

By: Hiram Reisner

With Congress reviewing President Barack Obama's spending proposals for fiscal 2013, Florida Rep. Allen West says he is very concerned that the Defense Department's budget was not protected as "a sacred cow." West — who sits on the House Armed Services Committee and is a former Army lieutenant colonel — also told Fox News' Greta Van Susteren Wednesday the military cannot be the scapegoat for Washington's out-of-control spending.

"I have to tell you, we did not protect the department of defense as a sacred cow — right now you'll see \$487 billion of cuts over the next 10 years," West said. "One of the things that disturbs me is we cannot continue to look at the military as bill payer for our fiscal irresponsibility. The Obama administration says they will not cut healthcare benefits to retirees and raise the rates by triple.

"So I think until we have leadership that's willing to tackle the other side — the mandatory spending side — with the Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, net interest on the debt," the tea party favorite continued, "you can take the military defense budget and zero it out — but you will still have close to \$1 trillion deficit."

Van Susteren noted many of the nation's fiscal troubles could be tackled by limiting government waste and fraud, while the administration talks about raising taxes and cutting defense spending. West agreed.

"Until we can show we're going to be fiscally responsible up in Washington, D.C., and do the hard work that the American people sent us up there [to do], why should we ask for more resources from the American people?" West asked.

"When you talk to the chairman of Budget Committee, Paul Ryan, we can find \$1.2 trillion in cuts but it doesn't have to come on the backs of our military," he said. "Because right now when you talk about the defense situation that you see all across the globe — we should not [be] sending a message to our enemies we're going to cut our defense right now."

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