

# FOREWORD

In April 2015, the eight Commissioners appointed to the National Commission on the Future of the Army convened for the first time in Arlington, Virginia. Bringing together a wide array of experiences and backgrounds, we eight had one common goal: to conduct our work in an unbiased, transparent, and inclusive manner so that we could, to the best of our abilities, fulfill the mission assigned to us by the Congress. This report summarizes how we gathered the information we required and includes, in our best judgments, findings and recommendations regarding the future of the Army.

As we travelled across the Army and the nation, we were privileged to meet many soldiers, their families, dedicated veterans, civic leaders, and citizens committed to maintaining a strong Army. We found truth in the sentiment that soldiers are the strength of the Army. Our nation must never forget that among the many blessings bestowed upon our country, one of the greatest is the cohort of American women and men who step forward to willingly don the Army uniform in order to defend our freedom. In the hard choices that lie ahead, maintaining unfailing faith and trust with those soldiers and their families must remain a critically high priority; for, without these soldiers, America does not have an Army. As it has been since the very beginning of our nation, it is in these soldiers

that we place our full trust and confidence.

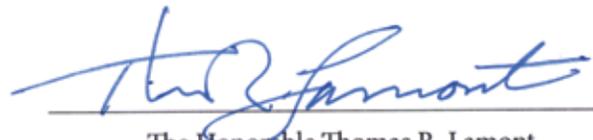
In our travels, it was disheartening to sometimes hear elements of discord from within the Army's ranks—and some from without—pitting the Army National Guard against the Regular Army. This is unacceptable behavior, especially from some senior uniformed and civilian officials. Such parochialism undermines the Army's values, does disservice to soldiers and veterans, and adversely impacts the Army's mission. We encourage the Army's most senior leaders, as well as the Congress who established this Commission, to, by their words and by their example, eliminate this unhelpful bickering among the components of America's Army.

The report which follows is our work. While aided and supported every step along the way by an incredibly talented and dedicated staff led by Major General Ray Carpenter, U.S. Army Retired, and Mr. Rickey Smith, we eight assume full responsibility for the content of our report.

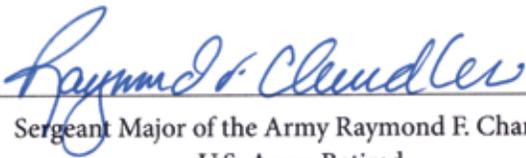
It has been our great privilege to serve on this Commission. We came to this Commission believing in the Army. We conclude our service with an ever deeper appreciation of the unmatched commitment the soldiers of America's Army make to fulfilling their oaths of service on behalf of our nation.



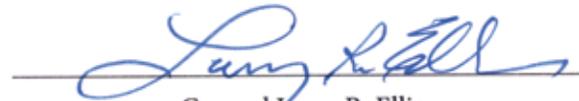
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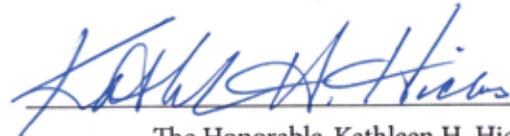
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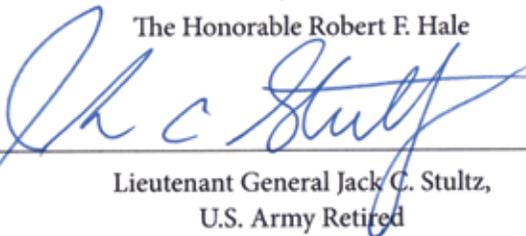
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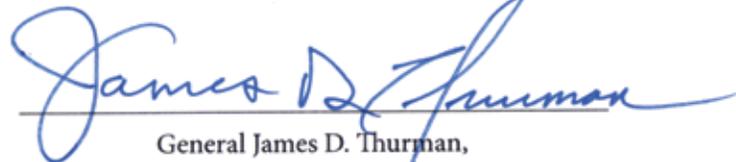
The Honorable Robert F. Hale



The Honorable Kathleen H. Hicks



Lieutenant General Jack C. Stultz,  
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General James D. Thurman,  
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Not later than February 1, 2016, the Commission shall submit to the President and the Congressional defense committees a report setting forth a detailed statement of the findings and conclusions of the Commission...with its recommendations for such legislative and administrative actions as the Commission considers appropriate in light of the results of the studies.”

