

STATEMENT OF
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20TH CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
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Introduction

After 43 years in uniformed service, 4 years as Chief of Staff of the Army, and 3.5 years as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, this will be my last set of posture hearings. I want to thank the Congress up front for your continued support to our military, not only this year but every year for the last 4 decades. We would not have a military without the generous support of the American people and their elected representatives. Thank you for what you have done and, yet again, I ask that you support this year's request with an on-time budget approval.

I am honored to represent the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Guardians, and their families of the United States Joint Force. They are the most lethal and capable military in the world. Our troops are the best led, best equipped, and best trained force anywhere because of your support. Side by side with our allies and partners, American Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Guardians are standing watch in 158 countries and conducting operations every day of the year to keep Americans safe.

The United States military is a key component of our national power. In concert with our diplomatic corps, economic organizations, and democratic institutions, we support efforts to sustain a stable and open international system. This hard and soft power provides a range of options to this legislative body and the Commander-in-Chief. Our strength deters adversaries and preserves peace. Although, if deterrence fails, the United States military is prepared to fight and win against those who attack the United States or our vital interests.

The Joint Force appreciates the work that our elected representatives do to ensure that we have the resources needed to train, equip, and man the force in order to be ready. The increased level of military funding beyond last fiscal year will ensure we continue future modernization while simultaneously meeting the national security readiness requirements of today.

The Joint Force will deliver modernization of our armed forces and security to the people of the United States at the FY 2024 budget request of \$842 billion. The people of the United States, through this body, have committed significant funding and we will work diligently to ensure it is spent prudently in the best interest of this Nation. This budget will enable the investments and transformations necessary to build the Joint Force of 2030 and beyond.

In alignment with the National Defense Strategy (NDS) and National Military Strategy (NMS), this budget delivers a ready, agile, and capable Joint Force that will defend the Nation, while taking care of our people, and working with our partners and allies. There are direct linkages from the NDS and NMS to the Joint Warfighting Concept (JWC) which describes how we will employ and succeed as a Joint Force. The JWC is threat informed and fully integrated into our resourcing and requirements processes to build the force required for the future.

Stable, predictable, and timely budgets are critical for this Nation's defense. The passage of these budgets enables proper planning, prioritization, and programmatic investments necessary for continued progress. Continuing resolutions risk future modernization and impair our ability to meet our missions.

Preventing great power war through readiness and deterrence is very expensive but not as expensive as fighting a war and the only thing more expensive than fighting a war is losing a war. This budget is a significant step in the right direction to ensure that the United States military maintains the current readiness and develops the future modernization necessary to deter war and, if deterrence fails, to fight and win.

Strategic Environment

The People's Republic of China (PRC): War with the PRC is neither imminent nor inevitable, however the potential for armed conflict is growing. The PRC remains our #1 long-term geostrategic security challenge. Since the reforms of Deng Xiaoping in 1979, the world has witnessed the greatest geopolitical shift in economic power in over 100 years. In the wake of the PRC's economic growth has come rapidly increasing PRC military capability. Using economic and military hard power, the PRC's goal is to revise the global international order by midcentury, and it intends to be the regional hegemon in Asia within the next 10 years. Its intention is to exceed the United States' military capability within the Western Pacific in the next decade and to exceed the United States' overall military capability by 2049.

The PRC continues to take increasingly aggressive actions to reshape the Indo-Pacific region and revise the global order. It is making significant economic investments in its military to improve technology and modernize its military forces. The PRC continues to challenge the stability and security in the Pacific as well as across the globe. Through economic coercion, the PRC is expanding its global footprint and increasing its ability to project military power at range and scale. It is aggressively modernizing its military in order to protect its authoritarian interests and are prepared to use force if required. The PRC seeks to strengthen its hard power enabling the PRC to coerce others with militarily might. These PRC actions continue to move its nation down the path towards confrontation and conflict.

