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Chairman Tierney Comments on GAO Report on Weaknesses in the Defense Acquisitions Process

Washington, D.C. – Today, Congressman John F. Tierney (D-MA), Chairman of the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, issued the following statement about a newly-released Government Accountability Office (GAO) report he requested as part of his sustained oversight of U.S. defense procurement waste.

The GAO report identifies an area of weapon systems procurement that still goes unchecked—analysis of alternatives (AOA). The AOA process is designed to ensure that the Department of Defense and military services consider the range of options before committing to a specific defense weapons system. The GAO identifies numerous cases in which the Department of Defense made little or no effort to conduct such analyses at the start of these procurements. As such, the Department of Defense initiated procurement of these systems without confidence that the right solution was being pursued given all options available. In each case, the programs launched without a credible AOA process were delayed, over-budget, or both.

“The spiraling cost-overruns and delays of weapon systems continue to burden the taxpayer at a time when every penny counts. The Defense Department’s failure to conduct a credible analysis of alternatives has major consequences. The results speak for themselves: not a single one of the systems GAO identifies was both on time and on budget.

“Congress recently passed legislation to help limit wasteful defense spending on weapon systems. However, the job is far from done. I appreciate Secretary Gates’ demonstrated commitment to getting control of a run-away defense procurement system. He’s got to keep the momentum. We have to make sure the Department stops making improvements at the margin and gets to fundamental issues. Now of all times, we need fiscal discipline. GAO offers some sensible recommendations to bring discipline. And, we on this Subcommittee will continue to press the Department to be more rigorous with its procurement of weapon systems.”

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