2015 NDAA, Section 1703(c)

The American people expect their Army to be trained and ready whenever called upon to achieve national objectives. In an increasingly complex world with an increasing array of diverse threats at home and abroad, America’s Army must possess a wide range of capabilities to fulfill its myriad missions. However, even as the demand for Army forces expands and diversifies, the fiscal resources necessary to meet that demand have declined and will remain challenging for several years. This tension between growing requirements and fewer resources not only creates national-level risk, it also has resulted in some unhealthy competitive tension among the Army’s components, especially between the Regular Army and the Army National Guard. In large part, these factors, plus the Army’s proposal, endorsed by the Department of Defense, to consolidate all Apache aircraft in the Regular Army, prompted the Congress to establish the National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCFA).

The nation has one Army. For sound reasons—historical, cultural, legal, operational, and strategic—the Army has three distinct, interdependent, and essential components: the Regular Army, the Army National Guard, and the Army Reserve. The Regular Army consists of full-time soldiers and is often imperfectly referred to as the active component. The Army National Guard and Army Reserve—also known collectively as the reserve components—are comprised primarily of soldiers serving part-time but who can be ordered to full-time duty. Until mobilized or activated by the President for federal service, the soldiers and units in the Army National Guard are commanded by the fifty-four governors of the states and territories and are available for the ever-widening range of domestic missions: disaster response, counter-narcotics, border security, and response during civil disturbances among them. Regular Army soldiers and units of the Army Reserve operate under federal direction, and while they may support

“immediate response” requirements in rapidly emerging domestic situations, they must seek federal approval to continue beyond immediate conditions. Despite the differences among the components, the nation’s one Army is intended to operate under the Total Force Policy. This report will highlight some areas where that policy is not being fulfilled in the manner envisioned.

## THE COMMISSION

Congress established the NCFA in the Carl Levin and Howard P. “Buck” McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (NDAA FY15). The language enacted is similar to that in the NDAA FY13 establishing the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force. Eight NCFA commissioners were appointed, four by the President and four by the Chairs and Ranking Members of the Senate and House Armed Services Committees. The commissioners were appointed as Special Government Employees for the duration of the Commission’s work.

The commissioners selected a full-time executive director and a staff director who, in turn, selected a staff of about forty individuals with experiences and backgrounds specifically relevant to the Commission’s assigned tasks. The staff included broad representation from the Army Headquarters, the National Guard Bureau, and the Office of the Chief of Army Reserve as well as the Joint Staff, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the Congressional Research Service. Some individuals (such as the executive director) were hired specifically for this mission.

Undertaking its mission, the Commission sought at all times to not only comply with the governing Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), but to conduct its activities in a transparent, unbiased, and comprehensive manner. The Commission conducted public sessions in Arlington, Virginia,

each month from May until December 2015. The Commission also conducted nineteen site visits to directly engage with units, soldiers, senior officials, and, in many cases, the local citizenry (see Appendix G) in an effort to hear as many voices as was practical. Governors, Members of Congress, and local officials made their views known in person and in writing. Every commander of the geographic Combatant Commands presented their thoughts, as did numerous other senior defense officials. The associations that represent the interests of so many soldiers also testified before the Commission in public sessions, and most followed up with written comments. Representatives of the intelligence community provided their best assessments concerning the nature of the security environment in which Army forces will operate. Numerous defense analysts, from within the government but also from think tanks and other experts outside of government, provided useful analyses.

## WHAT WE FOUND

America's Army is the strongest in the world. It is made so by the extraordinary women and men who answer the call to duty and voluntarily choose to serve the nation when, frankly, they have many other opportunities. Sustaining the quality of the All-Volunteer Force must remain a national priority; the alternatives—accepting a less well-educated, less fit (morally or physically), or less-motivated force, or returning to short-term compulsory service—will not yield the Army America needs now or in the future.

