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THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF

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BEFORE THE SENATE  
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SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES

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Chairman Udall, Ranking Member Sessions, distinguished members of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify for the first time on our nuclear forces and the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2015 and Future Years Defense Program. I am joined by Vice Admiral Terry Benedict, Director of Strategic Systems Programs for the United States Navy; Lieutenant General Stephen W. Wilson, Commander of Air Force Global Strike Command; and Major General Garrett Harencak, Assistant Chief of Staff for Strategic Deterrence and Nuclear Integration for the Air Force.

You asked me specifically to address the policies and programs that the Defense Department has in place to sustain our nuclear forces and ensure that our deterrence is sound following the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review and the New START Treaty. But let me first start by thanking this committee for your continued support of the nuclear forces and the nuclear enterprise.

Translating the goals of “sustainment” and “deterrence” into effective plans and capabilities is more than a little challenging, as this Committee knows quite well. U.S. policies and programs concerning nuclear weapons have to reflect considerations that range far beyond the purely military, because the weapons, their deployment and posture, and what we say about them can entail issues of foreign policy, diplomacy, intelligence, science and technology, and homeland security, for example.

We want an arsenal that contributes to effective deterrence. We want an arsenal that is kept qualitatively up to date, that is survivable and flexible but that is no larger than necessary to meet our national security needs. And we want an arsenal that is an effective deterrent against the advent of regional nuclear powers whose intentions and decision processes are far from

transparent. But most of all we want an arsenal that is safe, secure, and effective, and that will contribute to deterrence as long as nuclear weapons exist.

The path to accomplishing these goals will necessarily be adapted as required based on changes in the strategic environment and the financial and technical resources available. But there are two principal, mutually supporting components to our efforts. The first is working to ensure that this and future Presidents have suitable options for deterring, responding to, and managing a diverse range of 21<sup>st</sup> century security challenges. The second is working constantly with our allies to ensure continuing confidence in our shared national security goals, including assurance in our extended nuclear deterrence posture, and strengthening strategic stability with Russia and China.

## **STRENGTHENING THE PRESIDENT'S OPTIONS**

Since 2010, we have made significant progress in strengthening the President's options for deterring, responding to, and managing 21<sup>st</sup> century security challenges. Deterrence is not limited solely to nuclear weapons. Non-nuclear strategic capabilities, such as ballistic missile defenses and investments in a capability for conventional prompt strike systems, play an important role in our strategic posture; however, they are not substitutes for our nuclear forces.

**New Nuclear Employment Strategy:** With regard to policy, the most significant development since the Nuclear Posture Review and the entry into force of the New START Treaty is the nuclear employment guidance issued by the President last June. This new Nuclear Employment Strategy was the culmination of an 18-month effort that reviewed U.S. nuclear deterrence requirements, developed a range of nuclear employment strategy options, and analyzed potential implications of each strategy option for U.S. nuclear force requirements and achieving U.S. and allied objectives if deterrence fails.

Both an unclassified and classified report on this guidance were provided to Congress in June 2013 and subsequent classified briefings have gone into greater detail. There are five important aspects of the new employment strategy:

- It affirms that the fundamental purpose of nuclear weapons remains to deter nuclear attack on the United States and our allies and partners. The United States will maintain a credible deterrent, capable of convincing any potential adversary that the adverse consequences of attacking the United States or our allies and partners far outweigh any potential benefit they may seek to gain through an attack.
- It affirms that the United States will only consider the use of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States or its allies and partners. The guidance narrows U.S. nuclear strategy by directing that planning should focus on only those objectives and missions that are necessary in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, including deterring nuclear use in escalating regional conflicts. The regional deterrence challenge may be the “least unlikely” of the nuclear scenarios for which the United States must prepare, and continuing to enhance our planning and options for addressing it is at the heart of aligning U.S. nuclear employment policy and plans with today’s strategic environment.
- At the completion of the study, the President determined that we can ensure the security of the United States and our allies and partners and maintain a strong and credible strategic deterrent while safely pursuing up to a one-third reduction in deployed strategic nuclear weapons from the level established in the New START Treaty. The President indicated in his Berlin speech that the Administration would pursue such reductions through negotiations with Russia.

