

Statement of
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Before the
House Armed Services Committee
8 September 2011

Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Smith, and Members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to testify today. I would like to compliment you for holding these hearings.

Not only are we here to remember the event that led to a pivotal change in our national security strategy ten years ago, we are here to undertake an important discussion of where we go from here. This discussion of our national security strategy is urgently needed—and has been sorely lacking in the recent debate about the greatest economic crisis our country has faced in the past eight decades. Our national security and economic health are inextricably linked and interdependent. They must be considered together and addressed as an integral whole.

As you know, there are those who believe that drastic cuts should be made to our defense spending to help offset our nation's debt. If the new Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction does not reach its targeted level of cuts, unprecedented automatic cuts to defense will be triggered. Huge cuts to defense spending, combined with little to no analysis of their impact to our overall national security, would have devastating consequences – something akin to performing brain surgery with a chainsaw. Further, I would characterize this debate as nothing less than determinative of what our role in the world will be in the future - will we continue to be a global superpower and force for good? Or will we allow ourselves to become one amongst many, forfeiting both the freedom of

action and leadership role in the world which has done so much for our citizens and for free people everywhere?

Providing for the national defense is the most fundamental responsibility of our federal government. There are certainly ways to be more cost effective and it is unrealistic that the Department of Defense will be spared from shared sacrifices, but it is critical that we analyze our spending levels in the proper context. Our national security is the one area for which our federal government is solely responsible. There is little room for error.

Our national security strategy must drive any debate over the level of resources that the nation should devote to national defense. And the ability of the American economy to generate these resources must inform our strategic thinking. A failure to do either is likely to cost the United States more in the long run, in both dollars and lives. A lack of discussion and agreement about strategy will ensure that any cuts in our security budgets will be driven by at best arbitrary budget targets rather than reasoned strategic goals, rational operational concepts, and executable investment plans.

Objectives and Threats to Them

Before discussing our strategy – that is, how we achieve our national objectives – we need to understand what those aims are. I also believe that in thinking about the future, we must study and learn from the past. For the better part of a century, the United States has pursued a consistent set of aims. These include protecting U.S. territory from attack, defending our allies against aggression, and preventing a single power from becoming so strong that it threatens to dominate the Eurasian continent. Beyond these core interests, the United States has repeatedly used force in the service of the common good, whether to

alleviate suffering, provide relief from natural disasters or guarantee global public goods such as unfettered freedom of navigation on the high seas.

For the foreseeable future, I believe we will face three primary challenges. The first is the ongoing war with Al Qaeda and its affiliates: a protracted conflict with irregular adversaries using unconventional means that spans the globe. The second is the threat that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction - and especially nuclear weapons and associated delivery systems - by hostile regimes, such as North Korea today and prospectively Iran in the future, pose to the U.S., our allies and the stability of key regions. The third, and potentially the most consequential, challenge is the rise of China. Chinese military modernization, financed by a burgeoning Chinese economy, promises to reshape the balance of power in Asia. As that occurs, we need to ensure our ability to defend our territory, assure our allies, and maintain full and free access to the Western Pacific.

Although each of these challenges is very different, meeting each successfully will require the United States to formulate and implement a long-term strategy. Further, each demands a comprehensive response. Military capabilities have a role to play in meeting each challenge, but so too do other instruments of statecraft and elements of national power. Nor should the United States meet these challenges alone. America's allies, partners and friends can and should play an important role as well.

In addition to these long-term challenges, the United States must be prepared to respond to any number of disruptive events that could destabilize the international system, ranging from the outbreak of a virulent pandemic, to the collapse of a strategic state, to the use of nuclear weapons.

While successive administrations have framed these challenges differently or have ranked them differently in terms of likelihood and impact, I believe that there is a consensus spanning administrations that these are the challenges that we face today and are likely to face in the future. The adequacy of our forces needs to be measured against our ability to meet these challenges – specifically, to assure our allies and dissuade, deter and, if necessary, defeat our adversaries.

Matching Ends and Means

Each administration attempts to match ends and means within economic constraints. I have been involved in every such effort, at increasing levels of responsibility, since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 until the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR). The 2010 QDR represents the most recent administration's attempt to match ends and means. As a complement to this QDR, the 2010 QDR Independent Panel, commissioned by Congress and co-chaired by former Secretary of Defense Bill Perry and former National Security Advisor Steve Hadley, identified a number of shortfalls in the ability of the United States to protect its interest against the threats that I have outlined. These included the need to counter anti-access capabilities, defend the homeland, and bolster our cyber capabilities.

