



[UPDATED] The Dangers of Deep Defense Cuts:

What America's Civilian and Military Leaders are Saying

May 23, 2012

Under current law, the U.S. Department of Defense automatically faces significant spending cuts over the next 10 years—cuts that America's civilian and military leaders have candidly described as “devastating” and “very high risk.”

This precarious state of the Pentagon's future fiscal affairs is due to the Budget Control Act of 2011, the controversial August deal by which Congress and the President agreed to raise America's debt limit. As part of the bargain, the debt-limit deal immediately placed ceilings to cap the defense budget and other forms of discretionary spending. In implementing these budgetary caps, the Obama administration recently proposed in its fiscal year (FY) 2013 budget to cut Pentagon spending by roughly \$487 billion over the next decade.

However, because Congress failed to meet the Budget Control Act's deadline to reduce the long-term deficit by \$1.2 trillion, the Pentagon now faces the worst-case scenario: current law now requires additional across-the-board cuts to the Pentagon budget totaling more than \$500 billion over ten years.

The stakes couldn't be higher for the Defense Department—and America's long-term national security. As illustrated by the recent quotations below, civilian leaders in the Executive Branch and Congress, and military leaders in the U.S. Armed Forces continue to voice grave concerns about the dangers of deep defense cuts and underscore the urgency of undoing sequestration immediately

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Executive Branch

President Barack Obama

- “Now, as Commander-in-Chief, I have no greater responsibility than protecting our national security, and I will never accept cuts that compromise our ability to defend our homeland or America's interests around the world.” ([April 13, 2011](#))

Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta

- Sequestration “...would have a devastating effect on not only national defense but I think on the rest of the country. It's totally unacceptable, and frankly our political leaders cannot allow it to happen. That's where I'm coming from on this issue.” ([May 3, 2012](#))
- “[H]aving served in the Congress and having worked on budget issues most of the time I was in Congress, I'm very concerned that the Congress, both Democrats and Republicans, have to show leadership here, and can't just allow sequestration to take effect. I mean, the whole purpose of sequestration, or even developing a crazy vehicle like that, was to ensure that they would exercise leadership to prevent it from happening. Instead, they weren't able to come together on any proposal and now we have this thing supposedly taking place in January.” ([May 3, 2012](#))
- “There isn't any member I've talked to that doesn't think that sequester is a disaster... All of them understand that it's the wrong way to go. And I just have to hope that ultimately, they will find the courage and leadership to be able to address that issue, de-trigger sequester, deal with the other challenges that are out there and try to do it as soon as possible because frankly, the longer this drags on, the more of an impact it has in terms of the planning process and in terms of the budget process. And frankly, even though we're not planning for sequester to take place because it is such a disastrous step if it occurs, it still has an impact within the department and outside the department for planning purposes.” ([April 16, 2012](#))
- “I think... the shadow of sequestration is there. And I don't think we're kidding anybody by saying that somehow, it's not having some impact. Clearly... the industrial community is concerned about the potential for its impact. It continues to be a concern that we have as far as the possibility that that could happen.” ([April 16, 2012](#))
- “If additional efforts are made to go after the defense budget, I think it could have a serious impact in terms of our ability to implement the strategy.” ([February 26, 2012](#))
- “We are more than prepared to work with the Congress to try to develop an approach that will de-trigger sequestration. This approach would subject the department to another \$500 billion in additional cuts that would be required to take place in a meat-ax approach. We are convinced that it would result in hollowing-out the force and inflicting severe damage to our national defense.” ([February 16, 2012](#))
- “[A]s I've said time and time and time again, sequestration is a crazy process that would do untold damage to our national defense. It's -- it's a mechanism that would do, you know, just kind of blind -- blind-sided cuts across the board and would really hollow-out the force.” ([February 15, 2012](#))

- "... [Under sequestration] we would have to reduce the size of the military sharply. Rough estimates suggest after ten years of these cuts, we would have the smallest ground force since 1940, the smallest number of ships since 1915, and the smallest Air Force in its history." ([November 14, 2011](#))
- "Unfortunately, while large cuts are being imposed, the threats to national security would not be reduced. As a result, we would have to formulate a new security strategy that accepted substantial risk of not meeting our defense needs A sequestration budget is not one that I could recommend." ([November 14, 2011](#))
- "I've learned that by cutting in excess of 20 percent in every area, sequester will lead to a hollow force. And let me explain just exactly what we're talking about when we talk about a hollow force. Obviously, that which is hollow retains a shell but lacks a core. A hollow military has the organizational structure but lacks the people, the training and the equipment it needs to actually get the job done." ([November 10, 2011](#))
- "A hollow military doesn't happen by accident. It comes from poor stewardship and poor leadership. I guess my message to the Congress is that it must show the necessary leadership by doing the job that they've been asked to do. That means identifying savings in the two-thirds of the federal budget that still has yet to be considered for deficit reduction, along, in my view, with additional revenues." ([November 10, 2011](#))
- "In my conversations with the members of Congress and with members of the committee, I have told them that if this -- if this nation has brave young men and women who are willing to die and put their lives on the line in order to sacrifice for this country, it really shouldn't be too much to ask our leaders to sacrifice just a little, to provide the leadership essential to solving the problems facing this country." ([November 10, 2011](#))
- "[Sequestration] is a blind, mindless formula that makes cuts across the board, hampers our ability to align resources with strategy and risks hollowing out the force." ([October 13, 2011](#))
- "...[W]hat I'm urging the committee—the supercommittee to do is do the right thing, come up with the decisions that should be made, frankly, on the two-thirds of the budget that is still yet to be considered for deficit reduction. They're working with the one-third of the budget in discretionary spending, and it's taking a trillion-dollar hit, and defense is going to have to pay up almost half of that." ([October 13, 2011](#))
- [On whether DoD, with ~\$450 billion, has contributed enough to cuts] "Absolutely. The fact is, we're having to cut a half trillion dollars – almost a half trillion dollars out of the defense budget. And that's going to take – it's going to take, as I said, some very difficult choices." ([October 13, 2011](#))
- "We can do [pre-sequestration defense cuts] in a way that protects our force for the future. But it's going to take us to the edge, and if suddenly on top of that we face additional cuts, or if this sequester goes into effect and it doubles the number of cuts, then it'll truly devastate our national defense, because it will then require that we have to go at our force structure. We will have to hollow it out. We will RIF [reduction-in-force] people. It will badly damage our capabilities for the future.... And if you have a smaller force, you're not going to be able to be out there responding in as many areas as we do now." ([October 13, 2011](#))

- “Going forward, as we debate the proper size and role of the American military in the 21st century, we must remember that the American people and our partners across the globe are safer, more stable, and more prosperous because of our global leadership, and the strength of our military.” ([October 11, 2011](#))
- “Given the nature of today’s security landscape, we cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of past reductions in force that followed World War II, Korea, Vietnam and the fall of the Iron Curtain, which—to varying degrees, as a result of across the board cuts—weakened our military. We must avoid, at all costs, a hollow military—one that lacks sufficient training and equipment to adapt to surprises and uncertainty, a defining feature of the security environment we confront. We cannot and we must not repeat the mistakes of the past.” ([October 11, 2011](#))
- “Congress, in particular, must prevent disastrous cuts from taking effect, particularly with the mechanism that was built into the budget control act known as ‘sequester’. This mechanism would force defense cuts that would do catastrophic damage to our military and its ability to protect the country. It would double the number of cuts that we confront, and it would damage our interests not only here, but around the world. It would require a mindless approach of drastic cuts to both defense and domestic discretionary accounts.” ([October 11, 2011](#))
- “... [O]ur military must maintain its technological edge. Over the past two decades, our military has made particularly striking advances in precision-guided weapons, unmanned systems, cyber and space technologies—but our advantages here could erode unless we maintain a robust industrial and science and technology base. If we lose that base, it will impact on our ability to maintain a strong national defense—it’s that simple.” ([October 11, 2011](#))
- Senator Lindsey Graham: “If we pull that [sequestration] trigger, would we be shooting ourselves in the foot?”

