

(As of June 17, 2015)

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Commission:

Thank you for opportunity to testify before this important Commission.

I am here today wearing two hats:

First as President of the Association of the United States Army, an organization that includes in its membership military personnel and civilians of all ranks, current and former, from all components of America's Army – active, Guard, and Reserve. We represent the American Soldier and support all aspects of national security while advancing the interests of America's Army and the men and women who serve or have served - and their Families.

Second, as former Army Chief of Staff, and a former member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff I have some experience with the matter under discussion. On my watch as a senior leader I sought to balance the post-Cold War and post-Gulf War downsizing of the Army with a concerted effort to redesign the force for growing global challenges – all while honoring our commitment to those who stepped forward to serve when the Nation needed them.

In both roles, I have and will continue to advocate for America's Army – a term I use all-inclusively. I support initiatives that make the unified whole stronger than its individual parts. We have no other choice than to collaborate to achieve that end.

The Army's Fundamental Mission

Since its founding 240 years ago this week, America's Army has existed for one purpose – to protect and defend the American People, our way of life, and our homeland. This was true for colonial militia forces and true to this day.

Clearly, all of the nation's military services contribute to that purpose, but it is the United States Army that uniquely provides

the wherewithal to support and defend Americans at home while being able to simultaneously respond to global crises by projecting decisive land power outside our borders to defeat enemies at a distance.

I want to focus in on that phrase “defend Americans at home.” From frontier defense to coastal and harbor defense to missile defense (Nike Hercules/Dew Line) to ballistic missile defense and cyber defense today, protecting the homeland has been a priority from day one and the Army’s Reserve Component plays an enormous part in that mission, along with our sister services and other governmental agencies.

A Kaleidoscope of Challenges and Risks

Many of the challenges and commitments I dealt with 20 years ago remain relevant today. The global security environment we face now and into the future is more dynamic, more unpredictable, more complex, and certainly more dangerous than at any time in my adult life. Often the threats to our security resemble a kaleidoscope – ever changing and very complex.

We have faced monolithic challenges in the past, but today Russian irredentism, a tumultuous Africa from the Med through sub-Sahara, seemingly unstoppable Middle East turmoil, a resurgent China, and a belligerent North Korea all create for the combatant commanders an increased demand for land forces to deal with contingencies, engagement, exercises, advice and assistance and state partnership programs.

I am very concerned with the ongoing and planned downsizing of all components of our Army. I understand the importance of getting the Nation’s fiscal house in order, but our Nation’s security must be non-negotiable. We are a rich nation with global interests and in my view, we can afford the defense we need to protect the security we cherish. I also appreciate the need to modernize our ships, aircraft, and nuclear triad, but in my experience a balanced and capable joint force is our proven best hedge against any threat.

We are here today because senior leaders in the Army and in the Department of Defense were required to make some very tough organizational and fiscal decisions while continuing to wage war overseas, respond to emergencies in the homeland, and adapt the force for emerging challenges, like cyber war.

The ill-advised budget mechanism we know as sequestration forced immediate reductions in Army spending beginning in 2013, with little predictability of future budget levels.

I believe the Secretary of the Army, the Chief of Staff, and other defense leaders will not be able to move forward effectively toward a Total Force concept and design until the burden of sequestration is lifted.

I have spoken out on this many times and believe this is the greatest inhibitor to progress and oppose raising the risks to our Nation's security any more just to achieve near-term savings. This is a major challenge that I hope the commission will highlight in its report.

We are sending mixed messages to our friends and allies around the world, and indirectly encouraging aggression and adventurism by those who seek to dominate their region through fear, intimidation, and oppression.

I would encourage the Commission to start with a clean slate to help the Nation identify and understand the Army that it needs to fully implement the President's defense strategy today and into the foreseeable future is one which combines all three components, with unique and common characteristics, trained and ready to perform assigned duties in peace and war effectively.

I think that starts with right-sizing our Army for the realities of the global security environment – an Army that led 80 percent of worldwide contingency missions in 2014.

Not only must we immediately stop the precipitous downsizing of the Army, but we must seriously consider growing

all elements of the force to maintain an Army that we both need and can afford.

Establishing Balance and Equilibrium in the Force

I believe we need to properly utilize every Soldier to create equilibrium – equilibrium within the Total Army – Active, Guard, Reserve, and DA Civilians. The Army unto itself must be organized, trained, and ready so that it can meet the demands of the moment, of the day after tomorrow, and the unknown future. The Army when fully mobilized is a powerful instrument of national power. In its normal peace time posture it represents unmatched potential and whatever this commission decides it must be reflective of the fullness of the capabilities of America's Army on parade. Anything else would be irresponsible.

Likewise, we need equilibrium and balance within the Joint Force. We cannot afford vulnerabilities in any domain – including the land domain.

Further, the Joint Team needs an Army that will continue to serve as the “backbone” of the Joint Force and other coalitions as the primary provider of critical theater logistics, communications, intelligence, medical services, aviation support, engineering, transportation, special operations forces, and more.

We need to also recognize that the Army is a national institution that will have to continue to provide national strategic depth in other areas like the Army Corps of Engineers' maintenance of national critical infrastructure, the defense industrial base, the Army Medical Department's groundbreaking research efforts, national missile defense, support to civil authorities, as well as maintaining the schoolhouse for leader development and key personnel specialties in all services and for many international partners.

