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Opening Statement (As Prepared) Chairman Jim Langevin

Subcommittee on Cyber, Innovative Technologies, and
Information Hearing:

*"Reviewing Department of Defense Science and
Technology Strategy, Policy, and Programs for Fiscal
Year 2023: Accelerating the Pace of Change"*

May 12, 2022

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

The Subcommittee will come to order. I would like to welcome everyone to this hearing today on the Department of Defense's Fiscal Year 2023 strategy, policy and programs for science and technology. Following the open portion of the hearing, the subcommittee will reconvene in a closed, classified Members-only session in room 2212 with representatives from DARPA and the military services' research entities. . .

This is an important opportunity to examine the Department's work to maintain the technological advantage. I want to thank Ranking Member Banks for organizing this hearing with me and thank our witnesses for joining us. Before us today we have:

- **The Honorable Heidi Shyu**, Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering
- **Ms. Kristen Baldwin**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Science, Technology, and Engineering
- **Mr. William Nelson**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Research and Technology and Chief Scientist; and
- **Mr. Paul Mann**, Acting Deputy Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation

This is a bittersweet hearing for me, as it is the final science and technology posture hearing that I will chair before retiring at the conclusion of this Congress. It is remarkable to me how far we have come in the years since I joined the Armed Services Committee, but I am continually reminded how far we have to go.

Foremost are the infrastructure and facilities challenges throughout the enterprise. It is shocking that we face a massive backlog in laboratory investment – more than \$5.7 billion in the latest report to Congress. These challenges affect not just the pace and breadth of innovation, but our ability to attract and retain the top-tier talent that we depend on. I am committed to doing everything in my power to address this issue, and I look forward to hearing how to set the Department on a sustainable path of research facility investment. This could not be more pressing.

We live in an incredibly dynamic world, with an accelerating pace of innovation, but we face enormous challenges within the Department in terms of technology development, transition, and adoption. But these are not just about the adoption of commercial innovation and more agile procurement, but the Department's willingness to invest at scale in potentially game-changing technologies.

The case study for this in my mind is electromagnetic rail gun. It is incredibly disappointing to me that this program is being effectively shelved, with the Navy being unable or unwilling to make the effort to integrate and transition this capability into a warfighting system. Similarly, I am perplexed as to why there is a sudden lack of support for the Diode-Pumped Alkali Laser program, a key directed energy technology that is making great strides. By shunning these programs, I fear that we are ceding a crucial technological space to our competitors, and they are not sitting idle.

That being said, in conclusion, I want to talk about our greatest strength as a country-- the incredible talent and resourcefulness of our people. But we cannot expect our edge to persist indefinitely. We must aggressively invest in our future through STEAM education and workforce training. We must ensure that all are able to contribute, and that means ensuring that historically black colleges and universities and minority serving institutions are full partners in the defense ecosystem. It means enabling small businesses to bring their unique capabilities to the innovation base. And it means that researchers, engineers, and innovators who bring their talents to the unique challenges of national security should find a Department of Defense able and willing to embrace their ideas, rather than an opaque system that too often impedes the rapid adoption of innovation.

I know our witnesses today share my concerns and my desire to do right by the incredible men and women that we serve as they protect the country. I thank you all for appearing, and I look forward to today's discussion and working with each of you in my final year on the Committee.

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