Welcome Remarks

Speaker:

Roger Zakheim, Director, Ronald Reagan Institute

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Roger Zakheim:
Thank you so much for being here, I'm Roger Zakheim. As you heard, I have the honor of serving as Director of the Reagan Institute, which is the DC office of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute. It is my pleasure to welcome all of you to our second annual National Security Innovation Base Summit, and we're honored that each of you has joined us today, whether you're here in-person in Washington DC or joining us online. Today's geopolitical landscape is characterized by soaring tensions, proliferating conflict, and technological advancement, moving at speeds that we can barely comprehend. Gone are the days of US overmatch across a spectrum of warfighting and technology. Our adversaries are determined to offset areas of US superiority, and they're trying to remake the world in their own autocratic image. America's innovation leadership has never been more important than it is right now.

And while America remains the global leader in innovation, defense budget uncertainty and the deterioration of the industrial base has coincided with sustained investment by our competitors to erode US military superiority. This threat has become so severe and systemic that the Reagan Institute decided to create a permanent program dedicated to strengthening the National Security Innovation Base, or NSIB as we call it. Now, to help empower this vital ecosystem, last year, the Institute launched its inaugural NSIB Report Card, a first-of-its-kind initiative to measure the health, effectiveness, and resilience of this ecosystem, and provide recommendations for its improvement. Now, it's our privilege today to unveil the second iteration of that Report Card at this year's Summit and have all of you discuss it during today's proceedings. For those here in-person, they're right outside, they're going fast, so pick it up, and we're eager to get your feedback. President Reagan recognized that America's preeminence and innovation is a critical source of our national strength. In March of 1980, just a few short months after he was elected president, he said, “we have to take full advantage of the contributions that American science and technology can make to the defense of the United States and to the preservation of peace.” And while strength certainly involves tangible military assets like a robust Navy, a fleet of advanced fighter aircraft, an inventory of state-of-the-art munitions, we have come to understand that it also entails a healthy and resilient innovation base.
It includes the best and brightest minds, sufficient innovation capital, secure supply chains, protection of intellectual property, and synergy between the public and private sectors, all of which will be discussed at length today. But to kick off today's discussions, we'll invite two leaders of the report card to dive into this year's -- today's discussions. And again, everybody can take a copy of the report card, which stands outside. Those watching online can access the report card at www.reaganfoundation.org/nsib. To preview these findings, please join me in welcoming to the stage Rachel Hoff, our Policy Director here at the Reagan Institute, and Mr. Dale Swartz, Partner at McKinsey and Company, which serves as the knowledge partner for this important project. Thank you.

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