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Ronald Reagan Institute Publishes Third Annual National Security Innovation Base Report Card

The Report Card Shows Critical Gaps in U.S. Technological Advantage Amid Rising Global Competition

WASHINGTON, DC – The Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute’s Center for Peace Through Strength today published its third annual National Security Innovation Base (NSIB) Report Card, an innovative policy tool to measure the effectiveness and resilience of our nation’s innovation ecosystem and provide recommendations for improvement.

“America’s adversaries are actively cooperating to weaken U.S. security and economic leadership, and critical vulnerabilities and inefficiencies in the National Security Innovation Base leave opportunities for those adversaries to exploit,” said Roger Zakheim, Director of the Reagan Institute. “Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth has prioritized rebuilding the defense industrial base and fielding new technologies. This report card offers a baseline for his efforts and provides a roadmap to mobilize the full potential of the U.S. innovation ecosystem, ensuring a long-term strategic advantage.”

The Reagan Institute brought together a bipartisan group of former policymakers, national security experts, innovators, and industry leaders to advise on the report card, which assesses and grades the national security innovation ecosystem across ten key indicators. For the first time, the report card analyzes manufacturing capacity and industrial base, identifying gaps in the supply chain and stockpiles of critical weapons. Detailed assessments of each indicator can be found in the full report card at www.reaganfoundation.org/nsib. This year’s grades are:

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|--|----|---|----|
| Defense Modernization | D | Private Sector Innovator Base | B+ |
| Innovation Leadership | A- | Public/Civil Innovation Base | C |
| Pull-Through for Broader National Priorities | B | Manufacturing Capacity and Industrial Base* | D |
| Customer Clarity | D+ | International Alliances and Partnerships | C |
| Innovation Capital | B+ | Talent Base | C- |

**This is a new indicator for the 2025 NSIB Report Card.*

The Reagan Institute also included six signature recommendations, crafted to improve the NSIB ecosystem. Key recommendations include:

- Congress and the Department of Defense (DoD) should reform acquisition bottlenecks and reduce administrative and regulatory burdens to accelerate fielding new technologies to the warfighter.
- Congress should require all applicable DoD new start research, development, test and evaluation and procurement programs to contain unmanned, optionally manned, or autonomous capabilities.
- The DoD should create unmanned weapons systems (UxS) as-a-service contract vehicles.
- When Congress reauthorizes the Defense Production Act, it should refocus the program to its original purpose: meaningfully investing in defense.
- The DoD should establish a Joint Program Office for Talent Management (JPO-TM).
- Congress should establish a National Security Innovation Base Green Card Recapture Program.

The report card will guide the conversations at the third annual National Security Innovation Base Summit on March 5, 2025, at the Reagan Institute in Washington, D.C. Reporters wishing to cover the summit in person should request credentials [here](#). Those wishing to participate virtually can access the livestream [here](#).

About the Reagan Foundation and Institute

The Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute (RRPFI) is the sole nonprofit organization created by President Reagan charged with advancing his legacy and principles – individual liberty, economic opportunity, freedom and democracy, peace through strength, and national pride. A globally recognized nonpartisan organization based in Simi Valley, CA, with a leading policy institute in Washington, DC, RRPFI delivers impactful public affairs programming, policy convenings and projects of national and international significance, and distinctive educational initiatives.