

Failure to deliver an appropriations budget for our defense emboldens our foreign adversaries—that is a given—and we are already seeing that play out before our eyes. After the horrific attacks of October 7, carried out by Hamas, the Defense Department ordered an additional aircraft carrier strike group, air defenses, fighter jets, and troops to the Middle East to prevent this conflict from spiraling into a regional war. But because of this body's dysfunction of not being able to deliver a defense appropriations bill on time, the Pentagon has no money to pay for this bill. As we speak, our Defense Department is hunting for literally hundreds of millions of dollars to cover these costs, and it is pulling money away from other critical operations.

It also leaves our men and women in uniform without the certainty and the resources they need to protect our freedoms both abroad and here at home. In my case, it is the brave air men and women serving at Montana's very own Malmstrom Air Force Base. The men and women of the 341st Missile Wing operate our ICBM missile fleet. These missiles are over 30 years old and need to be replaced. The silos that they sit in are over 60 years old. They need to be replaced, but without that appropriations bill, this program will continue to be delayed because of our dysfunction.

Folks, the American military is being weakened across the air, land, and sea because we are failing to provide the predictability of the delivery of assets. For anybody who has ever been in business, you know that predictability is critically important. Without predictability, your chance of losing profits is huge. Well, we are talking about a little different thing here. We are talking about the defense budget, and without predictability, we are talking about some 300 programs that are going to be impacted because they don't know where the money is going to come from.

They can't get started on assembly lines or ramp up production on already approved contracts because there isn't the money to pay for them because we haven't passed our defense budget. That includes things like helicopters. It includes things like B-21 bombers and F-35 fighter jets. It is causing a nearly \$10 billion reduction in our shipbuilding programs, halting the construction of new ships and the maintenance of our current fleet, and delaying the completion of already approved Virginia-class submarines. These delays make this country a less safe country.

It is another blow to our already challenging recruitment and retention efforts. By the way, I might add, with the exception of the Marines, every branch of the service needs more people in our volunteer military, but because we haven't passed a defense appropriations bill, we are, once again, putting manpower at risk. Joint Chiefs

Chairman C.Q. Brown noted that a yearlong continuing resolution would create a \$5.8 billion shortfall in military personnel funding. These are the folks whom we send all over the world—to horrible places—to protect freedom. This is a \$5.8 billion shortfall.

Quite frankly, what does that say for the folks who want to sign up for the military, for those folks who want to volunteer and dedicate their lives to keeping this country safe?

They look at Congress and look at the job we are doing, and they say: Why the hell would I want to do that?

And we wonder why our end-strength numbers aren't where they need to be.

It is a slap in the face to our Nation's veterans—the fact that we can't get a defense appropriations bill done. Why? Because these veterans are relying on this body to deliver a defense appropriations bill that will strengthen TRICARE so that they can get the quality healthcare that they have earned.

But maybe the most disturbing thing about all of this—that we can't get a defense appropriations bill or any appropriations bill done, I might add, in a timely manner—is that some will say: Well, we are going to save money.

That is a joke. This whole charade is going to cost money. It is going to waste taxpayer dollars. We know the longer it takes you to buy something, the more it is going to cost. They know, when you shut down production lines, it costs money to start those production lines back up, and without money, that is exactly what has to happen.

Look, I could go on and on about the damage that a continuing resolution—an extension of last year's budget, a budget that was created when we had no idea of the threats that would be going on now—would do. The fact of the matter is that this Congress isn't doing its job. The greatest deliberative body isn't doing what it needs to do. And what is more important? What is a more important job for us than to keep our country safe? We wonder why our approval numbers are in the toilet. I can tell you. It is because of garbage like this—and it is garbage. They are tired of folks coming back to Washington, DC, and losing track of where they come from.

My point is just like on the farm. We need to stay here weekends, vote nights, and work as hard as we can to get this done because enough is enough. We need to get these bipartisan bills done so that we can keep this country the greatest country on Earth.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

One final thing before I yield the floor: We should be working on a supplemental bill right now to take care of challenges in Ukraine. We heard from Zelenskyy this morning, President Zelenskyy. We need to take care of the challenges in Israel and the humanitarian aid there and military support. We need to take care of the challenges

in the Indo-Pacific and to take care of challenges on our southern border. All of this stuff should have been done months ago, but once again, just like the appropriations bill, there is no urgency. We kick the can down the road, and we put this country at risk.

