

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

**ROOM SD-106
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*To receive testimony on
United States Strategic Command and United States Space Command in review of
the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2022 and the Future Years
Defense Program*
(As prepared for Delivery)

REED: Good morning. The Committee meets today to receive testimony from Admiral Charles Richard, Commander of U.S. Strategic Command, or STRATCOM, and General James Dickinson, Commander of U.S. Space Command, or SPACECOM. Admiral Richard, General Dickinson, I want to thank you for your service to our nation, and I would like to extend my thanks to the men and women serving under your commands. Maintaining our nuclear deterrent and preserving our ability to operate in space are fundamental to our long-term strategic competition with Russia and China.

There is a reason we have asked the commanders of STRATCOM and SPACECOM to testify together. Until 2019, Space Command was part of Strategic Command. Now, as SPACECOM stands up as an independent command, I would like to know what gaps or seams remain exposed during this transition and how they can be addressed.

Much has changed since our last hearing in 2021.

Russia's ongoing unprovoked and illegal invasion of Ukraine has shaken the international order that has maintained nuclear stability for the better part of a century. Vladimir Putin's behavior has been reckless to a dangerous degree. Just prior to its invasion, Russia conducted a large out-of-cycle nuclear exercise and the Kremlin has since made a series of escalatory statements. Normally, Russia conducts its nuclear exercises in the fall and the United States conducts ours afterwards in a stable, predictable fashion. Not so this year. More than ever, our nuclear deterrent—the bedrock of our national defense—is being relied upon as we witness the realities of a European conflict involving a nuclear armed nation.

In the past year, we have also seen China develop three missile fields in hardened silos throughout the country. This development, along with China's completion of its nuclear triad and modernization of its nuclear command, control, and communications fundamentally change the nature of Beijing's nuclear doctrine. We need to understand why China is undertaking this expansion; what it means for stability in the Indo-Pacific region; and how we should adjust our own nuclear deterrence to protect our nation and uphold the fundamental extended commitment to our allies.

Similarly, over the past year we gained a clearer picture of the threat we face in space, which has become a contested domain. In any future conflict, China will quickly extend its capabilities into space in a seamless fashion. Russia, for its part, acted recklessly in November by destroying a satellite in space while building up forces on the Ukrainian border. During today's hearing we will discuss these threats and the nature of conflict we can expect in space in the years to come.

In particular, General Dickinson, I would like to make sure that SPACECOM is fulfilling the space and ground functions you inherited from STRATCOM with respect to missile warning and nuclear command, control, and communications. Ensuring we can accurately warn both Strategic and Northern Commands, and our senior leadership, of a missile attack on the homeland is of the utmost importance.

SPACECOM is also responsible for integrating and tasking both ground and space sensors for better space situational awareness, essentially becoming DOD's "sensor command." General Dickinson, I ask that you share your vision on how to integrate this myriad number of sensors, which range from radars on the ground and at sea to sensors aboard satellites.

General, I would also like to know the progress your command during its stand-up and how you are finding and retaining personnel with the specialized skill sets associated with SPACECOM operations.

Admiral Richard, your command is undergoing an intense period of modernization that began with the ratification of the New Start Treaty. This will be the third modernization cycle since 1960, as parts of each leg of our triad age out. I am interested in hearing about the progress of modernizing the entire triad and the implications of altering that plan, especially with respect to our near-peer competitors.

In addition, I would like to know your views on the efforts by the National Nuclear Security Administration to re-capitalize its uranium and plutonium handling

infrastructure. Some of these facilities date back to the Manhattan Project and are single points of failure in supporting your mission. It is essential that we understand what impacts this may have on your operations.

Thank you again for appearing today and I look forward to your testimonies.

Ranking Member Inhofe cannot be here today, but I would ask that his opening statement be submitted to the record. I would note for my colleagues that there will be a classified briefing immediately following this session in SVC-217 to continue our discussion.