

TESTIMONY

House Armed Service Committee

9:50 14 April 2011

Representative Jack Kingston, GA-1

Chairman McKeon, Representative Smith, distinguished members of the Committee; I thank you for the opportunity come before you to discuss the military situation in the First Congressional District of Georgia. I have the pleasure to serve a unique district where all aspects of the armed services are present. I currently represent over 80,000 active duty, and it is estimated that over a third of my constituency is military or veteran related.

One location I am most proud of is represented by the Army. The 3rd Infantry Division headquarters, three of its maneuver brigades, support elements, aviation brigade, along with a battalion from the Ranger Regiment, a Special Operations Air Squadron, and other varied assets to include Coast Guard and Marine Reserve are located at Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield. This base cluster is the largest employer in the State of Georgia. This installation has won many of the best installation awards over the last decade and I am extremely proud of the 3rd Infantry's continued overseas deployments, most notably in the 2003 invasion, and finally in recent transition or draw down out of Iraq.

In a recent decision, post 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review, the President has determined to withdrawal one HBCT from Europe with implementation in 2015. I continue to bring this matter to your attention and hope that this committee and the Department of the Army will keep Fort Stewart in mind and I solicit your support for moving a Heavy Brigade Combat Team (HBCT) from Germany to Fort Stewart in 2015.

In 2009, the communities around Fort Stewart were told to prepare for the addition of a 5th brigade combat team. They did so at great personal cost to the community. When the Army cancelled the 5th Brigade, the community fell on hard times, coincidentally in the middle of the national housing crisis.

Today, Fort Stewart and its 280,000 acres, the largest east of the Mississippi, and its impact area, that can accept live fire training to include MLRS, is within easy access to the Port of Savannah, and one of the longest runways in the world at Hunter Army Airfield. Fort Stewart stands ready for any future mission, be it a drawdown in Europe, the move of another maneuver brigade, or the creation of a fires brigade. While other military installations look at spending hundreds of millions for land acquisition and environmental impacts (which are costly and wasteful), Fort Stewart is ready today to accept new units today.

Another military installation in the district, Moody Air Force Base, is in the thick of the joint fight worldwide. Moody provides the headquarters for the Joint Tactical Air Controllers, has Combat Search and Rescue elements, security forces for base defense, and of course A-10 squadrons which are in Afghanistan as we speak.

These elements have deployed multiple times to Iraq and Afghanistan and complement each other very well in their ability to overlap their training missions, not to mention training with elements from Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield, as well as nearby Special Forces elements in close air attack and other associated roles.

I know that the Air Force is looking at procuring Light Attack and Armed Reconnaissance Aircraft (LAAR) in FY12, which will further enable the Air Force to conduct reconnaissance and direct fires in support of ground troops.

Since Moody Air Force Base has these elements, the Close Air Support expertise, the JTACs, and the rescue forces, I highly suggest that the Air force considered LAAR being added to this location to further build on these training opportunities.

I am also please to represent a unique naval installation. There are only two nuclear missile submarine bases in the United States; one of which is in my District. I am honored to serve a wonderful contingent and constituent group of Navy and Marine interests at Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay. The facilities at that location are top notch.

Currently at this location at Kings Bay houses six of the SSBN Boomer type submarines, two of the SSGN converted submarines, world classes dry-dock and repair facility, as well as other associated Trident nuclear missile assembly facilities, and Marine controlled secure areas that support the SSBNs uniquely.

In years passed, there was a lot of discussion about moving submarines from other naval facilities to Kings Bay, and I believe this was after an efficiency study in 2005. Currently, Kings Bay was built for ten Submarines though there is much more capacity. A fast attack squadron, which the heavy Boomers must coordinate with anyways in day to day operations, would complement the submarine force at this location and synchronize submarine strategic efforts on a global scale.

Also, with the unique missions of the SSGNs, coupled with the fantastic Cumberland Sound, this area may be prime long term training opportunity for Special Forces and other associated elements. In 2009 I believe, Kings Bay was on the short list for receiving a possible Riverine force due to the unique geography of the location. This unfortunately never materialized.

In addition to these major installations, I also am proud to represent Townsend Bombing Range which is a Marine Active Duty and Georgia Air Guard installation. Subsequently, I represent multiple National Guard Armories, and my constituents serve the 164th Airlift Wing air guard lift assets and 117th Air Control Squadron. The Savannah Airport also is home to the Air Combat Training Center, which is a top notch, National Guard Training Facility used by many different States.

There are also multiple Coast guard interests along the Coast of Georgia and associated with Kings Bay.

I would like to thank the members of this committee for this chance to brief you on the multiple locations and in depth military situation in my District. The people of Georgia's First Congressional District are very proud of our military and know the sacrifices that our military make on a daily basis. That is why two weeks ago, Representative Gohmert and I introduced H.R. 1297 to ensure our military men and women did not have to suffer one bit in the event of a government shutdown. Again, thank you for your time.