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Before the

Subcommittee on Strategic Forces

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

U.S. NUCLEAR WEAPONS POLICY, PROGRAMS, AND
STRATEGY

Wednesday, April 11, 2018

Washington, D.C.

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U.S. NUCLEAR WEAPONS POLICY, PROGRAMS, AND STRATEGY

Wednesday, April 11, 2018

U.S. Senate
Subcommittee on Strategic
Forces
Committee on Armed Services
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:32 p.m.
in Room SR-222, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. Deb
Fischer presiding.

Members Present: Senators Fischer [presiding], Cotton,
Sullivan, Donnelly, Warren, and Peters.

1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. DEB FISCHER, U.S. SENATOR
2 FROM NEBRASKA

3 Senator Fischer: The hearing will come to order.
4 The subcommittee meets today to receive testimony on
5 U.S. nuclear weapons policy, programs, and strategy in
6 review of the Administration's Fiscal Year 2019 budget
7 request.

8 I thank the witnesses for being with us today.
9 General Rand and Admiral Benedict, this will likely be
10 the final time you appear before this subcommittee.
11 Congratulations to you both on your upcoming retirements.
12 We've enjoyed working with you and benefitted from your
13 testimony these past years. This nation owes you both a
14 deep debt of gratitude for your four decades of military
15 service. Gentlemen, I thank you.

16 [Applause.]

17 Senator Fischer: Secretary Roberts and Dr. Soofer,
18 thank you for joining us today. We look forward to hearing
19 from both of you on how the budget supports the policies
20 described in the Administration's Nuclear Posture Review, as
21 well as the broader actions being taken to implement the
22 NPR.

23 I also want to complement both of you for your work on
24 the NPR. Since its release, critics have made a number of
25 claims about its contents ranging from allegations that it

1 lowers the threshold for nuclear use by proposing the
2 employment of nuclear weapons in response to cyber attacks,
3 to assertions that it initiates a new global arms race.
4 Over the hearings and classified briefings we have held this
5 year, we have explored many of these criticisms and often
6 found that the truth is far less dramatic.

7 Instead, the 2018 NPR continues many of the policies
8 established in previous NPRs and plans put in place by the
9 Obama Administration, such as the modernization of our
10 nuclear forces. In the areas where it calls for change,
11 such as the introduction of two supplemental systems, the
12 NPR makes a clear case that the threats to our nation have
13 changed over the last 10 years and our nation's deterrence
14 posture must adapt accordingly.

15 Dr. Soofer, we look forward to hearing more on this
16 topic from you, sir.

17 Again, I thank the panel for being with us today. We
18 look forward to your comments and to your full statements,
19 and those full statements will be made part of the record.

20 With that, I would like to recognize the Ranking
21 Member, Senator Donnelly, for any opening remarks that he
22 would like to make.

23 Senator?

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. JOE DONNELLY, U.S. SENATOR FROM
2 INDIANA

3 Senator Donnelly: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thanks
4 for holding today's hearing, and to our witnesses for being
5 here.

6 Let me start out, as our Chair did, by noting that this
7 will be the last time we have testimony from two friends of
8 the subcommittee: General Robin Rand, the Commander of Air
9 Force Global Strike Command, having served in the Air Force
10 for 44 years -- amazing, thank you so much -- and Vice
11 Admiral Terry Benedict, the Director of the Navy Strategic
12 Systems Program, having served 41 years in the United States
13 Navy. The Admiral said 41 years in the Navy is equivalent
14 to 44 years in the Air Force.

15 [Laughter.]

16 Senator Donnelly: That's a joke, for the record.

17 Both of you came to your leadership positions when our
18 DOD nuclear program was undergoing great change and
19 attention, and both of you, in my opinion, have been an
20 amazing credit to the airmen and seamen who perform our
21 nuclear deterrence mission 24/7, 365 days a year. I want to
22 thank you for your service and wish you the best.

23 Today's hearing is focused on DOD's nuclear weapons
24 policy for Fiscal Year 2019. If we include the full cost of
25 the B-21 bomber, the Department will be requesting about

1 \$22.1 billion for nuclear modernization and operations, or,
2 as Dr. Soofer likes to say, about 3 percent of the Fiscal
3 Year 2019 DOD budget. We are told in peak years it will
4 rise to about 6 to 7 percent.

5 That 6 to 7 percent deters a threat that is existential
6 to our homeland, and our job in Congress is to ensure those
7 dollars are well spent. It's in that regard that I'll ask
8 questions on programs and operations for Fiscal Year 2019.

9 Also of interest is the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review.
10 It has many features similar to the 2010 Nuclear Posture
11 Review and retains the same negative use assurance in that
12 we will not use nuclear weapons against nations in good
13 standing with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty but
14 reserve the right to do so under extreme circumstances. It
15 keeps our commitment to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty
16 and to nonproliferation in general but recognizes the
17 changed threat environment as compared to 2010.

18 Of interest will be the proposal for two supplemental
19 systems, one a low-yield submarine-launched ballistic
20 missile, and the other the bringing back of a sea-launched
21 Cruise missile which was dropped in the 2010 NPR as it was
22 not maintained in storage stateside. My understanding is
23 this action upset Japan and South Korea, so that additional
24 aspect needs to be taken into account when we consider this
25 proposal, along with the programmatic and policy, force

1 structure, and budget impacts.

2 With that, let me thank everyone for coming today, and
3 thank you, Madam Chair, for holding this hearing.

4 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Senator Donnelly.

5 With that, I would ask for opening comments by members
6 of the panel. My apologies.

7 Secretary Roberts?

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. GUY B. ROBERTS, ASSISTANT SECRETARY
2 OF DEFENSE FOR NUCLEAR, CHEMICAL, AND BIOLOGICAL DEFENSE
3 PROGRAMS

4 Mr. Roberts: Thank you, Chairman Fischer, Ranking
5 Member Donnelly. Thank you for this opportunity again to
6 testify before you today on the Fiscal Year 2019 budget
7 request for nuclear forces. I'm pleased to join Vice
8 Admiral Terry Benedict, General Robin Rand, and Dr. Soofer
9 to discuss one of the Department of Defense's highest
10 priorities.

11 As the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear,
12 Chemical, and Biological Defense Programs and the Staff
13 Director for the Nuclear Weapons Council, I oversee the
14 Department's efforts to ensure the U.S. nuclear deterrent is
15 safe, secure, ready, and effective, developing and
16 sustaining capabilities to counter weapons of mass
17 destruction threats, effects, and proliferation, and ensure
18 DOD compliance with nuclear, chemical, and biological
19 treaties and agreements.

20 Since the Cold War, the U.S. has reduced its nuclear
21 stockpile by over 85 percent and deployed no new nuclear
22 capabilities. Meanwhile, our adversaries have modernized
23 their weapons systems and developed new capabilities while
24 reducing transparency. With the return of Great Power
25 competition and emerging nuclear threats, it is important to

1 ensure our nation's nuclear stockpile and infrastructure are
2 prepared to provide a credible, flexible, ready, and
3 technologically advanced deterrent that is resilient to
4 technical and geopolitical change. The ability to
5 effectively deter threats to our nation's security relies on
6 a diverse nuclear force with the flexibility to deliver
7 tailored effects quickly and credibly. We now face a
8 challenging task to counter and deter a wide range of
9 current and emerging threats in an environment of increased
10 uncertainty and risk. We must prepare to deploy a tailored
11 and flexible nuclear deterrent as we face modern challenges
12 and hedge against an uncertain future.