Secretary Panetta: “We’d be shooting ourselves in the head.” ([September 22, 2011](#))

- “[D]efense is taking more than its share of the cuts. We’re doing in excess of \$450 billion in reductions.... [I]f you’re serious about dealing with the deficit, don’t go back to the discretionary account. Pay attention to the two-thirds of the federal budget that is in large measure responsible for the size of the debt that we’re dealing with.” ([September 20, 2011](#))
- “Even as we take on our share of the country’s efforts to achieve fiscal discipline, we still face the potentially devastating mechanism known as ‘sequester.’ So I’ve tried to make clear over the past month the roughly \$1 trillion in cuts that would be forced by sequester would seriously weaken our military, and it would really make us unable to protect this nation from a range of security threats that we face.” ([September 20, 2011](#))
- “If [Congress and the President] do the sequester, this kind of massive cut across the board which would literally double the number of cuts what we’re confronting—that would have devastating effects on our national defense.... Very simply, it would result in hollowing out the force. It would terribly weaken our ability to respond to the threats in the world. But more importantly, it would break faith with the troops and with their families. And a volunteer army is absolutely essential to our national defense. Any kind of cut like that would literally undercut our ability to put together the kind of strong national defense we have today.” ([August 16, 2011](#))

- “Sequester will not only impact our military strength, I think it will impact our economic strength as well. Cancellation of weapon systems, construction projects, research activity would seriously cripple our industrial base, which would be unacceptable not only to me as Secretary of Defense but to our ability to be able to maintain the best defense system for the world.” ([August 4, 2011](#))
- “It is that multitude of security challenges that makes me particularly concerned about the sequester mechanism that was contained in the debt-ceiling agreement. This mechanism—this kind of doomsday mechanism that was built into the agreement—is designed so that it would only take effect if Congress fails to enact further measures to reduce the deficit. But if it happened—and God willing, that would not be the case, but if it did happen—it would result in a further round of very dangerous cuts across the board, defense cuts that I believe would do real damage to our security, our troops and their families, and our military’s ability to protect the nation.” ([August 4, 2011](#))
- “I do not believe—based on my long experience in government and working with the budget—that we have to choose between strong fiscal discipline and strong national defense. I don’t deny that there are going to be tough decisions that have to be made and tough choices that have to be made. But we owe it to our citizens to provide both strong fiscal discipline and a strong national defense.” ([June 9, 2011](#))
- “[Defense spending] is by no means the cause of the deficits.” ([June 9, 2011](#))

General David Petraeus (ret.), Director of the Central Intelligence Agency

- “As our nation contemplates difficult budget decisions, I know that our leaders will remember that our people, our men and women in uniform, are our military, and that taking care of them and their families must be our paramount objective.” ([August 31, 2011](#))
- “... [W]e have relearned since 9/11 the timeless lesson that we don't always get to fight the wars for which we are most prepared or most inclined. Given that reality, we will need to maintain the full-spectrum capability that we have developed over this last decade of conflict in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere.” ([August 31, 2011](#))

Former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates

- If the base Pentagon budget were cut by 10 percent—“which would be disastrous” for the military—that would only be \$50 billion of a \$1.4 trillion deficit, “We are not the problem.” ([June 30, 2011](#))
- “.... [A] smaller military, no matter how superb, will be able to go fewer places and be able to do fewer things.” ([May 24, 2011](#))
- “If we are going to reduce the resources and the size of the U.S. military, people need to make conscious choices about what the implications are for the security of the country, as well as for the variety of military operations we have around the world if lower priority missions are scaled back or eliminated. They need to understand what it could mean for a smaller pool of troops and their families if America is forced into a protracted land war again—yes, the kind no defense secretary should recommend anytime soon, but one we may not be able to avoid. To shirk this discussion of risks and consequences—and the hard decisions that must follow—I would regard as managerial cowardice.” ([May 24, 2011](#))

- “If history—and religion—teach us anything, it is that there will always be evil in the world, people bent on aggression, oppression, satisfying their greed for wealth and power and territory, or determined to impose an ideology based on the subjugation of others and the denial of liberty to men and women. More than any other Secretary of Defense, I have been a strong advocate of soft power—of the critical importance of diplomacy and development as fundamental components of our foreign policy and national security. But make no mistake, the ultimate guarantee against the success of aggressors, dictators, and terrorists in the 21st century, as in the 20th, is hard power—the size, strength, and global reach of the United States military.

“Beyond the current wars, our military credibility, commitment, and presence are required to sustain alliances, to protect trade routes and energy supplies, and to deter would-be adversaries from making the kind of miscalculations that so often lead to war.

“All of these things happen mostly out of sight and out of mind to the average American, and thus are taken for granted. But they all depend on a properly armed, trained and funded American military, which cannot be taken for granted.” ([May 22, 2011](#))

- “Indeed, throughout our history, Americans have periodically been tempted to crouch behind the nation's borders, feeling secure surrounded by the vast seas, in the belief that remote events elsewhere in the world need not bother us. That approach has repeatedly led to disastrous results, whether it was the failure to manage rising and aggressive powers in Europe in the first half of the 20th century or failing to deal with the rise of a violent terrorist network that would strike us here at home on 9/11. The lessons of history tell us we must not allow our frustrations to cause us to withdraw from the world or diminish our ability or our determination to deal with the threats and challenges on the horizon.” ([May 14, 2011](#))
- “... [M]y greatest fear is that in economic tough times that people will see the defense budget as the place to solve the nation's deficit problems, to find money for other parts of the government.... And as I look around the world and see a more unstable world, more failed and failing states, countries that are investing heavily in their militaries—as I look at places like Iran and North Korea and elsewhere around the world—as I look at the new kinds of threats emerging from cyber to precision ballistic and cruise missiles and so on—my greatest worry is that we will do to the defense budget what we have done four times before.

“And that is, slash it in an effort to find some kind of a dividend to put the money someplace else. I think that would be disastrous in the world environment we see today and what we're likely to see in the years to come.” ([August 9, 2010](#))

Office of Management and Budget Director Jacob Lew

- “As a result of the size of the [*Budget Control Act's* sequestration] cuts, and the manner in which they may be imposed, DoD [the Department of Defense] would almost certainly be forced to furlough large numbers of its civilian works. Training would have to be curtailed, the force reduced, and purchases of weapons would have to be cut dramatically. In short, there could be significant impacts on our military capabilities and on our ability to execute the current national security strategy.... Reductions of this magnitude, imposed in this manner, could pose a significant risk to national security.” ([September 15, 2011](#))

Office of Management and Budget Controller Daniel Werfel

- “The president has made clear that Congress can and should act to avoid the sequester. The intention of the sequester was to drive Congress to a compromise through the threat of mutually disagreeable cuts to both defense and non-defense discretionary funding. If allowed to occur, the sequester would be highly destructive to national security and domestic priorities and core government functions.” (April 25, 2012)

Office Of Management And Budget Acting Director Jeffrey Zients

- “In terms of the sequester, it is a bad policy. It's bad policy all around. It would lead to the cuts on the defense side that go across the board or indiscriminant totaling \$500 billion. We have similar cuts of similar magnitude on the discretionary side and elsewhere which are not appropriate. So overall, the sequester is bad policy.” ([February 14, 2012](#))

