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# STATEMENT OF

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BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

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Chairman Turner, Ranking Member Sanchez, and distinguished members of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am pleased to be here today with General C. Robert Kehler, Commander of U.S Strategic Command, Thomas D'Agostino, Administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) and Under Secretary of State Ellen Tauscher.

The subcommittee asked us to address a number of issues: the on-going review of U.S. nuclear planning guidance; NATO's Defense and Deterrence Posture Review; preparations for future arms control efforts with Russia and potential reductions in U.S. nuclear forces below the New START Treaty's limits; and the President's budget for fiscal year 2012 and fiscal year 2013 as it relates to nuclear sustainment and modernization plans. I will also briefly summarize Administration concerns regarding provisions in H.R. 1540, which deal with nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons policy. General Kehler will give the USSTRATCOM operational perspective. Administrator D'Agostino will provide more detailed information on the nuclear stockpile and infrastructure. And Under Secretary Tauscher will provide more details regarding where we stand on New START implementation and thinking on next steps for arms control.

# **Today's Nuclear Balance**

I would like to begin by providing some context. The U.S. nuclear arsenal included 5,113 weapons as of September 30, 2009, at the time of our last unclassified release of stockpile totals. That figure has dropped slightly. In addition, there are several thousand retired warheads awaiting dismantlement. All told, our nuclear arsenal has been reduced significantly from a high point of approximately 31,000 warheads at the height of the Cold War in 1967.

Unclassified estimates suggest that Russia has 4,000 to 6,500 total nuclear weapons, of which 2,000 to 4,000 are non-strategic tactical nuclear weapons. We have a good understanding of the numbers of deployed Russian strategic nuclear warheads, since they are reported under the New START Treaty, and we have already conducted thirteen on-site inspections in Russia since the Treaty entered into force on February 5th. We have significantly less confidence in estimates of Russian tactical nuclear weapons.

China is increasing the size of its nuclear arsenal but is estimated to have only a few hundred nuclear weapons. India and Pakistan are also increasing the size of their nuclear arsenals, but each is estimated to have fewer weapons than China. Our allies, the United Kingdom and France, each have a few hundred nuclear weapons. North Korea has tested a plutonium-based weapon design and appears to be trying to develop highly enriched uranium weapons. And Iran continues to defy the will of the international community and pursue its nuclear ambitions.

In any event, although both Russia and the United States have substantially decreased nuclear weapons since the Cold War, even after New START is fully implemented, together we will account for over 90 percent of the world's nuclear weapons. As a result, our focus for the next stage of arms control is bilateral efforts with Russia.

### **Reviewing Nuclear Guidance: Nuclear Posture Review Implementation Study**

In order to expedite efforts to reach an arms control arrangement with Russia, the Obama administration elected to rely on existing nuclear guidance from 2002 to determine the acceptable limitations in the New START Treaty of 1,550 deployed nuclear warheads on each side. This decision was consistent with the recommendations of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States: in effect, to seek an initial agreement with Russia to ensure verification was in place after the START Treaty expired, and then use follow-on negotiations to explore the possibility of further reductions.

As part of the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), the President directed a follow-on analysis to set a goal for future nuclear reductions below New START levels, while strengthening deterrence of potential regional adversaries, strategic stability vis-à-vis Russia and China, and assurance of our allies and partners. In undertaking this implementation study, we are focused on achieving the five strategic objectives established in the NPR:

- Preventing nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism;
- Reducing the role of U.S. nuclear weapons in U.S. national strategy;
- Maintaining strategic deterrence and stability at reduced nuclear force levels;
- Strengthening deterrence and reassuring U.S. allies and partners; and
- Sustaining a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal.

We are currently in the process of assessing deterrence requirements against these metrics. Our analysis is also considering the critical question of what to do if deterrence fails. In effect, we are asking: what are the guiding concepts for employing nuclear weapons to deter adversaries of the United States, and what are the guiding concepts for ending a nuclear conflict on the best possible terms if one has started?

The Defense Department is leading this analysis, the results of which are intended to provide options for the President's guidance to the Department on nuclear planning. DoD will use this Presidential direction to guide what force structure, force posture, and stockpile requirements are required to protect the United States and our allies and partners, as well as to inform plans for the employment of nuclear weapons in the event that deterrence fails.

Ensuring that our nuclear forces are properly sized and configured to face real threats, both today and into the future, is a responsibility this Administration takes very seriously. Within the DoD, the Office of the Secretary of Defense is working closely with the Joint Staff and U.S. Strategic Command in conducting this analysis. We are also working in close coordination with the National Security Staff and with senior representatives from the Department of Energy and the Department of State. We expect the analysis to be completed before the end of the year.

