

ICBM EAR Week of November 5th, 2024 Prepared by Peter Huessy, President of Geo-Strategic Analysis, Potomac, Maryland and Senior Fellow, The National Institute of Deterrence Studies

A Salute to all our wonderful Veterans.

Summary: China nuclear review seminar is forthcoming and first TRIAD Symposium Announced; President Trump wins the Presidency and the R party takes the Senate 53-45-2 and probably will also organize the House 223-112. Analysts review the dangers the administration will face including Ukraine, the Middle East and the Western Pacific. Another hit piece on ICBMs is posted including the charge the USAF is hiding Minuteman III missile tests by launching when “Americans are asleep.”

Kori Schake lays out the threats facing the US, and Foreign Affairs reposts their 2023 complaint that the US seeks too much power. Foreign Affairs from 2023 reprints an essay by Bacevich that the US seeks too much power. The website “Common Dreams” says MMIII is a serious threat to blow the world up. A parallel essay on nuclear bombers says the US is starting a major arms race with the deployment of a new strategic bomber. There is also a new CRS report on the Sentinel ICBM program for late October which the Naval Institute reposted.

Events of Significance

Nuclear Deterrent Seminar: December 6th, 2024: Update on the China Nuclear Buildup with Christopher Yeaw from the University of Nebraska

<https://emailmarketing.secureserver.net/s/a4fb2b1>

Triad Symposium sponsored and hosted by LSUS and NIDS on June 24th, 2024 on the campus of LSUS in Shreveport Louisiana in cooperation with the USAF Global Strike Command. Here is our draft outline. Comments and suggestions are most welcome.

Triad Symposium

June 24, 2025

8am-5pm

Reception 515-630pm

Louisiana State University in Shreveport

University Center Ballroom

Hosted by:

LSUS

NIDS

BRF Defense

All in Central Standard Time (CST)

745-815	Sign-in and Refreshments	
815-830	Opening Ceremony and Welcome Remarks	

830-915	Session 1: Strategic Environment (Threats, Policy & Strategy) Importance of Nuclear Deterrence for National Security	
915-945	Session 2: Major Program Updates 1: Submarines (Sustain & Modernize) SLBMs/D5	
945-1035	Session 3: Industry Panel 1 Workforce Needs, Programs	
1035-1050	Networking Break (15 minutes)	
1050-1130	Session 4: Major Program Updates 2: Bombers (Sustain & Modernize) Long-range Standoff, Cruise Missiles, Conventional LRS Weapons	
1130-1200	Session 5: Major Program Updates 3: ICBMs (Sustain & Modernize)	
1200-1300	Lunch & Networking	
1300-1345	Session 6: Industry Panel 2 Technology & Innovation Needs, Small Business Contributions, Initiatives & Collaboration	
1345-1420	Session 7: Major Program Updates 4: National and Nuclear NC3 (objectives of NC3)	
1420-1440	Networking Break (20 minutes)	
1440-1515	Session 8: Major Program Updates 5: Strategic Defense Systems & Other/Non-Nuclear Strategic Weapons	
1515-1550	Session 9: Educating the Public and influence Lawmakers	
1550-1635	Session 10: Closing Keynote	
1635-1700	Closing Remarks	
1715-1830	Reception, Hosted by the Committee of 100 in LSU-S Collaboratory	

Objective:

Role of Triad in International Competition and Conflict

Key Topics:

Understand International threats and domestic challenges to US strategic deterrence and the nuclear enterprise (to include AF efforts to eliminate a command dedicated to advocating for strategic deterrence and nuclear enterprise operations)

Counter perceptions that developing conventional capabilities in preparation for great power conflict—however necessary—is not sufficient to avoid parallel and robust nuclear modernization and sustainment.

Provide updates on programs and operations of

- SLBMs
- ICBMs
- Bombers and Cruise Missiles
 - Strategic Weapons
- National and Nuclear NC3
- Strategic Defense Systems

Outline plans to educate the public and influence key decision makers about the importance of nuclear deterrence for national security.

