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COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
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AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES

COMMITTEE ON ETHICS
CHAIRMAN

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3815

October 8, 2015

General Carter F. Ham, USA, Retired
Chairman, NCFA
2530 Crystal Drive, Suite #5000
Arlington, VA 22202

Honorable Thomas R. Lamont
Vice Chairman, NCFA
2530 Crystal Drive, Suite #5000
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Ham and Vice Chairman Lamont:

I am writing to express my thanks for the work that the National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCFA) has diligently carried out to adhere to the directives of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (P.L. 113-291), and to provide my own recommendations for you and your fellow Commissioners to consider as part of your continuing review process.

I appreciate the engagement that you have had thus far with a broad spectrum of stakeholders via your research, site visits, field hearings, meetings, and direct dialogue. I would especially like to thank you for your visit to Fort Indiantown Gap on 8 September 2015 to hear directly from Major General Joseph, my constituents, and Pennsylvania's outstanding National Guard members. As your experiences have surely demonstrated, today's Army National Guard is a robust and ready force that is not only committed to serving their communities and our nation at large but expects to be deployed at a moment's notice. A properly resourced and empowered National Guard will maintain a well-balanced force structure and allow for the preservation of a vigilant homeland security and disaster response force here at home. That is why I concur with the five recommendations shared by Major General Hargett in his remarks at the 20 May 2015 NCFA hearing in Arlington, VA. In addition to those recommendations, I also recommend that the Commission ensure that Army National Guard units continue to be incorporated into future training drills and rotations in order to enhance the value of such training for all parties.

Moving forward, it is critical that our future Army structure continue to uphold a proper balance between active Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve components in order to remain adaptive, cost effective, and able to rapidly deploy against the wide range of future threats that we will face both at home and abroad. I am concerned that short-sighted reductions or dramatic force structure modifications that marginalize the roles, responsibilities, or capacity of our National Guard and Reserve forces would present long-term harm to our responsiveness and lead to the loss of specialized skills and experiences provided by our Guard and Reserve members. I also continue to have concerns regarding the Army's Aviation Restructure Initiative (ARI) and its long-term repercussions. As such, I request that the Commission's review of ARI provide a comprehensive assessment on whether the proposed transfer of the Army National Guard's AH-64 Apache helicopter platforms represents the most strategically and fiscally sensible option for both our Guard and active forces.

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The past 14 years have tested our active Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve forces with numerous challenges and demands. Through it all, our Army National Guard units have proven their ability to answer the call and have exhibited professionalism, combat capability, and the capacity to serve as a force multiplier. I again thank you and your fellow Commissioners for your work on this directive to help ensure that the Army's future force structure stands ready to meet the Army's long-term missions and operational environments. As a steadfast supporter of our service members and their families, I look forward to reviewing the Commission's final report and recommendations next February.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charles W. Dent". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "C" and a long, sweeping tail.

CHARLES W. DENT
Member of Congress