

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

**ROOM SD-G50
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To receive testimony on reshaping the U.S. Military

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Thank you, Senator McCain for calling this important hearing and I want to thank the witness for being here today.

The United States has relied on our military's dominance in every battle sphere since the end of the Cold War. We have not had a near peer competitor for decades and that has allowed us to take for granted certain fundamental aspects of projecting power and deterring and defeating aggression.

Unfortunately, we are no longer in a position to assume our air, land, naval, space and cyber superiority against potential adversaries. We are no longer able to assume that we can project power from the United States instead of being forward-based and we can no longer assume that we will have months to mobilize and move forces, uncontested, to respond to aggression.

It should also not be a surprise to anyone that 15 years of fighting the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq forced us to make trade-offs on long-term defense investment in order to support near term readiness and to pay the costly bills from those two wars. During that time, other countries have modernized and made technological advances. Now, we must focus on what our military needs to keep our competitive edge.

I would like to also emphasize the need to be clear sighted about our ability to predict conflicts and adversaries 15-20 years out. As Defense Secretary Gates told West Point Cadets, "When it comes to predicting the nature and location of our next military engagements, since Vietnam, our record has been perfect. We have never once gotten it right." If past is prologue, it is very possible that 20 years from now we will be facing adversaries and competitive environments that we did not expect. Therefore, we must ensure that our military is, above all, adaptable to the new crises that lurk unseen over the horizon.

I hope that some of the technological innovations and organizational concepts that are being explored by the Defense Department will allow us to have a more effective, agile and adaptable military. But underlying all of these considerations is, of course, the question: "what will our national security strategy look like?" We should not advocate for substantially higher investments that have a long spending tail unless and until we have fully articulated the strategy that will drive our budget. We also need to carefully examine the current budgets and programs of the Services and Agencies to ensure that they are aligned to meet the threats of the future in the timeframes that we need.

One additional point that cannot be overemphasized -- our national defense strategy has always assumed a strong NATO alliance and an unwavering commitment to our allies in Asia since the end of World War II. Any disruption to those assumptions will require a fundamental rethinking of our strategy. Our successes in recent operations are due in large part to the allies and partners that stand shoulder to shoulder with our troops. Our commitment to those partners and allies is essential.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I look forward to the testimony.

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