

Opening Statement of Ranking Member James M. Inhofe
October 19, 2021 Senate Armed Services Committee Nominations Hearing
For the Record

Thank you, Chairman Reed, and thanks to our witnesses for being with us and for their willingness to serve the nation.

The world is more dangerous than at any point in my lifetime. American interests are under immense pressure from our adversaries.

We learned from hearings over the last month that after a disastrous departure from Afghanistan, the threat of global terrorism is growing. Under Taliban rule, Afghanistan is now the safest place in the world for terrorist planners.

While we have been focused on Afghanistan, threats from China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran have all increased: China has expanded construction of nuclear siloes and aggression against Taiwan; Russia has held its largest military exercise in four decades and continues to test dangerous nuclear weapons; Iran has continued to move closer to a nuclear bomb; and North Korea has sustained its track record of violating UN resolutions.

It's more important than ever that we accelerate our work to deter each of these threats, which were identified and prioritized in the 2018 National Defense Strategy. We've got to take each of these threats seriously — we've got interests around the globe.

That starts with adhering to the core of the existing strategy. We can't get distracted, and we can't simply study the problems we have forever.

Next, we've got to adequately resource that strategy, even as we innovate in technology and in the way that we fight.

I'm particularly concerned that the Army will bear the brunt of any proposed budget cuts at DOD, which will significantly impact the Army's hard-fought modernization plan.

Implementing our strategy also includes honest assessments of where the U.S. military has gaps, and moving rapidly to fix those gaps and create problems for our adversaries.

One of our big gaps with the Chinese and the Russians is in our outdated and inadequate test capabilities, and I think we'll hear a bit about that today.

We need strong, capable civilian leadership in the department, so thank you all again for your willingness to serve.

Chairman Reed.

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