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STATEMENT OF

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Statement of John Allen Williams
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I thank Chairman Snyder, Ranking Member Wittman, and the distinguished members of the Subcommittee for the opportunity to share some thoughts with you on professional military education. This is a subject of deep professional and personal interest to me, and I am honored to be asked to do so. The Chairman's letter of invitation requested that I "provide testimony that holistically assesses the professional military education system" and "how it should be improved in light of current and future demands." Accordingly, I will discuss some general considerations that should be borne in mind as decisions are made about officer education.

It is appropriate that these hearings examine the progress made in the professional military education system some two decades after Committee Chairman Skelton's "Report of the Panel on Military Education" to review the ability of the PME system "to develop professional military strategists, joint warfighters, and tacticians."¹ Three aspects of this report seem particularly noteworthy: the importance of developing strategists to plan for an uncertain future, the need to involve the civilian academic community, and an emphasis on quality. These remain relevant today. It seems clear from testimony to date that the various Service and Joint schools share this vision. The recommendations of the Skelton Report continue to influence the PME system in its planning and operations, evident most recently in a thoughtful memorandum of "President's Intent" by the President of National Defense University.²

My remarks this morning will consider three issues: developing strategists to meet future strategic challenges, PME and civil-military relations, and the engagement of military officers with the civilian academic community. My conclusion is that the maximum exposure to rigorous civilian academic standards will strengthen PME, better prepare the military to deal with future challenges, and strengthen the bonds between the military and society.

Developing Strategists to Meet Future Strategic Challenges

The strategic environment is evolving in ways that are not entirely predictable, although several trends are apparent. Strategic surprise is always possible, although in retrospect we should not have been so surprised by the events that occurred eight years ago tomorrow. Since it is difficult to plan for radical changes, predictions tend to be based on projections of currently observable trends and miss impending discontinuities in the pattern. As John Collins pointed out, "Modern military strategists ply their trade in volatile environments that are fraught with more uncertainties, complexities, and ambiguities than Clausewitz imagined."³

The international environment. An earlier project looked at the threat as it changed before, during, and after the Cold War – particularly the post Cold War period we called the "Postmodern" era – and the effect of the evolving threat on military professionalism and civil-

¹ Committee on Armed Services, U.S. House of Representatives, "Report of the Panel on Military Education of the One Hundredth Congress," April 21, 1989, p. v. (Hereafter, the Skelton Report)

² VADM Ann E. Rondeau, "NDU President's Intent," Memorandum for Senior Leaders, August 25, 2009. Her strong emphasis on quality and academic rigor is fully consistent with the recommendations of the Skelton Report.

³ John M. Collins, *Military Strategy: Principles, Practices, and Historical Perspectives* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, Inc., 2002), p.9. This is a comprehensive and sophisticated introduction to military strategy that deserves a wide audience.

military relations.⁴ The Postmodern era is marked by an increase in subnational threats such as ethnic violence and terrorism, in addition to traditional military threats emanating from troublesome nation-states. The dominant military professionals were the soldier-statesman or the soldier-scholar, operating in a small professional military.

With the attacks of September 11, 2001, it seemed to me that the threat shifted so significantly that a new paradigm was in order.⁵ For want of a better name, I referred to this new period as the “Hybrid” era, given the wide range of threats at all levels: international, transnational, and subnational.⁶ Unfortunately, the traditional threats did not go away, and the major military mission became the full spectrum of operations: “all of the above.” In addition to the soldier-warrior and manager and the soldier-statesman and scholar, there arose a new military professional: the soldier-constable, who operates not only abroad in peace operations, but at home in civil emergencies. The force structure retained its professional military core, but now with a more fully integrated reserve force – no longer called up only for major contingencies, but now as a constant part of the total force.

