

**Chair McCollum – Opening Statement  
Subcommittee on Defense  
Future Defense Spending  
March 23, 2021**

This afternoon the subcommittee will hold its third hearing in a series to discuss emerging issues that affect future defense spending.

While cyber security, nuclear modernization, and Overseas Contingency Operations funding are three unrelated topics, a common thread that unites them is the significant impact they have had on our bill in the last several years and how they will continue to shape our work for years to come.

Today we will hear from four witnesses:

- Niloofar Howe, a Senior Fellow with New America will discuss cyber security;
- James Acton, the Co-Director of the Nuclear Policy Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace will cover nuclear modernization;
- Mandy Smithberger, the Director of the Center for Defense Information at the Project on Government Oversight will detail problems with OCO spending; and
- Roger Zakheim, the Washington Director of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute will address broad spending issues.

In the last decade we have transitioned from thinking of cyber security as primarily a function of protecting the Department of Defense Information Networks to creating a functional cyber combatant command and integrating cyber effects into most missions.

Our adversaries will continue to advance their techniques and capabilities, which will force our subcommittee, and the whole of government, to evolve.

Few efforts will have a more significant budgetary impact than nuclear modernization.

Aging systems such as Minutemen ICBMs, Ohio-class submarines, and B-1 and B-2 bombers necessitate modernizing foundational components of the nuclear triad.

In its most recent report projecting the 10-year costs of nuclear forces, CBO estimated the nuclear enterprise to cost DoD \$326 billion from 2019 to 2028.

When combined with costs borne by the Department of Energy, the total was 23% greater than CBO's previous estimate.

And finally, the end of the Budget Control Act caps on discretionary spending allows us to have a more honest conversation about OCO.

In the last ten years, Democratic and Republican administrations and Congresses used OCO as a budget gimmick to circumvent BCA caps.

It is time we correct those past mistakes, and I would to remind my colleagues that our FY 2021 House report stated, “The OCO experiment has been an abject failure and has given the Department a budgetary relief valve that has allowed it to avoid making difficult decisions.”

Our subcommittee will face a series of difficult decisions in the coming months, and I hope our witnesses will provide information that will help guide us in making some of those choices.

And now, I would like to recognize our distinguished ranking member, Mr. Calvert, for his comments.