13 Over the past several decades, our nuclear weapons
14 infrastructure has suffered the ravages of time and a lack
15 of a comprehensive investment. Many of the specialized
16 capabilities required for stockpile work have atrophied or
17 become obsolete.

18 Our effort to reestablish our production capabilities
19 at sufficient rates must be a national priority. As an
20 integrated enterprise, we are focused on developing and
21 executing a plan to meet stockpile needs and establish a
22 path forward to manufacturing critical materials and
23 components to meet future deterrent requirements.

24 While our nuclear triad forms the core of our
25 deterrent, it is further strengthened by denying any

1 potential adversary the perceived benefits of nuclear use.
2 By ensuring that U.S. forces and infrastructure are able to
3 survive and operate through nuclear attack, we remove the
4 incentive an adversary may have to launch such an attack in
5 the first place. They demonstrate that aggression of any
6 kind is not a rational option.

7 Our efforts to counter nuclear threats and respond to
8 post-detonation scenarios, as well as supporting nuclear
9 nonproliferation efforts, allow for improved responsiveness
10 in-theater and flexibility for U.S. forces to safeguard our
11 weapons systems, delivery platforms, and personnel overseas.

12 Our Fiscal Year 2019 budget request is critically
13 important for sustaining and revitalizing the nation's
14 nuclear deterrent in all its forms. It includes funding for
15 sustaining and modernizing our nuclear forces and addressing
16 military requirements in a complex and changing security
17 environment.

18 We ask that you support both the Department of Defense
19 and Department of Energy National Nuclear Security
20 Administration's budget request as we continue to work
21 closely to deter potential adversaries, meet emerging
22 threats, assure our allies, and hedge against an uncertain
23 future. I thank you very much for the committee's time,
24 support, and leadership. Thank you.

25 [The prepared statement of Mr. Roberts follows:]

1 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

2 Dr. Soofer?

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1 STATEMENT OF ROBERT M. SOOFER, PH.D., DEPUTY ASSISTANT
2 SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR NUCLEAR AND MISSILE DEFENSE POLICY

3 Dr. Soofer: Thank you. Madam Chair, Ranking Member
4 Donnelly, I thank you for the opportunity to testify today.
5 With your permission, I'd like to submit a longer statement
6 for the record and make a few opening remarks. Thank you.

7 Secretary Mattis, Undersecretary Rood, and General
8 Selva have previously briefed the full committee on the 2018
9 Nuclear Posture Review, so I won't go into any great detail
10 today. However, I would like to take a moment to summarize
11 a few key points based on feedback we received from members
12 of Congress, as well as our allies.

13 First, the findings and recommendations of the 2018
14 Nuclear Posture Review are well grounded in what has been a
15 traditional bipartisan approach to nuclear policy,
16 summarized by Secretary Mattis in his public remarks
17 following the February meeting of NATO's Nuclear Planning
18 Group.

19 "The U.S. approach to nuclear deterrence," he said,
20 "embraces two co-equal principles: first, ensuring a safe,
21 secure, and effective nuclear deterrent; and second, working
22 wherever possible for nuclear nonproliferation and arms
23 control whenever it advances stability and security for us
24 and our allies. Nuclear deterrence and efforts to foreclose
25 proliferation and reduce the number of nuclear weapons are

1 not mutually exclusive.”

2 Second, reflecting the priority afforded nuclear
3 deterrence, the Fiscal Year 2019 budget request includes
4 full funding for Department of Defense nuclear programs and
5 is meant to maintain the nuclear modernization plans
6 approved by Congress over the past years.

7 Third, despite what you may have seen in the press, our
8 nuclear posture does not increase the circumstances under
9 which our nation would contemplate the use of nuclear
10 weapons, nor do we increase reliance on nuclear weapons.
11 Rather, we maintain the longstanding policy that “the United
12 States would employ nuclear weapons only in extreme
13 circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United
14 States, allies and partners.” This recognizes the enduring
15 role for nuclear weapons in deterring nuclear and
16 conventional aggression and assuring allies, while hedging
17 against an unpredictable security environment.

18 Fourth, the recommendation to pursue two supplemental
19 capabilities to the existing nuclear force program of record
20 will not increase the likelihood of nuclear war or stimulate
21 an arms race. These recommendations include in the near
22 term modifying a small number of existing submarine-launched
23 ballistic missile warheads to lower their explosive yield,
24 and in the mid to longer term pursuing a nuclear sea-
25 launched Cruise missile, a capability that existed in our

1 arsenal until it was retired early in the prior
2 administration when the security environment seemed more
3 benign. Both these capabilities are in response to Russian
4 nuclear doctrine and new nuclear capabilities that must be
5 viewed in the broader context of the long-term competition
6 between the United States and Russia identified in the 2018
7 National Defense Strategy.

8 These capabilities are also applicable to what appears
9 to be China's growing nuclear forces that can threaten the
10 United States and its allies in the Indo-Pacific region.

11 The supplemental capabilities are needed to ensure that
12 Russian and Chinese leadership do not mistakenly conclude
13 they could achieve some advantage by initiating a limited
14 first use of nuclear weapons, potentially including low-
15 yield weapons. It's not a radical departure from previous
16 policy. It does not signify a shift to nuclear war
17 fighting. Rather, it reinforces the imperative expressed by
18 the previous administration to retain a range of nuclear
19 capabilities in explosive power and methods of delivery to
20 strengthen deterrence in a wide range of scenarios,
21 including an adversary's calibrated nuclear escalation.

22 These two additional capabilities strengthen the
23 credibility of our declaratory policy to counter any nuclear
24 attack under any circumstance, which in turn raises the
25 nuclear threshold and strengthens deterrence by signaling to

1 adversaries that they have nothing to gain through limited
2 strikes and everything to lose.

3 And because these capabilities are consistent with
4 existing arms control treaties and do not threaten Russian
5 nuclear retaliatory forces, they should not stimulate an
6 arms race. Rather, they could provide the means for
7 addressing the growing disparity between Russia and the
8 United States in nuclear forces not limited by existing
9 nuclear treaties, a disparity that has been well recognized
10 by Congress and that will continue to grow in the future
11 unless we create some point of leverage.

12 Fifth, throughout the Nuclear Posture Review we
13 consulted extensively with allies and partners, and their
14 reaction to the NPR has been positive. Asian and European
15 allies recognize that the security environment has changed
16 for the worse and requires an emphasis on nuclear deterrence
17 even while we continue to pursue, where feasible, a balanced
18 policy that combines effective deterrence with a broad-based
19 effort to reduce nuclear risks through global
20 nonproliferation initiatives and a responsible program of
21 arms control.

22 Finally, I would add that, as noted by Secretary
23 Mattis, the United States' commitment to arms control and
24 nuclear nonproliferation remains strong, but arms control is
25 not an end in itself and depends on the security environment

1 and the participation of willing partners. Russia's
2 significant non-compliance with the INF Treaty and buildup
3 of nuclear weapons not limited under the new START Treaty
4 calls into question its willingness to be a serious partner
5 in arms control. The United States remains committed to
6 strategic dialogue when conditions permit.

