



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

MESSAGE TO THE FORCE ON OUR NUCLEAR ENTERPRISE FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2014

To the men and women of the Department of Defense:

Earlier this year, following revelations about troubling lapses of integrity in our nation's nuclear forces, I ordered comprehensive internal and external reviews of our entire nuclear enterprise. Today at the Pentagon, I announced the reviews' findings and what we are doing to address them – ranging from changes that involve oversight, policies, and culture, to changes that require more funding and resources for the nuclear mission – but I wanted to send a personal message to all of you.

Our nuclear deterrent plays a critical role in assuring U.S. national security, and it is DoD's highest priority mission. No other capability we have is more important. Our nuclear forces stand alone in being able to deter nuclear attack on the United States and our allies.

For too long, we have overlooked career paths, compensation, infrastructure, and small-unit leadership that are mission-critical in the nuclear force. That is changing. It will *continue* to change. What you do every day is critically important to America's national security.

Over the last year, I have heard from many of our people in the nuclear force. I visited missileers at F.E. Warren Air Force Base and called launch control officers underground at Malmstrom. I visited nuclear weapons maintainers at Kirtland Air Force Base, met with STRATCOM senior and junior officers at Offutt, and met with submariners aboard the ballistic missile submarine U.S.S. *Tennessee* at Kings Bay. Today, I am visiting bomber crews, missileers, and support teams at Minot Air Force Base. Despite sometimes insufficient resources and manpower, our airmen, sailors, and Marines have stretched themselves to maintain, guard, and operate the nuclear enterprise every day. They deserve our thanks.

To all these individuals and their colleagues across our nuclear enterprise: You are the heirs to a proud legacy, and it is because of you that our nuclear enterprise is safe, secure, and effective today. We will expect excellence, and the President will expect excellence, because the American people expect excellence. In turn, we will ensure you have the resources and support you need – and we will always be unspeakably grateful to you for carrying out this vital mission.

Thank you all, and your families, for what you do for our country.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chuck Hagel". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single blue stroke.