

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

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Chairman Forbes, Ranking Member Bordallo, distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, on behalf of our Secretary, the Honorable John McHugh, our Chief of Staff, General Raymond Odierno, the more than 1.1 million Soldiers serving both here at home and overseas, and our dedicated Army Civilians, I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the Readiness of your United States Army in light of planned and potential defense cuts.

I, along with the other Service Vices, sat before this subcommittee in July. Then, the Budget Control Act had not yet been passed and our testimony was based on predicted cuts estimated at \$450 billion over ten years. I told you I believed cuts of that level would be tough, but doable. I also stated my belief that cuts above and beyond the \$450 billion mark would directly and deeply impact every part of the Army...from modernization to readiness to Soldier programs...nothing would be immune. There is simply no getting around that fact. Once we break that \$450 billion threshold, our ability to meet our national security objectives and effectively protect our country against all threats or contingencies would be appreciably and increasingly undermined.

It is even more troubling to note that the \$450 billion mark now does not represent the ceiling of expected cuts, but likely the floor. As Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta said while testifying before the House Armed Services Committee on October 13th, 2011, the nearly \$500 billion in defense cuts already being imposed are “taking us to the edge.” Another \$500 billion would be “truly devastating.”

For the United States Army, a \$1 trillion cut would mean training would have to be curtailed, degrading our overall operational readiness. The size of our force would be reduced, thus limiting our ability to respond to unforeseen contingencies, while also making it increasingly difficult to increase BOG:DWELL ratios for our Soldiers. Purchases of important weapons systems would have to be cut dramatically, thereby limiting or even reducing our military capability, and also crippling our industrial base. Finally, we would have to furlough large numbers of civilian employees. In short, a \$1 trillion cut would require us to assume significant operational risk by increasing response time to crises, conflicts, and disasters; severely degrading or impeding our capabilities, as well as our ability to employ forces around the world; and, in the event of unforeseen contingencies, this would most certainly equate to unacceptable risk in future combat operations.

We understand peace dividends are not uncommon. They have occurred following every major conflict up to and including Desert Storm. This time is different, however; in that the United States is still engaged in two theaters of operations. While we expect to have the majority of forces out of Iraq by the end of this year, our Soldiers will remain in harm's way in Afghanistan through 2014. Meanwhile, we have other national security requirements beyond the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan that will continue to require significant manpower and resourcing support for the foreseeable future. And, in this era of persistent engagement, we cannot afford to be caught unprepared in the event another unforeseen contingency arises. During a speech delivered last week, Secretary Panetta stated, "Given the nature of today's security

landscape, we cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of past reductions in force that followed World War II, Korea, Vietnam and the fall of the Iron Curtain, which—to varying degrees, as a result of across the board cuts—weakened our military. We must avoid, at all costs, a hollow military—one that lacks sufficient training and equipment to adapt to surprises and uncertainty, a defining feature of the security environment we confront.”

We must also guard against making assumptions about future requirements that may very well leave us unprepared or vulnerable in the event of unexpected or unforeseen contingencies requiring large ground forces. There is much discussion of late regarding the potential savings associated with dramatically cutting the size of America’s ground forces, stating the belief that they will no longer be relevant on tomorrow’s battlefield. To echo the words of Secretary McHugh, we’ve heard these calls before and history has proven time and time again it is unwise to assume warfare will only be conducted in the air or on the sea. We acknowledge the changing nature of warfare and are continuing to work hard, along with our sister Services, to develop a versatile, tailorable force capable of providing the Nation options, while strongly cautioning against designing a force for the fight we hope to fight while ignoring historical precedents.

As Leaders, we are focused on successfully completing the fights we are in while simultaneously determining the makeup of our Army beyond 2014 given current and future fiscal constraints. Whatever decisions are made, we must go about making the necessary reductions smartly. As our Chief—General Odierno stated, “We have to

be ready for all contingencies, because we are terrible at predicting the future. It's incumbent on us, as an army, to ensure that we have a force that's ready to deal with these unknown contingencies." We must develop a force that strikes a balance between the three components of Readiness: Endstrength, Modernization and Training. We cannot have a hollow force that is lopsided or unbalanced. We must look beyond 2014 to 2020 to develop a force capable of meeting tomorrow's challenges. We must develop a force supported by concepts and capabilities that will enable us to remain dominant across the full spectrum of conflict; recognizing that tomorrow's threat, like today's threat, will likely be a hybrid mix of kinetic, non-kinetic, counterinsurgency and peace-keeping/humanitarian operations.

If allowed time and the necessary flexibility in decision-making, we may develop a force ready to meet this range of challenges. Large, directed cuts, however, would significantly increase risk and jeopardize our ability to meet our national security requirements, particularly in the event of unforeseen contingencies. We must remember that prior to 9/11, the Active Army was approximately 480,000 and that number was supposed to be able to join the other services in carrying out two major wars at one time, according to the national military strategy. Then came the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq — and, the Army proved too small to sustain both conflicts, and grew to its current strength of 570,000.

