

**OPENING STATEMENT OF U.S. SENATOR JACK REED
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**To receive testimony on the
National Commission on the Future of the Army
(As Prepared for Delivery)**

Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for holding this important hearing on the future of the Army. After nearly 15 years of continuous military operations, it is critical that we take a step back and assess the current state of the regular Army, the Army National Guard, and the Army Reserve. As such, our witnesses this morning each bring a unique and valuable perspective on these issues. I look forward to their testimony and exploring in greater detail the recommendations that the National Commission on the Future of the Army has put forth for consideration.

First, let me begin by thanking all the Commissioners, as well as the Commission's staff, for their hard work and willingness to undertake this important endeavor to examine the size and force structure for the U.S. Army. The comprehensive study the Commission produced is thorough and thoughtful. In particular, I applaud the Commission's efforts to reach out to all stakeholders including senior leadership in the Department of Defense; leadership within the regular Army, the Army National Guard, the Army Reserve; numerous elected officials both in Washington and the states; and most importantly the soldiers currently serving in uniform. I commend the Commission for their inclusive process, and their willingness to hear from a variety of different viewpoints.

As the final Commission report illustrates, the Army is faced with a number of challenges and tough choices for the foreseeable future. The threats facing our nation are not diminishing, and it underscores our need for a well-trained, properly equipped military force that can deploy

at a moment's notice. The Army has made increasing readiness levels a top priority. However, in a constrained budget environment, augmenting funding for readiness oftentimes comes at the expense of other Army priorities including investments in modernization and recapitalization. Furthermore, the problem is compounded by the fact that the Army has had a poor track record with their modernization efforts resulting in programs that have been truncated or cancelled.

I look forward to hearing from our witness on their thoughts on how the Army can continue to improve readiness, as well as your views on how the Army can improve its acquisition processes.

Another issue the Commission considered is the Aviation Restructure Initiative (ARI), and the transfer of all Apache helicopters from the Army National Guard to the regular Army. The Commission recommended allowing the Active Component to retain twenty battalions of Apaches, each equipped with 24 aircraft, while providing the Army National Guard with 4 battalions of Apaches, each equipped with 18 aircraft. In light of the vigorous debate the ARI proposal has generated in Congress, I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on how the Commission developed this recommendation.

Finally, the Army continues to draw down its end strength with a final goal of 450,000 in the Active Army, 335,000 in the Army National Guard and 195,000 in the Army Reserve. The Commission noted that this level of uniformed military personnel "provides the Army a minimally sufficient capability and capacity across a range of near-term challenges." In light of the evolving security environment, and unanticipated global challenges, I would welcome your comments on whether you believe the U.S. can continue to meet its commitments with a smaller Army.

Again, thank you Mr. Chairman for holding this hearing, and I look forward to hearing from our witnesses.