NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED
BY THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES
COMMITTEE STRATEGIC FORCES
SUBCOMMITTEE

STATEMENT
OF
LIEUTENANT GENERAL JAMES C. DAWKINS, JR., USAF
DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR STRATEGIC DETERRENCE & NUCLEAR INTEGRATION
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES
OF THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
ON
FY23 NUCLEAR FORCES
MAY 17, 2022

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the committee on the current status and future prospects of the Air Force's nuclear programs and policies. I would also like to highlight and thank our critical industry and government partners who work to seamlessly integrate monumental modernization and maintenance efforts across the U.S. nuclear enterprise. Finally, a special thank you to the Airmen who work tirelessly day in and day out to ensure the U.S. retains the safe, secure, reliable, and credible nuclear deterrent our Nation demands. Their ceaseless and often unheralded efforts to operate, maintain, and protect our systems ensures the credibility of the U.S. nuclear deterrent. I am proud to testify that due to their efforts, our Nation's bomber, Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM), and airborne Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications (NC3) forces maintained high standards for nuclear readiness despite the continued impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Their unwavering professionalism continues to ensure the foundation of our national security remains strong, but we must provide them the right tools and capabilities to face the pacing challenges posed by Russia and China.

After decades of underwriting global stability and security, the Department of the Air Force (DAF) is at an inflection point for providing a credible strategic deterrence capability in an evolving nuclear-armed, adversarial strategic environment. The DAF's core missions of protecting Americans and American interests, assuring our allies and partners, and deterring our adversaries have not changed in the past decade; however, the domains, technology, and threats have. Failure to adapt to a changing world is not an option; every operational plan and capability in the Department of Defense (DoD) rests on the foundation of strategic nuclear deterrence. The stakes could not be higher.

As I testified last year, the DAF continues to achieve many key nuclear goals including significant milestones in the LGM-35A Sentinel weapon system, Long Range Standoff missile (LRSO), B-21 Raider, the B61-12, and our NC3 programs. Sentinel is the next generation Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) that brings critical safety, security, and reliability features to replace the aged Minuteman III (MM III) system and a majority of its infrastructure. MM III is over forty years past its design life and will not be viable against future threats. Sentinel continues to be a model acquisition program and has achieved great success in the Engineering and Manufacturing Development (EMD) phase. Sentinel's acquisition ensures we maintain pace with our competitors and continue to deter the evolving threats posed by Russia, the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), and Iran. The Air Force also achieved great successes with the LRSO program, to include a test flight in March, which will replace the Air Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM) fielded in 1982. The LRSO's capabilities are critical to deterrence, as they will complicate the adversary's defense calculus by improving survivability and standoff range, while serving as the primary hedge for the ground and sea legs of the triad. Finally, the B-21 Raider program remains on schedule and on budget, with the first six aircraft in production.

It is vital that these recapitalization programs remain on schedule for the DAF to continue performing its critical deterrence mission. Time is not a recoverable asset and we need to make the most of every moment. Our strategic competitors and pacing challenges present the most technologically advanced military capabilities the U.S. has ever faced. Yet, we are equipping our Airmen with systems that are decades past their lifespans and were developed for a strategic environment that is very different than today's. The emerging security environment demands we modernize.

THE THREAT

America's post-Cold War military experience of freely operating in uncontested domains is over. For the first time in our Nation's history, we are facing two nuclear-armed, strategic competitors: Russia and the PRC. Over the past 30 years, while the U.S. focused on counterterrorism in the Middle-East, our strategic competitors took advantage of America's inattention to grow their conventional and nuclear capabilities and update their tactics to integrate nuclear warfare options into the broader spectrum of conflict. Russia and the PRC have built formidable and advanced defensive systems, are bolstering offensive and defensive capabilities in space and are rapidly developing the next generation of technologies in autonomously operated weapons, precision missiles, artificial intelligence and hypersonic flight.

