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**Wittman Statement on JFCOM Meeting with Secretary Gates**

**Washington, DC** – Congressman Rob Wittman (VA-1) released the following statement after departing a meeting with Defense Secretary Robert Gates to discuss the proposed closing of Joint Forces Command and the Defense Department’s overall “Efficiency Initiative” abruptly announced in August:

“Defense Department officials remain adamant that their decision-making process stand, and I remain disappointed that the Pentagon has not been forthright about the decision-making with regard to Joint Forces Command and the overall defense budget cuts announced in August. What we have seen today was a discussion and dialogue that should have taken place in July, prior to the August announcement. It is incumbent upon the leaders of this nation to make thoughtful, strategic decisions especially in the case of national security. On the other hand, the Secretary assured us that a significant number of the jobs located in Hampton Roads will remain. It is my hope Secretary Gates remains a partner with Virginia in working through this “Efficiency Initiative” and its impact on this nation’s security and Virginia. Efforts to find efficiencies and eliminate wasteful, duplicative spending are needed, but I still believe we are missing elements in this decision, and we will continue to ask hard questions of department officials.”

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*Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He serves on the Natural Resources Committee and the Armed Services Committee where he is the Ranking Member of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.*