The need for adaptive leaders is apparent in this new era. Not only is the threat evolving, the force structure is not sufficiently robust to permit much specialization. Forces and their leaders will need to adapt to a wide range of missions, sometimes at the same time. Marine Corps General Charles Krulak’s concept of the “three block war” captures this well, as marines and soldiers need to be prepared to engage in high intensity operations, peacekeeping, and humanitarian operations simultaneously – perhaps within three contiguous blocks.⁷ Leaders at all levels must think strategically, even if they are not strategists, including in the increasingly professionalized enlisted ranks.⁸

The domestic environment. Domestic challenges are twofold. First, U.S. civil society provides the context in which the military is shaped. Civilians make the final decisions on the level of resources to be devoted to military purposes and determine the force structure by what they are willing to pay for. Civilian society increasingly expects the military to follow civilian mores in its social behavior. This became evident in the aftermath of the Tailhook scandal,⁹ and the trend is still apparent. Also, potential recruits vote with their feet as they decide whether or not to enter the military.

Morris Janowitz frequently noted that militaries reflect the societies they serve. If the

⁴ Charles C. Moskos, John Allen Williams, and David R. Segal, *The Postmodern Military: Armed Forces After the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁵ John Allen Williams, “The Military and Society Beyond the Postmodern Era,” *Orbis: A Journal of World Affairs* 52, No. 2 (Spring 2008), pp.199-216.

⁶ For a discussion of the notion of hybrid wars, a notion closely related to the hybrid era, see Frank G. Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars* (Arlington, VA: Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, December, 2007). http://www.potomac institute.org/publications/Potomac_HybridWar_0108.pdf Accessed September 7, 2009.

⁷ Gen. Charles C. Krulak, “The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three Block War,” *Marines Magazine* (January 1999). http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/usmc/strategic_corporal.htm. Accessed September 5, 2009.

⁸ While beyond the scope of this testimony, the increasing professionalism of the enlisted ranks has implications for enlisted education and contributes to a flattened military hierarchy based increasingly on ability and training rather than on formal rank structure. This has long been seen in the military medical communities and, perhaps counter intuitively, in the special operations forces. Inter-rank differences are further lessened by the ease of electronic communication and its embrace by younger officers and enlisted personnel. This has further implications for the leaders needed in such a personnel environment.

⁹ Those wishing to read a comprehensive overview of this incident and its immediate aftermath should consult William H. McMichael, with a foreword by Charles C. Moskos, *The Mother of All Hooks: The Story of the U. S. Navy's Tailhook Scandal* (Edison, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1997).

society tolerates drug use, as it did in the Vietnam War era, these problems will follow recruits into the military. If a society is becoming more comfortable with diversity of all kinds, demands for the military to change in that respect will not be far behind. Similarly, the ground combat exclusion for women will come under increasing assault. It will require the most gifted and well educated leadership to manage the military successfully as such changes occur.

Second, there are a number of easily imaginable scenarios that could cause the military to operate domestically, with *posse comitatus* restrictions waived in view of a civil emergency. This could be to preserve or restore order in the wake of some catastrophe. More controversially, it could also be used in ways citizens directly involved would not like, such as enforcing a quarantine. The Department of Defense wisely avoids being the lead agency in the wake of catastrophic incidents, preferring to operate in support of other agencies, such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Some operations could greatly reduce the affection and respect the American people have for their military, which will be much more popular when it is operating “over there” as opposed to “back here.”

Developing strategists. Given the complexity of the future threat environment and the importance of the issues involved – military threats and the proper relation between the military and the society it serves –the Skelton Report’s call for the development of strategists and the encouragement of strategic thinking is increasingly relevant. One should note that these are not quite the same thing. Only a small number of officers will develop into strategists of the first rank, but these are so important that the PME system must do as much as it can to encourage them to develop their talents to the maximum degree possible.¹⁰

This is a tall order. A recent study suggests that only a few individuals “possess the necessary cognitive skills and insight to be competent strategists.... Strategy may be a game anyone can play, but the evidence is strong that very few can play it well....” The need, therefore, is to identify those “with the mindset and talents to craft strategy competently.”¹¹

