

Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Smith, I want to thank you and this Committee for the opportunity to share with you some of the national security priorities I hold for the upcoming year on behalf of the Eighth District of North Carolina.

As I have traveled around communities in North Carolina, people have consistently told me that restoring fiscal responsibility is their number one priority, and that they sent me to Washington to force the government to live within its means.

Accordingly, I am committed to cutting spending, reducing the size of government, promoting economic growth, and balancing our budget.

Today, I would like to discuss a number of issues: namely, the challenges that we must face along with our allies and partners; the commitments we have made to our men and women in uniform, and the importance of ensuring accountability and transparency when trying to maintain a strong national defense in a tough budget environment.

While we've seen the gradual reduction of core Al-Qaeda's influence, it's important to remember that we continue to be engaged in a global conflict against increasingly factionalized groups that seek to do us harm, along with the states that support them.

A failure to exercise US diplomatic and military leadership means nuclear states like Iran and North Korea will be able to bully the international system both through direct threats and their proxies.

North Carolina is fortunate to be home to over 700,000 proud veterans, and I am lucky to represent a District that has a strong military presence given its proximity to Fort Bragg. I just returned from a productive visit to Camp Mackall, an extension of Ft. Bragg where some of America's finest train to become part of the special forces, and I am pleased to report on their fine work.

The men and women at Fort Bragg have matchless capabilities and unique missions. I look forward to continuing working with the base to ensure that their priorities are met when it comes to equipment, facilities, and training.

As the United States increases its Special Operations and Airborne operations presence, it is critically important that we support in depth training and techniques, an area where Ft. Bragg continues to excel. I look forward to working with you and this Committee to provide the necessary resources to ensure the utmost success for our dedicated men and women in uniform there.

While I recognize that this committee does not intend to reauthorize or make changes to the Authorization of Military Force this year, I would still like to take a moment to touch on the issue given its continued importance in regards to civil liberties and our ability to effectively prosecute terrorists.

I would like this committee to note that I will not support trading our guaranteed civil liberties for the promise of security. With that said, I also refuse to stand by and allow terrorists to be treated as common criminals. The Administration has taken that stance when it comes to pursuing those involved in the deadly September 11th attack on the U.S. Embassy in Benghazi and we have all seen the failure in results it has led to. Waiving subpoenas in the face of radical militants is simply not the way to protect America's interests.

This approach is also apparent in the Administration's attempt to close the prison in Guantanamo Bay and transfer over a hundred fifty terrorists to American soil or return them to their home nations. I cannot and will not support policies like this that threaten American's around the world.

The United States is a nation built on the premise of liberty and constitutional rights. We preserve a unique separation of powers so that we can ensure not one branch has too much power. The programs in the NDAA, like any other, fall within that system and it is our duty as elected Representatives to ensure it does not violate our privacy or civil liberties.

Thanks to the Committee for the opportunity to speak today and for your efforts on behalf of our nation's warfighters and their families.