

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
November 1 - 7, 2013

1. [Kerry Says Saudi Arabia is Indispensable U.S. Partner, Ally](#) (11-06-2013)
2. [Hagel: Six Priorities Shape Future Defense Institutions](#) (11-05-2013)
3. [Kerry, Sikorski Endorse Trade Agreement in Warsaw Talks](#) (11-05-2013)
4. [Locklear Welcomes Closer U.S.-China Cooperation](#) (11-05-2013)
5. [International Effort Rids Hungary of Highly Enriched Uranium](#) (11-05-2013)
6. [Facts on U.S.-Japan Commission on Civil Nuclear Cooperation](#) (11-04-2013)
7. [PACOM Chief: Fiscal Climate Threatens to Hollow U.S. Military](#) (11-01-2013)

1. [Kerry Says Saudi Arabia is Indispensable U.S. Partner, Ally](#) (11-06-2013)

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State John Kerry described Saudi Arabia as an indispensable partner to the United States, but a partner that has independent and important views of its own, “and we respect that.”

“Our relationship is strategic, it is enduring, and it covers a wide range of bilateral and regional issues,” Kerry said during a recent press conference in Riyadh with Saudi Arabia’s foreign minister, Prince Saud al-Faisal.

Kerry and Saud responded to news media speculation that the U.S.-Saudi relationship had become strained over recent events in the region, from the civil war in Syria to limited overtures from the ruling Iranian regime. Kerry, who is on a 10-day trip to the Middle East, Europe and North Africa, arrived in Riyadh on November 3 for consultations with senior Saudi officials following a brief visit to Cairo for talks with Egyptian leaders.

In addressing the partnership between the two longtime friends and allies, Kerry noted that President Obama outlined core U.S. interests in the Middle East during a September address at the U.N. General Assembly that included the use of all elements of U.S. power to secure those interests. Obama said the United States will confront aggression against U.S. partners, ensure the free flow of

energy from the region to the world, dismantle terrorist networks that threaten U.S. citizens and allies, and will not tolerate the development or use of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.

“These are core U.S. interests, and we share these interests with Saudi Arabia, and we intend to work on these with Saudi Arabia,” he said alongside Foreign Minister Saud November 4.

Saud told journalists that the relationship between the two nations has been based on independence, mutual respect, common interest and constructive cooperation on regional and global issues to serve peace and security.

“A true relationship between friends is based on sincerity, candor and frankness rather than mere courtesy,” Saud said. “Within this perspective, it’s only natural that our policies and views might see agreement in some areas and disagreement in others.”

Saud noted that this is normal in any serious government-to-government relationship and especially with one that embraces such a wide range of issues.

Kerry and Saud addressed a broad range of regional concerns during their meeting, and Kerry also heard the views of Saudi King Abdullah on Syria, Egypt, Iran, Yemen, Lebanon and the Middle East peace process.

The United States appreciates Saudi leadership in supporting the Syrian Opposition Coalition and its commitment to achieving a political resolution of the crisis in Syria that has caused more than 100,000 civilian deaths, Kerry said. Neither the United States nor Saudi Arabia believes that the 2 1/2-year-old Syrian civil war can be resolved through military force, he added.

Kerry said a negotiated political settlement that ends the violence and creates a transition government that will eventually lead to a democratically elected government provides the best approach. Diplomats have been meeting in Geneva at the same time Kerry was meeting with Saudi leaders, but they were unable to agree on a date that would have brought the warring sides in Syria to negotiations that were being called Geneva 2 talks.

U.N. and Arab League Special Representative for Syria Lakhdar Brahimi told reporters that “we are still striving to see if we can have the conference before the end of the year.”

The United States believes it must consult with Saudi Arabia as well as with the Syrian coalition leadership and international partners to prepare for a second Geneva conference to end the civil war and create a transition government that would replace the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, Kerry told journalists.

Saud told reporters that Saudi Arabia agrees that the effective solution for Syria is through a transition government that does not include Assad, and that the representative of the Syrian people is the opposition coalition. The only differences are over tactics for achieving those goals, he said, but the resolution lies with strengthening the coalition and working for its success.

On Egypt, Kerry said the Egyptian people urgently need economic transformation, and the United States agrees with its friends in Saudi Arabia and with others on the need to work rapidly to bring an economic transformation and improve the quality of life.

