



Statement for the Record

Hearing: Rebuilding the Arsenal of Democracy: The Imperative to Strengthen America's Defense

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AUVSI is the world's largest non-profit organization dedicated to advancing uncrewed systems, autonomy, and robotics. We represent over 400 corporations and 8,000 professionals across more than 60 countries in industry, government, and academia. AUVSI and our members aim to strengthen U.S. leadership in commercial autonomy and defense technology. It is critical that the United States aggressively develop the workforce and technology needed for future transportation, robotics, and advanced warfighting systems to remain globally competitive. We appreciate the opportunity to submit comments for the record. Our focus is on the critical need to strengthen and expand the American and allied supply chain for drones, autonomous and automated systems, and their components.

The United States faces a critical moment in its national defense strategy. Modern, high-intensity conflicts, from Ukraine to the South China Sea, have highlighted the urgent need for scalable, attritable, and technologically advanced uncrewed systems. To secure democracy and deter aggression, we must develop an uncrewed arsenal capable of responding to 21st-century threats.

Why We Need an Uncrewed Arsenal

Strategic competitors like China are building military assets at a pace that puts the U.S. and its allies at a severe disadvantage. Multiple unclassified war games and real-world conflicts reveal that modern warfare rapidly depletes munitions, drones, and other platforms. Without sufficient production capacity, supply chains, or acquisition reform, the U.S. risks being outgunned and unprepared.

Drawing inspiration from America's WWII "Arsenal of Democracy," we must replicate the same industrial mobilization to meet today's challenges. The rapid production of aircraft, tanks, and munitions proved that collaboration between government and industry can decisively alter the course of history. Today, the focus must be on uncrewed systems: Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (UAS or drones), Uncrewed Underwater Vehicles (UUVs), Uncrewed Surface Vehicles (USVs), and Uncrewed Ground Vehicles (UGVs).

How We Get There: Key Recommendations

1. **Scale Production Immediately**
 - a. Place large-scale orders for uncrewed systems to meet warfighter demands and arm allies.
 - b. Consistent, predictable demand will enable industry to scale production, reduce costs, and build resilient supply chains.
2. **Reform Acquisition Processes**
 - a. Shift from a requirements-based to a problem-based acquisition system.
 - b. Empower the Department of Defense (DoD) to work with industry to define battlefield challenges and allow private innovation to deliver solutions rapidly.



- c. Expand initiatives like Replicator, which has demonstrated early success in accelerating the deployment of attritable uncrewed systems.
3. **Strengthen the Industrial Base**
 - a. Invest in workforce development and advanced manufacturing capabilities.
 - b. Enhance supply chain resilience to reduce reliance on foreign components and ensure the availability of critical technologies.
4. **Commit to Long-Term Funding**
 - a. Allocate supplemental appropriations to support a multi-year investment in national security innovation and the industrial base.
 - b. Establish ongoing funding for initiatives like Replicator to maintain readiness in all domains, including maritime and electronic warfare.
5. **Preposition for Deterrence**
 - a. Globally deploy uncrewed systems and components to signal U.S. readiness and deter adversaries.
 - b. Focus on systems that are low-cost, attritable, autonomous, and capable of overwhelming Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2AD) systems.

Conclusion: A Call to Action

The U.S. must take decisive steps to secure its technological and industrial edge. By rapidly scaling production, reforming acquisition, and investing in workforce and manufacturing capabilities, we can build an uncrewed arsenal. This effort will ensure readiness for modern conflict, deter aggression, and maintain strategic deterrence.

As we learned from WWII, the strength of democracy depends on the strength of its industrial and technological base. Now is the time to act.

Thank you for considering our comments.