

ICBM EAR Week of November 22, 2024

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Missile Strike Targets--Russia

UN Institute for Disarmament Research Senior Researcher Andrey Baklitskiy: “Ukrainian armed forces claim that Russia attacked city of Dnipro with an ICBM with conventional payload. If true this will be totally unprecedented and the first actual military use of ICBM. Not that it makes a lot of sense given their price and precision.”

Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova: **The** newly operational U.S. ballistic missile defense base near Redzikowo, Poland, “leads to undermining strategic stability, increasing strategic risks and, as a result, to an increase in the overall level of nuclear danger.”

U.S. officials “dismissed [Moscow’s announcement of an updated] doctrine as [a] nothingburger of nuclear threats.”

Unnamed Russian official responding to the Biden administration greenlighting the use of long-range missiles against Russia: “Mr. Biden has slammed shut the door of his own coffin.”

Congressional Analysis: 2024 Election and Senate Appropriations

There will be a new chair of the Senate Defense Subcommittee on Appropriations and that could most likely---if under seniority rules--- be Senator Collins of Maine or Mitch McConnell of Kentucky. The current subcommittee chair Mr. Tester was defeated for re-election.

If one examines the full SAC committee, of the top nine ranking members of the current majority, Murray through Coons, seven are on the defense subcommittee. And likewise, of the top 9 minority members of the full Committee, Collins through Boozman, eight are members of the defense subcommittee. Given the makeup of the Senate at 53-47, vs the current 51-49, the defense subcommittee ratios will probably be the same, with the new R majority adding one seat and the new Democratic minority getting only six seats.

For election buffs, there are still 5 million votes still outstanding, meaning that 156 million people will have voted, the second largest vote ever given that in 2020 some 160 million Americans voted. Third party candidates received over 2.5 million votes. President elect Trump

is at 77 million compared to 72 million in 2020. VP Harris has received 74.4 million votes, 7 million less than Biden in 2020.

The House has three races left to call with R candidates ahead by 800 and 250 votes, respectively in Iowa and California but with one incumbent Congresswoman in California trailing by slightly less than 500 votes. R have flipped 8 seats and the Dems have flipped 7.

In the Senate, Senator Casey of PA has conceded to Senator elect McCormack who won by 16,000.

Strategic Developments: New Russian Nuclear Doctrine Summary

MOSCOW, November 19. /TASS/. Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed a decree ratifying the revised nuclear doctrine, titled "Foundations of State Policy on Nuclear Deterrence." The document has been officially published. According to Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov, the document will be scrutinized both domestically and internationally. TASS has compiled the key details of the doctrine.

Key provisions: According to the document, nuclear deterrence is aimed at "a potential adversary, which may encompass individual countries and military alliances (blocs, unions) that regard Russia as a potential enemy and possess nuclear and/or other weapons of mass destruction or have substantial combat capabilities of general-purpose forces." Russia will also engage in nuclear deterrence against those countries that offer their territory, maritime zones, airspace, and resources for aggression against it. The president is the ultimate authority on the use of nuclear weapons. Aggression from any non-nuclear state, but with the involvement or backing of a nuclear state, will be considered a joint attack on Russia. Additionally, a nuclear response is deemed possible if there is a critical threat to Russia's sovereignty, even from conventional weapons, including an attack on Belarus as part of the Union State, or a massive launch of warplanes, cruise missiles, drones, or other aircraft crossing the Russian border.

The Ukraine Quandary

President Reagan spent his political career working to end the USSR. If we failed to defend Ukraine, we would be helping Putin recreate the USSR or a new Russian empire, which seems to be a really dumb idea. Yet too many are supporting the narrative that Ukraine's sovereignty is irrelevant to US security.

But wanting to defend Ukraine doesn't mean the path to victory is open. Most troublesome however has been the sense that the US and Ukraine have no achievable plan to kick Russia out of Ukraine, with the US instead primarily emphasizing the need for restraint in order to prevent any escalation of the conflict especially an escalation that would include the use of nuclear weapons, which Mr. Putin has serially threatened to use. Especially with the recent use against Ukraine of what is apparently a Russia ICBM with a conventional warhead, perhaps a reminder that there are more missiles where this one came from!

However, it must be emphasized one cannot change international borders, using military force. That is why the US and a coalition kicked Saddam out of Kuwait and why Thatcher kicked Argentina out of the Falklands.

On the other hand, when the United States pledged to protect Ukraine sovereignty in 1994, we did not take sufficient measures to fulfill that promise.

In 2008, Russia invaded Moldova and Georgia and the United States did very little in response. In 2014 Russia invaded Ukraine and the United States response was not to come to the defense of Ukraine but actually to place an arms embargo against Ukraine. Our assistance consisted of sending Ukraine blankets

Ukraine poses zero military threat to Russia; similarly, the NATO border states with Russia are no threat as they do not have the necessary offensive force structure to invade a country and hold territory the strength or size of Russia. Now NATO does have the joint forces one would assume could deter an attack on the territory of any of its members. In that respect NATO is very much a defensive alliance.

Unfortunately, there is not a strategy for victory on the table, nor does there appear to be such a strategy in development. It also is clear that Russia cannot swallow all of Ukraine no matter how many North Korean soldiers are sent into the cauldron of military conflict though some observers think the conflict has begun to tilt in the direction of Moscow.

For three years, Mr. Putin has threatened the United States with an escalation for the use of nuclear weapons should the United States and NATO supply Ukraine with weapons capable of striking into Russia. The US has provided such missiles but the Putin threats have been so frequent they have now begun to make Europe, NATO and the United States to not take them seriously.

And by assuming the Putin threats are only bluff, the US may assume our current deterrent capabilities are sufficient and lose a sense of urgency to robustly modernize our nuclear deterrent, especially our less than sufficient theater nuclear forces.

Now Mr. Putin has lowered the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons. His new doctrine includes the right to attack with nuclear weapons any nation which is allied with another nation that does have weapons such as the alliance of Ukraine and the USA

He also expanded the doctrine to allow attacks against not just Russian assets within Russia proper but also Russian interests outside of the homeland.

