

Major General Carpenter,

Thank you for your service with the National Commission on the Future of the Army as we face both major national security challenges abroad and significant budget challenges at home.

As you may be aware, I represent the Second Congressional District of Alabama and the home of the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence at Fort Rucker. In this role I have had the opportunity to understand not only the role of Army aviation in my home state of Alabama, but to also gain an appreciation for the operational and financial challenges facing Army aviation globally.

I stand before you in strong support of the Army's Aviation Restructure Initiative (ARI). This strategy is the only way the Army can field a fully capable, modernized and ready Aviation force to meet its operational requirements within the President's budget. As you recall, the budget for Army Aviation in 2013 was approximately \$7.5 Billion. The budget for Army aviation in 2019 will be \$4.5 Billion – a dramatic drop of \$3.0 Billion or 40%. This dramatic budget cut is a direct result of the Budget Control Act of 2011– legislation I opposed because of its impact on national security. It is also the failure of the President and Congress to address the ongoing draconian budget caps for defense.

Unless the President and Congress reverse the defense sequester, the Army has no choice but to make dramatic reductions and realignments in force structure and the posture of Army Aviation. With turmoil in the Middle East, Russian aggression, and a Chinese military buildup, this budgetary pressure could not happen at a worse time. Therefore, it is imperative that we put the national interest above parochial concerns to meet mission requirements and maximize every dollar. And, to be clear, the national interest is to support the continued and unimpeded implementation of the ARI.

One somewhat controversial, but key component of ARI is the transfer of Apaches from the National Guard to the Regular Army. Members of this body and the Senate have repeatedly attempted to delay or avert these transfers. Without

question, delays in transferring Apaches to the active Army will have direct operational impacts on the 1st Infantry Division in Kansas, the 25th Infantry Division in Hawaii, and the 10th Mountain Division in New York. Should the Army not transfer any Apaches from the Guard to the Regular Army, the Army will have to procure new Apaches to meet its operational requirements. What is the pricetag? According to GAO, \$5.5 Billion. Where is that money likely to come from? Among other areas, funding the modernization of Blackhawk helicopters used by National Guard - Blackhawks which are used not only in combat, but are of great utility in natural disasters and other Homeland Security missions we depend on the Guard to execute. As you know, Apaches - unlike Blackhawk and Chinook helicopters - have no dual use capabilities. Their mission is exclusively for overseas contingencies.

I will continue to fight the defense sequester and increase the defense budget caps to a level that is consistent with the national security threats we face. However, unless and until the budget caps for defense are increased, the Budget Control Act is the law of the land. And as long as that is the case, the Army must plan accordingly. Army Aviation is short over \$5 Billion dollars. That is the unfortunate reality. I encourage the Commission to ensure that Army Aviation is best postured for its global commitment in this time of intense budgetary pressure as I know you will.

Martha Roby