

HASC-SF Hearing on President's Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Request for Nuclear Forces and Atomic Energy Defense Activities

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Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Cooper, and distinguished Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the President's Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Request for Strategic Forces.

Security Environment and Strategic Priorities

Today, the United States faces an increasingly complex global security environment, in which the central challenge to our prosperity and security is the reemergence of long-term strategic competition by revisionist powers in China and Russia.

While they pose separate challenges with unique attributes, both China and Russia seek to reshape the world order and change territorial borders. Consequently, they pose increasing security threats to us, our allies and partners.

Long-term competition with China and Russia requires increased U.S and allied military investment because of the magnitude of the threats they pose today, and the potential that these threats will increase in the future. We also must simultaneously strengthen our efforts to deter and counter the clear and present dangers posed by rogue regimes such as North Korea and Iran.

The U.S. military remains the strongest in the world. However, our advantages are eroding as potential adversaries modernize and build-up their conventional and nuclear forces. They now field a broad arsenal of advanced missiles, including variants that can reach the American homeland. For example, earlier this month, Russian President Putin claimed publicly that Russia now possesses unprecedented, new types of nuclear forces with which to target the United States and allies.

While this picture is unsettling and clearly not what we desire, as Secretary of Defense Mattis has pointed out, "We must look reality in the eye and see the world as it is, not as we wish it to be."

The administration has heeded this admonition in recent strategic reviews – the *National Security Strategy*, the *National Defense Strategy*, and the *Nuclear Posture Review*. They reflect a consistent and pragmatic assessment of the threats and uncertainties we face regarding the future security environment.

Our task at the Defense Department is to ensure that U.S. military advantages endure and, in combination with other elements of national power, we are fully able to meet the increasing challenges to our national security. Weakness invites challenges and provocation, but as both George Washington and Thomas Jefferson observed, American strength deters war and promotes peace. It also assures allies and attracts new partners.

Strengthening our alliances and attracting new partners is a critical element of retaining our advantages. As the National Defense Strategy points out, “Mutually beneficial alliances and partnerships are crucial to our strategy, providing a durable, asymmetric advantage that no competitor or rival can match. This approach has served the United States well, in peace and war.”

Nuclear Policy and Posture

The 2018 *Nuclear Posture Review* (NPR) reflects DoD's strategic priority to maintain a safe, secure, survivable and effective nuclear deterrent.

The logic of the NPR was best articulated by Secretary Mattis: “This review rests on a bedrock truth: nuclear weapons have and will continue to play a critical role in deterring nuclear attack and in preventing large-scale conventional warfare between nuclear-armed states for the foreseeable future. U.S. nuclear weapons not only defend our allies against conventional and nuclear threats, they also help them avoid the need to develop their own nuclear arsenals. This, in turn, furthers global security.”

Effective deterrence is critical to our security, and in a complex and dynamic security environment there is no “one size fits all” deterrence strategy. The requirements for effective U.S. deterrence can vary greatly given the unique perceptions, goals, interests, strengths, strategies, and vulnerabilities of different potential adversaries. The deterrence strategy effective against one potential adversary may not deter another. Consequently, the 2018 NPR calls for the United States to tailor deterrence as necessary across a spectrum of adversaries, threats, and contexts. Tailoring our deterrence strategy requires a diverse set of nuclear capabilities to counter a spectrum of threats, and the flexibility needed to adjust our deterrent to new threats as they emerge over time.

The 2018 NPR confirms the findings of all previous NPRs that the diverse capabilities of the nuclear triad provide the flexibility and resilience needed for deterrence. Unfortunately, each leg of the triad is now operating far beyond its originally-planned service life. Consequently, we must not delay the recapitalization of the triad initiated by the previous Administration.

We are off to a good start. The FY2019 budget request funds all critical Department of Defense (DoD) modernization requirements, helping to ensure that modern replacements will be available before the Nation's legacy systems reach the end of their extended service lives. The FY19 budget request for nuclear forces is \$24 billion, which includes \$11 billion for nuclear force sustainment and operations, \$7 billion for recapitalization programs (including LRSO, B-21,

GBSD, and the Columbia Class SSBN), and \$6 billion for Nuclear Command, Control and Communications (including MILSATCOM).

In addition, the President's budget request includes two supplemental capabilities designed to enhance deterrence against emerging challenges in the near- and mid-term. The Department requests \$22.6M in FY19 to begin work to modify a small number of existing submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) warheads to provide a low-yield ballistic missile option in the near term. We also request limited funds of \$1M in FY19 to initiate an analysis of the performance requirements and costs to pursue a modern, nuclear-armed, sea-launched cruise missile (SLCM) that could be available in the mid-term.

These proposed supplements would contribute to deterrence by raising the threshold for nuclear use. They would do so by denying potential adversaries confidence that their coercive threats of limited nuclear first use, or their actual first use can provide a useful advantage over us and our allies. These supplements do not, and are not, intended to mimic adversary nuclear capabilities. They can, nevertheless, help address the imbalance in U.S. and Russian non-strategic nuclear forces, and may create incentives for Russia to return to compliance with its nuclear arms control commitments.

The DoD request to recapitalize the nuclear enterprise in FY19 is about 1.4% of the total DoD base budget. At its peak in 2029, recent estimates, such as those from the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review project the cost of recapitalizing our nuclear forces at approximately 3.7% of the Department of Defense's budget. When the cost of sustainment and operations of our nuclear forces is added to these recapitalization costs, it is estimated that the total cost of the nuclear triad will account for approximately 6.4% of the Department's budget, again at its peak in 2029 before declining. As Secretary Mattis stated, "America can afford survival."

The U.S. commitment to nonproliferation and arms control remains strong. The United States remains committed to all of its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, including Article VI. We will continue to use arms control measures like the New Start Treaty, nonproliferation measures, and counter nuclear terrorism measures to advance the security of the United States and our allies and partners.

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman, let me conclude by stating that in an increasingly complex and threatening security environment, DoD must sustain the capabilities needed to deter and defend against attacks on our homeland, U.S. forces deployed abroad, allies and partners. We must make the investments needed to address the on-going erosion of our advantages and remain the preeminent military power in the world. Along with our allies and partners, we must ensure that we have the capabilities needed, now and in the future, to protect our people and the freedoms we cherish, and are able to engage potential adversaries diplomatically from a position of strength.

To do so, I urge you to support the important capabilities funded in the President's FY19 budget request.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to your questions.