7 I thank the committee for its strong bipartisan support
8 of U.S. nuclear policies and modernization programs over the
9 years and look forward to answering your questions. Thank
10 you.

11 [The prepared statement of Dr. Soofer follows:]

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1 Senator Fischer: Thank you.

2 General Rand?

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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL ROBIN RAND, USAF, COMMANDER, AIR
2 FORCE GLOBAL STRIKE COMMAND

3 General Rand: Good afternoon, Chairman Fischer and
4 Ranking Member Donnelly. Thank you for allowing me to
5 appear before you today, and thank you very much for your
6 kind remarks.

7 As I conclude my third year in command of Air Force
8 Global Strike Command, I have four fundamental focus areas.

9 First, the fight tonight, the fight in 2030, the
10 professional development of our airmen, and the care and
11 feeding of our families. Today I will highlight two of
12 these areas in my opening comments.

13 In the fight tonight, let me say the strength of Global
14 Air Force Strike Command is in our 34,000 airmen and their
15 remarkable families. Representing them today is Command
16 Chief Master Sergeant Tommy Mazzone, a highly distinguished
17 combat veteran and the senior ranking non-commissioned
18 officer in our command. He is also my best wingman. He and
19 these airmen are nothing short of spectacular and deserve
20 our nation's gratitude for their service of providing global
21 strike and strategic nuclear deterrence.

22 Right now, we have airmen deployed to the
23 Intercontinental Ballistic Missile fields of Colorado,
24 Nebraska, Wyoming, Montana, and North Dakota, where they
25 provide a 24/7, 365-day umbrella of strategic nuclear

1 deterrence and assurance for our nation and our allies.

2 At the same time, we have striker airmen deployed in
3 the Middle East in support of Central Command and Africa
4 Command fighting violent extremists. We have airmen
5 deterring our adversaries and assuring our partners in
6 European Command and Pacific Command, and we have airmen
7 supporting counter-narcotic operations in U.S. Southern
8 Command, all of this while our bomber airmen remain postured
9 to support the U.S. Strategic Command's nuclear operational
10 plan.

11 At the direction of the commander of the United States
12 Strategic Command, in September 2017, we reorganized to
13 establish one line of authority for USSTRATCOM's air
14 component under a single four-star commander. The
15 reorganization established clear lines of authority,
16 simplifying an outdated command structure for bomber and our
17 missile forces. My position is now dual hatted as the
18 Commander of Air Force's Strategic-Air Joint Force Air
19 Component Commander, and the Commander of Air Force Global
20 Strike Command.

21 A major part of this reorganization was to activate the
22 Joint Global Strike Operations Center, or J-GSOC,
23 headquartered at Barksdale Air Force Base. The J-GSOC
24 enables us to focus on the operational nuclear deterrence
25 and global strike missions, while the headquarters of Air

1 Force Global Strike Command focuses on organize, train, and
2 equip aspects of our mission.

3 Equally important as our ability to fight tonight is
4 our ability to fight in 2030. Simply stated, modernization
5 of our nuclear forces is at a critical juncture. The key to
6 Air Force Global Strike Command's continued success will
7 remain our ability to modernize, sustain, and recapitalize.
8 To accomplish this we must have predictable, adequate, and
9 flexible budgets in order to continue our readiness recovery
10 while building a more capable and lethal force. The future,
11 as Great Power competition reemerges as a major focus area,
12 requires that Air Force Global Strike Command lead the way.

13 I am happy to report today that we're on a good path
14 moving forward, and I look forward to answering any of your
15 questions about our modernization and sustainment plans
16 related to our mission.

17 Again, Madam Chairwoman and subcommittee members,
18 Ranking Member Donnelly, I want to thank you for your
19 dedication to our great nation and the opportunity to appear
20 before the committee today to highlight the missions and
21 successes of the striker airmen and Global Air Strike.
22 Thank you.

23 [The prepared statement of General Rand follows:]
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1 Senator Fischer: Thank you, General.

2 Admiral Benedict?

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1 STATEMENT OF VICE ADMIRAL TERRY J. BENEDICT, USN,
2 DIRECTOR, STRATEGIC SYSTEMS PROGRAMS

3 Admiral Benedict: Yes, ma'am. Madam Chairman, Ranking
4 Member Donnelly, thank you for the opportunity to be here
5 today, and thank you for your support of the Navy's
6 deterrence mission and for your very kind words to open.

7 It's been my greatest privilege as the Director to
8 represent the men and women of SSP for the last eight years.
9 My goal as the Director has been to ensure that they are
10 properly positioned to execute the mission with the same
11 level of success today and tomorrow as they have done since
12 our program's inception in 1955.

13 SSP is currently extending the Trident II D5 strategic
14 weapon system to match the Ohio Class service life and to
15 serve as the initial weapon system on the Columbia Class.
16 I'll summarize our efforts by saying that all of our life
17 extension programs remain on track and on budget. Our life
18 extension efforts will ensure an effective and credible sea-
19 based strategic deterrent on both the Ohio and the Columbia
20 Class until the 2040s.

21 The Navy is also taking steps to ensure a credible
22 weapons system is available beyond 2040. In fact, the last
23 Nuclear Posture Review directs the Navy to "begin studies in
24 2020 to define a cost-effective, credible, and effective
25 sea-launched ballistic missile that we can deploy through

1 the life of the Columbia SSBN through the 2080s." We will
2 execute that direction.

3 I look forward to your questions. Thank you.

4 [The prepared statement of Admiral Benedict follows:]

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1 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Admiral.

2 As I noted in my opening statement, one of the basic
3 premises of the NPR is that our nuclear forces must adapt to
4 the changing threat landscape that we face. Some critics,
5 including the Russian government, have attacked us by
6 denying that the security environment has changed, while
7 others argue that the sheer power of the U.S. nuclear
8 arsenal is somehow going to insulate us from any changes in
9 a security environment.

10 Dr. Soofer, you touched on this in your opening
11 statement when you note that "potential adversaries do not
12 stand still," and consequently U.S. deterrence requirements
13 cannot remain, as you put it, fixed.

14 We've heard plenty of testimony about the changing
15 threat environment on this committee and on the full
16 committee. I don't think that's in question. But I'd like
17 to explore the notion that U.S. nuclear forces have no need
18 to adapt to a different security environment.

19 So, Dr. Soofer, U.S. nuclear policy and planning has
20 long emphasized the need for flexible adverse nuclear forces
21 specifically to adjust to a changing threat landscape. Is
22 that correct?

23 Dr. Soofer: Yes, it is.

24 Senator Fischer: And I'm sure that you've seen these
25 vague criticisms that the current U.S. nuclear posture is

1 more than sufficient to deter any new threats. What is your
2 reaction to statements like this? And in your opinion, what
3 would be the impact to strategic stability of overlooking
4 the expansion of adversaries' arsenals, the increasing
5 ability of adversaries to deny U.S. nuclear employment, and
6 the violation of treaties, and concluding this warrants no
7 change in U.S. nuclear posture?

8 Dr. Soofer: Thank you, Madam Chair. As senior DOD
9 leadership has testified, including General Hyten, today we
10 have a strong nuclear deterrent, and there should be no
11 question that we have the ability to deter current threats.