- The Nuclear Employment Strategy reaffirms our commitment to a safe, secure, and effective arsenal that the United States will maintain the nuclear Triad, and that U.S. nuclear forces will continue to operate on a day-to-day basis that maintains strategic stability with Russia and China, deters potential regional aggressors, and assures U.S. Allies and partners.
- It adopts an alternative approach to hedging against technical or geopolitical risk, which could lead to future reductions in the non-deployed nuclear weapon stockpile. The United States is investing in a more modern, responsive infrastructure; however, modernizing this infrastructure will take at least a decade or more to achieve.

**Sustaining and Modernizing Nuclear Forces:** We have analyzed the different types of adversaries we must deter and the range of scenarios for which we must prepare, and we have concluded that the range of options provided by the nuclear Triad offers the flexibility needed for the range of contingencies we might face. A sustained long-term investment in the enterprise is required; the strategic delivery vehicles we rely on today grew out of investments the Nation made in the 50's, 60's, 70's, and 80's. Many of these systems are aging out of service, and we must now invest in extending the life of some and replacing others. The force structure choices we make today will determine the capabilities a President will have in twenty, thirty, and forty years. We cannot say what mix of capabilities the United States will need that far into the future, but modernizing the Triad will provide the next generation of U.S. policymakers with a flexible and resilient range of capabilities.

The FY 15 budget and FYDP reflect our plans for maintaining and modernizing the Triad. The 1043 report which DoD and DoE plan to provide to Congress in April will address

these issues in more detail. We appreciate Congress providing thirty days from the release of the FY15 budget request to submit the 1043 report.

**Strategic Delivery Vehicles:** With regard to the strategic submarine force, the construction of the first of 12 Ohio-class replacement submarines is scheduled to begin in 2021, with long-lead item procurement beginning in 2016. The first new U.S. SSBNs will enter the force beginning in FY 2031 to maintain the minimum number of submarines necessary to meet strategic requirements. These submarines will include new advances in nuclear reactor design that eliminate the need for midlife refueling, thereby providing greater operational availability for each submarine. Eliminating the need for the midlife nuclear refueling will allow a force of 12 Ohio-class replacement submarines to replace the 14 SSBNs needed for deterrence missions today and provide significant long-term cost savings. The service life for the Trident D-5 SLBM has been extended so that transition to the Ohio-replacement submarine will occur before we need to begin replacing the missiles.

To sustain the Minuteman (MM) III, Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) through 2030, the FY15 budget funds critical upgrades and component replacements. The Air Force Analysis of Alternatives (AOA) is examining options for a post-2030 follow-on system known as the Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent. This will enable development of a comprehensive plan to modernize and extend the life of the MMIII or to develop a follow-on ICBM. Follow-on ICBM activities will be closely coordinated and aligned with steps taken to modernize the MMIII through 2030 in order to achieve cost savings. This AOA should be finished in late spring or early summer.

Our nuclear-capable strategic bombers can be used to demonstrate our commitment to allies and our capabilities to our adversaries. The United States will continue to maintain two B-

52H strategic bomber wings and one B-2 wing. Both bomber types are aging. Sustained funding and support is required to ensure operational effectiveness through the remainder of their respective service lives. The FY 15 budget continues funding for the Long Range Strike Bomber (LRS-B) which is currently in development.

**Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications:** The President is the only one who can authorize the use of nuclear weapons and our Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications (NC3) systems are critical to providing the President situational awareness in a crisis, responses for consideration, and transmitting the President's orders to strategic forces. The Department is formulating a long-term strategy to modernize critical NC3 capabilities including enhanced NC3 support for regional contingencies. The Department continues to prioritize resources to address known capability gaps while incrementally building toward a modern NC3 architecture that will ensure timely decision-making support for the President.

**Nuclear Weapons, Stockpile, and Infrastructure:** Along with delivery vehicles and NC3, strengthening a President's options requires sustained commitment to warhead life extension programs and infrastructure modernization. Thanks to the measure of budgetary relief Congress provided for Fiscal Year 2014, we have been able to continue uninterrupted production of modernized W76-1 submarine launched ballistic missile warheads, and have completed the first system-level engineering development test of the B61-12 bomb.

