

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

**SH-216
HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
Wednesday, January 27, 2016**

**Hearing to receive testimony on military space launch and the use of
Russian-made rocket engines
*(As prepared for delivery)***

Let me thank Chairman McCain for holding this hearing and our witnesses for taking the time to testify today on this important topic.

I believe that today's hearing has three issues the committee needs to understand.

First, what are we doing to develop a replacement to the Russian RD-180 engine? This committee has spoken forcefully in two National Defense Authorization Acts to fund a replacement for it by 2019. The congress has appropriated \$444 million in the past two years in support of this effort, \$304 million above what was requested. This is one of the rare events where the Department is getting substantially more funding than they are proposing. I believe we are sending you a message and we want your response.

Second, I believe we need to understand what the Department actually needs in terms of RD-180 engines based upon what current Atlas V rocket can uniquely lift that other competitors currently cannot. We have been told the Atlas V will operate through 2022 until a new rocket with a U.S. engine can replace it.

Third, I think we need to understand what the Department is doing to encourage the entrance of other competitors to the DOD launch market. The United Launch Alliance or ULA is having to build an entirely new rocket, we should be encouraging other entrants as a hedge so that we avoid SpaceX being the only provider of launch, much like ULA was, in case there are delays with the replacement to its Atlas V rocket.

With that let me thank everyone for their participation today and I look forward to a positive hearing.