.S. can continue to meet its commitments with a smaller Army.

Again, thank you Mr. Chairman for holding this hearing, and I look forward to hearing from our witnesses.

**Statement of Gen. (R) Carter Ham
Chairman, National Commission on the Future of the Army
Testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee
February 11, 2016**

Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed; on behalf of all my fellow commissioners thank you for inviting us to testify before the committee on our report on the future of the Army. We appreciate the opportunity discuss our findings and recommendations with the committee.

The Committee and staff have already received the Commission's report, so I won't spend a lot of time addressing specific points. But, I would like to give you a sense of how comprehensive we were.

The Commission made every effort to be inclusive, accessible, and transparent.

We visited 17 states and interacted with:

- over 320 different Army units;
- all 54 Adjutants General and 33 Governors
- about 80 Members of Congress; and
- all six geographic Combatant Commands and many of our most important allies and foreign partners

And that is just a very partial list.

I should also point out that we paid strict attention to the law you passed creating the Commission; you'll notice every chapter begins with a direct quote from the law as a way to frame the subsequent material.

The result is a set of 63 specific recommendations that are unbiased, well researched, based on realistic assumptions, and backed by solid data. Importantly, our recommendations had to be consistent with "acceptable levels of national risk" and "anticipated future resources." In other words, we were not unbounded in our work.

What we found is that our Army is the best in the world. Those who wear the uniform deserve our gratitude every day.

But the Army faces severe challenges, most of them budget-driven. From fiscal years 2010-2015, overall defense funding declined 7%. Army funding declined 14%.

On the two main issues before the Commission – force size and mix, and the Apache transfer – the Commission found the following.

An Army of 980,000 is the minimally sufficient force to meet current and anticipated missions at an acceptable level of national risk. Within that 980,000, the Commission finds a Regular Army of 450,000, an Army National Guard of 335,000, and an Army Reserve of 195,000 represent the right mix of forces and, again, the *absolute minimum* levels to meet America's national security objectives.

To fully understand this recommendation it is important to remember the mandate you gave us. We weren't asked to come up with an optimal force size based on the world situation and our best judgment. That would have been nice, but it would not have been realistic.

Instead, we were asked to size the force in light of the two previously mentioned considerations – acceptable risk and anticipated resources. Adjust either or both and you can arrive at very different conclusions, and I'm sure you and the administration will have your own ideas on how to balance those considerations.

However, in our assessment, an Army of 980,000 is the absolute minimum – a floor, not a ceiling.

On the Apache question, the Commission recommends the Army maintain 24 manned Apache battalions – 20 in the Regular Army and four in the Army National Guard. The Commission recommendation has advantages over the Aviation Restructure Initiative in both wartime capacity and surge capacity, and will reduce peacetime deployment stress. It will also promote better integration of the Regular Army and National Guard.

To offset the added cost of having four Apache battalions in the Guard, the Commission suggests the Army could add only two Black Hawk battalions to the Guard instead of the four currently planned, and slow Black Hawk modernization.

The report also contains several prominent themes based on the Commission's fact-finding and analysis.

First, the All-Volunteer Force is a national treasure. Since its inception, the quality and professionalism of the force has improved dramatically – but it is expensive. However, the Commission considers sustaining the All-Volunteer Force vital to the future of the nation. All budget and force management decisions must be made with this goal in mind.

Second, the Commission believes it is critically important to develop a true “one Army” Total Force culture. While the Regular Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve are distinct, essential, and interdependent, they are meant to operate as one force – with their efforts fully integrated.

The Commission found that gaps and seams exist in the implementation of the Total Force Policy. The report highlights some of those and offers remedies.

For example, we recommend putting all Army marketing under one roof, fielding a consolidated pay and personnel system, and making changes to the existing 12304b authority that will make it easier for the Army to employ the reserve components.

And third, the Commission recommends funding at the president's FY16 level, which would provide the Army with the *minimum* resources necessary to meet its requirements at acceptable risk. But given the strategic environment and potential for growing instability, even this funding level may prove inadequate.

Furthermore, it should be understood that even with budgets at the PB16 level, the Army would still suffer from significant shortfalls, in aviation and short-range air defense as well as other capabilities we address in the report.

That is a very brief rundown on what we found. Certainly, not everyone will agree with our recommendations. Indeed, many have already voiced their disagreement.

What I do hope, though, is that our report will contribute to the important debate that the Congress and the Administration, indeed the Nation, must have to determine how America's Army should be sized, trained, modernized and postured.

With that, we are prepared to answer your questions.

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