

Rep. Allen West Says Defense Cuts Would Send 'Horrible Message' (News Max)

By Hiram Reisner

Florida Rep. Allen West said Wednesday if the failure of the defense-reduction supercommittee leads to additional cuts to the Defense budget it would not only send a "horrible message" to Americans but also to "our adversaries and our enemies all across the world."

"I'm very worried about it — speaking from experience — having lived through a period when the military was made a bill payer for the federal government, and we saw what happened as far as the reduction of ammunition, and fuel, and spare parts," West, who served in the Army for 20 years, told Fox News' Shannon Bream.

"So I think that when you look at the fact that we have made the cuts to the military — \$466 billion over the next 10 years — another \$500 billion to \$600 billion, especially when we're

asking our military to do more at this time, would send a very horrible message not just across this country but also to our adversaries and our enemies all across the world," West said.

The former lieutenant colonel said it is critical that Congress makes provisions to avoid cuts in the Defense budget and that President Barack Obama goes along with a congressional plan. Obama said after the supercommittee announced it had failed that he would veto any attempt to get around spending cuts, which were built in to a failure of the debt-reduction panel.

"I think the president has to — the most important title that the president of the United States has is commander-in-chief," West said. "And if he is willing to put politics over the men and women that we have in uniform serving all over this country that were asked to stand on freedom's ramparts and protect us so that we could have a Thanksgiving, then I think the president really is misguided in his statement.

"So I think that we can find the right type of cuts in spending — I think that the president should understand that he has a responsibility in this," West said. "\$4.4 trillion of debt has come upon the United States of America since he's been in office, less than three years. So I think that he should be looking at places within the executive branch where he can look at agencies, and failed programs, and duplicative programs that could be put on the table, as well."

Bream then asked West whether he concurred with a call from Texas Gov, Rick Perry during Tuesday night's debate that Defense Secretary Leon Panetta should resign to protest any cuts

to Pentagon funding.

"No, I would not agree with that. You know, I was very fortunate — I sit on the House Armed Services Committee — and we had Secretary of Defense Panetta, as well as the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Dempsey, and all of our service chiefs and the commandant of Marine Corps testify about the ramifications that these cuts would have," West said.

"I would want to see someone like Leon Panetta —who now after being the head of the CIA, knows the security environment that is out there —for him to stay as the secretary of defense to continue to fight to make sure that we do the right things by the men and women in uniform for this great nation," he said.

<http://www.newsmax.com/TheWire/defense-budget-west/2011/11/24/id/419053>