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2. Hagel: Six Priorities Shape Future Defense Institutions (11-05-2013)

By Cheryl Pellerin
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Nov. 5, 2013 – In the months since the 2012 defense strategic guidance first reflected a new budget reality, Pentagon officials and military leaders have been working on the department’s longer-term budget and strategy, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said here this morning.

In the keynote address before the Center for Strategic and International Studies’ Global Security Forum, Hagel said a needed realignment of missions and resources is being undertaken across the department that will require significant change across every aspect of the enterprise.

“I have identified six areas of focus for our budget and strategic planning efforts going forward,” the secretary said.

“Working closely with the service secretaries, service chiefs, combatant commanders and DOD leaders,” he added, “these six priorities will help determine the shape of our defense institutions for years to come.”

The priorities include institutional reform, force planning, preparing for a prolonged military readiness challenge, protecting investments in emerging capabilities, balancing capacity and capability across the services, and balancing personnel responsibilities with a sustainable compensation policy.

During his first weeks in office, Hagel said, he directed a Strategic Choices and Management Review that over several months identified options for reshaping the force and institutions in the face of difficult budget scenarios.

“That review pointed to the stark choices and tradeoffs in military capabilities that will be required if sequester-level cuts persist, but it also identified opportunities to make changes and reforms,” Hagel said.

“Above all,” he added, “it underscored the reality that DOD still possesses resources and options. We will need to more efficiently match our resources to our most important national security requirements. We can do things better, we must do things better, and we will.”

Addressing the six priorities that will shape future defense efforts, the secretary began with a continued a focus on institutional reform.

Coming out of more than a decade of war and budget growth, he said, there is a clear opportunity and need to reshape the defense enterprise, including paring back the world’s largest back office. This summer, Hagel announced a 20-percent reduction in headquarters budgets across the department, beginning with the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

“Our goal is not only to direct more of our resources to real military capabilities and readiness,” Hagel said, “but to make organizations flatter and more responsive to the needs of our men and women in uniform.”

The second priority is to re-evaluate the military force-planning construct -- the assumptions and scenarios for which U.S. military forces organize, train and equip themselves.

“I’ve asked our military leaders to take a very close look at these assumptions and question these past assumptions, which will also be re-evaluated across the services as part of the Quadrennial Defense Review,” the secretary explained.

“The goal,” he added, “is to ensure they better reflect our goals and the shifting strategic environment, the evolving capacity of our allies and partners, real-world threats, and the new military capabilities that reside in our force and in the hands of our potential adversaries.”

Hagel said the third priority will be to prepare for a prolonged military readiness challenge. In managing readiness under sequestration, he added, the services have protected the training and equipping of deploying forces to ensure that no one goes unprepared into harm's way.

This is the department’s highest responsibility to its forces, the secretary said, and yet already, “we have seen the readiness of nondeploying units suffer as training has been curtailed, flying hours reduced, ships not steaming, and exercises canceled.”

The Strategic Choices and Management Review showed that sequester-level cuts could lead to a readiness crisis, and unless something changes, Hagel said, “we have to think urgently and creatively about how to avoid that outcome, because we are consuming our future readiness now.”

The fourth priority will be protecting investments in emerging military capabilities -- especially space, cyber, special operations forces, and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, the secretary said.

“As our potential adversaries invest in more sophisticated capabilities and seek to frustrate our military's traditional advantages, including our freedom of action and access ... around the world,” he said, “it will be important to maintain our decisive technological edge.”

The fifth priority is balance across the services in the mix between capacity and capability, between active and reserve forces, between forward-stationed and home-based forces, and between conventional and unconventional warfighting capabilities, Hagel said.

“In some cases we will make a shift, for example, by prioritizing a smaller, modern and capable military over a larger force with older equipment. We will also favor a globally active and engaged force over a garrison force,” he explained.

The services will look to better leverage the reserve components, with the understanding that part-time units in ground forces can’t expect to perform at the same levels as full-time units, at least in the early stages of a conflict. In other cases, the services will seek to preserve balance, for example, by controlling areas of runaway cost growth, the secretary said.

The sixth priority is personnel and compensation policy, which Hagel said may be the most difficult issue.