Given the current apparent inability of either country to obtain victory, on the table being widely discussed is a ceasefire and move to an armistice which might include the creation of demilitarized zone. A key issue may be whether Mr. Putin will take an offramp if offered by the United States. Or whether Putin will continue the conflict even while the Russian economy struggles.* And Russia's attacks against other NATO countries involving cyber, assassinations and infrastructure sabotage.

What kind of future deal might be negotiated? Russian territorial occupation of areas it has conquered; some sort of buffer zone to separate armed forces; a long delay if not prevention of

Ukraine's entry into NATO; and some sort of security guarantees for Ukraine short of such membership.

Russian expert Stephen Blank with the FPRI sees this kind of a deal as a disaster. Ukraine would be surrendering its territory and as such begin the dismembering of its territory. Putin's aggression would be rewarded, and the beginning of the unraveling of NATO would start, a long sought Soviet and now Russian objective. And future efforts to support a NATO member subject to criminal Russian aggression may be difficult to achieve given such an outcome of the Ukraine conflict.

* **New York Sun, November 20th**, by **Anthony Grant**: [Putin Eyes a 'Trump Peace Deal' in Ukraine, a New Report Says, as Russian Economy Buckles | The New York Sun](#)

Two New China Reports, Bill Gertz, Washington Times

<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2024/nov/19/china-military-significant-threat-capable-winning> By [Bill Gertz](#) - [Read More](#)

By [Bill Gertz](#) - *The Washington Times* - Tuesday, November 19, 2024

A version of this story appeared in the daily [Threat Status](#) newsletter from *The Washington Times*. [Click here](#) to receive *Threat Status* delivered directly to your inbox each weekday. [China's](#) military power poses an acute threat to the United States and [Beijing's](#) forces could now potentially defeat the U.S. military in a future regional conflict, according to a congressional commission report made public Tuesday.

The report, based on both classified and unclassified information and hearings, also warned that [Beijing](#) is escalating tensions in the Indo-Pacific region against [Japan](#), in addition to continued military pressure targeting [Taiwan](#) and [the Philippines](#) further south. Two decades of large-scale military expansion by [China](#) focused on building large numbers of missiles, ships, aircraft and other systems for a future Indo-Pacific conflict, said the 793-page report by the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission.

By [Bill Gertz](#) - *The Washington Times* - Friday, November 22, 2024

[China](#) is using strategic deception to advance its strategy of seeking a preeminent world position, and understanding Beijing's use of duplicity in statecraft is critical for successful American policies, according to Miles Yu, a former State Department policymaker and expert on the Chinese military.

Mr. [Yu](#) said in a report published by the Hoover Institution that Henry Kissinger understood Chinese deception well, saying that leader Mao Zedong showed "an almost instinctive ability to misdirect his opponent, creating illusions of weakness where the strength lay and vice versa." For [China](#), strategic deception is shaped by concepts of realpolitik dating back to the Warring States era, between 475 B.C. and 221 B.C., and combined with revised Marxist dialectical thinking. Realpolitik influence uses pragmatism, deception and unprincipled flexibility, while

Marxist dialectical thinking is used to understand and manipulate contradictions to drive progress.

New Study of the Week: China Imperialism by Chris Ford, November 21, 2022, National Institute for Public Policy



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Executive Summary

As the countries of the world struggle with what to do about the growing power of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and its increasingly obvious predilection to bully and intimidate other states, it is important to be honest and clear about the nature of this challenge: the problem presented by China's growing aggressiveness is not about the United States per se, but rather about the future sovereignty and autonomy of all the states of the Indo-Pacific, and perhaps beyond. It is about whether they will be pulled into a new network of quasi-tributary relationships with Beijing in which they will be expected to defer to China on any matter that Chinese Communist Party (CCP) officials in Beijing deem to be of importance. This paper draws out the many loose parallels that exist between the PRC's present-day entanglement of other peoples in webs of Sinocentric influence and coercion and the "classic" imperialism engaged in by the European powers in the 19th and into the early 20th Centuries. It describes at ten basic elements often associated with the metropole/periphery relationships of European imperialism in the 19th Century, and that—albeit so far with the exception of the phenomenon of direct imperial rule and settler colonialism—arguably represents a basic imperialist template. It then demonstrates the remarkable degree to which modern Chinese relationships with the Global South follow that imperialist template today. These ten facets of imperialism are:

The Weeks Best Nuclear Analysis

The American Nuclear Arsenal Guarantees Peace: Americans deserve peace and stability. America's nuclear arsenal has provided that for eight decades....NIDS essay by Adam and Curtis. <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/american-nuclear-arsenal-guarantees-peace-213744>

Minuteman Missile Test with Three Warheads
<https://hackaday.com/2024/11/12/minuteman-icbm-launch-tests-triple-warheads/>

Putin Does Lower Nuclear Threshold
Putin formally lowers threshold for using nuclear arsenal after Biden's arms decision for Ukraine... By [Mike Glenn](#) - [Read More](#)

The True Aims of China's Nuclear Buildup

Beijing's Growing Arsenal Is Meant to Dissolve America's Alliance System in Asia

By [Kyle Balzer and Dan Blumenthal](#)

November 21, 2024

Excerpt: Since 2018, American defense analysts have repeatedly identified China as the greatest threat to U.S. national security. They have variously described Beijing as a “systemic challenge,” a “pacing threat,” and even a “peer adversary,” owing to China’s massive military buildup, belligerent behavior in the Asia-Pacific, and global campaign of economic coercion. These vague, buzzy phrases point to a growing consensus: that China’s ambitions greatly imperil American national interests. There is no consensus, however, on the intention behind China’s strategic moves, chief among them its rapid buildup of nuclear weapons.

[“Deterring the Nuclear Dictators,” *Foreign Affairs*, Madelyn Creedon and Franklin Miller, November 20, 2024.](#)

For more than three decades after the end of the Cold War, the United States and its allies faced no serious nuclear threats. Unfortunately, that is no longer the case. Russian President Vladimir Putin has been rattling his nuclear saber in a manner reminiscent of Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev. Chinese President Xi Jinping has directed a dramatic buildup of China’s nuclear arsenal, a project whose size and scope the recently retired commander of U.S. Strategic Command has described as “breathtaking.” The Russian and Chinese leaders have also signed a treaty of “friendship without limits.” North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is supplying weapons and troops to support Russia’s war in Ukraine, and North Korea is improving its ability to strike both its neighbors and the U.S. homeland with nuclear weapons, as it demonstrated with an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) test launch on October 31.

