

Opening Statement of U.S. Senator Jack Reed
Ranking Member, Senate Armed Services Committee
(As prepared for delivery)

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Hearing on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)
and the Military Balance in the Middle East

Good Morning. We are fortunate to have before us today witnesses that have served time in the military, diplomatic, and intelligence entities of our government and that have a range of knowledge and experience in issues relating to the Middle East, non-proliferation, asymmetric warfare, and matters of war and peace. This is our second hearing relating to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, and I want to thank Chairman McCain for his efforts to make sure the committee is presented with a range of views and opinions on the JCPOA.

In the weeks ahead, Congress has an obligation to review carefully the details of this agreement and to validate that the agreement will meet our common goal of stopping Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. This week's hearings are part of that effort.

Last week, the committee held a hearing with the Secretaries of Treasury, State, Defense and Energy, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. That hearing was important as it provided the committee with the Administration's views on the agreement, plans for regional engagement in the months and years ahead, and an opportunity to better understand the details of the agreement – from Iran's enrichment capabilities under the JCPOA to how snapback sanctions would be imposed if the terms of the agreement were violated.

I hope our witnesses today will provide their assessment of whether the deal is the best available option to prevent the Iranians from obtaining a nuclear weapon – both in the near and long term. I specifically hope they will address a number of areas:

- (1) The terms of the agreement itself, particularly with respect to cutting-off the paths to a nuclear device, past military dimensions of their program, duration, and the breakout time necessary for Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon;
- (2) The alternatives, if any, to the JCPOA;

- (3) The inspections regime under the deal, including lessons-learned from past international inspections that have been incorporated into this deal;
- (4) The role and capacity of the International Atomic Energy Agency to implement this deal; and
- (5) The sanctions regime under the JCPOA and availability of those tools to be used against Iran in situations of terrorism, regional destabilizing activities and human rights abuses.

While the implementation of this agreement will not be performed by the Department of Defense, the DOD will have a critical role in implementing the regional engagement policies and programs laid out at Camp David with our Gulf Cooperation Council partners. Secretary Kerry is in the region this week and is working with our GCC partners on the next steps of this policy to enhance the ballistic missile defense capability of the GCC and to improve their interoperability and collective defense against asymmetric threats. These are important efforts that I look forward to hearing about today.

Israel rightly views Iran as a significant and ongoing threat to their national security interests. And, while Prime Minister Netanyahu is unlikely to ever endorse this agreement, the United States should make every effort to deepen further our cooperation on military and intelligence matters with Israel. I would be interested in hearing the assessment of the witnesses on how the United States might successfully move forward with the Netanyahu government under this agreement.

I want to make one final point. These negotiations focused on denying Iran a pathway to a nuclear weapon. A nuclear Iran would be a more formidable force in the region. And, as it has repeatedly demonstrated, not a force for peace and stability, but one that supports terror and seeks to impose its will throughout the Middle East. Moreover, a nuclear Iran would likely prompt a regional nuclear arms race that through accident or design could lead to catastrophe. None of us would condone or ignore Iran's support of terror, or other destabilizing activities in the region, but these negotiations were properly focused on nuclear weapons.

I look forward to the panel's responses as we continue to deepen our understanding this agreement.

Thank you.