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THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF

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Chairman Nelson, Ranking Member Sessions, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding key nuclear issues. I am pleased to meet with you and to testify with the Commander of U.S. Strategic Command, General Robert Kehler, former Secretary of Defense William Perry, and Dr. Keith Payne.

As you know, just over a year ago, Secretary Gates delivered the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) Report to Congress. The NPR provides a roadmap for advancing the Administration's comprehensive approach to reducing the role and number of nuclear weapons toward the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, while sustaining, as long as nuclear weapons exist, a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal.

We have made substantial progress over the past year in implementing the NPR; our efforts continue, and the Department of Defense looks forward to working with Congress to achieve the aims set forth in the NPR. I would like to focus today on five areas in particular: implementation of the New START Treaty; the revision of Presidential guidance; the development of plans for next steps in arms control; NATO's Deterrence and Defense Posture Review; and the Administration's commitment to maintaining a safe, secure and effective nuclear arsenal.

Implementing the New START Treaty

The New START Treaty, which entered into force on February 5, 2011, allows the United States to continue to field a credible and flexible nuclear deterrent force. The Treaty's limit of 1,550 warheads on deployed ICBMs, deployed SLBMs, and accountable nuclear warheads for deployed heavy bombers allows the United States to sustain effective nuclear deterrence, including sufficient survivable nuclear forces for an assured devastating second-strike capability. And the Treaty's limit of 700 deployed ICBMs, deployed SLBMs, and deployed heavy bombers supports strategic stability by allowing the United States to retain a robust Triad of strategic delivery systems—while downloading all remaining Minuteman III ICBMs to a single warhead each.

Maintaining each leg of the nuclear Triad – ICBMs, SLBMs, and dual-capable heavy bombers – under New START allows us to preserve strategic stability and hedge against any unexpected technical problems or operational vulnerabilities that may arise in any one leg. The Administration plans a robust nuclear Triad of 700 deployed ICBMs, SLBMs, and nuclear-capable heavy bombers under New START:

- We plan to retain all 14 Ohio-class SSBNs and deploy no more than 240 Trident II D5 SLBMs at any time.
- We also plan to retain up to 420 of the current 450 deployed Minuteman III ICBMs, each with a single warhead.

- And we plan to retain up to 60 nuclear-capable B-2A and B-52H heavy bombers, while completing the conversion of all nuclear-capable B-1B and some B-52H heavy bombers to conventional-only capability.

The Department of Defense is currently defining detailed plans for meeting New START limits. We will give priority to doing so in a cost-effective way over the seven year implementation period for the Treaty, for example by making any necessary changes to Ohio-class SSBNs during their regularly-scheduled maintenance. The Department is committed to providing timely information to Congress as our plans develop further.

A key contribution of New START is its verification regime, which provides a firm basis for monitoring Russia's compliance with its treaty obligations while also providing important insights into the size and composition of Russian strategic forces. The United States and Russia exchanged initial New START databases in March 2011. Required notifications for changes in that data, along with routine updates every six months for the entire database, will allow us to track changes in the status of Russian strategic offensive arms covered by the Treaty.

One of the tasks under New START is to remove from accountability hundreds of U.S. strategic delivery vehicles that counted under the old START Treaty. This will be done by a combination of offering exhibitions of conventional-only systems including our converted cruise missile-carrying SSGNs and the B-1B bomber, and eliminating a number of ICBM silos and heavy bombers that are no longer in use. The exhibition of the converted B-1B occurred on March 18.

Both Parties have already completed some Treaty-required exhibitions of other strategic systems. The Russian Federation conducted an exhibition of the RS-24 road-mobile ICBM and its associated launcher in March, and the United States exhibited the B-2A bomber in early April.

The Treaty allows each party to conduct up to 18 on-site inspections each year. The United States successfully completed the first of these inspections in Russia on April 16. We expect the Russian Federation to conduct their first inspection soon.

