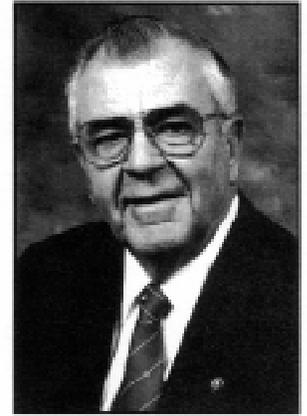


Congressman Herbert H. Bateman
AMERICA'S FIRST DISTRICT — VIRGINIA

NEWS



2211 Rayburn HOB ■ Washington, DC 20515 ■ (202) 225-4261 ■ (202) 225-4382 FAX

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CONTACT: Maureen Cragin
Ryan Vaart
(202) 225-2539

**STATEMENT OF THE
HONORABLE HERBERT H. BATEMAN**

**Full Committee Markup Of HR 1401
Report of the Military Readiness Subcommittee**

I am pleased to report to the committee on the actions of the Military Readiness Subcommittee on its portion of the fiscal year 2000 Defense Authorization Bill.

Much has been said lately about declining military readiness and that adequate readiness funding is absolutely essential to sustain the readiness of our armed forces to protect America's security interests and global leadership. The Administration, at last, is admitting that there are serious readiness problems in the military services and presented a budget request for fiscal year 2000 containing funding increases to fix these problems. Unfortunately, I find the budget request long on rhetoric and short on substance.

The Administration has stated that there is an additional \$12 billion in the budget request for overall defense needs. Over \$8 billion of that so called "increase" is based on funding adjustments such as lower inflation rates, lower prices for fuel, favorable foreign currency accounts, assumed savings from unproven, unrealized efficiencies, and other adjustments from one year to the next. Unfortunately, that \$8 billion cannot be used to buy additional training time on combat training ranges, additional spare parts, more flying hours, or more steaming days for our combat ships, nor will it begin to reduce the staggering backlog of facilities maintenance in all of the services. Of the remaining \$4 billion, if the funding for programs that are not supposed to be in the operation and maintenance budget, such as commissary operations and Pentagon renovation funding are deducted, there is not much left to improve readiness.

The committee also heard from the chiefs of the military services about significant unfunded requirements for next year that are urgently needed to improve military readiness. Most of these unfunded requirements are for day to day military operations, spare parts, depot

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maintenance, and facility maintenance. These unfunded requirements were identified prior to the current contingency operations in the Balkans. I fear these shortfalls are growing by the day.

After a thorough review of the budget request, and after a series of in-depth hearings on a wide range of readiness issues at military installations throughout the United States and overseas, the subcommittee recommends a package of readiness improvements that will provide immediate readiness improvements. Based on the service chief's unfunded priority lists, the mark before you provides significant increases in depot maintenance, training center improvements, facility maintenance, repair parts, and base operations support.

In addition to funding increases, the subcommittee mark includes several legislative provisions that will substantially improve how the DOD conducts its day to day business. The mark contains provisions that would clarify notification requirements in existing law concerning the outsourcing of functions in the military services and industrial activities; a provision that would require a review of the chronic shortage of repair parts versus large excess inventories of the Department of Defense; a provision that would review the capabilities of the Department to provide repair parts and supplies during times of national emergencies; and a requirement for the Department to review the causes and remedies associated with the huge backlog of maintenance and repair at military installations. The mark also contains a series of provisions dealing with the management of civilian personnel of the Department of Defense.

The mark, again this year, includes a provision that would authorize \$35 million for impact aid for local school districts with large concentrations of children from military families and a provision to expedite their receipt of the funds.

I believe that the mark before you represents what I believe will, within the resources available, achieves the goals that we all share. That goal is to provide what is required to improve and ensure force readiness and improve the quality of life for the men and women of our armed forces.

I would like to thank the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Ortiz for the support and cooperation he has given me again this year, and all the other members of the subcommittee for their patience and support.

I would also like to thank the subcommittee staff: Pete Steffes, Joe Boessen, Tom Hawley, Mary Ellen Fraser, Dudley Tademy, and Diane Bowman for all their hard work and long hours.

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