These two “must-fund” functions – providing the mission essential enablers at the theater level and strategic depth at the national level – consume as much as half of the standing Army on

any given day. That leaves combat forces as the only “fungible” part of the force to absorb planned reductions. Not a wise option.

The Size of the Army Matters

An Army of 1.2 million Soldiers (some required and authorized and some required but not authorized) would be able to fully implement the President’s defense strategy with significantly reduced risk and provide better strategic options compared to the dangerously smaller force being considered today.

Since 1988 the active Army has been around 47% of the total Army with the Guard organized at 34% and reserve at 19%. I think cyber domain issues are such that it is possible to foresee an emerging demand for trained and very capable Soldiers and units distributed across the Army. My hunch is the Army Reserve might be the most logical component for the preponderance, not all, of these highly skilled people.

Whatever the case, it seems to be planning for a future which is different than today might facilitate reconstitution when it becomes necessary.

It would send a clear signal to friends and allies, and the growing list of potential adversaries, that the United States will fulfill its international commitments and defend its global interests. And it would empower our diplomacy.

It would provide adequate, ready ground forces to surge to unforeseen contingencies on the rapid timelines envisioned in our defense strategy without having to disengage from other priority activities or critical regions.

It would provide adequate capacity to achieve desired rotation rates for Soldiers from across the Army thereby balancing hardships with training and professional education to build readiness, making time available for physical and mental recuperation and reestablishing bonds with Families, and pursuing civilian careers.

It would facilitate development of the Army cyber force to address growing challenges in that 21st Century domain.

And, frankly, it would largely resolve the concerns and friction that contributed to the creation of this Commission.

A larger Army means a commitment to a larger Reserve Component as well. And along with that commitment comes the need for assured access to and readiness levels of Guard and Reserve forces that will help the Army maintain battlefield dominance while leveraging the unique skills of citizen-Soldiers in emerging mission areas like cyber, engagement, and partnership.

It would make more troops available to our Governors and civil authorities to better address both natural and manmade disasters in the homeland as well as maintaining essential combat capabilities in an Operational Reserve that provides strategic depth.

All of this means we must design units to meet Army requirements - some will be in the Active Army while others will remain in the Guard and Reserve. By that I mean we must organize, train, and equip units that can replace, augment, and operate with units across the Army, regardless of component.

Clearly, it will take longer for some reserve units to validate deployment readiness due to the nature of their mission. That's OK as long as it is built into a Total Force approach as we go forward.

Finally, preparing an Army to be globally responsive and regionally engaged also requires balance between forward stationing and power projection from the homeland. The Commission should take a hard look at where Army forces need to be based. And if that means greater emphasis on CONUS basing, then what strategic mobility requirements will meet combatant commander needs?

We Need to Make the Tough Calls Now

Advocating for a larger Army is tough any day of the year, especially when some of our Nation's leaders have shifted their focus to other priorities and to other interests.

But advocating for a larger Army once "the enemy is in the wire" is too late. Recent experience shows that it can take as long as 32 months to stand up one brigade combat team – time we will not have.

Such an approach transfers the risk associated with right-sizing an Army onto the rucksacks of the men and women who step forward to serve our Nation in harm's way. We should strive to be better than that. We ask the ultimate commitment from them in our defense – and we should give them the tools, the training, and the capacity to be successful.

A predecessor of mine, Major General Leonard Wood (the 5th CSA), wrote nearly a century ago:

"The World War has come and gone, so far as our participation is concerned. We were unprepared in every department. We paid the price in blood and treasure.

"There is nothing in existing conditions which in any way justifies failure to provide a sound system of national defense. America must be ever ready to throw the weight of her influence for justice and the maintenance of righteous peace. This influence will be most effective in preventing war if we are reasonably ready to make our protest promptly effective."

We will again, without doubt, send the young men and women of our Army into harm's way – organized, trained and equipped according to the Nation's interests and will during periods of peace.

No matter how hard we look for alternatives, there is just no substitute for trained, courageous, and adaptable Soldiers. At some unknown point in a future crisis more American Soldiers

might be the necessary antidote. If they are not ready - or worse, not even in the force at the critical time - the options and risks become unthinkable.

We have too often in our Nation's history taken too much risk in the capability, capacity, and preparedness of our Army.

This Commission has the responsibility - as all of us do - to help our elected leaders better understand the Army's roles and responsibilities in the defense of our Nation and the promotion of our global interests.

A larger Army than the one currently planned - adequately funded - should be the cornerstone of a more secure and prosperous America in the 21st Century.

The Criticality of the All-Volunteer Force

The forces that I have discussed today will require high-quality, well-educated, committed, and professional American Soldiers. The All-Volunteer Army to which they will belong is, and will remain, essential to the nation as we face a dangerous and uncertain future.

Concluding Remarks

I began by saying that I wear two hats - one, the president of a non-profit educational association and the other as a Soldier who devoted nearly 60 years to his profession. These two roles have provided me with a unique perspective from which to view our defense posture, both domestic and foreign. Defense of the homeland is essential - for if you cannot defend home soil, you will not be able to project power overseas.

That non-negotiable mission can only be accomplished by a Total Army mindset and structure.

The Association of the United States Army stands ready to be a resource to the commission. Thank you for this opportunity and I'd be glad to respond to your questions.