Legislative Branch (Alphabetical Order)

Senators Jon Kyl (R-AZ), Marco Rubio (R-FL), Kelly Ayotte (R-NH), John McCain (R-AZ), Lindsey Graham (R-SC), and John Cornyn (R-TX)

- “We all agree that the Defense Department must eliminate wasteful programs and continue to find efficiencies; however, our defense policy is becoming less about military strategy and more about fiscal strategy. Officials are forced to align resources to reflect arbitrary budget numbers rather than actual threats confronting the United States.” ([March 28, 2012](#))
- “At a minimum, we have to prevent the across-the-board cuts from taking full effect in 2013.” ([March 28, 2012](#))

Senator Kelly Ayotte (R-NH), Congressman Charles F. Bass (R-NH) and Congressman Frank Guinta (R-NH)

- “Defending our country represents the federal government's primary constitutional responsibility, and our military leaders have consistently testified that threats to our national security have increased, not decreased. Yet, in this national security context, defense sequestration would reduce our military capabilities, harm our military readiness to respond to future contingencies, and break faith with our troops.” ([April 9, 2012](#))

Senator Kelly Ayotte (R-NH), Member of the Senate Armed Services Committee

- “I worry that President Obama's proposed defense budget is based more on, in my view, what was irresponsible and what we did in the Budget Control Act, and what the Office of Management and Budget has handed you in terms of a number that treats all federal expenditures the same, rather than a clear-eyed, objective assessment of our U.S. national security interests and the kind of military that we need to protect those interests and the American people.” ([May 10, 2012](#))
- “If sequestration goes forward, it won't just be BRAC, it will be everything on the table. It will be like BRAC on steroids if sequestration goes forward.” ([March 13, 2012](#))

Congressman John Boehner (R-OH), Speaker of the House of Representatives

- “[W]hen it comes to what's going to happen to our military with these cuts in January, you can imagine that there are a lot of people concerned. The Defense Secretary's made clear that these cuts will devastate our ability to keep our country safe. The White House has admitted that these cuts will have a devastating impact on our military. So where is their plan? It's as simple as that.” (May 16, 2012)
- “I'm not happy about the sequester, the way it's made up. I think it could be replaced. I think the defense cuts in that would take place in January of 2013 are unsustainable and will put America at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to defending our interest at home and abroad.” ([February 6, 2012](#))
- [On Department of Defense cuts prior to sequestration] “I would argue that they've taken more than their fair share of the hits.” ([October 27, 2011](#))

Congressman Paul Broun (R-GA), Member of the House Homeland Security Committee

- “We don't have enough Marines. We don't have enough brigades in the Army. We don't have enough ships in the Navy. Or enough wings in the Air Force. We need to be building our military, not tearing it down. Our military is stretched to the limits. Families are being destroyed because of multiple deployments and our military is tired in the personnel, tired in the equipment. We need to be spending more on the military—which is the constitutional function of the federal government under the original intent.” ([October 5, 2011](#))

Congressman Norm Dicks (D-WA), Ranking Member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense

- “You'd have a major, major cut in defense [if the Budget Control Act's sequestration mechanism is activated] — it's unacceptable... There's no way to speculate what would happen. But I think at some point — if there are cuts of that magnitude — there would have to be a reduction in force.” ([September 25, 2011](#))

Congressman Randy Forbes (R-VA), Chairman of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness

- “When Congress passed the Budget Control Act, these defense cuts were an afterthought. There was no predecision analysis that our country needed less national security. It was a last-minute deal to solve the debt ceiling crisis. Congress played chicken with our national security, and that game clock is winding down until Jan. 2, when the clock runs out on our nation's armed services.” ([May 17, 2012](#))
- “This strategy is not the strategy of a superpower, this is a menu for mediocrity.... We're going to see the dismantling of the greatest military [in] the world; not by some Goliath that rose up in some other part of the world, but by the thousand cuts that we sat back and just let take place.” ([February 15, 2012](#))
- “All of a sudden, we now have, truly, a strategy that's being driven by the budget, not a budget that's being driven by the strategy.” ([February 15, 2012](#))
- “[T]he final [myth] is this, that we can make these kinds of drastic cuts without a substantial risk to our future.” ([September 8, 2011](#))
- “As we consider our deficit, federal spending and the impact on our defense budget, I believe we should be asking four questions: first, what are the threats we face? Second, what resources do our combatant commanders need to protect us against those threats? Third, what do these resources cost and how can we obtain them as efficiently as possible? And, fourth, what can we afford, and what are the risks to our nation if we do not supply those resources? I believe many in Congress and the White House have been asking only the portion of question four that asked how much they want to spend and have been ignoring the other questions almost entirely.” ([July 26, 2011](#))

Congressman Trent Franks (R-AZ), Member of the House Armed Services Committee

- “I'm convinced that if this so-called Super Committee fails and sequestration is triggered, it will mean undoing the greatest military force in the history of humanity. And potentially the beginning of our financial ruin as well, because the military creates all kinds of ripples in our economy and the high paying jobs that result. If there is any true stimulus that the government can make, it is to keep this country strong and to invest in the men and women

who give everything they have for all of us. Not only do these cuts jeopardize our national security, of course they endanger our economy." ([October 5, 2011](#))

Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee and Armed Services Committee

- "I will introduce legislation that will protect the defense department from devastating cuts... If [the Super Committee] fails, don't destroy the Defense Department." ([September 25, 2011](#))
- "I'm willing to do things that will be controversial to make the Department of Defense budget sustainable and more business-like. But what I'm not willing to do, as a Ronald Reagan Republican, is put on the table cuts in defense that would say to the country and the world at large, 'defense is a secondary concern when it comes to Washington spending.' " ([September 8, 2011](#))
- "My view of this debt ceiling debate is that the Republican party agreed to a \$600 billion defense cut as part of a trigger if we couldn't control domestic spending—which is a philosophical shift from the Reagan party that we need to push back against." ([September 8, 2011](#))

Congresswoman Vicky Hartzler (R-MO), Member of the House Armed Services Committee

- "The first responsibility of the United States government is to provide for the common defense, Without further action by the Senate and the Obama Administration, significant across the board cuts to defense will take place in January of next year as part of the sequestration process resulting from the failure of legislators to reach an agreement on how to reduce the deficit. This sequestration process came about as a result of the Budget Control Act that raised the debt ceiling – which I voted against." ([May 10, 2012](#))

Congressman Duncan Hunter (R-CA), Member of the House Armed Services Committee

- "This budget begins the process of putting in motion deep cuts to our national defense. Instead of calculating our security investments based on existing and emerging threats, while looking for efficiencies wherever possible, this plan ignores the full scope of danger facing U.S. and global security. ([January 27, 2012](#))
- "The primary role of government is to provide for the common defense of the American people. Anyone in public office has just as much of an obligation to uphold this commitment as do the men and women in our military. Allowing the automatic defense cuts to go into effect would be a clear abandonment of this duty." ([December 16, 2011](#))

Senator Jim Inhofe (R-OK), Member of the Senate Armed Services Committee

- "These devastating additional \$500 billion in proposed cuts to our military forces would take effect just three months into the new fiscal year. The Defense Department cannot wait until after this year's elections to address this issue. We need to fix it now. President Obama has already gutted our military with the defense cuts contained in his budget. Adding sequestration cuts on top of that will have irreparable consequences." ([March 29, 2012](#))