I have had the privilege of working with some outstanding strategists in my military and civilian careers.¹² Without exception they were highly intelligent, intellectually curious, widely read, hard workers, and independent thinkers comfortable with ambiguity. No military education system can create such strategists, but it should encourage them in their interests, broaden their intellectual horizons, and help them develop the skills they need to be effective. It can also help them recognize and develop strategic abilities in their associates. This cannot await their arrival

¹⁰ Note that strategic thinking goes beyond statements of goals or of simple cost-benefit analyses. Robert L. Goldich pointed out in a personal communication that strategic thinking also requires “a full comprehension of, and appreciation for, the role of passion, ideology, belief, and emotion in the conduct of human affairs.”

¹¹ Andrew F. Krepinevich and Barry D. Watts, *Regaining Strategic Competence* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments) 2009, p. x-xi.

¹² I taught at the U.S. Naval Academy and Officer Indoctrination School (for staff corps officers) and served periods of active duty at the U.S. Naval War College and the Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). I had the Navy officer billet codes of strategic plans officer and social science instructor, and served periods of active duty in the Pentagon with Joint, DOD, and Navy strategic planning staffs, most notably the Navy Strategy Branch (OP-603, then N513). In my civilian career I have written on professional military education, including a book analyzing the Army’s civilian graduate education program. I work closely with the Navy ROTC program at Northwestern University, edit *The National Strategy Forum Review*, and am on the Board of Directors of the Pritzker Military Library. I have learned much from Admiral James Stavridis, Vice Admirals Ann Rondeau and Congressman Joe Sestak, Lieutenant General Wallace Gregson, Major General Thomas Wilkerson, Rear Admiral James Stark, Colonels Robert Killebrew and Joseph Collins, Captains Peter Swartz, Larry Seaquist, Joe Bouchard, Richard Diamond, Roger Barnett, and David Rosenberg, and – last but not least – Colonel John Collins and Mr. Richard E. Friedman.

at a senior service school – by then it is too late – but must begin as early in their careers as possible.

The PME system cannot be designed to educate only the top one or two percent of its students, the future grand strategists. It must also ensure that the balance of the officers in the system form the habit of thinking strategically. They will not all reach the pinnacle of their profession or become leaders in strategy development, but they will make valuable strategic contributions by their writing, staff work, teaching, and mentoring. The right educational experiences will help students develop the intellectual capital they will need later in their careers, even if its immediate relevance is not apparent. Although continuing professional education should be expected, demanding operational billets are not conducive to systematic thought and reflection – emphasizing the importance of a period of residential study.

PME and Civil-Military Relations

The decisions made about professional military education will have implications for civil-military relations in a society that has fewer links between the military and civilians since the advent of the all-volunteer force. This is not uncommon historically, but the need for a large Army kept conscription levels – and thus civil-military contacts – high throughout much of the Cold War. Each level of the PME system provides opportunities to enhance these links.

At the officer accession level, it is necessary to maintain a variety of commissioning sources. The academies are repositories of service culture and by virtue of the appointment process guarantee a wide representation of students. (West Point, in particular, has a central place in the culture of its parent service.) These are also programs that the military can control. One occasionally hears calls for their abandonment, but this would be a big mistake. Once destroyed, they could not be rebuilt.¹³

One of the enduring legacies of Vietnam is the loss of Reserve Officer Training Corps programs at a number of prestigious universities. Given the historical disinclination of American elites¹⁴ to participate personally in the defense of the society that grants them so many privileges, especially since the end of nearly universal conscription, this is particularly unfortunate. This experience showed the need for the military to have sources of officer accession training that are not subject to the political whims of university professors, a lesson reinforced by resistance to ROTC programs because of Congressionally-mandated policies on sexual orientation and the military.