If we don't wake up and do what we need to do to keep this country safe and be the lead for democracy in the world, what have we become? We should not be leaving here for any holiday—Christmas, New Year's, whatever it is—until we get these supplementals done because we are the greatest country on Earth for a good reason: because we are the greatest country on Earth. Not doing these supplementals takes away from that. We have already done enough damage with the deferred appropriations bills on a CR. We need to go to work. It is that important.

I ask unanimous consent that the letters from Joint Chiefs of Staff C.Q. Brown, Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro, as well as Secretary of the Air Force Frank Kendall, on the impacts of a continuing resolution on our Nation's security as it applies to the Air Force and the Navy and our military, in general, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT  
CHIEFS OF STAFF,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. JON TESTER,  
Chairman,  
Subcommittee on Defense, Committee on Appropriations,  
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for the opportunity to share my view on the impact that a year-long Continuing Resolution (CR) would have on the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Joint Force. In addition to the critical need for Congress to take action to support our allies and partners by passing the President's national security supplemental funding request, the single greatest thing that Congress can do to enable the Department to execute our strategy is to enact a full-year appropriation.

DoD has never operated under a year-long CR; it would be historically costly to the Joint Force. In a CR, the DoD's actual buying power is significantly impacted and degraded. Failing to fully fund the DoD would disrupt important progress made in fiscal year 2023. The National Defense Strategy lays out evolving security challenges, which require the Joint Force to modernize quickly or risk losing our strategic advantage. As I have said previously, we cannot outpace our pacing challenge while under a CR.

A year-long CR would prevent the DoD from executing numerous multi-year procurement contracts that are critical to meeting our requirements in the Indo-Pacific; delay or deny investments in important modernization projects; and create a significant shortfall in personnel funding.

Thousands of programs will be impacted with the most devastating impacts to our national defense being to personnel, nuclear triad modernization, shipbuilding and ship maintenance, munitions production and replenishment, and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) priorities.

Personnel: A year-long CR would create a \$5.8 billion shortfall in military personnel

funding and exacerbate recruiting and retention challenges. DoD would be forced to delay service member moves and slow recruiting to offset the costs of the 5.2 percent pay raise for the military.

**Nuclear triad modernization:** A year-long CR would delay nuclear triad modernization, including a delay in the procurement of the B-21 Raider and could prevent the award of the second Columbia class ballistic missile submarine.

**Shipbuilding and ship maintenance:** Under a year-long CR, 30 percent (\$9.7B) of the funding in the Navy shipbuilding budget request could not be spent and only one of two requested Virginia class submarines could be awarded. Additionally, a year-long CR would cancel or delay ship depot maintenance availabilities, impacting readiness.

**Munitions production and replenishment:** Under a year-long CR, DoD could not award multi-year procurement contracts to increase production capacity or replenish inventories for munitions critical to INDOPACOM, including long range anti-ship missiles, GMLRs (precision rockets), Patriot air defense missiles, the naval strike missile, and a long-range version of the joint air to surface standoff missile.

**Pacific Defense Initiatives:** A year-long CR would jeopardize \$1.3 billion in investments critical to DoD's INDO-PACIFIC posture including impacts to forward basing, sensor-to-shooter capabilities, long range radars, hypersonic defense, and investments in classified capabilities.

**No new military construction projects:** Military construction projects are, by definition, new starts, so a year-long CR could cause a year-long delay in construction projects intended to modernize our installations and improve quality of life.

Passing a full-year funding bill and the President's national security supplemental request would prevent these devastating impacts. It would also provide funding for critical weapons and equipment for our allies and partners while replenishing depleted DoD stocks and providing for robust investments in the defense industrial base.

We owe our servicemembers the tools they need to be successful. We have asked them to modernize and accelerate the future capabilities they need to continue to deter and project credible combat power. We need full appropriations to stay ahead of pacing, acute, and unforeseen challenges.

I appreciate your continued support for our Joint Force and look forward to our future engagements.

