

STATEMENT OF
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HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES
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Chairman Cooper, Ranking Member Turner, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, I am honored to join you today and pleased to offer my perspective on near-peer advancements in space and nuclear weapons. These are my personal views and do not represent the official policy or position of United States Strategic Command, the Department of Defense, or the United States Government. To put my bottom line up front:

- China and Russia continue to invest in decades-long military modernization programs that are delivering highly capable weapon systems that can threaten the U.S. homeland and our regional allies and territories and disrupt our ability to project power and conduct military campaigns.
- Nuclear and space modernization efforts have received particular attention in both countries, as has the development of non-kinetic (i.e., cyberspace) capabilities. Some programs are near completion.
- China and Russia have backed their impressive programmatic progress with updated strategies and doctrine, new organizations, and aggressive and realistic training. Some of the results have been ably demonstrated in contingencies (e.g., the Russian invasion into Ukraine; Russian and Chinese cyber activities; etc.).
- The United States can no longer defer or delay our own modernization efforts. To preserve deterrence and underwrite the security of the United States and our allies and partners, we must update our nuclear triad and improve the resilience and performance of the nuclear command, control, and communications (NC3) system; modernize our conventional kinetic and non-kinetic capabilities; deploy effective surveillance and limited missile defense systems; embrace multi-domain operational concepts; and ensure our forces continue to be staffed and led by highly qualified people.

Today's global security situation is not a repeat of the Cold War. As I testified while still in uniform, today's national security landscape is highly complex and uncertain. Yesterday's regional battlefield is becoming today's global battle-space as near-peer and other adversaries acquire technologies and exploit the interconnected nature of our world to quickly transit

political, geographic, and physical domain boundaries. The potential threats to our security and the security of our allies are diverse, can arrive at our doorsteps rapidly, and can range from small arms in the hands of terrorists to nuclear weapons in the hands of hostile state leaders. The possible intersection of violent extremism and weapons of mass destruction remains a significant concern that requires constant vigilance. State and non-state actors alike can stress our intelligence capabilities and contingency plans by employing highly adaptive, hybrid combinations of strategies, tactics, and capabilities and by using the speed of information to mask their activities behind a veil of deception and ambiguity. New capabilities like cyber weapons and unmanned vehicles are emerging and familiar weapons like ballistic missiles and advanced conventional capabilities are more available, affordable, and lethal. Adversaries are also threatening the U.S. in and through the strategically important and militarily critical areas of space and cyberspace.

At the near-peer level, open source reporting continues to validate what I saw on active duty. While China and Russia are pursuing different global grand strategies (China to replace the U.S. as the world's most important and dominant superpower; Russia to preserve a position of relevance and influence on the global stage), military modernization is serving a similar purpose in both places. While different in emphasis, Chinese and Russian leaders see their modernization efforts (and their supporting disinformation campaigns) as a means to negate the significant military advantages we have demonstrated for the last two decades—and to convince our regional allies that we cannot or will not come to their aid.

Chinese and Russian modernization programs are expansive and formidable. Both countries are upgrading their significant long-range conventional strike capabilities and exercise them realistically and routinely; both are active in cyberspace; both are deploying anti-satellite weapons and other means to threaten our national security space assets; both are improving their defensive and anti-access capabilities; and both can quickly inflict enormous casualties and damage on the U.S. and our allies with nuclear forces that they are modernizing. While either Russia or, to a lesser extent China, can unleash large-scale nuclear attacks against the U.S. and our allies, both have also developed sophisticated employment doctrines that include the potential use (perhaps first use) of nuclear weapons in regional conflict situations. While

China still professes a “no first use” policy, some interpret Chinese nuclear ambitions (and their emerging capabilities) to represent a pathway to a first-strike capability. Russia still retains the ability to attack the U.S. with a massive nuclear strike with little to no warning and has deployed low-yield weapons for regional contingencies. Russia is also pursuing new types of nuclear weapon delivery platforms, some of which are not covered under the existing New START Treaty extension.

Another significant change has occurred since the end of the Cold War. Nuclear weapons no longer pose the sole credible near-peer strategic threat to the U.S. and our allies. While a large-scale nuclear attack of any kind remains the worst-case scenario, China and Russia see the ability to threaten high-value targets in the U.S. and allied homelands and territories with conventional, cyber, and the limited use of nuclear weapons as a strategic game changer. For the first time since the beginning of the nuclear age China and Russia are developing the capabilities to realistically attack important facilities and critical infrastructure in the U.S. and allied homelands and territories with long-range conventional (including hypersonic) weapons without having to cross the nuclear threshold. They can also attack targets with cyber weapons without having to cross the kinetic threshold; a threat that both countries have demonstrated in real-world operations against industry and infrastructure around the world. These modern capabilities pose a credible threat to escalate a conflict to the strategic level without initially having to resort to nuclear weapons; thereby raising the risks and costs of U.S. intervention to unacceptable levels and enabling more assertive foreign policies and aggressive actions.

