

**OPENING STATEMENT OF U.S. SENATOR JIM INHOFE
RANKING MEMBER, SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**ROOM SD-G50
DIRKSEN SENATE OFFICE BUILDING**

Tuesday, April 5, 2022

To receive testimony on the posture of United States Special Operations Command and United States Cyber Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2023 and the Future Years Defense Program

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I join you in welcoming our witnesses.

As I've said many times, we face a more dangerous and complex set of threats than any time in my lifetime. Just last week, Army Secretary Christine Wormuth said "this is probably the most dangerous security environment" in her 25 years of service. I agree.

The Chinese Communist Party announced a 7.1 percent defense budget increase this year, continuing two decades of historic military modernization. Every day, they give us more evidence that their goals and interests are fundamentally opposed to ours.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has upended European security, North Korea is developing more capable ICBMs, Iran has accelerated its aggression, and terrorist groups are reconstituting in Africa and Afghanistan.

For our witnesses today, you face challenges across each of these threats. In addition to growing their conventional military capabilities, our adversaries are expanding their use of irregular warfare and cyber to threaten the United States and our partners.

I'm still working through the recently released 2022 National Defense Strategy, but I've seen an extensive description of the gray-zone and cyber threats posed by each of our adversaries. But I haven't seen much in this budget so far about responding to those threats.

General Clarke, you have the daunting challenge of reorienting SOCOM for a high-end fight, even as you'll be stretched thin in shouldering the burden of the fight against terrorism. Like with our Afghanistan withdrawal, I'm concerned we're taking too much risk there—mitigating that risk will largely fall on you and your troops.

General Nakasone, the pace of Chinese advances in cyber is breathtaking, and our other adversaries are also moving fast.

We want to make sure you have the resources and authorities you need to maintain or regain your advantage. I definitely want us to do more in cyber cooperation with our allies and partners, so we'll have to look at funding for that this year.

I look to our witnesses to describe how the men and women they lead are postured to deal with this daunting array of threats, and what this committee can do to ensure they have the tools necessary to be successful. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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