12 But in the course of the Nuclear Posture Review, we
13 concluded that, as I indicated, the threat doesn't stand
14 still, and there's some disturbing trends out there that
15 require a response.

16 One of the biggest problems that we faced was the
17 growing disparity between Russia and the U.S. in a category
18 of weapons called non-strategic nuclear weapons, sometimes
19 referred to as tactical nuclear weapons. This has been a
20 concern not only of ours but of previous administrations as
21 well, and even during the new START ratification proceedings
22 in 2010 there was a provision in the resolution ratification
23 that directed the administration within one year to address
24 this disparity, bring the Russians back to the negotiating
25 table.

1 So we've been concerned about this for a long time, and
2 we came to the conclusion that it wasn't just the numbers
3 but it was the types of capabilities that they were
4 deploying -- depth charges, torpedoes, short-range ballistic
5 missiles; air, land, and sea-launched Cruise missiles. Why
6 would you build so many different types of nuclear weapons?
7 Both the U.S. and Russia reduced their tactical nuclear
8 weapons at the end of the Cold War. We have a modest number
9 that we are modernizing but certainly not expanding, but the
10 Russians are expanding their capabilities.

11 So they have the capabilities, plus you've heard about
12 their nuclear doctrine, their limited nuclear war doctrine.
13 Some people would argue that maybe the Russians wouldn't do
14 this in an actual scenario, but we have to assume that they
15 would because they have the capability and they exercise the
16 capability.

17 So you have the doctrine, you have the capabilities,
18 you have what everybody agrees is a more belligerent Russia.
19 So we add all that up, and we came to the conclusion that
20 just maybe the Russians perceived an advantage with this new
21 capability. After all, if they didn't think they needed
22 them, they probably wouldn't build them given our strategic
23 triad.

24 So we felt we had to do something in the near term and
25 in the long term to address this problem. In the near term

1 it's the modification of a modest number of submarine-
2 launched ballistic missile warheads, just so the Russians
3 understand that at that low level of low-yield capability,
4 we have a response option, the president has a response
5 option. It's for deterrence purposes, not for war fighting.

6 In the longer term, how do you address this growing
7 disparity in non-strategic weapons? We've been trying to
8 get the Russians to come back to the table to negotiate
9 reductions, but they haven't been willing to come back. So
10 by going forward with a sea-launched Cruise missile
11 capability, a capability that, by the way, is consistent
12 with the INF Treaty, consistent with the new START Treaty,
13 maybe this will give us some leverage to bring them back to
14 the negotiating table.

15 If we don't do this, the problem may be that we get to
16 a point where the Russians may perceive they have not only a
17 military advantage over us, because the numbers are so
18 disparate, but now your allies start to worry. They say,
19 well, the Russians have two times or three times, ten times
20 as many weapons as the United States does. Maybe in a
21 crisis situation, they'd question our leadership. So
22 there's a real military and strategic problem associated, I
23 think, with not addressing the growing threat.

24 I hope that answers the question.

25 Senator Fischer: Yes. As we look at Russia and their

1 doctrine of escalate to deescalate, and I think we've had
2 numerous discussions on that in this subcommittee and in the
3 full committee as a whole, there seems to be acceptance of
4 that now and kind of almost a downplaying of it, and instead
5 the focus I think is on -- and I think it comes from the
6 Russians in many areas. The focus is on we are so superior
7 in our nuclear capabilities, the power that the United
8 States has, then why would the United States need to change?
9 They view it as a change in the posture that we're taking.

10 You mentioned so many points to that, but specifically
11 how would you address the Russians saying that the United
12 States has such superiority when it comes to our power that
13 we have with our nuclear capabilities that there's no way
14 they're going to do the escalate to deescalate?

15 Dr. Soofer: First, the Russian claim in Putin's March
16 1st speech, where he's claiming that he's doing this in
17 reaction to what the U.S. is doing, of course that's
18 nonsense because these capabilities, the Russian
19 capabilities have been in development for decades. So it's
20 clearly not a response to what the United States is doing.
21 We are playing catch-up at this point. So I think that
22 criticism on its face is just false.

23 So I'm not quite sure how to address it other than
24 that. I would just go back to say that even Ash Carter,
25 former Secretary of Defense, he noted that there has been no

1 arms race. The only country that's been running this race
2 has been the Russians over the last 10, 20 years.

3 Senator Fischer: Thank you.

4 Senator Donnelly?

5 Senator Donnelly: Thank you, Madam Chair.

6 Assistant Secretary Roberts, what is your assessment of
7 the NNSA efforts on modernization in general and the ability
8 to produce up to 80 plutonium pits by 2030, as required by
9 statute?

10 Mr. Roberts: Thank you, Senator, for the question.

11 Given the future stockpile requirements, number one, I
12 certainly support, as stated in the NPR, to produce 80 pits
13 by 2030. Based on the work that we've done now, I think
14 that we're in a good position to actually achieve that.
15 We've recently completed a review. It was basically an
16 engineering analysis, as well as a workforce analysis on the
17 path that we've looked at, the various alternatives that
18 have come out of those, both an analysis of alternatives
19 review and this engineering analysis that was just recently
20 completed.

21 The modernization aspects we've looked at that are in
22 place at a production facility at Los Alamos, this is the
23 one place where we still have existing and enduring
24 production capabilities. In fact, Los Alamos has been the
25 plutonium Center of Excellence for operations. They will

1 have the capability to produce up to 30 pits per year. Now
2 we have to look at how we get from 31 to 80.

3 So this engineering analysis was looking at the
4 processes that are necessary to select the best location for
5 future pit production requirements of 50-plus pits per year,
6 and we're undergoing right now a final assessment to make a
7 recommendation to the Deputy Secretary of Energy. Hopefully
8 that will be done very soon. We've looked at the various
9 alternatives, and we've come up with a recommendation that
10 will hopefully meet that requirement, and we'll do that
11 before the 11th of May, which we're required to do by law,
12 as you know.

13 Senator Donnelly: Thank you.

14 Admiral Benedict, can you give us the status for Fiscal
15 Year 2019 on the Navy role in the conventional prompt strike
16 system?

17 Admiral Benedict: Yes, sir. To date, we have been
18 operating under the Defense-wide account. We flew a very
19 successful experiment late last year in the fall. As I have
20 briefed, the results of that were classified, but it was a
21 very successful experiment, met all our objectives. We have
22 now been directed to do the second experiment along the
23 lines of conventional prompt strike, as well as at the
24 direction of OSD we are running a motor competition. The
25 inputs from industry are in SSP. We are evaluating those,

1 and I would suspect that we will make an award here very
2 shortly.

3 Senator Donnelly: Thank you.

4 Dr. Soofer, we haven't seen all the budget data for the
5 low-yield submarine-launched ballistic missile. How much
6 will it cost in Fiscal Year 2019 for the NNSA and for the
7 DOD?

8 Dr. Soofer: Thank you, Senator. I believe the request
9 for Department of Defense is \$23 million, and I think it
10 will be \$50 million to complete the project. Unfortunately,
11 Senator, I don't have the numbers for NNSA. I'm going to
12 say that they're going to be in a similar range, and those
13 numbers will be provided to Congress by OMB in a whole-of-
14 government errata by the end of this month.

