

Opening Statement of U.S. Senator Jack Reed
Ranking Member, Senate Armed Services Committee
(As Prepared for Delivery)

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**Hearing on the impacts of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JPCOA) on
U.S. interests & the military balance in the Middle East.**

Good Morning. Secretary Lew, Secretary Kerry, Secretary Carter, Secretary Moniz, and General Dempsey, your appearance before the committee comes a little more than two weeks after the world woke up to the news that after 20 months of negotiations, the P5+1 and Iran agreed on the terms of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The agreement, no matter your position on it, is historic and, if implemented scrupulously, could serve as a strategic inflection point in the world's relations with Iran, for international non-proliferation efforts, and for the political and security dynamics in the Middle East. I commend the President and his negotiating team – from cabinet officials to our nation's scientists – for their persistence and hard work.

In the weeks ahead, Congress has a solemn obligation to carefully review the details of this historic agreement and to independently validate that the agreement will meet our common goal of stopping Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. Today's hearing is part of that obligation, and I look forward to your testimony.

Secretary Kerry, you were the key architect of this agreement and your willingness to take on what I am sure feels like a thankless endeavor is to be commended. I hope you will help us understand why it is your assessment that this agreement is a good deal and how you intend to direct our diplomats in the field to work with our partners in the region to address Iran's destabilizing activities in the region.

Secretary Moniz, you played an important role in the negotiations, and you too have been a strong advocate for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action throughout. During your testimony, I hope you will help us understand what gives you confidence in the technical safeguards built into this agreement, particularly with regard to: (1) the cutting off of Iran's pathways to a nuclear weapon; (2) the cradle-to-grave access and auditability of the supply chain; (3) the dedicated procurement channel to manage all purchases of the Nuclear Supplier Group's "trigger list" and dual-use items; (4) the IAEA Additional Protocol for enhanced inspections, and it is designed for detecting elements of a covert weapons program; and (5) the limitations on Iran's enrichment program. Secretary Carter, you are a unique Secretary of Defense with a Ph.D. in physics and having spent so much of your career on nuclear weapons, I look forward to your technical insights on these elements as well.

Secretary Carter and General Dempsey, while neither of you were a party to the negotiations, you have both recently travelled to the Middle East to speak with your counterparts about the agreement's potential implications for regional security. During your meetings you undoubtedly heard the assessments of our partners and allies on a range of issues, including how Iran may use sanctions relief to pursue its regional ambitions, expand its support to terrorist proxies, and invest more heavily in its military. These are serious concerns and ones which I share.

Our partners in Israel see Iran as a significant and ongoing threat to their national security interests. While Prime Minister Netanyahu is unlikely to ever endorse this historic deal,

it is incumbent upon the United States to deepen further our cooperation on military and intelligence matters with Israel and to better understand the concerns of the Israelis.

It is also critical that our partners and allies in the Middle East know that the United States will not abandon the region in the wake of this nuclear agreement and that we will continue to stand alongside them as we confront common state and non-state threats. The May 2015 Joint Statement following the U.S. and Gulf Cooperation Council, or GCC, meetings at Camp David provided a roadmap for how the Administration intends to proceed. It also makes clear that the Department of Defense will be at the forefront of these efforts.

Critics of the Vienna agreement point to perceived flaws related to Iran's ballistic missile capability and its support of terrorist proxies across the region. The Camp David Joint Statement outlines our commitment to enhancing the ballistic missile defense capability of the GCC and improving their interoperability to increase collective defense. In order to counter Iran's support of terrorist proxies, the Joint Statement indicates that we will be increasing our training and exercise engagements with GCC Special Operations Forces elements so as to better enable our partners to confront Iran's asymmetric capabilities. These are important efforts that I look forward to hearing about today.

There are some aspects of this agreement that are not in the purview of our committee. For example, sanctions relief and the sanction snapback arrangements. As a member of the Banking Committee, I intend to study these issues closely as that committee holds a hearing next week.

I want to make one final point. These negotiations focused on denying Iran a pathway to a nuclear weapon. A nuclear Iran would be a more formidable force in the region. And, as it has repeatedly demonstrated, not a force for peace and stability, but one that supports terror and seeks to impose its will throughout the Middle East. Moreover, a nuclear Iran would likely prompt a nuclear arms race in the region that through accident or design could lead to catastrophe. None of us would condone or ignore Iran's support of terror, or other destabilizing activities in the region, but the focus of these negotiations were properly focused on nuclear weapons.

The history of arms control makes this point. As Fred Kaplan, a noted national security expert, pointed out: "[t]he U.S.-Soviet strategic arms treaties, signed throughout the Cold War, didn't require the Soviet Union to disavow communism, end its support of Third World insurgencies, or institute Jeffersonian democracy—but the deals were still very useful. They capped, and in the later years reversed, the nuclear arms race; and they provided a forum for diplomacy, a cooling-off of the distrust and hatred, at a time when no other issues could have done so."

I look forward to the panel's responses as we continue to understand this agreement and evaluate its capacity to cut off all pathways to a nuclear device and provide long-term warning of violations so that an appropriate response can take place.

Thank you.