“Without serious attempts to achieve significant savings in this area, which consumes roughly now half the DOD budget and increases every year, we risk becoming an unbalanced force, one that is well-compensated but poorly trained and equipped, with limited readiness and capability,” he said.

Going forward, the department must make hard choices in this area to ensure that the defense enterprise is sustainable for the 21st century, the secretary said.

Hagel said Congress must permit meaningful reforms as it reduces the defense budget, and the department needs Congress as a willing partner in making tough choices to bend the cost curve on personnel, while meeting its responsibilities to its people.

“Even as we pursue change across the Department of Defense,” the secretary said, “the greatest responsibility of leadership will always remain the people we represent, our men and women in uniform, their families, and our dedicated civilian workforce.”

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[3. Kerry, Sikorski Endorse Trade Agreement in Warsaw Talks \(11-05-2013\)](#)

Washington — Europe and the United States are negotiating a trade agreement that could enhance their economic power and “raise the standards by which all countries are engaging in economic activity,” Secretary of State John Kerry said November 5 in Warsaw, Poland.

In an appearance with Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski, Kerry emphasized the strong economic, security and cultural ties between the United States and Poland. Poland supports the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), advocated by the United States, an agreement that will increase market access for 800 million consumers in the two regions.

Kerry said the United States envisions TTIP as a means to “raise the standards by which countries around the world are doing business” in ways that will stimulate economic activity, while also reinforcing the shared values of freedom, democracy and human rights.

Sikorski said Poland supports a free-trade agreement motivated by environmental, economic and energy interests, foreseeing a time when natural gas produced in the United States might flow into Poland.

Poland is the largest commercial partner the United States has in Central Europe, Kerry noted, sharing a fourfold increase in trade in the last decade.

Kerry is on a 10-day diplomatic trip, with stops in the Middle East, Europe and North Africa.

In his press appearance with Sikorski and in later remarks to the American Chamber of Commerce in Warsaw, Kerry noted his respect for the “remarkable journey” that Poland has made through its

transition from a satellite state of the Soviet Union to one of the most progressive and vibrant nations of the region today.

Kerry described TTIP as representing “the doorstep of another great transformation that could actually make trade more open, make markets more free, make competition stronger and create more opportunity for jobs.”

The agreement is envisioned as a means to establish rules-based trade, with greater transparency and more uniform standards across borders. Smoothing the regulatory road to trade will stimulate more trade, Kerry said.

“So more compatible standards could also help auto manufacturers, like General Motors, which produces more than 2 million cars a year in the southern city of Gliwice,” Kerry said at his chamber of commerce appearance. “And these companies and others like them here in Poland would greatly benefit from an increased, two-way trans-Atlantic capacity.”

With the majority of the world’s population under age 30, young adults are coming to maturity with aspirations and a need for opportunity. Kerry said it is in the interests of today’s governments and businesses to expand the chances for advancement future generations will need.

The European Union and the United States begin a second round of negotiations on the trade agreement November 11.

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[Kerry, Polish FM Sikorski at Joint Press Availability](#)

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[Kerry at American Chamber of Commerce in Poland](#)

4. Locklear Welcomes Closer U.S.-China Cooperation (11-05-2013)

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Nov. 5, 2013 – Recognizing the United States’ growing strategic partnership with China, the top U.S. commander in the Asia-Pacific region expressed hope today that commitments by the U.S. and Chinese presidents will promote communication, understanding and closer cooperation between their militaries.

Speaking to reporters at the Foreign Press Center here, Navy Adm. Samuel J. Locklear III, the U.S. Pacific Command commander, emphasized the importance of communication between allies and partners, including China, in a highly interconnected world.

“To have the militaries not communicating with each other just doesn’t make a lot of sense,” he said.

“It is a different world. We are very connected in many, many ways across our societies,” Locklear said. “So it is important that military leaders ... establish a relationship that lets us understand each other.”

Understanding leads to a degree of transparency, and transparency leads to a degree of trust, he continued. “And trust leads to an ability to prevent miscalculation,” he added.

Locklear acknowledged that the United States and China – like any other countries – won't always share the same views. "There will always be things that countries disagree about. That is just the nature of the world," he said. "There are always going to be friction points that can lead to a potential miscalculation."

