

Representative David W. Jolly

Florida 13th District

Chairman Frelinghuysen, Ranking Member Visclosky, and other Members of this Subcommittee:

It is an honor to appear before you as a new Member of Congress, and particularly as the Representative of the Congressional district that was served for 43 years by my mentor and your dear friend Bill Young. I know from my many years of working for him that he cherished the tens of thousands of hours he spent in this room with you providing for our Country's national security and he counted many of you as his closest and dearest friends.

The Tampa Bay area, which I represent, is a region that is a key provider of resources for the men and women who go into harm's way to protect us. Thousands of my constituents go to work every day to develop and produce systems for every branch of our Military. It is where the canopies for the cockpits of the Joint Striker are produced. It is where guidance systems for many of our satellites and delivery systems are developed and produced, as well as much of the work we do on the GPS III system. It is where the production of many of the munitions for the Army and Marine Corps are managed. It is where the Cooperative Engagement Capability for naval warships was developed, and where hundreds of other important war fighting capabilities were developed and produced by large and small businesses alike. I would appreciate the Committee's continued support for these important national programs.

The Tampa Bay area is also an area where men and women serve in the National Guard and Reserve at the C. W. Bill Young Joint Readiness Center and where hundreds of pilots fly helicopters for the Army Reserve. I might add that the Army Reserve Medical Command is resident at the Readiness Center and, as you heard yesterday, the Army Reserve provides much of the medical support for the entire Army. Many men and women who reside in my district also work at MacDill Air Force Base, just across Tampa Bay from us, which is home to U.S. Central Command, U.S. Special Operations Command, and a very important active duty and reserve air refueling wing.

Mr. Chairman, I know that you are particularly knowledgeable and supportive of the work of our Special Operations Forces, and I want to thank you and the other Members here for your continuing interest in providing them the resources they need to accomplish their extremely important missions. These brave men and women would not be the competent warriors they are, or in the sufficient numbers they are, without the leadership of this subcommittee. Each of you can take great pride in the success of the missions they perform, many of which most of the world will never know about.

Speaking of those missions, Mr. Chairman I know that on one of your many visits to the headquarters of Special Operations Command (SOCOM), you were with the SOCOM Commander the night his forces captured Saddam Hussein. It must have been a gratifying night to see the fruits of your many years of effort at work and to witness such a historic moment.

On the subject of SOCOM, I am aware that there have been previous discussions of relocating staffing and functions from the headquarters in Tampa to other locations, and that this committee took a strong stand last year in questioning those efforts. I hope that in this era of fiscal constraint, we can work together to ensure that the tremendous investment this committee and our country have made in SOCOM at MacDill will be fully utilized. It is no accident that Central Command, where so many of our overseas deployments are managed, and SOCOM are collocated there. They work together extremely well.

In closing Mr. Chairman, I know that your subcommittee's work fulfills the most important Constitutional responsibility of Congress, and that is to provide for our common defense. Without a strong national defense, all of our other work would be rendered irrelevant. I know it is hard work. I know that it requires many hours away from your families. Moreover, I am aware that the staff you have assembled to help you with that work is among the finest on Capitol Hill. So thank you and please know that this Congressman is honored to serve in the same body with you and to be supportive of your critically important work.