Congressman John Kline (R-MN), Member of House Armed Services Committee

- “Setting aside the nightmare sequestration, the budget in front of us is alarming enough: the small, in my estimation, number of ships; the reduced number of amphibious ships. We’re looking at expanding into the Pacific -- or reemphasizing the Pacific and reducing the number of ships at the same time.” ([February 16, 2012](#))

Senator Jon Kyl (R-AZ), Republican Whip and Member of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction

- “Secretary Panetta said the sequester would do catastrophic damage to our military and its ability to protect our country. And what’s amazing to me is that the President said that he would veto any effort to do this. Now, he’s the Commander-in-Chief, and when his own Defense Secretary says that it would be catastrophic, it seems to me that the President needs to readjust his thinking on that.” ([February 15, 2012](#))
- “Defense is not the cause of the problem and therefore it cannot be seen as the solution to deficit reduction.” ([September 8, 2011](#))
- “You set a defense budget based on your needs and requirements for national security, not based on some artificial percentage or number because of deficit reduction.” ([September 8, 2011](#))
- “[D]efense has already taken huge hits—especially in the last three years, but really over the last several years.... In a three-and-a-half trillion dollar budget, two-thirds of which is entitlements, there is enough slop in the system that you can find a trillion and half in savings [over the next ten years], without deeply cutting into benefits, or totally readjusting how these programs work—although they will require some adjustment. People kid about waste, fraud, and abuse, but it’s real. And if we have the courage to face that, we can find the savings without forcing additional discretionary cuts, which, of course, would implicate defense spending.... So my point of view is that defense should not have any additional cuts.” ([September 8, 2011](#))

Congressman Doug Lamborn (R-CO), Member of the House Armed Services Committee

- “The Armed Services Committee expects at least twenty-five percent of the civilian workforce to be furloughed if this sequestration takes place. And according to Secretary Leon Panetta, at least a million jobs would be lost. He calls this a doomsday mechanism. So in closing, deeper cuts to our military would be so detrimental to our national security it’s horrible to contemplate. There’s no doubt that we can find efficiencies in a large budget like the Department of Defense has. And I am a fiscal conservative. But we don’t want to cut capabilities. That’s what I’m concerned about.” ([October 5, 2011](#))

Senator Carl Levin (D-MI), Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee

- “As you know, as a result of the Budget Control Act, the Department of Defense (DOD) will reduce its budget by an estimated \$450 billion over the next 10 years; this is apart from any sequestration which could trigger as much as an additional \$600 billion in DOD cuts, which I agree with Secretary Panetta would be disastrous. In light of the programmatic challenges DOD faces in achieving this initial \$450 billion in savings in the midst of multiple wars, and the detrimental effect additional cuts could have for our national security, I am unable to recommend further discretionary cuts to DOD’s budget as part of the Joint Select Committee’s deficit reduction proposal, particularly prior to the completion of the strategy-driven review currently being conducted by DOD.” ([October 14, 2011](#))

Senator Joseph Lieberman (I-CT), Chairman of the Senate Homeland Security & Government Affairs Committee

- “[T]he risk involved in this budget is unacceptable. Therefore, I believe that we have to have the political courage both in facing the budget for fiscal year 2013 and the threat of sequestration to work together across party lines and with the President and the administration to reduce the impact of these proposed cuts. And we've got to do it responsibly. We've either got to find savings elsewhere or we've got to have the political guts to raise revenues to pay for an adequate defense, to in my opinion fulfill our constitutional responsibility to provide for the common defense.” ([February 14, 2012](#))
- “[W]e must not and cannot balance our budget by retreating from the world. We will not grow our economy by embracing protectionism. We will not close the deficit by gutting the defense budget. The path to restoring fiscal responsibility and economic growth at home is not through strategic irresponsibility abroad. It is through disciplined and bipartisan leadership at home and abroad.” ([June 21, 2011](#))

Congressman Kevin McCarthy (R-CA), House Majority Whip

- “The Pentagon shouldn't be and hasn't been immune to spending reductions, but it is reckless and irresponsible to make arbitrary cuts to programs vital to our national defense.” ([May 3, 2012](#))

Senator John McCain (R-AZ), Ranking Member of the Senate Armed Services Committee

- “I haven't really seen anything quite as unusual as this situation that we are facing. We have the sequestration which has been mandated by the Congress and the president of the United States staring us in the face. Sequestration that, according to the Secretary of Defense, not any of these members here, but the Secretary of Defense, is having a devastating effect on our ability to defend this nation. That it is impossible for the United States to meet its national security obligations if this sequestration takes place.” ([March 29, 2012](#))
- “I believe that the cuts that are required by sequestration aimed at the Department of Defense are a threat to our nation's security and we are opposed to that draconian action, as is the secretary of defense and others.” (February 2, 2012)

Congressman Howard “Buck” McKeon (R-CA), Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee

- “This sequester was never intended to be policy. It was meant to be something both parties wished to avoid, in order to motivate members of the supercommittee to work together.... There is strong bipartisan agreement that the sequester is bad policy and should be replaced.” ([May 9, 2012](#))
- “The cuts that I outlined take us right to the limit of acceptable risk. Because the Congressional Super Committee failed to reach an agreement on mandatory spending, a sequestration mechanism will kick in on January 1st. Sequestration takes all the cuts I outlined and doubles them. It pushes us far past the limit of acceptable risk, and would put this great country in considerable danger.” ([March 13, 2012](#))

- “The cuts will force another one hundred thousand troops out of the Army and Marines. We’ll shrink our Navy to its smallest size since before World War One. And the Air Force will be the smallest in its history. We will not modernize our nuclear deterrent, which hasn’t seen replacement systems in decades and is the smallest since the early 1950s. Active duty military, reservists, federal civilians, and contractors will be laid off. Some assembly lines and shipyards will close. We estimate that around one and a half million people will lose their jobs as a result of the defense cuts in sequestration.” ([March 13, 2012](#))
- “The president’s budget is a clear articulation of his priorities. The president’s budget asks the men and women in uniform, who have given so much already, to give that much more so that the president might fund more domestic programs.” ([February 15, 2012](#))
- “The administration appears committed to ensuring the military is the only sector of the federal government to meaningfully contribute to deficit reduction. Simultaneously, the budget proposes additional spending by diverting savings from declining war funding to domestic infrastructure spending. How can you save by not spending money that wasn’t in the budget to begin with? This is a cynical gimmick that once more ensures our military -- and only our military -- is held responsible for what little deficit reduction this budget represents.” ([February 15, 2012](#))
- “An honest and valid strategy for national defense can’t be founded on the premise that we must do more with less or even less with less. Rather, you proceed from a clear articulation of the full scope of the threats you face and the commitments you have. You then resource the strategy required to defeat those threats decisively. One does not mask insufficient resources with a strategy founded on hope.” ([February 15, 2012](#))
- “Defense has contributed more than half of the deficit reduction measures taken to date. There are some in government who want to use the military to pay for the rest, to protect the sacred cow that is entitlement spending. Not only should that be a non-starter from a national security and economic perspective, but it should also be a non-starter from a moral perspective.” ([October 13, 2011](#))
- “... [G]lobal leadership is heavy and expensive. I understand that. But our military’s positive role as a defender of the global peace is undeniable.” ([September 12, 2011](#))
- “As we begin to emerge from a long, tough fight, this should be the time to reset and rebuild our military. Instead, we are lowering our gloves.