Russia's willingness to attack Ukraine shattered the relatively peaceful decades enjoyed in Europe. Our NATO and European allies and partners faced the stark reality that Russia will expand their influence through force and their direct and indirect threats to use nuclear weapons is alarming. Assurance to our European allies and partners is as critical now as it was during the Cold War. Russia continues to modernize both its nuclear and conventional forces and is leading the world in the development and deployment of hypersonic weapons. Russia has not only modernized every leg of its triad, but is expanding its nuclear stockpile to include novel strategic systems. Russia has multiple types of non-strategic nuclear weapons (NSNW) deployed or in research and development, including, short- and close-range ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and anti-ship missiles. Several of Russia's novel strategic systems—the Poseidon nuclear- powered, strategic-range torpedo; and the Burevestnik nuclear-powered, strategic-range cruise missile—and its NSNW are not subject to New START Treaty's limits or verification regime.

The PRC represents the largest long-term threat to the U.S. as it rapidly increases its offensive and defensive warfighting capabilities to specifically defeat our power projection in the Pacific. China is growing their nuclear arsenal to at least a thousand warheads by 2030, modernizing and expanding its delivery systems, and building a survivable nuclear triad. In addition to the land- and sea-based capabilities, the PRC announced its new nuclear-capable strategic stealth bomber, which analysts assess will be operational by the end of this decade. The increases in capability, combined with improvements in the readiness of its nuclear and C2 forces and its advancement of the airborne leg of its triad, will significantly increase the responsiveness, survivability, and lethality of the PRC's nuclear deterrent. The PRC's nuclear breakout is deeply concerning. These capabilities will embolden Chinese leaders to leverage their nuclear forces to achieve Chinese political objectives, such as coercing other states—including U.S. allies—or threatening U.S. assets and interests across Asia and the Pacific. Additionally, China continues to develop other advanced weapons, to include their hypersonic glide vehicle that showcased global range. The PRC is not constrained by any arms control agreements and none are expected to be negotiated anytime in the near future.

Meanwhile, DPRK and Iran are also pursuing destabilizing capabilities and technologies. DPRK continues its ballistic and hypersonic missile development and testing, threatening regional stability in the Pacific. It is also working to add rail-mobile and sea-launched missile capabilities that complicate our ability to find, fix, track, and target their missiles. Iran's posturing and refusal to negotiate on international nuclear agreements shows their willingness to continue pursuing nuclear weapon and ballistic missile technology.

Competitor or ally, all nuclear-armed countries are working on or have already invested heavily in modernization, expansion, and development of their nuclear forces. The U.S. must continue to

shepherd its resources and focus on its nuclear forces to ensure we do not fall behind or allow our deterrent force to be overshadowed by the emerging capabilities of strategic competitors. Furthermore, modernized capabilities from competitors could encourage allies to look elsewhere for strategic assurance.

STRATEGY & THE NUCLEAR TRIAD

Bolstered by the strength of our U.S. Navy and the Department of Energy's (DOE) National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) partners, the triad and the NC3 enterprise has served as cornerstone of U.S. defense strategy for decades. The triad, two-thirds of which the DAF operates, brings together the capabilities of the bomber, ICBM, and the Navy's submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) forces. With foreign nuclear threats growing, the importance of the triad is more important today than ever. Each leg provides unique and complementary attributes, complicates adversary planning, and ensures no country could launch a strategic attack that eliminates our nuclear forces or our Nation's ability to respond. The triad's diversity enables risk mitigation if a particular leg of the triad is degraded or unavailable due to unforeseen technological issues, operational vulnerabilities, or technological breakthrough by a competitor. The certainty of our weapons ensures no adversary would dare risk the catastrophic consequences of a nuclear strike against our homeland.

The triad is also a key part of our allies' defense strategy through U.S. extended deterrence commitments. Our allies and partners watch what we say and do as much as our strategic competitors do. The U.S. does not only deter potential adversaries from aggression against the homeland; extended deterrence assures our allies and discourages nuclear proliferation by increasing allies' and competitors' confidence about the integrity of U.S. security commitments. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance has provided for the common security of our European allies since 1949 and Air Force and NATO dual-capable aircraft are integral to NATO's overall deterrence and defense posture. In the Indo-Pacific, U.S. nuclear capabilities play a vital role in maintaining peace, stability, and non-proliferation goals.

REQUIREMENTS, MODERNIZATION, AND RECAPITALIZATION

U.S. nuclear deterrence and extended deterrence relies on the Air Force's execution of daily deterrent operations and other states' perceptions of our capability. The credibility of our nuclear deterrent is degraded if our weapons and delivery systems are unreliable or inaccurate, or if training is inadequate. Furthermore, U.S. investments in conventional, space, and cyberspace capabilities can all be negated if an adversary perceives a nuclear advantage over the U.S. and escalates a conflict in an effort to gain that perceived advantage.

