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Opening Statement (As Prepared) Ranking Member Adam Smith

House Armed Services Committee Hearing:
“Oversight of U.S. Military Support to Ukraine”
February 28, 2023

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

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to welcome our witnesses and thank them for appearing today. U.S. support to Ukraine has been both strong and bipartisan. This strong support in Congress for assistance to Ukraine grows out of the deep well of support that the American People have for the Ukrainian People in their fight against Russia’s attempt to destroy their country.

Oversight of our support to Ukraine is entirely appropriate and a necessary component of providing assistance. To that point, I am interested in hearing from our witnesses today about the extraordinary effort that has gone into the Department’s oversight effort, from cataloguing equipment provided, to site visits and other monitoring of our assistance, to the interagency Inspector General effort that is getting started.

I am also heartened by the efforts that our Ukrainian partners have taken regarding anti-corruption efforts to ensure that assistance to Ukraine is used for its intended purpose. I would also point out that Ukraine is not in a position to misuse or redirect the defense assistance it receives. Ukraine needs it for almost immediate use on the battlefield – and the results of recent battles, including the retaking of huge swaths of their country around Kharkiv and Kherson – are proof positive that our defense equipment is being used for its intended purpose.

The Department, working at President Biden’s direction, has worked diligently to determine everything that we can offer to Ukraine for its defense as quickly as we can, based on their battlefield requirements, the speed at which our industry can replace equipment, and our own risk assessments about what we need in our own stocks to meet our own defense objectives.

I also want to make clear that the criticism of the Administration for providing aid insufficiently quickly or omitting certain platforms misses the main point that the United States –

as led by the President and supported by Congress – has created an unprecedented support system to support Ukraine in the last year. In less than a year, the Administration has:

- Provided tens of billions of dollars of support, including \$32.5 billion in security sector assistance for training and equipment via Presidential Drawdown Authority and the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative;
- Continued and established new training programs in the United States and abroad so that Ukrainian troops can properly use the equipment that has been given to them;
- Organized a worldwide coalition of countries to provide significantly increased support to Ukraine in a coordinated way, and;
- Implemented comprehensive oversight efforts for our assistance.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I look forward to hearing more from our witnesses today.

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