

Ranking Member Ro Khanna Opening Statement

(As prepared for delivery by Rep. Houlahan)

**Cyber, Innovative Technologies, and Information Systems Subcommittee
Hearing: *“Information Technology Posture of the Department of Defense”***

March 26th, 2025

Thank you, Chairman Bacon.

I would like to join you in welcoming Ms. Kirsten Davies, Chief Information Officer, at her first public appearance before this subcommittee. You have a very challenging job, and I look forward to working with you.

In the interest of time, I will keep my remarks brief. Gone are the days when the department could focus simply on buying the latest weapons systems, blithely assuming that they would work, without having to focus just as much attention on the vital networks and data that enable them. It is that network and information infrastructure that forms the backbone of the capabilities that the men and women of the Department of Defense depend on every day.

As CIO, the key initiatives under your purview are essential to the ability of the Department to stay ahead of its pacing threats. Zero-trust implementation, network modernization, enterprise cloud adoption, protection of operational technology, securing our supply chain, and retirement of technical debt, including cryptographic modernization, are critical to reducing our vulnerabilities to increasingly advanced adversaries. Establishing clear frameworks for data interoperability, modernizing defense business systems, continuing deployment of the Mission Partner

Environment, management of the Department's spectrum assets, and overhauling the Authority to Operate process are just as critical to bringing our own operations up to speed.

And most importantly, we must hire and retain the skilled workforce that these challenges demand. This has not been a straightforward matter in recent months, so I hope that as we discuss current and future initiatives, we can likewise dig into the effects of the Deferred Resignation Program and hiring freezes on the current and future workforce.

Each of these matters I mentioned have been the subject of significant attention in recent National Defense Authorization Acts, but I know our work, just like yours, is not done. You live these critical issues every day, and I look forward to hearing your perspectives on the Department's progress and challenges - and what we in the Congress should consider for further action. There is no alternative to getting this right.

And with that, I want to again thank our witness for appearing before us today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.