The issuance of new Presidential guidance is the first step in a chain of events. The Secretary of Defense will then issue more detailed planning guidance to the military. Based on the Secretary's guidance, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff will then issue detailed implementing guidance. Finally, U.S. Strategic Command will revise its nuclear plans, based on this direction. Strategic Command's plans will be reviewed by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, and ultimately approved by the Secretary of Defense.

#### **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. At the NATO Summit in Lisbon in November of 2010, NATO 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.

A key part of this agreement was a decision by the Alliance to undertake a Deterrence and Defense Posture Review (DDPR). The DDPR is 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 "NATO seeks its security at the lowest possible level of forces" and that the Alliance "will seek to create the conditions for further [nuclear] reductions in the future." The Strategic Concept is also 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 Russia and the United States. Allies also endorsed territorial missile defense as an alliance mission, thereby reinforcing interest in determining the appropriate mix of nuclear and non-nuclear capabilities for deterrence.

The primary aim of the 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 to ensure its members' security. The review will also consider how political

instruments such as arms control and partnerships can affect the level of capabilities that will be needed in the future and what additional capabilities may need to be created.

The work on the DDPR is expected to be complete by the spring of 2012, prior to the next NATO Summit, which will be held in Chicago. While precise outcomes are unknown at this time, the DDPR is proceeding in accordance with the principles that have been central to NATO's nuclear posture for decades, including:

- Retaining an appropriate mix of both conventional and nuclear capabilities;
- Sharing the risks and burdens of nuclear deterrence in tangible ways;
- Maintaining the minimum number of nuclear capabilities needed to ensure effective deterrence:
- Emphasizing up-to-date security measures at U.S. and Allied bases;
- Encouraging Russia to better secure and reduce its arsenal of non-strategic nuclear weapons; and
- Maintaining undiminished security for all Alliance members.

The DDPR 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 provides an effective deterrence and defense posture. As with all NATO documents, the DDPR will be a consensus document. We believe that it will include a discussion of the role and size of NATO nuclear forces, as well as a discussion of the possibility for future nuclear reductions. Consistent with our commitment in the NPR, I want to reiterate that any changes in NATO's nuclear posture would only be taken after a thorough review within – and decision by – the Alliance.

# Future arms control efforts with Russia and potential reductions in U.S. nuclear forces

As stated in the NPR, the United States intends to pursue further reductions in nuclear weapons with Russia. When complete, our analysis of deterrence 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 the nuclear forces of other states that would be required to do so in a manner that supports our commitments to stability, deterrence, and assurance. We will ensure that the United States maintains our ability to deter a nuclear attack, our operational flexibility, and the ability to hedge against geopolitical and technical uncertainty.

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. Therefore, the NPR stated that we will place importance on Russia joining us as we move to 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.

Any future discussions with Russia should include tactical nuclear weapons, as directed in the resolution of ratification for the New START Treaty. Discussions regarding reductions in the total number of nuclear weapons, both deployed and non-deployed, are also needed. In any future reductions our aim should be to seek the relocation of Russian non-strategic nuclear weapons away from the territory of NATO members.

The timing and the framework for these future discussions are not settled, but the work ongoing now will help to inform those discussions when they do begin. One of the key enablers of any future reductions, both bilateral and multilateral, will be increased transparency. The United States took the first step by declaring the number of nuclear weapons in the U.S. stockpile, and we would welcome reciprocal declarations by Russia and China.

As with all of the activities we are discussing today, it is our intention to keep the Congress appropriately informed about new developments in U.S. arms control policy and strategy.

# FY12 and FY13 Budget Issues Related to Nuclear Force Size and Modernization

Upon taking office, the President made reversing the declining budgets for the nuclear complex a priority. The 2010 NPR highlighted the importance of sustaining a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent. The Administration's Section 1251 Report on nuclear force structure plans reflects our commitment to the modernization of our nuclear arsenal for the long term. The Administration is committed to making the investments necessary to recapitalize the complex and ensure we have the highly skilled personnel needed to maintain our nuclear capabilities. These are large investments, but essential to U.S. national security.

The United States has seven years from entry into force of the Treaty to reduce to the aggregate limits of the New START Treaty. Decisions have not yet been made as to whether DoD will take the full seven years to implement the New START Treaty reductions, and whether

delivery systems will be reduced to or below those central limits prior to expiration of the Treaty. As a result of the congressional budget action in August, based on direction from the Secretary of Defense, the Department is conducting a comprehensive review of all programs to inform necessary budget reductions. To date no decisions have been made with respect to future force sizing or the modernization plans for nuclear delivery systems; such decisions will be informed by the Administration's ongoing review of deterrence requirements. I can assure you, however, that these decisions will be consistent with the goals of the NPR, including to maintain strategic stability, provide assurance to our allies and partners of the credibility of the U.S. nuclear umbrella and other security commitments, and to maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent.