“At a time when our military is falling into disrepair, we have laid out over half a trillion dollars in projected cuts to Pentagon spending. I cannot understate how dangerous these defense cuts have become.” ([September 12, 2011](#))
- “50% of the mandatory cuts associated with the trigger are from the defense budget. That is a deeply unbalanced number, with defense accounting for less than 20% of federal spending.” ([September 12, 2011](#))
- “Admiral Greenert, our incoming Chief of Naval Operations, recently testified that he needed around 400 ships to meet the Navy’s broad set of missions.

“Well, we had a nearly 550 ship fleet in 1992; today we are projected to drop to 250. At the end of the Cold War, we had 76 Army combat brigades. Today we have 45. We had 82 [U.S. Air Force] fighter squadrons, today we have 39.” ([September 12, 2011](#))

- "A Marine general recently testified in front of my committee that if America had another military emergency, they could only respond to the Central Command area of operations. That's it. In short, if something happened in the Pacific, don't bother calling the Marines." ([September 12, 2011](#))
- "I believe in peace, and I pray for peace. But, like General Marshall, I am clear about how peace is sustained. Stability rests on the shoulders of the American military." ([April 28, 2011](#))
- "For the past two years, the Pentagon has suffered cut after damaging cut, killing off vital military modernization programs and atrophying our military's end strength. Yet after pilfering our national security budget to pay for more entitlement programs and irresponsible social spending, President Obama announced plans to cut a jaw-dropping \$400 billion from the defense budget over a 12-year period." ([April 28, 2011](#))
- "The defense cuts of the recent past, present, and future will weaken our nation, leave us vulnerable to attack and hasten in an unmistakable era of American decline." ([April 28, 2011](#))
- "There are reasonable ways to cut waste in the defense budget. Oversight and acquisition reform can help us spend defense dollars smartly. But carving out critical capabilities while our nation is at war is simply wrongheaded." ([April 28, 2011](#))

Congressman Steven Palazzo (R-MS), Member of the House Armed Services Committee

- "[W]e have to do whatever it takes to make sure sequestration does not hit our military. You know, when I first got here, less than 13 months ago, we were talking about \$78 billion in cuts. And then it was \$100 billion in efficiency savings that was going to be reinvested. And now we're at \$487 billion with the possibility of another \$500 billion. That's reckless. It's dangerous. It's morally irresponsible." ([February 16, 2012](#))

Congressman Scott Rigell (R-VA), Member of the House Armed Services Committee

- Sequestration "would devastate our national security and our local economy. A strong defense is the first responsibility of the federal government." ([March 29, 2012](#))

Congresswoman Martha Roby (R-AL), Member of the House Armed Services Committee

- When commenting on the effects of sequestration: "Our military will cease to operate as we know it today. They can't. They don't have the resources... We will not be able to have the presence that we need to have in certain areas of this world. And it's frightening." ([May 4, 2012](#))

Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL), Member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and Committee on Foreign Relations

- "The good news is that I can't find anyone around here who actually thinks this is a good idea. Everybody agrees that this would be catastrophic. The bad news is that we can't find enough people around here who want to do anything about it right away." ([March 29, 2012](#))

- “And I think we’re already in the process of making significant reductions in defense spending. But to eviscerate defense spending the way this administration is contemplating doing, or the way, quite frankly, that the debt limit deal contemplates doing, is just unsustainable.” ([February 15, 2012](#))
- “The kinds of cuts being talked about would endanger our national security and our ability to defend ourselves and our allies. There’s already been around \$300 billion of cuts that have been approved or discussed. If nothing happens with the super debt committee, it could reach a trillion dollars, which would be devastating.” ([September 15, 2011](#))
- “We have to understand that our defense spending is not the driver of national debt and that these significant kinds of cuts that people are talking about in the trillions would be devastating to our national defense.” ([September 15, 2011](#))
- “Now, I am a strong advocate of cutting unnecessary and wasteful spending, but the defense budget is not the biggest driver of our debt—it accounts for roughly twenty percent of our annual federal spending. By contrast, entitlement programs swallow more than half the budget and they are the main drivers of our debt.” ([September 13, 2011](#))
- “The Pentagon already faced sharp cuts. During his last two years in office, Secretary of Defense Gates cut or curtailed procurement programs that, if taken to completion, would have cost \$300 billion. This summer, the President and congressional leaders agreed to cut another \$350 billion from the defense budget over the next ten years.

“Those cuts by themselves alone are worrisome enough but what is more worrisome is what’s looming: In the worst case scenario, if the so-called Debt Super Committee doesn’t reach any deal at all, the Pentagon could stand to be slashed by more than \$1 trillion over ten years.

“Our new secretary of defense—himself is a well-known budget hawk – has warned that cutbacks of this scale would have a “devastating effect on our national defense.” ([September 13, 2011](#))

- “If America refuses to lead, who will combat international outlaws? Who will stop terrorists and weapons proliferators? Who will deal with the Iranian and North Korean nuclear programs? The rising disorder in Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia? The growing challenge from China which seeks to dominate East Asia, but won’t even let its own people use Google?” ([September 13, 2011](#))
- “The American armed forces have been one of the greatest forces of good in the world during the past century. They stopped Nazism and Communism and other evils such as Serbian ethnic-cleansing. They have helped birthed democracies from Germany to Iraq. They have delivered relief supplies, and performed countless tasks in service to our nation.

“All they have ever asked for in return is that we provide them the tools to get the job done—and that we look after them and their families. They have never failed us in our time of need.

“We must not fail them now. We must maintain a strong national defense.” ([September 13, 2011](#))

Congressman Paul Ryan (R-WI), Chairman of the House Committee on the Budget

- “If there's one thing that we have bipartisan agreement on, if there's one area where we agree with the president and the secretary of defense, it's that this sequester will decimate our military at a time when our men and women are overseas fighting in a war, in a world that has become much more dangerous.” (May 8, 2012)
- “The United States remains a nation at war, and our troops remain engaged against a fierce enemy overseas. It is difficult to square this reality with the President's steep reductions in both troop levels and funding levels. The timing of these cuts raises serious concerns that decisions are being driven by budgetary concerns as opposed to strategic priorities.” ([February 29, 2012](#))
- “The failure by the Administration to deal honestly with the drivers of the debt – specifically when it comes to government spending on health care – is a failure that imperils our economic security and our national security. With its call for crushing levels of debt and the crowding out of defense by entitlement spending, the President's budget – in my opinion – charts a path to decline.” ([February 29, 2012](#))
- “Defense spending as a share of the budget has fallen from around 25 percent thirty years ago to around 20 percent today. Like all categories of government spending, defense spending should be executed with greater efficiency and accountability. But responsible budgeting must never lose sight of the fact that the first responsibility of the federal government is to provide for the defense of the nation.” ([April 5, 2011](#))
- “Unlike defense, the share of the budget that goes to these entitlement programs is growing rapidly. In 1970, these major entitlements consumed about 20 percent of the budget—a number that has grown to over 40 percent today. Unless action is taken to reform these programs, they will continue to crowd out all other national priorities until they break the federal budget.” ([April 5, 2011](#))

Congressman Adam Smith (D-WA), Ranking Member of the House Armed Services Committee

- “...[W]e're not going to have more economic opportunity in this country if we have less influence in the world. It doesn't work that way.” ([November 2, 2011](#))
- “I came across this statistic that last year the United States Navy did 700 separate port calls in different Asian countries. And what that does is it builds relationships, it builds partnerships, all as part of a broad effort to make sure that those sea lanes in that critically important part of the world stays open to all; that China does not, sort of, flex its newfound muscle in a way that jeopardizes the interest, not just of the United States, but of a broad range of countries. We build that relationship by being present.” ([October 27, 2011](#))
- “And, again, all of that costs money. If we have 50 or 60 fewer ships, we're not doing 700 port calls. We don't have as many aircraft carrier battle groups, and we're not able to project power and protect our interests in that way. So I think it's a very powerful argument being made just on the numbers. If you simply look at the defense budget and say, gosh, if we cut this amount of money out of it, this is where we would be.” ([October 27, 2011](#))
- “And if we're going to get our GDP-to-debt ratio anywhere close to what the experts think it should be -- it's on a pace to go to 80 percent. If the super committee does what it's supposed to do, it really only pulls it down to about 75. We're supposed to be at 50. My point

is more is going to have to be cut or more revenue is going to have to be brought in.”
([October 27, 2011](#))