These developments pose far-reaching challenges to U.S. national security. The United States no longer has the luxury of ignoring nuclear dangers and concentrating on deterring a single adversary. To address this new reality, the Biden administration has modified U.S. nuclear targeting guidance in order to be able to deter China and Russia simultaneously. It is also developing new nuclear delivery systems, platforms, and warheads. But Washington’s efforts to modernize the aging U.S. nuclear deterrent have been hampered by inadequate industrial base capacity, materials and labor shortages, and funding gaps. What needs to be done is clear: the next administration should dispense with undertaking an extensive review of either the nuclear deterrence policy or the modernization plans. There is a huge need to just get on with the work of modernization and fix the problems.

MORE ADVERSARIES, LESS TIME

Over the past three decades, incoming administrations have generally undertaken a Nuclear Posture Review, a time-consuming process to determine U.S. nuclear policy and strategy for the next five to ten years. To understand why the new Trump administration should limit itself to doing a quick update of the Biden guidance rather than a complete Nuclear Posture Review, it is important to recognize the threat and how rapidly it has grown. Although Russia got off to a slow start in its nuclear modernization program, that effort is now largely complete. Russia has achieved a modern strategic triad of land-based intercontinental missiles, strategic submarines and their associated missiles, and bombers and their air-launched cruise missiles.

Each element of the updated triad is a significant improvement over previous capabilities, and some are also destabilizing to the existing strategic balance : the Russian Sarmat, for example, a massive missile designed to replace the heavy SS-18 intercontinental ballistic missile, can carry a large number of nuclear warheads designed to attack American ICBMs in a first-strike scenario.

Several new Russian nonstrategic systems are deeply disturbing. The Poseidon, an intercontinental-range nuclear torpedo, for example, is designed to devastate large coastal areas and render them unfit for habitation for centuries to come. Of even more concern is Russia's effort to rebuild all elements of its regional nuclear forces—short- and medium-range missiles that can be launched from the ground, sea, or air. These systems are clearly intended to intimidate Moscow's neighbors and lend substance to Russia's new nuclear doctrine, announced by Putin in September, in which the Kremlin broadened the circumstances in which it might use nuclear weapons.

China has been modernizing its nuclear forces even faster. Beginning around 2020, Xi ordered a massive and rapid expansion of China's arsenal. The number of strategic nuclear weapons the country deploys is projected to double from 500 to 1,000 by 2030 and to reach at least 1,550 by the middle of the next decade. Beijing has already achieved a capable strategic triad, smaller but similar to that of the United States and Russia, and it is also expanding and diversifying its regional nuclear forces. Unlike Russia and the United States, China nominally adheres to a "no first use" policy. But its nuclear forces have in fact acquired first-strike and launch-on-warning capabilities.

Although China's and Russia's growing arsenals pose serious challenges, the United States' nuclear deterrence policy is fully capable of dealing with them. For more than 45 years, U.S. policy has focused on deterring aggression against vital national interests and those of U.S. allies by maintaining the ability to target the assets that potential adversaries value most: themselves and their leadership cadre, the security infrastructure that keeps them in power, selected elements of their nuclear and conventional forces, and their war-supporting industries. In the past, such adversaries might have been leaders of the Soviet Union; today, they are the regimes of Putin, Xi, and Kim.

Nonetheless, the growth of Chinese nuclear capabilities will present a new challenge by introducing a third major nuclear superpower by the mid-2030s. In order to prepare for the possibility of coordinated or opportunistic aggression by both Russia and China, U.S. President Joe Biden announced in June modified U.S. targeting guidance, which, as the National Security Council official Pranay Vaddi has put it, is designed to "deter Russia, the PRC, and North Korea simultaneously." Vaddi went on to say, with reference to U.S. nuclear forces, that the country "may reach a point in the coming years where an increase in current deployed numbers is required."

Left unstated but highly important is determining the correct size of the U.S. arsenal. Crucially, the United States' deployed nuclear force must be sufficiently large to cover the targets that potential enemies value most, as defined by the most recent targeting guidance and any subsequent updates. But contrary to what some commentators have suggested, the United States

need not and absolutely should not increase its nuclear arsenal to match that of Russia's and China's combined. The new guidance, when fully implemented, will provide a strong and effective deterrent. As a result, the incoming Trump administration should avoid the years-long guidance development process that new administrations traditionally undertake—beginning with a Nuclear Posture Review.

Rather than trying to rewrite the Biden administration's already updated guidance, the new administration should focus on those areas in which the United States does have problems: the slow progress of its own nuclear modernization, the large gaps in its conventional deterrent, and the significant weaknesses in the U.S. defense industrial base.

THREE THINGS AT ONCE

The original creation of the U.S. nuclear triad was not the result of strategic calculation. The combination of land-based missiles, submarine-launched missiles, and strategic bombers arose initially as a result of interservice rivalry in the 1950s. But the combination of different flight profiles and basing modes proved to be highly valuable. The first real triad was fielded by the Kennedy administration. Two decades later, the Reagan administration modernized those forces: it gave the Minuteman ICBMs new motors and guidance systems, designed a new class of strategic submarines equipped with new missiles, and provided the aging bomber force with then stealthy, long-range cruise missiles to ensure their continued effectiveness. By the turn of the twenty-first century, however, the Reagan-era triad had become antiquated and should have been replaced. But U.S. strategists were diverted from this task by a combination of geopolitical assessments—that Putin, for example, who had come to power only a few years earlier, was not a threat to the United States or its Western allies and that the overall nuclear threat had diminished—and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In 2010, the Obama administration, as part of its efforts to ratify the New START treaty, a bilateral arms reduction agreement with Moscow, initiated a program to replace all three legs of the triad. But the Obama plan immediately ran into challenges, including budget caps, an inadequate industrial base, workforce retirements, and the need for parts and materials that no longer existed. Sadly, all the elements of this program are behind schedule and over budget. The three legs of the U.S. triad are still safe, secure, and reliable, but they have been operating well beyond their intended lifespan.

