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**Statement of Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and
International Security Rose Gottemoeller
Before the Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
July 13, 2016**

(U) Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee. I'm pleased to be here today with my colleagues from DOD and DOE to testify about the Long Range Standoff (LRSO) cruise missile. I will focus my remarks on three key points. First, the LRSO is consistent with our arms control commitments and the President's Prague Agenda. Second, the LRSO supports strategic stability and does not undermine it. Third, it is important in the eyes of our allies.

(U) Let me begin by affirming that the LRSO program, along with our approach to nuclear modernization, is consistent with our obligations under the New START Treaty and the broader Prague Agenda, which called for maintenance of a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal as we move toward a world without nuclear weapons. There was a recognition that nuclear weapons have an important role to play in the defense of the United States and our allies, but that we would work to reduce the roles and numbers of nuclear weapons and not create new nuclear warheads and new missions. The LRSO does not require a new warhead, and it is not being developed in support of a new mission. Its mission is the same as that of the more than 30-years old Air-Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM), the AGM-86B, which the LRSO is replacing. The AGM-86B is deployed on heavy bombers, which are subject to the New START Treaty.

(U) We continue to reduce our deployed strategic weapons in accordance with the New START Treaty and the President has been clear in his willingness to examine further nuclear reductions. It is equally clear that further reductions require a ready and active partner, which we do not have in the current Russian administration. Furthermore, Russia is engaged in its own nuclear modernization program to replace Cold War era systems, and we believe Russia will proceed on this course irrespective of U.S. modernization, including the LRSO.

(U) There is no evidence that the LRSO or our nuclear modernization program are prompting an action-reaction cycle or catalyzing arms races.

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The Russians have already developed their next-generation nuclear-armed air-launched cruise missile, the KH-102, and have employed its conventional variant, the KH-101, in Syria. Any notion that LRSO is spurring on Russia's advanced cruise missile development is simply not borne out by the facts.

(U) The LRSO is valuable in maintaining strategic stability. During the Cold War, we worried about the destabilizing nature of intermediate- and medium-range ground-launched cruise and ballistic missiles due to their short times of flight and the fear that they might be used to conduct decapitating first strikes on command and control systems. That is why we negotiated the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.

(U) The LRSO is different. Unlike a ground-launched system, the LRSO cannot pose the threat of a short-notice, disarming attack because it will be carried as a stand-off weapon by long-range bombers. Arms control has generally given a "discount" to bomber weapons because they were seen as the least threatening to stability, because they pose the smallest risk of surprise attack. The process of alerting these bombers would be observable and these relatively slow flying aircraft would take hours to reach the point where they would release their weapons to targets. Moreover, the aircraft are recallable. These deliberate aspects of bomber weapons provide the President with the most signaling flexibility during a crisis.

(U) Indeed, it is the absence of a nuclear-armed cruise missile that might leave us most vulnerable to unintended escalation during a crisis. Without a stand-off cruise missile option, future Presidents may find themselves facing the unpalatable choice of responding to nuclear coercion or attack with SLBMs or ICBMs, or attempting to employ a stealth bomber to penetrate the adversary's territory to reach targets.

(U) I've explained how the LRSO is consistent with the Prague Agenda and I've explained what it doesn't do – undermine strategic stability. I also want to tell you what it does do. I will leave the technical details of this to my DOD colleagues, but I want to acknowledge the contributions of the LRSO to our foreign policy objectives – in particular as they pertain to assuring U.S. allies against high-end threats.

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(U) The future security environment in both Asia and Europe will be characterized by increased anti-access, area-denial (A2AD) capabilities, meaning adversaries will have weapons that degrade the U.S. military's ability to project power into conflict areas, to include capabilities necessary for responding to nuclear attacks. These adversary strategies are designed to make the U.S. forward presence highly vulnerable, degrading the survivability of our stealth platforms, and hindering our ability to project power forward in a crisis by the middle of the next decade. The LRSO's standoff and penetration capability addresses these vulnerabilities. It will help deny the enemy the ability to constrain our President's options for responding to nuclear attack. It will assure our allies of our ability to meet our extended deterrence commitments.

(U) This is not just our view. We've heard from our allies about the value of the LRSO during our extended deterrence discussions. China is developing the combination of modernized nuclear forces, intermediate-range ballistic missiles, and supporting strike architecture to deny U.S. conventional forces and stealth bombers timely access to the Western Pacific in a crisis. Similarly, our NATO Allies have begun to grapple with responses to a Russian doctrine that embraces nuclear coercion.

(U) Without the LRSO, once again, the United States, if the President decided to signal with or employ nuclear weapons, would be forced to either send a bomber into an environment in which it may not be able to penetrate, or to rely on the strategic-range weapon systems in the ground- and sea-based legs of our triad to deter nuclear coercion or respond to first use.

(U) While it is up to the President to make final decisions about what capabilities are needed and what risks can be managed, our collective view is that the LRSO provides us with rational options that would increase Presidential decision space in a crisis and uphold our extended deterrence commitments to allies.

(U) Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to answering your questions.

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