

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

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

Tuesday, May 25, 2021

To consider the nominations of Ms. Susanna Blume to be Director of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation, Department of Defense; the Honorable Heidi Shyu to be Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering; and the Honorable Frank Kendall III to be Secretary of the Air Force

(As prepared for delivery)

Thank you, Chairman Reed, and thanks to our witnesses for being with us and for their willingness to serve the nation—again. For each of you, this is at least your second time serving. We appreciate that.

Our nation’s top military and intelligence leaders have told this committee in recent months that the world is more dangerous and complex than at any point in our lifetimes. I agree with them.

The 2018 National Defense Strategy provides a roadmap to deal with these security challenges. That’s why this Committee’s top priority has been ensuring we effectively implement it.

We have a daunting set of challenges in the areas you would oversee, if confirmed. And the threat isn’t a 2040 timeframe. It’s now. And we’re behind.

Insufficient and uncertain funding has hamstrung our military for years. We must do a better job of resourcing the strategy, improve our ability to make decisions quickly, and invest in the right capabilities to keep up with China and Russia.

We certainly need to accelerate our invention and adoption of advanced technologies, from hypersonic weapons, to biotechnologies and quantum computing.

The National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence told us the Chinese will dominate us — as soon as 2025 — if we don’t change course.

2025 is also when our combatant commanders tell us the Chinese will have more fifth-generation stealth fighters on the frontline than we do. Our days of airpower dominance are long gone. We’ve got a lot of work to do.

If confirmed, you would have the honor of supporting a team of Americans who represent everything that is noble and best in our nation.

Our service members and our military families do everything we ask of them and more. They deserve strong civilian leadership that I hope you will provide, if confirmed.

We look forward to hearing each of your views on these and other important issues.

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