Sincerely,

CHARLES Q. BROWN, Jr.,  
General, U.S. Air Force.

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
Washington, DC, December 8, 2023.

Hon. JON TESTER,  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Defense, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: As the first session of the 118th Congress draws to a close, I write to express my deepest concern that the Department has yet to receive an appropriations funding bill for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024, and is facing the threat of operating under a year-long Continuing Resolution (CR) with potential for sequestration. I urge the Con-

gress to prioritize the national security of our country by passing our annual appropriation bills without further delay.

Today, our Sailors and Marines are postured in the eastern Mediterranean, through the Red Sea, and across in the Indo-Pacific to deter and respond to acts of aggression from Russia, Iranian-backed terrorist groups, and the Communist Chinese Party. Their ability to maintain a forward U.S. presence without interruption, and to maintain a competitive advantage over our adversaries depends upon Congress' approval of the Department's Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 budget request. Should the Congress fail to provide a FY2024 appropriation and instead enact a year-long CR at FY2023 levels, or worse with sequestration, our Navy-Marine Corps team will incur an immediate \$15.2 billion set-back (-5.9%), with impacts in nearly every area. Misalignments from the full-year CR drives that shortfall to \$28 billion:

**People and Quality of Life:** A year-long CR would provide \$2.2 billion less for Service Member pay, housing, subsistence, and relocation, creating hardships for our military families and lowering morale across the force. End strength challenges will be further hampered, as recruiting incentives are reduced and reserve mobilizations are curtailed. Quality of service initiatives to improve living conditions and expand resources for mental health will be blunted.

**Readiness:** A \$4.6 billion reduction in operations and maintenance will inevitably impact our fleet by immediately degrading our ability to operate our ships and aircraft in this uncertain environment. Pre-deployment training and large-scale exercises will be curtailed resulting in less-proficient aviation, maritime, and ground forces deploying overseas. Deferred weapons system maintenance will further limit the capabilities available to the Combatant Commanders. The impacts will continue to be felt in future years, as upcoming deployments will be jeopardized by delaying or cancelling surface ship maintenance at private shipyards, while a hiring freeze would undermine the next generation of workers at our naval shipyards and maintenance depots. Finally, the Department would be forced to significantly reduce sustainment at our bases with reductions in preventive maintenance impacting fire protection systems, utility infrastructure maintenance, and facility condition inspections.

**Shipbuilding:** A \$9.7 billion reduction in shipbuilding and conversion will preclude construction of one Submarine Tender, one Frigate, and two Littoral Combat Units (due to prohibitions on rate of production increase). Funding restrictions will result in higher costs for five ship classes and refueling of one nuclear aircraft carrier, delaying both construction work and material/warfare systems procurements. For Virginia-Class Submarine, only one of two ships requested could be awarded as well as the inability to award economic order quantity funding for the Virginia-Class SSN multi-year procurement in FY25-29. Reductions in funding and quantities of ships awarded will negatively affect the progress on restoring our Nation's shipbuilding workforce for six major shipbuilders in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, incentivizing workers to pursue more stable careers.

**Nuclear Deterrence:** While the first FY24 CR provided an anomaly for a production rate increase on the second Columbia-Class Submarine, the rate of operations increase for advance procurement funding in FY24 will cause delays in long lead time material awards for up to ten future Columbia-Class Submarines and a delay of Submarine Industrial Base investment funding. This puts at risk the modernization of the sea-base leg of our nation's nuclear triad.

**Marine Corps Force Design:** Restrictions on new starts and production rate increases will slow progress on the Marine Corps' transformation to a more agile, efficient, and technologically advanced force able to deter and defeat forces across the Pacific island chains. Production rates of Tomahawk and Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System weapons systems, two ground vehicles and two aircraft will be reduced.

**Weapons Industrial Base:** Year-long CR restrictions will prevent a combined \$380 million investment in the Weapons Industrial Base to increase throughout and production capacity of critical munitions including TRIDENT, Tomahawk, Standard Missile, Long Range Anti-Ship Missile, Advanced Anti-Radiation Guided Missile, and Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missile. These efforts are in direct response to lessons learned from the conflict in Ukraine.