OCS programs can be expanded rapidly, with no need for the government to fund the college education of the inductees, and now provide a high percentage of Army Second Lieutenants. The pedagogical issue at this level is the degree to which academic requirements should be so focused on engineering. Without underestimating the need for technically competent officers, the proper balance of technical, social scientific, moral, and humanist components in curricula needs to be reconsidered if we are training officers to lead people, as opposed to machines, in the most challenging and ambiguous environments. It is past time to reemphasize the importance of the humanities and social sciences, deemphasized in the Navy under the influence of Admiral Hyman G. Rickover and the presumed need for all officers to emphasize technical competence over all else. He “championed the cause of rigorous technical

¹³ See the special issue of *Armed Forces & Society* devoted to U.S. and non- U.S. Academy education, edited by David R. Segal and Morten G. Ender: *Armed Forces & Society* 35, No. 1 (Fall 2008).

¹⁴ This is a very general term, but it refers here to the most privileged members of American society.

education at the expense of broader education that line officers had been receiving at Annapolis and the war colleges.”¹⁵

Civilian graduate education is primarily justifiable for its contribution to officer development, but it has the side effect of exposing military and civilian elites to one another in that setting. The interactions there will also put a human face on the military for the future civilian decision-makers. I note that all three Service Academies have partnership agreements with civilian universities for social science based Masters Degree programs for their incoming tactical officers to help them train their cadets or midshipmen.¹⁶

An earlier study of civilian graduate education for military officers found, “...civilian graduate education offers a channel to mutually beneficial interaction between the military profession and the academic community.... [F]or some, these contacts may provide an enduring source of intellectual growth and a link between the military community and the academic community.”¹⁷ As General David Petraeus noted, “Sending American military officers to graduate school also benefits our country as a whole by helping to bridge the gap between those in uniform and those who, since the advent of the all-volunteer force, have had little contact with the military.”¹⁸

The intermediate and senior service schools seem attentive to the emphases on jointness and on the development of strategic thinkers. I am not close enough to those programs to assess the level of success they are having in this regard, but the statements by the leaders of these institutions in earlier Subcommittee hearings are encouraging. The process by which officers are assigned to the various war colleges and the criteria on which these selections are made need to be monitored robustly. Additionally, it would be valuable to know the degree to which their war college experiences were used in subsequent tours and the length of time graduates remained on active duty after graduation.

The case can be made for civilian graduate education as an optional alternative to war college attendance. As the best civilian programs are prestigious and academically challenging, the competition may improve the war colleges as they strive to attract the best students. General Petraeus lists several reasons why such schooling is important. These include taking officers out of their intellectual comfort zone, exposing them to a wider range of opinions, providing intellectual capital, improving communication skills, sharpening critical thinking, and imparting intellectual humility.¹⁹ This experience also appears to result in attendees having a greater tolerance for a diversity of ideas, although we found that their fundamental values and beliefs were not altered.²⁰ This is especially likely if the program moves beyond the hard sciences. As soldier-scholar Josiah Bunting pointed out, “...it is the man who is both liberally and

¹⁵ Admiral James G. Stavridis and Captain Mark Hagerott, “The Heart of an Officer: Joint, Interagency, and International Operations and Navy Career Development,” *Naval War College Review* 62, No. 2 (Spring 2009), pp. 27-41, at p. 32. The authors offer a compelling analysis of educational and assignment issues related to Navy officer development, noting the irony that Admiral Rickover was himself broadly educated.

¹⁶ David R. Segal, personal communication, September 5, 2009. The universities are Columbia University, the University of Maryland, and the University of Colorado.

¹⁷ Sam C. Sarkesian, John Allen Williams, and Fred B. Bryant, *Soldiers, Society, and National Security* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1995), pp. 169, 175. The benefits noted do not apply only to lengthy doctoral programs. There are a number of masters programs of very high quality that would benefit the officers participating in them and be enriched themselves by such participation. Doctoral programs tend to take less time when they are undertaken by highly focused military officers with a limited career window in which to complete them.

¹⁸ David H. Petraeus, “Beyond the Cloister,” *The American Interest* (July/August 2007), p. 20.

¹⁹ Petraeus, pp. 16-20.

