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**STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN JOEL HEFLEY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY INSTALLATIONS AND FACILITIES**

Over the course of the last few weeks, the Subcommittee on Military Installations and Facilities has conducted a series of hearings examining in detail the Administration's FY2000 budget request for the military construction and military family housing programs of the Department of Defense. The subcommittee has also reviewed the implementation by the military departments and DOD of important facilities improvement initiatives such as the Military Housing Privatization Initiative and the privatization of utility systems on the Nation's military installations. Today, the subcommittee will examine the long-term planning of the military services to meet their infrastructure requirements.

Addressing the serious facilities shortfalls that bear on the quality of life for military personnel, the condition of their workplaces, the quality of the training environment, and readiness of the armed forces to carry out their mission is a key issue affecting the viability of the Nation's military installations and, more fundamentally, the effectiveness of the Nation's military capability. Chronic underinvestment by the Department of Defense to meet its facilities requirements has resulted in replacement cycles, recapitalization rates, and maintenance backlogs that are well short of accepted practices in the private sector or elsewhere in the public sector.

Considerable attention by the Department of Defense and the Congress has been paid recently to improving basic living conditions for military personnel and their families. While we still have a long way to go, it is clear to me that we are beginning to make progress. An equally focused program is also required to address shortfalls affecting training and readiness. Much of the current infrastructure is simply not adequate to meet mission requirements. While resources are being devoted to new mission beddowns, aside from the Army's attention to strategic mobility, I am deeply concerned that facilities shortfalls to meet current mission requirements continue, in the main, to be deferred.

This subcommittee has been assured by senior officials of both the Department of Defense and the military departments that the outyears look better and that additional resources will be committed to the MILCON and maintenance backlogs. From a historical perspective, however, outyear projections for the MILCON accounts have rarely been realized.

In the earlier years of this decade, each of the military departments projected outyear MILCON programs that exceeded \$1.4 billion. When I assumed the chairmanship of this subcommittee, I searched in vain for those resources. They never appeared in the Department's budget submission. In each year thereafter,

this subcommittee was presented with a budget request for the military construction and military family housing programs of the Department of Defense which fell short by each of the three yardsticks by which budget trends are measured – the Administration routinely requested fewer funds than it had requested the year before, fewer funds than were authorized and appropriated by Congress for the then-current program, and, more tellingly, fewer funds than it had programmed in its budget assumptions in the previous FYDP.

Perhaps the outyears will see an increased commitment by DOD to investment in basic infrastructure. Based on this year's incremental funding scheme for the MILCON accounts, I remain skeptical. The Department continues to treat MILCON, a critical set of investment accounts, as a bill-payer for other immediate needs. It seems we can always make do with an inadequate facility, poor berthing spaces, or crumbling airfield pavements for a few more months – or even just one more year. That is how the military services got themselves into the condition they are in now. At some point, the promises of the future must be married to the realities of the present. I hope that time will come very soon.

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