15 Senator Donnelly: Okay. Thank you.

16 General Rand, my understanding is we dropped from the
17 B-2 the ability to send and receive information with the new
18 satellite system that can operate in a nuclear stress
19 environment. Does that concern you?

20 General Rand: No, sir. I made that decision largely,
21 and then coordinated it with my boss, General Hyten, at
22 STRATCOM. The rationale, sir, is that the AEHF that you
23 referred to will not be fielded until 2026. It's our
24 intention to sunset the B-2 in the early 2030s. The six
25 years of utility to have us receive and transmit isn't worth

1 the squeeze when that \$1.3 billion that we save can be used
2 for other more critical MC-3 capabilities across the
3 enterprise.

4 I will tell you that what we did do is we have sped up
5 the acquisition of what's called the common very low
6 frequency receiver that we will start putting on the B-2 in
7 Fiscal Year 2019.

8 Senator Donnelly: Thank you.

9 Thank you, Madam Chair.

10 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Senator Donnelly.

11 Senator Sullivan?

12 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Madam Chair.

13 Gentlemen, thanks for being here.

14 Dr. Soofer, I wanted to thank you for your help
15 previously on the Advancing America's Missile Defense Act.
16 A number of us worked on that last year and it became a full
17 part of the NDAA; very strong bipartisan support, by the
18 way. It started really significantly revamping our missile
19 defense for our country when the threats are very
20 significant.

21 As you know, in the previous NDAA there had been a
22 demand for the completion of the Ballistic Missile Defense
23 Review, and I'm sure all of you are hard at work. I had the
24 opportunity to question Undersecretary Rood on that
25 recently, and I was pressing him. Didn't get it, but I'd

1 like to press you now to try to get the review sooner rather
2 than later because, again, one of the things that I think
3 was very positive in this last go-around was that it was
4 very bipartisan. I'm working with a number of folks on the
5 committee and some of the folks in the Pentagon. I'm
6 looking at ways to make progress again on some of the
7 missile defense issues.

8 But it would be really important, as we're marking up
9 the NDAA this year, to be informed by the review. Otherwise
10 we essentially miss an entire year.

11 So you probably were ready for this question, but can
12 we get a commitment from you to have that done, say, by
13 within the next month? You know how this schedule works.

14 Dr. Soofer: Yes.

15 Senator Sullivan: How about before we start marking up
16 the NDAA in earnest?

17 Dr. Soofer: Senator, we are now weeks away from
18 getting this done. I think the draft is done. It's a
19 coordination problem, and you know how difficult it is to
20 get coordination.

21 Senator Sullivan: Correct, but you know how difficult
22 it is to miss the window.

23 Dr. Soofer: Yes, sir.

24 Senator Sullivan: And given your background, you know
25 a lot about how the markup of that bill works. Do you think

1 we'll have it in time to be informed as we mark up the next
2 National Defense Authorization Act? It would be a missed
3 opportunity is all I'm saying.

4 Dr. Soofer: It would be, sir, and we will do our best
5 to have it done and to you by the end of this month or early
6 next month.

7 Senator Sullivan: Okay. Good. Well, we want to keep
8 working with you and keep pressing you on that.

9 Let me ask, as we are looking at one of the things --
10 we did a CODEL, a number of us, up to Fort Greeley in Alaska
11 where we're going to have a new missile defense field built.
12 One of the challenges that we want to work with all of you
13 on, Senator Inhofe and I, and I know the Chair and Ranking
14 I'm sure are very supportive of this as well, but when we
15 were up there talking about how long it would take to
16 actually fully operationalize a new field at Fort Greeley,
17 which everybody agrees we need, the estimates were four,
18 maybe five years -- four, maybe five years. We won World
19 War II in four to five years.

20 So we want to work with all of you to accelerate the
21 deployment of these missiles that are supposed to protect
22 the entire United States, and I think four to five years is
23 unacceptable. I think everybody says it's unacceptable, but
24 we need to look at ways to make sure that -- the threat is
25 here. The threat is here right now, today. The whole point

1 of the bill was to advance our missile defense. Four to
2 five years doesn't help anyone.

3 Do you care to comment on that, any of the members of
4 the panel here? We need to do more, faster, and we can. We
5 won a war in that amount of time. I think we can build a
6 new missile field.

7 Dr. Soofer: Senator, I agree. I've always wondered
8 why it takes so long. The answer that usually comes back is
9 the weather in Alaska, the construction --

10 Senator Sullivan: Well, trust me, we built the Alcan
11 Highway in World War II, which was 1,100 miles, in eight
12 months. We can do this stuff. We can do it. We're
13 Americans, we can do it. So the weather is not a big deal
14 in Alaska, trust me.

15 Dr. Soofer: And I think the other limiting factor may
16 be development of the redesigned kill vehicle.

17 Senator Sullivan: We can get the silos built, and I'm
18 not saying we have to get that done. How about just a
19 commitment from all of you at all levels of the government
20 to just accelerate this? Nobody wants this to be four to
21 five years. Can I get that from everybody here in positions
22 of authority?

23 Dr. Soofer: Yes, sir.

24 Admiral Benedict: Yes, sir. Absolutely.

25 Senator Sullivan: And then one final question. As we

1 are looking at the missile defense provisions in the NDAA,
2 one issue that keeps coming up is the idea of space-based
3 sensors uniformly to integrate our theater, Aegis, THAAD,
4 homeland. Would you all agree with that as a priority?

5 Dr. Soofer: Absolutely.

6 Senator Sullivan: Okay. Thank you.

7 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Senator Sullivan.

8 Senator Warren?

9 Senator Warren: Thank you, Madam Chair.

10 And thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

11 So, the Administration's Nuclear Posture Review calls
12 for a new low-yield submarine-launched ballistic missile.
13 DOD has previously suggested that this could be accomplished
14 quickly by modifying the W-76 warhead that goes into our
15 existing submarine-launched Trident missile. The NNSA
16 administrator recently came before our committee, and she
17 testified that she didn't know how long it would take NNSA
18 to modify the W-76 warhead, and she didn't know whether it
19 could be done before the life extension production line
20 closes at the end of the year.

21 So let me ask you this, Dr. Soofer: Does DOD know how
22 long it will take to modify the W-76 warhead?

23 Dr. Soofer: When we considered this during the Nuclear
24 Posture Review, and since then, we came to the conclusion
25 based on talking to people at NNSA that this could take two

1 to three years at the most.

2 Senator Warren: So you think two to three. Does that
3 mean it can't be done by the end of the life extension
4 program?

5 Dr. Soofer: I think it's important that it be done by
6 the end of the life extension program.

7 Senator Warren: So you think it will be within the end
8 of the life extension program.

9 Dr. Soofer: It should be.

10 Senator Warren: Okay. All right. So, the NNSA
11 administrator also testified that NNSA had not requested any
12 funding to modify the W-76 warhead, she didn't know if they
13 would request a reprogramming or a supplemental request, so
14 let me ask you about that one, Dr. Soofer. I understand
15 that the DOD budget does include \$22.6 million for the SLBM.
16 Is the OMB request next month a reprogramming or a
17 supplemental?

