

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

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

Tuesday, May 10, 2022

To receive testimony on worldwide threats

(As Delivered)

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

When our witnesses testified before this committee last year, they provided a dire assessment of the threats to our national security. It's clear and, I really can't overstate this, the security situation we face today is significantly more dangerous and complex than it has ever been, or certainly was a year ago. The Chinese threat is beyond anything we ever dealt with before. This year, Beijing announced a 7.1 percent defense budget increase. They've had two decades of real growth with no signs of slowing down and, as the chairman alluded to, Putin's unprovoked aggression against Ukraine shows the danger posed by the nuclear-armed Russia to our security, those of our allies, and international order.

Iran's malign behavior continues throughout the Middle East and terrorist groups like ISIS and al-Qaeda are growing in strength across Africa. Despite this reality, President Biden's budget request is inadequate. It doesn't deliver the real growth the military needs, and that is the 3 to 5 percent increase that we established some five years ago. And as I've said it before, inflation is the new sequestration that we consider today, and it's making everything we do more difficult.

So, I look forward to hearing from both of you about how our threats have evolved ever since last year and how the intelligence community is changing to respond to the national security strategy. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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