

## **TRANSCRIPT: Rep. Doug Lamborn: House Armed Services Committee**

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

**Date:** 10/5/11

**Location:** Capitol Visitors' Center, CVC 268

It's not just our nation that's at stake. I think our world is at stake. We live in a dangerous world. And the US is the best force for good in this dangerous world. And if American values and Western Civilization values erode because we have less vibrant and robust military, then I think that that's bad for the entire world. So thank you for inviting me to be here. One other position I have on the Armed Services Committee that I need to mention is I am on the subcommittee for Strategic Forces. Which has to do with our nuclear missile defense and space missions. So I'm very—and I'm from Colorado Springs, Colorado, where there are five major military installations. So these are issues that are near and dear to my heart. Like Paul said a minute ago, Congress's first constitutional duty is to defend our country. So let's get back to sensible fiscal policies, but not sacrifice our national defense. And we can and should do both.

So I will take it upon myself as my mission to educate my fellow members, whether they're liberals, conservatives, Tea Party members, moderates, whomever. And I will educate them on the importance of these issues. Some really don't have the window to look in on these issues that those of us who are on the Armed Services Committee have. You know, we'll hear daily classified, unclassified what's going on in the world and the state of our military and what the needs are going forward. And a lot of members don't have that and so they really don't know how critical and how finely balanced the future of our military really is. Unfortunately, the Obama administration has repeatedly turned to the armed services for where to cut first. And that's been a pattern for two years and eight months now. And there are liberals in Congress who enabled that perspective and go along with that. Domestic spending increased by nearly twenty percent in the first two years of this administration, but military budgets were cut by about half a trillion dollars. Now, it depends—the exact dollar amount depends on what baseline you're starting from. Especially for future amounts. So we have to be—there may be a little discrepancy there. But that only—that depends on where you start as a baseline. The Obama administration wants to cut another four hundred and seventy billion dollars over the next ten years and all of that was sort of baked in the cake, unless we have any changes or reversals, before the super committee was ever formed. Now with the super committee on top of all that, we could have a cut of up to half a trillion dollars again in defense if the 1.2 trillion dollars in savings is not met. If it's partially met, that would be proportional. But if that's not met at all and with a six-six Republican Democrat breakdown on the committee, that is entirely a possibility. So even though defense is less than twenty percent of the overall budget, it would get forty percent of the sequestration cuts. Once again, that's out of proportion. These put vital missions such as nuclear forces and missile defenses at risk. Specifically, cuts would undermine the only missile defense system that protects the homeland by delaying the ground based mid-course defense return to flight program.

The proposed cuts would significantly delay the achievement of the European phased

adaptive approach. Which in it—in itself, when first proposed by president Obama, that is the second—the second approach, the first one under Bush had the third site in there. You may remember that. That's already gone. That was the only capability in the European phased adaptive approach that would have protected the US homeland. But by getting rid of the third site and sort of jilting some allies in the process, we have a more limited European system. It's still better than nothing. It's still a good thing. It's still worth pursuing. But even that now runs the risk of being delayed and capabilities being undermined with these kinds of cuts that could happen with sequestration. We would be delaying upgrades to Navy ships needed for missile defense and cuts in procuring the standard missile three interceptors needed by various combatant commanders. So that bodes ill for missile defense. With nuclear deterrence, there is also a bleak picture should sequestration happen. The triad, the nuclear triad, which defends the US and thirty-one allies, becomes seriously undermined. Some people are talking about a diad. I don't know if you talked about that earlier, Frank, cause I missed the—most of the program cause I was in an amendment markup process in a committee that I had to be there for recorded votes. But if you have a diad, if you get rid of one of the three legs of that three legged stool, it's—it really puts our nuclear deterrence at risk. It's easier to target from a—by an adversary. If you only have two of the three out there. So this—the kinds of things that are happening with sequestration are horrible should they take place. We would be reducing modernization and sustainment of the current fleet of Minutemen 3 ICBMs. There are about four hundred and fifty ICBMs on alert today. But we could cut a quarter of those if sequestration takes place. So three things could happen in particular to our nuclear deterrent. We would have less early warning about a nuclear missile launch. Some of that has to do with erosion of satellite capability. For the first time in seventy years, allies and adversaries would question our ability to provide a nuclear response to an attack. And more about that in a moment. And our ability to defend against incoming missiles is degraded – excuse me, is degraded. Now shrinking the US nuclear umbrella, I referred to that a minute ago, that promotes global instability. It's a classic case of being pennywise and pound foolish. Although I guess you would phrase it slightly differently, Frank. But nevertheless, that's true.

Other countries, if they question our nuclear deterrence, our nuclear umbrella, because it's shrinking, they would have incentive to go develop their own. That promotes instability cause more countries are out there developing an active nuclear program. And to the defense workforce and industrial base, I heard about that just a few moments ago, jobs would be destroyed, jobs would be cut. The Armed Services Committee expects at least twenty-five percent of the civilian workforce to be furloughed if this sequestration takes place. And according to Secretary Leon Panetta, at least a million jobs would be lost. He calls this a doomsday mechanism. So in closing, deeper cuts to our military would be so detrimental to our national security it's horrible to contemplate. There's no doubt that we can find efficiencies in a large budget like the Department of Defense has. And I am a fiscal conservative. But we don't want to cut capabilities. That's what I'm concerned about. Not just—let's find efficiencies, yes. Let's make procurement work better. Let's save dollars wherever we can on less essential things that can be identified. But let's don't cut capability. So the choice between a strong military and a strong economy is not—they're not diametrically opposed. There's no—that's a false dichotomy to say you can't

have both. We can and have had both in the past. So I will work with you together to make sure that we have a strong economy. Thank you for what you're doing. Frank, thanks for what you're doing.