

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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