18 Dr. Soofer: They call it, as a formal term, errata.
19 It's a whole-of-government errata.

20 Senator Warren: An errata?

21 Dr. Soofer: An errata.

22 Senator Warren: Okay.

23 Dr. Soofer: It's a new term to me, as well. But it
24 essentially will be a reallocation of funds, because I think
25 they're thinking of trying to do that with existing funds,

1 but I'm not sure. It's called an errata, a whole-of-
2 government errata.

3 Senator Warren: Okay, but it's a reallocation is what
4 you're telling me, it's not new money. You're shaking your
5 head, right? It's a reallocation. So what is the money
6 going to be reallocated from?

7 Dr. Soofer: That's a decision for NNSA and the
8 Department of Energy to make, and I'm not privy to that.

9 Senator Warren: So we don't know where it comes from.

10 Dr. Soofer: You'll know when you see the budget
11 request.

12 Senator Warren: Okay. But right now, it's that
13 somebody is actually willing to give up \$23 million, right?
14 Okay.

15 What is DOD using the \$23 million for?

16 Admiral Benedict: So, ma'am, the \$23 million in the
17 Department of Defense is actually in my budget, and my
18 budget will be to do the integration of the NNSA effort to
19 ensure that all my documentation is complete and consistent
20 with this type of weapon, and to do the work at my strategic
21 weapons facilities, to do the loud-out change between the
22 current configuration on the submarines and this new
23 configuration.

24 Senator Warren: Okay. So the NNSA is going to do the
25 actual modification.

1 Admiral Benedict: Yes, ma'am.

2 Senator Warren: And the \$22.6 million is so that you
3 can -- say that one more time?

4 Admiral Benedict: I need to do the integration of
5 their effort with --

6 Senator Warren: So it's to integrate.

7 Admiral Benedict: Yes, sir. Yes, ma'am, integrate
8 with the system. I need to change all my documentation to
9 ensure that I'm complete and consistent with nuclear
10 weapons, and then I need to do the actual work at my
11 strategic weapons facilities to change the warhead on the
12 missiles. Yes, ma'am.

13 Senator Warren: Okay. Thank you.

14 You know, I appreciate and I think you all understand
15 why we're concerned about this. We're all familiar with
16 NNSA's program management challenges in recent years, and
17 given that track record, I find the number of unknowns that
18 we heard before from the administrator and that still seem
19 to be there worrisome. We're already asking them to conduct
20 an unprecedented number of life cycle extension programs,
21 along with other demands of the stockpile stewardship
22 programs, and I just have real concerns about their capacity
23 to take on additional work. I think maintaining our current
24 arsenal and our current programs should be our number-one
25 priority and that we should manage that first.

1 Thank you very much. Thank you, Madam Chair.

2 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Senator Warren.

3 Senator Cotton?

4 Senator Cotton: Dr. Soofer, I want to speak to you
5 first about Russia's pattern of behavior regarding their
6 international commitments. Is Russia violating the INF
7 Treaty?

8 Dr. Soofer: Yes, it is, Senator.

9 Senator Cotton: Is Russia still violating the Open
10 Skies Treaty?

11 Dr. Soofer: I believe so, Senator.

12 Senator Cotton: We also know what happened in the
13 United Kingdom a few weeks ago with the poisoning of two
14 Russians. I know you aren't the lead for chemical weapons
15 issues, but given what's been reported by our government and
16 the actions we've taken, is it fair to say that Russia has
17 violated the Chemical Weapons Convention?

18 Dr. Soofer: I don't know, Senator. I assume so.

19 Senator Cotton: I'll answer yes.

20 What about some other international agreements to which
21 Russia is a party? The Budapest Memorandum, the
22 Presidential Nuclear Initiative, the Conventional Forces in
23 Europe Agreement, the BNN document. Is Russia out of
24 compliance with all of these in one way or another?

25 Dr. Soofer: Yes, Senator.

1 Senator Cotton: What do you think this pattern of
2 behavior tells us about how much Russia respects its
3 international commitments?

4 Dr. Soofer: I think they scorn their international
5 commitments, and they're bent on upsetting the status quo.

6 Senator Cotton: So what about the new START Treaty?
7 Is Russia complying with its obligations under new START?

8 Dr. Soofer: We believe that they have met the limits.
9 Yes, Senator.

10 Senator Cotton: After all the scorn they show for
11 these other commitments, they are upholding their
12 commitments under the new START Treaty. Why would that be?

13 Dr. Soofer: I think it's a strategic approach. I
14 think that they are limiting their strategic nuclear weapons
15 while they circumvent this by building up their non-
16 strategic nuclear weapons that are not limited by the
17 treaty. I think it's a very clever approach.

18 Senator Cotton: So they are complying with their
19 obligations under the treaty that tends to benefit them
20 while they get the benefits of violating all of their other
21 treaties.

22 Dr. Soofer: Yes, sir.

23 Senator Cotton: Well, new START expires in about three
24 years, but we'll have the option to extend it for another
25 five years. Do you think it makes sense in this set of

1 circumstances to extend the new START Treaty if Russia
2 remains in violation of almost every other international
3 agreement that they have made?

4 Dr. Soofer: Senator, we're going to begin a whole-of-
5 government review of the pros and cons of extending that
6 treaty.

7 Senator Cotton: Thank you.

8 Finally, I want to address what President Putin said in
9 his televised remarks last month about all kinds of new
10 Russian capabilities. I don't think any of these
11 capabilities were terribly surprising for people who have
12 followed the matters. But would something like an
13 intercontinental-range nuclear-powered Cruise missile be
14 covered under the new START Treaty? Or what about his so-
15 called intercontinental underwater vehicle?

16 Dr. Soofer: Senator, these are not covered by the new
17 START Treaty.

18 Senator Cotton: So, all of the new systems he's
19 announced are not covered by the treaty that benefits him,
20 and he violates all the obligations under the other treaties
21 that don't benefit him. Given that set of circumstances, I
22 think we should take a serious second look at extending the
23 new START Treaty.

24 Admiral Benedict, if I can turn to you, I noted in the
25 Nuclear Posture Review that it said we would now field a

1 fleet of at least -- that's the quote, "at least" -- 12
2 Columbia Class SSBNs. I think the previous statement had
3 been we would field 12 Columbia Class SSBNs. Does that mean
4 that there is some thinking inside the Navy or the broader
5 Department of Defense that we might need more than 12
6 Columbia Class submarines?

7 Admiral Benedict: Sure. I think that's a decision
8 that will be made and a recommendation made by leadership as
9 we approach the end of production. But I think, given the
10 current changing world dynamic, we want to reserve the right
11 to revisit that at some point.

12 Senator Cotton: So that's the import of those words
13 "at least"?

14 Admiral Benedict: Yes, sir.

15 Senator Cotton: I think that's something we should
16 entertain as well. I was glad to see that in the review,
17 and thank you for that, Admiral.

18 Gentlemen, thank you again for your testimony today.

19 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Senator.

20 We'll begin a second round of questions.

21 Dr. Soofer, the Nuclear Posture Review repeatedly makes
22 the point that we have not made sufficient progress towards
23 a responsive nuclear infrastructure despite the fact that
24 it's been a longstanding goal that's been confirmed in
25 previous NPRs. So with that in mind, can you describe how

1 the Department is translating the NPR into specific
2 guidance, and what processes will be put in place so we can
3 assure a successful implementation?

