

Ryan Prepared Opening Statement
HBC Hearing ‘The Cost of Current Defense Plans: An Analysis of Budget Issues’
October 14, 2009

- *Thank Chairman Spratt.*
- I’d *also* like to welcome our witnesses: Stephen Daggett – welcome back; Matthew Goldberg – welcome. We appreciate you being here.
- I think it’s fair to assume that the chief concerns on most Americans’ minds – and on the minds of this Congress – remain the economy, jobs – and the future of health care.
- But even as we continue to address *these* challenges, others are coming to a head. Among them, of course, is how we’re going to handle Afghanistan and Iraq – as well as other developing threats such as North Korea and Iran.
- So even with the countless competing demands on the budget, this Congress must continue to honor the *primary* role of the Federal Government: providing for our national defense.
- In short, that means ensuring America’s men and women in uniform have whatever resources are necessary to complete their missions. *We simply cannot take our national defense for granted.*
- Now...that said, I don’t mean to imply that there’s not a great deal of room for improvement on DoD’s budgetary front. There’s clearly opportunity for savings – particularly in the procurement programs – so I look forward to exploring how the Department might more efficiently meet its critical mission.
- But I also want to discuss how this Congress might avoid the growing temptation to raid DoD’s budget for spending on other programs, as resources get tighter.
- I’m eager to hear from both Members and witnesses their thoughts on how we can achieve savings in DoD’s budget – without eroding its ability to provide for our nation’s security.