

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE

STATEMENT OF

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19TH CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BUDGET HEARING

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Chairman Visclosky, Ranking Member Calvert, distinguished members of this committee, it is an honor to join Acting Secretary Shanahan and the Honorable David Norquist in testifying before you today. It remains my distinct privilege to represent the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines of the United States Armed Forces.

Today, I can assure the committee that the United States military can defend the Homeland, meet our Alliance commitments, deter nuclear attack from any state actor, and effectively respond should deterrence fail. We have a competitive advantage against any adversary across all domains—air, sea, land, space, and cyber—and we can project power to advance the interests of the United States anywhere around the globe.

But that competitive advantage has eroded. This is the result of seventeen years of continuous combat against transregional violent extremism and the damaging effects of funding instability. China and Russia have capitalized on our distraction and our constraints. They have invested in capabilities specifically designed to challenge our traditional sources of strength and have sought to undermine the rules-based international order that brought prosperity and relative peace for the last seven decades.

With your help, starting in 2017, we arrested the erosion of our competitive advantage. Appropriations in fiscal years 2017-2019 allowed us to restore readiness and invest in new capabilities while meeting our ongoing commitments across the globe. However, we cannot undo decades of degradation in just a few years. This year's budget allows us to continue to restore our competitive advantage by enhancing our readiness and lethality.

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

Today's strategic environment is extraordinarily complex and volatile. The National Defense Strategy (NDS) characterizes and prioritizes our strategic challenges with a “2+3” framework that names China and Russia as the primary challenges with which we must contend, along with North Korea, Iran, and violent extremism. This framework provides a benchmark against which we can measure our capabilities. It is not intended to be predictive of future crises or armed conflicts; rather, it is an important tool for planning, managing risk, and developing capabilities. Our assumption is that if we build a Joint Force with the capabilities and capacities to meet these

challenges, either individually or in some combination, we will be well-positioned to respond to whatever threats the future holds.

China. China has paired its rapid economic growth with substantial military investment as it strives for regional hegemony and global influence. By investing heavily in the space and cyber domains while expanding air and maritime capacity and militarizing disputed land formations, they are developing the ability to deny us access to the East and South China Seas. The intended effect is to weaken our alliance structure in the Pacific and allow Beijing to rewrite the norms, standards, and laws in the region. They are also advancing their interests globally through the One Belt One Road Initiative, creating exploitative economic relationships across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. These relationships can be leveraged to reduce our influence and the access we need to project military power.

Russia. Similarly, Russia has invested in asymmetrical capabilities where they perceive they have a competitive advantage. They are using information, cyber, and unconventional operations combined with economic and political influence to advance their interests while seeking to undermine the credibility of NATO. We have seen examples of their revanchist behavior in the invasion of Georgia and Crimea, their ongoing activity in the Donbas, and the recent seizure of Ukrainian vessels near the Sea of Azov. We also saw their efforts to undermine democracy in 2016, both in Europe and the United States.

North Korea. While we remain hopeful for a peaceful denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, after two summits between President Trump and Kim Jong-Un, it is clear that we must remain ready for multiple contingencies. We are still dealing with a country that has nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles that threaten our Allies in the region and our Homeland. Regardless of the expressed intent of the North Korean leader, that capability exists and we must retain the force posture to deter and defend against the threat.

Iran. Iran continues to project malign influence and present challenges with missile, cyber, proxy, and maritime capabilities. We also continue to monitor Iran's nuclear capability. The regime aims to establish itself as the dominant regional power; their military development is designed to restrict our access to their sphere of influence while their activities threaten freedom of navigation along important commercial routes, destabilize the government of Iraq, exacerbate civil wars in Yemen and Syria, and support proxies inside of Lebanon and Syria.

Violent Extremist Organizations. While we have made significant progress against ISIS, Al Qaeda, and affiliated groups, the threats to the United States and our Allies and partners remain. Violent extremism is a global, generational, society-level problem of which military operations can only manage the symptoms. In the meantime, we have implemented a fiscally, politically, and militarily sustainable counterterrorism campaign.

