

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

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

**Thursday, May 27, 2021**

**To conduct a confirmation hearing on the nominations of Jill Hruby to be Under Secretary of Energy for Nuclear Security and Administrator, National Nuclear Security Administration; Frank Rose to be Principal Deputy Administrator, National Nuclear Security Administration; Deborah Rosenblum to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Defense Programs; and Christopher Maier to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict**

**(As prepared for delivery)**

Thank you, Chairman Reed. Before I begin, I want to echo the Chairman's sentiment about our former colleague and past Chairman of this committee, Senator Warner.

A former Marine, Secretary of the Navy, and lawyer, Senator Warner always put our troops first. He carried out a legacy that we continue here today of putting national security ahead of partisan politics.

Kay and I are keeping his family and friends in our prayers – he will be missed dearly.

Turning to the task at hand, I would like to thank our nominees for being with us and for their willingness to serve the nation.

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.

This is why I continue to highlight the National Defense Strategy as the right roadmap to deal with these challenges. But, it requires the right resourcing to make it a reality.

We have quite a few challenges in the areas you would oversee, if confirmed.

Modernizing our nation's nuclear deterrent has been a key priority for the past several years. Our senior military officers always tell us that, whenever they come before this committee.

We put off much needed investments in this area for decades, watching as our infrastructure crumbled and our most important military capabilities became harder to keep in working order.

Thankfully, we've made some progress recently, but we must keep our nuclear modernization effort moving forward.

This demands close cooperation between DOD and NNSA, and clear-eyed leadership on both sides. We simply can't afford to fall further behind our adversaries.

In addition to growing their conventional and strategic capabilities, China and Russia are using irregular warfare tactics, such as cyber, propaganda and lies, proxy forces, and economic blackmail, to undermine our interests around the world.

At the same time, ISIS and al-Qaeda are still determined to kill Americans and, without sustained pressure, history shows that the threat will grow. This is particularly true in Africa.

I look forward to hearing how you will address these serious challenges, if confirmed.

Thanks again to our nominees for being with us today.