Quotes of the Week

CNN, November 5, 2024: “Kamala Harris Predicted to Win By Nearly Every Major Forecaster”

President-elect Donald Trump “I am honored to nominate Chairwoman [Elise Stefanik](#) to serve in my Cabinet as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. [Elise](#) is an incredibly strong, tough, and smart America First fighter.

Gen. Thomas A. Bussiere, commander, Air Force Global Strike Command (AFGSC). “An airborne launch validates the survivability of our ICBMs, which serve as the strategic backstop of our nation’s defense and defense of allies and partners. These tests are demonstrative of what Striker Airmen bring to the fight if called by the president.”

Kori Shake, AEI, former US State Department Official: “U.S. deterrence has suffered under President Joe Biden. The administration’s shamefully botched withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan and the timidity of its support for [Ukraine](#) in the face of Russian threats of escalation rewarded challenges to U.S. security commitments. In Biden’s tenure, U.S. adversaries have grown increasingly brazen in their provocations and ramped up cooperation with each other. Washington, meanwhile, has not offered an adequate response.”

Former US Senator Saxby Chambliss: “Trump is inheriting a dangerous world. With real wars going on in Ukraine and in the Middle East, and real threats from China, North Korea and Iran, he is going to need an experienced national security team.”

Peter Huessy, Senior Fellow NIDS: “According to the news site “Common Dreams,” apparently the USAF is trying to hide missile tests from the American people by launching at night: and then issuing a public press release about the very launch.

Congressional and Political Developments in Washington

There will be new leadership in the Senate for the defense appropriations subcommittee. Senator McConnell of Kentucky is the highest ranking member of the defense subcommittee. The minority leader is stepping down but said he is considering taking the defense subcommittee

chair position as he is worried about the challenges facing the United States on security and foreign policy.

Ken Calvert is the House chair of the defense subcommittee but House R caucus rules say that a chairman can be for six years unless the rules are waived and Calvert has been chair for 6 years. The next in-line senior member of the Committee would be Mr. Steve Womack (AR). Womack is a strong supporter of assistance to Ukraine as is Mr. McConnell.

Congresswoman Elise Stefanik of NY has been nominated as the next Ambassador to the United Nations. A special election will be held to replace the NY Congresswoman who won 62% of the vote in her election on Tuesday.

The Upcoming Political Environment

Despite the victory by Mr. Trump and his party this week, the media reaction largely aligns with the dominant narrative prior to the election. The major points being made by the opponents of the former President are:

- The Republican party did not receive a mandate and therefore there is a no reason for the Democratic minority to support the new administration (NBC/CBS/ABC)
- The House Democrats did well and “held their own” as a check on the more extreme policies of the new administration (Wash Post analysis)
- The first Trump administration also worked to root out career civil servants who were suspected of undermining the president’s agenda or who spoke out when it appeared his directives were unlawful. Wash Post
- US allies are worried the new administration will not support current alliances (from Foreign Affairs journal)
- Wars and conflicts world-wide will expand with the new Administration and the administration may abandon Ukraine. (Brookings and Council on Foreign Relations)
- Some media reaction was relatively positive. This from the Wash Post: As president, Trump boosted the Pentagon’s budget, pressed U.S. allies to spend more on their own defense and loosened battlefield restrictions imposed by President Barack Obama — moves that were greeted positively within the Defense Department.

The Trifecta Is Close

"As of Monday afternoon, Democrats held 204 House seats, while Republicans held 214-6 seats, 2-4 short of a majority depending on what election analysis you want to accept. The GOP has won a number of high-profile swing seats, with Ryan Mackenzie defeating three-term incumbent Democrat Susan Wild in Pennsylvania and Don Bacon holding on to his toss-up seat in Nebraska, denying Democrats a top flip opportunity. There are upwards of 9 races where Republican candidates are leading but still have not been called in Washington, Colorado, Arizona, California, (4), Iowa and Alaska.

All in all, election forecaster Decision Desk HQ projects that Republicans will control 222 seats to Democrats' 213. Right now, Republicans hold 220 seats to Democrats' 212, with 3 vacant. Cook Political Report is also projecting a 'narrow Republican House majority of 222-3 seats. .'"

So far, the House Republicans have flipped seven seats and the Democrats have flipped five seats for a net gain of two for the Republican majority.

