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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Defense experts weigh in

American Legion National Security Symposium addresses the consequences of a reduced military budget.

INDIANAPOLIS (Aug. 28, 2012) -- Going to war, or planning for defense, without concerted, careful, intelligent and non-emotional deliberation is dangerous and unproductive. That was a common message communicated by four speakers at a National Security Symposium staged by The American Legion during the organization's 94th national convention on Aug. 27.

Four defense experts spoke before an audience of about 100 members of the organization's National Security and Foreign Relations (NS/FR) Commission and other interested parties at the convention in Indianapolis. The three-hour session also featured the honoring of former House Armed Services Committee chairman Ike Skelton with the Legion's 2012 Patriot Award.

First to speak was Lt. Col. Joseph Gallagher, advancing arguments he presented in his Army War College Master's Thesis. In recent times, according to Gallagher, Congress has repeatedly surrendered its constitutionally intended power to declare war in favor of ill-conceived, poorly planned and hastily executed military adventures directed by presidents. "Since the end of World War II," said the former Marine F/A-18 pilot, "an assertive executive branch has run roughshod over an abdicating Congress, which has compromised U.S. military efficacy. It has repeatedly resulted in the expenditure of national blood and treasure for strategically hollow ends."

Skelton, a now retired 34-year veteran of the House of Representatives, lauded Legionnaires from the World War II "greatest generation" and the Legion's continuing concern for military readiness. "We need that courage and commitment today because we continue to live in a dangerous and uncertain world," Skelton said. "George Washington had it right when he said: 'if you want peace, prepare for war.'"

Skelton then talked at length about the grave dangers to national security presented by sequestration, the planned massive, across-the-board cuts to defense spending designed to help deal with the nation's budget-deficit crisis. He spoke of weakening national defenses while still

in battle and as enemies and potential enemies pose rising threats.

This same point was made by Mackenzie Eaglen, a military readiness and defense strategy expert with the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy, a non-

partisan think tank in Washington. "This is unprecedented in our history," she said, pointing to the fact that the reductions were not the work of the president or his operatives alone. "So now, here we are with the specter of sequestration. And, I tell you, it is quite a long shadow that looms over Washington. But, the president did not propose anything in isolation. He pushed on an open door with the other party and that's the dirty secret. This was not a proposal that was anathema to the majority of Congress, which is unfortunate."

Retired U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Ed Dyer was the last to speak. Dyer is now vice president of military programs for Allison Transmission, Inc. Allison is the world's largest manufacturer of automatic transmissions for ground combat vehicles. After making a strong case in favor of preserving the industry supporting the development and manufacture of military ground vehicles, Dyer addressed the specific issue of sequestration: "As you heard recently from Mackenzie, a study released last month by George Mason University concludes that the automatic spending cuts... will decrease the nation's GDP by \$215 billion. They will decrease personal earnings in the entire workforce by over \$109 billion. And, they will cost the economy 214 million jobs."

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