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## **Ranking Member Ruppertsberger Opening Statement HPSCI Open Hearing: “The Growing Risks of Nation-State Conflicts”**

(Washington, DC) – Congressman C.A. Dutch Ruppertsberger (D-MD), Ranking Member on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, released the following statement at the House Intelligence Committee’s open hearing on the growing risks of nation-state conflicts.

“Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our witnesses for coming today.

People are worried about the state of the world. They look at ISIL, Al Qaeda, and Ebola, and they describe a state of global chaos. They say the world is unstable. Some even say the world is on fire.

They’re right to be concerned. The current threats from terrorism and disease are serious. But, the world is not in a state of chaos. Fires rage, but the world is not on fire. There is instability, but the international system as a whole remains resilient.

Even with recent Russian aggression in the Ukraine, Chinese aggression in the South China Sea, Iran aggression throughout the Middle East, and North Korean provocation, we have not seen the kind of large-scale military conflict of the early 20th Century.

But past performance, as they say, is no guarantee of future results. We must ask ourselves what could upset this global stability?

What are big countries like Russia, China, and Iran—those nations that pose enduring strategic challenges—planning? Additionally, what are the long term demographic, technological, economic and resource-based trends that could upset the international system.

As always, knowledge and intelligence are key. We cannot plan and prepare for what we do not know. We also need to know what we should do. We can influence others, but we are the masters of our own fate. The better we do, the better our example, and the more others willingly follow.

So, let me offer a few observations on this point:

First, while we should not be the global sheriff, it is our responsibility to sustain and further the international system. As the President recently said, when a problem breaks out anywhere in the world, the world turns to America. We should welcome this opportunity to lead along with our allies.

Again, I am not saying we must solve every problem. But if we fail to engage and to embrace our role in a strategic way—or if we lose the ability to do so—the world will be in for a major upheaval.

Second, we must maintain our economic advantage. History shows that when a dominant economic power loses its edge, that's when the sharks come. So, the U.S. must do everything it can to continue to fuel its relative economic growth. At the same time, it must continue to fostering growth that “lifts all boats,” both among and within nations, including our own.

The more countries profit from the international system, the more they preserve it, while income inequality within countries causes the kind of resentment and instability that threatens the international systems and countries from within.

Third, to maintain our economic advantage, we must innovate. We must lead the way in space, cyberspace, nanotechnology and biotechnology. We must find new and renewable sources of energy and other natural resources, at home and abroad.

Innovation will not only fuel our economic growth, but it will allow us to provide resources to the rest of the world. There is nothing that breeds instability more than resource scarcity.

Fourth, to be at the forefront of innovation, we must invest heavily in the education of science, engineering and math known as “STEM.” As we emphasize STEM education, we also can never lose sight of the liberal arts education that fosters America's unique ability to innovate, create, and communicate.

Fifth, a nation, however, powerful, needs allies and partners. There's nothing we can't accomplish when we work with others—and there's no quicker way to lose support in the world when we take actions that unite the rest of the world against us.

Just look at what China is doing in the South China Sea. In its pursuit of regional power, it alienates its neighbors who then move closer to us. Russia also is pursuing a self-defeating policy in the Ukraine. We should not follow their examples.

Ultimately, for over 70 years, the international system has endured. The fires we see all over the world have not become a global inferno. We must do everything in our power to make sure that continues.

So, I look forward to learning more about what other countries are doing, and I look forward to hearing what we can do. We have an extremely accomplished panel here, and I thank you again for agreeing to share your thoughts with us today. I also thank you, Mr. Chairman for holding such an important hearing.”