

# ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

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## Opening Statement of Chairman Rogers

WASHINGTON— The House Armed Services Subcommittee on Strategic Forces held a hearing today on the [The U.S. Nuclear Deterrent: What Are the Requirements for A Strong Deterrent In an Era of Defense Sequester?](#) Chairman Michael Rogers (AL) made the following opening statement as prepared for delivery:

*Witness testimony can be found on the [Committee Document Repository website](#) as well as linked below. All witness testimony is as prepared for, and embargoed until delivery.*

"This nation has some key decisions ahead of it. We find ourselves in the position of having to recapitalize our entire deterrent at exactly the time that every other nation is growing or modernizing its nuclear forces, but, we have absorbed reductions in our defense budget of \$487 billion and we're now 18 days into President Obama's defense sequester that will take another half a trillion dollars out of our defense budget over the next decade. If we can't fix this problem, we will do what Secretary Panetta described as cuts that would 'decimate our defense. It would cripple us in terms of our ability to protect this country.'

"I am encouraged that, at least in the short term, DOD understands the importance of the nuclear deterrent and will act to protect it and the central role it plays in the nation's security. For example, Deputy Secretary Carter, when testifying before the full committee two weeks ago, said that:

'nuclear deterrence is pretty important. So it's the last thing that you want to do serious damage to. So I would imagine that the Department of Energy, and the leadership there, and certainly we in the Department of Defense, will try to protect our nuclear capabilities to the maximum extent possible.'

"But, I worry that in the long-term, this situation will allow the President to further walk back on his commitments to modernize and maintain the deterrent. And these are his commitments he made during the New START treaty. They are his section 1251 plan he promised to the Senate; this is his Nuclear Posture Review. As I mentioned at the outset of

my remarks, the United States is in the position of having to modernize and replace its entire nuclear triad in the very near future.

"For example, our sea-based deterrent leg was first commissioned in 1981; our land-based deterrent has been deployed and on-alert since 1970; and, the mainstay of our airborne deterrent has been performing the strategic deterrent mission since 1955.

"Our nuclear deterrent is the most cost-effective and proven means of promoting peace for the American people and their allies, but we have not been investing in it in a responsible way. Our real and potential adversaries and competitors understand this. Russia, for instance, has tested three new ICBMs since the New START treaty entered into force two years ago.

"The People's Republic of China is preparing to put to sea a ballistic missile submarine and sea-launched ballistic missile and it appears to be readying three new long-range ballistic missiles capable of attacking the United States. If President Obama is right, and there is peace and security in a world without nuclear weapons, it seems every other country with nuclear weapons—or, like Iran, the aspiration to develop them—has missed the memo.

"I will add to the record a document derived from open sources that lists summaries of just a few open source articles of what other nuclear weapons states are undertaking today.

"I note that Russia's Vladimir Putin tells his people that, '[n]uclear weapons remain the main guarantee of Russia's sovereignty and its territorial integrity, it plays a key role in maintaining global and regional stability and balance'. President Obama, however, said at the State of the Union address last week that, 'we will engage Russia to seek further reductions in our nuclear arsenals...because our ability to influence others depends on our willingness to lead.' Are they both right?

"I think General Welch, former Strategic Air Command Commander and former Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force, had it right when he said that, 'The only basis for the idea that drastically reducing the number of nukes we have would magically make us safer and help eliminate other nuclear dangers is hope. But hope is not a plan, and hope is not a basis for security. Hope does not defend us. I would ask who would be willing to rely on hope for the safety and security of their family?...Leading the world to zero nuclear weapons is, at best, a fairy tale.'

"There is a rising consensus from General Scowcroft, Secretaries Perry, Kissinger, Shultz and Senator Nunn that the one-time frenzy of a world without nuclear weapons is little more than a fantasy, and a dangerous one. For example, the so-called Gang of 4's recent Wall Street Journal op-ed piece is a dramatic shift from the original 2007 piece. I think you'll find that the requirements in the May 2013 piece are precisely those Republican Senators and House Members would insist upon:

Washington should carefully examine going below New Start levels of warheads and launchers, including the possibility of coordinated mutual actions. Such a course has the

following prerequisites: a) strict reciprocity; b) demonstrable verification; and c) providing adequate and stable funding for the long-term investments required to maintain high confidence in our nuclear arsenal.

"Indeed, Secretary Kissinger and General Scowcroft warned in April 2012 that: "[s]trategic stability is not inherent with low numbers of weapons; indeed, excessively low numbers could lead to a situation in which surprise attacks are conceivable."

"This shift by the distinguished elder statesmen is welcome. It may not make the Washington, DC arms control community happy, because these requirements shut the door on the idea of evading the treaty clause or endorsing the 'Global Zero' vision, but they are smart policy.

"We are at a crisis point where we must focus on the imminent threats of North Korea and Iran.

So, I look forward to examining these matters today. They are important to the nation's security and they are matters we will tackle in our mark-up of the FY14 National Defense Authorization Act."

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