

TURNER REMARKS AS PREPARED

"Welcome to the 7th annual Ohio Defense and Aerospace Forum. It is great to be back in person, to welcome new and returning partners, and to continue our joint efforts to strengthen and grow Ohio's defense industry. Thank you to the Dayton Development Coalition and all the sponsors who made this event possible.

"Ohio is a leader in the defense industry with 10 military installations throughout the state. Our servicemen and women protect our nation from threats we face daily. Increasing and improving our military capabilities and readiness is vital to our defense strategy. This mission could not be accomplished without leveraging federal, private-sector and military partnerships. In doing so, we can properly fund our military facilities, research and development capabilities and defense systems.

"Their mission is not one to be taken lightly. Right now, America is faced with mounting threats from our adversaries like Russia, China and Iran. Aggressive action has long come from the ground, air, sea and, now in the present theatre, increasingly via cyber-attacks to the cloud.

"They can travel beyond the speed of sound and are moving into the space frontier beyond our atmosphere. From hypersonics to anti-satellite weapons to emerging threats from artificial intelligence and biological warfare – our adversaries have a full arsenal in ways that they can threaten the United States. We must be well-equipped and well prepared to counter these threats while advancing our research and development to improve the next generation of our offensive systems.

"Over the last several months, the world has watched as Putin has carried out a war of atrocities against Ukraine. As military setbacks in Ukraine continue to force Putin into a corner, he has openly threatened the use of nuclear weapons against the U.S., Ukraine, and our NATO allies.

"Simultaneously, Iran continues to enrich uranium at greater numbers while North Korea telecasts its increasing hostilities to its neighbors – our allies – and the United States. The threat is evident in various regions of the world so our nuclear posture must evolve to protect our nation and our allies wherever they may be.

"China is closely watching how the United States responds to each of these provocations, particularly Russia, as they eye their own ambitions in the Indo-Pacific and specifically with regards to the island nation of Taiwan. In fact, Chinese President Xi has formed an alliance with Putin, meeting as recent as last month. Both leaders hold an openly hostile posture towards the U.S. and are actively trying to undermine our democracy.

"China, however, uses a more sophisticated approach than the brute force and aggressive talk of Putin. China seeks to attack our supply chain and use cognitive warfare to insert their ideologies into our society to sow discourse within. They compete in the technological field through artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies like quantum computing. Their strategic actions place our economy and military at risk.

"Delaying research, development and procurement of new technologies denies our ability to maintain our current economic and military edge against China. Failure to invest in our work force and educational institutions now will weaken our ability to respond in the future.

"We are also a year out from America's withdrawal from Afghanistan. This withdrawal allowed the Taliban to regain power in the region which is an open gateway for extremists' groups like al Qaeda. The hasty withdrawal created a safe haven once again for terrorism in the region. This was no better displayed than when al Zawahiri was taken out by a drone strike by the intelligence community.

"The mission of protecting our nation is no small task with threats growing on the horizon. Thanks to the commitment, the dedication, and the partnership of those in this room the state of Ohio is leading the charge in preparing our military and intelligence community with the capabilities it needs to defend our country.

"One place where we are seeing advancements in our technologies and defense capabilities is at the newly established National Space Intelligence Center at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. This new center, right here in Ohio, is the primary source for foreign air and space threat analysis. I was proud to join the Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines this summer to stand up this new mission.

"During this forum you will hear from speakers with backgrounds both in the military and intelligence fields. Thank you to the members of the Ohio delegation who are present here: Congressman Brad Wenstrup who serves on the House Intelligence Committee and is an Iraq War Veteran, and Congressman Bill Johnson who serves on the House Energy and Commerce Committee and a retired Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Air Force. My Ohio colleagues are well experienced and well respected in both the military and intelligence fields.

"I founded this forum seven years ago as a place where academia, industry and government can come together in a collective effort to unify our state's efforts to provide for the collective defense of our nation, to highlight the successes of the Ohio defense community while growing its economic impact locally. As we look beyond the horizon, I am encouraged by what we can achieve together in defending our nation and creating additional jobs in Ohio. Again, thank you to everyone here today for the work you have done, the work you are continuing to do and for rising to the challenges we are facing."