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THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF

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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

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Mr. Chairman, Mr. McKeon, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. It is a pleasure to join Commander of U.S. Strategic Command, General Chilton, National Nuclear Security Administrator Thomas D'Agostino, and Under Secretary of State Ellen Tauscher in discussing U.S. nuclear policy and capabilities. I will focus my remarks on the recently completed Congressionally-mandated Nuclear Posture Review, or NPR.

The 2010 NPR provides a roadmap for implementing the President's Prague agenda of reducing the role and numbers of nuclear weapons, with the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. Because this goal will not be reached quickly, perhaps not in our lifetimes, the NPR outlines the specific steps needed to sustain a safe, secure and effective nuclear deterrent as long as nuclear weapons exist. The fiscal year 2011 budget requests from the Departments of Defense and Energy are the first installments in this long-term effort.

The 2010 NPR identifies the most urgent nuclear dangers today as proliferation and the potential for nuclear terrorism, and outlines a comprehensive approach to cope with these challenges that includes policy initiatives and increased investment in a number of areas. More broadly, the NPR identifies five key objectives for U.S. nuclear policy and posture:

1. Preventing nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism;
2. Reducing the role of U.S. nuclear weapons in U.S. national security strategy;
3. Maintaining strategic deterrence and stability at reduced nuclear force levels;
4. Strengthening regional deterrence and reassuring U.S. allies and partners; and
5. Sustaining a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal.

Given that the committee has received the NPR report, I will not summarize all of its conclusions, and instead request that the report be entered into the record. I will focus my remarks on declaratory policy and force structure issues.

## **U.S. Declaratory Policy**

The 2010 Nuclear Posture Review aims to make clear the benefits of complying with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) – and the potential consequences of not doing so. It strengthens the U.S. “negative security assurance” associated with the NPT:

*The United States will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons states that are party to the NPT and in compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations.*

At the same time, the NPR reflects continued concerns about chemical and biological weapons (CBW). It affirms that:

*... any state eligible for the assurance that uses chemical or biological weapons against the United States or its allies and partners would face the prospect of a devastating conventional military response – and that any individuals responsible for the attack, whether national leaders or military commanders, would be held fully accountable.*

Given the catastrophic potential of biological weapons and the rapid pace of bio-technology development, the NPR notes that the United States reserves the right to make any adjustment in this assurance that may be warranted by the evolution and proliferation of the biological weapons threat and U.S. capacities to counter that threat.

This clarified negative security assurance does not apply to nuclear weapons states such as Russia and China, nor does it apply to states not in compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations such as Iran and North Korea. For these states, the NPR makes clear that U.S. nuclear weapons still play a role in deterring not only nuclear attack, but also conventional or CBW attack against the United States or its allies and partners. As Secretary of Gates noted recently, for Iran and North Korea “all options are on the table.”

To address the potential nexus of terrorists and weapons of mass destruction, the NPR renews the:

*... U.S. commitment to hold fully accountable any state, terrorist group, or other non-state actor that supports or enables terrorist efforts to obtain or use weapons of mass destruction, whether by facilitating, financing, or providing expertise or safe haven for such efforts.*

## **Strategic Force Structure**

One of the first tasks of the NPR, which continued throughout the review, was to define positions for the New START negotiations. The DoD-led NPR team reached the following conclusions about U.S. strategic nuclear force structure:

- The United States should retain a nuclear Triad of ICBMs, SLBMs, and dual-capable heavy bombers under New START, in order to preserve strategic stability and hedge against any unexpected technical problems or operational vulnerabilities in one leg of the Triad. The fiscal year 2011 budget request includes funding for each leg of the triad.
- All U.S. ICBMs should be “deMIRVed” to a single warhead each, in order to reinforce strategic stability.
- An ability to “upload” non-deployed nuclear weapons on delivery vehicles should be retained as a hedge against technical or geopolitical surprise. Preference will be given to upload capacity for bombers and strategic submarines.

The Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and General Chilton supported New START reductions in deployed warheads, and limits on deployed as well as non-deployed strategic delivery vehicles (SDVs). New START limits were validated by rigorous analysis in the NPR.

The Administration intends to additional details for strategic forces under New START in the report required by Sec. 1251 of the 2010 National Defense Authorization Act. This report will

include a ten-year estimate of budgetary requirements for sustaining delivery platforms, the nuclear weapons stockpile, and the nuclear weapons complex.

### **Non-Strategic Nuclear Weapons**

The NPR concluded that as long as nuclear weapons exist, the United States should retain the capability to “extend” nuclear deterrence to allies and security partners. Its recommendations:

- Retain the capability to forward-deploy U.S. nuclear weapons on tactical fighter-bombers and dual-capable heavy bombers.
- Proceed with full scope life extension study and follow-on activities for the B-61 bomb to ensure first production begins in fiscal year 2017.
- Retire the nuclear sea-launched cruise missile (TLAM-N), as a redundant capability.
- Continue and expand consultations with allies and partners to address how to ensure the credibility and effectiveness of the U.S. extended deterrent.
- Decisions about the future of NATO nuclear weapons should be made through NATO processes, and not unilateral decisions.

### **Non-Nuclear Long-Range Strike Capabilities**

The Administration is currently examining the appropriate mix of non-nuclear long-range strike capabilities over the long-term. Today, these capabilities include conventional-only and dual-capable heavy bombers, and both sea-launched and air-launched conventional cruise missiles. Of these systems, only dual-capable bombers are accountable under New START. NPR analysis concluded the U.S. should develop non-nuclear prompt global strike capabilities, which are allowed under the New START Treaty – and should focus such capabilities on regional threats while not undermining strategic stability with Russia or China.

## **Toward a Sustainable Long-Term Approach**

A key premise of the 2010 NPR was that an effective national strategy for reducing nuclear dangers and sustaining the U.S. nuclear deterrent are long-term challenges that will require support from a long succession of U.S. Administrations and Congresses. Laying the groundwork for a sustainable bipartisan consensus is a central purpose of this NPR.

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