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NEWS

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STATEMENT OF
THE HONORABLE HERBERT H. BATEMAN
CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY READINESS

I would like to welcome everyone here today to this field hearing held by the Military Readiness Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee.

This is the first in a series of readiness field hearings that we will be holding this year. We have been conducting the field hearings for the past several years to hear from all levels of our military to hear about the challenges they face in their day-to-day lives. I am convinced that the only way to fully understand the efforts required to maintain the equipment and conduct training in a high operations tempo while trying to maintain a high state of readiness is to go where the work takes place....in the field. As in previous field hearings, we expect that the information obtained in these field hearings may be somewhat different than the information provided to us in Washington.

We have a great respect for the mission of the training centers and welcome the opportunity to get out of Washington and visit with commanders and participants of combat training centers. Congress has demonstrated its support for the military training centers by providing nearly one billion dollars for the operations of these centers. In addition to the funding requested by the Administration in this area, this committee has added an additional \$120 million in just the past two years for the operation of the preposition fleet of vehicles at the Army's National Training Center at Ft. Irwin, California.

This hearing is an effort to look at our service combat training centers and the value of the training experience which comes from personnel and units practicing their art of war. I anticipate that this field hearing will help members of the committee understand the efforts involved in the preparation and training required at home station prior to arriving at the training centers, the types of training conducted at the various training centers represented here today, and the impact and value the training has on units when they arrive back at their home station.

Members of the committee continue to have a growing concern over many of the issues affecting readiness, including operating tempo, increased deployments, morale, the impact of peacekeeping operations, and the increasing use of training funds for other purposes, just to name a few. Until recently, we have had to rely on anecdotal evidence to make our argument that readiness was slipping. It has become increasingly clear to everyone that either the measurement used to determine the status of military readiness was inaccurate or our anecdotal evidence over the past five years was a signal of a downward spiral in readiness. We are finally beginning to hear the service Chiefs of Staff admit to what we, on the House Armed Services Committee, have been chronicling for the past five years. Overall readiness of the force has slipped significantly in the past five years and it takes tremendous effort by the men and women of our Armed forces just to keep up with operational requirements.

It seems to me that the combat training centers have a unique opportunity to evaluate how well units are equipped, manned and trained and to assess a unit's leadership environment. The combat training centers see units from various installations with differing commanders who must fight the doctrine and tactics adopted by their service to win the next war. If units, who have adequate notification of the dates for their training center rotation, still arrive at the training center ill prepared in doctrine and tactics and are short personnel and equipment, I can only surmise that either the training center rotation has lost its priority as a training event or our military's ability to wage war has slipped even further than I had thought.

We are very fortunate to have three panels of witnesses who can speak to these issues today. The first panel is made up of representatives from the General Accounting Office who will provide us with some insight into how units are effected by their train up and participation in a training cycle at the National Training Center.

Our second panel will be made up of the commanders of the various service training centers here in the United States. We will have a chance to hear from the Commander of the 7th Army Training Center situated at Grahfenwohr, Germany during our next field hearing in Europe next month. We look to this panel to provide us with a true picture of the adequacy of resourcing for their respective training centers, the trends in training level of units and personnel who are coming to the training centers, and finally, any thoughts on how the training experience could be enhanced.

I am particularly pleased to have here today the commander of the Opposing Forces (OPFOR) at the National Training Center, Colonel John Rosenberger who has had a unique perspective to review and evaluate the level of expertise demonstrated by the units participating in exercises at the National Training Center. Let me say that I read with interest Colonel Rosenberg's article in the Association of the United States Army's Landpower Essay Series, and am particularly interested in the two quotes from that article. One was, "As an Army, we don't organize the way we intend to fight," and the other was, "We don't train anymore with the rigor and frequency *in the field* necessary to develop and sustain full combat potential." I look forward to learning more about these perspectives.

I know units are working hard with longer hours and fewer assets and personnel to train up for their training center rotations. We want to hear from men and women who have experienced the effort required to juggle all their normal unit requirements while preparing for their training center rotation. It is important that the members of the committee understand what it takes to be prepared for and conduct a training center rotation, because the effort to go to war can be expected to be nothing less.

I am especially pleased to have as our third panel, a selection of commanders and senior non-commissioned officers. They represent the men and women who make up some of the units who have participated in the various training center exercises, either as a unit going through their rotation at the center or, as a member of an aggressor or opposing force. I look forward to their testimony and to having a dialogue with them on how Congress can help to make their lives better.

We are especially fortunate today to have the entire Nevada Congressional delegation here for our hearing. I would like to yield to the Honorable Jim Gibbons from the second district for any comments he would like to make, and then yield to the Honorable Shelley Berkley from the first district for any comments she would like to make. Thank you both.