

TRANSCRIPT: Rear Admiral James Carey (Ret.) speaks at the launch of For the Common Defense on Capitol Hill

Event: Providing for the Common Defense: The First Duty of the 'Super Committee'

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Let me start out by just saying I fully support what the two congressmen said and what Tom Donnelly said. And in part that allows me not to have to repeat it. But some of the statistics and the specifics that they gave are exactly the things that worry me. I was going to point out with reference to Navy ships, I was in the Reagan campaign and then served in the Reagan Administration. Ronald Reagan had a saying during the campaign. Are you better off now than you were four years ago? That worked pretty well. I would paraphrase that a bit to say is the world a safer place now than it was at the end of World War One? Why do I choose World War One? Because at the end of World War One, the US Navy had two hundred and eighty-four ships. I know. I googled it. So in case any of you ask me. And as you heard Congressman Forbes say, we are headed to two hundred and forty-some ships. Less than at the end of World War One. And my premise is, I don't think the world is a safer place today than it was at the end of World War One. If nothing else, there's a thing called nukes that we should be concerned about that they didn't have at the end of World War One. And we should be doing all we can to protect ourselves against them. So I would also say if we end up with sequestration and there's four hundred billion dollars jerked out of the Defense Department, I would suggest to you that's not going to be very well planned. And it would be like going into the church used clothing area and you see a loose thread and you pull it and both the sleeves fall off. That is about the kind of result that you can expect if you just rip four hundred billion out of the system. Let me throw out one other thing that I would like you to be aware of. Because I heard just the other day—it was in the paper, I don't remember who said it, but it was someone from the administration who said, we need to move the military retirement system closer to the corporate retirement system. Let me suggest to you that the current military retirement system has served our country pretty well for the last fifty years. Let me suggest to you that the civilian retirement system for, let me say a bookkeeper—a bookkeeper gets to play golf on the weekend. A bookkeeper who gets to watch his kids grow up and to be home with them. A bookkeeper who does not have to risk getting his arms and legs blown off or dying, a bookkeeper who doesn't have to look at his kids attending nine different schools in their K through twelve years. A bookkeeper that doesn't have to look at being away from his family one third to one half of his entire military career. You may be able to sell that to a bookkeeper as a good system. If you shift the military system to that, our kids and grandkids are not stupid. And they are not going to go out and risk losing arms and legs and eyes and their life for a system that is—that they could plug into that they could stay home. And be—and watch their kids grow up. So I will tell you all, as you watch this thing go through, that suggestion scared the hell out of me. And I would ask you all, keep an eye on that. That is not a good idea and it will not serve us well. And I would tell you to, if—to man the force, when the option is that they could stay home and be with their kids and pick up a set of golf clubs, many of them are going to go with that option. But with that, I would just tell you, I fully—I fully, one hundred and one percent, support this coalition and what it stands for and what it's

trying to do. As the two congressmen said, as Tom Donnelly said, this needs our focus. We need to get behind this. Because this is scary, what's being talked about and it will do none of us good. Thanks much.