STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE THOM TILLIS

BEFORE

THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF THE ARMY

FAYETTEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the National Commission on the Future of the Army welcome to Fayetteville. Fayetteville's motto is "*History, Heroes and Hometown.*" It is fitting that the Committee's first hearing outside of Washington is in Fayetteville. In North Carolina we have a singular dedication to the defense of the nation. Up Highway 24 from Fayetteville sits 45 percent of the entire United States Marine Corps. 12, 000 citizen soldiers fill the ranks of the North Carolina Army and Air National Guard. In 2001, the first Army attack helicopter units to take the fight to al-Qaida in Afghanistan were the soldiers of the 130th Aviation Regiment from Morrisville, North Carolina. We have 16,000 Reservists from all services and one in every nine North Carolinians is a veteran.

Fayetteville is the proud hometown of Fort Bragg, not only the Army's largest post. Fort Bragg is America's Global Response Force. The All American Division – America's Guard of Honor—is the most decorated unit in the Armed Forces. General Colin Powell famously said "Nothing gets the enemy's attention quicker than knowing the 82nd Airborne Division is flying straight for his nose."

Special Forces were born here during the Kennedy Administration. The list of heroes who have called Fort Bragg home is a who's who of Army legends—Ridgeway, Gavin, Lee, Yarborough, Simons, Benavidez, Gordon, Shugart and Miller. Soldiers from Fort Bragg are deployed in more than 90 countries as we speak.

Mr. Chairman, the Commission meets at a dangerous time. Kiev is ablaze; senior Chinese military leaders now openly boast of their desire to settle millennial scores with their neighbors; al-Qaida and its inspired jihadis is stronger than ever; the mullahs' nuclear march in Iran accelerates; Israel feels abandoned; and American diplomats were left to fend for themselves in Libya, while the cavalry was told to stay put. . Five times since the end of World War I we have disarmed and paid dearly for those decisions in treasure and blood. "When it comes to predicting the nature and location of our next military engagements," former defense secretary Robert Gates said, "our record [since Vietnam] has been perfect. We have never once gotten it right."

We are on that path again.

Historically, America is in a defense budget trough. We spent: 4.6 percent of GDP on defense during the first Gulf War, 6 percent during the Reagan buildup, 8.9 percent

during the Vietnam War, 11.7 percent during the Korean War, and 34.5 percent during World War II.

The defense budget is now poised to drop to 3 percent or less under sequestration on President Obama's watch. We are on the cusp of a hollow force and for this community that brings back dark memories of the Carter Administration, when there were signs on Bragg Boulevard pleading "Iran Let Our People Go" while units from the 82nd Airborne would sneak into Special Forces areas to siphon off gas from Green Beret vehicles because the 82nd had no funding to buy fuel.

The Quadrennial Defense Review is at the heart of the present crisis. The QDR is blindly budget driven. It has no underlying strategic vision. The current QDR is more focused on climate change, global hunger and the first and third world income divide than it is on the waves of Islamic terror threatening the US and the West or the rise of a more militant and nationalistic China. The QDR has also failed to characterize or evaluate the risk to national security associated with the sequestration cuts.

The National Defense Panel said that the lack of any strategic vision coupled with sequestration, "caused significant investment shortfalls in U.S. military readiness and both present and future capabilities," which has in turn caused "our current and potential allies and adversaries to question our commitment and resolve." The Obama Administration has refused to come forward with proposals to repeal sequestration or de-couple the defense budget topline from the sequestration limits.

We no longer have a two war force—a force that is vital to deter would be adversaries in the Pacific, the Middle East and Europe. The QDR states that the military should be able to defeat "a regional adversary in a large-scale multi-phased campaign, and [deny] the objectives of—or impose unacceptable costs on—a second aggressor in another region." By denying rather defeating a second aggressor, the 2014 QDR force-sizing construct has been referred to as a "one-plus" rather than two-war construct.

America's military has since World War II been required to not only defeat a "large-scale aggression in one theater," but also to "simultaneously and decisively [deter] or [thwart] opportunistic aggressions in multiple other theaters. A strategy focused on climate change can't do that.

The Administration's last budget shows how sharply the Pentagon budget has shrunk and will continue to shrink.. In nominal dollars (unadjusted for inflation), defense spending stays flat between 2013 and 2024. Its $626 billion in 2013 and $630 billion in 2024. However, adjusted for inflation and population growth, the buying power of this funding drops by a quarter. As a share of the federal budget, it falls from 18 percent in 2013 to 11 percent in 2024. Meanwhile, Social Security spending in nominal dollars increases 85 percent to $1.5 trillion by 2024 and Medicare advances 75 percent to $863 billion.

The American military is significantly weaker than it was at the end of the Cold War. The size and readiness of the U.S. armed forces are declining during a period of global instability not seen since the end of the Soviet Union. Threats to U.S. vital interests are "elevated" and growing from Iran, Islamic terrorism, and North Korea.

The threat levels are even higher from a resurgent Russia and a militarizing China. Russia possesses the largest nuclear weapons arsenal among the nuclear powers (when short-range nuclear weapons are included)" and has demonstrated a willingness to harm U.S. allies in Europe—as evidenced by its ongoing destabilization of Ukraine. China has been modernizing its nuclear and conventional forces in recent years and "is taking increasingly assertive steps to secure its own geo-political interests in [the Asia-Pacific region] independent of U.S. efforts.

The Army was cut from 18 divisions to 10 and is short on equipment. The Army historically commits 21 brigade Combat teams to one war. Several years ago, that left just 21 more brigades for a second war and none for strategic reserve. But the problem is more acute. The Army announced in 2013 it may go as low as 33 brigades, far short of the 50 brigades that are needed.