**Research and Development:** A \$900 million reduction in research and development suspends research at businesses and universities across the country, makes our forces more reliant on aging systems, and provides our adversaries an opportunity to close the technological gap. Reductions to Marine Future Vertical Takeoff Family of Systems, Next Generation Jammer-Increment Two and MQ-4 Triton Multi-Integration will challenge Naval Aviation capabilities to face future threats.

**Military Construction:** A \$3.1 billion shortfall in military construction will cancel or postpone 30 projects across the U.S. and abroad, including three Child Development Centers. Twelve Pacific Deterrence Initiative projects on Guam will be affected, inhibiting our ability to blunt Chinese expansionism.

These impacts, when combined with misalignment between last year's enacted funding bill and our FY2024 budget request, amount to a total funding impact to the Department of the Navy of \$26.1 billion (\$22.8 Navy, \$3.3 Marine Corps). If a 1% sequester is applied, the impacts rises to \$28.8 billion (\$25.0 Navy, \$3.8 Marine Corps). In light of recent world events, we simply cannot afford to sacrifice readiness. Together, we must equip our Sailors and Marines with the best our Nation can provide to ensure they never have to face a fair fight.

Sincerely,

CARLOS DEL TORO.

Enclosures:

- (1) New Starts by Appropriation and Line Item.
- (2) Production Rate Increases by Appropriation and Line Item.
- (3) Total Appropriation Rates of Operation Increases.
- (4) Summary—Total Misalignment of Funds in a 12-month CR.

NEW STARTS BY APPROPRIATION AND LINE ITEM

Appropriation/Line Item	TOTAL DON		NAVY		MARINE CORPS	
	QTY	Amt (\$K)	QTY	Amt (\$K)	QTY	Amt (\$K)
SCN .....	1	11,733,234	1	11,733,234		
AS Submarine Tender .....	1	1,733,234	1	1,733,234		
SCN Completion of Prior Year Shipbuilding Programs .....		566,119		566,119		
Completion of PY SBP (LI 5300) .....		566,119		566,119		
OPN .....		7,594		7,594		