The PRC remains focused on revising the global international order by midcentury. In short, the PRC continues to develop significant nuclear, space, cyber, land, sea, and air capabilities. It is working every day to close the technology gap with the United States and our allies. We must maintain our military superiority over the PRC in all the domains of war if we are to preserve the great power peace of the last 80 years. The PRC represents a real and growing national security challenge. This is a matter of national urgency.

History is not deterministic and war with the PRC is not inevitable. While the PRC is clearly an increasingly capable strategic competitor, it is imperative that we keep our relationship in competition and not in conflict. By maintaining a strong military with overmatch against the PRC, we are postured to deter conflict with the PRC. Through integrated deterrence, we will raise perceived costs to the PRC and deter aggression. If deterrence fails, then we will end the conflict on terms favorable to the United States.

Russia: Over one year ago, Russia undertook an illegal and unprovoked war against Ukraine threatening peace and stability on the European continent—a peace that ensures global stability and an international order where all nations can prosper. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine is in complete contradiction to the basic rules that underline the United Nations Charter established at the end of World War II. Russia’s war is a brazen assault against the free people of Ukraine and threatens to destabilize all of Europe and beyond.

In response to this Russian war of choice, we are supporting Ukraine as it fights to protect its sovereignty and supporting our NATO allies with a United States force presence in every single nation on NATO’s eastern flank. Putin’s war of choice has caused untold human suffering and terrorized a free country and its people. Putin attempted to seize Kyiv, overthrow its government, and fracture the NATO alliance. NATO remains more unified than ever, and Ukraine remains free and independent.

The Ukrainian people have demonstrated immense bravery and resilience and inspired the world. The international community has come together to ensure that this unambiguous act of aggression by Russia does not go unanswered. This fight is not just in Ukraine’s interests, it is in the global interest to protect the system and rules that have prevented great power war since the conclusion of World War II.

With the backing of the United States Congress, the United States is determined to continue to support Ukraine with the means to defend themselves. The United States has committed to provide Ukraine 160 155mm Howitzers, over 1,000,000 155mm artillery rounds, 38 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS), a Patriot air defense battery, 8 National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile Systems (NASAMS), 31 Abrams tanks, and 109 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicles.

A broad mix of air defense systems protect the skies over Kyiv and the cities of Ukraine. Armor systems strengthen Ukrainian front lines enabling offensive and defense operations. Ukrainians employ long range fires to challenge Russian command and control and its ability to sustain Russian aggression. These systems will enable Ukraine to ensure that Russia does not achieve its strategic objectives. Russia failed in its initial war aims and continues to revise its strategic goals due to its sustained operational failures. Russia continues to pay extremely heavy costs on the battlefield.

Last year, in Poland, we established the first permanent United States installation on NATO’s eastern flank. The United States maintains significant numbers of combat capable forces in Europe to deter aggression and to stand shoulder to shoulder with our allies and partners.

Russia retains a large nuclear capability to threaten the United States, Europe, and the globe. Vladimir Putin and his regime continue to use irresponsible nuclear rhetoric and posturing. Russia has repeatedly demonstrated its capability and will to conduct complex malicious cyber activities targeting American digital infrastructure, both military and commercial.

Through private military companies, Russia continues to undermine other nations' sovereignty and create unstable security situations. Aside from its brutal war in Ukraine, Moscow's actions in Africa and the Middle East demonstrate its aggressiveness, resourcefulness, and opportunism. Russia is an immediate acute and very dangerous challenge to the United States' national security.

North Korea: Its continued weapons testing and development pose real threats to our homeland as well as allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific. North Korea's rhetoric is becoming increasingly aggressive as it is growing more confrontational and continues to enhance its ballistic missile capability and capacity. Pyongyang shows no signs of relenting in its focus on its Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) program at the expense of its citizens and the peace of the Korean Peninsula as well as the entire region. Readiness of United States military forces on the Korean Peninsula and our ability to rapidly respond to provocation ensure stability and prevent war.