²⁰ Sarkesian, *et al.*, p. 171.

professionally educated who will be the better soldier.”²¹

Engagement with the Civilian Academic Community

There are several areas in which engagement with the civilian academic community would be beneficial to officer PME. One of these is the need to meet civilian standards for accreditation of the military’s Masters Degree programs. This has had a positive effect on the institutions offering the programs and resulted in better academic experiences for the officers.

Another is the flow of civilian instructors into the academic portions of residential PME programs. Not only do these professors bring an outside perspective and, presumably, high academic standards into the schools, those who go back to civilian institutions will do so with a deeper understanding of the military and a stronger appreciation of the people who serve in it.

Third, the involvement of serving officers in the intellectual life of the country benefits both. Scholars and others differ on the degree to which officers should contribute to public discussions of the great issues of the day, even when not speaking in their official capacity, but it is imperative that advice given to the Congress be candid and complete. As soldier-scholar Sam C. Sarkesian noted, the military should not be “a silent order of monks isolated from the political realm.”²²

Officers who are able to do so would benefit from involvement with the most rigorous scholarly professional organizations. One of these is the organization I have the privilege of heading, the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society (IUS).²³ I am pleased to report that participation in our organization by serving officers is strong, and they are making an outstanding contribution to our scholarly society, our journal, and our conferences. Although we have not coded our data specifically for military status (something that we are working on), it appears that about 16 percent of our U.S. IUS Fellows (our members) are active duty military officers. There are also many reserve component and retired military Fellows. A number of foreign military officers in all of these categories are also active Fellows.

Our journal, *Armed Forces & Society*, observes the highest academic standards. Despite the fact that military officers are not full time academics, their representation in our journal is strong. According to journal editor Patricia Shields, a sample of manuscripts submitted showed that 16 percent had at least one active duty officer as an author or coauthor. A sample of articles published showed that about half that, 8.2 percent, were authored or coauthored by at least one active duty officer. Other manuscripts are presently in the peer review process, so the numbers may understate the level of participation by active duty officers. Because our journal is highly theoretical and requires a thorough knowledge of the literature, being published there speaks well about the training and ability of those who succeed and shows competence in the kind of deep analysis and critical thinking needed to face the challenges ahead. Indeed, an active duty officer is a member of our editorial board and one of our book review editors has published two articles

²¹ Josiah Bunting, “The Humanities in the Education of the Military Professional,” in Lawrence J. Korb, ed., *The System for Educating Military Officers in the U.S.* (Pittsburgh, PA: International Studies Association, 1976), p. 158.

²² Sam C. Sarkesian, “The U. S. Military Must Find Its Voice,” *Orbis: A Journal of World Affairs* 42, No. 3 (Summer 1998), pp. 423-437 at p. 426.

²³ The IUS (www.iusafs.org) was formed in 1960 by Morris Janowitz, founder of the field of military sociology. He was followed by Sam C. Sarkesian, Charles C. Moskos, David R. Segal, and myself. We are an interdisciplinary and international scholarly society of some 700 “Fellows.” We hold a major biennial international conference in odd numbered years and publish the leading civil-military relations scholarly journal, *Armed Forces & Society*, edited by Professor Patricia Shields of Texas State University.

himself in our journal and just returned from Afghanistan. As an historical note, one of our most reprinted articles is a 1989 piece by David Petraeus earlier in his career on military influence on the use of force since Vietnam.²⁴ It is well worth rereading today.

Another indicator of active duty involvement with rigorous scholarship is participation in academic conferences such as the biennial international conference of the IUS. The centerpiece of these conventions is a series of panels where papers are summarized (much as is done in these hearings, although it is generally impossible for academics to limit themselves to five minutes). These conference papers are generally reports of works in progress and are the first step toward publication in our journal or elsewhere. The papers presented approximate the percentage of active duty publishing in *Armed Forces & Society*. For the 2005, 2007, and forthcoming 2009 conferences, the percentage of papers with at least one active duty military officer as an author or coauthor were 7.5 percent, 9.6 percent, and 6.8 percent, respectively.²⁵ In addition, they participate as panel chairs and discussants. At the risk of seeming to exaggerate the role of the organization I head, I include the following chart breaking down active duty officer participation in our conferences. We also typically have students from the U.S. Service Academies and the Royal Military College of Canada, many of whom participate on a well-attended “cadet panel.”

