



# EVOLVING STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

## COMPLEX, VOLATILE, AND EVOLVING THREATS

- > As the *National Defense Strategy* (NDS) points out, the United States, allies, and partners confront a security environment that is more complex and volatile than any we have experienced in recent memory.
- > Today, more than 20 States possess offensive missiles, and potential adversaries are expanding their missile capabilities simultaneously in three different directions by:
  - Increasing existing missile system capabilities;
  - Adding new and unprecedented types of missile capabilities to their arsenals; and
  - Integrating offensive missiles more thoroughly in their coercive threats, military strategy, and war planning.
- > Left unaddressed, the expanding missile capabilities of potential adversaries could embolden them to believe mistakenly that they can coerce us, inhibit our freedom of action to respond to aggression, and undermine our security alliances.

## ROGUE STATES ARE PURSUING LONG-RANGE MISSILE TECHNOLOGIES

- > North Korea has rapidly accelerated its nuclear weapons and demonstrated an Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM) capability that could possibly be tipped with a nuclear warhead.
- > Iran is extending the range of its ballistic missile systems and is pursuing a Space Launch Vehicle (SLV) program that could shorten a pathway to an ICBM capability.

## POTENTIAL ADVERSARIES ARE EXPANDING REGIONAL OFFENSIVE MISSILE SYSTEMS

- > North Korea is fielding regional missiles capable of threatening allies and partners, and deployed U.S. forces, and is diversifying its ballistic missile program by launching a variety of missile types from various platforms.
- > Iran has the largest ballistic missile force in the Middle East – with increased accuracy, range, and lethality – that can strike U.S. forces, allies, and partners throughout the region and in southeastern Europe.
- > Potential adversaries are also fielding regional offensive missile systems that are becoming more accurate and lethal.
  - These systems include multiple types of short-, medium-, and intermediate-range missiles intended to provide coercive political and military advantages in regional crises or conflict.
- > Russia is developing a new generation of advanced, regional ballistic and cruise missiles that support its anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) strategy intended to prevent the United States and its allies and partners from countering Russian aggression in regional crises or conflicts.
  - These new missile systems, in addition to existing ones, appear to be a central element of Russia's frequent and explicit coercive nuclear threats to U.S. allies and partners.
- > A key component of China's military modernization is its regional ballistic and cruise missile arsenal designed to prevent U.S. military access to support regional allies and partners.
  - China is augmenting its short-range ballistic missile force with a growing number of medium- and intermediate-range ballistic missiles, including sophisticated anti-ship missiles that pose a direct threat to U.S. aircraft carriers.
- > Through potential adversary proliferation networks, State and non-State actors are employing these weapons today.

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**These are the realities of the emerging missile threat environment that U.S. missile defense policy, strategy, and capabilities must address**