

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ADAM SMITH
RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

March 1, 2011

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Brady, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to join my Chairman and friend, Buck McKeon, to testify today on the funding needs of the Committee on Armed Services.

I fully support the budget request presented to you by the Chairman. It seeks to balance our continued commitment to fiscal responsibility with our responsibility to oversee national security and provide for our men and women of the Armed Services. We believe that this budget will provide the resources necessary to oversee a military engaged in two wars and do so with a nearly 800,000 dollar reduction from the 111th Congress. This cut extends across both the majority and minority staffs and it reflects our continued effort to do more with less.

Threats to our national security remain high and increase in complexity. Our men and women in uniform must possess and execute all necessary authorities and resources to meet these threats and adapt to new ones as they emerge. Unfortunately, we do not have unlimited resources. As our nation and this Congress look to address the growing national deficit, this Congress, and in particular, the Armed Services Committee, must ensure that we are spending defense dollars wisely. Simply spending more on defense does not make us safer – spending money wisely and effectively does.

Our committee continues to operate under sound fiscal policy. From the 111th to the 112th, our committee's membership remains at 62 members. With the changes to the other committees we are now the largest committee in the House. However, because we have always operated with a modest number of highly-skilled staff, our ratio of staff to Members remains the second lowest in the House. Further, our policy to work in a unified approach continues to serve us well. As the Chairman mentioned, this request was done in a bipartisan manner that

demonstrates our commitment to work together to provide effective oversight in a cost-effective manner.

I control fifteen minority staff slots. For purposes of all benefits, overhead costs, and committee operations, the minority staff is treated in exactly the same manner as the rest of the staff. As is our long standing tradition, should there be any staff increases, they will be shared with the minority. And as for reductions, let me just say that reducing oversight staff will not save money. We need a robust staff to oversee the 671 billion dollar defense budget and fewer congressional eyes on that budget will most certainly cost money in the long run.

It is our duty to provide for our men and women in uniform as they perform their duties in defense of our nation. At the same time, we owe the American people our best efforts to find savings and efficiencies in defense spending. The committee's budget request supports these objectives in a diligent and fiscally disciplined manner.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.