

**Statement of Senator Thad Cochran, Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense Appropriations
Hearing on FY2016 National Guard and Reserve Budget Request
April 29, 2015**

The subcommittee will come to order. Our hearing will review the budget requests for the National Guard and Reserves for Fiscal Year 2016. We are pleased to welcome:

- Chief of the National Guard, General Frank Grass
- Director of the Air National Guard, Lieutenant General Stanley Clarke
- Director of the Army National Guard, Major General Timothy Kadavy
- Chief of the Army Reserve, Lieutenant General Jeffrey Talley
- Chief of the Navy Reserve, Vice Admiral Robin Braun;
- Chief of the Air Force Reserve, Lieutenant General James Jackson, and
- Marine Forces Reserve Commander, Lieutenant General Richard Mills

The Guard and Reserve provide vital support to our homeland defense and in overseas contingency operations; they are integral in maintaining our national security interests. Since 2001, the Reserve Components have evolved from a purely strategic force in reserve, to a strategic and operational reserve. In this role, they must maintain a higher state of readiness in the event they are called to duty.

Funding for the Guard and Reserve, which is contained within the budget requests of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines, totals \$46.7 billion for Fiscal Year 2016. The request is \$1.7 billion more than the current level.

Despite this modest increase, the future readiness of the Guard and Reserve remains in jeopardy. The uncertainty of the fiscal environment and the evolving requirements for mobilized Guardsmen and Reservists at home and abroad continue to challenge all of us.

In times of fiscal and global uncertainty, we must keep the needs of the total force in mind. The men and women who serve in the Guard and Reserve have done an outstanding job of answering the call while managing civilian careers. I look forward to hearing about their successes and challenges from today's distinguished panel of witnesses. Your full statements will be included in the record.

I am pleased to yield to the distinguished Vice Chairman, Senator Durbin.