

Congressman Parker Griffith's Budget Committee Statement

I would first like to thank the Committee on the Budget for allowing me to testify here today. As I am sure everyone in this hearing is aware, funding the Department of Defense is one of the most important parts of our budget. Our safety is directly related to a functional and efficient Defense Department that must be ready to deploy troops, aircraft, ships or missiles to protect our homeland and international allies. According to President Obama's Budget outline, the Department of Defense will have \$533.7 billion for its base budget for 2010, which is a four percent increase from FY2009 funding. While this is a moderate increase, we must keep in mind that we are spending billions of that increase on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. As the Obama Administration and the 111th Congress look to prioritize defense projects for FY2010, we should not be remiss and forget about the importance of missile defense.

World news continues to confirm the importance for missile defense, as the military technological advancements occurring in Iran and North Korea exhibit the threat in that region of the world is real. On February 2, Iran launched its own Omid Satellite into orbit aboard a Safir-2 rocket. This proves Iran is on a path to developing satellite guided long-range ballistic missiles, while its nuclear program continues to progress. Also, let's not forget North Korea tested a Taepodong 2 missile in 2006, which is capable of lofting a 1 ton nuclear warhead 3,500 miles to Alaska, Hawaii and the west coast. Both of these countries are rogue nations in control of very powerful technology that could harm the United States. In order to protect our nation, we must fully fund our missile defense projects. Missile defense ensures that would-be proliferators are denied the opportunity to hold America or its allies hostage. For these reasons, it complements our nation's diplomatic efforts to roll-back North Korea's and Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities.

In addition to being a deterrent to these rogue nations, our missile defense creates jobs in Huntsville Alabama, which is in my district. Redstone Arsenal has more than 32,000 jobs military jobs, 78,000 military retirees and 118,000 family members depending on this industry for their livelihood. Huntsville is also has one of the highest concentration of scientists and engineers in the world. This community is slated to continue to grow and as the manufacturing, service, bio-tech, and bio and homeland defense industries develop we should not stunt the growth of this region of the country. We should continue to research ways to ensure the safety of Americans through producing sound missile defense technology.

Should deep funding cuts to a system like the Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) program occur, we do not know what impact they will have on the operational readiness and availability of the system. GMD is the United States' only defense against the threat of long-range ballistic missiles. Members of the Budget Committee have the authority to make decisions that will keep our country strong from a national security and economic perspective, and I urge them to continue to do so.