Our security, our prosperity, and the international system that makes them possible are threatened today by actors ranging from advanced and ascending militaries backed by nuclear arsenals to lone fighters inspired by radical ideologies. The Joint Force must respond by balancing the capabilities we need for today's operations with the depth, flexibility, and advanced technologies required to respond to the challenges of the future. If approved, the President's Budget 2020 (PB20) request will enable the Department to adapt the force we have today, while we design the force needed for tomorrow's challenges.

THE FORCE WE NEED TODAY

The Joint Military Net Assessment—a rigorous tool we use to evaluate the Joint Force's ability to meet its strategic objectives—identified challenges across all domains in the context of our near-peer competitors. Other assessments and strategic reviews have also highlighted the sustained investment we need to improve readiness, capabilities, and capacities in the Joint Force. The FY20 budget provides funding for current operations and, building on budgets of recent years, continues to build readiness and improve lethality by modernizing existing capabilities and expanding capacity.

Readiness.

We have realized readiness improvements through fundamental changes in our global force management processes. As directed in the NDS—and in support of its 2+3 strategy—we have implemented Dynamic Force Employment (DFE). This is a top-down process of prioritizing and allocating resources against our strategic priorities with bottom-up refinement from the Geographic Combatant Commanders.

DFE allows us to position resources globally to mitigate strategic risk and be operationally unpredictable while remaining strategically predictable. This improves our ability to respond to

unforeseen crises—as well as opportunities—and provide strategic flexibility for senior decision makers while maintaining readiness across the Joint Force.

Within this new framework for global force management, your men and women in uniform are operating across the globe every day to assure Allies and partners, deter adversaries, and assist local forces in combatting violent extremism at its sources. PB20 provides them the resources they need to accomplish their missions and return home safely.

Current Operations.

China. U.S. forces conduct freedom of navigation operations globally to challenge excessive maritime claims—including those made by China—and demonstrate our determination to operate wherever international law allows. In the South China Sea and elsewhere in the region, we also fly bomber missions, demonstrating a resilient global strike capability that checks Chinese ambition and assures our regional Allies and partners. Throughout the Pacific, our troops exercise and engage with partners to signal our commitment and counterbalance China’s challenges to the rules-based order.

Russia. In Europe, the European Defense Initiative and associated posture adjustments and combined exercise programs represent the largest reinforcement of NATO’s collective defense posture—and the largest demonstration of its interoperability—since the Cold War. U.S. personnel also contribute to NATO’s integrated ballistic missile air defense in Europe. In both the Atlantic and Pacific, we conduct sustained air and sea operations to monitor Russian activities and deter any aggression.

North Korea. U.S. troops on the Korean Peninsula are postured and trained to deter North Korean aggression, provocation, and coercion. Their current priority is supporting the State Department-led maximum pressure campaign to achieve the full, final, and verifiable denuclearization of the Peninsula. In concert with like-minded nations, we have expanded our sea and air operations to deter and disrupt illicit ship-to-ship transfers of refined petroleum and other materials restricted by UN Security Council Resolutions.

Iran. U.S. forces conduct freedom of navigation operations in the Strait of Hormuz. We continue our commitment to the stability of the government of Iraq, and our efforts to build the capacity of

our regional partners. In these and other ways, the Joint Force complements U.S. diplomatic and economic efforts to counter Iranian malign influence in the Middle East.

VEOs. The United States has assembled a global coalition to counter violent extremist organizations—leveraging a relatively small footprint of U.S. forces to enable local partners throughout the world. The immediate priority is achieving the enduring defeat of ISIS in Iraq and Syria through Operation INHERENT RESOLVE. We are also working by, with, and through partners in every region to cut the “connective tissue” of foreign fighters, resources, and the ideological narrative that enable violent extremists to operate transregionally.

Iraq and Syria. U.S. troops remain engaged in the D-ISIS campaign. As the campaign transitions from clearing ISIS-held territory to a focus on stabilizing the region, activities such as training local security forces, enabling local governance, and conducting counterterrorism operations will help prevent a power vacuum in Northeast Syria and a resurgence of ISIS. We are working with our Coalition partners to ensure we meet Turkish security concerns as well as protect those that fought with us against ISIS.