Meanwhile, we must also be mindful of the fact that our Soldiers, who have remained remarkably resilient, are tired and stressed. Less than one percent of the

Nation's population has fought two wars in two separate theaters for over a decade. Many of our Soldiers have gone on multiple 12-15 month deployments. A significant portion of those who have served are suffering the effects, including injuries, wounds and illnesses. Especially if we will be required to depend on a much smaller force in the days ahead, we must ensure our Soldiers are allowed sufficient time to recover and rehabilitate. We must also ensure sufficient funding is provided in order to conduct necessary study and research in the area of brain science, to include effective protection, diagnosis and treatment, given the large numbers of individuals suffering from the "signature wounds" of this war—injuries to the brain (e.g., mild traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress). Bottom line: we must do whatever is required to maintain the trust of our Soldiers and their Families. As Secretary Panetta has stated, [cuts upwards of \$1 trillion] "would terribly weaken our ability to respond to the threats in the world. But more importantly, it would break faith with the troops and with their families. And a volunteer army is absolutely essential to our national defense. Any kind of cut like that would literally undercut our ability to put together the kind of strong national defense we have today."

I assure the members of this subcommittee, I and the Army's other senior leaders remain mindful of the fact that our nation is dealing with significant fiscal and economic pressures; and, we fully recognize we must be part of the solution. We also know we cannot expect to operate the way we have over the past decade and we cannot expect the same level of funding and flexibility to continue indefinitely. We understand we owe it to the American public to make the most of every dollar entrusted

to us for the defense of our Nation. Indeed, former Defense Secretary Gates set in motion \$178 billion in overhead efficiencies, with \$78 billion of that applied to deficit reduction; so the Defense Department has done, and will continue to do, its share.

That said, I appear before you today, deeply concerned about the immediate and long-term potential impacts of the rapid, dramatic cuts associated with sequestration on the capabilities and overall readiness of our Force. Absorbing cuts of up to \$1 trillion dollars would be extremely difficult during times of peace. Enacting such cuts while still conducting combat operations, after a decade of war fought in two separate theaters, would not only be extremely difficult, but would also poses tremendous risk to our long-term readiness and the security of our Nation. I believe we need to be allowed the opportunity to implement the \$450 billion in cuts already on the table in a responsible way; while not locking ourselves into additional cuts that we may come to regret later. We must recognize that if we get it wrong with defense, the consequences will be measured not just in treasure, but in blood.

The last time I appeared before I you I left you with my readiness priorities as the Vice Chief of Staff of Army. I would like to again conclude with these priorities. These priorities have not gone away and much work remains in each of these areas:

1. Achieving a minimum of 1:3 (Active Component) and 1:5 (Reserve Component) BOG:DWELL. (1:3 means for every one year deployed, an individual has three years at home). This is critical to ensuring the long-term health and well-being of

our Force, particularly given the significant number of individuals struggling with musculoskeletal and other types of physical injuries and behavioral health conditions, including post-traumatic stress and traumatic brain injury. In this era of persistent engagement, we must maintain the appropriate force structure required to meet our national security requirements around the world while allowing our Soldiers and Family Members sufficient time to rest and recover. This is critical to ensuring we do not break faith, but maintain the trust of our people now and into the future. Our analysis shows nearly two-thirds of our Soldiers who have deployed have less than 24 months of DWELL. Clearly we still have a long way to go.

2. "Fulfilling the Contract." We must fulfill our obligation to complete the full Reset process. Reset is a cost of war, and it prepares our formations for an unpredictable future and evolving threats. I am concerned that increased fiscal pressure will force cuts in this area. It is critical to our long-term readiness that we maintain support for the Army's Reset of vehicles and equipment two to three years beyond the conclusion of Overseas Contingency Operations.

3. Commitment to the Army's Modernization Program. We must avoid making cuts to key and critical modernization programs. Given the pace of technology development, such cuts could have far-reaching implications on the readiness of the Force. The Network and the Ground Combat Vehicle (GCV), in particular, are absolutely critical to achieving the Army of 2020.

4. Responsibly Reducing Army Force Structure. We must make whatever reductions are required to our endstrength responsibly. This is critical to achieving the appropriate BOG:DWELL ratios vital to the short-and long-term health of the Force. This also is also critical to ensuring our Force remains a capable force, able and ready to respond when called upon by the Nation.

I assure the members of this subcommittee, your Army stands ready as the most capable and decisive land force in the world. It is better trained and equipped, and our young leaders are better prepared than at any other time in history. With Congress' support over the last decade, we have built a remarkable force that has truly performed magnificently in all endeavors, exceeding all expectations.

These continue to be challenging times for our military and for our Nation. Our Army's senior leaders remain focused and committed to effectively addressing current challenges, particularly with respect to fiscal demands, while also effectively determining the needs of the Force for the future. While we all recognize the requirement to make tough choices and necessary sacrifices in the days ahead, we must do so responsibly, applying the lessons of history, to ensure what remains after the cuts are made and reductions completed is a willing and capable force able to successfully fight and win our Nation's wars. As another President leading this Nation during a period of fiscal crisis, following a hard-fought war stated, "A strong defense is the surest way to peace. Strength makes detente attainable. Weakness invites war, as my generation knows from four very bitter experiences."

Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, I thank you again for your steadfast and generous support of the outstanding men and women of the United States Army, Army Civilians and their Families and I look forward to your questions.