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STATEMENT OF HONORABLE DUNCAN HUNTER CHAIRMAN, MILITARY PROCUREMENT SUBCOMMITTEE B-2 HEARING

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On January 4, 1995, in an unprecedented and extraordinary show of support for a terminated weapon system, seven former defense secretaries wrote a letter to the President in which they noted that:

- the Cold War was not the end of history or the end of danger and, therefore, should not be the end of the B-2;
- closing out the B-2 program with a purchase of only 20 bombers does not adequately consider the challenges to U.S. security that may arise in the next century;
- the B-2 remains the most cost-effective means of rapidly projecting force over great distances; and
- the logic of continuing low-rate production of the B-2 is both fiscal and operational.

Their letter concluded by stating: "We urge you to consider the purchase of more such aircraft while the option still exists."

One of those seven former secretaries has written me a letter responding to my invitation to appear as a witness here this afternoon. Let me read everyone what he had to say.

[Mr. Hunter reads a letter from Former Secretary Casper Weinberger.]

Though Cap has made a very compelling case for continued B-2 production, unfortunately, the Department of Defense has not complied with a February 1996 Presidential directive to re-examine the B-2 as part of a Deep Attack Weapons Mix Study in time for the FY 1998 budget cycle. However, inasmuch as former Secretary Perry sought no funding to continue B-2 production in any of the three budgets he prepared—including the FY 1998 budget—since being urged by his predecessors to do so, the prospect that the Department will change its current course of action is not a likely one. Meanwhile, the last two B-2s are completing

final assembly, and the production line will be dismantled thereafter. Once gone, the time and cost to restart this line would probably prohibit such action.

It would appear, then, that the fate of the B-2—like the fate of the nuclear submarine, the fate of the conventional cruise missile, and the fate of the F-117—rests with the Congress. Only through congressional intervention was Admiral Rickover able to build the nuclear submarine program that eventually became the pride of the Navy. Only congressional intervention kept U.S. conventional cruise missile options from being given away in arms control negotiations, thus protecting the extraordinary capability that the Tomahawk demonstrated during the Gulf War. And only congressional intervention added a second squadron of F-117s to the inventory—the superstars of Desert Storm.

The former joint forces air component commander in Desert Storm, retired General Chuck Horner, told the subcommittee last fall that the B-2 was the only weapon system in the U.S. inventory free of range, survivability, and lethality limitations and, as such, could well be the nation's only practical option for projecting truly decisive power in future crises. Yet, he noted that the planned force of 21 aircraft is too small to underwrite a large-scale air campaign. The question that must be answered—before it's too cost-prohibitive to do so—is whether or not the B-2's combination of range, payload, precision weapons delivery, and stealth make it uniquely capable of independently responding quickly and decisively to future contingencies and thus justify its continued production. The purpose of this hearing is to address this question.

With us this afternoon to help answer this question is a distinguished panel of defense experts.

My friend and colleague Congressman Norm Dicks from Washington

Honorable Richard Perle
Former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy
Resident Fellow
The American Enterprise Institute

Dr. Loren Thompson
Senior Fellow
The Alexis de Tocqueville Institution

Dr. Eliot A. Cohen
Director, Strategic Studies
School for the Advanced International Studies
Johns Hopkins University

Dr. Robert W. Chandler
President
Strategic Planning International, Inc.,

...whose recent book, "Tomorrow's War, Today's Decisions" has been distributed to each member.

Gentlemen, we thank you for being with us. Mr. Perle, we will begin the testimony with you, followed by Drs. Thompson, Cohen, and Chandler. Following everyone's testimony, I want to run a videotape of the recent successful demonstration of the B-2 GATS/GAM—that's GPS-Aided Targeting System/GPS-Aided Munition in B-2-speak.