U.S. ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY PARTICIPATION AT IUS BIENNIAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

Source: Dr. Robert A. Vitas, IUS Executive Director

	2005 IUS Conference			2007 IUS Conference			2009 IUS Conference		
	Paper	Chair/Discussant		Paper	Chair/Discussant		Paper	Chair/Discussant	
US Army War College	1	1	2	2	0	2	2	1	3
US Army Command & Staff College	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0
US Military Academy	1	4	5	2	3	5	4	0	4
Other US Army	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>7</u>
Army Subtotal	8	8	16	10	6	16	10	4	14
US Air War College	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
US Air Command & Staff College	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	0	2
US Air Force Academy	2	1	3	2	0	2	3	0	3
Other US Air Force	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Air Force Subtotal	5	1	6	6	0	6	7	0	7
US Naval War College	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
US Naval Academy	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Navy Subtotal	2	0	2	5	0	5	1	0	1
US Marine Corps	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
Marine Corps Subtotal	0	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2
US Coast Guard Academy	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>
Coast Guard Subtotal	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	1	3
U.S. Active Duty Military Totals	15	10	25	24	7	31	21	6	27
TOTAL PAPERS PRESENTED	200			250			310		
PERCENT U.S. ACTIVE DUTY	7.5%			9.6%			6.8%		

²⁴ David H. Petraeus, “Military Influence and the Post-Vietnam Use of Force,” *Armed Forces & Society* 15, No. 4 (Summer 1989), pp. 489-505.

²⁵ I thank IUS Executive Director Dr. Robert A. Vitas, *Armed Forces & Society* Editor Dr. Patricia Shields, and Secretariat Director Ms. Mary Frances Lebamoff for gathering these data for me.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The military leaders and strategists being developed today will have to deal with the most complex challenges imaginable, both internationally and domestically. They will also provide the shoulders upon which the next generation of leaders will stand. Accordingly, it is vital to provide them with a solid educational foundation to give them the knowledge and skills they will need and to develop their habits of mind to be able to deal with ambiguity, new challenges, and an evolving military personnel structure.

The PME system is based on so many considerations that it may be impossible to meet all requirements. It becomes necessary to prioritize among, for example, service specific versus joint requirements and technically focused versus broad curricula. The need to consider opportunity costs is ever present because the system is already so full that an increased emphasis on one priority will require the lessening of another.

As the Congress considers the issue of professional military education going forward, I recommend that the following be included as important considerations:

- Providing the right mix of PME opportunities, whether Service, Joint, or civilian – including overseas cultural immersion programs
- Ensuring that the right officers are selected for these programs and that they will have follow-on assignments that are appropriate for their education
- The need to instill flexible habits of mind, nurturing strategic thinkers who are reflective and able to deal with ambiguity
- Enhancing the role of the humanities and social sciences, especially in officer accession programs
- Considering the effect of the PME system on the relations between the military and the civil society from which it comes and which it is sworn to defend
- Encouraging the best officers to interact with civilian academic institutions, both as students and as participants in academic discourse
- Holding students accountable for academic rigor in their educational process, whether in civilian or military educational institutions
- Making performance in educational institutions, civilian and military, a strong factor in subsequent assignments and promotions
- Recognizing that coordination must include not only Service and Joint issues, but inter-agency, international, and multinational considerations, as well
- Focusing on the increasing professionalization of the enlisted force and considering how enlisted educational opportunities can better meet evolving security challenges

We must always bear in mind that the purpose of our military forces is to prevail in combat. I believe that the above considerations will facilitate that, but they are not a substitute for the most rigorous military training possible and should not detract from the military mindset that makes victory possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. I hope these remarks will be of interest to the Subcommittee and useful to you in your important work.