



**HOUSE ARMED SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM AND
UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS
JIM SAXTON, NEW JERSEY
CHAIRMAN**

PRESS RELEASE

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OPENING STATEMENT OF JIM SAXTON

Markup of H.R. 5122, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007

Washington, D.C. – The purpose of today’s meeting is to markup the Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee’s portion of H.R. 5122, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007. Once again, my good friend Marty Meehan of Massachusetts and I worked closely to put together this Chairman’s, or Chairman and Ranking Member’s, mark that you have before you.

We remain a nation at war, with our troops engaged in battle every day. Quite properly then, we kept our focus on measures that would benefit our troops. Just last weekend, I visited our troops in Iraq and was once again impressed by their courage, fortitude and high morale. They believe in what they are doing, and they deserve everything we can do to support them.

While there, I saw at least two subcommittee force protection initiatives deployed and operating. At Balad Air Base north of Baghdad, we saw the counter mortar radar acquisition system, or C-RAM for short. It shoots incoming rockets and mortar shells out of the air, and is working today to protect our troops. The threat is real—Balad experiences daily rocket and mortar attacks. The next day, we observed a more sophisticated system floating over Baghdad airport—a tethered blimp that monitors the area and finds the perpetrators of attacks.

While it is gratifying to see that we are making a difference, we can and must do more. That’s why we’ve included initiatives in chemical-biological defense, special operations forces and homeland defense.

All of us traveled extensively since we last considered a defense bill, and every trip I take to Afghanistan and Iraq reminds me of the quality of our troops and reinforces my desire to provide them everything we can to execute their vitally important mission.

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For this war is about the Global War on Terrorism, and the outcome does in fact affect our security here at home. To that end, we have included some provisions intended to smooth the often disjointed interagency coordination process—for both overseas missions and domestic emergencies.

We have a responsibility to address other matters, and have done that as well. We had six hearings in preparation for this markup, exploring defense science and technology, Special Operations Command, the world-wide terrorist threat and information technology.

What is in this package? Some common threads are apparent:

- As noted, we have begun to explore ways to improve the interagency coordination process, and included several items to improve the capabilities of the Special Operations Command.
- We included two legislative measures to improve Pentagon processes. One would provide for more effective test and evaluation procedures, bringing them into synch with the rapid acquisition authorities the Department of Defense (DoD) has, and the other would speed the development of information technology systems.
- We continue and expand our successful initiative of last year to develop chemical and biological countermeasures, and have supported programs for the equally important medical research and development.
- We continue our scrutiny of the Department's information technology (IT) programs, though not as severely as in past years. In fact, our recommended reductions are barely one percent of the requested \$31 billion IT budget request.

As I've said, this mark addresses many concerns, but we have much, much more to do. I thank all the members for their help in creating this legislation.

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