- “If we don't make the case for how to fix that [running a deficit slightly more than one-third of what we spend], defense is going to be crucified, because it is part of the discretionary budget.” ([October 27, 2011](#))
- “If we don't step up and confront the problem with either revenue or spending outside of the defense budget, give the super committee somewhere to go, give people who want to control the deficit, including by the way our bond raters, somewhere to go, inevitably, defense is going to be crushed.” ([October 27, 2011](#))
- “And here's the only real difference between discretionary and mandatory spending and revenue -- and this is our bad luck. In order to cut mandatory spending or increase revenue, Congress has to act. Basically, we have to pass a law. In order to cut discretionary spending, Congress simply doesn't act. And you can take a look at how Congress is functioning right now and very quickly conclude that you would much rather be on the side of Congress not acting than having to have them to act to protect what you're interested in.” ([October 27, 2011](#))
- “The second thing that we have to do is admit that savings can be found within the defense budget in a way that does not jeopardize national security. Basically embrace the idea of the strategic review that the White House and the Department of Defense are undergoing right now.” ([October 27, 2011](#))
- “We have too much middle management...you know, too many generals, too many admirals, too many layers of acquisition people. I'm told that not only are you paying people -- more people than you need, but it actually slows down the process. You have to go through seven or eight or nine or 10 different layers of approval, and by the time you do that you have a more inefficient system.” ([October 27, 2011](#))
- “If we go to sequestration, every line item in the defense budget -- and, frankly, every line item in all discretionary spending -- has to be cut by the exact same amount, which is, frankly, insane.” ([October 13, 2011](#))
- “I urge the Joint Select Committee to avoid cuts to the national defense accounts beyond the reductions already applied by the BCA. Further reductions could undermine national security...” ([October 13, 2011](#))
- “... And I agree with the chairman that the cuts that we are facing in our Department of Defense budget do place national security issues at risk.” ([October 13, 2011](#))

Congressman Mac Thornberry (R-TX), Member of the House Armed Services Committee

- “Providing for our common defense is one of our most serious constitutional responsibilities. With each day that passes, sequestration looms larger. These arbitrary and automatic cuts remain an enormous danger to our military and our national security, and Congress must do something about it.” ([May 18, 2012](#))

Congressman Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Ranking Member of the House Committee on the Budget

- “[T]here's no disagreement about the need to replace the meat ax cuts from the sequester with an alternative approach to reducing the deficit by at least \$1.2 trillion. And I want to emphasize that fact. The meat-ax across-the-board cuts to both defense and non-defense are a reckless way to reduce the deficit. And we need a responsible alternative.” (May 14, 2012)
- “This slash-and-burn approach isn't the best way forward for our country but was included as a measure of last resort to force both parties to come together and agree on a plan to reduce the deficit... It would be a big mistake to allow these additional cuts to take place for two important reasons: they would be too deep and too arbitrary.” ([April 3, 2012](#))

Congressman Allen West (R-FL), Member of the House Armed Services Committee

- “Not just so much from a strategic level, but also from a tactical level, through the operational level, back up to the strategic level, we have to go back and start developing a strategy first and foremost before we start looking to the military and basing the military upon the budget, or basing the military upon the numbers.” ([September 8, 2011](#))

Congressman Rob Wittman (R-VA), Member of the House Armed Services Committee

- “Numbers matter when assessing strategic risk despite the incredible capability of our current ship inventory. With that said, the capabilities of these ships matters as well and we need to find the right balance to execute the maritime strategy of the 21st century.” ([April 18, 2012](#))

Military Leaders

General Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

- If sequestration were to be implemented, "We would not any longer be a global power." ([February 27, 2012](#))
- "In my personal military judgment, formed over 38 years, we are living in the most dangerous time in my lifetime right now, and I think sequestration would be completely oblivious to that, and counterproductive." ([February 16, 2012](#))
- "I will tell you that I am prepared to say that sequestration would pose unacceptable risk..." ([February 14, 2012](#))
- "If some of the cuts occur in the magnitude and, more important, with the targets as they're described right now in sequestration, and it causes us to RIF - this goes back to the notion of, do we have the time to reduce the force over time responsible and predictably-that's one thing. If we don't, if we begin to have to RIF to meet the budget targets imposed by sequestration, we lose that core." ([October 13, 2011](#))
- "...[In the beginning of Iraq and Afghanistan] where we suffered was not in the basic rifle infantrymen - we can grow them, we can grow them in 20 to 30 weeks-you can't grow a captain, a major, a lieutenant colonel, a sergeant major in 20 to 30 weeks. And if we don't - if we're not careful with this and we have a migration of that talent out of the Army, that's irrevocable for probably 10 to 15 years." ([October 13, 2011](#))
- "National security didn't cause the debt crisis nor will it solve it." ([July 27, 2011](#))
- "Based on the difficulty of achieving the \$400 billion cut [to defense spending], I believe \$800 billion would be extraordinarily difficult and very high risk." ([July 26, 2011](#))
- "I'm a student of history, as you know, and I've studied the post-Vietnam period, I've studied the post-Desert Storm, [and the] Desert Shield period. What makes this period different is we're doing all this while we're still actively engaged in conflict and we have young men and women in harm's way. And that adds a degree of complexity and a degree of uncertainty that I think we can't discount." ([July 26, 2011](#))

Admiral Michael Mullen, Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

- "Ten years of war have not broken the all-volunteer force, but drastic budget measures that adversely affect the lives and livelihoods of our people very well might." ([September 20, 2011](#))
- "[W]e also, to a one, share your concerns about the devastating impact of further automatic cuts should the Congress fail to enact additional deficit-reduction measures... [T]here is nothing discretionary about the things we [in the Department of Defense] do every day for our fellow citizens. From the two wars we are fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, to the support we provide our NATO allies in Libya, from disaster relief missions like those in Haiti and Japan, to the training and exercises in joint combined operations we conduct around the world, the U.S. military remains a linchpin to defending our national interests. To loosen that pin unnecessarily through debilitating and capricious cuts—nearly double to those already in

the offing—puts at grave risk not only our ability to accomplish the missions we have been assigned, but those we have yet to be assigned as well.” ([August 4, 2011](#))

- “At about 4.5% of GDP, the return on U.S. defense spending has been immense and historic: preventing world war between great powers, securing the global commons and the free flow of international trade and natural resources, combating terrorism across the globe, and protecting the American people and our allies. However, our operations have come with stresses and strains as well as costs to our readiness. For this reason, if we are to continue to execute the missions set out by our strategy, we must recognize that returning from war and resetting the force is costly and will require several years of continued investment. Congressional support is required for our forces, their families, their equipment and training, and our military infrastructure to ensure the success of our ongoing efforts and for us to be ready to respond to new and emerging security challenges.” ([February 16, 2011](#))

General Raymond Odierno, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army