It is worth noting that neither the 2010 QDR nor the 2010 QDR Independent Panel anticipated the current budgetary environment. Both counted on real budget growth to be able to bridge the gap between our commitments and our capabilities. Yet, the current situation is such that the debate is not about how much growth there will be in security budgets, but rather how extreme the cuts will be to those budgets.

Defense cuts, if too deep or too hasty, will open up further and perhaps unbridgeable gaps between our commitments and our capabilities. In this situation, the United States will, in theory, face two broad alternatives: either to reduce our commitments or accept greater risk. Such a choice is largely academic, however, because neither the President nor the Congress can determine U.S. commitments on their own in our ever more interconnected world. Moreover, reducing commitments is something that is easier said than done. In my view, for example, it would be extremely unwise to skimp on defending U.S. territory or maintaining the fundamentals of nuclear deterrence. It is also difficult for me to imagine, let alone recommend, that the United States abrogate any of our mutual defense treaties that commit us to the defense of allies across the globe.

As a result, defense cuts will force us to accept greater risk. In concrete terms, that means a reduced readiness to wage war and, should we go to war, in conflicts that will go on longer and cost more American lives than would have been the case if we were better prepared. As terrible as the loss of any life is, our men and women in uniform face the lowest casualty rates in our nation's – or the world's - history. This is largely due to investments that have been made in precision weapons; intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; personal and vehicle protection; strategic airlift; and military medicine. Should Congress or the Defense Department make major cuts without thinking them through, I fear that we will face far higher casualties in the future.

Reducing readiness and increasing risk applies to times of peace as well as war. It also amounts to a decreased ability to reassure allies, partners and friends and deter competitors. Our day-to-day military posture and global presence are responsible for more of our security and freedom than we know or consciously appreciate. When, beginning

with the 2006 QDR, we began to portray seriously the demands of day-to-day operations on our forces, we realized that the demands of presence, engagement and responding to small scale contingency operations require considerable forces. This is a demand that will continue even as we draw down in Iraq and Afghanistan. Cutting back on our engagement with our allies, partners and friends threatens to undermine their confidence in us, and reducing our presence in key regions could tempt potential adversaries.

In addition, we cannot always determine when and where we will be required to fight, and recent experience shows us that it is difficult to fix capability shortfalls rapidly. We all know the difficulties the Defense Department experienced in fielding up-armored Humvees and later MRAPs. In fact, the only armored Humvees that we had in the U.S. force posture ten years ago were few in number and were procured for example to protect our nuclear ballistic missile submarines and their nuclear weapons.

The Defense Department and American industry cannot generate capabilities overnight. This is particularly true of naval and aerospace platforms, which often take more than a decade to field and are expected to last for decades. In these areas, stability in programs is extraordinarily important. Requirements need to be realistic, reasonable and stable over time to allow for effective acquisition strategies. And investment budgets must be stable and consistent. Swings in funding cause problems and often yield systems that take longer to acquire, cost more, and underperform. Even worse, instabilities in requirements, acquisition programs or procurement funds can lead to billions of dollars wasted on programs that never deliver any capabilities to our men and women in uniform.

Generations to come will inherit the force structure that results from your deliberations, just as we inherited decisions made by those who came before us. It is worth

remembering that many of the weapon systems that our men and women in uniform are using to fight today's wars were the product of the defense buildup of the 1980s. Many of these platforms are rapidly approaching the end of their lifespan, and failure to modernize the force will lead to significant shortfalls in the U.S. force posture. Our industrial base has been drawn down to such an extent that in a number of areas, such as shipbuilding, solid rocket motors and naval nuclear propulsion, we are down to the bare bones; marginal cuts may very well eliminate an entire defense industrial sector. As a result, any cuts need to be thought through very carefully indeed.

Let me offer an anecdote to illustrate the need for patient long term investment to generate needed capabilities. In September 2002, the senior civilian and military leadership identified as a top priority making the Defense Department an organization capable of tracking down and capturing or killing Al Qaeda leaders. This began a process of developing capabilities, some of them quite sensitive, which allowed us earlier this year to find and kill Usama Bin Laden. It didn't happen overnight; it took time and required a lot of work. But it did have a big impact.