Revising Guidance

A key part of implementing the 2010 NPR, as with previous such reviews, is the revision of Presidential and Departmental guidance for nuclear operations and deterrence, and subsequent modification of operational plans. That effort is now beginning. In follow-on analysis called for in the NPR, the Department of Defense will update our assessment of deterrence requirements, including analyzing potential changes in targeting requirements and force postures. Potential changes will be assessed according to how they meet key objectives outlined in the NPR, including reducing the role of nuclear weapons, sustaining strategic deterrence and stability, strengthening regional deterrence, and assuring U.S. allies and partners.

The analysis of potential revisions to guidance and planning will take account of commitments made in the NPR, including:

- Fully implementing New START while retaining and modernizing the Triad;
- “De-MIRVing” to single warheads on each ICBM;
- Retiring TLAM/N while modernizing Dual-Capable Aircraft and their associated nuclear bomb;
- Fully funding warhead Life Extension Programs and the associated Stockpile Management Program; and
- Making long-deferred investments in the Department of Energy nuclear complex so that it can assure an arsenal of safe, secure, and effective weapons as long as nuclear weapons exist.

The NPR Report reflects clearly the commitment of the Obama administration to ensure that nuclear deterrence remains effective for the problems for which it is relevant in the 21st century. We will continue to ensure that, in the calculations of any potential opponent, the perceived gains of attacking the U.S. or its allies and partners would be far outweighed by the unacceptable costs of the response. Effective deterrence requires a credible threat to respond. It also requires forces that can put at risk that which a potential adversary’s decision makers hold dear.

The analysis will also look at possible changes to force posture that would be associated with different types of reductions. And, it will consider possible changes to nuclear deterrence strategies associated with changes in the global security environment, as well as the potential contributions of non-nuclear strike capabilities to strategic deterrence. To be well-hedged against geopolitical or technological surprise remains a key priority.

Every President since the beginning of the nuclear age has asked the Defense Department to conduct such analyses and has used that information to inform updated planning guidance to the Department of Defense. As Commander in Chief, the President is responsible for determining what is required to protect the United States and our allies and partners, as well as how he wishes the military to support deterrence, to prepare for the possibility that nuclear deterrence might fail, and for taking steps to restore deterrence. Ensuring that our forces are properly sized and configured for the real threats of today and tomorrow is a key responsibility of any Administration.

Planning for Next Steps in Arms Control

As stated in the NPR, the United States intends to pursue further reductions in strategic and non-strategic nuclear weapons with Russia, including both deployed and non-deployed nuclear weapons. When complete, the analysis of targeting requirements and force postures will help inform the formulation of any future arms control objectives.

We intend to consider future reductions in the numbers of deployed and non-deployed nuclear weapons, both strategic and non-strategic, and the associated changes in Russian forces and other variables that would be required to do so in a manner that supports the commitments to stability, deterrence, and assurance.

The NPR noted that because of our improved relations, strict numerical parity between the United States and Russia is no longer as compelling as it was during the Cold War. However, it also noted that large disparities in nuclear capabilities could raise concerns on both sides and among U.S. allies and partners, and may not be conducive to maintaining a stable, long-term strategic relationship, especially as nuclear forces are significantly reduced. It is therefore important to us that Russia joins us in moving towards lower levels.

Maintaining strategic stability with both Russia and China will remain a key priority in the years ahead. We continue to pursue high-level, bilateral dialogues with Russia and China aimed at promoting more stable, resilient, and transparent strategic relationships. Such discussions are moving forward with Russia, and we are seeking similar discussions with China.

It is our intention to keep the Senate fully informed about new developments in U.S. arms control policy and strategy.

Conducting NATO's Deterrence and Defense Posture Review

The 2010 NPR stated that any changes in NATO's nuclear posture should only be taken after a thorough review within – and decision by – the Alliance. We and our NATO allies agreed to conduct a review of NATO's deterrence and defense posture at the Lisbon summit last December. At that summit, leaders approved a new Strategic Concept for the alliance, agreed to update allied capabilities to ensure that allies can make good on Article 5 commitments in the face of new threats, and rejuvenated the alliance's relationship with Russia.

