

## September 24, 2008 - Murtha Floor Remarks for the FY09 Defense Appropriations Bill

[[Print](#)]

### CHAIRMAN MURTHA FLOOR REMARKS FY 2009 DOD APPROPRIATIONS BILL SEPTEMBER 24, 2008

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense has held 22 hearings, and our members and staff have visited over 100 military bases and facilities both here at home and throughout the world.

The result is a \$487.7 billion fiscal year 2009 Defense Appropriations bill that supports our troops and their families; invests in equipment needed to support the force; imposes fiscal discipline necessary to manage the department's resources; and addresses flaws in U.S. national security policy.

Earlier this year, I was disappointed to hear the Secretary of Defense say that the U.S. military must prepare more for fighting wars against insurgents and militias such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan, rather than spend time and resources preparing for future conventional conflicts.

I find these comments to be misguided and lacking in strategic vision at a time when over 90% of our ground combat units are rated as not fully mission capable.

This lack of strategic foresight has left our Armed Forces in a degraded state of readiness; has left our military facilities in disrepair; and has left many Defense acquisition programs broken or badly damaged.

This bill addresses our future military needs and provides the resources urgently needed by the Department of Defense to prepare the United States military forces for threats to our national security beyond the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I am inspired by our troops and their families. Their sacrifices and service to this great Country are applauded by both the American people and this Congress. We may disagree on matters of policy, but we can all agree on the need to **take care of our troops and tend to the needs of their families**. This bill addresses these needs in many ways:

For medical treatment and research the bill adds over \$1 billion above the budget request within the Defense Health Program. Some of these recommendations include:

\$300 million for Traumatic Brain Injury and Psychological Health.

\$40 million for medical care centers of excellence at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

\$150 million for breast cancer research, \$80 million for prostate cancer research, \$20 million for ovarian cancer research, and \$20 million for lung cancer research.

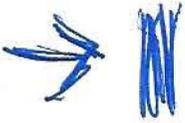
For the Family Advocacy Programs the bill includes \$102 million above the budget request for a total of \$410 million.

The bill provides \$72 million to compensate service members for Stop-Loss, which arbitrarily and involuntarily extends the term of their service.

The bill provides \$734 million above the budget request for renovation and repair of barracks, military hospitals and other facilities. With this funding, we address the



unsatisfactory conditions at these facilities.



The bill includes language to ensure that DoD takes the steps necessary to ensure that Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and Fort Belvoir remain the Gold Standard of military medicine. Language in the bill directs the Department to provide a detailed plan for transitioning to these new facilities.

The bill expresses concern over the frequency of troop deployments and the stress this places on service members and their families. The bill requires the Department to report quarterly on unit deployments.

**Equipment to Support the Force:** Key to improving the U.S. military posture is to maintain our domestic industrial base. This bill begins to stabilize weapons procurement programs needed for the future.

In the shipbuilding account, the bill includes \$14.1 billion and realigns funding to increase the number of ships from 7 proposed in the budget to 8 vessels.

The bill provides an additional \$523 million in advance procurement to begin producing the next lot of 20 F-22 Raptors.

The bill more efficiently aligns funding for the Joint Strike Fighter. It provides \$6.3 billion for development and production of 14 aircraft and includes funds for developing an alternative engine.

The bill includes an additional \$750 million for National Guard and Reserve Equipment.

The bill includes \$3.6 billion for the Army's Future Combat Systems, an increase of \$26 million.

**Improving Fiscal Responsibility:** The bill reduces programs which have experienced uncontrolled cost growth due to poor management and design instability, while increasing funding for oversight activities.

The bill cuts \$650 million from unjustified and uncontrolled growth in outsourcing, and adds \$24 million for additional personnel required by the DoD Inspector General to oversee the growth in DoD contracts.

The bill reduces the presidential helicopter program by \$212 million because of design instability and uncontrolled cost growth.

The bill also cuts \$197 million and 16 aircraft from the Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter because of program delays and restructuring.

**Improving National Security Policy:** The bill includes provisions to improve the U.S. image abroad and to better align responsibilities for diplomatic activities.

The bill includes language directing the Department to study and make recommendations on the closure of Detention Facilities at Guantanamo Bay Naval Base.

The bill reduces funding for AFRICOM, and directs DoD to work with the State Department

to ensure that the United States does not pursue a "military first" policy in Africa.

The bill once again provides a general provision which prohibits the torture of detainees in U.S. military custody.

The bill includes a provision which prohibits establishing permanent bases, and which prevents U.S. control of Iraqi oil resources.

[Close Window](#)