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**SEQUESTRATION IS DAMAGING OUR MILITARY READINESS TODAY
WE FACE A CURRENT THREAT TO OUR NATIONAL SECURITY THAT MUST BE
ADDRESSED**

Dear Colleague,

I would like to bring to your attention testimony received by the House Armed Services Committee on September 18, 2013, from the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Raymond Odierno, on the impacts of sequestration to the United States Army.

“The impact of sequestration in FY13 coupled with the threat of continued sequestration levels of funding are forcing the Army to implement significant reductions to end strength, readiness, and modernization in order to generate short-term cost savings. However, this will leave Congress, future administrations, and the Nation with severely reduced options for action. **The next administration will have less capability to deter conflict and would be increasingly reliant upon allies in any future conflict, with no guarantee that our allies would be willing or able to provide the assistance needed to meet U.S. national security goals.** In the event of a strategic surprise or upon the completion of hostilities, an undersized Army would be unable to conduct long-term stability and transition operations.”

Most alarmingly, he stated: “If the magnitude and speed of the discretionary cap reductions remain, the Army will not be able to fully execute the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance requirements. From FY14 to FY17, as we continue to draw down and restructure the Army into a smaller force, the Army will have significantly degraded readiness and extensive modernization program shortfalls. Only in FY18 to FY23 will we begin to rebalance readiness and modernization to a level that is appropriate to fully execute the Defense Strategic Guidance. But this will come at the expense of reductions in force structure and end strength, which in my view will add significant risk for the Army to conduct even one sustained major combat operation.”

Just yesterday General Odierno stated that, “because of what happened last year, we were not able to invest in our readiness, we had to stop training basically for six months of the year.” The exception being only for Afghanistan-bound units and the Global Response Force. “Now we’ve had the shutdown [and] the continuing resolution. We have two brigades right now that are

prepared if we have to do something outside Afghanistan,” he said. “We hope to get to seven by June.” As of today the Army has two out of 42 Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) fully trained and ready to execute their full range of missions. Almost 95% of our BCTs are not fully trained and ready to deploy if needed.

As the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee Subcommittee on Readiness, I receive frequent updates and briefings on the readiness posture of our forces and have an obligation to draw your attention to this issue. Sequestration presents a clear and present danger to our national security with devastating consequences for our defense industrial base and our military. Since fiscal year 2011, the Department of Defense has struggled to address a series of internal efficiency initiatives, successive budget cuts, the Budget Control Act of 2011, sequestration, and most recently, a government shutdown. Even before the shutdown, defense spending had decreased by more than \$800 billion from levels proposed just three years ago – which when projected out to 2020 represents the lowest level of defense funding as a percentage of the U.S. Government’s total budget authority since before WWII. Indiscriminately cutting an additional \$52 billion a year – each year – from DoD for the next decade will result in the hollowing out of our military and leave our nation with a gutted and vulnerable defense department unprepared to respond to crises that threaten our national security and our citizens’ lives.

If you would like more information or wish to receive a briefing on current force readiness levels, please contact Kevin Bosse in Congressman Wittman’s office at 202-225-4261 or Michele Pearce on the HASC staff at 202-226-7171.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Wittman
Chairman
Readiness Subcommittee
House Armed Services Committee