### *Force Structure, Readiness, and Modernization*

The demands from the Combatant Commands for Army capabilities are significant and, in many cases, increasing. Yet, the Army is down-sizing. After all we have heard, read, seen, and analyzed, we find that an Army of 980,000 is the minimally sufficient force to meet current and anticipated missions with an acceptable level of national risk. Within that Army of 980,000, the Commission finds that a Regular Army of 450,000, an Army National Guard of 335,000, and an Army Reserve of 195,000 represent, again, the absolute minimums to meet America's national security objectives. However, the reserve components must be resourced to provide both needed operational capability and the strategic depth the nation requires in the event of a full mobilization for unforeseen requirements. These forces should be maintained at currently planned readiness levels, and every effort should be made to increase funding for modernization.

The Commission finds that the nation can maintain a force of 980,000 soldiers, along with reasonable levels of readiness and modernization, only with budgets at levels at least equal to those proposed in the President's request for fiscal year 2016.

Sequester-level funding established by the Budget Control Act of 2011, as amended, will not be enough. Moreover, Congress and the Administration need to return to predictable and responsible budgeting in order to eliminate the fiscal turmoil that leads to inefficiencies and consumes time better spent managing the Army.

Even with budgets permitting a force of 980,000, the Army faces significant shortfalls. Army aviation represents a key example. Today, some aviation assets cannot meet expected wartime capacity requirements. Considering all types of Army units, peacetime demand for aviation assets is among the highest, and demand may grow as threats from Russia and other nations escalate. Retaining an eleventh Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) in the Regular Army would help meet these demands. With an eleventh CAB, the Army would be better postured to retain a forward stationed aviation brigade in Korea—a major advantage over rotating forces as currently planned—and shortfalls in capabilities would decline significantly.

Short-range air defense represents another example of an important shortfall. In the post-Cold War era, the Army envisioned little threat from the air forces of potential adversaries. Recent activities in Ukraine and Syria have demonstrated the threat environment has changed. Yet, no short-range air defense battalions reside in the Regular Army. Moreover, a sizeable percentage of the Army National Guard's short-range air defense capability is providing essential protection in the National Capital Region, leaving precious little capability for other global contingencies, including in high-threat areas in northeast Asia, southwest Asia, eastern Europe, or the Baltics. Other capabilities with significant shortfalls include tactical mobility; missile defense; chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN); field artillery; fuel distribution; water purification; watercraft; and military police.

Remediating these shortfalls within a 980,000-soldier Army will require hard choices and difficult trade-offs. Budgetary pressures make end strength increases unlikely, at least for the next few years. If end strength cannot increase, the Army should consider reducing two Infantry Brigade Combat Teams in the Regular Army in order to provide the manning necessary to strengthen aviation, short-range air defense, and other capabilities.

However, even if end strength constraints can be met, the Army will need significant additional funding to mitigate these shortfalls. The Army can help by working with the Administration to propose efficiencies and reduce redundancy in its operations. Congress needs to accept these changes, even though some are politically difficult to implement. But more efficiencies and fewer redundancies will not be enough; added funding will eventually be needed if major shortfalls are to be eliminated.

### *Developing One Army*

While the Army is intended to operate as one force—integrating the efforts of the Regular Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve—gaps and seams exist in the implementation of the Total Force Policy. Symptoms include lack of a focus on multicomponent units that bring together capabilities from all components, the absence of an integrated recruiting force, and the inability to manage pay and personnel across the entire Army with a single system. Regrettably, parochialism, some tension among components, and the lack of predictable and responsible budgeting exacerbate the lack of unity.

As a result of the budgetary constraints imposed by the Budget Control Act of 2011, the Army had to make many significant trade-offs, including cancelling Combat Training Center rotations and furloughing Army civilians. Moreover, the Army replaced four Army National Guard units scheduled to deploy in June 2013 for overseas operations in order to avoid about \$93 million in added costs required to mobilize and deploy the units. Given that year's tight budget situation, the decision to employ Regular Army units in lieu of reserve component units was understandable. However, these decisions caused longer-term harm by reducing opportunities for leader development and training for reserve component soldiers. The decisions also increased tension and suspicions between the Army components, leaving some reserve units feeling that they were not being treated as an important part of the Army.

The Commission believes the Army must fully implement the Total Force Policy. It must capitalize on the reserve components to provide not only needed operational capabilities, but also the strategic depth required for future campaigns.

