



# U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

*PRESS RELEASE*

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## **Opening Statement of Senator Daniel K. Inouye March 1<sup>st</sup> Defense Appropriations Subcommittee Hearing**

“Good morning. Today marks our first Defense Appropriations Committee hearing of the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress. I’d like to begin by welcoming several new subcommittee members – Senator Johnson (D-SD), Senator Reed (D-RI), Senator Collins (R-ME), Senator Murkowski (R-AK), Senator Graham (R-SC), and Senator Coats (R-IN). I am pleased to have such a distinguished group serve on our subcommittee, and I look forward to working with each of you in the years ahead.

“Let me remind my colleagues and the new members of the subcommittee that our first defense hearing of the year is typically reserved for the roll-out of the coming year’s budget. This morning, however, we will hear from Deputy Secretary of Defense, William Lynn, and Under Secretary of Defense, Comptroller, Robert Hale, regarding the impact of a long-term Continuing Resolution (CR) on the Department of Defense.

“Today is March 1<sup>st</sup>, five months into fiscal year 2011 and three days before the current CR expires. The path forward on completing the appropriations bills for fiscal year 2011 is still challenging. Unless cooler heads prevail and both Houses of Congress begin to make progress on passing this year’s budget, there remains the possibility that the whole government could be funded through a full year CR. This hearing is intended to examine the consequences of putting the defense budget on auto-pilot for the next seven months.

“We have military men and women fighting a war in Afghanistan, training forces in Iraq so that we can safely draw down our forces there, and operating around the globe to protect our national security. Yet, under the current funding situation, each of the military services has already been adversely impacted by the current CR. The readiness of our forces is beginning to be threatened as flying hours and steaming days are reduced, exercises and training events are canceled, equipment is foregoing much needed maintenance, and the list goes on.

“The Department’s acquisition programs are also being adversely impacted. The Army has no funds to refurbish war-torn High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles or “HUMVEES”, which means that 300 personnel have been released from two critical Army maintenance depots. The Navy cannot award contracts for a second Virginia-class submarine, a second DDG-51, or the first Mobile Landing Platform. The Air Force will not be able to procure additional MQ-9 Reaper Unmanned Aerial Vehicles to increase the number of much needed combat air patrols in Afghanistan. And those are just a few examples.

“The military personnel accounts will face serious shortfalls if forced to operate at the fiscal year 2010 funding levels the rest of the year. The Navy would be underfunded by \$456 million, the Marine Corps by \$468 million, and the Air Force would experience a \$1 billion shortfall in military personnel accounts.

“The Defense Health Program would have to reduce the number of hours on patient care provider contracts and take other actions that will have an adverse effect on the quality and timeliness of medical care and resources for our military and their families.

“The list of affected programs and challenges goes on and on, but ultimately, it is the men and women in uniform that will pay the price.

“Secretary Gates summed it up best in late January when he said that continuing work under a CR would be ‘the worst of all possible reductions.’ He went on to say, ‘That’s how you hollow out a military even in wartime.’

“Mr. Secretary and Mr. Hale, I look forward to hearing more from you about the specific actions the Department will have to take if forced to operate under a CR for the remainder of the fiscal year, but first let me turn to Vice Chairman Cochran for his opening remarks.”

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