4 Dr. Soofer: Thank you, Senator. Just today, as a
5 matter of fact, we put together a package or a memo to the
6 Secretary of Defense that lists about 40 different actions
7 following from the Nuclear Posture Review. Those actions
8 are assigned to specific entities within the Department of
9 Defense -- Joint staff, Army, Navy, OSC policy, STRATCOM.
10 It's our recommendation that the Office of the Secretary of
11 Defense review the progress twice a year and report to the
12 Deputy and the Secretary on how well we're implementing
13 these specific recommendations.

14 Again, there are about 40 different recommendations.
15 Some of those recommendations speak directly to our hedging
16 criteria and the need to have a more responsive nuclear
17 infrastructure. I will note, however, that these
18 implementation recommendations are only for the Department
19 of Defense and do not pertain to the Department of Energy.
20 They would have their own procedures.

21 Senator Fischer: And will the Department provide that
22 implementation guidance to this committee?

23 Dr. Soofer: I think as soon as the Secretary of
24 Defense signs that, we should come up and brief you on the
25 implementation plan.

1 Senator Fischer: Thank you.

2 You mentioned hedging, and with the NPR we see that it
3 emphasizes the importance of being able to hedge against the
4 geopolitical and technical uncertainties that we're seeing
5 out there.

6 To what extent is the Department reviewing its hedging
7 strategies to ensure that they're keeping pace with this new
8 threat environment?

9 Dr. Soofer: Maybe I can start, but Secretary Roberts,
10 given his affiliation with the Nuclear Weapons Council, may
11 be better suited. But this idea of hedging is nothing new.
12 Previous administrations have done it, and they've hedged
13 against geopolitical changes, what happens if the
14 relationship with Russia gets even worse and they break out
15 of the new START Treaty and they start deploying more
16 weapons? How do you hedge against that? Do you hedge
17 against technical problems in your force?

18 But because our force is so old and we're in the
19 process of recapitalizing every leg, we also have a new
20 level of risk called programmatic risk or schedule risk. So
21 what happens if the new systems don't come online in time
22 before the old systems are retired? So we have to figure
23 out a way to hedge against that possibility given the fact
24 that sometimes programs are late.

25 So again, this is part of the NPR implementation

1 tasking, but I think the Nuclear Weapons Council is looking
2 seriously at this as well.

3 Senator Fischer: Mr. Secretary, that also is an issue
4 when we look at the NNSA's protection capacity, correct?

5 Mr. Roberts: Yes, yes.

6 Senator Fischer: Would you like to continue from Dr.
7 Soofer's comments on that?

8 Mr. Roberts: Well, first of all, I endorse everything
9 he said. But also, the Nuclear Weapons Council and the
10 subordinate bodies, because we have now created three other
11 subordinate bodies, one on standing and safety, one on
12 transformation coordination, and then one on compartmental
13 issues and an advisory committee for that regard, what we're
14 doing is we are taking on that accountability and
15 enforcement, looking at the priorities.

16 Senator Fischer: When you say we're taking it on, is
17 that the Weapons Council?

18 Mr. Roberts: Yes, ma'am.

19 Senator Fischer: Okay.

20 Mr. Roberts: Taking on those roles and
21 responsibilities, in effect an enforcing function because of
22 the criticality of the dates we've set out very explicitly
23 in the Nuclear Posture Review. There is no margin for many
24 of these programs. If we don't, we're going to have a gap,
25 and that gap is going to adversely affect our deterrence to

1 the point where it may not be credible. So that's very
2 important. It will be difficult, but it's something that we
3 absolutely have to do.

4 Senator Fischer: Do you have any insight into the
5 future in looking at how that road map is going to differ,
6 perhaps, from any existing plans or requirements that we
7 have out there now?

8 Mr. Roberts: I've been very --

9 Senator Fischer: Or are you just right on schedule,
10 right on point?

11 Mr. Roberts: I've never been very good at predicting
12 the future.

13 Senator Fischer: But you do have the flexibility to
14 confront any changes that may be happening on the world
15 stage?

16 Mr. Roberts: Yes, and that's part of my office's
17 responsibilities, is that we'll be watching that very
18 closely and identifying, in fact, and bringing to this
19 committee any issues and problems that we see are important
20 and that need to be addressed.

21 Senator Fischer: Okay. Thank you very much.

22 Senator Donnelly?

23 Senator Donnelly: Thank you, Madam Chair.

24 Secretary Roberts, will the low-yield submarine
25 ballistic missile warhead undergo the traditional 6.x review

1 process the Nuclear Weapons Council has established for
2 acquisition programs?

3 Mr. Roberts: Yes, it will.

4 Senator Donnelly: This would be for General Rand. My
5 understanding is that your organization has ownership of the
6 National Airborne Command Post, or NEACP, a modified 747,
7 which is aging out by the 2030s. How is its replacement
8 coming along?

9 General Rand: Sir, there has been no money yet laid
10 into the palm or the fight app for this, but I think we are
11 going to begin some very serious discussions in the next
12 weeks and months to follow, but not only about the NEACP
13 but, if I could, about the family of systems that includes
14 the Take Charge and Move Out, as well as the Airborne
15 Command Post. So I will pitch my opinions and ideas to the
16 Chief of Staff of the Air Force and to General Hyten, and
17 there is no doubt a need to get very serious about this.

18 Senator Donnelly: Because the follow-up question I had
19 is are some of its missions going to be split amongst other
20 aircrafts and other commands?

21 General Rand: No, sir, not at this time. We intend to
22 keep the NEACP for what it's intended for the ability for
23 the nuclear command and control communications, as well as
24 to support Secretary of Defense. But we will keep those
25 three, the Take Charge and Move Out that supports the Navy,

1 and the Airborne Command Post, as well as how we use the
2 NEACP.

3 Senator Donnelly: Okay.

4 General Rand: I personally am in favor of looking at
5 some commonality in that platform, though, for those three
6 missions.

7 Senator Donnelly: Thank you.

8 Admiral Benedict, what are we doing, or what do we need
9 to be doing to solve the radiation hardened microelectronic
10 problem that seems to be looming?

11 Admiral Benedict: Yes, sir. That is not a Navy
12 problem, that is not an Air Force problem. I believe that
13 is a national problem, and I will tell you that the
14 Department of Defense is extremely serious about taking that
15 on at the Department level. OSD Industrial Base, that group
16 that manages industry, has formed a task force which has not
17 just the Navy and the Air Force on it but also DTRA and all
18 the other interagency groups which will deal with radiation
19 levels to an event of a nuclear capability. That is chaired
20 by OSD Industrial Base, and the executive agent for that is
21 actually Crane.

22 Crane has done all our nuclear rad hard piece part work
23 for the D-5 life extension effort. We have procured enough
24 parts to ensure that we can sustain the Trident II D-5 life
25 extension effort through the 2040s. Our next need will be

1 in the follow-on, which is directed in the NPR, and we are
2 working closely with the United States Air Force. We passed
3 the entire rad hard database that we developed for the life
4 extension effort to the Air Force as part of commonality,
5 and they will be the first ones to deal with the actual
6 issue of reduced capacity for the rad hard industry in the
7 U.S.

