



U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

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U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations Testimony of Secretary of Defense Robert Gates

WASHINGTON, D.C. . The U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee on Tuesday held a hearing on the Bush Administration's request for nearly \$100 billion in additional funding for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Two key Administration officials testified at that hearing, including Secretary of Defense Robert Gates. The Secretary's prepared testimony is below.

I appreciate the opportunity to join Secretary Rice in discussing the President's Supplemental Appropriation Request to fund the costs of operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and the wider Global War on Terror.

From the start, I would like to express my strong support for the programs funded in the State Department's request. The kinds of challenges our country faces in Iraq and Afghanistan cannot be overcome without the important non-military efforts outlined by Secretary Rice.

The 2007 Supplemental Request of \$93.4 billion for the Department of Defense is in addition to the \$70 billion that has already been appropriated for war-related costs in this fiscal year. If these additional funds are delayed, the military will be forced to engage in costly and counterproductive reprogramming actions starting this spring to make up the shortfall. Timely enactment of this Supplemental Request is critical to ensuring our troops in the field have the resources they need.

While our country is properly focused on the serious situation in Iraq, it is critical that the gains made in Afghanistan these past few years not be allowed to slip away. This was at the top of my agenda at the NATO ministerial earlier this month in Seville.

I believe that it is important to consider the defense budget requests . both for the base budget and the war-related requests . submitted to the Congress this year in some historical context, as there has been, understandably, sticker shock at their combined price tags . more than \$700 billion total.

Please consider that, at about 4 percent of America's Gross Domestic Product, the amount of money the United States is projected to spend on defense this year is actually a smaller percentage of GDP than when I left government 14 years ago following the end of the Cold War . and a significantly smaller percentage than during previous times of war, such as Vietnam and Korea.

Since 1993, with a defense budget that is a smaller relative share of our national wealth, the world has gotten more complicated, and arguably more dangerous. In addition to fighting the Global War on Terror, we also face:

" The danger posed by Iran's and North Korea's nuclear ambitions, and the threat they pose not only to their neighbors, but globally, because of their record of proliferation;

" The uncertain paths of China and Russia, which are both pursuing sophisticated military modernization programs; and

" A range of other potential flashpoints, challenges and threats.

In this strategic environment, the resources we devote to defense at this critical time should be at the level to adequately meet those challenges.

Fiscal Year 2007 Supplemental Request

The FY 2007 Supplemental Request includes \$39.3 billion to provide the incremental pay, supplies, transportation, maintenance and logistical support to conduct military operations. The additional U.S. ground and naval forces being sent to the Iraq theater are projected to cost \$5.6 billion. This total includes funding for personnel costs, supplies, spare parts, contractor support, and transportation. The FY 2008 GWOT Request complies with Congress's direction to include the costs of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan in the annual Defense Department budget.

Reconstitution

The request includes \$13.9 billion to reconstitute our nation's armed forces . In particular, to refit the ground forces, the Army and Marine Corps, who have borne the brunt of combat in both human and material terms. These funds will go to repair or replace equipment that has been destroyed, damaged, or stressed in the current conflict.

All Army units deployed, or about to deploy, for missions overseas are fully trained and equipped, often with additional gear for their particular mission. In an expeditionary, rotational force one can expect that units returning from their deployment will decline to a lower readiness level as personnel turn over and equipment is repaired or replaced.

Force Protection

This supplemental includes \$10.4 billion for investments in new technologies to better protect our troops from an agile and adaptive enemy. Programs being funded would include a new generation of body armor, vehicles that can better withstand explosions from Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), and electronic devices that interrupt the enemy's ability to attack U.S. forces. Within this force protection category, the FY 2007 Supplemental includes \$2.4 billion to counter and defeat the threat posed by IEDs.

Afghan/Iraqi Security Forces

The request includes \$9.7 billion to stand up capable military and police forces in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The bulk of these funds are going to train and equip Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) to assume the lead in operations throughout Afghanistan. Some 88,000 have been trained and equipped, an increase of 31,000 from the previous year.

The \$5.9 billion for the ANSF in the FY 2007 Supplemental is a substantial increase over previous years' appropriations. It reflects the urgent priority of countering increased

activity by the Taliban, Al Qaeda, and narcotics traffickers to destabilize and undermine the new democracy in Afghanistan. These funds will significantly upgrade the capability of Afghan forces to conduct independent counter-insurgency operations.

In Iraq, more than 300,000 soldiers and police have been trained and equipped, and are in charge of more than 60 percent of Iraqi territory and more than 65 percent of that country's population. They have assumed full security responsibility for three out of Iraq's 18 provinces and are scheduled to take over more territory over the course of the year. These Iraqi troops, though far from perfect, have shown that they can perform with distinction when properly led and supported. Iraqi forces will be in the lead during operations to secure Baghdad's violent neighborhoods. By significantly increasing and improving the embedding program, Iraqi forces will operate with more and better Coalition support than they had in the past.

Non-Military Assistance

Success in the kinds of conflicts our military finds itself in today . . . in Iraq, or elsewhere . . . cannot be achieved by military means alone. The President's strategy for Iraq hinges on key programs and additional resources to improve local governance, delivery of public services, and quality of life . . . to get angry young men off the street and into jobs where they will be less susceptible to the appeals of insurgents or militia groups. Commander's Emergency Response Program, or (CERP) funds are a relatively small piece of the war-related budgets . . . \$456 million in the FY 2007 Supplemental. But because they can be dispensed quickly and applied directly to local needs, they have had a tremendous impact . . . far beyond the dollar value . . . on the ability of our troops to succeed in Iraq and Afghanistan. By building trust and confidence in Coalition forces, these CERP projects increase the flow of intelligence to commanders in the field and help turn local Iraqis and Afghans against insurgents and terrorists.

Conclusion

With the assistance and the counsel of Congress, I believe we have the opportunity to do right by our troops and the sacrifices that they and their families have made these past few years. That means we must make the difficult choices and commit the necessary resources not only to prevail in the current conflicts in which they are engaged, but to be prepared to take on the threats that they, their children, and our nation may face in the future.

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