The challenge now is how to replace the legs of the triad simultaneously—a huge undertaking. Minuteman III ICBMs were first deployed in the mid-1970s and upgraded in the 1990s. By now, their component parts are obsolete and their lifespan cannot safely be extended much beyond the mid-2030s. Ohio-class submarines were designed to operate for around 30 years; 11 out of the 14 boats currently in commission have served longer than that, and several have been in commission for more than 35 years. The air-launched cruise missile, deployed in 1980 to extend the utility of the Eisenhower-era B-52, had a design life of ten years and is still in service. (It is now scheduled to be retired at the end of this decade or early next.)

The U.S. nuclear arsenal need not match that of Russia's and China's combined.

Many of the replacement weapons themselves have run into development challenges. The Sentinel ICBM, which was approved in 2014, has incurred a major cost overrun, in part because it requires the refurbishment of the Minuteman silos and a new command-and-control system. The navy has recently said that the first Columbia-class missile submarine—which is designed to replace the Ohio-class boats—may be delayed by one to two years because of the defense industry’s inability to produce key components. Although many defense analysts think that the United States needs at least 200 of the new B-21 bombers to be able to conduct both conventional and nuclear missions, the program has been inexplicably limited to just 100 aircraft. The new cruise missile that is intended for both the B-21 and B-52—a missile known as the long-range stand-off weapon, or LRSO—has had its near-term funding slashed. This has forced the military to rely further on an outdated cruise missile that was designed to evade 1980s-era Soviet air defenses, not the more advanced systems Russia uses today. An additional weakness is the U.S. regional nuclear deterrence force. During the Cold War, the United States deployed several thousand theater-range nuclear systems, but more than 90 percent of these were eliminated through a series of bilateral accords with the Soviet Union and Russia in 1991 and 1992. As is well known, Moscow reneged on its commitments and rebuilt its ground, naval, and air short- and medium-range nuclear forces. The United States has a small number of air-delivered bombs in Europe and no dedicated deployed regional nuclear weapons in the Pacific. Although Washington does not need to replicate the numbers it maintained during the Cold War, it does need more flexible options. Congress directed the Biden administration to build and deploy a nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missile (SLCM-N) to provide enhanced deterrence to U.S. partners in the Pacific and to its NATO allies, but this capability won’t be available for another decade or more.

TIRED TANKERS, WITHERING WARHEADS

Although nuclear forces provide the backbone of U.S. deterrence, conventional forces are the United States’ first line of defense. If conventional forces are sufficiently strong, they can deter the initial stages of aggression by Russia and/or China, and the questions of war and nuclear attacks could be avoided. But here, too, there have been recurring failures.

For example, the air force does not have enough aerial tankers to support conventional or nuclear forces in multiple theaters. Tankers are needed to refuel U.S. forces in both Europe and the Indo-Pacific—a dauntingly large geographic area. But for four long years, the air force has put off the issue, occasionally offering the prospect of a “bridge tanker” option but never acting on it. And because the international situation has deteriorated further over those four years, the air force has a greater tanker shortfall—perhaps 100 or more—than it did in 2021.

The navy has dropped from its 2025 budget request a Virginia-class submarine—the newest and most capable class of nuclear-powered fast attack submarines—because of conflicting priorities with surface ships and defense industry delays. The United States’ nuclear-powered attack submarine force is well below what is necessary to provide a simultaneous deterrent in both the North Atlantic and the Pacific. Similarly, the navy’s mismanagement of ship and submarine overhauls has resulted in years-long delays on badly needed assets. In the same vein, the navy has complained for over a decade about Russia’s and China’s growing ability to block others from entering the waters and air space around their periphery. Yet it treats the best

countermeasure—the hypersonic conventional prompt strike (CPS) missile—as if it is a luxury. Deployment will occur in dribs and drabs until the middle of the next decade, even though U.S. combatant commanders in the European and Asia-Pacific theaters are deeply worried about the next three to four years.

Apart from effective delivery systems, the United States needs to update the nuclear warheads or bombs that these systems will carry. In the hopeful period after the end of the Cold War, China, Russia, and the United States, along with all other nuclear weapons states, signed the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, a multilateral agreement to stop all explosive nuclear testing. Although the treaty has never entered into force, the United States has unilaterally adhered to it. As a result, the country has had to rely on means other than testing in the monitoring and development of its nuclear stockpile.

When Washington signed the treaty, it assigned the Department of Energy to establish a program to scientifically replicate the data that had been previously gathered from nuclear testing. This program was extraordinarily successful, and the DOE and the National Nuclear Security Administration have been able to maintain all remaining warheads in the U.S. nuclear stockpile through life-extension programs. But now that most of the warheads have either been or are in the process of being “life extended,” the NNSA must start to design and develop new nuclear weapons using these same scientific and computational capabilities, rather than testing.

This will not be easy. For one thing, the NNSA must relearn design and manufacturing skills and requalify existing vendors or find new ones. The bigger challenge, however, is the NNSA production complex. Unlike the NNSA’s science and computational facilities, the production complex was largely ignored after the Cold War. NNSA is now struggling to keep obsolete facilities—a few of which date back to the Manhattan Project or the early days of the Cold War—functioning until they can be replaced. This massive construction program is also behind schedule and over budget. There are many reasons for this, including a lack of skilled workers, design difficulties, and a diminished industrial base, but generally this work hasn’t been done in 25 years.

As NNSA shifts from extending the lifespan of existing warheads to making new ones, the production complex must relearn how to produce key components or materials or find substitutes and adapt to modern manufacturing techniques. A new round of budget caps is further constraining the ability of the complex to modernize.

GET IT DONE

The primary task facing the Departments of Defense and Energy right now is getting the new systems built. The new secretary of defense should draw on the lessons of Reagan’s defense secretary, Caspar Weinberger, who, during the triad modernization effort of that era, instituted a series of ongoing reviews of all three programs. For each program, he required the service secretary, the service chief, and the program manager to report to him every three months on program status and on efforts to fix any apparent problems.

The service secretariats have now proved themselves unreliable and untrustworthy: the new defense secretary should institute Weinberger-style reviews for the Sentinel ICBM, the

Columbia-class submarine, the B-21 bomber, and probably the LRSO missile programs. The administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration, in conjunction with the secretary of energy, should adopt a similar process to review the NNSA warhead and construction programs.

