

Congressman John Rutherford (FL-04) Testimony

House Armed Services Committee

April 11, 2018

Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Member Smith, distinguished members of the Committee – thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of my priorities for the Fiscal Year 2019 National Defense Authorization Act.

As some of you know, Florida's 4th Congressional District encompasses most of Jacksonville and St. Augustine and includes Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Naval Station Mayport, Marine Corps Blount Island Command, Florida National Guard installations, and many industry partners. I am proud to represent these men and women, who contribute substantially to our national security, in Congress.

First, I would like to thank the Committee for its continued support of many programs that are key to the missions and growth at Northeast Florida's installations. This includes the MQ-4C Triton, P-8A Poseidon, the Littoral Combat Ship, and various Shipbuilding and Repair accounts, among others. I urge the Committee to continue supporting these important programs.

However, today I would like to spend this time focusing on four areas of importance in this year's legislation – E-2D Advanced Hawkeye procurement, the Air Force's Light Attack Aircraft, the Littoral Combat Ship, and the Law Enforcement Information Exchange program.

First, the E-2D Advanced Hawkeye is the Navy's only carrier-based Airborne Early Warning and battle Management Command and Control System. This aircraft is a key enabler of the Carrier Strike Group and provides theater air and missile defense, synthesizes information from multiple onboard and off-board sensors, makes complex tactical decisions, and disseminates actionable information to Joint Forces in a distributed, open-architecture environment. The U.S. Navy's Unfunded Priorities List this year includes \$340 million for two additional E-2D aircraft in FY2019, for a total of 6 aircraft. The additional aircraft will allow for a more efficient production schedule and enable early transition of E-2Cs to E-2Ds at the Carrier Airborne Early Warning Weapons School. Of operational importance, it will provide CSGs with the E-2Ds advanced capabilities to pace rapidly evolving threats, ensuring that the most capable AEW aircraft is available for the defense and protection of U.S. and Coalition forces. I urge the Committee to support this request of 6 aircraft in FY2019, along with supporting the necessary RDT&E.

Second, senior Air Force leadership has stated the need to procure a fleet of off-the-shelf, light attack aircraft, commonly referred to as the OA-X program. Last year's NDAA supported this concept of a rapid procurement, as greater use of this type of aircraft would provide close air support in a cost-effective way for the Air Force. Using aircraft, like the A-29 Super Tucano, is a cheaper solution than having more advanced aircraft, like the F-35, carrying out CAS and other missions. This saves money and extends the life of more expensive aircraft. The Air Force is

conducting an experiment leading to a procurement decision this year, and should that decision be made, Congress needs to be prepared to meet that request. I urge the Committee to provide Advanced Procurement funding for the purchase of long-lead items so that the first delivery of the aircraft will be no later than 2020. I believe the full utilization and investment in this program has the potential to reshape how our airmen carry out its mission.

Third, one program I know this Committee is intimately familiar with is the Littoral Combat Ship, whose *Freedom* class ships are homeported at Naval Station Mayport. I applaud the Committee's continued support of this program and for its commitment to rebuilding our Navy's fleet. Of importance to Mayport, the President's Budget Request supported the necessary LCS MILCON at Mayport for its Training and Support facilities. I urge the Committee to support this request as the current alternative is training these crews out in San Diego, which is neither a good use of taxpayer money nor is it good for the crews. I also strongly support three more LCS in FY2019 and a quick transition to the new frigate, as I know many on this Committee do.

Lastly, as a former sheriff, I understand the tools that can help our law enforcement and intelligence agencies carry out their respective missions. The Naval Criminal Investigative Service has successfully used a capability called the Law Enforcement Information Exchange, commonly referred to as LInX, to address the data collection, analysis, and integration challenges that confront the defense intelligence and law enforcement agencies at all levels of government. I have seen firsthand how important this capability is in dealing with high-volume disparate data in numerous law enforcement and intelligence agencies, so I would like to submit report language for the record that requests LInX be made a congressional interest item to ensure it receives adequate and stable funding.

Again, thank you all for this opportunity and time to speak today. I also say thank you on behalf of a grateful nation for all the hard work you do in ensuring our nation remains the strongest and safest in the world. I am always available for further discussion on these or other programs of interest. I yield back.

Propose Report Language on Item of Special Interest

Law Enforcement Information Exchange (LInX)

The budget request includes \$706.6 million in Operation and Maintenance, Navy for Investigative and Security Services, of which \$7.7 million would provide an analytical tool for the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) advanced integration and analysis of high-volumes of disparate data. The committee is aware that for nearly 10 years the NCIS has successfully used a capability called the Law Enforcement Information Exchange (LInX) to address the data collection, analysis, and integration challenges that confront the defense intelligence and law enforcement agencies at all levels of government. Most recently, the LInX program has added investigator friendly analysis tools to more rapidly survey, evaluate, and develop insights from the large and growing number of data sources. Massive amounts of data existing in an ever-increasing variety of open or warrantable formats - everything from documents and narrative reports to emails, blogs, and text messages - are sources of raw information that, when rapidly and reliably analyzed, provides actionable intelligence for military and law enforcement agencies. NCIS and other agencies' use of LInX has proven its capability and capacity to deal with high-volume disparate data in numerous law enforcement and intelligence cases.

Given the NCIS's record of success with this intelligence and law enforcement capability, the committee is concerned that this program receives adequate and stable funding to ensure its continuous operational availability to investigators and analysts of other agencies. Accordingly, the committee designates the NCIS's LInX program as a congressional interest item. The committee further directs that the Director, NCIS, or designee, not later than August 15, 2018, provide an update briefing addressing the LInX program and the Navy's utilization, program performance, plans for expanding its use, and efforts to share the NCIS's experience with the program with other intelligence and law enforcement agencies.