Iran: Iran's support for and involvement in conflicts in the region and its neighbors threaten to push the Middle East into broader regional instability and chaos. Through its funding of terrorist activities and support to partner and proxy forces inside the borders of its neighbors, along with its ballistic missile programs, Iran seeks to revise the regional order and balance of power in its favor. Iran's proliferation of UAVs across the region and into Russia pose critical security challenges for the United States and our partners. Iran is taking actions to improve its capabilities to produce a nuclear weapon, should it make the decision to do so, while continuing to build its missile forces. From the time of a national decision, Iran could produce enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon in approximately 10-15 days and it would only take several months to produce an actual nuclear weapon. The United States remains committed, as a matter of policy, that Iran will not have a fielded nuclear weapon. The United States military has developed multiple options for our national leadership to consider, if or when Iran decides to develop a nuclear weapon.

Violent extremist organizations: Terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda, ISIS, Al-Shabaab, and others continue to export terror, destruction, and destabilization. Unless the root causes of instability that give rise to these types of groups are resolved, terrorists will continue to take root around the globe, threaten others with attacks, and undermine legitimate governments. The root causes can only be effectively addressed by including governments of the region and we can best influence outcomes with diplomatic, economic, information, stability, and counterterrorism efforts. Through coalition efforts to train, advise, and assist partners and allies as well as intelligence sharing, we will continue to ensure that terrorists do not possess the capacity and capability to exert their will. Our counterterrorism strategy is to work by, with, and through our regional allies and partners and to conduct direct action counterterrorism strikes when necessary to protect the United States or our interests.

Allies and partners: Our alliances and partnerships are key to maintaining the rules based international order and a stable and open international system promoting peace and prosperity. This budget allows us to build our partners' and allies' capabilities, foster interoperability, and strengthen relationships. Doing so allows us, our allies, and our partners to counter the coercion of our strategic competitors, oppose the malign activity of regional threats, and meet the varied security challenges posed by state and non-state actors. We are stronger when we operate closely with our allies and partners.

Readiness and Modernization

Right now, we are experiencing a fundamental change in the character of war. The character of war—how, where, and with what weapons and technologies wars are fought—is changing significantly. We must fully integrate developing technologies including precision long range fires, hypersonic weapons, quantum computing, artificial intelligence, robotics, and pervasive all-domain sensors.

The current rapidly changing technology will provide decisive advantage to the nations that can integrate and fuse the capabilities into military weaponry, doctrine, training, organization, and professional development. The future operating environment will be highly lethal and will be characterized by the ability to see and sense the environment like never before. The attributes of the future Joint Force will be characterized by stealth, resilience, speed, distributed, agile, adaptive, in a constant state of motion, and, most importantly, highly lethal. Our leaders and forces will operate independently in degraded communication environments with mission type orders in austere logistics.

Continued modernization is imperative for the Joint Force. Building the Joint Force required to implement our National Defense Strategy requires modernizing our capabilities, design, and employment. We must not allow ourselves to create the false trap that we can either modernize or focus only on today. We must do both. The United States has always had the advantage of time to conduct a long build up prior to the beginning of hostilities. Our fortunate geography with oceans on our east and west borders and friendly neighbors to our north and south have given us the strategic advantage of buffer zones to threats. With advances in technology and a growing global interconnectedness, we will no longer have the luxury of a long protected buildup prior to conflict. It is imperative that we have a modern advanced force in sufficient size and readiness to enable sustained deterrence and, if required, to be able to fight and win. We must make some fundamental changes to our Joint Force in order to leverage our military overmatch to deter conflict in a future operating environment.

Our strategic competitors are modernizing their militaries, weapons, and capability. We must continue to modernize ours; we have no choice. We must divest legacy systems to enable the modernization of our forces.

