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FY2023 NDAA Member Day Statement for the House Armed Services Committee

April 28, 2022

Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Rogers, thank you for the opportunity to present my priorities for the FY2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

As we approach Fiscal Year 2023, we are living in an uncertain world. Russia's invasion of a sovereign country and President Putin's disregard for the human, financial and environmental tolls of war have many people wondering how far his aggression may go and to what end.

Though accurate numbers are difficult to determine due to the secrecy of the Russian defense ministry and the ongoing battles, NATO projects that Russia alone lost between 7,000 and 15,000 soldiers during the first four weeks of fighting. This number pales in comparison to the estimated number of innocent Ukrainians who have been displaced, injured or killed over the last nine weeks.

While diplomacy and sanctions are always my preference over armed conflict, our country must be prepared for whatever actions Putin may try to justify.

President Biden's proposed \$773 billion defense budget calls for one of the largest investments in our national security history so that our military can continue to be the best-prepared, best-trained, best-equipped military in the world. In order to maintain these goals, we must balance the books by eliminating legacy platforms that siphon resources from effective platforms and promising technology developments. President Biden has identified \$2.7 billion that would be redirected through the elimination of these programs.

One such proposal that I wholeheartedly support is the decommissioning of 9 Freedom-class littoral combat ships (LCS). The LCS program has experienced numerous challenges, with significant reliability issues including engine failure during 10 of 11 deployments reviewed by the Government Accountability Office (GAO). The Navy has sought to decommission this program for several years, but Congress has not supported the Navy's request. Now is the time to decommission the LCS and repurpose the \$60 million cost of the program.

One such place redirected funds should go is to increase Research, Development, Test & Evaluation (RDT&E) accounts. Specifically, I support an increase of Navy RDT&E funds by \$17.65 million to fund two projects that would have significant military applications and commercial applications.

I recommend that the Committee support investment in a Small Unmanned Aerial Systems (sUAS) Degraded Environmental Flight Facility. sUAS are rapidly becoming a common tool for missions involving intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) in both military and civilian domains. However, current sUAS platforms are often constrained to operate in relatively

benign environments whereas mission needs may require more robust operations in conditions such as in high winds, rain, dust, fog, and other obscurants. Missions may also require operation in GPS denied environments. Current laboratory and operational testing capabilities struggle to adequately imitate GPS denied or degraded environments. A sUAS Degraded Environmental Flight Facility would provide the Navy with new operational testing capabilities allowing for testing of sUAS platforms in conditions that simulate real-world degraded environments. I recommend that the Committee authorize funding for this project at a level of \$12.65 million under Navy RDT&E Force Protection Applied Research.

Additionally, I recommend that the Committee support a project at the Memphis Detachment of Naval Surface Warfare Center (NSWC) Carderock Division, in partnership with the University of Memphis, to help the Navy better understand and address cavitation erosion of naval propulsors, control devices, and surfaces. Cavitation reduces the performance of combat ships and other vessels by causing significant surface damage and, in turn, driving up the cost of repairs and part replacement. This effort can help the Department of Defense reduce costs, enhance vessel design, and improve naval and industry shipbuilding to address cavitation erosion. I recommend that the Committee authorize funding for this cavitation erosion project for \$5 million under Navy RDT&E Force Protection Applied Research.

Finally, I recommend that the Committee support continued development of Multiple Drone, Multiple Sensor Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) Capabilities. The use of multiple drones with large area coverage electro-optical and infrared sensors for initial target detection coupled with multiple drones with interrogation sensors (acoustic, magnetic, electric field, vibrometry, seismic, etc.) can provide the Army with organic battlefield situational awareness. The interrogation sensors can discriminate decoys from real targets and as well as

detect real targets under camouflage, and can lead to effective targeting. The University of Memphis is becoming the primary research center for the study of multi-drone and multi-sensor warfare capabilities and technology development (sensors, deployment concepts, integration, and testing). UofM's expertise will enhance the Army's capabilities to develop new system concepts and tools for using multi-drones in early battlefield situational awareness that will increase force protection and improve threat detection. I recommend that the Committee provide \$5 million under Army RDT&E Air Platform Applied Research to continue this work.

Thank you for your leadership on the Committee. I appreciate your consideration of my requests and look forward to working with you to ensure the timely passage of the FY23 NDAA. If you need any additional information, please contact me or Craig Dulniak (craig.dulniak@mail.house.gov) in my office.