

HEARING TO MARK UP THE AIRLAND PROGRAMS CONTAINED IN THE NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015.

TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2014

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AIRLAND,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:35 a.m. in room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Richard Blumenthal (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators Blumenthal, Donnelly, Wicker, and McCain.

Committee staff members present: Peter K. Levine, staff director; and Leah C. Brewer, nominations and hearings clerk.

Majority staff members present: Creighton Greene, professional staff member; Gerald J. Leeling, general counsel; and William K. Sutey, professional staff member.

Minority staff members present: William S. Castle, minority general counsel; Ambrose R. Hock, professional staff member; and Anthony J. Lazarski, professional staff member.

Staff assistant present: Robert T. Waisanen.

Committee members' assistants present: Cathy Haverstock, assistant to Senator Nelson; Jason D. Rauch, assistant to Senator McCaskill; Moran Banal, assistant to Senator Gillibrand; Ethan A. Saxon, assistant to Senator Blumenthal; Karen E. Courington, assistant to Senator Kaine; George Elliott, assistant to Senator Sessions; Brandon R. Bell, assistant to Senator Chambliss; Joseph G. Lai, assistant to Senator Wicker; and Charles W. Prosch, assistant to Senator Blunt.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR RICHARD BLUMENTHAL,
CHAIRMAN**

Senator BLUMENTHAL. The subcommittee will come to order.

Today the Airland Subcommittee meets to mark up an original bill, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015.

I am very pleased that this markup is going to be in open session. I am confident that we can do our business in public. If any of our members have any issue that requires disclosure of classified information or if we are advised by the staff that it might, we can do it in closed session or postpone it until later.

Speaking of the staff, I would like to thank them for their excellent work on both sides of the aisle, and we have cooperated fully in reaching this point.

Traditionally the subcommittee has used the chairman's mark. We will do so again today. This package contains legislative provisions and report language that the majority and minority committee staffs have worked on together and that I have reviewed and approved, along with Ranking Member Senator Wicker. And I would like to particularly thank him for the excellent work of him and his staff.

In preparing for this markup, Senator Levin asked the subcommittee chairmen to consider certain guidelines in evaluating and making recommendations for programs or activities to the fiscal year 2015 budget request. This markup essentially follows that guidance. In the markup book before each member at tab A, you will find Senator Levin's markup guidance and a short summary highlighting the proposed adjustments to the Department of Defense's budget request. Each member's staff has been briefed, received their Senator's copy of the markup book, and had time to study it.

This year the portion of the Defense Department's base budget request falling under the Airland Subcommittee's jurisdiction came to a total of \$40.7 billion, including \$31.5 billion in procurement and \$9.3 billion in research and development. As it stands right now, the chairman's mark recommends a net decrease to the base budget of \$10.2 million. I think that members will find that the recommended reductions are minor but fully justified, programmatically prudent without creating any unacceptable strategic risks today or into the future.

Everyone is aware that the subcommittee is working without the benefit of the overseas contingency operations budget request from the Department of Defense. Although the budget request includes a placeholder of \$79 billion, we do not have the detailed program, project, or activity information necessary for the authorization of appropriations. There is no doubt that the Department will need funds related to the conduct of and recovery from operations in Afghanistan, and we look forward to receiving the detailed request.

In this regard, I would like to highlight that the proposal before the subcommittee has no earmarking. It would support virtually all of the major weapons and equipment programs as requested, and in some cases, it prudently recommends additional funds in view of the budget uncertainty we face in the years ahead. Some of the recommendations would, very importantly, increase funds for procurement of the UH-60M Blackhawk helicopter and light utility helicopter in support of the Army and Army National Guard's requirements under the aviation restructure initiative, also support the Apache and Chinook helicopter programs that have proven so critically important to operations in Afghanistan and around the world, and provide additional funds as identified in the Chief of Staff of the Army's unfunded priorities to modernize armored vehicles and mitigate risk in the industrial base, support continued funding for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, the KC-46 tanker, and the C-130J programs. It would also support modernization of the

C-130H aircraft and support replacement of the E-8 Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS).

The subcommittee has always resisted program reductions unless consistent with sound program management or if the funds would be better used for higher priority requirements. Accordingly, this year's recommendations include some adjustments based on fact-of-life programmatic changes and are so noted in your books.

Finally, the recommendation includes legislative proposals that would establish a national commission on the future of the Army. This proposal is near completion in an agreed-on compromise form, and we expect that in the next hours or days we will have a final version.

It would also require periodic reports on Air Force implementation of the recommendations of the Air Force commission and place temporary limitations on the disposition of Air Force aircraft.

Before I turn to Senator Wicker, the ranking member, I want to again compliment all who have worked together this year. I feel it has been, as I said earlier, a very bipartisan effort continuing to this day, and I know that your subcommittee staff, Bruce Hock, Tony Lazarski, as well as your legislative assistant, Joe Lai, have all made real contributions to the success of the subcommittee's effort. I would like to personally thank Bill Sutey and all of our staff for the excellent work that they have done.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR ROGER F. WICKER

Senator Wicker.

Senator WICKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me join you in commending the staff and members for their work on this bipartisan mark.

To begin with, let me point out that the greatest risk our military faces today is the risk of an unready force that is insufficiently equipped and unable to accomplish its assigned missions. It is the job of this subcommittee to help ensure that our force has the resources it needs to acquire the equipment it needs to limit that risk.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your efforts in addressing some of the shortfalls we face.

