

## Opening Statement of Chairman McKeon

WASHINGTON— The House Armed Services Committee held a hearing today on [The Fiscal Year 2014 National Defense Authorization Budget Request from the Department of Defense](#). Chairman Howard P. "Buck" McKeon made the following opening statement as prepared for delivery:

*Witness testimony can be found on the [Committee Document Repository website](#), or linked below. All witness testimony is as prepared for, and embargoed until delivery.*

"Good morning ladies and gentlemen, the House Armed Services Committee meets today to receive testimony on the fiscal year 2014 budget request for the Department of Defense. I'd also like to welcome Secretary Hagel to his first appearance with us. General Dempsey, thank you for being here as well. And Secretary Hale, thank you for all the work you do in the midst of this budget madness. You are a true professional.

"Our job on this Committee is to weigh inputs from senior military leaders so that we may fulfill our Constitutional obligation to provide for the common defense. Two months ago, General Dempsey told this committee that the military could not absorb any further cuts without jeopardizing the missions that we ask of them.

"Today, I hope to hear how the President's budget, which asks for another \$120 billion out of defense, will impact our military posture and readiness. Specifically, I'd like to hear which missions we must now abandon, reduce, or cancel outright to comply with the President's budget – because I don't see the world getting safer, as recent events in North Korea, Iran, Syria and Africa attest. In fact, even as our forces draw down in Afghanistan, we are negotiating an agreement to maintain an enduring presence in that nation.

"I am also curious why, after three rounds of cuts to our Armed Forces in as many years, our troops are again being asked to pay the bill for out of control spending in Washington.

"Carl Vinson, for whom this room is named, said 'A country does not need a navy of one strength when we she is prosperous and a navy of another size when there is an economic depression.' I believe that sentiment applies to all our Armed Forces. It was true when Vinson said it during the Great Depression, and it is true today during the Great Recession.

"With that in mind, the budget we received asks us to take another \$120 billion dollars from the military and offers no solutions to repair the damage being done by sequestration this year. This is not simply a 2017 problem. I hope to hear how we can resolve the stark differences between the President's budget request and the President's national security strategy.

"Margaret Thatcher, who left us this week, said during her time as Prime Minister 'the defense budget is one of the very few elements of public expenditure that can truly be described as essential.' Our charge is to provide that essential security to the American people and by doing so assure our allies.

"I look forward to our witnesses' insights. Thank you."

## **Witnesses**

### **General Martin Dempsey, USA**

Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

- Witness Statement [[PDF](#)]
- Witness Biography [[PDF](#)]

### **The Honorable Chuck Hagel**

Secretary of Defense, U.S. Department of Defense

- Witness Statement [[PDF](#)]
- Witness Biography [[PDF](#)]