Schedule and programmatic uncertainties increase operational risks. For far too long, we have deferred our Nation's nuclear modernization and cannot do so any longer. As a result, the DAF is simultaneously recapitalizing its bomber fleet, ICBM force, air-launched missiles, and NC3 systems. These modernizations are already late to need and have little to zero schedule margin. It is not a choice between replacing these platforms and keeping them. It has become a choice between replacing them or losing them entirely. This once in a lifetime recapitalization of critical next generation capabilities must remain a top priority as we concurrently look to divest those aging and legacy systems that are not effective against the pacing challenges.

The DAF continues to maintain a strong, mutually supportive partnership with the NNSA to ensure our modernization and recapitalization programs remain on time and on budget. It is critical that each

of these programs deliver on schedule to reduce the risk of capability gaps near the end of this decade and into the next. To that end, the NDAA passed by Congress this past December enhances our nuclear deterrent by reiterating bipartisan support for our nuclear forces as the cornerstone of our national defense, and emphasizing the importance of the LGM-35A Sentinel weapon system. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 President's Budget request also greatly supports the modernization of the Air Force's Global Strike capability by ensuring continued investment in our major recapitalization programs, including the B-21, Sentinel, LRSO, and the MH-139 helicopter, while also continuing critical sustainment efforts for our current nuclear forces and support components.

GROUND LEG - INTERCONTINENTAL BALLISTIC MISSILES

The ICBM force is the most responsive leg of the triad, staying on day-to-day alert 24/7/365. ICBMs deter strategic attack on the homeland while greatly complicating the targeting calculus of any potential adversary. Through the combination of accuracy and rapid response, an adversary must consider our ICBM force in any decision involving their use of nuclear weapons. Additionally, the quantity and dispersion of the ICBM force make it a nearly insurmountable targeting problem. Without ICBMs, an adversary could calculate a more favorable outcome for an attack against the U.S. homeland. For example, without ICBMs, a conventional-only attack on our limited number of submarine and bomber bases could significantly degrade the U.S. nuclear capability.

Minuteman III*:* The MM III remains an indispensable part of the nuclear triad. However, the Air Force can no longer cost-effectively sustain it and emerging threats will reduce its future effectiveness. The Air Force deployed the first MM III missile in 1970 into launch facilities built in the 1960s. The MM III weapon system is now more than forty years beyond its designed service life and requires at least twenty significant modernization and sustainment programs to keep it viable until replaced by Sentinel beginning in FY29. The Air Force continues to work across multiple lines of effort to ensure the legacy ICBM force remains safe, secure, and effective during the concurrent operations supporting the transition to Sentinel and until its retirement.

Nuclear weapons must be as good on their last day as they are on their first—anything less is unacceptable; however, the MM III sustainment efforts cannot change the reality that this legacy platform will not be able to close capability gaps or evolve to meet future strategic requirements. The MM III's design and technology are over 56 years old. The ability to upgrade and adapt to change is prohibitively costly and significantly design constrained. The high costs and design constraints are compounded by the system's on-going asset attrition and obsolescence, with many vendors, technologies, and parts no longer in existence. These sustainment and attrition issues drive difficult trade-offs between operational maintenance requirements, which are also limited by legacy design architecture constraints, and the associated development and procurement costs. These compounding problems create exponential and prohibitive costs. This reality is reflected in several comprehensive reports and studies that have been conducted by the DAF, DoD, Congress, and academia over the past eight years that have all concluded that MM III life extension is not the most viable or even cost-effective solution.