As of Monday, there were 8 house seats where Dems have the majority but have not been called and 9 seats where the R have the majority but have not been called. If all remain as they now are re who is leading, the House would be 223-112, which would be a 11 vote majority in the House for Republicans and it would be a Trifecta for the R party and President Trump. .

Nevada and Arizona have been called for Mr. Trump, and thus the former President won all 7 battleground states including Georgia, North Carolina, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania and thus 312 electoral votes, exceeding every Republican candidate since 1988 or the past 36 years or 9 elections. While Biden won the 7 battleground states by a total of 143,000 votes, Trump won the 7 battleground states by a whopping 750,000 votes which implies a near 1 million vote switch in these seven states. Overall, so far, the former President received 74,600,000 votes which some remaining on the West Coast to be counted, more than his 74,000,000 he received in 2020. VP Harris received so far around 70,000,000 votes or some 11 million less than Biden in 2020.

The Senate will be 53-45-2 with King and Sanders independent but who will probably vote to organize under Democratic leadership. Senator Cruz won by a million votes but with a conservative third party getting one third of a million votes that largely would have gone to Cruz which then puts Cruz some 300,000 votes behind Trump's margin of 1.7 million. Senate seats switched in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, and Montana.

R Senate candidates in Michigan and Wisconsin lost by 20,000 and 29,000 votes, respectively, a relatively very small number of 0.3 to .9% and against incumbent Senators. R candidates. Pennsylvania with 99% of the vote counted has been called for McCormack, with thus four seats flipped by the Republicans.

Strategic Developments

Ukraine Now Faces a Nuclear Decision

ForeignPolicy.com (Analysis), Nov. 7 | Casey Michel

With Donald Trump's election victory this week, it's clear that the president-elect will not be nearly as supportive of Ukraine's fight against Russia as the current administration—and may well abandon Ukraine entirely. Such a reality is already resounding in Ukraine, with plenty of hand-wringing in Kyiv about how Trump will pull the United States back from its fight. As a result, Ukrainians will be forced in the coming weeks and months to search for solutions beyond Washington's support—and consider a potentially nuclear solution that had been only hinted at previously.

Russian Launch

A Yars ICBM was loaded into a silo launcher at the Kozelsk missile base in Russia's Kaluga region, according to Newsweek, which cited a statement published on Thursday by the Russian Defense Ministry. In an interview with Reuters, Sergei Karaganov, an influential Russian foreign policy advisor with close ties to President Vladimir Putin, **said that Moscow's recent changes to its nuclear doctrine are part of an effort to "sober up our Western partners, especially the**

Europeans,” and warned that Russia will continue to take “more steps up the ladder of nuclear escalation” if those countries provide additional assistance to Ukraine.

MM III Test Flight

The U.S. Air Force fired an unarmed Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) from Vandenberg Space Force Base, California on Nov. 5. The ICBM's reentry vehicle traveled approximately 4,200 miles to the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command's Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site located within the Republic of the Marshall Islands at the Kwajalein Atoll.

What Foreign Policy Experts Are Saying Will be the Impact of a Trump Administration

Foreign Affairs a liberal/progressive security journal “Wrings Hands About Trump Presidency, Trashes His Foreign Policy Chops.”

One analyst writes: "The leaders of Egypt, Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, Qatar, and Turkey similarly congratulated Trump and pledged to work with him for peace. Even a top official in Hamas—the Palestinian terrorist group that started the Iranian axis’s ongoing war with Israel—expressed hope that Trump would follow through on 'his statements that he can stop the war.'

Israeli Gets it Right

"'When you are strong, when you bring your enemies to their knees, that’s the way to really end wars,' Ohad Tal, a member of Israel’s parliamentary defense committee, told the *Washington Free Beacon*. 'I think Trump gets that. Now that he’s back, I think America will return to being the force for global peace and security that it should be. So, it’s a happy day for America, for Israel, and for the world.'"