But "the last place you want those miscalculations occurring is at the military level," he said. "So the more understanding we have of each other, I think the less chance of those miscalculations occurring."

Locklear expressed optimism over an agreement by President Barack Obama and Chinese President Xi Jinping to promote that closer cooperation. Meeting in June for two days of informal talks, the presidents agreed that North Korea should denuclearize, and they pledged to work together to resolve cybersecurity and other issues.

"What President Barack Obama and President Xi Jinping said was that we are going to look at some ways to improve that mil-to-mil connectivity so we have the right dialogue, and that it is in the right place and in the right time," Locklear said. "And we are doing that."

Speaking last week with American Forces Press Service, Locklear noted steps in the right direction, from bilateral meetings between U.S. and Chinese military leaders to port visits by both navies' ships.

The next major development, to take place in May, will be China's participation in the Rim of the Pacific, the world's largest multinational maritime exercise. This represents a big commitment from China, Locklear said, because Chinese ships will operate alongside other allied and partner navies and under U.S. command and control.

"It will give them the opportunity to see and be seen in a multilateral light that will be beneficial to security environment as we go ahead," he said. "It sort of puts them out with the rest of the team and lets them be part of that team."

Ultimately, developing a strong U.S.-China military-to-military relationship will take time, Locklear recognized.

As China continues to rise as a regional and global power, he said, in some respects its leaders feel "they are entering a security environment and a world order environment where they didn't get to set the rules – some of those rules they don't agree with."

"If they choose a path of coercion to solve that, I think that will be disastrous," he said.

But with a role in encouraging North Korea to eliminate its nuclear-weapons program, Locklear said, China has the opportunity to be a leader in promoting security, economic growth and stability across the region.

The big question moving forward will be whether China chooses to be a "net user or net provider of security," he said. "We hope it will be a net provider, and I think there is potential for that to happen."

Biographies:

[Navy Adm. Samuel J. Locklear III](#)

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5. International Effort Rids Hungary of Highly Enriched Uranium (11-05-2013)

Washington — An international effort coordinated among Hungary, the United States, Russia and the International Atomic Energy Agency has removed all remaining highly enriched uranium (HEU) from Hungary, the U.S. Department of Energy announced November 4.

This achievement makes Hungary the 12th country to completely eliminate HEU from its borders since President Obama's 2009 announcement of an international effort to secure all vulnerable nuclear material around the world.

“The removal of Hungary's remaining HEU inventory shows the overwhelming response of the international community to President Obama's call to secure all vulnerable nuclear materials,” said U.S. Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz. “We know that in the wrong hands, just small amounts of these materials could be used to create a weapon of mass destruction. This operation in Hungary and our ongoing partnerships with countries around the world help to ensure that terrorists never obtain a nuclear weapon.”

Under the multiyear effort, the U.S. Energy Department's National Nuclear Security Administration removed enough HEU from Hungary for nine nuclear weapons. The final 49.2 kilograms were removed in three secure air shipments over the past six weeks and transported to Russia.

Previously, the four participants returned 190 kilograms of HEU from Hungary to Russia via three shipments in 2008, 2009 and 2012. The material will be downblended into low enriched uranium for use in nuclear power reactors.

The other 11 locations that have eliminated their HEU under this effort are Austria, Chile, the Czech Republic, Libya, Mexico, Romania, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine, Vietnam and Taiwan. To date, the Energy Department has removed or dispositioned more than 5,000 kilograms of HEU and plutonium from more than 40 countries around the world and has removed all HEU from 25 countries.

The HEU in Hungary was originally procured from Russia for use in scientific applications in the Budapest Research Reactor at Hungary's Atomic Energy Research Institute. In 2009, U.S. and Hungarian scientists successfully converted the reactor from HEU to LEU use, allowing for the elimination of Hungary's entire HEU inventory. The Budapest Research Reactor has continued its scientific activities without the need for these dangerous materials, the Energy Department said.

Along with removal and reactor-conversion activities, the Energy Department has worked with Hungary to improve physical protection at facilities storing or using nuclear and radiological materials. The department is also engaged with Hungary on a range of nuclear security and nonproliferation activities. These include border security and export control cooperation, safeguards information management, and emergency-response training, the Energy Department said.

