

**Chairman Hal Rogers**  
**House Committee on Appropriations**  
**Subcommittee on Defense**  
**Department of Defense Fiscal Challenges Hearing**  
**February 26, 2013**  
**Opening Statement As Prepared**

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Good morning. Thank you all for coming. This hearing today is critically important. This week, our national defense will face serious and dangerous sequestration cuts, as well as potentially damaging constraints if the current DoD funding structure is simply extended for the remainder of the fiscal year. While it is not within this Committee's power to solve sequestration at this time, it IS within our jurisdiction to try and help loosen the chains and allow the Department some funding flexibility in order to do its best with what it has.

To this end, two weeks ago I proposed a plan to craft a Continuing Resolution package that would include a full-year Defense Appropriations bill, as well as a full year Military Construction/Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill. These two individual bills passed the House last year on a broad bipartisan basis, were conferenced with our Democrat and Republican counterparts in the Senate, and have been completed since last December.

If enacted, this package will avoid a government shutdown, while prioritizing DoD and Veterans programs and ensuring some much-needed funding flexibility.

I know that Chairman Young shares this goal, and I sincerely applaud his leadership on this subcommittee and his unwavering support for the people and missions of our military.

It is crucial that the Committee receive the best information possible regarding DoD's funding challenges under both sequestration and a CR, directly from our military leaders.

I want to welcome each of you to this storied room.

- Chief of Staff of the Army, General Raymond Odierno;
- Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Jonathon Greenert;
- Commandant of the Marine Corps, General James Amos;
- Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General Mark Welsh; and
- Chief of the National Guard Bureau, General Frank Grass.

For several of you, this is your first time testifying before this Subcommittee and I look forward to hearing directly from you, hopefully now unshackled from OMB's gag order. I don't have to tell you that the Members of this subcommittee know that you come representing thousands of our fine servicemen, servicewomen, and their families. We must begin by acknowledging their service, dedication, and sacrifice to our great nation and we reaffirm our commitment to providing them with the tools, training, and support necessary to carry out vital security missions throughout the world.

It is under that yoke of responsibility that our nation and our government face unprecedented fiscal challenges, particularly for the Department of Defense. Like many of my colleagues, I believe sequestration is both terrible politics and a terrible policy. It will have a devastating effect on important programs and services, most notably taking its toll on our service men and women and our defense capability. The President's sequestration approach represents a haphazard, negligent, and indiscriminate approach to governing; an abdication of leadership. As you men know, leadership is about making choices, tough choices. Sequestration is about not making choices. I had hoped our Commander in Chief would have put forward an acceptable alternative to this near term disaster, but we are all still waiting. Last year, the House voted twice to resist these across-the-board cuts, only to have the White House criticize and disparage.

These cuts will gravely impair the Defense Department's mission capabilities, troop training, equipment and supply lines, research and development efforts, and our overall readiness. Today, it is my hope that we can have an honest and open dialogue to discuss the very real impacts of the pending sequestration, exactly where cuts will occur, and the forced steps the military is taking to mitigate these effects. No question cuts can be made to nearly each and every Department, but this approach will certainly lead to more costs, not less, and less 21<sup>st</sup> Century security, not more.

Secondly, the Department of Defense is wrestling with the possibility of a year-long continuing resolution. As I said before, while final decisions have not been made, I am proposing to include both the completed Defense and Military Construction/Veterans Conference Reports in a CR agreement, in order to protect critical functions of our defense and help ensure our nation's safety in these uncertain times.

This proposal would also have the benefit of saving billions in taxpayer dollars. Under a straight date-change CR extension -- without these bills attached -- billions in potential savings would be lost or unnecessarily wasted. For example, savings from closing out programs that have exceeded their usefulness will not be realized, new multi-year procurements, which save both money and time, would not be permitted, and program delays or disruptions for hundreds of programs will result in price increases.

I think it's clear that this nation is facing some very hard choices. It is up to Congress to pave the way for our financial future, and it is up to the Committee to do what we can in the short term to make the most of a difficult situation. That is one reason why it is essential that we hear what these distinguished witnesses have to say today.

So, onto the business at hand. Now, I know this is slightly unorthodox, but I have to leave shortly so I want to make sure I get the answer to the following question from each of you. Gentlemen, yes or no, would you say that is critical that Congress pass a full year Defense appropriations bill for fiscal year 2013?

Thank you for being here, and I look forward to hearing your answers.

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