Our Airland Subcommittee mark includes a number of important provisions which address the modernization and sustainment of Army ground and aviation platforms, as well as the tactical aircraft component of our Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force. However, there is still a ways to go to produce a defense budget that is based on our national security interests and the threats to those interests. We face no shortage of challenges with this budget.

As the chairman has already pointed out, our mark supports the continued funding of the F-35, KC-46, and C-130J programs and modernization of our C-130H aircraft, as well as the development of the long-range strike bomber and the Air Force's TX trainer. While the mark supports replacing our JSTARS aircraft and the HH-60, this committee needs to ensure there is a workable funding plan in place for these programs.

I endorse the mark's additional funds for the light utility helicopter and UH-60M Blackhawk. These funds will mitigate fiscal

year 2016 sequestration impacts and provide Blackhawks to the Army National Guard as part of the aviation restructure initiative.

I also support what we have done for the armored vehicle industrial base.

I strongly support the creation of a commission to study the future of the Army, including the role of our National Guard. I believe the National Guard must be a combat-capable force ready to supplement our active duty combatants when called on. I know the commission's findings will greatly inform Congress and the Department of Defense as we consider force structure decisions in the future.

Mr. Chairman, before we proceed to business, I would like to highlight three additional issues relevant to our subcommittee.

Sequestration. I remain gravely concerned that Congress has done little to mitigate the impacts of sequestration on our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines. Sequestration remains the greatest challenge facing our military. Without congressional action, DOD will return to sequestration funding levels in fiscal year 2016. Unless we take action, the ability of our military and our industrial base to react to unforeseen contingencies will be severely eroded.

Second, the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO). I am disappointed the President's budget request did not include a request for overseas contingency operations. You pointed this out, Mr. Chairman. Unfortunately, OCO remains an important element of the defense budget. It is important for our committee to see the request so we can have a total picture as we perform our oversight responsibilities.

Third, intra-theater aircraft. I remain deeply concerned about the Air Force's total force plan. I am convinced that some elements of the TFP were shortsighted and may adversely affect our intra-theater airlift capability at a time when our services are evolving toward a more rotational deployment model. I share the concern of many of my colleagues regarding the Air Force's plans to transfer C-130J and C-130H aircraft beginning this fiscal year, given the intense congressional scrutiny and potential amendments on this issue. I once again urge the Air Force to delay any scheduled fiscal year 2014 aircraft and personnel transfers until the Defense Authorization Bill is complete and signed into law.

In closing, I want to thank the staff, Bill Sutey, Creighton Greene, Robert Waisanen, and Ethan Saxon of the majority staff, as well as Bruce Hock, Tony Lazarski, and Joe Lai of the minority staff, for their hard work and collaboration on this mark. Mr. Chairman, I think if the taxpayers realized how hard the staff works on this mark and how well they work together on a bipartisan and in a patriotic fashion, I think the taxpayers would be pleased and think that we are certainly getting our money's worth with this excellent staff. So kudos all around to them, and they have my greatest admiration.

In closing, national security is solely a Federal responsibility under our Constitution. I know you share my gratitude toward this wonderful staff with their bipartisan cooperation.

Thank you, sir.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Senator Wicker.

I do share your gratitude toward each of the individuals on our staff whom you mentioned. I want to thank them again personally and open the floor to any of our subcommittee members who may have comments. Senator McCain?

Senator MCCAIN. Mr. Chairman, I just want to thank you and Senator Wicker for the great work you have done on this markup and appreciate your hard work. I disagree about the staff. I think they are very incompetent actually. [Laughter.]

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Senator McCain. We will give them a raise as a result of those comments. [Laughter.]

Before we open the floor to possible amendments, I would like to just note that, as you all know, the practice of the Senate Armed Services Committee over many years has been that any amendment to add funding has to be accompanied by an offset. Accordingly, if any Senator proposes an amendment that would increase spending, they have to also identify an offset to pay for it within the Airland Subcommittee's jurisdiction and also consistent with the Senate agreement on earmarks, I will oppose any amendments to add funding, even if it has an offset, if it is an earmark.

I understand that we have a few amendments that our staffs have been working to clear, and so I would like to call up a package of the following amendments that are at the Senators' places now.

For Senator Inhofe, two amendments: number 002 regarding the family of medium tactical vehicles program and number 059 regarding Air Force Weather Agency training programs.

For Senator Donnelly, three amendments: number 006 regarding the armored vehicle transmission industrial base; number 094 regarding the enhanced position location reporting system program; and number 095 regarding the joint light tactical vehicle program.

For me, amendment number 106, as modified, regarding cargo unmanned aerial systems.

For Senator Ayotte, three amendments: number 063 regarding lightweight robots; number 066 regarding the airborne signal intelligence enterprise; and number 068 regarding body armor.

For Senator McCain, amendment number 084 regarding a report on F-35 software development.

And finally, for Senator Graham, amendment number 088 regarding the modular handgun program.

Senator Wicker, I understand that these amendments have been cleared by the minority.

Senator WICKER. That is correct.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Then without objection, we will include these items en bloc in the subcommittee's recommended mark to the full committee.

At this time, are there any other proposed amendments to the subcommittee markup package or any other issues that we need to discuss? [No response.]

If not, this subcommittee meeting is adjourned. Thank you all for your participation. Thank you, Senators Wicker and McCain, for being here and Senator Donnelly.

And I would move to adopt the subcommittee package. All who agree, please say aye. [Chorus of ayes.]

All opposed? [No response.]

The subcommittee package is adopted and the committee is adjourned. The ayes have it.
[Whereupon, at 9:50 a.m., the subcommittee adjourned.]