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SENATE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

STATEMENT OF
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BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
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INTRODUCTION

Chairman Levin, Senator McCain, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to meet with you today. United States Strategic Command was closely consulted before and during negotiations on the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), and I look forward to discussing the treaty with you today. I would like to note at the outset how proud I am of the extraordinary work the Command performed in support of these negotiations. We have an amazing team, and their diligence, expertise, and tireless work continue to ensure our ability to deliver global security for America.

New START

New START will enhance the security of the United States of America, and I support its ratification. Our nation will be safer and more secure with this treaty than without it. Let me briefly explain why, from the perspective of the combatant commander responsible for planning and executing strategic deterrence and nuclear operations.

First, New START limits the number of Russian ballistic missile warheads that can target the United States, missiles that pose the most prompt threat to our forces and our nation. Regardless of whether Russia would have kept its missile force levels within those limits without a New START treaty, upon ratification they would now be required to do so. The New START bomber counting rules are unlikely to result in a reduction in Russian nuclear bomber forces, but these platforms have much less potential to be destabilizing, and we will retain the option to sustain equivalent capabilities.

Second, New START retains sufficient flexibility in managing our deterrent forces to hedge against technical or geopolitical surprise. To support the New START negotiation effort,

U.S. Strategic Command analyzed the required nuclear weapons and delivery vehicle force structure and posture to meet current guidance. The options we provided in this process focused on ensuring America's ability to continue to deter potential adversaries, assure our allies, and sustain strategic stability for as long as nuclear weapons exist. This rigorous approach, rooted in deterrence strategy and assessment of potential adversary capabilities, supports both the agreed-upon limits in New START and recommendations in the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR). We will retain a triad of strategic nuclear delivery systems, and if we have a technical failure in one of our nuclear systems, we can rearrange our deployed force posture and structure within the treaty limits to compensate.

Third, New START will reestablish a strategic nuclear arms control verification regime that provides intrusive access to Russian nuclear forces and a measure of predictability in Russian force deployments over the life of the treaty. Such access and predictability contribute to our ability to plan confidently our own force modernization efforts and our hedging strategy. Without New START, we would rapidly lose some of our insight into Russian strategic nuclear force developments and activities, and our force modernization planning and hedging strategy would be more complex and more costly. Without such a regime, we would unfortunately be left to use worst-case analyses regarding our own force requirements. Further, we would be required increasingly to focus low density/high demand intelligence collection and analysis assets on Russian nuclear forces.

DETERRENCE CAPABILITIES

The nuclear enterprise remains, today and for the foreseeable future, the foundation of U.S. deterrence strategy and defense posture. The NPR recognizes this and makes a series of

recommendations that I strongly urge the Congress to fully support. Specifically, the NPR recommends moving forward with a number of nuclear enterprise sustainment projects, including strengthening our nuclear command and control structure; continuing development and deployment of our triad of delivery systems; maintaining a safe, secure, and effective stockpile; and revitalizing the National Nuclear Security Administration's aging infrastructure. America's triad of diverse and complementary delivery systems provides unique synergies that make our deterrent highly credible and resilient in the face of a variety of potential technological and geopolitical developments. The NPR endorses DoD efforts to explore future triad systems, specifically to extend the Minuteman III ICBM through 2030 and conduct studies now to inform decisions on a follow-on ICBM; to replace the Ohio-class SSBN at end of life for existing ships; and to study future long-range bomber capabilities. It also supports moving forward with full-rate refurbishment of the W76 warhead for our submarine leg of the triad; study of full-scope life extension of the B61 bomb (including enhancing safety, security, and use control) to sustain its strategic deterrence and extended deterrence roles; and initiating studies to develop life extension options for the W78 ICBM warhead, including the possibility of also adapting the resulting warhead for sea launched ballistic missiles and thereby reducing the number of warhead types.

Additionally, the NPR and the President's Budget recognize the need to improve, sustain, and ensure all necessary elements of a safe, secure, and effective deterrence enterprise, including weapons, delivery systems, warning and communications capabilities, and their supporting human capital and technological infrastructures, and to make sustained investments to adequately preserve these capabilities for the foreseeable future. These investments are required in order to confidently reduce the overall U.S. stockpile while sustaining the credibility of our nuclear

stockpile, which is fundamental to effective deterrence. Investments that revitalize NNSA's aging infrastructure and intellectual capital strengthen our security with the facilities and people needed to address technological surprises, geopolitical change, and a range of cutting-edge national security challenges. In order to sustain the deterrent and implement the NPR, we must commit to long-term investments that begin with several increases outlined in the President's Fiscal Year 2011 Budget, most notably a 13% increase in NNSA funding. These investments are not only important—they are essential.

CLOSING

Every day, US Strategic Command remains focused on providing the President and future presidents with the options and flexibility needed for deterrence. Today, our deterrent is safe, secure, and effective; our forces are trained and ready; and the Command is faithfully and fully carrying out its mission each and every day. I am confident that the combination of New START ratification, implementation of the NPR's recommendations, and funding of associated investments will enable the men and women of U.S. Strategic Command to continue delivering global security for America today and in the future. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before this committee.