Ploughshares and Nuclear War

Ploughshares, an advocate of global zero for nuclear weapons, claims the new administration will be a threat to US security and to the US democracy. Says the Fun, “The Trump administration will spend up to \$2 trillion in the coming decades, which could lead to nuclear war and escalation of current wars. Nuclear weapons blackmail is already being used by Russia in Ukraine writes Ploughshares and as a result Trump may agree to an “unjust peace.” There is a significant worry that the US will resume nuclear testing which would push Russia and China to also test and thus “catalyzing the nuclear arms race.” The Trump administration will also escalate tensions with Iran and thus push Iran to become a nuclear power.

Trump Security Team Review

On the other side of the political spectrum, the Washington Times daily security review notes that Brian Hook the author of the tough Iran policy during the first Trump administration will lead the transition team for the State department, Chris Miller authored the Heritage Foundation chapter on defense and may well be a senior member of DoD. NATO and EU members have said they will increase defense spending amid worried that the new administration would possibly end support for Ukraine. Thursday during a European Union [leaders summit](#) in Budapest, featured calls for more European autonomy on defense.

\$21 billion for the Taliban

A new report says the US provided \$21 billion in assistance to Afghanistan since the US withdrew from the country in 2021. according to a new [report](#) by the Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction.

OPINION ON THE ELECTION by Neil Patel the founder of the Daily Caller

The system does not work well for a lot of people. And the reaction to the 2016 election of Mr. Trump lacked any introspection or accountability. There started a war on merit where immutable characteristics such as gender, race and sexual orientation were determined to be how what should be merit based decisions should be made. Disagreements were judged to be due to racism, or Russian influence, not genuine differences of opinion. There was also collusion between the social media companies and the US government in a widespread effort to make war on free speech, amid calls to actually criminalize differences of opinion. On immigration, we effectively eliminated screening or vetting and had an open border. Enforcement of immigration law would only occur if some 5000 apprehensions a day were occurring, but not anything less than that. And for some reason, millions flowed to groups like BLM and Antifa that engage in mass riots. On top of trans policies that led to serious harm to women in sports activities and irreversible surgeries on minor children.

Commentary and Analysis Re Trump and US Security Policy NIPP Addresses Extended Deterrence, NATO and Germany

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President-Elect Trump and Extended Nuclear Deterrence: Whither Germany?

Dr. Keith B. Payne

Dr. Keith B. Payne is a co-founder of the National Institute for Public Policy, Professor Emeritus at the Graduate School of Defense and Strategic Studies, Missouri State University, a former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, and former Senior Advisor to the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Michael Rühle Michael Rühle is the former Head of the Climate and Energy Security Section, NATO, and served for over 30 years in NATO's international staff, specializing in policy planning, speechwriting, energy security, and hybrid threats.

The possibility that the next American president would once again be Donald Trump has been on everyone's mind in Germany for months. A much-discussed concern in Germany is that, if re-elected, Trump would not only give NATO a cold shoulder, but also end nuclear "extended deterrence" protection for America's European allies. If so, after more than 70 years under the American "nuclear umbrella," Europeans would be at the mercy of nuclear coercion by Russia, China and, prospectively, Iran. In line with this pessimistic scenario, many German observers conclude that Berlin would then have to find new ways of securing a nuclear arsenal for protection against nuclear coercion and attack. Their proposals—some serious, others not—range from German acquisition of nuclear weapons to the "Europeanization" of the French nuclear arsenal.

It is impossible to know in advance precisely what the new Trump Administration's policy will be regarding U.S. relations with allies. However, a look at President-elect Trump's first term suggests strongly that German fears of losing American extended deterrence protection are unfounded.

Trump has never made a secret of his frustration with many European allies' relatively low level of defense spending and corresponding lack of capabilities. Although he has used starker language than his predecessors, perhaps reflecting his background in New York City real estate, he basically has restated what all American presidents since Eisenhower have said. That is, unbalanced burden-sharing in terms of security policy, which de facto amounts to the United States heavily subsidizing European security, is unacceptable to the American people in the long term and is unsustainable. This is particularly true now given America's global responsibilities; Moscow's and Beijing's entente and aggressive designs; the looming "axis of upheaval," including Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea; and, the serious security and cost problems associated with the largely uncontrolled mass, illegal immigration on America's southern border. These developments have created enormous new security problems and costs for the United States.

