

**Chairman Thad Cochran Opening Statement
Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense**

Subcommittee Markup of the FY2017 Defense Appropriations Bill

May 24, 2016

(As prepared for delivery)

The Subcommittee meets this morning to consider the Department of Defense Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2017. The bill recommends \$515.9 billion in base Defense funding and \$58.6 billion for Overseas Contingency Operations.

During our review of the President's budget, we conducted eight public hearings and one classified hearing to understand the request and the needs of the Armed Services for the fiscal year beginning October 1st. The Subcommittee has worked in a bipartisan manner to produce a bill within our budget allocation that promotes our national security interests. The bill before us today recommends funding to increase readiness for our military services. It sustains U.S. force structure and provides stability to our men and women in uniform and their families.

I am pleased that our committee has identified resources to procure a polar icebreaker, a much needed national security investment, for the first time since fiscal year 1990. We are also making important investments in other shipbuilding programs, missile defense, and aircraft, which are critical to our military's modernization. These are important initiatives that have broad bipartisan support among members of this subcommittee.

I appreciate the support of Vice Chairman Durbin and urge approval of the bill.

I now turn to the Vice Chairman for any remarks he would like to make.

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