

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

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

Tuesday, March 29, 2022

To receive testimony on the posture of United States European Command and United States Transportation Command

(As prepared for Delivery)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General Wolters and General Van Ovost, thank you both for your distinguished service to our country.

As I've said many times, this committee's top priority has been ensuring the effective implementation of the 2018 National Defense Strategy. It told us China is our pacing threat, and that we need much more effort from our military to take on that threat.

The threats have only gotten worse since then. Yesterday, the administration sent us the classified 2022 National Defense Strategy. I hope the unclassified version is public soon.

I understand this strategy was late in part because the Biden administration revisited what were likely rosy assumptions about Russia. It's a good reminder that we must deal with the world as it exists today, not the world we might wish for.

Our plan to deal with that world must rest on a strong foundation of military power. And it must focus on actions, not words, for credible deterrence.

Four months ago, Secretary Blinken justified not sanctioning Russia by saying "The President believes that sanctions are intended to deter." Last week, the president himself said that "sanctions never deter." Nothing about this makes sense.

Deterrence failed in Ukraine. We must ensure it does not fail anywhere else. The costs of war are far greater than the costs of preventing war.

We must ensure that our combatant commands have what they need to credibly deter our adversaries and address the challenge of strategic competition.

These threats highlight the need for real growth in the defense budget and a sense of urgency and willingness to take risk both at the Pentagon and here in Congress.

We just received the President's FY23 budget and it does not request the real growth we need. We'll do our due diligence and our constitutional duty, as we did last year.

General Wolters, I look forward to hearing your assessment of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and how the U.S. and our NATO Allies will bolster European defenses while continuing to support Ukraine's ability to defend itself.

I'm troubled by lackluster funding for the European Deterrence Initiative in recent years and concerned about the ability of our industrial base to support re-arming ourselves, our NATO allies, and the Ukrainians.

General Van Ovost, I would like to know if you have the resources you need to support not only General Wolters in Europe but also our INDOPACOM commander.

Additionally, I look forward to hearing your view of our current sealift readiness and how that impacts your ability to support your combatant command counterparts.

Thank you both again for testifying today. Senator Reed.

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