

Chairman Hal Rogers
House Committee on Appropriations
FY 2014 Defense Appropriations Bill
Full Committee Mark Up
June 12, 2013
Opening Statement As Prepared

Thank you both for your remarks. I also want to thank you now for your hard work in crafting this bill. It's a great responsibility to shepherd the tax dollars that go to our national security and military efforts, and I know you both, as well as the Subcommittee, do not take that responsibility lightly.

As Chairman Young stated, this bill provides more than \$512 billion in non-war funding, a decrease of more than \$5 billion below last year's enacted level, and approximately \$28.1 billion above the current sequester level.

Our national security is critically important, and we've already seen the damaging effects that sequestration has had on our military, so I believe this funding level is appropriate, justifiable, and, most importantly, sufficient.

This bill makes the hard choices to keep our nation safe, secure, and constantly prepared for whatever threats we may face. It provides funding to advance our missions abroad, to prepare and equip our troops, and to ensure the effectiveness of the world's greatest military.

Essential funding is included for key readiness programs to train and prepare our troops for combat and peacetime missions, as well as the procurement of necessary equipment, weapons, and platforms to maintain our forces and conduct successful operations.

A strong military requires well-cared-for troops, so we've fully funded the authorized 1.8 percent pay raise for the military – instead of the 1 percent the President requested. We've increased funding for the Defense Health Program, including additional funding for traumatic brain injury and psychological health research, and suicide prevention outreach.

This bill also helps address the problem of military sexual assaults by fully funding the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program, and adds \$25 million to expand sexual assault victim assistance programs.

Similar to last year's Defense Appropriations legislation, we've prohibited the transfers of Guantanamo detainees to the U.S. or its territories, and have placed conditions on the release of detainees to other countries.

But, as I said earlier, and as I've said at each mark up we've already had, we are going to have to find savings wherever we can so we can fall in line with the law.

This bill reflects some common-sense decisions that save taxpayer dollars wherever possible – without affecting the safety or success of our troops and missions. These cuts include rescissions of unspent, prior-year funds, and savings from the proposed civilian pay raise. Due to the strategic drawdown of forces overseas, funding for ongoing military operations is also reduced by \$1.5 billion.

As appropriators, it's our duty and responsibility to prioritize tax dollars. This is not always the easiest of tasks – especially now, when we face the devastating cuts of sequestration and extraordinarily high budget deficits. But there is absolutely no higher national priority than the protection of our country through a strong national defense.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill today, so we can get it on the House floor as soon as possible.

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