

**Opening Statement of U.S. Senator Jack Reed
Ranking Member, Senate Armed Services Committee**

**Room SD-106
Dirksen Senate Office Building
Wednesday, January 28, 2015**

**To receive testimony on the impact of the Budget Control Act of 2011
and sequestration on national security.**

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Thank you Mr. Chairman for holding this important hearing.

I also want to welcome our witnesses and thank them for their dedicated service as they lead America's soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines during these challenging strategic and fiscal times.

This hearing takes place as the Administration and Congress continue to wrestle with two intersecting policy problems and our debate on how best to solve them.

Because of sequester, we have a strategic problem. Every senior civilian and military leader in the Department of Defense has told us that if defense budgets continue to be capped at sequestration levels, we will likely not be able to meet the national defense strategy without an unacceptable level of risk.

As Senator McCain has indicated, we face a variety of new and continuing threats around the world, from Ukraine, to Syria, to Yemen and beyond. If we don't address the problem of sequestration, we will severely limit the range of available military options to address these threats and protect our national interests.

For the last three years, in numerous rounds of congressional hearings and testimony, our witnesses have described the increased strategic risk and damaging impact of Budget Control Act topline caps and sequestration restrictions on our military readiness, modernization, and the welfare of our service members and their families. I am sure that we will hear a similar message again today.

Compromise and difficult choices will be required to provide sequestration relief for the Department of Defense and for other critical national priorities, including public safety, infrastructure, health, and education.

Mr. Chairman I know you are committed to working with our Budget Committee to find a way to work through these challenges and I am eager to help in this effort. In the meantime, I look forward to the testimony of our witnesses.

Thank you.