

June 23, 2011

WASHINGTON- House Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Rep. Norm Dicks gave the following statement on the House floor during consideration of the Defense Appropriations bill for FY2012:

"It has once again been an honor to work with my friend Chairman Bill Young to prepare the Defense Appropriations bill for fiscal year 2012. In the longstanding tradition of this Committee, the bill has been prepared on a bipartisan basis, and I support the bill.

"I'm happy to report that the bill provides the funds necessary to support our troops both at home and in the field. It also makes the investments in research and development and acquisition needed to fully equip our forces and maintain our Nation's technological edge. Within the funds provided, and after careful review, the Committee exercised its constitutional responsibility to allocate resources to those programs that best support the requirements of our military forces.

"In writing this bill, the Committee had to make hard choices. The allocation for this bill is \$530 billion, \$9 billion below the request. While this is \$17 billion above the fiscal year 2011 enacted level, much of the increase is absorbed by the military pay, operation and maintenance, and Defense Health Program accounts.

"The bill also provides the funds needed to support U.S. Service personnel. Examples of this include:

- The military pay accounts fund a 1.6% raise consistent with the budget request and the level included in the House-passed fiscal year 2012 Armed Services bill.
- The bill provides \$32.3 billion for the Defense Health Program, including \$125 million above the request to continue the Committee's longstanding efforts to improve research and treatment

of traumatic brain injury and psychological health conditions. The bill also includes funding increases for a several research efforts including peer-reviewed breast cancer, prostate cancer, ovarian cancer and lung cancer research.

- The bill fully funds \$2.3 billion requested for family programs, and adds funding for several initiatives including \$250 million to replace Schools owned by local education authorities and \$40 million for Impact Aid.

"The bill addresses many of DoD's most pressing investment needs. It funds 10 ships as requested in the budget and 32 Joint Strike Fighter aircraft. The bill also adds funding to fill gaps in DoD capabilities. Some examples include:

- M1A2 System Enhancement Package: \$272 million is included to prevent a break in production of tanks.
- HMMWV Force Protection: \$50 million is added to develop and test improved armor and other blast protection technologies on the HMMWV.
- Long Range Strike: \$100 million is added to reduce technical risk and schedule risks for this program.
- C-17 Replacement: \$220 million is included to replace the operational loss of a C-17 aircraft.
- Special Operations Command Shortfalls: \$250 million is added to address unfunded requirements identified by the Special Operations Command.
- National Guard and Reserve Equipment: \$1.5 billion is included to fund equipment shortfalls in National Guard and Reserve equipment.

- Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance: \$50 million is included above the request to continue to fill gaps in DoD ISR equipment.
- Israeli Missile Defense Programs: \$130 million is added to enhance Israeli missile defense programs including the Arrow missile defense system.
- Small Business Innovative Research: \$50 million is included to continue the Committee's efforts for SBIR Phase III transition
- Historically Black Colleges and Universities: \$20 million is added to continue Defense research at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).
- Energy Efficiency Improvements: The bill includes \$82 million above the request to field equipment that will reduce the energy footprint of deployed Marine Corps units. The bill also includes \$10 million above the request for pilot programs to improve DoD energy efficiency.

"The bill provides \$118.7 billion for operations in Afghanistan and for the continuing withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq. The bill ensures that troops have essential force protection and provides the means for the Afghans to provide their own security. The bill includes \$12.8 billion to train Afghanistan's National Security Forces.

"While the bill provides essential support for our troops, I remain concerned about our nation's direction in Pakistan and ongoing operations in Afghanistan. There is cause to question the reliability of our partnerships with both countries. In the light of recent events, we must reassess the extent of U.S. military involvement, and the objectives of U.S. foreign policy in that part of the world, re-examining whether U.S. national security requires a continued deployment of over 100,000 U.S. service personnel.

"After a careful review of our security situation, I believe it is time to significantly accelerate the withdrawal of U.S. forces.

"To accomplish this objective responsibly will take some care. By necessity, a political solution in Afghanistan will involve negotiations with Taliban representatives; it will also demand taking into account the interests of surrounding nations to ensure that those neighbors do not fight with one another along sectarian or tribal divides within Afghanistan. Finally, we must guard against creating a vacuum similar to the one that occurred at the end of the Soviet occupation in 1989. Even with these cautions in mind, I believe it is time to begin the process of bringing the level of deployed U.S. troops in line with a new assessment of our security interests in the region.

"While I have concerns about our nation's policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan, I strongly support this bill. It is a bipartisan bill, and it provides the resources needed by our troops. I urge your support for the bill."

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