In this regard, I would like to comment on a trend that I find particularly worrisome. The United States invests considerable sums in highly sensitive capabilities. In recent years, it has become all too common to reveal, for a variety of reasons whether advertent or inadvertent, some of these sensitive capabilities. As a submariner, I learned at an early age that exposure of sensitive U.S. operational capabilities squanders painstaking and often expensive work and jeopardizes American lives.

The Department of Defense should be credited with beginning the process of seeking greater efficiencies, and I believe that process can and should continue.

Underperforming or unrealistic programs should be terminated. Excess infrastructure should be shed. Needless bureaucratic layers in the Pentagon and other defense organizations should be eliminated. I also believe that it is worthwhile to look at the area of military benefits, including retirement. Any such review should be conducted in a very careful, systematic and fair manner; one which recognizes the gratitude our Nation owes to those who sacrificed their lives or well-being in our defense.

Before I end, I would like to re-emphasize what I said in the beginning, and that is that it is both urgent and vitally important to the nation that a discussion of strategy precede any attempt to institute major cuts in the defense budget. Accordingly, I would like to offer the following recommendations.

First, that the Congress, working with the Administration, commission an independent, bipartisan panel of experts to examine our strategy, explore alternatives, and make recommendations for future strategic options. This panel could be modeled on the 2010 QDR Independent Panel or the 1997 National Defense Panel.

Second, I believe that Congress, working with the Administration, should stand up a panel to carefully examine military benefits, to include compensation, health care and retirement. As I noted previously, I believe that there is room to examine benefits. Such an examination should be comprehensive, thoughtful and employ significant grandfathering of provisions with the ultimate aim being to preserve the vitality and sustainability of the All Volunteer Force, a key American asymmetric advantage. As one who served both during the draft era and the All Volunteer Force, our military today is by far the best we've ever fielded.

Third, I believe that any cuts to defense must preserve our ability to recapitalize our forces. We must make sure that we bequeath to future generations the world's most capable, most effective military. Only that will allow us to ensure that we can protect our interests against threats we cannot even imagine today.

Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to testify before you today. I will be happy to take your questions.

**DISCLOSURE FORM FOR WITNESSES
CONCERNING FEDERAL CONTRACT AND GRANT INFORMATION**

INSTRUCTION TO WITNESSES: Rule 11, clause 2(g)(4), of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives for the 112th Congress requires nongovernmental witnesses appearing before House committees to include in their written statements a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source of any federal contracts or grants (including subcontracts and subgrants) received during the current and two previous fiscal years either by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness. This form is intended to assist witnesses appearing before the House Armed Services Committee in complying with the House rule.

Witness name: Edmund P. Giambastiani, Jr.

Capacity in which appearing: (check one)

Admiral, U.S. Navy (ret.)

Individual

Representative

If appearing in a representative capacity, name of the company, association or other entity being represented: _____

FISCAL YEAR 2011

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant

FISCAL YEAR 2010

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant

FISCAL YEAR 2009

Federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant

Federal Contract Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government, please provide the following information:

Number of contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2011): _____;
 Fiscal year 2010: _____;
 Fiscal year 2009: _____.

Federal agencies with which federal contracts are held:

Current fiscal year (2011): _____;
 Fiscal year 2010: _____;
 Fiscal year 2009: _____.

List of subjects of federal contract(s) (for example, ship construction, aircraft parts manufacturing, software design, force structure consultant, architecture & engineering services, etc.):

Current fiscal year (2011): _____;
 Fiscal year 2010: _____;
 Fiscal year 2009: _____.

Aggregate dollar value of federal contracts held:

Current fiscal year (2011): _____;
 Fiscal year 2010: _____;
 Fiscal year 2009: _____.

Federal Grant Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has grants (including subgrants) with the federal government, please provide the following information:

Number of grants (including subgrants) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2011): _____;
Fiscal year 2010: _____;
Fiscal year 2009: _____.

Federal agencies with which federal grants are held:

Current fiscal year (2011): _____;
Fiscal year 2010: _____;
Fiscal year 2009: _____.

List of subjects of federal grants(s) (for example, materials research, sociological study, software design, etc.):

Current fiscal year (2011): _____;
Fiscal year 2010: _____;
Fiscal year 2009: _____.

Aggregate dollar value of federal grants held:

Current fiscal year (2011): _____;
Fiscal year 2010: _____;
Fiscal year 2009: _____.