



U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: June 9, 2009
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Opening Statement of Chairman Daniel K. Inouye at June 9 Defense Appropriations Subcommittee Hearing

Washington, DC – Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawaii) delivered the following opening statement at today’s Defense Appropriations Subcommittee hearing featuring Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

“Today, the Subcommittee is pleased to welcome Dr. Robert Gates, the Secretary of Defense, and Admiral Mike Mullen, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to testify on the Administration’s budget request for Fiscal Year 2010. And Mr. Secretary, while the full Senate Appropriations Committee already had the pleasure of meeting with you earlier this year regarding the Administration’s Fiscal Year 2009 supplemental budget request, let me extend a particularly warm welcome to you on behalf of the Defense Subcommittee. Your continued willingness to put our Nation’s needs ahead of your personal interests demonstrates your unwavering commitment to public service and your dedication to the men and women in our military. The Nation owes you a debt of gratitude.

“The Administration has requested \$534 billion for the base budget of the Department of Defense in Fiscal Year 2010, an increase of \$21 billion over the amount enacted in Fiscal Year 2009 for such activities. Additionally, the Administration has requested \$130 billion in supplemental, non-emergency funding for Overseas Contingency Operations in the next fiscal year.

“Mr. Secretary, you have called this a reform budget, and in recent months you have given several keynote speeches emphasizing in particular the need for a greater balance in our force structure between competing requirements for irregular and conventional warfare and for changing the way the Defense Department does business. The budget request before us reflects these priorities and as you’re well aware, raises a few questions.

“A key theme you’ve emphasized in recent months is the need to provide an institutional home in the Department for the Warfighter engaged in the current fight. Much of the critical force protection equipment that is used with great success in theater today has been funded outside of the regular defense budget process and is being managed by newly created, ad hoc organizations that appear to be temporary in nature. For example, since 2005, the Department has procured over 16,000 Mine Resistant Ambush Protected

Vehicles, funded entirely with supplemental appropriations. Yet, even after five years, the role of these vehicles in our force structure and the future role of the Office that manages this program within the Department of Defense are undefined. Another example is the I.S.R. Task Force which has accelerated the fielding of critical intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets into theater. You have made it a point to emphasize these capabilities by adding \$2 billion to the base budget for ISR capabilities. Yet, the role of this Task Force within the Department's institutional chain of command remains ad hoc and its future undetermined. There is no question that these capabilities will be needed in the future. So we hope that today you can illustrate to the Subcommittee how we can institutionalize the lessons learned with respect to equipping the Warfighter, and permanently address the Warfighters' requirements in the Defense Department bureaucracy without continuously adding bureaucratic layers.

“At the same time, Mr. Secretary, conventional threats to our national security remain. While irregular warfare is and will presumably continue to be the preferred tactic for non-state actors, we cannot lose sight of threats from traditional nation states such as North Korea, Iran and others. So as we consider the many adjustments your budget proposes to modernization programs designed to address conventional threats, it is important that we understand the strategic underpinnings and consequences of curtailing or terminating programs such as the F-22 fighter, the C-17 transport aircraft or the Future Combat Systems Manned Ground Vehicles. There is no question that the requirements to winning irregular conflicts have been neglected too long, but we must ensure that we strike the right balance between preparing for both irregular and regular wars and we look forward to hearing your thoughts on that.

“Finally, Mr. Secretary, your budget emphasizes our nation's greatest military asset, the all-volunteer force, by fully funding end strength growth, providing for increased medical research and increasing funding for our Warfighters' families. These programs have long been funded through supplemental appropriations and we welcome your commitment to our service members and their families by institutionalizing these programs in the base budget. On the other hand, the rising military personnel and health care costs are creating budget pressures on our acquisition programs, calling into question the affordability of many high-priced platforms designed to meet specific military requirements.

“So gentlemen, we have much to discuss today. We very much appreciate you being here with us and look forward to your testimony.”

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