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Graduate Student Council

of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Appendix 1

Re: Statement of Support for the education and research recommendations of the “Future of Defense Task Force Report 2020.”

The Graduate Student Council (GSC) represents the nearly 7,000 graduate students of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). We support policies that strengthen the American science and technology base, drive American economic competitiveness, and ensure that the development of new technology is guided by American values.

Accordingly, we strongly support the education and research funding recommendations outlined in the Future of Defense Task Force Report, including expansion of university funding, investment in STEM primary education, immigration support, and streamlined security clearances for graduate students.

American investment in research and development (R&D) is faltering. The Department of Defense R&D spend has stagnated, while other countries, including our competitors, dramatically increase investment. Furthermore, current US immigration policy pushes STEM talent away from the US and towards other countries, including our competitors, while security clearance delays drive talent away from defense work. The Future of Defense Task Force Report presents a clear and effective roadmap to increase investment in basic R&D and to strengthen US STEM talent.

STEM talent is the most important driver of US innovation. Today's graduate students are tomorrow's research leaders, and US academic institutions play an essential role in training the future leaders of the US science and technology base. However, graduate students in the US face challenges working in defense-critical areas, including quantum computing, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity. **In line with the task force's recommendations, we believe that increasing funding for targeted fellowships, such as the National Defence Science and Engineering Graduate Fellowship Program (NDSEG), and expanding internships for defense-relevant research, such as the X-Force Fellowship, is one of the most effective ways to secure the American technological future.**

One of the most important outputs of research activities are the trained scientists and engineers who will lead future US innovation. If you would like to know more about the importance of increased research funding for graduate students and our nation's global competitiveness, or would like to discuss additional methods of advancing graduate education and research, please reach out to us at gsc-eab-fed@mit.edu.