LGM-35A Sentinel Weapon System: The DAF fully committed to replacing the entire MM III system with the LGM-35A Sentinel weapon system. Sentinel addresses ICBM capability and attribute gaps for accuracy, probability-to-penetrate, range and payload, targeting flexibility, nuclear safety, and physical and cyber security. Additionally, the development of a newer, more capable ICBM weapon system provides an opportunity to reduce the total cost of ownership by increasing system reliability and adopting specific design features focused on increasing maintainability. In

addition, the implementation of a modular open system architecture, coupled with the Air Force's ownership of the technical baseline, greatly enhances the weapon system's ability to adapt to future emerging threats and sustainment modifications. For the past seven years, Sentinel has met every major milestone and is currently in the EMD phase, which includes weapon system design, qualification, test, evaluation, and nuclear certification. In FY23 the DAF is investing $4.1 billion dollars into the Sentinel program, which allows further maturation of critical weapon system technologies and software and continued development of Vandenberg SFB test capabilities and infrastructure. Sentinel takes our ICBM force into the modern era, addresses the challenges of sustaining and securing this strategic capability, and allows us the opportunity to evolve tactics, techniques, procedures, and operator culture.

As a critical national security priority, continued, consistent, and predictable funding remains essential to ensure the on-time delivery of the Sentinel weapon system. Sentinel's unique use of digital engineering, modularity, and modular open system architecture, along with government ownership of data rights, allow it to remain viable against emerging threats and more easily integrate future NC3 systems. Increases in safety, security, reliability, and cyber resiliency have been incorporated since the start. New C2 systems maximize modularity, which streamlines future upgrades, increases maintainability, and boosts flexibility while maintaining responsiveness, and potentially reducing manpower requirement by 35%. Sentinel also allows a two-thirds reduction in the number of security and maintenance convoys, further bolstering security, reliability, and cost-savings. Sentinel's modular design improves maintainability by reducing component replacement requirements through line-replaceable and upgradable hardware. New flight systems significantly increase reliability and reduce guidance system failure by up to 60%. The incorporation of enhanced diagnostics such as fault detection, isolation, and prediction enables performance prediction, big data analytics, logistics data collection, and supply chain integration to lower life cycle costs. The fielding and stewardship of Sentinel provides a critical national security capability in a responsible, balanced way that enhances fiduciary efficiency.

The Sentinel program will begin fielding in 2027 to meet full operational capability (FOC) in 2036. The system will utilize the W87 and Mk21 until the W87-1 and Mk21A are fielded. It is critical for Sentinel to remain on this timeline in order to successfully transition from the MM III while continuing to meet ICBM on-alert requirements of the United States Strategic Command.

AIR LEG – BOMBERS AND ASSOCIATED NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Consisting of nuclear capable bombers and their associated standoff and gravity weapons, the air leg is a clear and visible signal of U.S. intent and resolve during a crisis and provides a flexible and tailored response through a variety of deployment and employment options. Today, these include the B-52 with ALCM and the B-2 with their load-out of B61. In the very near future, we will add the B-21 and the LRSO to the inventory, as well as the B61-12, which completed the first production unit of its Life Extension Program in November of 2021. Our bomber force is capable of employing the full range of combat power across the entire spectrum of conflict, giving Combatant Commanders the flexibility and necessary reach to strike, if deterrence fails. To accomplish this, the air leg requires both stand-off (i.e. LRSO) and stand-in (e.g. B-21 bombers with gravity weapons) capabilities—these are not interchangeable.

As the most flexible and visible leg of our triad, our bombers provide two critical features for our nuclear force: signaling capability and recallable forces. The generation of bomber forces from their day-to-day operations to nuclear operations takes time and is deliberately visible to enemies and allies

alike. This generation can communicate our intent and potentially prevent a conflict before it starts by allowing time to off-ramp before nuclear use. Bomber forces also enable global reach through their deployment around the world. This can provide critical signaling to enemies and allies in peacetime and allow for prompt response if deployed. While the nuclear mission of the bomber force is critical, the capabilities bombers bring to conventional operational plans are no less important. This is especially true given the USAF is not only our Nation's only bomber force, but also our Allies' only bomber force.

The B-2 bomber serves our country well and will do so until it is replaced by the B-21. The B-2 remains the only penetrating bomber able to hold any target in the world at risk, but requires communications upgrades and integration of the nuclear B61-12 gravity weapon in order to remain relevant to the fight. The B-2's replacement, the B-21, will carry this legacy of long-range strike forward; it is currently executing in the EMD phase and the Air Force is closely monitoring the production of the first six aircraft.

Investments in the B-21 and modernization of the B-52 ensures the U.S. maintains the capability to deter aggression, assure allies, and project combat power across the full spectrum of conflict. The B-52 is executing the most comprehensive modernization in its history, to include commercial engine replacement and modernization of its radios and radars, all of which remain on track. These modernization programs ensure the B-52 remains relevant through the 2050s. With a future two-bomber fleet of B-21s and modernized B-52s, the ability to reach any potential target, anytime, anywhere in the world remains intact.

