

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE TRENT KELLY
BEFORE
THE NATIONAL COMMISSION OF THE FUTURE OF THE ARMY
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America has never won a war without the full commitment of the Citizen Soldier - defined as either draftees or members of the militia, National Guard, and Reserves. The key for all services and components to remember is that it is one fight for the entire military. Any attempt to refocus the fight for funds to Army vs. Air Force vs. Marines vs. Navy or to pit the Active Component vs. the Reserve Component is a path to failure. Our country faces dire consequences if all components and services do not work together to meet their Constitutional requirement of defending this great nation from all enemies, both foreign and domestic.

As the National Commission on the Future of the Army addresses the issues it has been asked to review, I ask that they be ever mindful of not only doing what is best for the military, but also what is best in preserving the intent of our Founding Fathers and the Constitution. Our Founding Fathers built this great nation to persevere against all threats, both internal and external. America was built on a system of checks and balances that preserved a balance of power between all three branches of government. They also intended that the military maintain a similar system of checks and balances to allow for an Army to be built to protect America from all foreign threats while preserving a strong standing militia that protected the citizens from an overthrow by an Army that was too strong to be accountable to America's civilian elected leadership. Currently, we

have the greatest men and women our country can provide to protect us from foreign threats, and I have immense respect for the General Officers and Admirals tasked with protecting us from foreign threats. However, no institution should ever be allowed to be in a position where a few, without checks and balances from another source, have the power and ability to force their will on the government and civilians of the nation.

Fortunately, the checks and balances we have in place serve as a forcing mechanism that requires the Active Component, the National Guard and Reserves to work in concert. When that system is out of balance, strife results. In order to be an effective check, the National Guard and Reserves must always have the same equipment to include: fighter jets, bombers, BCTs equipped with M1 tanks and Bradley Fighting Vehicles, Apache Helicopters, and all other combat systems available to the Active Component.

The Reserve Component was not created to be a disaster response, combat service support, combat support or Governor's force. Even though the National Guard has a mission to respond to the Governors in the time of disaster in their states, it also has the mission to respond to the call of the President to fight contingencies around the globe.

Therefore, the National Guard and Army Reserve must be equipped and trained to stand shoulder to shoulder with the active force to protect America from all enemies, foreign and domestic. Read the words of our Founding Fathers. The intent of the Second Amendment was that the National Guard (militia) serve as a combat force. Today that means that the National Guard must remain an operational and not strategic reserve with the ability to fully carry out all combat missions with the same ability as the Active Component. Training and mobilization times are not a measure that should be

considered as the sole source of deciding what equipment should be issued to each component. I can assure you from personal experience in combat in Iraq that the measurement of a unit's quality and consequently the equipment issued to it, is based on an arbitrary measurement of premobilization and transit days in a unit's mobilization timeline.

The same arguments being made today against the Guard and Reserves were made when I was a young second lieutenant mobilized for Desert Storm and the Reduction in Forces (RIF) that followed. Instead of focusing on the great relationships and increased operational ability forged between the Active Army and the National Guard in the last 14 years of combat, we instead find the Active and Reserve Components pitted against each other as a result of a lack of funding. Both Active and Reserves must remain strong and similarly equipped based on the types of units. You cannot make cuts based on today's end strength. Capability must be based on the threat. Any cuts below pre-9/11 levels would place our country in a position of disadvantage. Reducing the growth we saw in our Active and Reserve Components between 2001 and the present is a matter of fiscal responsibility given the immediate threat.

I base this statement on my almost 30-year military career in the Mississippi Army National Guard. As an Engineer Officer who has commanded at the Brigade and Battalion levels, a War College Graduate, and a veteran of three mobilizations, two in combat in Iraq, I understand the value of combat units in our Reserve Component. I know the capabilities of our Reserve Component. All cuts, reductions and reapportionment to equipment must be made based on capability and needed depth to sustain combat operations. That means looking at ways to use the total force, not just

the Active Component. In this current budgetary climate, however, the cost effectiveness of the Guard and Reserve is in the best interest of this nation. The ability to perform all combat missions by the Guard and Reserves must be maintained, which necessitates the most modern equipment and adequate numbers of combat units.

The Guard and Reserves stand ready as an operational force and have always stood ready. Despite the last 14 years of combat, there are still some that argue that the Guard cannot perform some missions. These claims are unfounded. I know from personal experience that the Guard can and did perform full spectrum missions. I know that the missions performed by the Guard and Reserves were not based on what they could do, but rather what missions they were allowed to perform. In 2005, I deployed as a Battalion Operations Officer as part of the 155th BCT from Mississippi in performing full spectrum operations in Iraq in the most volatile time in the War. The 155th was attached to the II Marine Expeditionary Force Forward and had 2/11 ACR attached to the 155th BCT. Our National Guard Brigade integrated seamlessly with our active duty brothers and sisters and performed admirably in full spectrum operations. My second tour, with approximately 50 percent of the unit combat veterans from full spectrum operations in 2005, and well over 50 percent of the leadership veterans of that tour, was not tasked with performing full spectrum operations. They instead were assigned as Convoy Security Units. That mission was need driven, not capability driven.

My background has led me to discuss ground forces, but the AH-64s must be left in the Guard and not all put in the Active Component. This mix is necessary. Guard pilots are well trained, more mature and fully capable. This combat asset must remain in the Reserve Component. Going back to my initial thoughts, all the combat power must not

be retained in any one component. It is true that UH-60 Blackhawks and CH-47 Chinooks are great multipliers during humanitarian and disaster relief. However, we cannot forget the reach-back capability that our Army needed during the last two contingencies and will need again for those pilots and attack aviation platforms of the National Guard's AH-64 units. Combat units have and will continue to provide humanitarian support and disaster relief. The people not the equipment mix, are what make state disaster relief a success in states. The AH-64 mix between the Reserve Component and Active Component should remain the same in percentages and should not be changed or all the Apaches pulled from the Reserve Component.

In order for America to perform its military duty on the global scale, we must always retain a fully combat capable Guard and Reserve. American resolve in all wars has always been maintained by a strong involvement by the Citizen Soldier. This includes a rapid involvement by reserve combat forces in full spectrum operations that involve every small community in this nation. When the Guard and Reserve go to war, their communities go to war. We should look to our nation's experience in Vietnam, when our nation did not deploy our Citizen Soldiers, as proof of the power of this statement. As a result, we must not put all combat capabilities in the hands of the standing military and create a strategic Reserve Component only capable of performing combat support, Combat Service Support Roles, and domestic humanitarian missions. Our nation can only remain the greatest nation in the world by maintaining a strong combat capability in the Guard and Reserve, with our Citizen Soldiers.

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