

STATEMENT OF DR. MICHAEL HOROWITZ
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, FORCE DEVELOPMENT AND
EMERGING CAPABILITIES

OSD POLICY / STRATEGY, PLANS, & CAPABILITIES

BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMS SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES

“Hypersonic Weapons in the Context of the National Defense Strategy”

12 MARCH 2024

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Lamborn, Ranking Member Moulton, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I'm honored to be here.

Today, I want to speak to the Department's policy regarding hypersonic weapons, including both how they contribute to the Department's range of offensive capabilities and how the Department is approaching defense against adversary hypersonic systems. I will also speak to how they align with Department of Defense objectives under the *2022 National Defense Strategy* (NDS).

THE NATIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY AND THE THREAT ENVIRONMENT

The 2022 NDS outlines four core priorities and serves as our north star:

- Defending the Homeland, paced to the growing multi-domain threat posed by the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC);
- Deterring strategic attacks against the United States, our allies, and our partners;
- Deterring aggression, while being prepared to prevail in conflict when necessary; and,
- Building a resilient Joint Force and defense ecosystem.

The central premise of the NDS is the urgent need for the Department to sustain and strengthen integrated deterrence. The NDS also speaks to the threat environment we face, including those posed by adversaries—especially the PRC as the pacing challenge and Russia as an acute threat. In the past year, we have seen these threats continue to evolve in the hypersonics arena. The PRC is fielding hypersonic weapons capable of ranging across the Western Pacific in the thousands, with multi-mode seekers enabling the targeting of both mobile and fixed targets. Russia continues to learn from its use of offensive hypersonic missiles in its war of aggression against Ukraine, and the DPRK continues to develop and flight test what it claims are hypersonic capabilities.

The Department of Defense's efforts to mature, develop, and field hypersonic technologies—both conventionally-armed offensive capabilities and systems for defense against adversary hypersonics—contribute to all four of the NDS objectives, which are key to support vital U.S. national interests in the evolving threat environment, to contribute to a stable and open international system, and to maintain and strengthen our global defense commitments to U.S. allies and international partners. The Missile Defense Review, which is integrally linked to the NDS, further specifies that the U.S. will continue to pursue defenses for U.S. forces, our allies, and partners against all regional missile threats – including hypersonic missile threats – from any source.

We see conventionally-armed offensive hypersonics as a logical and necessary addition to the mix of capabilities that the Joint Force employs to deter and defend against attacks on our forces, allies, and partners, and if necessary, prevail in future conflicts. Defense against hypersonics requires a credible domain awareness capability for the United States homeland and a robust

regional missile defense posture for other strategic locations such as Guam, which is unambiguously part of the United States.

Advancing both offensive and defensive hypersonic technologies directly contribute to the three pillars of the 2022 NDS: Integrated Deterrence; Campaigning; and Building Enduring Advantages.

HYPERSONICS COMPLEMENT EXISTING CAPABILITIES

In concert with select allies, DoD is pursuing multiple hypersonic-based capabilities to contribute toward the diverse mix of warfighting capabilities the Department requires to counter and address the current threat landscape, to strengthen deterrence, and prevent and—if necessary—prevail in potential future conflicts.

Looking first to offensive hypersonic capabilities, the Department continues to focus on developing conventionally armed systems that can contribute to long-range strike within a designated theater area of responsibility. Hypersonic weapon systems are a key component in the mix of capabilities that the Joint Force needs to deter and, if necessary, to defeat aggression. Development and deployment of these technologies and systems provide additional cutting-edge capabilities and needed response options to our armed forces, working in concert with our broader array of capabilities.

From a policy perspective, U.S. development of offensive hypersonic systems supports integrated deterrence against the priority challenges identified in the National Defense Strategy. The Department's offensive hypersonic weapon development is driven by the need to provide a full range of options to senior decision-makers, especially in a battlefield environment in which an adversary has deployed high-end defensive and anti-access/area-denial systems that may challenge the effectiveness of some U.S. weapons.

It is also critical for the United States to develop counter-missile capabilities to defend against hypersonic threats. The Department is continuing its effort to develop active and passive defenses against regional hypersonic missile threats, and to pursue a persistent and resilient terrestrial and space-based sensor network to characterize and track all hypersonic threats, improve attribution, and enable engagement.

More broadly, however, the Department is also making substantial investments in a range of conventionally-armed offensive capabilities, from long-range strike to undersea to autonomous systems. This wide array of systems with varying capabilities are critical to enhance deterrence by fielding credible capabilities to deny the adversary benefits of their advancements. Hypersonics are an important element in this mix of capabilities, and for some mission sets, hypersonics will play a key role.

THE DEPARTMENT IS COMMITTED TO INVESTING IN HYPERSONICS

To help meet the broad challenges outlined by the NDS—and to ensure the right mix of capabilities for the Joint Force—Secretary Austin and Deputy Secretary Hicks have pushed the Department to invest in innovation to ensure that U.S. military capabilities go beyond cutting edge. Hypersonic technologies are one of the 14 Critical Technology Areas, or CTAs, established by Under Secretary of Defense for Research & Engineering, the Honorable Heidi Shyu.

Across these areas, DoD is making significant investments to facilitate rapid development and testing of technologies, enable affordable production at scale, and accelerate the delivery of these capabilities to the warfighter. We are also continuing to invest to develop the critical integrated air and missile defense capabilities required to defend against adversary hypersonic systems.

Foremost among these efforts is the Glide Phase Interceptor (GPI), a sea-based capability designed to engage offensive threats in the lengthy glide phase portion of a hypersonic flight trajectory. As announced by President Biden and Prime Minister Kishida at the Camp David summit in August 2023, the United States plans to co-develop GPI with Japan, which will allocate \$1 billion of its own funding for the project.

Ultimately, the Department is focused on developing and deploying hypersonic systems, and defending against them, in a way that maximizes our ability to meet the objectives of the National Defense Strategy and Missile Defense Review.

I am pleased to be here today with my counterparts from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, as well as from the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, and the Defense Intelligence Agency. Together, we look forward to discussing in greater detail the specific hypersonic programmatic efforts underway in the Department.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, offensive and defensive hypersonic technologies directly contribute to the three pillars of the 2022 NDS: Integrated Deterrence; Campaigning; and Building Enduring Advantages.

DoD is focused on developing and fielding the right mix of the right capabilities to ensure we can generate the effects we need to deter, and if needed, prevail in any conflict, with a focus on the PRC pacing challenge and the acute threat from Russia. Hypersonics represent a key element in this mix of capabilities.

Delivering those capabilities, in concert with a network of allies and partner and in parallel with other advanced technologies and new operating concepts, will ensure the U.S. Department of Defense maintains the ability to deter potential adversaries and to defeat aggression, if necessary.

Thank you.