The new Strategic Concept repeats the alliance's traditional formulation that it will maintain an "appropriate mix" of capabilities, both nuclear and conventional, for deterrence and defense. Allies also endorsed territorial missile defense as an alliance mission, thereby reinforcing the interest in determining the appropriate mix in current circumstances.

Accordingly, the primary aim of the Deterrence and Defense Posture Review (DDPR) is to determine the appropriate mix of nuclear, conventional, and missile defense forces that NATO will need to deter and defend against threats to the Alliance and ensure its members' security.

The review will also consider how political instruments like arms control can affect the level of capabilities that will be needed in the future and what additional capabilities may need to be created.

The DDPF will be guided by the new NATO Strategic Concept, which states that “[d]eterrence, based on an appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional capabilities, remains a core element of our overall strategy,” and that “[a]s long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance.” The Strategic Concept also notes that the Alliance “will seek to create the conditions for further [nuclear] reductions in the future,” and consistent with Senate language in the New START resolution of ratification, that any further steps must take into account the disparity between the non-strategic (tactical) nuclear weapons stockpiles of the Russian Federation and of the United States.

The DDPF report will be prepared by the North Atlantic Council, where permanent representatives to NATO will work in close consultation with allied capitals to ensure a result that is focused on the requirements of maintaining an effective deterrence and defense posture. We expect that this review will be conducted over the coming year and concluded in spring 2012.

Investing in a Safe, Secure and Effective Nuclear Arsenal

The 2010 NPR highlighted the importance of sustaining a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent. The Administration’s FY2012 budget reflects our commitment to the modernization of our nuclear arsenal for the long term, including some \$125 billion over the next ten years to sustain our strategic delivery systems, and about \$88 billion over the same period to sustain our nuclear arsenal and modernize infrastructure. These are large investments, but essential to U.S. national security.

As articulated in the NPR and consistent with the New START Treaty, the Administration is committed to modernizing the nuclear Triad:

- Funding began for the OHIO-class replacement SSBN in FY2010 to support the FY2019 lead ship procurement. Continued research, development, technology, and engineering investments are included in the FY2012 President’s Budget Request.
- The Navy plans to sustain the Trident II D5 missile, carried on the OHIO-class SSBN, through at least 2042 with a robust life extension program.
- The preparatory analysis for a follow-on ICBM capability to be fielded in the 2030 timeframe has begun.

- DoD will continue to maintain heavy bombers to provide a long-range air-delivered conventional and nuclear attack capability for the indefinite future, including upgrades to the B-2 and the development and fielding of a new long-range, nuclear-capable penetrating bomber starting in FY2012.
- In addition, DoD is developing a new dual-capable Long-Range Standoff (LRSO) missile to replace the current air-launched cruise missile in the latter half of the 2020s.

The NPR identified a number of NNSA nuclear weapons facilities that are decades old and must be replaced or modernized to ensure the reliability of a smaller nuclear arsenal. Two particularly critical facilities are the Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Replacement (CMRR) Facility and the Uranium Processing Facility (UPF), which will take more than a decade to complete. The CMRR and UPF are in their early design phases today; as their designs proceed, we will have more accurate estimates of their costs.

Conclusion

A key premise of the 2010 NPR—following the advice of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States—is that a successful long-term national approach for reducing nuclear dangers must be balanced, with movement in one area enabling and reinforcing progress in other areas. The approach must also be integrated, both nationally—across federal agencies and between the executive and legislative branches—and internationally among a wide range of partner governments. And an effective approach must be sustained over time, with support from a long succession of U.S. administrations and Congresses. A balanced, integrated, and sustained approach to nuclear policy will require a strong bipartisan consensus. This administration has devoted significant time and energy to this effort and we are gratified at the many signs of progress in this regard. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on these critical issues today, and I look forward to your questions.