

STRENGTHENING REGIONAL DETERRENCE

The U.S. global alliance and partnership network is a military center of gravity. The National Defense Strategy (NDS) requires strengthening security architectures in key regions in order to fully leverage Allied and partner capabilities to deter and, if necessary, defeat adversary aggression. U.S. extended nuclear deterrence is foundational to this approach, and Allies and partners can be confident that the United States is willing and able to deter the range of strategic threats they face whether in crisis or conflict.

Modern, flexible, and tailorable U.S. nuclear forces are key to assuring Allies and partners that the United States is committed and capable of deterring the range of threats. Extended nuclear deterrence also contributes to U.S. non-proliferation goals by giving Allies and partners confidence that they can resist strategic threats and remain secure without the need to acquire nuclear weapons of their own.

CAPABILITIES TAILORED TO EXTENDED DETERRENCE

Modernizing the U.S. Nuclear Triad and regional capabilities are fundamental elements of U.S. extended deterrence commitments. Only if the United States can deter strategic attack against the Homeland can Allies and partners be confident that U.S. regional extended deterrence commitments are credible. The Triad is augmented by important regional capabilities. The most likely scenario for adversary nuclear employment involves nuclear attack arising from regional conflict. To deter theater attacks and resist nuclear coercion, the United States retains and deploys capabilities uniquely suited to regional conflicts such as the F-15E Dual-Capable Aircraft (DCA) and its eventual replacement, the F-35A, equipped with the modern B61-12 bomb; the W76-2 low-yield submarine-launch ballistic missile warhead; the AGM-86 air-launched cruise missile, and the Long-Range Standoff weapon. These capabilities are key to ensuring that adversaries do not miscalculate the consequences of nuclear use on any scale, thereby reducing their confidence in initiating conventional war in the first instance.

STRENGTHENING EXTENDED DETERRENCE IN EUROPE AND THE INDO-PACIFIC

Although the Cold War’s shadow has long since receded, new threats have grown in both Europe and the Indo-Pacific region. NATO has and will continue to rely upon the strategic nuclear forces of the United States, the United Kingdom, and France for its deterrence and defense posture. In particular, U.S. DCA and nuclear weapons forward-deployed in the U.S. European Command area of responsibility are key to NATO’s nuclear-burden-sharing arrangements, and the United States will continue to support steps to ensure a modern, ready, and credible NATO nuclear deterrent.

Our security commitments in the Indo-Pacific region are also enduring. We will continue to field flexible nuclear forces suited to deterring regional nuclear conflict, including the capability to forward deploy strategic bombers, dual-capable fighter aircraft, and nuclear weapons to the region. We will seek to identify pragmatic steps to strengthen deterrence consultations, including periodically meeting at more senior levels and examining options to improve crisis management. We will use multilateral venues for greater information sharing and dialogue to better posture collective deterrence and defense with Allies and partners. And, while we retain the capability to forward deploy nuclear forces to the region, we will also identify opportunities for greater capability integration to respond to emerging threats.