The Administration has outlined a concept that we refer to as the "3+2" strategy. This strategy, when completed decades from now, would result in five types of warhead designs in place of the twelve unique warhead types in today's active nuclear weapons stockpile. The strategy envisions three interoperable warheads compatible with both submarine and land-based ballistic missiles, and two aircraft-delivered weapon types. This modernization and consolidation

of warhead types would allow for more efficient hedging and therefore reductions in the non-deployed stockpile.

One of the two air-delivered weapons, the B61-12 gravity bomb and its accompanying tail kit assembly (TKA), are scheduled for first production in 2020. This life extension program (LEP) will enable us to consolidate and retire several different variants of the B-61 and shift our surveillance resources to other areas of the stockpile. Most importantly, over time, the B61-12 will become the sole nuclear gravity bomb in the United States inventory and will be carried by both dual-capable aircraft (e.g., F-15E, and in the future F-35), as well as the B-2 bomber and the Long Range Strike Bomber. The second air delivered weapon, the air-launched cruise missile (ALCM) will be maintained as our standoff weapon until a follow on system, the long-range standoff (LRSO) missile, achieves first unit production in FY2025 - FY2027.

Development of the Interoperable Warhead-1 (or W78/88-1), part of the “3+2” strategy, is being delayed beyond NNSA’s future years nuclear security plan (FYNSP). This delay is the result of prioritizations due to the current fiscal climate.

**Budget and Fiscal Uncertainties:** Thanks to the two-year budget agreement that Congress recently approved, we are now facing a more certain fiscal environment, at least in the short term. Ultimately, sustained and reliable funding profiles are necessary to avoid cost increases and to meet our modernization timelines.

**Personnel Review for the Nuclear Enterprise:** The recently publicized issues concerning a few Air Force and Navy personnel involved with the nuclear forces pose no threat to the reliability and effectiveness of our nuclear forces. There are nonetheless serious issues of professionalism and discipline that must be addressed. The Secretary of Defense has created two special review panels to assess the reasons for these failures and to propose corrective actions.



The internal review, co-chaired by Assistant Secretary of Defense Madelyn Creedon and Rear Admiral Peter Fanta from the Joint Staff, will examine the nuclear mission in both the Department of the Air Force and the Department of the Navy regarding personnel, training, testing, command oversight, mission performance, and investment. They will report their findings to Secretary Hagel no later than April 30, 2014. Additionally, General Larry Welch, USAF (Ret) and Admiral John Harvey, USN (Ret) will lead an independent review to provide a broader, external examination of the DoD nuclear enterprise. They have been asked to provide findings and recommendations to the Secretary no later than June 2, 2014. These reviews are not about assigning blame, but about identifying, assessing, and correcting systemic deficiencies, and applying best practices for DoD nuclear enterprise personnel.

## **STRENGTHENING EXTENDED DETERRENCE AND ASSURANCE AND STRATEGIC STABILITY**

Since 2010, we have made considerable progress in strengthening extended deterrence and assurance, and we continue to engage Russia and China on efforts toward mutually beneficial steps for enhancing strategic stability.

**Extended Deterrence and Assurance:** We will continue to assure our allies and partners of our commitments to their security, and demonstrate it through forward deployment of U.S. forces in key regions, strengthening U.S. and allied conventional and missile defense capabilities, and the continued provision of U.S. extended nuclear deterrence. U.S. nuclear weapons have played an essential role in extending deterrence to U.S. allies and partners against nuclear attack or nuclear-backed coercion by states in their region that possess or are seeking nuclear weapons. A credible “nuclear umbrella” has been provided by a combination of means – the strategic nuclear forces of the U.S. Triad, non-strategic nuclear weapons currently forward deployed in Europe in support of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and U.S.-

based nuclear weapons that could be forward deployed quickly to meet regional contingencies. Security relationships in key regions will retain some nuclear dimension as long as nuclear threats to allies and partners remain. Extended nuclear deterrence can also serve our nonproliferation goals by reassuring non-nuclear allies and partners that their security interests can be protected without a need to develop their own nuclear weapons.

As outlined in the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review, we have been working with allies and partners on how best to strengthen regional deterrence – beginning formal dialogues on the topic where they had not existed, and maintaining and refreshing the NATO deterrence dialogue which has long existed.

