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Washington, D.C. — Today, Congressman Duncan Hunter, a member of the House Armed Services Committee and veteran of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, warned against additional cuts within the defense budget, beyond the \$450 billion in reductions outlined by Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta for the coming decade.

“This budget begins the process of putting in motion deep cuts to our national defense. Instead of calculating our security investments based on existing and emerging threats, while looking for efficiencies wherever possible, this plan ignores the full scope of danger facing U.S. and global security.

“With this proposal, one of my biggest concerns is the severity of future budget cuts under sequestration. The outlook is not good.

“Proposed reductions in end strength will take the Marine Corps dangerously close to its absolute minimum threshold. The Army will undergo major reductions in ground forces, losing 80,000 soldiers. There are also reductions and delays for the Navy, which, along with the Air Force, will carry an even larger part of our security mission in the coming decades.

“These initial cuts totaling \$450 billion are the most the national security budget can absorb without doing irreparable harm to military readiness and core capability. These cuts should serve as a warning. In very clear terms, this budget brings the U.S. military dangerously close to its tipping-point and the added cuts with sequestration will be the final push toward a hollow force.”