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House of Representatives

DIVISION I—MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

Following is an explanation of the effect of this division of the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 2764 (hereafter referred to as “the amended bill”) relative to the versions of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2008 (H.R. 2642) as passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate. References to amounts or language proposed by the House of Representatives or the Senate refer to amounts and language in the House or Senate passed versions of H.R. 2642 or in the accompanying committee reports (House Report 110-186 and Senate Report 110-85).

Matters Addressed by Only One Committee.—The language and allocations set forth in House Report 110-186 and Senate Report 110-85 should be complied with unless specifically addressed to the contrary in the amended bill and this explanatory statement. Report language included by the House, which is not changed by the report of the Senate or this explanatory statement, and Senate report language, which is not changed by this explanatory statement is approved by the Appropriations Committees of both Houses of Congress. This explanatory statement, while repeating some report language for emphasis, does not intend to negate the language referred to above unless expressly provided herein. In cases where the House or the Senate have directed the submission of a report, such report is to be submitted to both Houses of Congress.

TITLE I

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

“Grow the Force”.—The Appropriations Committees note that the President, in the fiscal year 2008 budget submission to Congress, did not identify individual projects associated with the Administration’s \$2,820,898,000 “Grow the Force” initiative, instead requesting lump sum funding for the initiative. Detailed information on individual projects was not provided by the Army and Marine Corps until weeks after the budget submission. The amended bill provides full funding for this initiative, by project, and identifies the “Grow the Force” projects in the table at the end of this divi-

sion of this explanatory statement. The Appropriations Committees remind the Department that the “Grow the Force” projects for which the President requested lump sum funding are part of the regular military construction program and are therefore subject to the same notification and reprogramming requirements that apply to all military construction appropriations.

Construction Inflation.—The Appropriations Committees are concerned by the continuing impact of high inflation rates for construction material prices and labor costs. These high rates have made it increasingly difficult for the services and Defense agencies to execute their military construction and family housing construction programs in a timely manner without scope reductions, project cancellations, and reprogramming requests. Given the enormous volume of construction to be completed over the next five years due to BRAC, global rebasing, end-strength increases for the Army and Marine Corps, and numerous smaller initiatives, realistic budgeting for construction inflation is necessary if the quality of life and quality of service for military personnel and their families are to be maintained at a high level. The Appropriations Committees are dismayed by the failure of the Office of Management and Budget and the Department of Defense to incorporate realistic inflation estimates in the budget submissions, even though the consequences of this failure are predictable. The Appropriations Committees support and encourage current efforts to more accurately account for regional variations in construction inflation; however, the Committees also believe that such efforts will be of limited value if the overall inflation figure used by the Administration to build the military construction program is unrealistically low. The Department of Defense is directed to report to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress on the baseline construction inflation rate incorporated in the fiscal year 2009 military construction and family housing budget request, as well as a justification for that rate, no later than seven days following the submission of that request to Congress.

Integrated Construction Plans for the “Grow the Force,” Global Basing, and Base Realignment and Closure Initiatives.—The Appropriations Committees remain concerned about the ability of the Department of Defense to effectively coordinate and integrate the significant construction demands of the “Grow

the Force” initiative with the equally daunting construction programs associated with the Department’s global rebasing plan and the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure program, particularly within the short time-frame allotted for the completion of each of these initiatives. The Secretary of Defense shall submit a separate report to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress by January 31, 2008, identifying the installations at which there is any overlap of military construction and/or family housing construction among any or all of the three initiatives. In addition to a detailed list of the projects by installation, the report should include the projected timeline for completing each of the identified projects and the projected timeline for the movement of military personnel associated with the initiatives into the affected installations.

Government Accountability Office (GAO) Review of Global Defense Posture Report.—The Appropriations Committees agree that the GAO review of the status of the Defense Department’s Global Defense Posture should be submitted to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress no later than April 15, 2008.

Failure to Comply With Report Deadlines.—The Appropriations Committees note the Department of Defense’s failure to comply with deadlines for several reports directed by the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress. These deadlines have passed without the reports being delivered, or even notice from the Department as to why it has been unable to meet the deadlines. Some of these reports are merely collections of data that are readily available. The Appropriations Committees find this delay unacceptable. These reports are directed to ensure proper congressional oversight and to inform congressional decisions on the Department’s budget requests. The Department of Defense is directed to submit all reports required by House Report 110-186 and Senate Report 110-85 that are currently overdue, or an explanation of why these reports have not been delivered along with the expected date of delivery, no later than seven days after the enactment of this Act. The Department and the services are also directed to meet future reporting deadlines. If future deadlines are not met, the Department or service shall submit an explanation for the failure to deliver and the expected date of delivery no later than seven days after the deadline.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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