NEW STARTS BY APPROPRIATION AND LINE ITEM—Continued

Appropriation/Line Item	TOTAL DON		NAVY		MARINE CORPS	
	QTY	Amt (\$K)	QTY	Amt (\$K)	QTY	Amt (\$K)
WPN LSD Midlife & Modernization .....		7,594		7,594		
WPN Conventional Prompt Strike .....	8	341,434	8	341,434		
RD TEN (PE/PROJ) .....	8	341,434	8	341,434		
0604840M F-35B C2D2 0358 Utility and Subsystem Support to Mission .....		260,285		209,657		50,628
0605212M CH-53K 3069 CH53K Improvement .....		8,113				8,113
0204229N Tomahawk Mssn Planning Ctr 4032 NAV/COMMS .....		42,515				42,515
0204571N Consolidated Trng Sys Dev 1982 Adversary Mission System .....		2,969		2,969		
0205633N Aviation Improvements 0357 IFDIS fault detection .....		5,140		5,140		
0205633N Aviation Improvements 1356 Corrosion Prevention Impro .....		2,000		2,000		
0602792N Innovative Naval Prototypes (INP) Applied Res 3506 Com .....		4,010		4,010		
0602792N Innovative Naval Prototypes (INP) Applied Res 3507 Chim .....		1,500		1,500		
0602792N Innovative Naval Prototypes (INP) Applied Res 3508 Curi .....		15,537		15,537		
0603563N Ship Concept Advanced Design 3505 Maritime Preposition .....		1,800		1,800		
0603739N Navy Logistic Productivity 0356 NADACS Inventory .....		1,502		1,502		
0603801N Innovative Naval Prototypes (INP) Adv Tec Dev 3507 Chim .....		4,000		4,000		
0604030N Rapid Prototyping, Experimentation & Dem 0385 Rapid P .....		4,732		4,732		
0604258N Target Systems Development 2159 ASW TARGET .....		90,490		90,490		
0604840N F-35C C2D2 0358 Utility and Subsystem Support to Mission .....		3,514		3,514		
FHCON Projects .....	2	72,463		72,463		
P307 Replace Andersen Housing Ph 8 .....	1	205,032	1	83,126	1	121,906
P387 Replace Andersen Housing Ph 7 .....	1	121,906			1	121,906
MCN Projects (BA01) .....	1	83,126	1	83,126		
P226 Maintenance Facility & Marine Air Group HQs .....	26	2,897,154	14	1,827,884	12	1,069,270
P191 Water Treatment Plant .....	1	125,150			1	125,150
P415 PDI: Child Development Center .....	1	127,120			1	127,120
P002 Cybersecurity Operations Facility .....	1	105,220			1	105,220
P316 PDI: Artillery Battery Facilities .....	1	186,480			1	186,480
P406 PDI: Recreation Center .....	1	137,550			1	137,550
P408 PDI: Religious Ministry Services Facility .....	1	34,740			1	34,740
P760 PDI: Training Center .....	1	46,350			1	46,350
P859 PDI: Consolidated MEB HQ/NCIS PHIL .....	1	89,640			1	89,640
P870 PDI: 9th ESB Training Center .....	1	19,740			1	19,740
P158 Bachelor Enlisted Quarters & Support Facility .....	1	23,380			1	23,380
P1241 Communications Towers .....	1	131,800			1	131,800
P1044 Submarine Pier 31 Extension .....	1	42,100			1	42,100
P1102 Weapons Magazine & Ordnance Operations Fac. ....	1	112,518	1	112,518		
P614 PDI: Joint Consol. Comm. Center (INC) .....	1	219,200	1	219,200		
P691 Aircraft Development and Maintenance Facs .....	1	107,000	1	107,000		
P1339 Child Development Center .....	1	141,700	1	141,700		
P1334 Child Development Center .....	1	35,000	1	35,000		
P1069 Maritime Surveillance System Facility .....	1	43,600	1	43,600		
P541 PDI: Missile Integration Test Facility .....	1	109,680	1	109,680		
P678 PDI: Satellite Communications Facility (INC) .....	1	174,540	1	174,540		
P891 Shipyard Electrical Backbone .....	1	166,159	1	166,159		
P171 Weapons Magazines .....	1	195,000	1	195,000		
P525 Laboratory Compound Facilities Improvements .....	1	221,920	1	221,920		
P111 EDI: Ordnance Magazines .....	1	110,000	1	110,000		
P222 MQ-25 Aircraft Laydown Facilities .....	1	77,072	1	77,072		
MCNR Projects (BA01) .....	1	114,495	1	114,495		
P185 G/ATOR Support Facilities .....	2	36,949			2	36,949
P405 Organic Supply Facilities .....	1	12,400			1	12,400
	1	24,549			1	24,549
Total New Starts .....		6,047,801		4,769,048		1,278,753

PRODUCTION RATE INCREASES BY APPROPRIATION AND LINE ITEM

Appropriation/Line Item	TOTAL DON		NAVY		MARINE CORPS	
	QTY	Amt (\$K)	QTY	Amt (\$K)	QTY	Amt (\$K)
APN JSF STOVL .....	17	409,480	9	326,762	8	82,718
Multi-Engine Training System (METS) .....	1	228,140	1	228,140		
PMC Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV) .....	16	181,340	8	98,622	8	82,718
Guided MLRS Rocket .....	43	111,731			43	111,731
Tomahawk .....	12	17,750			12	17,750
Amphibious Combat Vehicle .....	4	1,262			4	1,262
SCN DDG 1000 .....	21	62,234			21	62,234
Columbia Class (FF) <sup>1</sup> .....	6	30,485			6	30,485
Columbia Class (AP) <sup>1</sup> .....	4	7,068,215	4	7,068,215		
Virginia Class Submarine (FF) .....	1		1			
Virginia Class Submarine (AP) .....		612,181		612,181		
CVN Refueling Overhauls AP .....		2,595,781		2,595,781		
DDG 1000 .....		1,189,888		1,189,888		
FFG .....		396,565		396,565		
LHA .....		337,424		337,424		
T-AO .....	1	1,038,474	1	1,038,474		
LCU .....		744,679		744,679		
Auxiliary Vessels .....	2	32,832	2	32,832		
Service Craft .....		62,532		62,532		
SCN Completion of Prior Year Shipbuilding Programs .....		9,008		9,008		
Completion of PY SBP (LI 5300) .....		48,851		48,851		
WPN Adv Med Range Air-to-Air Missile (AMRAAM) .....		306,324		306,324		
Sidewinder .....		306,324		306,324		
Rolling Airframe Missile (RAM) .....	170	733,032	155	718,670	15	14,362
LRASM .....	37	103,253	37	103,253		
Evolved Sea Sparrow Missile (ESSM) .....	19	15,877	7	4,938	12	10,939
MK-48 Torpedo .....	20	22,765	20	22,765		
	33	419,974	30	416,551	3	3,423
	11	13,794	11	13,794		
	50	157,369	50	157,369		
Total Production Rate Increases .....		8,628,782		8,419,971		208,811

