

October 8, 2015

**Congressman Richard Hudson
Statement for the Record
House National Guard and Reserve Components Caucus
National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCFA) Event**

Our armed forces provide for the common defense of the United States, keeping the homeland secure and protecting our interests abroad. This past year alone has shown that national security threats from terrorist organizations like ISIS and rogue nation states such as Iran will not go away just because we do not want to deal with them any longer. As we continue to witness instability in the Middle East and Russian posturing in Ukraine, Syria, and the Baltics, it is vital that we create and maintain the tools our leaders need to combat and deter threats to our interests at home and abroad. In order to be effective on any battlefield, we must make strategic decisions that prioritize providing the training capabilities our men and women in uniform require for their dangerous missions across the globe.

Our Airborne paratroopers and Special Operations forces at Fort Bragg are critical aspects of our national defense apparatus and are frequently the first response worldwide. Our Airborne paratroopers are perpetually on standby as 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 use tactics honed over a decade of war to swiftly mitigate or eliminate threats on our nation's most sensitive missions, and are often deployed with little notice. It is vital to our security apparatus that we maintain 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. I share the Commission's priority of maximizing efficiency in these lean fiscal times, but operational readiness for our first lines of defense cannot be marginalized.

As you continue to evaluate the structure of our Army, 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 at "the epicenter of the universe" rely on to conduct the high risk missions they're charged with in combat. While I understand the tight fiscal atmosphere the Army is in, I expect the commission to assess the monetary and operational values derived from co-locating units at Fort Bragg and prioritize our operational readiness.

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 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.