The President's budget request for FY2012 included \$7.6 billion for weapons activities at the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA). I would like to thank this committee for supporting that budget request. On the other hand, both the House of Representatives and Senate Appropriations Committee made significant reductions to the budget request for weapons activities and to the NNSA's budget overall. The House reduced weapons activities funding by \$497.7 million and the Senate committee reduced the requested amount by \$439.7 million, along with additional reductions to NNSA budget requests for other important activities like Nuclear Nonproliferation and Naval Reactors. Overall the NNSA budget request was reduced by \$1.1 billion by the House and by \$711.9 million by the Senate Appropriations Committee.

While we recognize that fiscal austerity will constrain spending on national security programs in the years ahead, significant reductions to funding for our nuclear enterprise will place our strategic and extended deterrence commitments at risk – a posture the United States cannot afford. The President committed modernizing our nuclear weapons and infrastructure after completion of the 2010 NPR – including a commitment to pursue these programs and capabilities for as long as he is President. Even in the difficult budget climate that we now confront, the President has kept his word.

The Department of Defense contributed significantly to NNSA's requests for FY2011 and FY2012, and is prepared to continue support through FY2016. These contributions are reflective of the close linkage between NNSA's nuclear weapons programs and the specific needs of its customer, DoD. Without adequate funding for NNSA, however, the nuclear weapons life extension programs, nuclear infrastructure, and the retention of the people on which we depend to maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal are all at risk. It is for that reason that Secretary Panetta stated to the House Armed Services Committee that he would oppose reductions for modernization funding.

The nuclear enterprise remains, today and for the foreseeable future, the foundation of the U.S. deterrence strategy and defense posture. The U.S. nuclear weapons infrastructure requires significant and immediate investment. In order to remain safe, secure, and effective, the U.S.

nuclear stockpile must be supported by a modern physical infrastructure and staffed by the most promising scientists and engineers of the next generation. I understand the budget pressures, but the nuclear enterprise is an area where there is a need to invest now to save money later. As Secretary Panetta said before this committee recently, cuts to modernization funding would be "tremendously short-sighted." I look forward to working with this committee to identify ways to restore this much needed funding.

#### H.R. 1540 Provisions of Concern

The National Defense Authorization Bill passed by the House of Representatives, H.R. 1540, includes a number of provisions relating to nuclear weapons that are of concern to the Administration. The Administration's position on these provisions has been made clear in the Statement of Administration Policy on H.R. 1540, which notes that the President's senior advisors would recommend vetoing the bill if these provisions were enacted into law.

I would like to reiterate those concerns here today. In particular, sections 1055 and 1056 of H.R. 1540 would impinge on the President's authority to implement the New START Treaty and establish U.S. nuclear weapons policy. Moreover it would set onerous conditions on the Administration's ability to direct the retirement, dismantlement, or elimination of non-deployed nuclear weapons.

This legislation would dictate the pace of reductions under New START in a way that would bar DoD and DoE from studying the best means to implement reductions, preclude DoD from being logistically able to meet New START Treaty timelines, and add disruptions and costs at a time when our country and nuclear enterprise can ill afford them. Notably, it would set conditions on New START implementation and divert resources from stockpile sustainment in ways that tax the very programs that the House Appropriations Committee has just cut drastically. Further, section 1056 raises constitutional concerns, as it appears to encroach on the President's authority as Commander in Chief to set nuclear employment policy.

As mentioned above, the President has kept the commitments he made during the New START Treaty ratification process; the provisions in H.R. 1540 would impose restrictions above and beyond those commitments. I believe that robust dialogue on these issues is the best means to satisfy Congressional concerns, rather than attempts to restrict the authorities of the President.

#### Conclusion

The 2010 Nuclear Posture Review specifically states in its Introduction that sustaining the U.S. nuclear deterrent will be the work of many Administrations and Congresses, and thus requires sustained bipartisan support. In fact, a key purpose of the NPR was to help to forge such a consensus.

We made good progress on some areas, including securing most of the requested funding for fiscal year 2011, and Senate advice and consent to ratification of the New START Treaty. As we face reductions to DoD's budget, and as we enter into a Presidential election period, we need to establish a strong bipartisan consensus to address these issues as apolitical national security priorities.

As this work continues and guidance is reviewed over time, we expect and welcome vigorous and informed debate on these matters of national importance. But at the end of the day, I believe that it is strongly in the U.S. national interest that the Administration and Congress reach a workable and sustainable bipartisan consensus.

I appreciate the opportunity to discuss these important issues, and to work with this subcommittee to develop that necessary bipartisan commitment. Thank you and I look forward to your questions.