

LATE TESTIMONY

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

Thursday, March 28, 2013

4:00 PM

Conference Room 224

RE: SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 200, URGING THE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS TO REACH AN AGREEMENT ON AN APPROPRIATIONS BILL TO ADDRESS THE CURRENT FISCAL CRISIS AND MITIGATE ITS NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE MILITARY AND THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE CIVILIAN POPULATION IN HAWAII AND ACROSS THE NATION.

Chair Espero and Vice Chair Baker, and members of the committee.

My name is Charles Ota and I am the Vice President for Military Affairs at The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii (The Chamber). I am here to state The Chamber's support of Senate Concurrent Resolution 200, Urging the President and Congress to reach an agreement on an appropriations bill to address the current fiscal crisis and mitigate its negative impact on the military and the Department of Defense civilian population in Hawaii and across the nation.

The measure recognizes the severe financial impacts being placed on the US military, especially on the forward deployed forces in Hawaii and throughout the Asia Pacific. These forces, military and civilian members of the US Department of Defense, not only provide for the security of the region but are the prime enablers of global commerce and trade for the US and all nations in the Pacific.

For example, China has demonstrated its maritime assertiveness in controlling the vital sea lanes of the South China Sea through which flow more than 50% of the global economy. The US provides the primary security force capable of ensuring that these sea lanes remain free and open for global commerce and trade.

Moreover, the US military must remain prepared to protect Hawaii, Guam, and the US mainland from ballistic missile attack by North Korea, which continues to conduct tests to perfect this capability. A missile defense system is critical to protecting Hawaii because the state serves as the home base for US military operations in the Pacific.

The ground-based Aegis missile defense system being developed at the Pacific Missile Range Facility on Kauai is specifically designed to protect the state from ballistic missile attack.

Finally, the US military is the prime response force to assist Asia Pacific nations faced with natural disasters and in need of humanitarian assistance. This region is historically vulnerable to such emergencies, and the US military must be prepared to respond to requests for assistance.

In light of the above, we recommend approval of the resolutions.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.