

**Chairman Thad Cochran Opening Statement  
Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense**

**Hearing to review to Review the FY2017 Budget Request & Budget Justification  
for the National Guard and Reserve**

**March 16, 2016**

*(As prepared for delivery)*

We are reviewing this morning the proposed budget request for the National Guard and Reserve. We want to thank all of you are here to present information and statements to the committee about the budget request. We especially appreciate the quality of leadership we have in our Armed Forces today:

- General Frank Grass, Chief of the National Guard;
- Major General Brian Neal, Acting Director of the Air National Guard;
- Lieutenant General Timothy Kadavy, Director of the Army National Guard
- Lieutenant General Jeffrey Talley, Chief of the Army Reserve;
- Vice Admiral Robin Braun, Chief of the Navy Reserve;
- Lieutenant General James Jackson, Chief of the Air Force Reserve; and
- Lieutenant General Rex McMillian, Commander of Marine Forces Reserve.

The Guard and Reserve provide one-third of the personnel currently serving in our armed services, and they continue to be vital source of contributions to our military operations overseas and in the defense of our homeland.

Since 2001, the Reserve Components have evolved from a strategic force in reserve to an operational reserve. As they have evolved, they have maintained a higher state of readiness in the event the President or Secretary of Defense calls them to duty.

Despite fiscal and global uncertainties, our Guardsmen and Reservists have done an outstanding job of answering the call while managing civilian careers. I look forward to hearing about our successes and our challenges from today's panel of witnesses.

The budget request suggests funding for the Guard and Reserve, which is contained within the budget requests of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force, at an amount of \$46.6 billion for Fiscal Year 2017. The request is \$400 million less than the current level. However, evolving requirements for mobilized Guardsmen and Reservists make it very important for this Committee to "get it right," and we value the insight and assistance of this distinguished panel.

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