The Army's reduction in force size, driven by budget cuts, was in fact accelerated by two years due to the severity of the sequester in FY 2013. From a height of 566,000 in FY 2011, the Army's end strength in FY 2014 was on a downward slide to 420,000 Active Army soldiers. The number of National Guard soldiers is slated to drop by 8,200 this year to 342,000, and the Army Reserve would hold at 198,000.

Cuts are also coming to pay and benefits. In FY 2015 the DOD sought to curb personnel costs, which the officials said consume a rising share of defense spending, include limiting troop pay raises to 1 percent, reducing housing allowances by an average of 5 percent, cutting some $1 billion in commissary subsidies -- which will likely mean higher prices for troops and retirees -- and higher health care fees for some retirees. With two years' worth of pay caps and the 5 percent housing-cut proposal, an E-5 Army sergeant with 10 years of service and a family of four would lose $1,400 a year, while an O-3 Army captain would lose $2,100 by the end of fiscal 2015. That is not much of a retention bonus.

Service members would also have to pay out of pocket for some of their housing expenses. The department would cover an average of 95 percent of such costs under basic allowance for housing (BAH), with troops picking up the difference. The Administration is now openly talking of eliminating the Commissary benefit. The people that hurts the most are our youngest soldiers who most heavily rely on the convenience and cost that the commissaries to provide for their families.

I hope that this Commission will validate many of the recommendations of the recently adjourned Military Pay and Compensation Commission. We must give all our soldiers the ability to save and build a sound financial future for themselves and their families regardless of how long they stay in the service.

Mr. Chairman, as this Commission begins its work I urge its members to look at two things--balance and people.

A balanced force is one that can take the fight to Islamic insurgents and also be prepared for the contingencies that require, as General McMasters has ably noted, "heavy armor."

This also means optimizing the lessons learned from the evolution of special warfare. Special Warfare is more than direct action. It is foreign internal defense. It was Green Berets from Fort Bragg who trained and accompanied Bolivian Special Forces as they hunted down and killed the communist terrorist Che Guevara in the 1960s. That capability is doubly important today as the specter of Islamic violence threatens American friends on six continents.

I should also note that having foreign armies more closely aligned with America's goals is essential if we are to bring the full resources of the West to bear in the current fight against Islamic extremism. This Commission should encourage that and Fort Bragg is a case in point. The Assistant Division Commander of the 82nd Airborne is a British Brigadier and the Deputy Commander of the XVIII ABN Corps is a Canadian Major General.

We must also resist attempts to save money by emaciating the Reserve component. This is not your granddaddy's National Guard. The twelve thousand soldiers of the NC Guard are an operational force, not simply a strategic reserve. I have seen the tendency in some services to increase the flow of funds to the active component by hollowing out the reserve component. That is both counter-intuitive and counter-productive. There is bang for the buck in the Guard and Reserve because these men and women are highly trained, proficient soldiers and tend to be older and more experienced than their active duty counterparts.

People are the key. Training can no longer be given short shrift, this Administration has slashed the training budget. Erwin Rommel, was right, "The best form of welfare for the troops is first-class training, for this saves unnecessary casualties." George Marshall believed that as well. His multi-corps Louisiana Maneuvers tested the mettle of future Army leaders: Eisenhower, Patton, Bradley and Krueger. One reason that the U.S. armed forces have been world-class is that since World War II, they trained better than any other soldiers in the world, often at the Army's National Training Centers at Fort Irwin and Fort Polk. Major large-scale joint exercises and combined exercises with U.S. allies developed and refreshed the critical abilities to deploy and sustain forces and train forces to operate together effectively. But such training is now at risk as I have discussed with the senior leadership of the XVIII Airborne Corps.

Realistic, demanding training is a tremendous confidence builder for any soldier—officer or enlisted. It not only gives personnel confidence in their own units' capabilities, but also builds confidence in combined arms. It is a powerful leader development tool. Absent actual combat, intense training teaches invaluable lessons to junior leaders and

gives their superiors unique opportunities to observe their ability to lead under highly stressful conditions, as General Marshall once did.

The Army must resume training for both irregular and conventional missions (amphibious assault, combined arms, etc.) and, as noted above, increase realistic live-fire training and reduce over-reliance on more simulators when possible.

Mr. Chairman as an aside, training only works if the entire force participates for the common good. The parochial budget issues of one service cannot be permitted to impact the readiness of a sister service. We have seen that, with a fraying of the Air Force/Fort Bragg relationship. There can be no air in airborne without continued sustained support from the Air Force and this commission must reiterate what it is that constitutes a supporting and a supported force.

The corollary for all training is equipping for the fight:

> Older equipment is generally less effective.
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> Delaying modernization means using older existing equipment, which is less reliable and more difficult and expensive to maintain. This tends to lower the operational status of all of our units. As available funding declines, equipment maintenance and repair appears to be one of the Administration's first bill payers. As it was in the 1970s, it appears to be an early indicator of a serious threat to combat readiness.

The commission cannot look at the Army as a standalone institution. Securing America's military dominance requires promoting:

> An industrial base that can retain a highly skilled workforce with critical skill sets and;
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> Sustained investment in platforms that offer future commanders and civilian leaders a vital set of core equipment to respond to any threat.

Mr. Chairman, I have only touched the surface of your mandate and I stand ready to help you in any way that I can as you continue your work. Let me again thank you for coming to Fayetteville. Our Army is the foundation of freedom and our community is ready to continue its storied tradition of support and service to those on the front lines. I wish you success in your endeavors, and in words well known in Fayetteville, "All the Way!"