



Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen

Subcommittee on Defense, House Committee on Appropriations

**Fiscal Year 2017 National Guard and Reserve Forces
Budget Hearing
March 22, 2016
Opening Statement As Prepared**

The Committee will be in order.

This morning the Committee conducts and open oversight hearing on the posture of the National Guard and Army Reserves.

We are pleased to welcome four distinguished general officers as witnesses.

General Frank J. Grass, is the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, a permanent member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, representing more than 467,000 Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen in the Army and Air National Guard.

General Grass has appeared before this Committee in his capacity as Chief on several occasions, however, this will be his last appearance before the Committee. General Grass is retiring in the fall. General Grass, you have led the Guard through challenging times. We wish you well in your retirement!

Lieutenant General Timothy Kadavy, is the Director of the Army National Guard, consisting of 28 fully capable brigade combat teams. This is General Kadavy's first year to testify before this committee. We welcome you, General Kadavy.

Major General Brian Neal is the Acting Director of the Air National Guard. This is General Neal's first year to testify before this Subcommittee. General, we appreciate the experience and expertise that you bring to this hearing.

And finally, we are pleased to welcome the Chief of the U.S. Army Reserve, Lieutenant General Jeff Talley. His units total over 200,000 soldiers. General Talley has testified before this Committee many times. Unfortunately, this will also be his final appearance as he, too, is preparing to retire. Welcome General Talley.

As we have discussed repeatedly in this room, the country is facing more serious threats, from more sources, than at any time since World War Two: The ISIS franchise, al Qaeda and other terrorist groups are active in the Middle East, North Africa and around the world; Russia

continues to menace Ukraine, its neighbors and our NATO partners. China is rapidly expanding its military and naval, air and space capabilities.

In short, no one knows for sure where the next conflict will develop, forcing us to respond militarily.

Generals, this country relies now - perhaps more than ever - upon the service of your citizen-soldiers and airmen to ensure mission success.

Our Guard and Reserves units performed magnificently in Iraq and Afghanistan, and throughout the world. And the Committee would like to commend them for their dedication and time away from home and family. All these factors make the dedication of our reserve forces even more laudable.

That said, the Committee is deeply concerned about their readiness following nearly fifteen years of war.

We are eager to hear your testimony which will assist the Committee to better determine the needs of the men and women who make up the Guard and Reserves.

It has been this Committee's long tradition to work to ensure that the Reserve component is properly equipped and trained. Even with recent budget constraints, this committee will continue to do everything possible to ensure adequate funding to enhance readiness for both your homeland and overseas missions.

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