In the fall of 2019, the Secretary of Defense tasked the Joint Staff to develop the **Joint Warfighting Concept (JWC)** to address strategic conflict. This year, the Joint Staff published the third iteration of JWC and will integrate the ideas into new joint doctrine. Today, JWC is the unifying vision to guide future force design, force development, and force employment to ensure we have the right people, equipment, training, roles, and doctrine. It will continue to incorporate evolving threats to help us shape our strategic environment and future operations. JWC 3.0 contains an updated description of the overarching military challenges facing the Joint Force, a refined explanation of the military solution—expanded maneuver—and a detailed description of how the Joint Force will apply this solution. This version of the JWC includes greater fidelity on key warfighting concepts and more precision on the operational approaches that will enable the Joint Force to gain positions of advantage against peer adversaries.

Joint All Domain Command and Control (JADC2) is a warfighting capability to sense, make sense, and act at all levels and phases of war, across all domains, and with partners, to deliver information advantage at speed to our forces and decision makers.

We are revising our leader development **Joint Professional Military Education (JPME)** to support the JWC. We are modernizing our JPME curriculum to develop strategically minded joint warfighters, who think critically and can creatively apply military power. Our focus remains on instructing mission command, operational agility, and ethics to ensure our military leaders can effectively employ forces at all levels of warfare and respond to a dynamic battlefield. Additionally, we are increasing the amount of JPME devoted to the study of the changing character of war and Great Power Competition.

We are focused on building a more lethal Joint Force by ensuring that we continue to modernize our concepts, doctrine, training, and military education. We must continue to invest in capabilities that sustain our military overmatch, while strengthening alliances and attracting new partners. Investments in this budget ensure the Joint Force can execute all requirements leveled by our Nation. The investments made in this budget will ensure that we remain a capable and ready force while funding our priorities of **nuclear modernization, long range fires, hypersonic technology, artificial intelligence, robotics, shipbuilding, space, and cyber.**

Nuclear modernization: The **nuclear triad** is the foundation of our strategic deterrent. Our adversaries are improving their nuclear posture and potential nuclear threats continue to emerge. It remains critical that all three legs of the triad—bombers, intercontinental ballistic missiles, and submarines—remain a viable deterrent and allow us to hedge against geopolitical, technological, operational, and programmatic risks. Our legacy systems have been extended well beyond their original service lives and we must recapitalize our nuclear enterprise. Modernizing the nuclear triad will cost 3.7% of the Defense budget at its peak not including DOE/NNSA warhead modernization. Costs will be significant but relatively less burdensome on the overall Defense budget relative to previous recapitalization efforts. Modernization of our nuclear forces, weapons complexes, and requisite nuclear command, control, and communications (NC3) capabilities are a high priority.

Long range fires: The war in Ukraine highlights the strategic and devastating effect provided by long range fires. The Joint Force must have a long range strike capability without having to also maintain air superiority. Long range fires provide significant offensive capabilities that are both cost-effective and cost-imposing means of improving deterrence. By enabling power projection from standoff ranges, the risk to critical United States assets decreases while the defensive burden imposed upon the enemy increases. These fires challenge an adversary's logistics, command and control, and basing forcing them to choose between increased risk or decreased effectiveness. The PRC has thousands of ground-launched theater-range missiles in its arsenal that would be difficult for the United States to counter given its current inventories. Investments in long range and hypersonic missiles launched from ground, sea, and air platforms are a cost-effective strategy that improves our ability to compete with the PRC. Recent budget requests have enhanced the lethality and resilience of the Joint Force by developing and expanding the long-range fires portfolio.

Hypersonic technology: Our adversaries are undertaking hypersonic weapons testing and development from a variety of delivery platforms. These weapons operate at speeds greater than Mach 5 and are maneuverable, which make the weapons challenging to detect and defeat. Weapons operating at these speeds will provide significant offensive capability that will challenge an opponent's decision timelines. We must invest in this technology to provide a suite of capabilities that provide transformational warfighting capability to our Joint Force.

