

May 3, 2007: Armed Services Subcommittee Opening Statement of Ranking Member Mac Thornberry

Mark-up of National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007

(Washington D.C.) -Rep. Mac Thornberry, (R-TX), ranking Republican on the Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee, today released the following opening statement for the subcommittee's mark-up of National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007:

"Mr. Chairman. First let me express my appreciation to you and to each of the subcommittee staff members for the work and cooperative spirit which went into this mark. The relative smoothness I expect from today's meeting is misleading. The change in control of Congress and of this committee, with all of the people coming and going, meant that getting a bill ready for markup was not easy. But with significant effort and a cooperative attitude, it has been done, and it has been done well."

"Second, I want to commend you for the substance of this mark, as well as to express appreciation for each of the members who contributed to it, including our former chairman, Mr. Saxton. It may not be exactly the mark I would have written if it were totally up to me, but it is a good product that draws on the considerable expertise and judgment of the members on this subcommittee, and it makes progress in several important areas."

"Third, I think that it is important to acknowledge that we have a lot of work ahead of us. This subcommittee is, in many respects, on the cutting edge of national security challenges facing our nation. We face a determined, adaptable enemy, which we have had trouble even finding the right name to place on them. Whatever name we put on this conflict, we should never forget that our adversaries seek to kill as many of us as possible and even to destroy our way of life, that technology allows them to communicate with each other and with the outside world in a way that has never been done before, and that our military alone cannot defeat this enemy."

"This subcommittee will have to help our nation find bipartisan, nonpartisan answers to questions such as:

- How do we ensure that we have a full understanding of the radical Islamist threat we face and how do we take that understanding to develop effective national strategies to counter it?
- What are the appropriate instruments of national power needed to wage this generation-long struggle and what can we do to facilitate a comprehensive and coordinated approach to their application?
- Does the Special Operations Command have the tools and authorities needed to effectively and flexibly do its job?
- How do we ensure that the Department is making the most effective use of the billions of dollars it spends on information technology every year?
- Are we effectively engaging the enemy in cyberspace and who is responsible for doing so within the military and across the government?
- How can we improve our science and technology efforts to benefit the warfighter and to ensure that we are prepared to face the threats of the future?

Mr. Chairman, as you know, these questions are just a starting place for the work ahead of us over the next 18 months. I look forward to working with you and with each of the members of this subcommittee to find answers that best protect our nation and the freedoms we love."

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