In this context, Europeans who still believe that they do not need to spend even two percent of their own gross national product on defense do not understand the times. No administration in Washington, Democrat or Republican, will be able to tolerate continuing free riding by some allies. This is an inconvenient reality for Europeans and criticism of European and other allies will continue if they do not provide at least the increased resources for their defense that they themselves have promised. Berlin, whose "Zeitenwende" (an epochal shift in response to Russia's aggression in Ukraine) is threatening to fail, must be prepared for this criticism if it continues to underfund the Bundeswehr. Trump's past sharp language ultimately led many other allies to increase their investment in conventional forces; there is no reason to expect him to be more gentle now if Berlin does not respond to the times.

However, it is a fundamental mistake to conclude that Trump's criticism of European defense underfunding signals that he will remove the American nuclear umbrella over allies. There was no move to do so during Trump's first term in office, and the overwhelming reasons for America's extended deterrent have only increased with the expansion of Russian and Chinese threats. For example, for many decades, the American extended nuclear deterrent has ensured that allies in Europe and Asia have not had to arm themselves with nuclear weapons. Effective extended deterrence is key to the long-standing U.S. goal of nuclear non-proliferation. This logic has not changed.

It also should be recalled that the previous Trump Administration increased funds to strengthen the U.S. extended deterrent over allies. The Trump Administration's 2018 Nuclear Posture Review, its key nuclear policy document, initiated two new sea-based nuclear weapons to help prevent Moscow from exploiting its dramatic nuclear superiority in Europe either politically or militarily. There was considerable opposition within the Democrat Party to these new nuclear options at the time, but a political consensus appears to be emerging that the American nuclear arsenal must be adapted for the continued protection of allies in Europe and Asia. In other words: the "nuclear umbrella" will remain open and likely even strengthened.

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Does this mean that Berlin can now relax in the belief that it no longer has to worry about nuclear deterrence? Of course not. There is continuing risk and burden-sharing in the nuclear field. Germany plays an important role in NATO's so-called "nuclear sharing." Along with other

allies, Germany provides aircraft—soon to be the ultra-modern F-35—that reportedly can carry American nuclear weapons. This makes Germany an important factor in NATO's nuclear deterrent in Europe. It is not only the new “front line” Eastern European allies that want Germany to continue to play this role, but also Washington. Fortunately, Berlin may finally be facing up to uncomfortable looming nuclear threat realities and is no longer trying to hide behind idealistic disarmament virtue signaling.

In sum, a second term of Donald Trump may not be convenient for some allies. He is likely to continue to call out laggards regarding the urgency of more balanced transatlantic burden-sharing. However, the U.S. nuclear protection provided to Europe almost certainly will remain in place, and likely will be strengthened. Germany, therefore, would do well to speculate less about nuclear alternatives and focus instead on continuing its role in NATO's nuclear deterrent, while strengthening its conventional military capabilities, including its defense industry, and deployment of longer-range conventional weapons. That is a contribution to the Alliance that all of Germany's allies have a right to expect from Berlin.

This article is adapted from the authors,' “Die Kultur des Trittbrettfahrens ist vorbei [The Culture of Free Riding is Past],” *Welt am Sonntag*, July 21, 2024, p. 9.

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The National Security Imperative for a Trump Presidency

How His Administration Can Shore Up the Foundations of American Power

By Kori Schake

November 8, 2024

Most U.S. allies are sure to be worried by the choice Americans made on November 5. Many observers are confounded by voters' willingness to roll the dice and reelect the intemperate Donald Trump as president. But Americans have long had an outsize risk tolerance, a characteristic that is integral to both the dynamism of the country's economy and the vibrance of its society. As the poet Robert Pinsky wrote in 2002, American culture is “so much in process, so brilliantly and sometimes brutally in motion, that standard models for it fail to apply”—an analysis the election result only reaffirms.

Since his arrival, a decade ago on the national political stage, Trump has broken the Republican Party and rebuilt it in his image. The GOP is no longer the party of figures such as Senator Mitt Romney and the late Senator John McCain (for whom I once worked), both of whom ran unsuccessful presidential bids on traditional Republican platforms. In their place are figures such as JD Vance, Trump's running mate, and Josh Hawley, the Republican senator from Missouri, who hew more closely to Trump's brand of populist politics. American voters delivered a resounding victory for this new brand of conservative leadership. It is right and proper that Trump now get a chance to enact the policies he campaigned on and the latitude to respond to events as they happen, supported by a cabinet and an executive-branch bureaucracy that are responsive to his direction. It is in the United States' interest that its president succeed.

