

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE RICHARD HUDSON (NC-08)

BEFORE

THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF THE ARMY

FAYETTEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

JUNE 10, 2015

Our armed forces provide for the common defense of the United States, keeping the homeland secure and protecting our interests abroad. These past few years alone have taught us that we face dangerous national security threats from barbaric terrorists like ISIS and murderous regimes like Iran who seek to destroy our country and our way of life. As tragedy unfolds across the globe, it is vital that we create and maintain a strong system for defense both within our borders and abroad. In order to be effective on any battlefield, we must make smart decisions and continue to provide the tools our men and women in uniform need to do their jobs as successfully as possible.

Our Airborne paratroopers and Special Operations forces at Fort Bragg are critical to our national defense apparatus and are often the first response worldwide. Our airborne paratroopers are perpetually on standby as part of the Global Response Force, a Brigade Combat Team that is required to be ready to deploy anywhere in the world within 96 hours. Our special operators have proven the efficacy of their tactics time and time again and get called on to take on our nation's most sensitive missions, often with no notice. It is critically important that we continue to support the in-depth training and techniques required to empower these troops to maintain their mission-critical state of readiness so they can respond to threats at a moment's notice.

As threats continue to grow, it's important that we support our men and women in uniform with the tools, resources and training they need, and that we do so in the most cost-effective and resourceful manner. I share the commission's priority of minimizing the burden on the taxpayer while maintaining our ability to take the fight to the enemy and win.

As you continue the challenging task of evaluating how our nation's Army should be structured, I urge you to fully consider the benefit of a continued robust role for North Carolina's own Fort Bragg, 440th Airlift Wing and Army National Guard. Fort Bragg and the 440th Airlift Wing are absolutely critical to conducting the type of training that both Airborne and Special Operations Forces located here at "the epicenter of the universe" rely on to conduct the high risk missions they're charged with in combat.

While I understand that the Department of Defense as a whole faces significant budgetary pressure that requires difficult decisions to be made, I expect the commission to assess the monetary and operational values derived from co-locating units here at Fort Bragg. The strong working relationship between the Air Force and the Army has been cultivated for many years and can neither be replaced nor replicated.

In the same regard, I echo the calls for the commission to sustain the combat role of the Army National Guard. Over multiple deployments, they have served shoulder-to-shoulder with active-duty Army soldiers, service members of our other components as well as the armed forces of partner nations. The Army National Guard provides a place for trained and experienced soldiers to continue their service when they leave active duty. If we do not provide them with this avenue, we risk losing their skills and abilities and we cannot afford to squander the effective and economical capability provided by the National Guard, particularly at a time of such intense fiscal constraint.

We face challenging fiscal times, but strategic decisions for the armed forces should be driven by the grave national security challenges we face. As we increasingly rely on Special Operations Forces, Fort Bragg plays an irreplaceable role in our continued effort to create and maintain a strong system for defense and to act as a global defender of freedom.

#