- “[W]hat even makes sequestration worse is we have no say in where the cuts come. It is directed across every element of our budget, and it’s a certain percentage. So what that would cause us to do is increase the pace of our end strength reductions. It would cause a hollowness -- significant hollowness in the force. It would probably cause us to breach many contracts that we already have in place because we would not meet the current requirements that we have on our developmental contracts. So it would affect every asset that we have in every area. So that’s the concern.” ([May 10, 2012](#))
- “[W]e are on a fine line right now with this cut... [F]rankly, we are on the razor’s edge when we talk about readiness, modernization, our end strength and force structure. If sequestration goes into effect, we will have to stop.” ([February 9, 2012](#))
- “We cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of previous reductions. I respectfully suggest that we make these decisions strategically, keeping in mind the realities of the risk they pose, and that we make these decisions together, unified, to ensure that when the plan is finally decided upon, all effort has been made to provide the Nation the best level of security and safety.” ([November 2, 2011](#))
- “Cuts of this magnitude [sequestration] would be catastrophic to the military and – in the case of the Army – would significantly reduce our capability and capacity to assure our partners abroad, respond to crises, and deter our potential adversaries, while threatening the readiness of our All-Volunteer Force.” ([November 2, 2011](#))
- “Sequestration would cause significant reductions in both Active and Reserve Component end strengths, impact the industrial base, and almost eliminate our modernization programs, denying the military superiority our Nation requires in today and tomorrow’s uncertain and challenging security environment.” ([November 2, 2011](#))
- “With sequestration, my assessment is that the Nation would incur an unacceptable level of strategic and operational risk.” ([November 2, 2011](#))
- “It [sequestration] would require us to completely revamp our National Security Strategy and reassess our ability to shape the global environment in order to protect the United States.” ([November 2, 2011](#))

General Lloyd J. Austin III, Vice Chief of Staff, U.S. Army

- “I think [sequestration] would drive us to go back and redo some of our planning, certainly make new assessments. That takes time. That certainly consumes a lot of organizational energy. So we are a bit concerned about that. I think from an Army perspective, again, we have not done any planning on this, as you know as you indicated. But the back of the envelope calculations are such that this would probably mean a loss of probably another 100,000 troops, 50 percent of those in the Guard and Reserve. And with those kinds of impacts, that probably would drive us to go back and relook our planning efforts here.” ([May 10, 2012](#))

General Peter Chiarelli, Former Vice Chief of Staff, U.S. Army

- “Once we break that \$450 billion threshold, our ability to meet our national security objectives and effectively protect our country against all threats or contingencies would be appreciably and increasingly undermined.” ([October 27, 2011](#))
- “For the United States Army, a \$1 trillion cut would mean training would have to be curtailed, degrading our overall operational readiness. The size of our force would be reduced, thus limiting our ability to respond to unforeseen contingencies.” ([October 27, 2011](#))
- “In short, a \$1 trillion cut would require us to assume significant operational risk by increasing response time to crises, conflicts, and disasters; severely degrading or impeding our capabilities, as well as our ability to employ forces around the world; and, in the event of unforeseen contingencies, this would most certainly equate to unacceptable risk in future combat operations.” ([October 27, 2011](#))
- “We must also guard against making assumptions about future requirements that may very well leave us unprepared or vulnerable in the event of unexpected or unforeseen contingencies requiring large ground forces.” ([October 27, 2011](#))
- “Absorbing cuts of up to \$1 trillion dollars would be extremely difficult during times of peace. Enacting such cuts while still conducting combat operations, after a decade of war fought in two separate theaters, would not only be extremely difficult, but would also poses tremendous risk to our longterm readiness and the security of our Nation.” ([October 27, 2011](#))
- “We must recognize that if we get it wrong with defense, the consequences will be measured not just in treasure, but in blood.” ([October 27, 2011](#))
- “While there is great appeal to pursuing the easy gains made by making cuts to force structure, there is significant risk associated with making arbitrary top line cuts without doing what is necessary to ensure what remains is a balanced, albeit smaller force capable of modest expansion should the need arise.” ([July 26, 2011](#))
- “These wars have also taken a toll on our equipment. Continued funding is critical to ensuring the necessary reset of our vehicles and equipment; as well as to ensure we are able to procure the right systems that are both affordable and sustainable for the next 20 years.” ([July 26, 2011](#))
- “It is imperative that as we begin to draw down forces, we do not sacrifice our combat experience and unit cohesion by cutting large numbers of soldiers arbitrarily.” ([July 26, 2011](#))

- “Whatever reductions are made carry risk, and with reductions we will not be able to do as much tomorrow as we are able to do today.” ([July 26, 2011](#))

Admiral Jonathan Greenert, Chief of Naval Operations, U.S. Navy

- “...[I]n my view sequestration will cause irreversible damage. It will hollow the military and we will be out of balance in manpower, both military and civilian, procurement and modernization. We are a capital intensive force and going in and summarily reducing procurement accounts here and there will upset quite a bit of our industrial base, which in my view, if we get into sequestration, might be irrecoverable.” ([November 2, 2011](#))
- “In 1998 we had six shipbuilder companies, today we have two. We have six shipyards going to five in 2013.” ([November 2, 2011](#))
- “Some of the actions we would need to take under sequestration could have a severe and irreversible impact on the Navy’s future.” ([November 2, 2011](#))
- “If we end programs abruptly and some of these companies shut down, we will be hard-pressed to reconstitute them. And each ship we don’t build impacts the fleet for 20-50 years.” ([November 2, 2011](#))
- “If we have a reduction of a kind that was passed around here—\$400 billion, \$886 billion—without a comprehensive strategic review—a fundamental look at what we were asking our forces to do, without a change in activity—as I described, we won’t be able to meet the global force management plan today.” ([July 26, 2011](#))

Admiral Mark E. Ferguson III, Vice Chief of Naval Operations

- “I think there are two significant impacts. If you look at sequestration, the impact on the Navy from the \$600 billion defense reduction would be about \$15 billion a year. That is the amount of the entire ship construction account that we would have to figure out how to spread in our budget and reduce. Waiting until December and then not having a resolution at that point would allow a very short cycle for planning. It will not allow us to make efficient or effective choices. It would also cause us to go back and relook at the strategy because the force that comes out of sequestration is not the force that can support the current strategy that we are operating under.” ([May 10, 2012](#))
- “Should...sequester occur, severe impacts would be immediately experienced by the Navy.”([October 27, 2011](#))
- [Due to sequestration] “Our response times to contingencies would be longer, we would have fewer forces available for deployment, and non-deployed forces would be less ready than today.” ([October 27, 2011](#))
- Sequestration consequences: ([October 27, 2011](#))
 - Programs involving a purchase, such as construction of a ship, submarine, aircraft, or building, would be unable to be executed. Cuts of this nature would result in the breaking of existing multiyear contracts, and would severely disrupt our suppliers and the industrial base
 - The reduced funding for other weapons procurement programs would drive up unit cost, resulting in reduced quantities and delivery delays.