**Extended Deterrence in Northeast Asia:** Our allies in Northeast Asia live in a dangerous neighborhood, and in the year following the Nuclear Posture Review, we initiated formal deterrence dialogues with both South Korea and Japan. Our Extended Deterrence Policy Committee (EDPC) with the Republic of Korea (ROK) and our Extended Deterrence Dialogue (EDD) with Japan address relevant nuclear and missile defense issues with each ally. Exploring concepts such as extended deterrence, assurance, and strategic stability through table top exercises and frank discussion helps us develop shared understandings with each ally and prepare for a range of security challenges and scenarios. Also, in October 2013 the U.S.-ROK alliance agreed upon a bilateral, tailored deterrence strategy to address the growing North Korean nuclear threat.

These high-level dialogues underscore that the United States is unequivocally committed to the defense of Japan and the Republic of Korea, and that both Allies are committed to working with the United States in deterring aggression and promoting peace and stability throughout the region. Our ability to send strategic bombers and tactical nuclear-capable aircraft to the region to

signal resolve resonates with our allies, as the B-52 and B-2 flights over South Korea last March during a period of heightened tension on the peninsula demonstrated.

**North Atlantic Treaty Organization:** NATO's 2012 Deterrence and Defence Posture Review affirms that nuclear weapons and missile defense are core components of NATO's overall capabilities for deterrence, and that as long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance. NATO will continue to seek conditions and consider options for further reductions of non-strategic nuclear weapons, and we will continue to work closely with our NATO allies on all issues related to the Alliance's nuclear capabilities through the Nuclear Planning Group and the High Level Group. These fora provide a critical venue for discussions among NATO allies on a broad range of nuclear policy matters, including the continued safety and security of nuclear weapons, shared perceptions of potential threats to Alliance members, and the development and evolution of common alliance positions on nuclear policy.

The United States currently forward deploys dual-capable aircraft (F-15Es and F-16s) and B-61 gravity bombs in Europe in support of NATO. In line with the 2013 Nuclear Employment Strategy and the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review, we will maintain the capability to deploy dual-capable aircraft as well as bombers globally, if needed. The Department will integrate nuclear delivery capability into the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) during follow-on development block upgrades of the aircraft at the end of calendar year 2024.

The long-standing special relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom remains strong. The Common Missile Compartment (CMC) for the next generation of our respective SSBN fleets is a cooperative effort that will provide cost-sharing benefits to both countries. In the current era of declining defense budgets and overall fiscal uncertainty, this type of collaboration is prudent.

**Strategic Stability:** We would welcome the opportunity to take additional steps with Russia to enhance strategic stability, including exploring opportunities for missile defense cooperation and further nuclear reductions. The Administration has said that it will pursue further reductions negotiated with Russia.

Even as we pursue new opportunities for cooperation, strategic stability also requires that we are vigilant in verifying compliance with existing arms control obligations. The U. S. takes treaty compliance very seriously and utilizes all measures that are available to us through the New START Treaty. As of February 5, 2014, the United States and Russia have each conducted 54 on-site inspections under the New START Treaty verification regime. We have met our inspection quotas for the Treaty's first three years, and we have begun the fourth year of inspections. Delegations from the United States and Russia have also met six times under the Treaty's Bilateral Consultative Commission to address issues related to implementation of the Treaty.

Although China's arsenal is smaller than Russia's, China continues to modernize its nuclear weapons and delivery systems. As it has for several years now, the United States continues to urge China to engage in discussions on strategic issues in a variety of venues. Both countries have said they want to address the other's concerns about their strategic postures. A sustained dialogue on our broad strategic postures and greater transparency between our two nations would be an opportunity for both countries to make those goals more credible.

One final word about strategic stability: for the United States, strategic stability, however we define it, must entail security for our allies and respect for their interests.

## **Conclusion**

The Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2015 and Future Years Defense Program underscores our commitment to ensuring effective options for this and future Presidents; ensuring a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal for as long as nuclear weapons exist; assuring U.S. allies; and continuing to engage Russia and China on strengthening strategic stability. The overall goals have not changed since 2010 and we have made considerable progress, but we have had to make adjustments due to budget constraints, and may have to do so again as the budget landscape becomes more clear. Thank you for the opportunity to testify; I look forward to your questions.