<sup>1</sup> Section 124 of the "Continuing Appropriations Act, 2024 and Other Extensions Act" (P.L. 118–15) includes an anomaly for \$621.27M for a Columbia Class Submarine. The "Further Continuing Appropriations and Other Extensions Act, 2024" (P.L. 118–22) Section 140 provides an anomaly for \$3,338,413,000 for Columbia Class AP.

TOTAL APPROPRIATION RATES OF OPERATION INCREASES <sup>2</sup>

Appropriation	TOTAL DON		NAVY		MARINE CORPS	
	QTY	Amt (\$K)	QTY	Amt (\$K)	QTY	Amt (\$K)
MPN .....		1,434,018		1,434,018		
RPN .....		103,887		103,887		
MPMC .....		582,352				582,352
RPMC .....		77,216				77,216

TOTAL APPROPRIATION RATES OF OPERATION INCREASES <sup>2</sup>—Continued

Appropriation	TOTAL DON		NAVY		MARINE CORPS	
	QTY	Amt (\$K)	QTY	Amt (\$K)	QTY	Amt (\$K)
OMN .....		4,058,432		3,938,540		119,892
OMNR .....		102,760		72,986		29,774
OMMC .....		424,994				424,994
OPN .....		2,389,073		2,316,278		72,795
PANMC .....		372,389		264,349		108,040
PMC .....		197,971				197,971
RD TEN .....		658,243		417,151		241,092
WPN .....		978,806		1,016,306		(37,500)
Total Appropriation Rates of Operation Increases <sup>2</sup> .....		11,380,141		9,563,515		1,816,626

<sup>2</sup> Rates of Operations increases by appropriation are calculated after accounting for new starts and production rate increases. With the exception of SCN and MILCON appropriations, CR restrictions for rates of operation are at the total appropriation level. However, it is prudent to consider proposed Congressional adjustments at a line item level when determining amounts that can be executed during the CR period, in order to preserve Congressional funding prerogatives in an appropriation act.

SUMMARY—TOTAL MISALIGNMENT OF FUNDS IN A 12-MONTH CR

Appropriation	TOTAL DON		NAVY		MARINE CORPS	
	QTY	Amt (\$K)	QTY	Amt (\$K)	QTY	Amt (\$K)
Total New Starts .....		6,047,801		4,769,048		1,278,753
Total Production Rate Increases .....		8,628,782		8,419,971		208,811
Total Appropriation Rates of Operation Increases .....		11,380,141		9,563,515		1,816,626
Estimated Sequestration TOA Shortfall—Yearlong CR .....		2,737,000		2,222,000		515,000
Misalignment of Funds—12 Month CR with Seq .....		28,793,724		24,974,534		3,819,190
PB24 Submission .....				255,752,514		
Total 12-Month CR Misalignments and Estimated Sequestration .....				(28,793,724)		
12-Month CR/SEQ TOA for DON <sup>3</sup> .....				226,958,790		

<sup>3</sup> Assumes no anomalies to lift restrictions on new starts and rate increases, and no authority to realign funding within and between appropriations. Includes PB24 levels for DHA accounts.

SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE,  
Washington, DC.