The secretary of defense should institute similar reviews for redressing the tanker shortfall and the delays in Virginia-class submarine production, along with speeding the development of the CPS missile and the nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missile (SLCM-N). These reviews should seek to enable the two major submarine producers to increase their output as quickly as possible; accelerate the deployment of CPS missiles, even through stopgap nontraditional means such as box launchers on large deck ships; initiate an immediate program to buy new tankers and fill in gaps in the inventory with leased tankers until enough new aircraft can be built and deployed; and assure and accelerate the development of the SLCM-N missile.

Given the possibility of further delays in these efforts, the new administration should provide sufficient funding to ensure that existing deployed systems—such as the U.S. nuclear command, control, and communications network, known as NC3, and the Ohio-class submarines—can continue to operate past their currently planned retirement dates and that the life-extension programs for current stocks of warheads are fully funded.

The United States will have to keep the old systems safe, secure, and reliable to continue to deter Russia and China. This will become especially crucial after the New START treaty expires in February 2026. To hedge against the premature retirement of an existing platform, the incoming administration should be prepared to begin a major effort to assure resilience and flexibility. It can do this by adding warheads to existing Minuteman and Trident 2 missiles; restoring, on Ohio-class submarines, the submarine-launched ballistic missile tubes that were disabled according to New START and loading Trident 2 missiles in them; procuring additional Trident 2 missile motors to allow a sufficient pool of test assets to exist after reloading the empty tubes; and “re-converting” to a nuclear role those B-52 bombers that were rendered incapable of launching a nuclear weapon under New START.

Additionally, the administration should seek to increase strategic deterrent forces beyond the current budget horizon. It can do this by planning to deploy Sentinel missiles in a multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle (MIRV) configuration, allowing a single missile to attack several targets at once; increasing the planned number of deployed long-range stand-off weapons; increasing the planned number of B-21 bombers and aerial tankers an expanded force would require; increasing the planned production of Columbia-class submarines and their Trident ballistic missile systems; and accelerating the development and deployment of the D5LE2 replacement missile.

The Trump administration should get serious about rebuilding the defense industrial base.

Washington should assess the feasibility of fielding some portion of the future ICBM force in a road mobile configuration—an approach that would involve mobile launchers that could be quickly relocated. It should also speed efforts to develop new countermeasures to respond to the

advanced missile defenses of U.S. adversaries and plan for a portion of the future bomber fleet to be on a continuous alert status.

Finally, the Trump administration should get serious about rebuilding the U.S. defense industrial base. It should rapidly review the Biden administration's 2023 Defense Industrial Strategy and October 2024 expanded guidance, updating and revising both as necessary. It should promulgate this guidance and immediately convene a summit with the secretary of defense and the CEOs of major defense firms (and perhaps their major subtier suppliers, as well) with the goal of expanding the base and making it more agile as rapidly as possible.

The incoming administration will undoubtedly face calls to hold a full-blown Nuclear Posture Review to examine and validate existing policy. Every administration since 1952 has reviewed its predecessor's nuclear (and other) defense policies, but it has only been since 1994 that this has involved a large interagency review. These full-scale reviews have on occasion been statutorily mandated, but all have been hugely time consuming and on balance have taken a year or more to complete.

Given that the current guidance—with the recent Biden changes—is fully up to date and more than adequate to guide the command's planning, there is no need for the Trump administration to conduct a massive review. A quick senior-level review within the administration should suffice. This not only will preserve a well-functioning policy but also will avoid a waste of senior-level focus and get the much-needed updated plans in place sooner. The new administration will surely face significant new challenges to U.S. nuclear deterrence. The United States and its allies simply do not have the luxury of waiting another three years for these challenges to be met.

Sam Faddis in AND Magazine, November 21, 2024: Ukraine Update: Russian President Vladimir Putin intensified his reflexive control campaign aimed at Ukraine and its Western partners by conducting an ostentatious ballistic missile strike against Ukraine that used multiple reentry vehicles on November 21.

Putin explicitly threatened that Russia may attack Western countries that support Ukrainian deep strikes in Russia and rhetorically connected the November 21 ballistic missile strike to Russian nuclear capabilities — a marked intensification of an existing Russian information operation that aims to use explicit threats and nuclear saber-rattling to discourage continued Western military support for Ukraine. Putin's November 21 statement demonstrates that Moscow's constant saber-rattling largely remains rhetorical. Neither the Oreshnik ballistic missile strike nor Putin's November statement represent a significant inflection in Russian strike capabilities or likeliness to use a nuclear weapon. The Kremlin continues to demonstrate its full commitment to use the prospect of "negotiations" with Ukraine and the West to pursue nothing

short of the total destruction of the Ukrainian state despite Russian President Vladimir Putin's efforts to posture himself as amenable to peace negotiations.

Missile Defense Update: Homeland Missile Defense?

North Korea, Russia, and China—and perhaps soon Iran—will continue to grow their long-range missile capabilities with the intent to hold the U.S. homeland at risk. The next president has no time to waste in restoring a credible missile defense.

by [Peppino A. DeBiaso](#) [Robert M. Soofer](#)
A Longer-Term Approach

The recommendations described above build on either existing programs or plans examined by DoD in recent years and, if funded, offer an expedient path to shore up homeland missile defense. However, these steps alone are insufficient to frustrate Moscow and Beijing's ability to wield coercive nuclear threats. To cope with this challenge requires a pivot in our approach to more innovative missile defense capabilities, technologies, and investments.

The foundation for any defense responsive to advances in offensive missile threats begins with sensors, especially those based in space. It is the only domain that offers persistent and global tracking of missiles from launch until they reenter the earth's atmosphere. There are initial efforts to move in this direction. For example, the U.S. [Space Force](#) and the Missile Defense Agency are developing complementary space systems intended to provide precision tracking data of enemy missiles, including [hypersonic](#) weapons, that will be fed to defensive interceptors to allow them to destroy incoming warheads. Additionally, the U.S. must move forward with a more robust R&D program to develop a [discrimination space sensor](#) that can distinguish real warheads from possible decoys. This advancement should cut down on the number of interceptors needed to destroy a threat missile—a huge game changer for the defense. Space sensor discrimination efforts over the past decade have suffered from anemic funding and an unwillingness to treat discrimination as an essential missile defense mission.

