

## Strong Defense: STRONG AMERICA

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* An initiative of Congressman Randy Forbes

## More Cuts to National Defense? Views from our Military Leaders

"This mechanism would force defense cuts that, in my view, would do catastrophic damage to our military and its ability to protect this country. It is kind of a blind formula that makes cuts all across the board, and guarantees that we will hollow out the force."

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta

"It has a good chance of breaking us and putting us in a position to not keep faith with this all volunteer force that's fought two wars and that needs to be reset in everything else that we look at for the future....And I think it would be incredibly dangerous for our country's national security to go there. And to your point, we are not going to solve that debt problem on the back of the Pentagon. You can't do it if you zeroed the budget." Former Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen

"The roughly \$1 trillion in cuts ... would seriously weaken our military, and it would really make us unable to protect this nation from a range of security threats that we face...[It] will not only impact our military strength, I think it will impact our economic strength as well. Cancellation of weapon systems, construction projects, research activity would seriously cripple our industrial base." Defense Secretary Leon Panetta

"There will be tough decisions and tough trade-offs. This will force us to take on greater risk."

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta on \$400 billion cuts already enacted

"We are not going to solve the national debt challenge on the back of the military. There are whole host of other issues that have to be addressed in order to significantly reduce that debt."

Former Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen

Question before Senate Armed Services Committee referencing an additional \$600 billion in defense

"If we pull that trigger, will we be shooting ourselves in the foot?"

Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta's answer:

"We'd be shooting ourselves in the head."

It will be "extraordinarily difficult and very high risk" to cut \$1 trillion from defense spending. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey

"These sorts of ill-conceived reductions in defense spending would inflict real damage to the well-being of our Airmen and their families, and ultimately undermine our ability to protect the Nation." Air Force Chief of Staff General Norty Schwartz

Trillion dollar defense cuts, "would be devastating for the military, forcing spending reductions that likely

would necessitate shrinking the size of the Army, Air Force and Marine Corps to the smallest numbers in decades and also <u>lead to the smallest Navy in nearly 100 years</u>."

Pentagon Spokesperson George Little

"There is no doubt in my mind that the continued strength and global reach of the American military will remain the greatest deterrent against aggression and the most effective means of preserving peace in the 21st century, as it was in the 20th."

Former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates

"Everything's on the table, everything's being discussed. There are all sorts of scenarios. We're looking at every aviation program, every shipbuilding program. We're trying to wring out cost wherever and whenever we can find it."

Under Secretary of the Navy Bob Work

"I also share your deep trepidation over sequestration and the potential for cuts so devastating and so dramatic that we place at risk the very security we're charged to provide, that we negate the very reason we exist."

Former Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen Cutting another \$600 billion from national defense "is <u>a red</u> <u>line that this government should not cross</u>."

Pentagon Spokesperson George Little

"Currently, we are not able to meet all the forward presence requirements of the other combatant commanders... in the case of another major contingency operation, the United States Marine Corps would not, right now, be able to meet the timelines of the combatant commanders in response to another major contingency operation should it occur simultaneously with current operations in Afghanistan." In reference to \$1trillion cuts, "We would start to have to make some fundamental changes in the capability of the Marine Corps."

General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, U.S. Marine Corps

"I will tell you that some of our low-density, high-demand requirements, personnel recovery, ISR, and a few are <u>right at</u> <u>the ragged edge</u>. In reference to \$1trillion cuts, "We would

have to go into a fundamental restructure of what it is our nation expects from our Air Force." General Philip M. Breedlove, Vice Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force

On current ability to meet needs of commanders in field, "No, we cannot meet all the other COCOM commander's validated demands. Those are prioritized through the global force management process. We work hard to meet them. We are not able to meet them all." In reference to \$1trillion cuts, "You're reaching an area there that I think would definitely we'd have to look very, very hard at our strategy, what we can and cannot do."

General Peter W. Chiarelli, Vice Chief of Staff, U.S. Army

"To meet Combatant Commanders needs unconstrained, doing some analysis, <u>I need about 400 ships. I have 285 ships.</u>" In reference to \$1trillion cuts, "If we have a reduction of the kind that was passed around here - \$400 billion or \$886 billion - without a comprehensive strategic review, a fundamental look at what were asking our forces to do, we won't be able to meet the Global Force Management Plan today. It will exacerbate our readiness trends. And if we have to go to a reduction of force structure, I am concerned about the industrial base."

Admiral Jonathan W. Greenert, Chief of Naval Operations, U.S. Navy