

29 November 2016

**STATEMENT FOR THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT & INVESTIGATIONS
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

I am honored to have been invited to appear before the Subcommittee as the Members address the matter of force management levels, commonly referred to as “troop caps.”

In my military experience, force management levels serve a useful function by ensuring that the level of U.S. military commitment remains consistent with the decisions made by the Commander-in-Chief and the Secretary of Defense.

However, it is also my experience that force management levels can have negative effects if applied at the wrong time in the decision-making process and can cause unintended readiness challenges in affected units.

At times, a “troop cap” number may be introduced very early in the planning process. Doing so limits options and, in my opinion, constrains military planners and advisors from offering a full range of military options. Far better, in my view, is for the force management level to be addressed later in the decision-making process.

My concern regarding readiness is that, to stay within force management levels in a particular theater, military commanders “break” units, meaning parts of whole units deploy while other parts remain at home station. In addition to creating an immediate readiness shortcoming, such decisions may have longer-term consequences affecting morale, cohesion, professional development and retention. In some cases, notably Army aviation units, some military capabilities such as unit maintenance have been contracted in order to keep uniformed personnel headcount under the force management level (it is my understanding that, to date, force management levels have applied only to uniformed personnel). Doing so creates numerous problems: 1) we are essentially “paying” twice for the same capability, the uniformed personnel who do not deploy as well as the contractors performing the maintenance function in theater 2) the “stay-behind” military personnel often are unable to sustain their proficiency because the equipment they routinely work on is in the deployed theater and 3) when the unit does reform post-deployment, more extensive training is required to attain the requisite levels of readiness.

I look forward to discussing this important matter with the Members on Thursday, December 1, 2016.



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