Artificial intelligence and robotics: Decision making in warfare is fundamental to the outcome. Militaries must be able to collect, analyze, and assess vast quantities of data in order to make effective decisions. The military that can iterate through the decision making framework fastest will have decisive advantage. Artificial intelligence has the potential to reform military decision making processes at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of war to enable rapid assessments and decisions that outpace human abilities. Additionally, artificial intelligence combined with new military platforms could enable the proliferation of robots across the battlefield. Robots in the land, sea, and air domains could provide significant quantities of firepower, logistics, and communications capabilities while decreasing risks to our military forces. Through human-machine teaming, each human warfighter would have exponentially increased abilities to shoot, move, and communicate in battle to prevail over the enemy.

Legacy platform divestment: Maintaining and operating weapons that are not relevant in the future fight and whose capabilities are matched by superior technology need to be divested. Continuing to purchase and maintain legacy equipment takes needed Defense dollars away from the acquisition of higher priority systems necessary for modernization. I strongly urge Congress to enact legislation that authorizes the Department to divest select legacy platforms to ensure that every Defense dollar spent on programs and equipment is relevant for the next fight. We must not be influenced by a sunk cost bias, and we cannot continue to mortgage our future by being wedded to technology of the past.

Shipbuilding: The United States Navy must always be the world's most powerful naval force in capacity and capability. We must never accept 2nd place in naval power. We are a maritime nation and the vast majority of international trade moves across the world's oceans. The United States is committed to a free and open global maritime common. Manufacturing our warships overseas is a strategic risk and is not in our national interest. Our shipbuilding and supporting vendor base are a national security capability that needs support to grow and maintain a skilled workforce. The FY 2024 President's Budget reflects the Administration's strong commitment to continued American naval dominance, including improvements to our industrial base to meet the demands of our current and future defense needs. This Nation must have the right ships, with the right crews, and the right capabilities on the right timelines in the theaters where they matter. This budget specifically procures warships and submarines with credible combat power to deter the PRC. We must continue to invest in the industrial base to support remotely operated ship development, fleet modernization, on time delivery of the COLUMBIA class submarine, and to accelerate production and maintenance of VIRGINIA class submarines to support both the United States and AUKUS needs.

Recapitalization of the **sealift fleet** is necessary to enable joint power projection. Sealift ships transport 90% of war material and supplies in support of major combat operations. The DoD sealift fleet is approaching the end of its useful life with an average age of 48 years. Our overall sealift readiness rate is consistently below our stated requirements. I urge Congress to remove all limitations on the Department's ability to procure additional used vessels to replace these aging ships.

Space: Space is essential to our way of life. Space capabilities are vital to our economy, quality of life, exploration initiatives, and national security. Every year we see additional commercial space launches and increased competition for lower earth orbit.

Our adversaries view space as a warfighting domain and believe that achieving supremacy in this arena will be a decisive factor in winning future conflicts. The exosphere is already contested as Russia has tested both a ground-based anti-satellite missile and an on-orbit anti-satellite weapon prototype, which threaten our space capabilities. Both the PRC and Russia view counterspace capabilities as a means to reduce United States and allied military effectiveness. Additionally, our adversaries have demonstrated space-jamming capabilities and maintain independent launch capabilities. Left unsecured, our capabilities in space will become strategic vulnerabilities. I urge Congress to support the significant increase in this budget for United States space capabilities.

Cyber: Adversaries continue to use operations in the cyber domain to compete with the United States and attempt to gain an information advantage. Malign cyber actors exploit commercial software vulnerabilities to gain network access and conduct cyber operations against United States citizens, organizations, and institutions. The low-cost barrier to entry and attribution deniability make this a priority method for adversaries to compete below the level of armed conflict while minimizing risk of escalation. The PRC, Russia, Iran, and North Korea use a range of cyber capabilities from information operations (IO) to cyber-attacks to collect intelligence, position for future operations, impose costs, and signal to the United States and adversaries.

Therefore, we must increase our ability to compete and prevail in cyberspace while ensuring all elements of informational power are integrated into operations, activities, and efforts to deter our adversaries and protect the United States homeland. This requires investments in technology, building and maturing cyber readiness and operations, reducing risk to weapon systems and critical infrastructure, strengthening cybersecurity, and improving network resiliency.

