

Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen
Subcommittee on Defense
House Committee on Appropriations
United States Army Budget Hearing – Fiscal Year 2015
March 27, 2014
Opening Statement As Prepared

The Committee will come to order.

This morning the Committee holds an open hearing on the posture of the United States Army and the budget request for the Army for fiscal year 2015.

We welcome back to the Capitol our friend and former colleague the Honorable John McHugh, Secretary of the Army, and General Raymond Odierno, Chief of Staff of the Army.

I speak for everyone in this room when I thank both of you for your long and valuable service and that of the men and women you represent. They have served repeated deployments overseas and comprise the majority of the 33,000 that serve in Afghanistan as we meet here this morning. The war is not over for them and we owe them a tremendous debt along with those who bear the physical and mental wounds of war.

Of course, there are many pressing issues facing our great Army and this morning we will discuss personnel issues, readiness, equipment modernization and reset, current operations in Afghanistan, research and development, and the lack of an OCO budget, among other important topics.

The Army budget proposal is \$116 billion. In addition, the Department of Defense has forwarded an \$80 billion “place holder” in lieu of a formal request for funding of Overseas Contingency Operations.

We have discussed this in private, but I will say it again publicly: this Committee – in the strongest possible terms - urges the Department of Defense ***and all of the services*** to work together to provide us with verifiable and defensible line item data on projected costs of our overseas operations as quickly as possible. We have a bill to write!

Of course, the Committee is concerned about the challenges facing the Army for both current operations and readiness.

Innovative thinking is required and the road to a lower top line is never smooth. We expect to have a thoughtful discussion on force structure and personnel, and also on several major programs:

- A new infantry fighting vehicle remains a major goal for the Army as does continuation of fielding components of the new information Network – a program of sensors, radios and software that started in 2011.
- Your proposed aviation restructure is designed to retire all the OH-58 series helicopters - the Army's only remaining single engine helicopter. The active component will downsize by 687 helicopters, and the Army National Guard will cut 111 helicopters. However the plan moves all the Apaches from the Army Guard to serve as reconnaissance helicopters for the Active Component. Whether or not to keep Apaches in the Army Guard remains a difficult issue.

Last point. The Army is people. A band of brothers and sisters. There must be zero tolerance for sexual assault in its ranks. Army leaders must teach, lead, and supervise. Good soldiers do not do sexual abuse and they do not tolerate it.

We will ask our witnesses for their summarized statements in a moment, but first I want to recognize the distinguished ranking member, Mr. Visclosky for any comments that he might have.

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