8 Senator Donnelly: Thank you.

9 And then, Admiral Benedict, what's the status for the
10 rocket propellant industrial base?

11 Admiral Benedict: Sir, that remains, in my opinion, my
12 professional opinion, fragile. We are down to, essentially,
13 two major suppliers. If you were to segregate those between
14 large capability and small to medium capability, we have one
15 in each. Not only are we fragile in the major developers
16 for solid rocket motors, we are seeing fragility within the
17 suppliers of constituents, some of the necessary chemicals
18 that make up a large percentage of a solid rocket motor.
19 That is, again, being addressed in OSD at the Industrial
20 Base Group through policy. We are working closely with the
21 Industrial Base.

22 I'll just remind this committee, we are the only
23 strategic asset that is in production today. We have
24 maintained a minimum state of production for the Trident II
25 D-5 rocket motors in order to ensure that there is capacity.

1 That skill set does remain alive, and we are producing at
2 the minimum sustaining safe rate for the Trident rocket
3 motors. The next, again, large rocket motor production
4 requirement will be the Air Force GBSD effort.

5 Senator Donnelly: Thank you.

6 Thank you, Madam Chair.

7 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Senator.

8 Senator Peters?

9 Senator Peters: Thank you, Madam Chair.

10 And thank you for all four of your testimonies here
11 today and for your service to the country. We appreciate
12 it.

13 Dr. Soofer, I'd like to start with you and ask you a
14 little bit about missile defense. I understand the NDAA is
15 reviewing three potential locations for a continental U.S.
16 interceptor site to join the current sites that are out
17 there. One of the locations under consideration is Fort
18 Custer Training Center, as you know, in Michigan, and my
19 understanding is that that site is shovel ready. It
20 provides the lowest cost, the least environmental impact
21 options out there, which we're very proud of.

22 In last year's STRATCOM posture hearing, General Hyten
23 testified that it would likely take five to ten years to
24 construct a third site once the decision is made. This is
25 not something, obviously, that you can just turn on. As a

1 result of that, I would agree with Senator Sullivan, who
2 suggested that we need this report as soon as possible so we
3 can inform the NDAA and be thinking through some of these
4 strategic implications going forward.

5 So my question for you is, what are the criteria and
6 priorities that the NDAA will consider when selecting a
7 preferred site for the continental interceptor site, as
8 required?

9 Dr. Soofer: Senator, I think the Missile Defense
10 Review will try to address some of that. But if I could
11 just talk generally about the types of criteria --

12 Senator Peters: That would be great.

13 Dr. Soofer: You have to ask yourself, what is the
14 threat you're protecting against? If it's mostly coming
15 from the east, say from the Middle East, there's one
16 location. If you want to get the Middle East and provide
17 additional protection from North Korea, you might choose a
18 different site. Are you trying to maximize your battle
19 space, get as many shots off as possible, have what's called
20 a shoot opportunity? That will dictate which site.

21 So all three of those in terms of getting input from
22 the warfighter, balancing it against the threat, and the
23 ease of construction, I think those are all being weighed.

24 Senator Peters: In the full committee recently,
25 actually in February, I asked General Robinson about the

1 missile threat from Iran, and she indicated -- I'll quote
2 her statement in the committee. She said she "watches North
3 Korea with an eyeball and a half, and then a half an eyeball
4 on Iran."

5 So from a battle space perspective, what are the
6 current consequences -- or I should say what would be the
7 consequences for the current GMD system if Iran were to
8 develop a ballistic missile capability that would threaten
9 the United States?

10 Dr. Soofer: Based on our analysis during the missile
11 defense review -- and I think this is supported by the
12 previous administration's findings -- you can actually
13 protect most of the United States against an Iranian threat
14 from the interceptors at Fort Greeley, as long as you have
15 the proper sensor support on the east side. You may recall
16 that we had plans to build a long-range discriminating radar
17 in Alaska to help discriminate the threat from North Korea.
18 You have to do the same from Iran.

19 So there is some inherent capability today to defend
20 against Iran, but it depends on the complexity of the
21 Iranian threat. If they have more warheads, more counter-
22 measures, then the system in Fort Greeley would not suffice
23 and it would make sense to have an additional site, a third
24 site somewhere else to deal with that threat.

25 Senator Peters: Areas such as Michigan, New York, and

1 Ohio that are being considered, something towards the
2 Midwest or East would be the place to have it, would be the
3 natural site for it?

4 Dr. Soofer: Yes, sir.

5 Senator Peters: So the question, though, as you
6 mentioned, we may have that capability, unless the system is
7 more sophisticated. However, given the fact that we have to
8 look five to ten years out and that's not an easy task to
9 do, but it's probably safe to assume that if they should get
10 that capability, they will constantly be improving it over
11 that time, that we need to be making these plans now. So
12 that process, there's a balancing act of what we can do now
13 and what we must do in the future. How do you weigh those?

14 Dr. Soofer: Exactly right, sir. I'll be honest with
15 you that one of the greatest areas of uncertainty is the
16 nature of the threat. We can share with you the information
17 we have in the intelligence world and have a more fulsome
18 discussion about that, but then there's also the issue of
19 cost.

20 Senator Peters: Of course.

21 Dr. Soofer: To go to an additional site, I'm thinking
22 about \$5 billion. Others say the priority should be sensors
23 in space, or a multiple kill vehicle, so we have to weigh
24 those.

25 This committee had some very significant debates over

1 an East Coast missile defense site, and I think where they
2 came down was it's a hedge against the Iranian threat to go
3 forward with a sensor. So there is a requirement for an
4 Atlantic radar.

5 But all these considerations are important. What
6 happens to the future of the agreement with Iran? This
7 could all impact the nature of the threat, and I think
8 that's going to be weighed in the final Missile Defense
9 Review, sir.

10 Senator Peters: Right. Thank you for your response,
11 appreciate it.

12 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Senator.

13 I have one last question for the Admiral and the
14 General. I would be interested in knowing your views on the
15 NPR, if you support it, if you see it as enhancing our
16 ability to deter our adversaries.

17 General Rand: Madam Chair, as I told you this morning,
18 I believe it's a good, sound document, and in my mind it's
19 what the 11 previous administrations supported. It states
20 the fact that there's a requirement for the triad to
21 continue, that it needs to be lethal, and it should be used
22 only in extreme circumstances. I like the fact that that is
23 our declaratory policy, and I think it is a good guideline
24 for setting the tone for deterrence and assurance.

25 Senator Fischer: Thank you, sir.

1 Admiral?

2 Admiral Benedict: Yes, ma'am. I would echo what
3 General Rand said. We were supportive during the
4 development of the NPR. We stand fully in a supporting role
5 of being able to deploy a low-yield weapon on the Trident
6 weapon system as quickly as possible, and I believe it
7 actually enhances deterrence. Yes, ma'am.

8 Senator Fischer: Thank you, sir.

9 Senator Donnelly, did you have other questions?

10 Senator Donnelly: No, Madam Chair.

11 Senator Fischer: Okay. With that, I would like to
12 thank our panel of witnesses for coming before this
13 committee today. Your information is always very helpful to
14 us.

15 And we extend our best wishes to General Rand and
16 Admiral Benedict for your many years of service to this
17 country. Thank you very much.

18 We are adjourned.

19 [Whereupon, at 3:39 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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