



# **Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen**

*Subcommittee on Defense, House Committee on Appropriations*

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## **Army Posture Hearing March 3, 2016 Opening Statement As Prepared**

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The Committee will come to order.

This morning the subcommittee continues a series of open defense posture and budget hearings. Today, the Committee will receive testimony on the posture of the United States Army and its Fiscal Year 2017 budget.

We welcome two Army leaders in new positions to the witness table:

- The Honorable Patrick Murphy, Acting Secretary of the Army , and
- General Mark Milley, the Chief of Staff of the Army.

Secretary Murphy was recently sworn in as the Undersecretary of the Army and serves as the Acting Secretary of the Army. He previously served with us here in the House from 2007-2011.

He is also an Army veteran, including service in Bosnia and then with the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne in Baghdad. Secretary Murphy, welcome and thank you for your continuing service to the country.

We also welcome for the first time General Mark A. Milley, the 39<sup>th</sup> Chief of Staff of the Army.

General Milley has held multiple command and staff positions in eight divisions and the Special Forces throughout the last 35 years, most recently serving as the 21st Commander of U.S. Army Forces Command at Fort Bragg. General Milley, we look forward to working with you in the years ahead.

Gentlemen, as you know, there was a time in the recent past when some experts saw a declining need for U.S. land power and actually planned for a smaller, less capable Army. Such thinking was clearly wrong.

While the United States Army remains the most formidable ground combat force on earth, declining end-strength and a frozen budget will challenge the Army's ability to "answer the bell" when asked by a future Commander-in-Chief.

For now, this Army is

- very much engaged in Afghanistan – trying to secure the hard-fought gains we made over the past 15 years of conflict, even as plans for our departure have been postponed;
- we have soldiers “advising and assisting” – and still in harm’s way – in Iraq and Syria and Africa, and around the world;
- The Army has a missile defense mission in the Persian Gulf and peacekeeping mission in the Sinai;
- Over 28,000 soldiers stand alert in South Korea against the unpredictable regime to the north;

At the same time, the need for a strong capable Army is underscored by new threats:

- You stand against Russian belligerence in Europe and act to deter a newly aggressive China;

In fact, as we meet here today, the Army has nearly 200,000 soldiers deployed in 140 countries.

For all these reasons, the Army has presented a budget that emphasizes readiness to ensure our soldiers are prepared for whatever our unpredictable world brings.

But, gentlemen, this appears to be a “status quo” budget - the funding level of the 2017 budget request nearly mirrors current levels.

After the return of forces from Iraq and Afghanistan, the expectation had been that units could return to full spectrum training.

Yet, the Army’s operational tempo has not slowed down, and since then, additional units, equipment and soldiers have deployed to Eastern Europe to deter and defend against Russian aggression. Meanwhile, critical maintenance has been delayed, and infrastructure repairs postponed.

Properly funding readiness, however, comes at a cost – primarily in the form of major reductions to large modernization programs. Most notably, it appears that Army aviation is the major bill-payer for preserving readiness. This comes at a time when we’re hearing Army leadership in Europe saying that additional aviation assets are their highest priority as they seek to deter Russia.

I would add that the National Commission on the Future of the Army is strongly recommending that the Army actually expand aircraft procurement to meet demands for air power on the Korean peninsula and in Europe, and to ensure the National Guard remains a viable partner.

Another challenge you face is a steady drawdown of your end strength numbers based on mission assumptions made several years ago. The world has changed dramatically in the last

two years, and so have our strategic challenges. Remembering the repeated combat rotations and the 18-month deployments of recent years, today we will discuss whether you believe the Army is properly sized to meet its range of requirements.

The Committee certainly appreciates the complexity of the challenges that are before you. We know these are dangerous times, and we will do everything it can to provide you with the resources you need to perform your mission – even if they’re not always in your budget request! In this regard, I want to call to your attention to a study, sponsored by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, to explore Army lethality.

We all agree that we never want to send our soldiers and Marines into a “fair fight.” We must maintain the upper hand.

This Subcommittee directed this research out of concern that our historic lethality overmatch over our adversaries is eroding, and in some case has been lost entirely. Specifically, we are concerned about the lethality of individual soldiers and small units, about field artillery that has not kept pace with technology advances. We are concerned about the losses we are facing in range, response time, accuracy and lethal effects, to name a few.

To illustrate this point, I would draw the Committee’s attention to eastern Ukraine where we have seen relatively new Russian technology – artillery, armor, small arms - used to great effect. This is one of the reasons this Subcommittee provided \$314 million in new funding last year to begin “up-gunning” some of our Stryker combat vehicles.

I would also add that China has made some impressive gains in these vital areas. This very important study should be landing on your desk shortly and we look forward to working with you to fill these gaps. I want to hear from you and your staff on actionable recommendations for FY17.

Secretary Murphy, General Milley, I want to close by asking you to convey to your soldiers (and their families) how much this Committee deeply appreciates the skill, the dedication and the sacrifice they display each and every day to protect us here at home.

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