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U.S. Military Chiefs Warn Budget Cuts Will Cancel Weapons

By *Roxana Tiron and Tony Capaccio* - Nov 2, 2011

The chiefs of the U.S. military warned today they may have to end new weapons programs, close bases and cut civilian personnel as early as next year if Congress allows about \$1 trillion in defense cuts over the next decade.

The military heads of the Navy, Marine Corps, Army and [Air Force](#), in testimony today before the House Armed Services Committee, are joining Defense Secretary [Leon Panetta](#) in warning against defense cuts that might reach \$1 trillion.

Cuts of that magnitude might reduce Marine Corps personnel below the level necessary to sustain “even one major contingency,” Marine Corps Commandant James Amos said in a prepared statement for today’s hearing.

The Navy may see reductions of as much as 25 percent to its procurement and readiness accounts if the special congressional committee fails to produce an alternative to automatic cutbacks, according to testimony prepared by Admiral Jonathan Greenert, the chief of naval operations. The so-called supercommittee is tasked with finding at least \$1.2 trillion in cuts across U.S. government spending to avoid the automatic cuts.

The Army would have to “eliminate almost all” modernization programs and consider consolidations and closures of bases that would be “commensurate with force structure reductions,” Army Chief of Staff General [Ray Odierno](#) said, also in prepared testimony.

Analyst Caution

Analysts recommended caution as the public assesses the military’s warnings.

“The services are special bureaucracies and they are trying to frighten us into preserving their budgets,” CATO Institute defense budget analyst Benjamin Friedman wrote in an e-mail.