



# COMMITTEE *on* APPROPRIATIONS

CHAIRWOMAN BARBARA A. MIKULSKI

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## Opening Statement of Chairwoman Barbara A. Mikulski

*July 17, 2014 Full Committee Markup*

**WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.)**, Chairwoman of the Appropriations Committee, today presided over the markup of the fiscal year 2015 Department of Defense Appropriations Bill. The bill provides \$549.3 billion in base and overseas contingency operation funding, compared to \$572 billion enacted in fiscal year 2014 and \$550.7 billion in the President’s budget request. The base budget appropriation is \$489.6 billion with \$59.7 billion for Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) of the Departments of Defense and State, compared to \$85.2 billion for DoD OCO enacted for fiscal year 2014.

*The following are Chairwoman Mikulski’s remarks, as prepared for delivery:*

“This morning’s agenda includes reporting the fiscal year 2015 Department of Defense Appropriations bill. This will be the eighth bill reported from our committee. Vice Chairman Shelby and I intend to continue moving the process forward so that we can avoid another shutdown and not put the government on autopilot with another series of short term continuing resolutions.

“Senator Durbin and Senator Cochran, the Defense chair and ranking member, have done an excellent job. On their shoulders rested decisions on how to allocate funds for the defense of the United States of America.

“The bill totals \$489.6 billion in base funding, which is consistent with the allocation, along with \$58.3 billion in Overseas Contingency Operations funding. It’s a good bill for our men and women in uniform. It emphasizes readiness, cares for our wounded warriors, takes steps to improve health on our military bases and provides resources needed to keep our nation secure.

“The bill makes prudent and sensible reductions to duplicative programs and projects that are inefficient or behind schedule.

“I am proud of this bill and I am also proud of all that Marylanders contribute to our nation’s defense. Maryland is home to 10 major defense facilities which house crucial and iconic agencies from Fort Meade’s National Security Agency and U.S. Cyber Command, to Fort Detrick’s Headquarters for the Army’s Medical Research Command, which makes cutting edge

breakthroughs in medicine and defends against biological and chemical weapons, just to name two.

“Maryland stands ready and the core of this bill is readiness to defend and protect the United States of America against all foes.

“This bill makes sure our troops are ready now through training and state of the art weapons, as well as tomorrow with key investments in cutting edge research to fight new cybersecurity threats.

“Readiness isn’t just about having the best weapons. This bill also includes the one percent pay raise for all Department of Defense (DoD) employees – military and civilian – and ensures our troops and their families have really outstanding health care.

“I am committed to ensuring injured troops get immediate, effective, state of the art care. That includes access to medical breakthroughs on prosthetics like the double arm transplant. Johns Hopkins assisted a soldier who had lost both arms in the Middle East and was able to give him back his arms and his life. This breakthrough will not only help him, but we’ll learn things from this that will help civilians who lose their limbs.

“That’s why I’m proud the bill includes a five percent increase to medical research programs, as compared to fiscal year 2014, for a total of \$1.18 billion.

“The bill also supports improving health and wellness on military bases with \$3 million for the Healthy Base Initiative, which is one of my biggest priorities. Under the Healthy Base Initiative, DoD is working with 14 military installations, including Fort Meade in Maryland, to improve military health and well-being through a prevention-oriented approach.

“Each base will design this program to fit their individual needs, but I know that all 14 installations are looking to bring healthier food options to their base. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is helping with farmer’s markets, the Culinary Institute of America and Sam Kass are helping to provide healthy and tasty foods and local school districts are getting involved by making sure kids start good behaviors early.

“I am very encouraged by what I’ve seen so far, but we have to ensure adequate resources and support to keep this vital initiative moving forward.

“We can’t promote healthy foods and better eating habits without supporting our commissaries, where families go for healthy food. So, the bill rejects the proposed cut of \$200 million for commissaries, which means commissaries will have the needed funding to keep doors open and provide low cost, high quality, healthy food to service members and their families.

“The bill includes support of key friends and allies. Just this past week, we have seen the importance of investment in Israeli Missile Defense programs. This missile defense technology has saved hundreds of lives and I am more committed to it than ever.

“I’m pleased that the bill provides \$621 million for Israeli Missile Defense programs, an increase of \$117 million from fiscal year 2014 levels. Of this, \$351 million is provided for the Iron Dome System, doubling the requested funding for the very system that is right now intercepting rockets with amazing accuracy that are being fired indiscriminately by Hamas into Israel.

“Israel was attacked with over 1,000 rockets this past week. Each rocket the Iron Dome System intercepts means Israeli lives have been saved. The value of this investment has never been clearer.

“We have to maintain Israel’s qualitative military edge through bilateral cooperation and investment. Israel is our treasured ally and the U.S. must not waiver in this commitment.

“I commend Senator Durbin and Senator Cochran on a good bill. I look forward to moving it out of Full Committee and on to the Senate Floor.”

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