Advanced Capabilities: The changing character of war necessitates that we continue to modernize and innovate our technology, capabilities, and training. Data and communication networks are fundamental to how the United States trains, plans, and employs force. We must have rapid and robust linkages from sensors to shooters in a networked information environment. This will require investments in **microelectronics and quantum computing** to ensure we maintain a technological edge over our adversaries. The current globally distributed supply chains as well as access to critical materials and rare earth metals present vulnerabilities to the Joint Force's ability to acquire necessary parts and technology in the event of crisis. We must also find ways to deepen collaboration on advanced capabilities with our closest allies and partners, such as our trilateral cooperation under AUKUS.

Taking Care of Our People

People are our most important resource in the Joint Force. We must ensure that we are doing all that we can to take care of and guard our most critical resource. Taking care of people is a critical readiness issue and it decisively impacts unit cohesion, recruitment, retention, and confidence in leadership.

To attract, grow, and retain the best talent in the world, we must ensure that we are always taking care of our people. I urge Congress to support this budget's significant pay raise, healthcare, and housing initiatives. Additionally, this budget strengthens our accountability and prevention measures for sexual harassment and sexual assault. Finally, this budget supports improving our mental health and suicide prevention programs. Each of these initiatives is fundamental to taking care of our troops and their families.

We are ensuring that the military departments increase their **childcare capacity**, and the DoD system remains the gold standard of childcare. The DoD operates the country's largest employer-sponsored childcare program, with over 27,000 staff members providing daily care for more than 160,000 children from infancy up to age 12. This fiscal year, the DoD is making a significant investment in constructing new child development centers as well as repairing, renovating, and maintaining existing child development centers to ensure our children are in safe and well-maintained facilities. Funding support from Congress is vital for fully staffed military childcare, and to support efforts to expand capacity in the community. Childcare is key to keeping working families working, reducing the high unemployment faced by military spouses, and ensuring the safety of our military children. Despite the childcare capacity and quality provided by the DoD there are still challenges for military families to access that care or quality care in the community.

This budget equips our service members and families with the tools, skills, and resources necessary to ensure their health and well-being. The health and wellness of our force is a readiness, retention, and recruitment issue.

The Joint Force is committed to **growing our talent** and ensuring that all who meet the requirements to serve are able to serve. The Joint Force competes for the talent of America's youth along with every other business and organization who seeks our Nation's best and brightest. The Joint Force's objective is to field the most lethal and combat effective fighting force in the world. We will continue to support the accessions of all qualified people to all jobs and positions within the Joint Force.

Conclusion

The United States Joint Force is a flexible and adaptable force ready to deter, fight, and win our Nation's wars. Significant threats exist across the globe and the United States is ready to respond to these challenges. The PRC continues its aggressive attempts to revise the global order for its own benefits. It is building up its military might to achieve its goals through the use of force. With its illegal and unprovoked war in Ukraine, Russia attempted to overturn the rules based international order and fracture NATO. Russia's war of aggression and nuclear rhetoric is irresponsible and risks miscalculation and escalation.

International aggression, where large countries use military force to attack smaller countries and change recognized borders, cannot be allowed to stand. The Joint Force will continue to work with the interagency and in cooperation with our allies and partners to deter aggression and threats to the free world. America's network of allies and partners is a strategic source of strength. It is this robust network, this team of teams, that stands against those autocratic, revanchist, and revisionist regimes that are uninterested in a connected and prosperous world.

It is within this framework that it is imperative we modernize our force, training, and doctrine to remain the most capable and ready force on the planet. The United States has been challenged before by many other adversaries. Yet, conflict is not inevitable—our military might makes war less likely by allowing us to deter across the spectrum of conflict. Our contract with the American people is that we, the United States military, will always be ready to protect the Constitution and the fundamental principles of what it means to be American. We will always protect and defend this experiment in liberty, to deter our enemies, and, if deterrence fails, then to fight and win.