

**FLOOR STATEMENT OF U.S. SENATOR JACK REED
CHAIRMAN, SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**U.S. SENATE FLOOR
Tuesday, October 11, 2022**

To discuss the fiscal year 2023 National Defense Authorization Act

REED: Mr. President, I rise to discuss the fiscal year 2023 National Defense Authorization Act. In a few minutes I will bring up this bill, which the Armed Services Committee passed by a broad, bipartisan vote of 23 to 3 in June. I am glad we have the opportunity to consider the NDAA on the Senate floor. We are at a critical period in our nation's security and this bill will help ensure our military has the tools and capabilities it needs to combat threats around the globe and keep Americans safe.

First, I would like to acknowledge Ranking Member Inhofe, whose leadership on this committee and in this body has been invaluable. His commitment to our men and women in uniform is unwavering, and he was instrumental in helping produce this bipartisan legislation. In honor of his well-earned retirement, I'm pleased that the committee voted to name this year's bill the *James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act*.

As we discuss the NDAA, we must keep in mind that the United States is engaged in a long-term strategic competition with China and Russia. Beijing poses the primary potential threat to our national security, as the only country in the world with the economic and technological capacity to mount a sustained challenge to our interests.

And, as we have seen with disturbing clarity, Putin has demonstrated his willingness to inflict violence and undermine the global order for his own benefit. The importance of U.S. support for the Ukrainian people cannot be overstated. They are fighting our fight, and we must aid them.

Elsewhere, states like Iran and North Korea continue to push the boundaries of military brinkmanship, and issues like terrorism, climate change, and pandemics remain persistent threats. The interconnected nature of these problems must drive how we resource and transform our tools of national power. The passage of the FY23 NDAA will be a critical step toward meeting these complex challenges.

Turning to the specifics of this year's defense bill. The NDAA authorizes \$817 billion for the Department of Defense and \$29 billion for national security programs within the Department of Energy.

The bill contains a number of important provisions that I would like to briefly highlight.

To begin, we have to ensure the United States can out-compete, deter, and prevail against our near-peer rivals. This NDAA confronts China and Russia by fully investing in the Pacific Deterrence Initiative, the European Deterrence Initiative, and the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative.

As part of this effort, the bill increases the defense topline authorization by \$45 billion to address the effects of inflation and accelerate implementation of the National Defense Strategy. This topline boost will accelerate the production of certain munitions and increase procurement of aircraft, naval vessels, armored vehicles, long-range fires, and other resources needed by the services and combatant commands.

The committee has also included an authorization of \$1 billion for the National Defense Stockpile to acquire strategic and critical minerals currently in shortfall. This will go a long way to help meet the defense, industrial, and essential civilian needs of the United States.

We also include additional support for our industrial base to produce the munitions needed to backfill our stocks, while also keeping supplies flowing to Ukraine and other European allies. Many Senators on both sides of the aisle have been actively engaged in this effort, but I especially want to recognize Senator Shaheen's leadership. She has been instrumental in pushing new authorities that can be helpful for the Department of Defense to address the current challenge we have and the better posture us for the future. Senator Shaheen's work has been highly impactful in the direction we ultimately took, which is reflected in the amendment that Senator Inhofe and I have offered as part of the manager's package.

Relatedly, America's capacity for technological innovation has long given us the strongest economy and military on earth, but this advantage is not a given – it must be nurtured and maintained. To that end, this year's NDAA authorizes significant funding increases for cutting-edge technologies like microelectronics, hypersonic weapons, and low-cost unmanned aircraft. Similarly, it increases funding to support U.S. Cyber Command's Hunt Forward Operations and artificial intelligence capabilities.

And, as we navigate threats of nuclear escalation from Russia and increasing capabilities from China, the NDAA enhances our deterrence strategy by helping to modernize the U.S. nuclear triad. It also makes progress in ensuring the safety, security, and reliability of our nuclear stockpile, delivery systems, and infrastructure; increasing capacity in theater and homeland missile defense; and strengthening nonproliferation programs.

Importantly, this year's NDAA provides a 4.6 percent pay raise for both military servicemembers and the Department of Defense civilian workforce. It also authorizes additional funding to ease the impacts of inflation on the force and provides resources to support recruiting and retention needs.

When I introduce the FY23 NDAA, it will be as a substitute to the House-passed NDAA. This substitute will be modified with a package of amendments that have been cleared on both sides. There are 75 amendments, including six major authorization bills from other committees. Again, I am pleased that we have brought this bill to the floor so the entire Senate has had an opportunity to participate in the process.

I also want to take a moment to thank all the staff who accomplished this herculean task in a week. The staff of the Armed Services Committee worked tirelessly to ensure every possible amendment was cleared and included. And I particularly want to thank Kevin Davis of the Office of Legislative Counsel who went above and beyond to draft this substitute.

The staff did a remarkable job. They were led by Liz King and John Wason and I salute both of them and all the members of the staff for their extraordinary efforts.

The topline defense number in this bill, together with the allocations set by Chairman Leahy for defense and non-defense funding across the appropriations bills, provides a realistic balance for funding the military and the rest of the federal government. Once we have completed work on this important authorization bill, we need to complete the appropriations process.

Let me conclude by once again thanking Ranking Member Inhofe and my colleagues – in particular, the President Pro Tempore, Senator King – for working thoughtfully and on a bipartisan basis to develop this important piece of legislation. I would also like to thank the staff who worked tirelessly on this bill throughout the year. I look forward to a thoughtful debate on the issues that face our Department of Defense and national security.

With that, I yield the floor.