

Opening Statement of Chairman Daniel K. Inouye
Hearing on FY 2011 Department of Defense Budget

June 16, 2010

Today, the Subcommittee welcomes 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 2011. Gentlemen, welcome, and thank you for joining us.

The Administration has requested \$549 billion for the base budget of the Department of Defense in Fiscal Year 2011, an increase of \$18 billion over the amount enacted in Fiscal Year 2010 for such activities. Additionally, the Administration has requested \$159 billion in supplemental funding for Overseas Contingency Operations in the next fiscal year, roughly equal to supplemental funding requested for the Department of Defense in the current fiscal year. The base budget for the Department of Defense has nearly doubled in the last ten years, and since 2001, we have spent close to \$1 Trillion on post-9/11 combat operations. Those are staggering numbers and warrant judicious scrutiny on behalf of both the Warfighter and the taxpayer .

Mr. Secretary, last year you set out to reform the Pentagon's budget, in particular by seeking a greater balance in our force structure between competing requirements for irregular and conventional warfare. This year's budget request continues this effort.

One 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. We would agree with that, but as you well know, much of the critical force protection equipment that is used in theater today has been funded outside of the regular budget process and is being managed by newly created, ad hoc organizations that we understood were to be temporary in nature.

Yet even after several years at war, these task forces still haven't transitioned into regular Defense Department operations. The Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicle Task Force, the Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Task Force, the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization, and the Helicopter Survivability Task Force come to mind. Last year, you even created a senior integration group to oversee efforts by these Task Forces.

These organizations are not only largely funded with supplemental appropriations, they remain apart from the regular acquisition process and enjoy considerable flexible authorities, some of which are being interpreted quite broadly, to say the least. When we met last year, you indicated to us that some of these task forces would disappear, so we'd appreciate an update from you with respect to the transition plans.

At the same time, conventional threats to our national security remain. We need only to look at words spoken and actions taken in recent weeks by North Korea, Iran and China to be reminded that our national security challenges go beyond those of irregular warfare. There is grave concern that with the current emphasis on irregular warfare capabilities, we could be losing sight of conventional threats, and degrading our ability to counter them.

Finally, Mr. Secretary, in light of our Nation's fiscal challenges, you recently stated that military spending should expect to receive harsher scrutiny. You mentioned large and small weapons systems, a review of Defense Department operations, and also the challenge of providing health care for our soldiers and veterans, quoting President Eisenhower's truism that "the patriot today is the fellow who can do the job with less money". As you can imagine, those statements raise a few questions, so we hope you will take this opportunity today to elaborate a bit further about what you have in mind.

However, before proceeding with your opening statements, I would like to defer to the Vice Chairman, Senator Cochran, for any comments he wishes to make.