To strengthen the Total Force, the Commission makes a number of specific recommendations. One involves expanded use of multicomponent units and organizations. Such units can improve readiness and capabilities if they can train together. Multicomponent units also offer opportunities for soldiers and leaders to learn how the components can best function together. The Army has a long and varied history regarding multicomponent units, but the opportunity exists for increased use. As one specific example, the Commission recommends that the Army develop a substantial pilot program to test multicomponent approaches in aviation and identifies some approaches that should be considered in designing the pilot program. Changes in recruiting and advertising can also help develop one Army. The Commission recommends pilot programs that align the recruiting efforts of the Regular Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve. The current practice of separate recruiting forces, programs, and incentives results in the Army competing with itself for a diminishing

pool of qualified individuals. That is not only unproductive, it is inherently inefficient. Similarly, consolidating the administration and budgeting of recruiting, advertising, and branding for all components will yield increased effectiveness and efficiency.

Lastly, a new approach to the issue of Apache transfers can help develop one Army.

### *Apache Transfers*

The Commission was specifically directed to address the proposal to transfer all Apache attack helicopters (AH-64s) from the Army National Guard to the Regular Army as one part of the Army's broader Aviation Restructure Initiative (ARI). The Commission concluded that the ARI is a well-crafted plan that holds down costs while maintaining a reasonable level of wartime capacity in the Apache fleet. ARI costs are consistent with the President's budget request for fiscal year 2016, the baseline used by the Commission, and the proposal has been endorsed in the President's budget. ARI, however, results in a lack of strategic depth, providing for no wartime surge capability in the Army National Guard. It also does not support the Total Force Policy.

In response to the ARI, the National Guard Bureau (NGB) formulated an approach to aviation restructuring that would retain six Apache helicopter battalions in the Army National Guard (two of which would be in multicomponent aviation brigades). The Commission found the NGB Alternative would provide a significant wartime surge capacity for the Apache force, and it would likely reduce the peacetime stress on Regular Army Apache units. But wartime capacity declines under the NGB Alternative, and costs increase.

The Commission examined numerous options to determine if any offered more advantages or fewer disadvantages compared to the ARI or the NGB Alternative. After extensive analysis, and numerous discussions with proponents of various plans, the Commission recommends that the Army maintain twenty-four manned Apache battalions—twenty in the Regular Army and four in the Army National Guard. The Commission also recommends retaining a forward-stationed Combat Aviation Brigade in Korea.

Compared with the ARI, the Commission's recommended plan offers advantages in wartime capacity, wartime surge, and peacetime operational tempo. Wartime capacity and peacetime operating tempo improve compared with those under the NGB Alternative. The Commission plan also improves aviation capability in Korea. Added costs under the Commission plan are significant, but the Commission offers an illustrative approach to offset those costs through changes in the force structure and equipping of UH-60 Black Hawk assault helicopters. Perhaps most important, the

Commission recommendation can help develop one Army that trains together in peacetime and, when necessary, fights together in war.

### *Army National Guard Allocation*

A specific consideration for the Commission was to identify and evaluate the distribution of responsibility and authority for the allocation of Army National Guard personnel and force structure in the states and territories. The NCFA found that the processes that shape and support allocating Army National Guard forces have changed over time to accommodate the Guard's dual missions under Title 10 and Title 32. The processes changed most notably when the Chief, National Guard Bureau was established by the Congress as a four-star position and designated a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The Commission found the processes employed to determine Army National Guard allocation to be sound and use objective, quantified metrics that were verified by the states and territories. Nonetheless, the regulations governing allocation are complicated and should be clarified by the Department of the Army. The Commission recommends the Secretary of the Army codify in Army regulations the existing Army National Guard Force Program review as the formal

method to manage changes to the Army National Guard force structure.

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From the founding of our nation, the United States of America placed its armed forces under civilian control. Ours is an Army of the people and for the people. Since its earliest days, the United States established a multicomponent Army, with one component comprising full-time soldiers serving in federal forces, and another component comprising part-time soldiers serving in state militias but able to be called up to federal duty in times of national crisis; the federal part-time reserve force evolved later in our nation's history. These three components are distinct, interdependent, and essential. Combined, they form America's Army, the best in the world, a Total Force providing land forces and strategic depth to the Joint Force for homeland defense and power projection. By maintaining faith with the soldiers of the All-Volunteer Army, continuing to support their families, and through adoption of the recommendations included in this report, the eight commissioners of the National Commission on the Future of the Army have full confidence that America's Army will retain its global preeminence well into the future.