

**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 receive testimony on Global Security Challenges and Strategy
(As prepared for delivery)

REED: Good morning. The committee meets today to discuss the global security challenges for the United States.

Before I introduce our witnesses, I would like to welcome the members of the Armed Services Committee to our first public hearing of the 118th Congress. I am pleased to welcome our new Ranking Member, Senator Wicker. Senator Wicker is a tremendous colleague, and I look forward to leading this committee with him in a bipartisan fashion. To our returning members – thank you for your continued partnership. And to our new members – Senator Mullin, Senator Budd, and Senator Schmitt – welcome. I look forward to working with each of you.

Turning to our witnesses. From China’s growing influence to Russia’s reckless aggression, our nation faces a complex and dangerous security environment. Prevailing in this environment will require thoughtful, resolute strategies informed by experts like those before us today.

Dr. Bonny Lin is the Director of the China Power Project and Senior Fellow for Asian Security at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. She is an expert on U.S. military strategy in the Indo-Pacific, with leadership experience across the Department of Defense and the RAND Corporation.

Dr. Fiona Hill is a Senior Fellow in the Center on the United States and Europe at the Brookings Institution. Dr. Hill has served as a top advisor for European and Russian policy on the National Security Council and is an expert on issues related to Russia, Central Asia, energy, and strategic competition.

Mr. Roger Zakheim is the Director of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute. He is an expert on U.S. defense strategy, having served as a professional staff member on the House Armed Services Committee and other

national security positions. He currently serves on the 2022 National Defense Strategy Commission.

Our objective today is to examine the national security issues that this committee should consider as we prepare the Fiscal Year 2024 National Defense Authorization Act. As the Biden Administration's National Defense Strategy makes clear, China is our primary competitor. It is the only nation with both the intent and the capability to mount a sustained challenge to the security and economic interests of the United States and its allies and partners around the world. At the same time, Russia remains a violent, destabilizing force. Putin's assault on Ukraine has inflicted horrific suffering on innocent civilians seeking a free and democratic society, threatened European stability, and harmed the global economy. In addition, nations like Iran and North Korea continue to push the boundaries of military brinkmanship, and issues like terrorism and climate change remain persistent.

The significance of these threats is widely understood. The question is how to address them in order to deter or mitigate the threat to U.S. national security and international stability more broadly.

To begin, we have to recognize that America faces an existential struggle between democracy and autocracy. Beijing and Moscow seek to change the international order by exploiting vulnerable nations through coercive economic and military pressure. America must offer an alternative to this kind of foreign policy. Given the economic, cultural, and geographic ties between many of our partners and China, we can't ask them to choose between engaging with the United States or China based solely on an economic or military calculation. We should use all our tools of statecraft and build mutually beneficial relationships.

Indeed, forging and maintaining strong international partnerships is likely to be the decisive factor in any future conflict. We have seen this through Ukraine's remarkable performance against Russia, and it will hold true in the Indo-Pacific. Our greatest comparative advantage over China is our network of allies, and strengthening that network should be at the center of our strategy moving forward. The development of the "Quad" involving the United States, Japan, India, and Australia presents a valuable framework. Similarly, our defense agreement with Australia and the United Kingdom, known as AUKUS, provides an excellent platform for improving the capabilities of our allies and increasing our engagement in the region.

Our adversaries' presence around the globe is evolving. I would ask our witnesses to share their assessments of the Ukraine conflict in the larger context of the evolving international order, as well as the implications for U.S. defense strategy going forward. Similarly, I would like to know what military and non-military factors are most likely to impact Chinese decision-making with respect to potential aggression against Taiwan.

As the recent shoot-down of a Chinese surveillance balloon in our airspace should remind us, the top priority of the National Defense Strategy is homeland defense. America's skies and seas must be secure to protect its citizens, and the Department must pursue technologies that provide 'forward detection' to buy decision time for decision-makers.

Finally, as we adapt to the meet these global challenges, we need to consider that we are entering an era of "trilateral" nuclear competition. The Cold War was essentially a bilateral rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, which developed deterrence theory and communication methods based on two competitors. That has changed with the ascendancy of China and its growing nuclear arsenal. I would ask our witnesses to help us understand this new trilateral dynamic and how it may impact efforts to deter the use of nuclear weapons.

Ultimately, long-term strategic competition is not just a rivalry of military or economic power, but also a competition of ideas. This requires us to develop an understanding of our adversaries' strengths, weaknesses, philosophies, and objectives, as well as our own. This is where the knowledge and insights of the experts before us today are so valuable.

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

Let me turn to Ranking Member Wicker.