



U.S. Congressman
Nick Rahall
WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**RAHALL SUPPORTS DEFENSE SPENDING BILL
-- SAYS MEASURE IS THE RIGHT STUFF FOR THE POST COLD WAR WORLD --**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV) today voiced his strong support for the Defense Authorization Bill which was passed out of the House this evening.

"This bill calls for the kind of Defense Department realignment that I have called on for years," said Rahall. "The bill's move away from big ticket items, developed for a bygone era, towards a stronger emphasis on troops and our national reserves is exactly what our country needs and will aid West Virginia better than the Defense Department has in the last twenty years."

Rahall acknowledged that although the Committee did not anticipate Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, they did recognize that historic changes required a restructuring of American readiness.

Among the new policy choices proposed in the bill were an increase in America's reserve forces.

"Included in this bill are plans to improve the capabilities of our reserve forces instead of reducing them," said Rahall. "We have to start putting people ahead of hardware. This bill makes a strong step in that direction."

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September 10, 1990

MEMORANDUM TO: MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE

RE: THE FY 91 DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL--THE RIGHT STUFF FOR THE POST COLD WAR WORLD

In its deliberations in July, the House Armed Services Committee took important first steps to meet the new realities of the post-Cold War world.

The committee bill--H.R. 4739--resulted from a broad consensus that in this time of change, uncertainty and fiscal austerity, our country's security will be protected best by investments in the "right stuff" for new times and not by indiscriminate or symbolic purchases of big ticket items developed for a bygone era. Our consensus was developed through wide consultations on policy principles within the Committee, with many Members of Congress and with a variety of defense experts in and out of government.

Although the Committee did not anticipate Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, we did recognize that historic changes required a general re-orientation of our defense priorities away from the fading confrontation with the Soviet Union in Europe -- now that we have won the Cold War -- and toward new vulnerabilities and dangers like the threat of terrorism, weapons of mass destruction in the third world and regional conflicts.

In short, our bill addresses precisely the kind of situation we now face in the Middle East.

Among the broad policy choices we faced, our committee opted to:

- o PUT PEOPLE AHEAD OF HARDWARE. We must protect the morale of our military personnel instead of preserving a larger force structure as the administration planned;

- o PROTECT THE READINESS OF A SMALLER FORCE. Our men and women in uniform will serve us well provided that we keep them combat ready, well-trained and capable of performing their mission.

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COMMIT TO A REAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM RATHER THAN THE CURRENT DEVELOP AND BUY PROGRAM FOR WEAPONS SYSTEMS. This means that we will use R&D to hedge against future uncertainties while ensuring that we do NOT move to the expensive production phase until we're sure a weapon is really needed to protect Americans in the new security environment and until we're sure that the system really works as advertised.

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FUND FORCES FOR NEW THREATS OVER REDUNDANT COLD WAR NUCLEAR FORCES. Our bill favors deployable forces in place of the administration's emphasis on strategic nuclear weapons modernization.

More specifically, our bill invests in the kind of capabilities we now find we need in Operation Desert Shield. Let me offer several examples:

- o FAST SEALIFT

We devised a program to develop and purchase the first fast sealift ships in a decade. This is precisely the kind of ship we urgently need to transport heavy forces to the Gulf.

- o AIRLIFT

We endorsed the C-17 airlift program to deliver men and material quickly to short fields at intercontinental range.

- o NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE FORCES

We beefed-up our national guard and reserve forces, particularly in the area of training. Hostilities in the Middle East have demonstrated just how crucial these forces are for military transport, water desalinization, chemical de-contamination, minesweeping, and delivery of medical care in the field. H.R. 4739 would reverse the Administration's plan to reduce these forces and, instead, improve their capabilities.

NSM Supports V-22

o IN-THEATER AGILITY

Our bill supports development and initial production of the tilt-rotor V-22. Because of its capability to fly long distances and then to land and take off like a helicopter, this system is also especially suited to small-unit special operations over long distances, as might be needed for hostage rescue missions.

o NEW MOBILE, LETHAL ARMOR

We re-directed the Armored Systems Modernization program away from a new heavy tank for Europe and toward a more survivable tank that could be more readily deployed in an operation such as Desert Shield.

o THREAT-SMART FORCES

Our bill re-orientes our intelligence and communications systems away from the confrontation with the Soviet Union and toward more unpredictable regional contingencies.

The committee provided for these programs in a fiscally responsible manner, by cutting Cold War systems like the B-2 and SDI which contribute little to our security in the new world.

In sum, the Gulf crisis has validated the choices our bill made back in July. We had the right priorities before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and we have the right priorities today.

There's no question that this week's defense debate will be historic and pivotal. I hope I can count on your support for H.R. 4739--the FY 91 Defense Authorization Bill.

LS

Les Aspin
Chairman