Both the precision tracking and discrimination space efforts should be prioritized and adequately funded as crucial elements of a more comprehensive layered defense.

Equally important, Washington must think more broadly about a framework for missile defense that incorporates a mix of interceptor systems and technologies operating in different domains—land, sea, air, and space. This consideration is central if the United States is to achieve the benefits of layering discussed above.

Currently, the DoD's effort to modernize the homeland defense posture is centered on developing a singular new land-based interceptor—the [Next Generation Interceptor](#). The plan is to have approximately twenty fielded by the early 2030s, though this number could be increased depending on the progress of more advanced systems. However, the new ground-based interceptor should be viewed as a “bridging” measure to transition to a defense architecture that incorporates multiple layers containing a mix of interceptors that will be required to cope with both larger future rogue state missile salvos as well as limited nuclear missile launches from Russia and China.

Emerging Capabilities and Technologies

There are several areas of new and emerging technologies that can offer a foundation for the next generation of missile defense. For example, within a layered defense framework, one potentially high-payoff approach is to intercept the missile while it is “[boosting](#)” into space, thereby destroying the missile, warhead, and any countermeasures it may be carrying early in flight. Progress has been made over the past decade in critical areas such as unmanned aerial vehicle platforms that make the boost-phase layer more attractive than in the past.

There is a new generation of [unmanned aerial vehicles](#) with the ability to operate with extended range and endurance across multiple regions and at altitudes beyond the reach of enemy air defenses. At the same time, advances are occurring in high-speed hypersonic missile [technology](#) (for both offensive and defensive roles) that could play a role in countering missiles in the boost phase. For example, the Army and Navy are testing new long-range offensive hypersonic missiles, while [the Missile Defense Agency](#) and Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) have been conducting technology development efforts for defensive hypersonic interceptors. The innovative application of unmanned platforms combined with long-range hypersonic interceptors offers one possibility for a new layer of defense capable of reducing the number of adversary launches during the boost phase, especially against countries that lack geographic “strategic depth,” such as North Korea and Iran.

High-energy compact lasers for air and cruise missile defense of the homeland are another area where advances are being made. All three Services are developing mobile high-energy lasers to shoot down cruise missiles and other air-breathing weapons. The Army, for example, is testing a [300-kilowatt-range](#), ground-based laser system on mobile platforms, while DoD is in the early stages of developing a [500-kilowatt laser](#) that may drive the technology base toward more powerful lasers in the megawatt class needed to knock down incoming ballistic missiles in the future.

A third area that should receive greater attention is space-based defense. Over the next decade, the development of [space-based defenses](#) may provide the most promising path to achieving a mix of effective interceptors as part of a multi-layered defense to defeat missile strikes from one or more adversaries. Much has changed since the United States last examined space-based defenses. For example, marked progress has been made in crucial areas underpinning space-based kinetic energy interceptors, including precise sensor tracking, micro-processing capability, space communication networks, miniaturization of satellite components, artificial intelligence to support the command and control of large satellite constellations, and substantially reduced space launch costs. Many of these technologies are already operating today in the commercial space sector. To better assess the current state of SBI-relevant technology, the DoD is required to perform detailed architectural trade and cost studies and carry out R&D efforts to enhance the maturity of various SBI systems.

The Policy Decision

Objectors would argue that a shift in U.S. policy in this direction will either cost too much, stoke a new round of the arms race, or both.

What we lay out is affordable. Today, the MDA spends about [30 percent](#) (~\$3.5 billion) of its annual Missile Defense Agency budget in direct support of homeland missile defense. This is less than a third of one percent of the Department of Defense FY25 budget request of [\\$850 billion](#). Resourcing the activities mentioned above would amount to less than one percent of DoD's budget or about \$8 billion per year. The additional \$5 billion per year should be weighted towards the research and development necessary to move to next-generation capabilities, with the balance apportioned to rectifying the most pressing shortfalls in the current ground-based missile defense system.

As to whether expanding U.S. missile defenses would stimulate further growth in Russia and China's nuclear arms, a broader perspective is necessary. U.S. restraint in missile defense—it has chosen to deploy only forty-four interceptors over the past twenty years—has failed to produce any reciprocal restraint on the part of Moscow and Beijing's strategic arms programs, which continue to increase in size and quality. Furthermore, it is not without a measure of hypocrisy that both [Russia and China](#) have well-established strategic air and missile defense programs and capabilities, presumably to blunt U.S. missile launches against their respective homelands. Russia currently has more ground-based interceptors deployed to protect its homeland—[sixty-eight nuclear-tipped interceptors](#)—than the United States. The recommendations for U.S. missile defense outlined above do nothing more than acknowledge the importance of protecting the homeland against limited threats, a position long understood by Russia and, more recently, China. Even if Russia and China choose to respond to improved and expanded U.S. homeland missile defenses, not a given historically, the net benefit to U.S. security of countering their coercive strategies far outweighs any additional missiles they would procure.

North Korea, Russia, and China—and perhaps soon Iran—will continue to grow their long-range missile capabilities with the intent to hold the U.S. homeland at risk. The next president has no time to waste. Fortunately, there is no need to repeat the extensive missile defense reviews already conducted by the Trump and Biden-Harris administrations, which unequivocally establish the indispensable roles of missile defense in U.S. national security. Instead, the president should take early action to bolster U.S. homeland missile defense by issuing clear direction to their national security team to bring forward within 120 days a set of options for a more comprehensive, layered missile defense plan to defend the American people against the threat of nuclear missile attack.

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Essay by Peter Huessy: A Trumpian Foreign and Security Policy: What to Expect?

With the election of Donald J. Trump to his second term as President of the United States, the critics of the President appear to have forgotten that for four years the former President did have a foreign and security policy, the record of which is now recorded history. Yet despite this ample evidence, supposed security experts writing in *Foreign Affairs*, the *New York Times* or speaking at the Center for American Progress or Carnegie Endowment, warned of the myriad dangers of a second Trump administration that often was completely unrelated to the four years 2017—20 when Trump was previously President.

The Liberal World Order: Embrace or Reform?

Three predictions stand out. One is that the new administration would be isolationist. Second that the new administration would reject the international world order constructed primarily by the United States and its top allies in the aftermath of World War II. The third fear was that a Trump administration would **reject the values underlying American foreign and security policy** and bury what was described as **the “exceptional nature”** of such US policy.