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[Facts on Removing Vulnerable Nuclear Material around the World](#)

6. Facts on U.S.-Japan Commission on Civil Nuclear Cooperation (11-04-2013)

Fact Sheet: Second Meeting of the United States-Japan Bilateral Commission on Civil Nuclear Cooperation

The second meeting of the U.S.-Japan Bilateral Commission on Civil Nuclear Cooperation was held on November 4, 2013, in Washington, D.C, with U.S. Deputy Secretary of Energy Daniel B. Poneman and Japan's Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Shinsuke Sugiyama leading the discussions as Co-Chairs. The delegations included participants representing a wide range of governmental agencies.

Established at the U.S.-Japan summit held in April 2012, the Bilateral Commission serves as a standing senior-level forum to foster a comprehensive strategic dialogue and joint activities related to the safe and secure implementation of civil nuclear energy and the response to the accident at the Tokyo Electric Power Company's (TEPCO) Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Station (NPS), including decommissioning and decontamination.

The first meeting of the Bilateral Commission was held on July 24, 2012 in Tokyo, at which time five working groups were launched to coordinate bilateral cooperation. They cover the following subjects:

- Nuclear security;
- Civil nuclear energy research and development;
- Safety and regulatory issues;
- Emergency management; and,
- Decommissioning and environmental management.

At the November 4, 2013 meeting, each of the working groups reported on the status of their activities and their accomplishments to date. Both sides discussed the next steps for each working group and how to further enhance bilateral cooperation in each field. In addition, the Japanese delegation made presentations on the following topics:

- The current situation of the Fukushima Dai-ichi NPS and decommissioning and decontamination efforts, including countermeasures against contaminated water;
- Japan's new regulatory requirements for light-water nuclear power plants and the status of draft regulatory requirements for nuclear fuel facilities and other facilities;
- Japan's efforts to implement comprehensive training for nuclear disaster response;
- The current situation regarding the reforms and reorganization of the Japan Atomic Energy Agency; and,
- The discussions in Japan on enhancing safety culture after the Fukushima nuclear accident.
- During the Commission meeting, the Government of Japan emphasized that the implementation of countermeasures to address contaminated water at the Fukushima NPS is an urgent task.

- The Government of Japan explained that, as has been announced in the Basic Policy for the Contaminated Water Issue at the TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, it is determined to play a proactive role in TEPCO's implementation of the necessary countermeasures responding to the contaminated water issue.
- For this purpose, Japan plans to actively disseminate information to the international community and mobilize the related technologies and expertise at home and abroad in an open manner.

On decommissioning and environmental management, the United States is committed to enhancing cooperation with Japan in the public sector through consultation and provision of guidance and information. The United States encouraged Japan to further engage the expertise of the U.S. private sector in remediation efforts at the Fukushima NPS. The U.S. Department of Energy and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency researchers facilitate technical exchanges with U.S. national laboratories to address many of Fukushima's critical cleanup challenges. Both sides decided to hold a video conference in December to discuss specific technical areas as well as future activities.

On civil nuclear liability, the United States welcomed Japan's recent decision to join the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage (CSC), and the two governments committed to continue close coordination regarding the CSC. Japan and the United States noted that this important Convention will enter into force 90 days after Japan's deposit of its appropriate instrument. They recognize that Japan's joining the CSC helps to facilitate U.S. commercial engagement in the Japanese nuclear sector, including support to the ongoing cleanup of contaminated water at the Fukushima NPS, as well as the decommissioning activities at the site.

Japan and the United States committed to work together to establish a global nuclear liability regime by encouraging other countries to join the CSC, thereby achieving a major objective of the Action Plan on Nuclear Safety adopted by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

On civil nuclear research and development, the United States and Japan decided to initiate nuclear energy research and development projects on advanced reactor materials, advanced reactor modeling and simulation, and advanced fuels. The Japanese side proposed to launch a bilateral collaboration on Probabilistic Risk Assessment (PRA). The United States responded positively to this proposal, and both Governments decided to explore holding a U.S.-Japan roundtable on PRA methodologies and their applications for nuclear safety.

