

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

Hearing to Review the Budget and Readiness of the Department of Defense

March 22, 2017

(As prepared for delivery)

The Subcommittee on Defense will come to order. Today we are receiving an update on military readiness and defense budget matters. We are pleased to welcome:

- The Honorable James N. Mattis, Secretary of Defense
- General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

The Fiscal Year 2017 Department of Defense Appropriations agreement has been approved by the House of Representatives, and I look forward to the Senate completing work on that bill in the coming weeks. We are well into the fiscal year, and members of this Subcommittee understand the importance of enacting defense appropriations legislation.

As we complete our work on the 2017 defense appropriations agreement, we also recognize that a request for additional appropriations in Fiscal Year 2017 has been submitted to Congress. We welcome comments from our panel on the budget amendment, as well as the submission for Fiscal Year 2018.

It is a distinct honor to have the Secretary of Defense before us in his first appearance as Secretary. I am also pleased to welcome back the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff before the Subcommittee.

We look forward to hearing more about your priorities and efforts to increase military readiness and strengthen the Department of Defense.

I now turn to the Vice Chairman, Senator Durbin, for his opening remarks.

Thank you.

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