

MPRnews

How will sequestration affect U.S. defense?

February 27, 2013

The lights of the U.S. Capitol remain lit into the night as the House continues to work on the "fiscal cliff" legislation proposed by the Senate, in Washington, on Tuesday, Jan. 1, 2013. (Jacquelyn Martin/AP)

A series of spending cuts, known as "sequestration," are scheduled to take place on March 1 unless President Barack Obama and Congress reach a budget deal. One major area of concern: how will our security be affected? One major cut will be \$500 billion from the Defense Department and national security.

"There is a right way and a wrong way to cut federal spending, but the sequestration plan about to go into effect is perhaps the most boneheaded approach that could possibly be concocted," wrote Scott Lilly, senior fellow at American Progress, in *The Huffington Post*. "There is finally a good deal of discussion about some of the major downsides of this deficit-cutting approach and its impact on public safety, military readiness, and the economy, but there is one fact about it that is not widely known and is not being widely discussed. The sequester won't reduce the deficit by anything close to the \$85 billion that's being advertised."

Lilly will join *The Daily Circuit* Wednesday Feb. 27 to talk about the larger consequences of these defense cuts. Benjamin H. Friedman, a research fellow in defense and homeland security studies at the Cato Institute, will also join the discussion.

Friedman wrote about the cuts in *World Politics Review* last month:

The prospect of \$500 billion in cuts to the U.S. defense budget from 2013-2021 has Washington in a panic. In unveiling a barely updated military strategy yesterday, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta repeated his warning that such cuts would lead to a "demoralized and hollow force." One of his deputies has called the cuts the equivalent of "self-castration." Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina recently warned that the cuts will "destroy" the Department of Defense.

We should not allow those claims to scare us into letting the Pentagon off the hook. The cuts, which come courtesy of the deficit deal -- the Budget Control Act -- passed by the U.S. Congress last summer, would indispose the Pentagon, not destroy it.