



U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

PRESS RELEASE

FULL OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR DANIEL K. INOUE FY 2012 DOD BUDGET OVERVIEW HEARING JUNE 15, 2011

“Today, I would like 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 2012. Gentlemen, it is my privilege to welcome you back to your last testimony before this Committee and to thank you for your many years of admirable and dedicated service to our country.

“You both entered your current positions during a tumultuous period for this country when we were losing ground in both Iraq and Afghanistan. You agreed to take on what are arguably two of the most difficult jobs in the country, and your leadership not only turned the tide of the ongoing wars, but also maintained the capacity, capability and public appreciation for the United States military. You have served tirelessly, and you have served honorably; this Committee and this country are truly thankful to both of you.

“But, as you know, there is no rest for the weary. Before we say farewell, the Committee has more business for you both and many issues to discuss regarding the budget.

“The Department’s Fiscal Year 2012 base budget request is \$553 billion, an increase of \$40 billion over last year’s enacted base budget. The Department is also requesting \$118 billion for overseas contingency operations for Fiscal Year 2012.

“Secretary Gates, as a part of the fiscal year 2012 budget, you insightfully set a goal for the Department to achieve efficiency savings of \$178 billion over the next five-years. Since that time, President Obama has challenged the Department to cut an additional \$400 billion over the next 12 years. I’d like to get your perspective of this reduction and your assessment of the impact this reduction will have on military personnel and warfighting capability.

“Since submitting the President’s Budget, many events around the globe have changed. The U.S. military is now engaged in operations over Libya, Osama bin Laden is dead, and longstanding dictatorships namely in the Middle East and Africa are being challenged or have been overthrown in favor of democratic governments. Yet our traditional threats remain and continue to grow while our attention has been focused elsewhere. I’d like to hear your thoughts on future force size, structure and capability that will be necessary to combat future threats.

“Your leadership brought about a significant change in the way the Department buys weapons. You boldly came into the office and challenged the military Services, the defense industry, and the Congress to cancel programs you deemed to be exquisite technologies built for a different war than the ones we were fighting.

“Although the enemy’s tactics and tools constantly changed, you forced the traditionally slow-moving Pentagon bureaucracy to respond swiftly with better capabilities, such as systems to defeat improvised explosive devices and increasing much needed intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets. I look forward to hearing from you both on other lessons that you have learned from the last ten years of war on how to improve the Department’s acquisition programs.

“Gentlemen, we sincerely appreciate your service to our nation, and the dedication and sacrifices made daily by the men and women of our Armed Services. We could not be more grateful for what those who wear our nation’s uniform do for our country each and every day.

“Your full statements will be included in the record. I now turn to the Vice Chairman, Senator Cochran, for his opening statement.”

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