

**Chairman C.W. Bill Young**  
**Subcommittee on Defense**  
**House Committee on Appropriations**  
**Fiscal Year 2014 Air Force Budget Hearing**  
**May 9, 2013**  
**Opening Statement As Prepared**

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Good morning. The topic of this morning's hearing is the Air Force budget and posture for fiscal year 2014.

The Air Force is the only service to receive a base budget increase in the fiscal year 2014 request, but much of this increase is devoted to an attempt to maintain readiness with the threat of continued sequestration. In the meantime, the Air Force is aging and shrinking, and has modernization needs across the fleet. We are anxious to hear how the Air Force is meeting its challenges.

This will be Secretary Donley's final appearance before this subcommittee. Secretary Donley has announced that he will be stepping down from his post in June, having served more than four-and-a-half years as Secretary of the Air Force. Secretary Donley, we thank you for your service to the country and wish you well in your future endeavors.

General Mark Welsh is making his second appearance before the subcommittee, but this is his first budget and posture hearing. General Welsh comes before us as a 1976 Air Force Academy graduate with over thirty-six years of military service. He became the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force last August, having previously served as Commander of U.S. Air Forces in Europe.

Thank you for appearing before us today. Your statement will be entered into the record.

I now turn to our ranking member, Mr. Visclosky, for any opening statement he would like to make.

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