On nuclear security, the United States and Japan committed to continue to strengthen the nuclear security posture of both countries and to fundamentally reduce the threat that terrorists could acquire nuclear material. Key steps towards these goals include the following:

- Reducing the quantities and attractiveness of weapons-usable nuclear material;
- Reducing insider access to nuclear material;
- Reducing the vulnerability of nuclear material to theft or diversion; and,
- Strengthening emergency response to security incidents and forensics capabilities.

Both Governments welcomed Japan's newly-strengthened emergency management system and improved coordination channels across government ministries and with utility operators.

Japan and the United States committed to further strengthening information-sharing and cooperation within the five working groups and to report their outcomes to the next meeting of the U.S.-Japan Bilateral Commission on Civil Nuclear Cooperation to be held in May/June 2014 in Japan, supplemented as necessary by videoconferences.

7. PACOM Chief: Fiscal Climate Threatens to Hollow U.S. Military (11-01-2013)

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Nov. 1, 2013 – Unpredictable funding and the indiscriminate cuts being forced by sequestration are steadily eroding military readiness and threaten to leave a hollow force ill-prepared for future demands, the commander of U.S. Pacific Command told American Forces Press Service today.

Navy Adm. Samuel J. Locklear III said a funding process based on short-term continuing resolutions rather than actual budgets limits decision-makers' ability to shape the force to reflect the changing security environment.

"For us, it is a fiscal disaster" that wastes billions of dollars, he said during an interview at the Pentagon. "What it does is make you spend your money based on a two- or three-year-old plan, so you can't spend the money on the plan that you need and what the American people need. You have to spend it on what you needed two or three years ago, depending on the last budget."

A predictable budget is essential for everyone – whether they're running a household or a major corporation, he noted. "Why would it be different for the world's largest military?" he questioned.

Sequestration exacerbates this problem, not only because it requires cuts that amount to about 10 percent a year over 10 years, but particularly because it limits how they can be made, Locklear said. That's because the sequestration law, the Budget Control Act of 2011, protects some accounts from the reductions. By "fencing off all the things you might need to change," Locklear said, it "implements this cancerous type of mechanism that takes the money out of places it can."

That has a direct impact on military operations, he said.

"It takes out the things that matter to us day to day as a combatant command. It takes it out of readiness money. It takes it out of operating money," he explained. "Instead of 10 percent out of a big base, it takes a big chunk out of the things we need to do to do the job today to defend U.S. interests globally."

Locklear credited the military services and joint force with channeling their assets to parts of the U.S. Pacific Command area of responsibility where U.S. interests are most at risk.

"We have been able to focus our readiness and our efforts toward those places, and at least for now, to minimize the risk, particularly the risk to the homeland and the region," he said. "We just keep pushing to the pointy end of the readiness spear."

But it comes at a cost, he emphasized. "What is coming out of this is the readiness in the shaft on the back," he said. "That shaft is what provides our credibility globally" and the ability to provide

ready forces when and where they are needed – whether for a humanitarian assistance and disaster response, a large-scale contingency or a full-scale war.

“That is what provides the credibility,” Locklear said. “And that shaft of readiness is being rapidly eroded by the current fiscal environment we are in.”

The admiral said he’s particularly troubled by the long-term damage the current budgetary situation could inflict.

“It limits our ability to shape and plan and put together a military that the American people are willing to pay for,” he said. “It gives us a shell of the one they did pay for and it eats the readiness from the inside of it. So you end up with a hollow military in a very short order.”

Locklear said he experienced a hollow force personally when he entered the military in 1972. “We had a lot of ships. We had a lot of airplanes. We had a lot of bases,” he said. “But we couldn’t get them underway. They weren’t manned properly. They weren’t trained properly. Our retention was terrible.”

He lamented that today’s military could face that same fate if the situation doesn’t change.

“That is where you get to if you allow readiness to be the bill payer for a prolonged period of time, and without allowing the military leadership to reshape it,” he warned. “This is a debate that needs to be heard.”

Locklear acknowledged that some people may accuse him and others within the Defense Department of sounding like Chicken Little saying “The sky is falling.”

“I say this is all about risk,” he said. “You can assume infinite risk in your military, as long as nothing happens. But history proves that something will probably happen. And our job is to tell our leadership and the American people what risks we are taking by the fiscal environment Congress is putting us in.”

Biographies:

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