Whatever world order the United States constructed at the end of World War II; it was not uniformly favorable to US interests. The advent of détente and peaceful coexistence led to nearly two dozen nations falling to Soviet and Chinese subversion making a mockery of the idea that “containment” was a successful US policy.

US security policy succeeded only after President Reagan reversed most of the policies adopted during the era of détente and peaceful coexistence which had led to the loss of Indochina and more than a dozen other nations to growing Soviet power.

The United States embrace of the of the Middle East Peace Process and the false idea that the root of terrorism was based on the legitimate grievance that there was no Palestinian state was also terribly misguided. .

As was the misguided economic embrace of Communist China starting in 1969.

Unpreparedness

US foreign and security policy thus was not one unbroken and consistent pattern from the end of WWII. One pattern that does emerge, however, is not being prepared, the flip side of détente and the embrace of the “peace process” and China. .

After World War II, the US more than disarmed. Despite post-WWII Soviet aggression and subversion in Eastern Europe, the creation of NATO was not initially paired with a robust US defense budget. Compared to \$60 billion for the last year of WWII, it was widely assumed the \$13 billion defense budget already approved for 1949 was going forward the high water mark for defense, with the Defense Secretary himself thinking of going as low as \$8 billion annually.

In the spring of 1950, a DoD official Paul Nitze put together NSC-68—a secret study calling for a new defense policy although the text did not include a secret budget estimate that called for a resulting defense budget of \$44 billion. Truman had promised no defense budget north of \$13 billion.

The proposed new policy was to prepare the United States to deter its enemies. Nitze once remarked that being unprepared was “provocatively weak” and that during the 1930’s the United States had allowed Japan and Germany to make war on the entire world precisely because we were unprepared.

Tragically, Nitze’s fear that the US was similarly unprepared in early 1950 was well-founded. On June 25, the triumvirate communist bloc of China, North Korea and the Soviet Union invaded the Republic of Korea, stunning the United States.

The House in January 1950 had turned down a Truman proposal to assist the Republic of Korea with \$150 million in economic assistance. Military assistance requested by the Republic of Korea was denied. But on June 19th, reacting to the North Korean invasion, the Senate finally agreed to provide the ROK with \$50 million, but that help would arrive only much after the invasion.

The price of unpreparedness? While the war geographically ended pretty much where it had begun, nearly 40,000 American and allied soldiers perished. The US saved the Republic of Korea, but the price was 3 million dead Koreans and the survival of the terrorist DPRK regime, now many decades later armed with dozens of nuclear weapons.

Shameful Retreat

A year later after the Armistice at Panmunjom ending the Korean war, the French were defeated in the far northwest of French Indochina at Dien Bien Phu in May 1954 by the communist Vietminh. The US did send the France upwards of \$1 billion or 80% of the war effort. The result was a communist North Vietnam, as the French withdrew from all of Indochina.

Over the next two decades, the world-wide communist bloc fought South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, eventually embedding communist governments in all of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos in 1975. The wars did not start with a cross border tank army as did North Korea in 1950 but by surreptitiously sending guerilla soldiers along the Ho Chi Minh trail into the South, Laos and Cambodia to terrorize the three nations.

By late 1969, however, after nearly a decade of intensified warfare, the ARVN was surprisingly able to defeat North Vietnamese regulars through the work of America's General Abrams and his Vietnamization program. But with the withdrawal of most US forces, and Congress unwilling to sustain US support to the ARVN, the US in 1975 withdrew all military assistance, and with no domestic arms industry with which to arm themselves, the South fell victim to North Vietnam's tank armies that rolled down the coastal highway to Saigon.

The US fight to save the Republic of Korea was heroic and indeed reflected the highest ideals of the American people, as did the extraordinary effort to save South Vietnam. But our failure to anticipate the Chinese entry into the Korean war, and the cutoff of assistance to South Vietnam some two decades later were all shameful, hardly reflective of the best ideals of America.

Mistakes Continue

Détente and peaceful coexistence gave benefits to the USSR that hardly reflected the ideals of the United States or the order sought after the end of World War II. The western banks loaned billions to the Soviet bloc at concessionary terms, freeing Moscow to use their satellites for subversion, sabotage and assassinations. Oil prices during the 1970s skyrocketed, giving Moscow's exchequer billions. (See Myron Norquist's How the United States Won the Cold War, in Advances in Competitiveness Research (Vol. 10, Issue 1, 2002)

Writes Norquist, "In 1980 the Soviet Union and its ruling elite felt their country was winning the Cold War. The USSR had good hard currency earnings and high expectations of much more. It was buying and smuggling western technology; it had taken over Afghanistan and was in a position to press on in the Middle East. The Soviets had updated their weapons... secretly deploy[ing] SS-20 missiles in Europe unilaterally," according to Anatoly Dobrynin, Soviet Ambassador to the United States from 1962 to 1986, and had support in the West for disarmament and a nuclear freeze (Dobrynin, 1995, p. 430).

During the 1990's, the US suffered four major terror attacks—the Trade Center in 1993; the Khobar Towers in the KSA in 1994; the African embassy bombing in 1998; and the explosion on the USS Cole in Yemen. But still at the end of the decade did not have in place a counter-terrorist plan or policy. In fact, in the summer of 2000 the White House testified to Congress that terrorist threats were just too multifold for the US to have put together a counter-terrorism strategy to prioritize our defenses, although said the witness a plan might be considered.

Even after Reagan's taking down of the Soviet empire, the US in 2001 brought China into the World Trade Organization. Subsequently, the US embraced lopsided trade deals with communist China and sold out millions of American manufacturing workers. In short, the US provided China with the economic base on which the current breathtaking expansion of the Chinese military rests. The opposite of Reagan's economic war on the Soviets. So how did this embrace of China reflect the best ideals of America?

Following 20 years of counter-terrorism warfare in Afghanistan and Iraq, it is hard to conclude that the subsequent US withdrawals somehow reflected the best ideals of the US government and its people, let alone were reflective of the liberal international order.

In 2008, Russia invaded Georgia and Moldova with little United States, EU or NATO response. In 2012, our diplomatic facilities in Libya were attacked and our ambassador tortured and killed, but our response was to blame an obscure anti-Islamic video let anyone get the idea the US was not prepared to deal with terrorism some thirteen years after 9-11.