HON. PATTY MURRAY,  
Chair, Committee on Appropriations,  
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIR MURRAY: As Congress works to advance Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 appropriations legislation, I write to highlight current, significant impacts a Continuing Resolution (CR) and the Fiscal Responsibility Act (FRA) have on the Department of the Air Force (DAF). Our biggest challenges are strengthening our capabilities, as well as recruiting and retaining the world’s best Air Force and Space Force, to prevail, if necessary, in the Indo-Pacific against the People’s Republic of China (PRC) as the pacing challenge. Overall, a year-long CR in FY24 would reduce buying power of the DAF by as much as \$13 billion. Additionally, should a sequester be ordered under the FRA, including discretionary spending levels capped at FY23 levels minus one percent with the directive to exclude military personnel accounts, the impact to the DAF would be an approximate eight percent cut, absent inflation, to absorb the remaining FY24 FRA topline cap.

While CRs and the associated limitations placed on the DAF ability to invest in modernization, as well as in our Airmen, Guardians, and civilians, are significant, the one thing we cannot buy back with any amount of funding is time. The longer the DAF operates under any CR, the more time our pacing challenge has to gain advantage and further increases their ability to inflict unacceptable levels of destruction against our people and capabilities. In 1940, General Douglas MacArthur said, “The history of failure in war can almost always be summed up in two words: ‘Too late.’ Too late in comprehending the deadly purpose of a potential enemy. Too late in realizing the mortal danger. Too late in preparedness. Too late in uniting all possible forces for resistance.

Any length of CR impacts DAF readiness, hinders acceleration of the U.S. Space Force, delays military construction (MILCON) projects, reduces aircraft availability, and curbs modernization in our race for technological superiority. Below are specific examples of current CR impacts on the DAF.

GREAT POWER COMPETITION OPTIMIZATION  
IMPACTS

Risks credibility of U.S. nuclear deterrence and undermines two legs of the nuclear triad:

For the future ground-base leg, LGM-35A Sentinel, delays weapon system construction, missile development, and delivery of MH-139 aircraft—essential to nuclear surety and security at a time when the PRC has built 100 new missile silos.

For the future air-based leg, B-21 Raider, delays procurement as the contract award is held to the previous year quantity and funding.

Stops 89 new starts, totaling \$2 billion, and 19 specific initiatives to counter the PRC, totaling \$4.8 billion, which would close key capability gaps and assure U.S. advantage through the Joint Strike Missile, Kill Chain Automation, Collaborative Combat Aircraft (CCA) development, and Moving Target Engagement.

Cancels \$2.8 billion in U.S. Space Force growth for new space architectures critical to the Joint Force in contested environments, including resilient Space Data Transport and Missile Warning/Missile Tracking (MWMT); tactical sensing; and positioning, navigation, and timing (PNT).

Delays procurement of seven National Security Space Launch (NSSL) missions thereby exposing Joint warfighters to significant risk.

MILITARY PERSONNEL & OPERATIONS IMPACTS

Limits DAF capability to cover any increase in military pay accounts including inability to initiate new bonuses or incentive pay designed to address critically-manned career fields.

Degrades operational readiness by underfunding critical accounts such as weapon system sustainment and the flying hour program.

MILCON IMPACTS

Prevents 34 new major construction projects totaling \$1.6 billion, including new weapon system beddowns, Quality of Life (QoL) facilities, and three Indo-Pacific projects fundamental to Agile Combat Employment (ACE) operations.

Prevents five new Energy Resilience and Conservation Investment Program (ERCIP) Defense-Wide MILCON projects, totaling \$138

million, for critical power and water requirements at two U.S. Air Force and three U.S. Space Force locations.

The DAF greatly values your partnership and appreciates your commitment to our Airmen and Guardians. However, the longer the DAF operates under a CR, the greater the impact is on our people and programs. While change is hard and focus on short-term distractions seems enticing, losing to the pacing challenge is unacceptable. No one wants great power competition and no one can predict when conflict might occur, but we must be as ready as we can be—now, tomorrow, and every day. I implore you and your colleagues to advance full-year FY24 appropriations legislation as soon as possible. Thank you for your continued support of our U.S. Air Force and U.S. Space Force.

Sincerely,  
FRANK KENDALL,  
Secretary of the Air Force.

Mr. TESTER. I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:08 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. Luján).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

VOTE ON COKER NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Coker nomination?

Mr. PAUL. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG).