

TRANSCRIPT: Jim Martin: Veterans support a robust defense budget

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

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. Look, when I came to Washington—yes, I'm a former Marine. Always will be, obviously. I came here about fifty years ago. I felt that the government had two essential functions. It was my firm conviction that those two were to, one, defend our country, two, deliver the mail. Well, fifty years later, I think I'm a little bit wiser. And I think the government has one mandatory function and it sure as hell ain't delivering the mail. [LAUGHTER] You know, if they run the post office, our military like they do the post office, they may cut back national defense to five days a week. Look, I represents seniors all over the country. And I got to tell you, most of them are—served in the military or they're from military families. They've seen more war, more military tension than any other age group. And they know that we cannot—we cannot have less national security, if you will. My seniors—let me go to my military record a minute. You mentioned the Korean War. They called it a conflict back in those days, I believe. I served in the Marine Corps for six years on active duty. I'm from a military family. My kid brother left some of the family blood in Vietnam. He fought there for a couple of years. I have an uncle who was the bombardier on the Enola Gay. Colonel Ferebee. And so the military is rooted in my family very strongly. You know, we can talk about entitlements, but it's not entitlements I'm going to talk about today. It's a strong national defense. And, you know, catchphrases like Randy Forbes mentioned earlier, you know, we don't want to be—we're a world power. We're headed to a regional power. That's scary. I remember the phrase Peace Through Strength. Back in the old days. That's how you keep peace—peace. With a strong military defense. When I was a reporter here back fifty years ago, 1962, the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee was a guy named Richard Russell from Georgia, a Democrat. We're non-partisan at Sixty Plus. We like Democrats as well as Republicans. That was a great Democrat. The chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, also from Georgia, Congressman Carl Vinson. Another great Democrat. They kept a strong military defense. It is a scary thought now what is happening to our military. The cutbacks that are coming, Frank, you know, the Marines can live with those, they always get hand me downs anyway, from the other branches, admiral. You know that as well as I do. But we do have to keep a strong national defense and by the way we do have about seven million seniors now nationally. Most of them are—have served in one branch or the other of the services and I got to tell you this, when I get out of here tonight, I'm going to be motivating those seniors, I'll just have to tell them what's going on. They're going to be calling House and Senate offices demanding that they—and, look, Elaine made a good point. The super committee, baloney. There's five hundred and thirty-five members of the House and the Senate. That's who should be arguing these questions. Not some super committee. The committee—the committee, the gang of six and the gang of seven and the super—nonsense. You got a hundred senators and four hundred and thirty-five members of the House. They're the ones that should decide these issues. Not some little group off to the side. And my seniors, Frank, and thank you very much for your leadership. Tommy Sears has done a great job. Admiral Carey and I go way back. He

said, we're getting old. No, admiral, we're never old. We're just older. Keep up the good fight. Thank you.