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Opening Statement (As Prepared)
Chairman Jim Cooper
Subcommittee on Strategic Forces:
*"Full Committee Markup of H.R. 7900 — National
Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023"*
June 22, 2022

Click [here](#) to view the hearing.

Thank, you Mr. Chair. I would like to take a few moments to highlight the Strategic Forces portions of the Chairman's mark that make our nation stronger and better prepared to address global threats. First, I would like to thank Ranking Member Lamborn and our Subcommittee members on both sides of the aisle for their continued commitment to this bipartisan process to maintain our sixty-one year tradition of passing an NDAA.

It is imperative that we continue to deter strategic attacks by ensuring that our superior nuclear forces are safe, secure, and reliable, including their command-and-control infrastructure. This mark focuses on ensuring the Departments of Defense and Energy are well-positioned for the immense task of sustaining our legacy forces, while also recapitalizing the nuclear enterprise for the next seventy years. It also ensures that both Departments are pursuing balanced approaches — emphasizing deterrence, but also nonproliferation and arms control. They must also remain focused on the highest priority efforts and realistic in their planned programs. Plutonium pit production is a prime example of where greater realism is needed.

Regarding space, recent demonstrations by China and Russia confirm that they are developing capabilities to degrade and destroy our national security satellites. This mark presses the Department to publicly release a strategy on how they will defend and protect our on-orbit assets. Further, we require the Space Force continue tactically responsive space efforts, including additional funding to do so, and encourage increased competition as the acquisition strategy for Phase 3 of the National Security Space Launch program is finalized.

Lastly, to address the importance of integrated air and missile defense is playing in the

ongoing war in Ukraine, this mark requires a strategy to share early missile warning data with allies and partners. We increased funding to bolster the quantity of Terminal High Altitude Area Defense interceptors and continue development of the Hypersonic and Ballistic Tracking Space Sensor payload. The mark includes additional funding in key areas for non-kinetic missile defense capabilities, such as directed energy.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to give a sincere thanks to our outstanding professional staff led by Maria Vastola — namely John Warden, Ryan Tully, Whitney Verett, and William Braden. I would also like to thank my personal staffer for this subcommittee, Zack Brown, for his excellent work.

Before I close, this is my last HASC mark-up due to gerrymandering in my home state. I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for making this committee the last bastion of bipartisanship in Washington. HASC is proof that Congress can work together to put national security at the forefront, and above politics. There are issues on which we disagree, but we work together to build a stronger America, as this committee has done for sixty-one years, and I want to personally thank Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Rogers for maintaining that precedent.

With that, I yield the remainder of my time.

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