And in 2014 Russian invaded Ukraine and the US subsequently put an arms embargo on Ukraine, while sending blankets to Ukraine as a token of our solidarity. Hardly a proud moment for the United States.

Need for Change

The period prior to Trump's first Presidency certainly did not necessarily reflect throughout the decades the best ideals of America. Most recently, things did not work out despite the US taking the lead in taking down the Taliban and the regime of Saddam Hussein because we got sandbagged by the drive-by media into adopting goals both impractical and unnecessary.

Building democratic institutions in societies ruled by the sword and the pistol is a fool's errand but we spent two decades in Afghanistan and Iraq trying to do so. Despite particularly brilliant and very short successful campaigns ending Taliban power and the Iraqi government, we then proceeded to do impractical nation building.

Given this decided mixed bag of US security policy from the end of WWII, should it be so worrisome that the new Trump administration will try and change things? After all, the recent relative restraint shown by the United States in Ukraine, Iran, the greater Middle East and the Western Pacific has not worked out well.

For example, despite US restraint, there is apparently no prospect for victory in Ukraine. The administration fears Israeli success will escalate things out of control---perhaps for fear the US is not prepared to deter Iran? The Republic of Korea and Japan are seriously discouraged by the state of the US deterrent, especially re theater nuclear systems which the US does not have in the entirety of the Pacific.

In short, there are many things that need to be fixed.

What then can we expect from former President Trump?

Using the first Trump administration as a guide, here is a what might be expected in the next four years of US foreign and security policy.

Let's start with Ukraine. As Victor Davis Hanson argues, a settlement of the war is not going to make anyone happy. Some portion of Ukraine may remain in Russian hands but hopefully not anything taken since February 2022. A demilitarized zone may have to be created. A significant pause in Ukraine considering NATO membership will probably be implemented although new NATO members such as Finland and Sweden will remain welcome. On the positive side, the carnage turning Ukraine into one mass "Verdun" will end and hopefully the reconstruction of the country can begin, including the return of its nearly 10-15 million citizens both exiled and kidnapped.

Next is the Middle East: Giving Israel the greenlight to get rid of Hamas and Hezbollah, providing the weaponry to do so, would help end part of the Iranian scourge. Parallel would be the extension of the Abraham Accords and getting back on track the smart idea that Israel allied with the Gulf States against Iran is the path forward. And jettison the looney idea that terrorism is rooted in the grievance of not having a Palestinian state. Put Hamas back on the terrorist list and take them down everywhere. Eliminate the Houthis and their protection racket for shipping.

With respect to Iran" Again, reduce its foreign exchange to single digits. Embargo its oil revenue. Eliminate any idea that Iran has a "right to enrich." Enforce the provisions of the Nuclear Non-Proliferations Treaty, as well as the IAEA Additional Protocol, while once and for all junk the JCPOA. Explain the fiction behind the idea that building advanced centrifuges (under the JCPOA) is somehow an indication of not wanting to produce nuclear weapons fuel.

On China and the Western Pacific: Deterrence is the way forward. And stopping China from stealing our industry -based technology which is estimated at \$600 billion annually by the former head of the National Security Agency. And having Taiwan buy whatever weapons it needs for defense including robust air and missile defenses and long-range prompt strike capabilities. And perhaps explicitly extending to the Pacific allies the US nuclear deterrent. And making India a real ally. And continuing to strengthen the ROK-Japan growing alliance and cooperation, as well as deploying a theater nuclear deterrent such as the Navy nuclear armed cruise missile and missile defenses.

NATO and US alliance: The Trump administration will push hard and be successful to ensure that our European, Middle Eastern and Pacific allies "pay their fair share" of what is needed to protect our mutual security.

Spending and the budget: Get rid of much of the wasteful foreign assistance, United Nations and World Bank funding, especially the unworkable energy subsidies in pursuit of global zero CO2 and greenhouse gases. Also delete all half a billion dollars for the worthless international family planning budget. And double the information operations such as VOA, Radio Free China and other elements of public diplomacy. Tell America's story to the world.

Good neighbors: Good fences make good neighbors so the first thing the administration could do was build the wall and begin the process of ending illegal immigration, the rule of law being one

of the important liberal elements of the world order the US helped establish after the end of WWII,

The Nuclear Framework

The Nuclear Framework: one of the constants during the entire post WWII era was the consistent attention . The most important policy is the recognition that the nuclear balance is critical to sustaining US led peace and prosperity. Trump, as he did in his first term, will robustly support the US nuclear Triad and the nuclear related recommendations of the Posture Commission, America First think tank and Heritage Foundation.

And we should remember, as President Kennedy declared it was critical that the US nuclear force had to be “second to none” a requirement President Trump shares. And remember the Cuban missile crisis ended peacefully because again as President Kennedy explained, “I had the Minuteman missile ace in the hole,” a new ICBM initially deployed in October 1962 at the Malstrom USAF base in Montana on the very day the US discovered the Soviet missiles were in Cuba.

What Trump will not do is follow what the United States did following the collapse of the Soviet Union when the United States went on what has been described as a “holiday from history” where we let our nuclear deterrent atrophy and come dangerously close to “rusting to obsolesce.”

A Trumpian foreign policy will above all be practical and realistic. It will pursue achievable goals. In 1981 almost no one in Washington except President-elect Reagan believed the US could win the Cold War by ending the Soviet empire.

Today, many “experts” think we can deal with Iran, North Korea, Russia and China as normal nations, committed to the international order created after WWII.

Create a Palestinian state and terrorism goes away. Restrain Israel and Iran won't be forced to build nuclear weapons. Stop our “hostile policy” toward North Korea and the peninsula can be denuclearized. Arms control or abandoning Ukraine will deter further Russian aggression. China is Burger King to the USA McDonalds—competitors not enemies, trade not tariffs, peaceful rise but not hegemonic goals.

These wrong-headed narratives have repeatedly shaped US security policy.

No longer.

The Areas of Russia that are being struck by long range Ukraine Missile Strikes. Yellow triangles are from where air operations by Russia are being operated. Red dots are staging areas

from where Russian attacks originate.

