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Opening Statement (As Prepared)
Chairman John Garamendi
Subcommittee on Readiness:
"Fiscal Year 2023 Readiness Program Update"
July 19, 2022

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Good morning. I call to order this hearing of the Readiness Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee. As I reviewed this subcommittee's work over the last several years in preparation for this hearing, one central theme jumped out at me: the military departments have struggled in every area to achieve the right balance between investments in new construction or procurement of platforms and the sustainment of its existing inventory. While procurement of systems is within the jurisdiction of other HASC subcommittees, once these aircraft, ships, and ground vehicles have been purchased, the Readiness Subcommittee is responsible for overseeing the decades of maintenance and training so that service members are ready for combat. The accounts which sustain and maintain these systems are chronically under-funded. And the infrastructure that facilitates that sustainment -- our shipyards and depots -- is often crumbling or woefully out of date.

This focus on readiness has taken on new importance given world events. Russia's immoral invasion of Ukraine has illustrated to the world anew that military success is built on a foundation of sound sustainment and logistics in a contested environment.

This failure to balance the appetite for "new" with the requirement to sustain what the Department already has applies as much to barracks as it does to ships and tanks. We have been repeatedly told by witnesses at hearings that military personnel are the Department's number one asset. However, when there are hard choices to be made, the sustainment of their barracks, dorms, and child development centers, the places they bring their children when called to duty, are first on the chopping block.

Unfortunately, we here in Congress share some of the blame for this phenomenon. To steal a quote from one of our witnesses, General Martin, O+M funds do not have a zip code. As a result, they are too often an attractive target to offset all manner of other priorities. In addition, it can be difficult to understand the true impact of cuts in these accounts on servicemembers.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on a number of topics today. Not only with updates on the many topics within this subcommittee's purview, but also with the real-world impacts of not fully funding operations and maintenance accounts.

We have a lot to cover, so I will end my remarks there and turn to Ranking Member Waltz of Florida, for his remarks.

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