



U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

PRESS RELEASE

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Chairman Daniel K. Inouye's Opening Statement at Senate Appropriations Committee Hearing on FY 2009 Supplemental Request

Washington, DC – Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawaii) delivered the following opening statement at today's hearing on the Fiscal Year 2009 Supplemental Appropriations request.

“Good morning. Today the committee meets to review the Supplemental Appropriations request for FY 2009. The request by the Administration totals \$83.4 billion of which approximately 95% is to support military and related security efforts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. An additional 4% is requested for other security initiatives, with the remaining 1% related to other issues, such as wild fire protection and improved communications equipment for the capitol police.

“To discuss the majority of the funding requested, the Committee is pleased to receive testimony from the Secretaries of State and Defense, Ms. Hillary Clinton and Mr. Robert Gates. It is good to see you both. The members of the Committee know each of you well. We hold you both in great esteem, and are familiar with, and appreciate, your candor. We look forward to your responses to the many questions which we will have.

“As we review the request, I want to note first that I am pleased that the President has indicated that this will be the last increment of funding for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that will be requested outside of the regular appropriations process. While we recognize that no one can predict what other new requirements might emerge which would require the Administration or Congress to seek additional funding, it is clearly a positive step that, beginning in fiscal year 2010 we can expect to see the costs of these on-going efforts to be contained in the regular budget.

“I believe it is also a positive step that the request for this last increment is not listed as an emergency. For several years, led by Chairman Byrd, this Committee has urged the Administration to get rid of the gimmick declaring war supplementals as emergencies. We very much appreciate the willingness of the new Administration to put these costs on budget.

“In general, it is my belief that the Senate is likely to be supportive of this request. Funding contained in the proposal will provide very necessary funds to support our troops in harm’s way and, almost as critical, provide funding to assist our allies and support the governments of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

“There are several areas, however, in which I believe the Committee will need additional clarification or justification before it can recommend funding. For example, many of my colleagues are concerned for the precise plan involved in the closure of the prison at Guantanamo. We wonder about the potential plan to station our war weary National Guard troops on the southwest border, and we question the appropriateness of providing foreign assistance for Pakistan under the jurisdiction of the Department of Defense. So too will we be seeking assurances that the Administration is not attempting to provide any assistance to Hamas.

“Hopefully, these issues will be among those addressed either in your statements or in the questions which follow. I would note to my colleagues that I recognize that there are many issues which you want to address and remind you that today’s hearing is on the 2009 supplemental request and not on the 2010 budget request, which we will receive next week. I would urge my colleagues to refrain from trying to discuss items in the 2010 request. We will be inviting both Secretaries back before the Committees at later dates to discuss the 2010 budget.

“Thank you both for appearing today, without objection your full statements will be made part of the record and at this point I would like to yield to Vice Chairman Cochran for any opening comments he may wish to make.”

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