

**Chairman C.W. Bill Young**  
**Subcommittee on Defense**  
**House Committee on Appropriations**  
**Department of Defense Budget Hearing**  
**April 16, 2013**  
**Opening Statement As Prepared**

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The subcommittee will come to order.

This morning the subcommittee will hold an open hearing on the fiscal year 2014 budget request of the Department of Defense.

I would like to welcome Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey. Although General Dempsey is a veteran at testifying to the subcommittee, Secretary Hagel is making his first appearance before us. We also welcome Mr. Robert Hale, the Department of Defense Comptroller who has probably appeared before us more times than he cares to remember. Welcome to each of you and thank you all for being here this morning.

Over this past year we've all heard talk of fiscal cliffs and challenges, sequestration, continuing resolutions, reductions, cuts, and furloughs. It is sad that in the media, these discussions have largely displaced news of the actions of our brave servicemembers. Because despite all of the economic turmoil we are facing, our service men and women continue to unfailingly defend this Nation and for that we are grateful.

Nevertheless, the resource challenges are very real, especially in the Department of Defense. Each Member of this Subcommittee is anxious to hear about how you all, as the leaders of the Department of Defense, intend to deal with these challenges. We certainly hope that any perturbations to the budget in fiscal year 2014 and the outyears are dealt with in a less frenzied and more controlled and well thought out manner than the reductions to fiscal year 2013 were dealt with. But the fact that the budget was delivered last week, more than 2 months late, is not an encouraging start to the fiscal year 2014 process.

Also notably absent from the submission is any request for Overseas Contingency Operations. The one piece of the budget that is strictly dedicated to our forward deployed forces and must be carefully evaluated to ensure our troops have what they need to protect our Nation is being further delayed for some unexplained reason. I encourage you to wrap up whatever deliberations remain on the OCO budget and submit it as soon as possible so our servicemembers will not be deprived of the resources they require.

However, as we have done in the past, this subcommittee is more than willing to work with you to ensure that the funding you need is appropriated where you need it. We recognize that there is a very delicate balance that must be achieved between the operations and readiness of today and the investments of tomorrow. The decisions made in the fiscal year 2014 budget today may well impact the Department for several years to come. We owe it to our servicemembers to make well informed and conscientious decisions.

I find it interesting to note that one of the themes of your budget this year is “Implementing the Defense Strategic Guidance” while at the same time your Department is in the midst of yet another strategic review. We will be anxious to hear the results of this review and look forward to working with you to understand the basis of your decisions. We may very well disagree along the way but in the end we will provide what is best for our servicemembers who give so much.

I am particularly concerned with your shipbuilding plan. The Navy’s new stated requirement for fleet size stands at 306 ships, down from the never achieved fleet size of 313 ships. The long term shipbuilding plan submitted with this budget request shows the Navy will reach 306 ships in 2037, a quarter of a decade away. It seems that every year this subcommittee is assured that the shipbuilding plan is sufficient for our Nation’s requirements and just as frequently the satisfaction of those requirements shifts to the right. And this is as we pivot to the Asia-Pacific region, and more immediately attempt to counter an increasingly provocative and unpredictable North Korea.

Despite these challenges, rest assured that this subcommittee will continue to work with you to ensure you have the required resources and authorities to conduct your mission and take care of the Nation’s soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines. We understand as well as anybody that the number one resource of your team is the great men and women who sacrifice so much in defending our freedoms.

So welcome – I look forward to your comments and pledge to continue to work with you as we work through your fiscal year 2014 budget.

Now let me turn to my good friend and partner, Ranking Member Pete Visclosky for any comments he may want to make.

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