

Chairman Richard Shelby Opening Statement
Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense
Markup of the FY2020 Department of Defense Appropriations Act
September 10, 2019

(As prepared for delivery)

The Subcommittee meets this morning to consider the Department of Defense Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2020.

The bill recommends \$622.4 billion in base Defense funding, \$70.7 billion for Overseas Contingency Operations, and \$1.7 billion in emergency funding.

The subcommittee held a number of public and classified hearings to get a complete picture of the needs of the Armed Services and intelligence community to better understand how those fit into the President's budget request.

That review has allowed Senator Durbin and me to work together to produce a strong, bipartisan bill.

The bill before you continues increases in funding for our nation's defense that meet the objectives of the National Defense Strategy by improving readiness, investing in innovation, and bolstering the combat effectiveness of the Department of Defense.

It provides strong support for our men and women in uniform, including a 3.1 percent pay increase - the largest in ten years.

The bill includes significant investments in both basic research and future technologies such as hypersonics, 5G, artificial intelligence, missile defense, and cybersecurity.

These investments in future technologies are not only game-changers, but they are essential for our military to maintain its technological superiority.

We must continue to make investments today that demonstrate our commitment to ensuring that our Armed Forces are well-trained, well-equipped, and better prepared than any other around the world.

This bill does that.

Last year, Congress successfully marked the first time that America's military was funded on time through regular order in a decade - something that is key to ensuring the United States maintains its military advantage.

Without sustained and predictable investments to restore readiness and modernize our military, we will rapidly lose our military advantage – something we cannot afford in light of increasing national security challenges from around the globe.

This year we are off to a late start but with the certainty of the budget agreement; stable, two-year funding, and the decision by all parties to eliminate poison pills, I see no reason why we cannot repeat the successes of the fiscal year 2019 appropriations process.

It is only on this foundation that we will successfully complete the considerable work that lies ahead.

I appreciate Senator Durbin's commitment to this framework and his efforts in crafting this bill and I look forward to working with him as we move to full committee and on to the Senate floor.

I now turn to Senator Durbin for any remarks that he would like to make.

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