

**Members' Day Testimony - Rep. Earl L. 'Buddy' Carter (1<sup>st</sup> District of Georgia)**

Thank you for this opportunity to share my concerns and priorities for the First Congressional District of Georgia. It's an honor to represent a district that is the home to every branch of the military and thousands of veterans who have honorably served our country. With this unique military footprint, the district's defense elements are vital to not just to our state and region but to the nation and its interests around the world.

Our district is home to the Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay, which is the port for the Atlantic ballistic missile submarine fleet. While these submarines play a critical role in nuclear deterrence and readiness, they will soon be reaching the end of their life cycle. The procurement timeline for the Ohio Replacement Program has been delayed, leaving open the possibility of a gap in the retirement of the Ohio-class submarines and new boats. I have submitted a programmatic request in support of the Ohio Replacement Program with the intent to maintain the development timeline. The Virginia-class attack submarine will also continue to play a large role in the nation's submarine fleet, and the Virginia Payload Module (VPM) is a cost-effective way to preserve our undersea strike capacity by adding expanded capabilities to the fleet. As such, I am supporting the President's budget request for the Virginia Payload Module and Virginia class submarines.

Similar in operational timeliness, A-10s, like the ones operated by the 23<sup>rd</sup> Wing out of Moody Air Force Base, have been providing critical close air support (CAS) for our ground troops since they first entered service in the 1970s. The combination of capabilities and its record of survivability against defensive platforms have earned it many supporters over the years

and it continues to play a major role in air campaigns. That's why I am supporting full funding for the operations of the A-10 fleet in the Fiscal Year 2017 Defense Appropriations bill.

Around the world, combatant commanders have utilized the Joint STARS battle management, command and control aircraft for accurate real-time information regarding our adversaries' movements. Those aircraft are now some of the oldest in the fleet and critically need funding for research and development. I have submitted a request supporting the President's budget request for the JSTARS platform and urge the committee to ensure the program remains on time and on budget.

The Special Operations community has seen a great bit of strain on their readiness due to their operational tempo over the past decade. The Preservation of the Force and Families (POTFF) initiative is a great program in which we can ensure our special operators, and their families, are adequately cared for while decreasing their down time to recover. I am supporting the President's budget for this program as well as requests for special operations aviation programs.

I would also like to address improved camouflage systems and their role to the services in future conflicts. Current camouflage netting systems do not afford proper concealment against enemy threats, specifically short-wave infrared (SWIR) sensors. Research and development of next generation systems is essential for our military to maintain the edge against our adversaries in multiple environments. For that reason, I have requested report language encouraging development of new and improved camouflage netting systems that will provide complete protection for our troops.

The Department of Defense has some very successful programs in place that support the education and reform of today's youth. The STARBASE program and the National Guard's Youth Challenge Program have helped to better the lives of thousands of kids across the country. For that reason, I am supporting a funding request consistent with the needs of those programs and planned expansions.

Lastly, the Army recently validated a requirement to increase the total number of armored excavators needed for global mission needs. Those requirements are consistent with changing needs across the combatant commands for machines capable of route clearance and engineering projects. Therefore, I am submitting a request consistent with the needs of the Army.

I appreciate your attention to these requests and thank you for the opportunity to provide input.