The current stand-off missile, the ALCM, is operating 30 years past its design life and has significant capability gaps that will only worsen through the next decade. As we face the modern defensive capabilities of our strategic competitors, the need for a stand-off capability makes LRSO essential. The LRSO provides the most survivable and sustainable weapon for our bomber force; holding high value targets at risk in a rapidly evolving threat environment. The bomber force's capability of launching multiple LRSO weapons at once complicates adversary defenses by creating a high number of targets that air defenses must find, fix, track, target and engage simultaneously from multiple vectors of attack, thereby increasing deterrence. When they come online, the combination of the stealth B-21 and LRSO can engage targets deep in an adversary's territory that cannot be effectively addressed by ballistic missile systems, denying an adversary any geographic sanctuary. LRSO's unique characteristics augment the capabilities of nuclear gravity bombs, providing more flexible response options and increasing the effectiveness of our bombers and nuclear deterrent.

The LRSO program represents the first simultaneous integrated nuclear program that the DoD and NNSA have executed since the 1980s. The LRSO program is on track to meet its planned initial operating capability (IOC) and has been moving smoothly forward since the EMD contract was awarded in July 2021. Its successful test flight this past March was an incredible step forward. The Air Force plans to invest $981M in FY23 for the continued design and development of the LRSO. As the nuclear hedge for unforeseen issues in the Sentinel and COLUMBIA SSBN programs, it is more critical than ever that the LRSO program remains funded and on schedule.

NUCLEAR COMMAND, CONTROL, AND COMMUNICATIONS (NC3)

The DAF operates and maintains approximately seventy-five percent of all NC3 capabilities, which is a critical system-of-systems that ensures the President and senior leaders have the ability to detect nuclear attacks, decide on a response, and direct nuclear forces. Today, many NC3 systems

are a legacy of the Cold War and the DAF continues to invest heavily in order to modernize, sustain, and protect interconnected NC3 elements as new threats emerge in multiple warfighting domains, particularly those threats in the cyber and space domains. To address these threats, we must continue to adapt our NC3 architecture and capabilities. We are working closely with the Department of Defense to ensure that NC3 is integrated into the Joint All Domain Command and Control (JADC2) by linking it with the DAF's Advanced Battle Management System (ABMS). The Joint Force must leverage capabilities, such as next-generation sensors and decision support provided by our ABMS investments to acquire, and if necessary, prosecute targets. The DAF has ensured that, where practical, Next Generation NC3 capabilities will utilize ABMS solutions to adapt a modern NC3 architecture.

Weapon system modernization is underway across the entire set of NC3 capabilities. In FY23, the USAF plans to invest approximately $689M in NC3 programs, including the Family of Beyond Line-of-Sight-Terminal Force Element Terminal (FAB-T FET), Global Aircrew Strategic Network Terminal (GASNT) Increment 1, and several other programs to ensure the reliable force direction of the Air Force's nuclear forces. The President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 budget request for the Space Force initiates a necessary transformation, beginning with fielding a resilient missile warning and tracking architecture to detect and maintain custody of emergent hypersonic and maneuverable missile technologies, while making survivability under attack a key attribute of the design. The Department is heavily investing in FY23, requesting $1.029 billion for this mission area.

Additionally, we continue to invest in the Survivable Air Operations Center (SAOC) as the aging E-4B National Air Operations Center (NAOC) replacement. The SAOC ensures national leadership a highly survivable NC3 platform in the event ground command and control, and associated centers are at risk or cease to function during national emergencies. The Air Force is finalizing the SAOC program acquisition strategy, targeting approval in mid- to late-FY22 and remain on target to deliver aircraft for this critical NC3 mission in the 2030s. The DAF will continue to provide reliable and resilient NC3 capabilities across a broad range of frequencies, from missile warning to force direction

INFRASTRUCTURE & WEAPONS GENERATION FACILITIES (WGFs)

