



Chairman Hal Rogers

House Committee on Appropriations

Army Posture Hearing March 3, 2016 Opening Statement As Prepared

Mr. Chairman, thank you for yielding. Acting Secretary Murphy and General Milley, thank you for your many years of service, and for taking the time to be here. I would like to congratulate each of you on your new posts. This is your first time testifying before this subcommittee and we welcome you.

Our soldiers in the US Army are dedicated men and women - ready and willing to respond to threats from our enemies and support our allies whenever called upon. Under your leadership, they execute missions of national importance abroad, and return to demonstrate leadership and commitment here at home. This Committee recognizes that they must undertake tremendous hardship and sacrifice to maintain their duties as soldiers, while keeping up with the everyday responsibilities of caring for loved ones and contributing to their communities. The demands on our troops are great, and we appreciate their dedication and commitment to the US Army. They have our full support as they deploy to face unprecedented challenges around the world.

As you well know, the threats facing our homeland and our troops grow more complex and unpredictable with each passing day. China is seeking to build itself into a maritime power - purchasing aircraft carriers, submarines, and amphibious assault capabilities, and making territorial claims in the South and East China Seas. At the same time, Russia continues to aggressively pursue its own interests, threatening the sovereignty and security of several States in the region. Meanwhile, the Middle East is devolving further and further into chaos - where men, women and children are forced to flee their home countries to escape the relentless brutality of ISIS and the Assad regime.

With so much uncertainty and turmoil throughout the world, I remain concerned about our ability to respond to complex challenges in multiple regions as our force structure continues to decline. According to the current plan, the Army is set to reach an active duty end strength of 460,000 by the end of fiscal year 2017, and will endure a reduction of another 10,000 troops by 2018. You are planning to cut yet another combat aviation brigade (CAB) over the next three years, leaving us with just 10 CABs in the active force. The first CAB eliminated was in my home state of Kentucky. Just last year, the Army deactivated the 159th CAB at Fort Campbell, which resulted in the loss of almost 3,000 personnel at this base. Nevertheless, the soldiers at Fort Campbell have weathered this unwelcome loss, are as ready and equipped as ever, and are deploying in the fight against ISIS this spring. The Headquarters of the 101st Airborne Division

deployed to Iraq just last month, and soldiers from the 2nd BCT will be deploying in May to join them. They have our support, and we wish them a safe return home.

Responding to threats from our enemies, each with their own unique set of capabilities, is made increasingly difficult in light of these constraints in personnel and resources. Your charge is to maintain our ability to defeat these threats to our homeland and our national interests in any circumstance – and we know this is no easy task. We acknowledge the hardships rendered by the increasing demands on our soldiers, and I look forward to having a thoughtful conversation about how this Committee can equip you to lead in this uncertain environment.

This Committee has every confidence in your ability to guide our troops in the midst of unprecedented challenges and tight budget constraints. You have our support, and we know that you will do what it takes to ensure the safety of our soldiers and our homeland. I look forward to hearing your testimony, and I yield back.

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