

**OPENING STATEMENT OF U.S. SENATOR JACK REED
CHAIRMAN, SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

ROOM SD-G50
DIRKSEN SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
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To conduct a hearing on the United States' strategic competition with China

(As prepared for delivery)

REED: The committee meets today to receive testimony on the United States' strategic competition with China.

This morning we will hear from four distinguished witnesses who are true experts in their respective fields. I would like to welcome each of you and thank you for joining us.

Ms. Bonnie Glaser is the Director of the Asia Program at the German Marshall Fund of the United States. She brings decades of experience working at the intersection of Indo-Pacific geopolitics and U.S. policy, including senior roles at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Department of Defense, and the Department of State.

Dr. Sheena Chestnut Greitens is an Associate Professor at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin, where her work focuses on East Asia, American national security, and authoritarian politics. She also serves as a fellow and adviser at many prominent think tanks and academic institutions.

Dr. Evan Medeiros is the Penner Family Chair in Asia Studies in the School of Foreign Service and the Cling Family Distinguished Fellow in U.S.-China Studies at Georgetown University. His expertise stems from his East Asia policy experience on the National Security Council and as a top advisor to President Obama. Dr. Medeiros, I understand that you also hail from Providence, Rhode Island, and I commend you on that as well.

Finally, Mr. Matt Pottinger is a Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. He served previously on the National Security Council and as Deputy National Security Advisor from 2019 to 2021, where he led the administration's work on the Indo-Pacific region, in particular its new emphasis on China policy.

We are grateful to have such an accomplished and wide-ranging panel of experts with us to discuss this important issue.

The Department of Defense has appropriately identified the Indo-Pacific as its "priority theater" and China as the "pacing threat" for the United States military. In the next 10 years, the Indo-Pacific region is projected to generate two-thirds of the global economy and be home to two-thirds of the global population.

For the past several decades, China has studied the United States' way of war and focused its efforts on offsetting our advantages. This strategy has achieved results, largely because China

began without any legacy systems to maintain and built from the ground up, investing in disruptive technologies like AI, quantum computing, hypersonics, and biotechnology, and stealing enormous amounts of intellectual property from other countries.

But despite its impressive military buildup, we must not assume that China is "ten feet tall." In the coming years, China faces a number of challenges both at home and abroad – including a significantly aging population, a push by Chinese minority groups for humane treatment by the government, and growing distrust and hostility toward China's predatory behavior around the world. I would welcome the witnesses' views on this aspect of our competition.

There is also broad consensus that our comparative advantage over China is our network of partners and allies in the region and globally. Strengthening that network should be at the center of any strategy for the Indo-Pacific region, but we must avoid making our approach "all about China" or we will risk isolating ourselves and alienating the very partners we will rely on. As the National Security Council Coordinator for Indo-Pacific Affairs, Kurt Campbell, said recently, "the best China policy really is a good Asia policy." Given economic, cultural, and geographic ties, we can't simply ask other nations to choose between us and China. We have to present a more attractive alternative – this is the very essence of competition.

In that vein, the maturation of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or "Quad," involving the United States, Japan, India, and Australia, presents a strategic opportunity to establish a durable framework in the Indo-Pacific. We are already seeing this potential in the Quad's work to improve COVID-19 vaccine distribution, and it is my hope that the Quad will continue to develop into a platform for engaging other regional partners. I would ask that the witnesses share their perspectives on how we can best manage this multilateral relationship.

In order to maintain and boost our military advantage, the Armed Services Committee created the Pacific Deterrence Initiative, or PDI, to better align DOD resources in support of military-to-military partnerships to address the challenges posed by China. PDI will remain a priority for the Committee as we seek to provide additional support for required military capabilities; strategic forward-based military posture; and enhanced training infrastructure and opportunities.

As we seek to more effectively compete with China through PDI and other military and non-military initiatives, we must also find new and better ways to responsibly manage this strategic competition and help to prevent hostilities between our two nations. Much has been written about the history of conflict between established and rising powers. History need not repeat itself, and armed conflict between the United States and China is not inevitable. Intended or not, such a conflict would be extremely costly for both sides and disastrous for the global economy.

To avoid such an outcome, we must seek to clearly communicate the objectives of our strategy in the Indo-Pacific and establish robust crisis communications with appropriate Chinese officials – not unlike those we had with the Soviet Union during the Cold War – to prevent miscalculation.

I look forward to our witnesses' testimonies, and thank them again for their participation.

Let me now recognize Ranking Member Inhofe.