The modernization of the bomber and ICBM weapons systems remains critical to the nuclear enterprise; however, the modernization of the supporting infrastructure is also required for the continued success of the mission. Like the rest of the enterprise, these facilities are relics of the Cold War and their sustainment needs have reached the point where this aging infrastructure is impacting the ability of our Airmen to support the Air Force's nuclear mission. The DAF is already working to rectify this by recapitalizing the decades-old Weapon Storage Areas (WSAs) as Weapons Generation Facilities (WGFs). The WGF will consolidate weapon maintenance, storage, and training functions required to support the ICBM and bomber missions into a single, modernized, secure facility. WGFs support rapid generation of nuclear aircraft and routine maintenance operations for the ground-based and air legs of the triad, improving weapons generation, maintenance, and storage operations, thus resulting in a more secure facility and efficient processes. These facilities will be the backbone for the generation of Air Force combat power and bolstering deterrence. The Air Force is designing all WGFs fundamentally alike in their respective mission areas (bomber/ICBM), providing semi-hardened facilities to support generation, maintenance, and storage functions for nuclear weapons.

The Air Force has made significant progress on evaluating requirements to account for modern weapon designs, driving costs down to ensure WGF affordability. The first WGF is under construction at F.E. Warren Air Force Base (AFB) in support of the ICBM mission and is estimated

to be completed next year and a 2025 IOC. The lessons learned from the F.E. Warren WGF is driving the design review for the WGF anticipated at Malmstrom AFB in support of the ICBMs; the DAF anticipates a construction award for the Malmstrom WGF in FY23. To support the bomber and LRSO force, the DAF will use FY22 enacted appropriations for the construction of the WGF at Barksdale AFB— which will combine existing facilities with new construction—and will submit a future budget request to begin planning for a WGF at Ellsworth AFB, as discussed with the Senate Appropriations Committee during the FY22 MILCON Budget hearing. Finally, the DAF is planning on WGFs at Minot AFB and Whiteman AFB to support both the ICBM and bomber mission and are expected in the 2030s.

DIGITAL ACQUISITION STRATEGY

While we are proud of these programs' progress, the DAF recognizes the need to Accelerate Change. Specifically, we are pivoting toward digital engineering, agile software development, and open digital architectures when developing each future program in order to reduce cost and cut the time between concept and solution. We have the capability to transform weapon system acquisition: computing power has increased by 10,000 times since 2000 and there has been exponential growth in the ability to collect, store, and analyze data to identify trends, i.e. "Big Data". The DAF is also paving the way for the novel concept of owning the technical baseline and creating an architectural framework to share with the warfighter. Another revolutionary concept we are pursuing is the computerization and virtualization of development and production, assembly, and even sustainment of systems. This unique use of technology will cut real-world testing times by validating digital models and make future upgrades and modifications faster and easier by bringing lessons learned and feedback from Airmen into the digital sphere. Aircraft, weapons, and other critical systems will prove their capability and worth in a digital reality before physical prototyping is even begun.

CONCLUSION

The DAF is actively working to adapt to new domains, new competitors, changing technologies, and an emerging security environment. To ensure and protect the American way of life, we must honor our commitments to our allies, while unequivocally and consistently communicating our resolve to our strategic competitors and pacing challenges; we must deter across every domain, every day. Our strategic deterrent enables all elements of our national power; we must continue to innovate, develop, acquire, field, and sustain our nuclear systems to abolish any doubt in our capabilities by either friend or foe.

The U.S. nuclear triad remains the primary military means by which the DoD provides deterrence against existential threats to our way of life, our homeland, and our allies. Failing to prioritize our modernization and recapitalization efforts for nuclear and conventional systems would result in retaining systems that are no longer capable of deterring our peer competitors and would amount to ceding power and influence to forces that could threaten the United States and its allies, friends, and interests. The only way to deter our strategic competitors, assure our allies, and defend our interests is to field an unquestionably credible force so that no potential adversary will dare to risk the fight. We can maintain deterrence by investing, modernizing, and recapitalizing smartly and quickly. The nuclear enterprise is on the correct path but we must remain diligent by providing stable requirements and consistent funding. The DAF is committed to providing stable requirements and continued funding for its current, and future, nuclear programs and capabilities across the enterprise. However, we cannot do this alone, and we ask for the continued support of Congress to provide the required authorizations and appropriations across both the DoD and NNSA enterprises to ensure deterrence of war on behalf of the Nation, its interests, and its allies.