

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

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“Hypersonic Weapons in the Context of the National Defense Strategy”

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INTRODUCTION

Chairman Lamborn, Ranking Member Moulton, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I'm honored to be here.

Today, I want to lay out the Department's view of hypersonic weapons, both offensive and defensive, and how they contribute to Department of Defense objectives in the context of the *2022 National Defense Strategy* (NDS).

THE NATIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY

The NDS, released last October, makes clear that the Department's priorities are:

- Defending the Homeland, paced to the growing multi-domain threat posed by the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC);
- Deterring strategic attacks against the United States, our Allies, and our partners;
- Deterring aggression, while being prepared to prevail in conflict when necessary; and,
- Building a resilient Joint Force and defense ecosystem.

The central premise of the NDS is the urgent need for the Department to sustain and strengthen integrated deterrence. The NDS is clear-eyed in its assessment of the range of threats posed to the United States by a number of adversaries. The PRC is the only competitor with both the intent and, increasingly, with the capability to systemically challenge the United States across the board: militarily, economically, technologically, and diplomatically.

We describe Russia as an acute threat—one that is both immediate and sharp—but Russia, unlike the PRC, cannot systemically challenge the United States over the long term. However, Russian aggression certainly does threaten our national interests and democratic values, as well as those of our Allies and partners.

The Department of Defense's efforts to mature, develop, and field hypersonic technologies—both offensive and defensive—contribute to all four of those objectives, which are key to support vital U.S. national interests, to contribute to a stable and open international system, and to maintain and strengthen our defense commitments to U.S. Allies and international partners.

We see offensive hypersonics as a logical and necessary addition to the mix of capabilities that the Joint Force employs to deter and, if necessary, prevail in future conflicts. Defense against hypersonics requires a credible domain awareness capability and missile defense posture for the continental United States and other strategic locations such as Hawaii, Alaska, and Guam, which are unambiguously part of the United States.

Advancing both offensive and defensive hypersonic technologies directly contribute to the three pillars of the 2022 NDS: Integrated Deterrence; Campaigning; and Building Enduring Advantages.

THE DEPARTMENT’S HYPERSONICS INVESTMENTS ARE GROWING

To help meet the broad challenges outlined by the NDS—and to “transform the foundation of the force,” as it reads—Secretary Austin and Deputy Secretary Hicks have pushed the Department to invest in innovation to ensure that U.S. military capabilities go beyond cutting edge.

Hypersonic technologies are one of 14 Critical Technology Areas, or CTAs, for Department investment emphasized by Under Secretary of Defense for Research & Engineering, the Honorable Heidi Shyu. In the CTAs, and across our Innovation Ecosystem, DoD is making significant investments to facilitate rapid development and testing of technologies, enable affordable production at scale, and accelerate the delivery of these capabilities, which are critical to implementing our strategy.

With the support of Congress, the Department’s FY23 budget contained our largest-ever commitment to developing and deploying the breakthrough technologies required to deter future conflict. In the same vein, DoD investments in hypersonics are growing and accelerating.

But, it is not enough to simply spend and produce more. Deterrence, today and tomorrow, requires integrating capabilities into new operational concepts through a dedicated campaign of learning. In line with the NDS, the Department is exploring creative concepts that expand U.S. options and constrain those of potential adversaries.

Further, we are focused on adapting to the operational challenges of the Western Pacific, all while working closely with Allies and partners—nations the NDS labels as a “center of gravity” for our Strategy.

Put another way, it is not just about building hypersonics; rather, the Department is focused on building and deploying these systems, and defending against them, in a way that maximizes the effective implementation of the National Defense Strategy.

HYPERSONICS COMPLEMENT EXISTING CAPABILITIES

In concert with select allies, DoD is pursuing multiple hypersonic-based capability solutions as complements to an existing suite of diverse warfighting capabilities. The Department is accelerating progress in this space so that we have the right capabilities to counter and address today’s threat landscape and that of potential future conflicts.

You will hear today about specific hypersonic programmatic efforts from the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, multiple Defense Agencies, and others. For offensive strike weapons, the Department will take advantage of the opportunities presented by employment of regional hypersonic systems in its global planning and posture considerations. And on hypersonic missile defense, the United States will continue to develop active and passive defenses against regional hypersonic missile threats, as well as pursue a persistent and resilient sensor network to characterize and track all hypersonic threats, improve attribution, and enable engagement. Across these capabilities, DoD is purposely generating a diverse array of options to defend

against hypersonic threats and to launch hypersonics from different platforms, across different distances, and based in different technological approaches.

In sum, hypersonic weapon systems and defenses are key to the mix of capabilities that the Joint Force needs to deter and, if necessary, to defeat aggression. Development and deployment of these technologies and systems provide additional cutting-edge capabilities and strategic options to our armed forces.

The Department is also making substantial investments in a broader array of capabilities, including long-range strike, undersea, and autonomous systems, in addition to hypersonics, that will ensure we can effectively deter through denial. For some mission sets, hypersonics can play a critical role in U.S. capabilities.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, advancing both offensive and defensive hypersonic technologies directly contribute to the three pillars of the 2022 NDS: Integrated Deterrence; Campaigning; and Building Enduring Advantages.

DoD is focused on developing and fielding the right mix of the right capabilities to ensure we can generate the effects we need to deter, and if needed, prevail in any conflict.

Delivering those capabilities, in concert with a network of allies and partner and in parallel with other advanced technologies and new operating concepts, will ensure the U.S. Department of Defense maintains the ability to deter potential adversaries and to defeat aggression, if necessary.

Thank you.