



### **Proposal retains spending caps despite warnings from military leaders**

Military Times

Military service secretaries and chiefs railed against the dangers of sequestration in testimony before the House Armed Services Committee on Tuesday, even as the House Budget Committee proposed a \$617 billion defense plan that keeps the caps in place. Rep. Tom Price, R-Ga., called the budget plan a “responsible” approach to ensuring national security, but defense leaders called sequestration “an enemy at home” as dangerous as any overseas threat facing the services.

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### **Sequestration impacting communities but BRAC could benefit them, says Army leader**

Army.mil

The active end-strength reductions are the result of sequestration, putting the Army on a glide path of 570,000 active-duty Soldiers in 2010 to 450,000 by 2018. Those troop reductions “will affect every installation in the Army” as well as the nearby communities, Lt. Gen. David D. Halverson, commander of the Army’s Installation Management Command, told lawmakers March 17. Halverson described how troop reductions correlate to an increase in excess capacity, making the case for a future round of base realignment and closure (BRAC). “Without a reduction in the number of installations, the Army will be forced to sacrifice quality-of-life programs at the expense of maintaining excess capacity,” he said. The cumulative effect will also harm adjoining communities.

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### **Millions wasted on maintaining empty buildings, Army officials say**

Reuters

Army leaders told lawmakers at a recent hearing that millions are being spent on maintenance of empty or unused buildings, even as budget woes mean thousands of troops might have to be cut. “Right now we’re paying about \$500 million a year, roughly, just to maintain empty infrastructure, unused infrastructure,” Army Secretary John McHugh told a Senate Appropriations Committee panel.

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### **U.S. to keep more troops in Afghanistan into 2016**

Associated Press

The Obama administration is abandoning plans to cut the number of U.S. forces in Afghanistan to 5,500 by year’s end, bowing to military leaders who want to keep more troops there, including many into the 2016 fighting season, U.S. officials say. While no final decision on numbers has been made, the officials said the administration is poised to slow withdrawal plans and probably will allow many of the 9,800 American troops to remain well into next year.

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### **All military jobs will soon be open to women, officials say**

Military Times

All four service branches are making progress toward opening all military jobs to women by 2016, according to officials testifying before the House Armed Services Committee. Each branch is looking at the last male-only jobs to see what accommodations can be made to open them to women, and they have until the end of September to create standards that are gender-neutral.

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