

**Testimony of Congressman Earl Blumenauer
March 15, 2016**

- **Thank you Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Visclosky. I appreciate the opportunity to testify today.**
- **The Administration has unveiled a defense budget that is not only unrealistic, but could also be dangerous. It keeps spending for nuclear modernization on track at over \$3 billion for Fiscal Year 2017.**
- **This comes at a time when one third of Americans think that the US is spending too much on defense, and more than half of registered voters across the country favor cutting the defense budget by \$12 billion.**
- **In this budget, billions of dollars will be spent on the controversial modernization of each leg of the nuclear triad—land-based missiles, submarine-based missiles, and bombers—which have not been used in 65 years.**

- **Most concerning is the inclusion of funding for a long-range, standoff replacement cruise missile, costing \$2.2 billion in the future years defense program. This will ultimately cost \$20 to \$30 billion, if not more.**
- **To be clear, this is merely to replace a cruise missile that the father of the device, former Secretary of Defense William Perry, feels is no longer relevant and has argued against.**
- **Congress should be pressing the Pentagon both for long-term cost reports, and to answer tough questions like, to what extent do certain weapons programs and their funding levels add to our existing capabilities?**
- **These weapons systems have been unable to help us address the military challenges that we face now in the Middle East and will consume huge sums of money in hopelessly redundant programs.**

- **The defense budget is also dangerous because of the spending reductions in the nuclear nonproliferation programs of more than \$130 million. These cuts pose real threats to our security.**
- **We are battling ISIS now. They have already obtained some low-grade nuclear material from a scientific research facility in Mosul. We have also seen reports of nuclear materials unaccounted for or stolen.**
- **We need to have these proven nonproliferation programs to reduce the inventory, track nuclear materials down, and take them out of circulation. We should be expanding these programs, not cutting them back.**
- **Additionally, by continuing a trend that results in spending 1 trillion dollars on modernizing the triad over the course of the next 30 years, nuclear modernization will come at the expense of our conventional weapons.**
- **Our nuclear capability is already far above what we need to deter any country in the world right now and this capability**

does not help us with the strategic challenges that we face today.

- A stronger nuclear program is not going to prevent Russian adventurism in Ukraine or Crimea, but it will result in our having to cannibalize the National Guard and Ready Reserve. The Army will also be paying the price for this.**
- These conventional forces have borne the burden for the last two decades of military activities and are going to be needed for both deterrence and, heaven forbid, further activity in the future.**
- We cannot do all of this within the current budget horizon.**
- We also have a little trust fund, the Overseas Contingency Operations account, that helps us ignore long-term budget realities and the costs of weapons programs. We are choosing to put that budgeting problem off for a future Administration and future Congresses.**

- **In so doing, we are playing fast and loose with the integrity of the Pentagon, with the resources and the materials that are necessary to support our troops now and in the future.**
- **It is not too late for this Congress to demand a spending plan, cost accountability, kill the new cruise missile program, and put us on a path of fiscal stability and sanity.**
- **Instead of continuing down this unsustainable path, let's focus on maintaining appropriate priorities for the military strength and defense of our country.**