

TESTIMONY BY
GEN CARTER HAM, USA RET.
FORMER COMMANDER
UNITED STATES AFRICA COMMAND

SUBMITTED TO
UNITED STATES HOUSE
ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

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Per Rule 11, clause 2(g)(5) of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives for the 114th Congress, I have not received any federal grants or contracts relevant to the subject matter of this testimony during the current or previous two fiscal years.

BIOGRAPHY

GEN Carter F. Ham, USA Ret.

President & Chief Executive Officer, Association of the United States Army

General Ham is the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Association of the United States Army. He is an experienced leader who has led at every level from platoon to geographic combatant command. He is also a member of a very small group of Army senior leaders who have risen from private to four-star general.

General Ham served as an enlisted infantryman in the 82nd Airborne Division before attending John Carroll University in Cleveland, Ohio. Graduating in 1976 as a distinguished military graduate, his service has taken him to Italy, Germany, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Macedonia, Qatar, Iraq and, uniquely among Army leaders, to over 40 African countries in addition to a number of diverse assignments within the United States.

He commanded the First Infantry Division, the legendary Big Red One, before assuming duties as director for operations on the Joint Staff at the Pentagon where he oversaw all global operations. His first four-star command was as commanding general, U.S. Army Europe. Then in 2011, he became just the second commander of United States Africa Command where he led all U.S. military activities on the African continent ranging from combat operations in Libya to hostage rescue operations in Somalia as well as training and security assistance activities across 54 complex and diverse African nations.

General Ham retired in June of 2013 after nearly 38 years of service. Immediately prior to joining the staff at AUSA, he served as the chairman of the National Commission on the Future of the Army, an eight-member panel tasked by the Congress with making recommendations on the size, force structure and capabilities of the Total Army.

He resides with his wife, Christi, in Arlington, Virginia.

Opening Statement:

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Smith – thank you for the opportunity to appear before this committee. I am honored to be here with Dr. Hamre and Mr. Zakheim, both distinguished public servants.

I agree that now is an appropriate time to review Goldwater-Nichols, a law which, in my opinion, has had overall positive effect on the U.S. Armed Forces and has most certainly affected my own professional development.

Not long after the law was passed, I went to the College of Naval Command & Staff in Newport. And, just to emphasize the point, fellow Army Majors Ray Odierno and Stan McChrystal were in my class. That initial exposure to joint education set each of us on paths that would lead to multiple joint command and staff experiences, none of which would have been likely absent Goldwater-Nichols.

As a battalion commander, we deployed to Macedonia on U.N. duty under the auspices of Joint Task Force Provide Promise. Later, I attended the Air Force War College, served on the staff at U.S. Central Command on 9/11 and for two years after. As a general officer, I commanded a multinational unit in Iraq, had two operations positions on the joint staff and concluded my active service at U.S. Africa Command. Again, I suspect that my path would have been far different had the Congress not passed Goldwater-Nichols.

While I agree that some changes are required, I'd urge some caution. The old adage, measure twice, cut once seems about right to me. Let's be sure the changes to the law are likely to improve military effectiveness, not simply change things.

I look forward to your questions.