China and Russia are also reorganizing their military establishments for 21st Century warfare. For example, Russia has combined its air, space, and air defense forces into the Russian Aerospace Forces command and has reorganized its tactical units to synchronize activities across domains. Similarly, China established the Strategic Support Force to integrate space, cyberspace, and related activities into military operations. Both China and Russia have carefully observed U.S. military operations over the last 20 years and have concluded that a new type of warfare has emerged. These new organizations reflect both countries’ views of the strategic importance of what the U.S. would call multi-domain operations.

While I am concerned about the commitment and progress China and Russia are demonstrating in their nuclear modernization programs, I am especially concerned about their activities in space and cyberspace. Of course, given the extreme threat posed by nuclear weapons, the U.S. cannot permit such extensive modernization to go unchallenged. We must ensure a strong nuclear deterrent remains the bedrock of our security and the security of our allies and partners. But nuclear modernization, while troubling, is comparatively straightforward to understand and address. Space and cyberspace are different in that operations in both domains are out of sight and the tangible evidence of modernization is difficult to discern. In particular, I am concerned about the on-orbit activities the U.S. has reportedly observed from both China and Russia. As reported in open press, objects from both countries have approached some of our important satellites to perform what look like intelligence gathering and rehearsals to attack them in some way. I am equally concerned about the threat through cyberspace and other electronic means to our satellite networks and the data that flows through them. These and other asymmetric space- and cyberspace-related threats are being developed within aggressive national space and electronic warfare programs supported by determined investment efforts

I cannot recall a time during my professional career when potential threats to our security were more varied or pronounced than they are today. The 21st Century has brought complex problems and new dynamics that challenge us in different ways than we experienced in the 20th Century. While nuclear weapons remain foundational to our security strategy and those of our allies, 21st Century deterrence and extended deterrence policy and doctrine must now account for a wide variety of potential adversaries with differing motivations and objectives and posing different strategic threats. The U.S. is no longer either deterring a single potential nuclear adversary or assuring a single alliance or ally and cannot rely on a “one size fits all” approach to deterrence or investment. The new asymmetric strategies and capabilities presented by our adversaries, especially China and Russia, demand a contemporary approach. Nuclear weapons remain foundational to the security of the U.S. and our allies, but today’s deterrence strategies and plans must integrate all elements of military and national power together to maintain credibility and be effectively used if conflict ever erupts. It is increasingly

clear to me that we must carefully match our strategies and plans to individual actors and deploy a range of conventional and nuclear capabilities that can either deter (if possible) or defeat them in multiple scenarios.

The U.S. has embarked on a strategic modernization program of our own, but the nation has reached a critical decision point with many competing priorities. I believe we have to stay the course to maintain our global position relative to these near-peer nations. We are out of time and cannot afford to defer or delay. In my view, the nation should continue on the important pathway that has had bi-partisan support for the last decade or more. These priority efforts continue to stand out:

- Modernize the nuclear triad (including ICBMs), and the critical nuclear C3 system. The nuclear triad remains the foundation of our strategic deterrent and the bedrock of our national security. Replacement bomber and ballistic missile submarine programs are underway, and it is of the highest importance to modernize the ICBM force without further delay. ICBMs have high deterrent value and provide an important hedge capability against technical failure, advances in adversary anti-submarine capabilities, or geopolitical change.
- Modernize the highly specialized industrial complex that sustains the weapons stockpile and support a weapons strategy that preserves the ability to extend the life of current weapons as well as produce and test new weapons if ever needed. The U.S. must have a strong nuclear industrial complex to preserve the safety, security, and effectiveness of our nuclear weapons and stockpile.
- Invest in space capabilities. Congress took a bold and historic step by creating the United States Space Force. It is important to look for opportunities to grow that military service sensibly and to support improvements in the resilience of our space architectures along with capabilities to deny adversary use of that medium if necessary.
- Invest in cyberspace capabilities. Improvements must occur across the whole of the government, nation, and alliances.

Mr. Chairman and subcommittee members, for many reasons this is a critical time for our national security. Thank you for your continued focus on these important strategic issues and for inviting me to share my personal views. I am looking forward to your questions.