

Durbin meets with Army leadership prior to hearing on Army 2017 budget request

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – In advance of today’s Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee hearing on the U.S. Army budget, **Vice Chairman Dick Durbin (D-IL)** met yesterday with **Acting Army Secretary Patrick Murphy** and the Chief of Staff of the Army, General **Mark Milley**. During the meeting, Acting Army Secretary Murphy, General Milley, and Durbin discussed the long-term future of Illinois’ Army installations, including the Rock Island Arsenal.

“Last year, the GAO completed a study that confirmed what we already know: the Department of Defense is underutilizing Arsenals and lacks a strategic plan to increase their workloads,” Durbin said. “I met with Acting Army Secretary Murphy and General Milley to discuss what more can be done for our nation’s arsenals, and as we plan for next year’s defense budget, I look forward to continuing our work to ensure that the Rock Island Arsenal has a long, bright future.”

As the Vice Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, Durbin has worked to:

- **Improve Rock Island Arsenal’s Competitiveness:** The Omnibus Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2016 includes \$145 million in funding for Industrial Mobilization Capacity (IMC) to help arsenals keep their work rates competitive. This funding helps Rock Island Arsenal and other arsenals compete more effectively for public-private partnerships and other business to help sustain capacity, cost efficiency and technical competence in peacetime, while preserving the ability to provide an effective and timely response to mobilizations, national defense contingency situations and other emergent requirements. Durbin included a similar provision in the Department of Defense Appropriations Bills for Fiscal Year 2014 and for Fiscal Year 2015.
- **Extend Rock Island Arsenal’s Humvee Ambulance Production Line:** In April, Durbin and U.S. Representative Cheri Bustos (D-IL) announced the extension of the Rock Island Arsenal’s Joint Manufacturing and Technology Center production line for two years as a result of the \$60 million they added to the Fiscal Year 2015 Defense Appropriations bill. Durbin included another \$60 million in the Fiscal Year 2016 Defense Appropriations bill.
- **Ensure a Steady, Higher Level Workload:** Durbin included language in Fiscal Year 2014 NDAA directed the Secretary of the Army to maintain a minimum workload at Rock Island Arsenal (and the arsenals in New York and Arkansas). This is similar to a provision Durbin originally authored as part of his Defense Appropriation Bill for Fiscal Year 2014 to require the Secretary of the Army to maintain a minimum workload at arsenals as calculated by the Army Organic Industrial Base Strategy Report. Durbin also included a similar directive in the Defense Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2015 and for Fiscal Year 2016, and this appropriator-authorizer consensus – for the first time this year – sends a strong signal of Congressional support for arsenals.

- **Put Arsenals on a Level Playing Field with Other Military Installations:** The Fiscal Year 2014 NDAA also included a provision that eliminates the Secretary of the Army's current authority to close an arsenal if he deems it necessary. This provision puts arsenals on a level playing field with other military installations, and ensures that any change in status can only be made through a standard process.