

“FY 2009 Military Construction Budget Request”

Statement

of

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Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)

before the

United States Senate
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies

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Mr. Chairman, I just have a brief statement, and I will submit it for the record. Mr. Army has a lengthier statement for the record as well, so I will keep it brief.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Military Construction component of President Bush's Fiscal Year 2009 budget request for the Department of Defense.

On behalf of the men and women of the Department – both Service members and civilians – I also want to thank the Committee for its continued support of America's Armed Forces. We look forward to working with you to ensure that our military men and women have everything they need to carry out their vital mission.

Mr. Chairman, the President's base budget for Defense is \$515.4 billion in discretionary authority for fiscal year 2009. That is an increase of \$35.9 billion or 7.5 percent over the enacted level for fiscal year 2008. Taking inflation into account, the real growth in this request is 5.4 percent. We are very pleased with that in the Department.

The base budget sustains the President's commitment to:

- Ensure a high state of readiness and ground force strength;
- Enhance the combat capabilities of the U.S. Armed Forces;
- Continue the development and implementation of capabilities to maintain U.S. superiority against future threats; and
- Continue the Department's strong support for Service members and their families.

The Military Construction portion of that request, which supports those strategic objectives, is \$21.2 billion, an increase of \$3.4 billion or 19 percent over the prior year. It funds the Department's most pressing priorities and facilities requirements, including new construction, replacement of troop housing, and facilities to support the increase of 92,000 soldiers and Marines over a five-year period.

Also included in that amount is \$9.1 billion to implement the recommendations of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission. This is the peak year for investment in BRAC, and these funds are critical if we are to successfully complete those projects by the deadline of 2011. We are also looking forward to reaping the savings from the anticipated BRAC, but we cannot realize those savings unless we are successful in Defense appropriations.

In addition to the \$21.2 billion needed for facilities, the Department is also requesting \$3.2 billion for family housing. This funding is vital for "quality of life" programs and will enable the Department to privatize an additional 12,324 units and to

eliminate inadequate housing units overseas. The requested amount is approximately \$300 million or just over 10 percent higher than the prior year. A big portion of that is for the Grow the Force initiative that we are pursuing.

So on behalf of the Department and the men and women of the Armed Services, I want to thank the committee for letting us appear here today, and I look forward to your questions.