United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 29, 2015

General Carter F. Ham
Chairman
National Commission on the Future of the Army
2530 Crystal Drive, Suite #5000
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear General Ham:

We have been pleased that under your leadership the National Commission on the Future of the Army has carried out a wide-ranging and thoughtful survey of America's Army. We have repeatedly heard from soldiers that your pursuit of fact-based information and honest assessments from the men and women executing our nation's policies earns their appreciation and confidence. As you begin writing your report to Congress, we want to share a number of thoughts.

First, we believe that the uncertainty of the future requires both significant capabilities and capacity. The United States must be able to prevail in any fight, as well as create or restore peace afterwards. The only realistic way to achieve this goal in the Army is to invest in our Reserve Components in order to provide the requisite warfighting functions and operational capacity America's Army needs today and into the future. We would like to have enough depth in our Army to ensure that if our assumptions about the length of the next war are wrong—as they often are—we have recourse other than to ask the American people to rebuild units at great cost and time.

For these reasons a specific proposal in the President's Fiscal Year 2015 Budget request to Congress to transfer all attack aviation missions to the Active Component concerned Congress enough to be written into your mission. However, we also want to emphasize our concern about providing depth across all missions. We believe the Army National Guard is the combat reserve of the Army and we believe it is the most cost-effective way to ensure combat capabilities and capacity for the nation.

Second, we believe that Reservists and Guardsmen have participated in and should continue to participate in the full-range of missions both as individuals and as units in operations around the world. As an "operational force", we believe these individuals and units bring unique experience and perspective that should not be discounted, particularly after enabling active duty operations over the last 14 years of war.

As training and mobilization requirements differ between components, planners should devise strategies that utilize the talent we have and place that talent where it is most needed. We believe it is prudent to establish predictable funding mechanisms to leverage capabilities from the Guard and Reserve to meet the operational requirements of the Department. As such, we

believe it necessary to proactively modify policies that currently prevent access to the best soldiers available for a particular mission, including the existing personnel policies that impede a true continuum of service for soldiers across components. With the current size of the Army and the possibility of even greater reductions, we must rethink these self-imposed, archaic policies that inhibit effective force management and operational utilization of all components.

Third, we ask that you take domestic response concerns into consideration. Currently, governors, who bear the primary responsibility for response missions within their states, rely heavily on the availability of federally procured military equipment operated by the National Guard to fulfill domestic disaster response requirements. However, the Department of Defense has not created a formal process for identifying the needs of the National Guard or the Reserves within the National Response Framework.

We believe, therefore, that it is in the Department's best interest to eventually develop an institutionalized accounting of requirements for domestic operations. Until then we urge you to address the need for such a process in your report. Our experience demonstrates that much like the process a combatant commander follows, a focus on capabilities and capacity for domestic response allows force planners to develop a true multi-use force structure.

Thank you for the work you have done so far. When Congress created the Commission, we sought additional advice from a panel of experts because we recognized the nation's Army was at a crossroads, and wanted greater analysis before deciding on a path that made irreversible changes. We appreciate that you have taken on that mission for our nation, and eagerly anticipate receiving your recommendations.

Sincerely,

Lindsey O. Graham
United States Senator

Patrick Leahy
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Roy Blunt
United States Senator

John Boozman
United States Senator

Joe Manchin III
United States Senator

Thom Tillis
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Chris Coons
United States Senator

M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator

Al Franken
United States Senator

Mark Kirk
United States Senator

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

Ted Cruz
United States Senator

Mike Lee
United States Senator

Mike Crapo
United States Senator

Barbara A. Mikulski
United States Senator

Chuck Grassley
United States Senator

Johnny Isakson
United States Senator

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Jeff Merkley
United States Senator

Jon Tester
United States Senator

David Perdue
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Gary C. Peters
United States Senator

Tom Cotton
United States Senator

David Vitter
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Heidi Heitkamp
United States Senator

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

Ron Johnson
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Joni Ernst
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Susan Collins
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Cory Gardner
United States Senator

Jim Risch
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Joe Donnelly
United States Senator

Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senator

Bob Menendez
United States Senator

Roger Wicker
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John Hoeven
United States Senator

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

Ben Cardin
United States Senator

Cory Booker
United States Senator

Bill Cassidy
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

Patrick J. Toomey
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