Afghanistan. Along with our Allies and coalition partners, we are setting the military conditions to fully support an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned peace process. Coalition forces train, advise, and assist Afghanistan National Security Forces, as well as provide critical aviation support, intelligence, and other capabilities to make them a more effective fighting force.

In addition to readiness gains from improved force management, DoD budgets in recent years helped arrest the decline of unit readiness across the Joint Force. In FY18 and FY19, we increased the quality and quantity of unit training, improved personnel deployment availability, increased stocks of key munitions, streamlined aviation depot processes, and added capacity to address shortfalls in maintenance and sustainment functions. PB20 enables us to continue on this path, but a decade of neglect will require years to correct. A full restoration of our readiness will require sustained, sufficient, and predictable funding into the future.

A MODERN AND MORE LETHAL FORCE FOR TOMORROW

The NDS calls for a more lethal force that expands the competitive space to meet critical challenges and key operational problems. The PB20 request invests in a more lethal force by funding efforts to modernize current capabilities and expand warfighting capacity.

A primary modernization priority is our aging nuclear enterprise. A large-scale nuclear attack poses an existential threat to the United States. U.S. nuclear forces are the indispensable means of addressing this threat, making nuclear deterrence the highest priority mission of the Joint Force. The 2018 Nuclear Posture Review established the elements of the nuclear modernization program—a program that is necessary, prudent, and affordable given the nature and evolution of the threats we face. PB20 fully funds that program.

PB20 also enhances joint warfighting capacity by fielding the capabilities we need to project power. In the air, continued procurement of 5th generation fighter aircraft allows us greater flexibility to respond globally today and in the future. At sea, recapitalizing the naval fleet with modern and lethal platforms sustains undersea, surface, naval aviation, and fleet logistic advantages while increasing investments in unmanned, autonomous maritime capabilities. And on the ground, enhancement of long-range precision fires, development of the next generation combat vehicle, and investments in close combat systems ensure our Soldiers and Marines' overmatch on the battlefield.

Space continues to be a priority area for modernization and innovation. In response to the evolution of threats to U.S. assets in space, we will establish the U.S. Space Force Headquarters, U.S. Space Command, and Space Development Agency. To deter our adversaries, we are pursuing organizational constructs, systems, and capabilities that will produce a more lethal, resilient, and agile Joint Force. Additionally, this budget request includes substantial investments in Missile Warning, launch platforms, Space Situational Awareness, Space Control, and enhancements to Position, Navigation, and Timing.

In the cyber domain, PB20 allows the Joint Force to further develop and employ the necessary tools to defend DoD infrastructure, compete below the level of armed conflict, and operate as part of broader joint operations. This budget request increases our investments in required

capabilities to operate effectively in cyberspace and maintain our competitive advantage against near-peer adversaries.

While improving lethality in the near term, we will continue to develop and design a future Joint Force that can fight and win against any adversary on any battlefield of tomorrow. A joint concept-driven, threat-informed approach to capability development—leveraging wargames, exercises, and experimentation—allows us to more deliberately evaluate needs of the current force and prioritize future requirements. Our refined approach to Force Development and Design allows senior leaders to pair emerging technologies with optimal organizational constructs and innovative operating concepts to plan and execute joint operations now and in the future.

No investment is more important to the effectiveness of our future force than the development and education of our future leaders. The nation's ability to compete, deter, and win requires leaders who have the vision, intellect, and critical thinking skills to employ, develop, and design the future Joint Force. With a special emphasis on revitalization of the War Colleges, our leader development program is designed to fully support the development of these strategic thinkers and future senior leaders of the U.S. Armed Forces.

CONCLUSION

This is my fourth and final appearance before this committee in support of the Department's annual budget request. I thank you for the great honor of representing your Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines.

More importantly, I would like to thank the committee for all you have done to support our troops, as well as their families. In visits to the Joint Force at bases and posts, stateside and around the world, I continue to be amazed by their spirit and dedication to the mission. Through the support of the Congress and the people you represent, our service members in uniform will prevail in our current conflicts and be prepared to confront the threats the United States will surely face in the future.

Together, we have honored our solemn obligation to never send our sons and daughters into a fair fight. With your continued support for sustained, sufficient, and predictable funding, we never will.