

WASHINGTON – A bipartisan group of six Members of the House of Representatives today released a joint letter calling for a reduction in U.S. military spending by scaling back worldwide military commitments. The letter was signed by Congressman Barney Frank (D-MA), Congressman John Campbell (R-CA), Congressman Rush Holt (D-NJ), Congressman Walter Jones (R-NC), Congresswoman Gwen Moore (D-WI), and Congressman Ron Paul (R-TX).

The six Members will now circulate the letter in the House of Representatives, asking other Members to co-sign the letter before it is finalized and sent to the President as well as House and Senate leaders.

The letter, addressed to President Barack Obama, Speaker of the House John Boehner, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, and to the Chairmen of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, Congressman Hal Rogers and Senator Daniel Inouye, requests a thorough re-examination of national security needs in light of the fact that "more than 21 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and 18 years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, our military planning and appropriations process go on largely as it has since the 1950s."

Members of the bipartisan group, who disagree on a wide range of other issues, express strong agreement that deficit reduction cannot be accomplished without substantial reductions in military spending.

Only a year ago, three of the House Members, Jones, Frank and Paul, along with Senator Ron Wyden, initiated an effort to cut U.S. military spending as part of deficit reduction. Despite the fact that for decades military spending had been considered a sacred cow, over the past year the idea that excessive military spending must be reduced as part of a long-term deficit-reduction plan has gained wider acceptance. The President's National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform recommended reductions in the budget of the Department of Defense of \$100 billion by 2015. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has committed to significant cuts in military spending and has stated that more cuts will require a re-evaluation of America's military mission. On Tuesday, The New York Times reported that Congressman Walter Jones, once seen as a "pariah" in his party for supporting military spending cuts, and Congressman Ron Paul, have become leaders in a growing conservative movement calling for a reduction in America's overseas military commitments.

Representatives Campbell, Holt and Moore have joined the bipartisan effort to scale back excessive military spending and their commitment marks another important milestone. The six Members will now expand their efforts by seeking the support of their colleagues in the House.

"America's national debt represents the single, most dangerous threat to our future security, prosperity and hegemony in the world," said Congressman John Campbell, who has offered amendments to eliminate waste in the 2011 and 2012 Department of Defense budgets and has called for an audit of the Pentagon. "As we engage in a debate this year about reducing spending, we must examine all areas of the federal government, including the Department of Defense, for responsible efficiencies and expense reductions through a reassessment of our national defense needs."

"I firmly believe that the best way to protect America is by enacting a budget that invests in all dimensions of our national security," said Congressman Rush Holt. "That means a budget that supports our conventional military forces, invests in our counter-terrorism efforts, and – just as importantly – protects our economic security by reining in needless or excessive spending."

"We cannot be serious about reining in federal government spending if we take the military budget off the table," said Congressman Ron Paul. "We must focus our resources on defending the United States rather than on building and maintaining an unsustainable trillion dollar empire overseas."

"Our nation is on an unsustainable fiscal path," said Congressman Walter Jones. "Every aspect of our government needs to be brought to the table and re-evaluated. We need to ensure that we have all the necessary tools to maintain our national security, but a serious look needs to be taken at the money we are spending on overseas military bases and the \$8 billion a month we are spending to rebuild Afghanistan."

"It is very clear that a very serious debate on this issue has to take place," said Congressman Barney Frank.

"It's downright illogical," said Congresswoman Gwen Moore. "The recession has driven more families into poverty, and we're cutting holes in the safety net. Yet we're getting out of Iraq and scaling back in Afghanistan without significant cuts to the Defense budget. If we're scrutinizing

Medicare and Medicaid because they are big expenditures, then we should take a strong look at Defense, which accounts for about the same spending every year."