

Chairman Hal Rogers
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense
Department of Defense FY 2014 Budget Hearing
April 16, 2013
Opening Statement As Prepared

Thank you, Chairman Young for yielding. Secretary Hagel, congratulations on your new position and General Dempsey and Secretary Hale, welcome back. Thank you for being with us today to discuss the Department of Defense's Fiscal Year 2014 budget request. In other subcommittee hearings, I've already lamented the fact that this budget request is woefully late and in its totality, full of gimmicks, tax increases, and generally unhelpful, but we will persevere.

Let me begin by taking an opportunity to again thank the fine service, dedication, and sacrifice of the men and women in uniform that you are here representing today. As this subcommittee has done in the past, we want to reaffirm our commitment to providing our warfighters with the tools, training, equipment and support necessary to carry out vital security missions throughout the world. Their service can't be overstated with continued instability in the Middle East and Northern Africa to the evolving challenges in the Asia-Pacific region- especially North Korea, there is no question that those who serve under our flag are doing so during a critical period in our history. World events often remind us that our country, our freedom and our way of life remain at constant risk and we must take measured steps to protect the values we hold.

In this volatile world, increasingly, we are facing enemies both foreign and domestic. We are now confronted with a very serious fiscal condition at home from skyrocketing entitlement programs and trillion dollar deficits to a fledgling economy and declining military industrial base. We can now add to that the devastating effects of sequestration to our service men and women. As I've said before, sequestration is the wrong approach to reining in spending, particularly as our nation's military readiness will foolishly suffer. However, we are under sequestration, and I hope you can clarify for me its impacts. We have recently heard that the Army has canceled 7 Combat Training Center rotations, the Navy has canceled ship deployments, and the Air Force has stood down 12 combat-coded squadrons – not to mention potential civilian furloughs for up to 14 days – all due to sequestration. I hope you can translate that into real world impacts for us, including what that means in terms of readiness and force posture.

While we continue to wrestle with these issues, I was pleased to see the FY13 Continuing Resolution package include a full-year Defense Appropriations bill, ensuring some much-needed funding flexibility for DoD. In the past three years, the Appropriations Committee has worked across the aisle and across the Capitol, demonstrating the commitment of Members and staff alike to restore regular order - and it is my goal to continue this process in FY14 with an eye on looking out for our men and women holding the line on our security.

We have some tough choices ahead of us, and I look forward to hearing from you today about the Administration's new priorities.

Thank you.

#####