

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

**ROOM SD-106
DIRKSEN SENATE OFFICE BUILDING**

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

To receive testimony on United States Strategic Command and United States Space Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2023 and the Future Years Defense Program

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also want to welcome our witnesses and thank them for their long service in defense of our nation.

Admiral Richard, General Dickinson, almost a year ago, each of you appeared before this committee and offered dire warnings about the need to deter two peer adversaries.

You cautioned us that Russia remains a pacing threat as it expands its nuclear forces, outlined the pacing challenge of a rising China and its massive military modernization effort, and advised us that Russia and China have already weaponized space.

If we have learned anything over the past year, it's that as worrying as your prior warnings were, the reality of what our nation is facing is much, much worse.

China is expanding its nuclear, missile, and space capabilities faster than any country in history. Its investments are shifting the balance of power in the Pacific — but China is also building its capabilities to extend its reach across the globe.

Putin's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine and his reckless threats of escalation have shattered Europe's security, and, for the first time in decades, forced Americans to face the possibility that nuclear weapons could be used in anger.

Meeting the challenge of Russian and Chinese aggression across all domains means we must invest in the capabilities required to deter these threats, and we need to be realistic about the level of resources needed to make that happen.

The administration's first budget request failed to seriously address these threats, and now we're looking at inflation that will cripple our buying power further — even after Congress acted to increase the budget.

This trend cannot continue if we intend to compete with two peer countries that are

clearly focused on overturning the U.S.-led global order.

Both of you are responsible for missions with zero margin for failure. Unfortunately, chronic underinvestment has left us with an undersized, aging nuclear deterrent and a space architecture that lacks the resilience needed to prevail in a multi-domain conflict.

Moving forward, we need to accelerate efforts to right-size our forces to meet the strategic deterrence and space warfighting requirements of the coming decades.

I look forward to your testimony. Mr. Chairman.

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