Nuclear Modernization:
Ensuring a Safe, Secure, Reliable, and Credible U.S. Nuclear Deterrent

1. Nuclear Deterrence is the #1 Priority Mission of the Department of Defense.

⭐ The nuclear deterrent underwrites every U.S. military operation on the globe—it is the backstop and foundation of our national defense and the defense of our allies.

⭐ For decades, Republican and Democratic administrations alike have recognized the critical importance of the nuclear triad for keeping the peace by deterring nuclear attack and large-scale war among the great powers.

⭐ DoD is prioritizing the nuclear mission over all other modernization programs, when faced with that choice.

2. We Must Recognize the Reality that Foreign Nuclear Threats are Growing.

⭐ Despite U.S. and allied efforts to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our defense posture, other countries have not followed our lead. We now face the most complex, uncertain, and dangerous nuclear environment since the end of the Cold War.

⭐ After 25 years of primarily drawing down and sustaining our Cold War systems, we must now continue the previous administration's modernization program and pursue modest supplemental capabilities—such as fielding a low-yield ballistic missile warhead and reintroducing a sea-launched cruise missile—to address this more challenging threat environment.

⭐ The U.S. cannot project power against nuclear armed adversaries without effective, reliable nuclear forces.

3. Our Deterrent Must Be Modernized to Remain Credible—Delay is Not an Option.

⭐ While still reliable and credible today, our current delivery systems, weapons, command and control systems, and infrastructure are rapidly aging into obsolescence.

⭐ Due to previous deferrals, our nuclear forces are well beyond their original design lives—some decades beyond—and must now be modernized simultaneously. We cannot keep current Cold War systems indefinitely—if not replaced, these capabilities will be lost and the credibility and effectiveness of our deterrent will be at risk.

⭐ We must reinvigorate our nuclear forces and enterprise to ensure we have the capability and capacity we need to deter adversaries and assure allies.

4. As the Foundation of Our Nation's Security, Our Nuclear Forces are Affordable.

⭐ Each leg of the triad is essential, complementary, and critical to ensuring no adversary believes it can ever employ nuclear weapons for any reason, under any circumstances.

⭐ Nuclear modernization will cost roughly 3.7% of the DoD budget at its highest point in the late 2020s and early 2030s. During this timeframe, DoD projects it will spend less than 7% of its annual budget on operating, sustaining, and modernizing its nuclear forces.

⭐ This is a modest percentage of our defense budget when measured against the catastrophic consequences of a major war or a nuclear war. America can afford survival.

5. Effective Arms Control and Nuclear Nonproliferation Efforts Contribute to Our Security.

⭐ The U.S. remains committed to nuclear nonproliferation and will work to strengthen the nonproliferation regime to halt the spread of nuclear technology and materials.

⭐ The U.S. commitment to extend nuclear deterrence to our allies contributes to nonproliferation goals by reducing incentives for allies to have their own nuclear weapons.

⭐ Arms control can be an effective tool for managing competition and reducing risk. Yet it is not an end unto itself, but must contribute to the security of the U.S. and its allies and partners. The U.S. remains committed to pursuing verifiable measures that effectively promote our security.

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