**House Armed Services Committee Ranking Member Adam Smith**

**Statement for the Record**

**Hearing on “Promoting DOD’s Culture of Innovation”**

**April 17, 2018**

**~\*~**

I appreciate the Chairman calling today’s hearing on the need for more innovation in technology development in the Department of Defense.

            Innovation is a broad term that gets thrown around a lot, but, to me, the most important aspects of innovation are promoting a culture of openness, looking for new ways to do things, being willing to accept prudent risks in trying something different, and constantly looking ahead rather than behind.

Maintaining a culture of innovation matters. Broadly speaking, a culture of openness and innovation contributed greatly to the United States’ defeat of the Soviet Union in the Cold War, including innovation within the Department of Defense. Harnessing innovation in the private sector, both through bringing bright people into the DOD and working directly with industry, enabled the United States to gain and maintain a technological edge in many areas. The story of technologies spinning out of the space race in the ‘60s is well known. Similarly, DOD investments in early internet technology were critical. Many efforts coming out of Silicon Valley over the last few decades actually started with funding from the DOD or other government sources. Simply put, the DOD has a long history of innovation that we need to keep in mind as we move forward. We’ve been here before, and succeeded before, so if the right resources and attention are applied, we can do it again.

However, if the U.S. is to remain a global leader in technology, we can’t just play defense and hope for the best. Efforts to maintain a technological edge are absolutely critical, as are investments in science and research, prototyping, and other development efforts to maintain and advance warfighting capabilities. No less important are investments in STEM education, programs that develop junior talent into future tech leaders and policies that promote an environment in which global collaboration, discovery, innovation, public institutions and industry can thrive.

Clearly, this cannot be done by DOD alone. However, DOD has a significant role to play as a customer and driver of innovation. DOD’s S&T ecosystem includes science, technology, and reinvention laboratories that house some of our country’s greatest assets and people. It also includes DARPA, which has invested in some pie-in-the-sky ideas that came to fruition and changed how we fight and how we live. Over the course of many years, Congress has worked to provide authorities and legislation that enable these institutions to be utilized to their fullest potential by the Department. In today’s hearing, I hope to hear more about how DOD needs to change to innovate in the technology areas we know are going to be vital in the future, such as robotics, artificial intelligence, and directed energy. America and the DOD have a long history of innovation, we just need to reenergize the institution to get where we need to go.