- Research and development programs would be delayed or cancelled.
 - Flying hours and steaming days would be reduced, and we would cancel selected depot maintenance availabilities.
 - Civilian personnel would be at risk for furloughs.
 - Funding for readiness and training would be reduced below levels that could sustain our current force structure.
- "... [O]ur prosperity and our standing in the world in many ways is ensured by the naval forces that we're able to deploy forward. Around the globe, potential competitors are working to negate that advantage through anti-access area denial capabilities, and we have to be able to pace that in the modernization of our forces as we go forward."
([October 27, 2011](#))

General Norton A. Schwartz, Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force

- "...[A] non-strategy bases approach that proposes cuts without correlation to national security priorities and core defense capabilities will lead to a hollowed-out force similar to those that follow, to a greater or lesser degree, every major conflict since World War I."
([November 2, 2011](#))
- "At a minimum, they [sequester cuts] would slash all of our investment accounts, including our top priority modernization program such as the KC-46, the tanker, the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, the MQ-9 remotely piloted aircraft, and the future long-range strike bomber."
([November 2, 2011](#))
- "If we fail to avoid the ill-conceived across the board cuts, we again will be left with a military with aging equipment, extremely stressed human resources with less than adequate training, and ultimately declining readiness and effectiveness." ([November 2, 2011](#))
- "[S]weeping cuts of the sort in the Budget Control Act's sequester provision would slash our investment accounts; raid our operations and maintenance accounts, forcing the curtailment of important daily operations and sustainment efforts; and inflict real damage to the effectiveness and well-being of our Airmen and their families. Ultimately, such a scenario gravely undermines our ability to protect the Nation." ([November 2, 2011](#))
- "...[E]ven the most thoroughly-deliberated strategy may not be able to overcome dire consequences if cuts go far beyond the \$450 billion-plus in anticipated national security budget reductions over the next 10 years." ([November 2, 2011](#))
- "From the ongoing budget review, the Department is confident that further spending reductions beyond the more than \$450 billion that are needed to comply with the Budget Control Act's first round of cuts cannot be done without damaging our core military capabilities and therefore our national security." ([November 2, 2011](#))
- [Effect of cuts on the Air Force]: ([November 2, 2011](#))
 - further reductions to our end strength, both civilian and military, despite the fact that the Air Force already is substantially smaller than it was ten years ago;
 - continued aging and reductions in the Air Force's fleet of fighters, strategic bombers, airlifters, and tankers, as well as to associated bases and infrastructure;
 - adverse effects on training and readiness, which has seen a decline since 2003; and
 - diminished capacity to execute concurrent missions across the spectrum of operations and over vast distances on the globe.

General Philip Breedlove, Vice Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force

- “We think that we would definitely not be able to execute the existing strategy if we have to go through sequestration. We echo your remark that it would be devastating. We simply can't afford this one.” ([May 10, 2012](#))
- “Considering just the initial BCA cuts, this future Air Force will be capable of accomplishing many of the mission sets of today, but will do so at a significant level of risk and with less capacity to respond to multiple crises.” ([October 27, 2011](#))
- “In a scenario where the budget reductions exceed the \$450 billion of cuts envisioned by the BCA, we would need to go beyond merely constricting our capacity, and instead shed several required capabilities, thereby fundamentally changing the complexion and character of the Air Force. A reduction of this size would affect the number of bases we can economically support; the number of Airmen, civilians, and contractors necessary to man a reduced force; the size of the industrial base for aircraft, weapons, and space vehicles; and the benefits that accrue from closely working with our allies, partners, and friends across the globe.” ([October 27, 2011](#))
- “A \$400 billion cut would force us to constrict our force. Beyond \$400 billion, we would have to go into a fundamental restructure of what our nation expects from our Air Force.” ([July 26, 2011](#))
- “Any stability in these kinds of budgets are helpful. In fact, when we look at how we buy in space and other large procurement programs, the ability to put stability into a purchasing program allows the subcontractors and others to predict and count on and then produce in good quantity. So stability in budget is always helpful as we plan for these types of things.” ([July 26, 2011](#))

General James F. Amos, Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps

- “I will tell you that the impact of sequestration, we'll have a reduced forward presence, it will be a refined strategy as we know it today. And I think it's certainly going to stagnate reset on my part in the Marine Corps. I mentioned in my opening comments 10 years of combat. The equipment that's in Afghanistan today came from Iraq. It came from Iraq. It will stagnate the ability to reset that force.” ([February 16, 2012](#))
- “We as a nation don't even know, or have not got a sense of appreciation for, the impact that sequestration's going to have on the Department of Defense... I don't think we understand the magnitude of the impact that sequestration would have.” ([November 14, 2011](#))
- “Sequestration becomes automatic cuts. And they're not arbitrary, they're uniform,” Amos said in his Pentagon office. “I think there are [combat] capabilities that we will end up losing because of sequestration.” ([November 14, 2011](#))
- “There is a piece [of the force] that we're going to have to modernize. That has bad connotations, because people think we're going out and buying new slick, shiny objects. No,” Amos said. “There are some things [that must be replaced] because they're just physically worn out.” ([November 14, 2011](#))

- “If sequestration happens, I cannot tell you how big the Marine Corps will be,” Amos said. “Any lower than 186,800, and I start getting nervous.” ([November 14, 2011](#))
- “We've learned that lesson over and over again. I've been in the Marine Corps where we've had manning-per-unit in the 80 percent, where we've got equipment manning at 80 percent, where training was hit-and-miss,” the commandant said. “That's a recipe for a hollow force. We're not going to do that.” ([November 14, 2011](#))
- “...[O]ne effect of sequestration might be to put a Marine Corps below the end strength level that's necessary to support even one major contingency. At the potential end strength level resulting from the sequestration, we're going to have to make some tough decisions and assume significantly more risk. We will not be able to do the things the Nation needs us to do to mitigate risk, or to meet the requirements of the Combatant Commanders. We won't be there to reassure our potential friends, or to assure our allies. And we certainly won't be there to contain small crises before they become major conflagrations.” ([November 2, 2011](#))
- “...[L]ower budget levels, end strength, and investment accounts will significantly affect contingency plans over time. Many of these plans depend on concurrent and/or sequential operations. Less capacity removes the capability for such operations. Operational plans, will necessarily be adjusted to accommodate the longer timelines required to achieve desired objectives. Longer time to accomplish objectives in war can easily translate into increased loss of personnel and materiel, and ultimately places mission accomplishment at risk.” ([November 2, 2011](#))

General Joseph Dunford, Assistant Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps

- “We have a tendency to view sequestration as a budget issue, but it's really not a budget issue. It's a re-ordering of our national priorities - it's what we won't be able to do. And certainly at the strategic level, I think what the Secretary has said is, we won't be able to implement the strategy as currently written if sequestration goes into effect. From a Marine Corps perspective, we're at 182,000 right now, we're at the margin of being able to meet the strategy.” ([May 10, 2012](#))
- “...[W]hen we went through the force structure review effort, we came up with a size Marine Corps of 186,000. 150,000 would put us below the level that's necessary to support a single contingency.” ([October 27, 2011](#))
- “I think at 150,000 Marines I would offer there would be some significant risks both institutionally inside the Marine Corps because we will be spinning faster and causing our Marines to do more with less...the responsiveness that we'll have to combatant commanders contingencies and crisis response will be significantly degraded.” ([October 27, 2011](#))
- “What concerns me is that folks would think that if we get it wrong, we can simply fix it in a year or two. That's not possible...if we break the trust of our Marines, sailors, soldiers and airmen today, it will be decades before we get it back.” ([October 27, 2011](#))
- “And I'd be concerned that further reductions would preclude our ability to modernize. And over time we would get back to that same state we were in in the 1970s where our equipment was antiquated, and -- and worn out. And that's exactly what we want to try to avoid. And again, that's one of the key aspects of hollowness.” ([October 27, 2011](#))

- “Within \$400 billion [in defense spending cuts] we would have some challenges in taking those cuts. If they were to exceed \$400 billion we would start to have to make some fundamental changes in the capacity of the Marine Corps.” ([July 26, 2011](#))
- “If we were forced to take cuts, they would absolutely come in the form of capacity.” ([July 26, 2011](#))
- “[Defense cuts need to be made] in a measured way so that we don't end up at the end of the day with a force that's hollow in the future.” ([July 26, 2011](#))