But making Trump's presidency successful does not mean simply adopting his ideas wholesale. Any new administration needs to square its sweeping campaign rhetoric with the realities of market behavior, fiscal constraints, and the actions of U.S. adversaries. In Trump's case, the former president's unpredictable, even erratic approach to decision-making could lead to foreign policy choices that reduce American power and increase the risk of conflict. It is therefore especially important to find ways to pursue Trump's goals while avoiding potential harm.

A number of thinkers have grappled with how to do this, including Nadia Schadlow, who served in Trump's first administration and recently advocated in *Foreign Affairs* for an approach she termed "a strategy of overmatch," which would help Washington "retain or develop sizable advantages in military power, political influence, and economic strength over its adversaries." I have argued for a revival of "conservative internationalism," an approach that would extend U.S. power abroad and U.S. influence in international institutions such as NATO in order to deter foreign aggression that might otherwise disrupt the U.S. economy.

Although that will be unappealing in the coming administration, some tenets of conservative internationalism would serve Trump's objectives in cost-effective and politically achievable ways. In particular, his administration is well positioned to advance two crucial objectives that the Biden administration (and Kamala Harris's presidential campaign) neglected: reestablishing deterrence and raising defense spending. A second Trump term is not without its dangers, but it also presents an opportunity to shore up these foundations of American security.

SHOW OF STRENGTH

U.S. deterrence has suffered under President Joe Biden. The administration's shamefully botched withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan and the timidity of its support for Ukraine in the face of Russian threats of escalation rewarded challenges to U.S. security commitments. In Biden's tenure, U.S. adversaries have grown increasingly brazen in their provocations and ramped up cooperation with each other. Washington, meanwhile, has not offered an adequate response.

In Ukraine, the Biden administration has yet to recognize the shortcomings of the West's policies, including those of the Obama and Trump administrations, in the years leading up to the full-scale Russian invasion. Biden's unwillingness or inability to grasp this has made his response too cautious as well. The United States should be taking more risks to ensure that

Russia's war fails. Biden's strategy of slowly dispensing allied weapons stocks telegraphs to U.S. adversaries the limits of Washington's support and the fragility of its commitment to Kyiv's success. His administration has allowed Russia to deter the United States from delivering weapons at the pace Ukraine needs, from putting more Russian territory at risk, and from turning the threat of escalation back on Russia.

Washington should spend less time worrying about what Russia might do and more time on getting Russia to worry about what the United States might do. Instead of loudly agonizing about the prospect of World War III, the U.S. president should sternly and publicly warn the Kremlin that unless Russian forces withdraw from Ukrainian territory, the United States will provide Ukraine with everything it needs to not just take back its occupied lands but also challenge Russian President Vladimir Putin's rule. Washington's message should be that, if Russia attacks a NATO country or uses a nuclear weapon, then the United States will deploy its own troops and rally its NATO allies to do the same to both defend Ukraine and hunt down all the Russian officials who made and executed the orders.

The United States' failure in Ukraine is creating deterrence problems in other parts of the world, too. China is watching closely as the Russian strategy of waiting out Western interest in the war proves effective, which raises the prospect that China might adopt a similar strategy in pursuit of its ambitions to rule Taiwan and absorb the maritime zones of its neighbors. China has treated the war in Ukraine as an opportunity to gain operational and technological insights, reverse engineer U.S. weapons recovered from the battlefield, and find ways to circumvent Western economic sanctions. The longer the war in Ukraine drags on, the more the cost of deterring China goes up.

Of course, the downside of bolder U.S. action to deter Russia is that it runs a greater risk of getting drawn into the fighting. Putin might even welcome this outcome, preferring to lose a war to the United States than to Ukraine. But Russian forces, already struggling to gain ground in Ukraine, would be decimated by the U.S. military. Stressing to Putin that such a humiliation could cost him his rule—or even his life—would likely stay his hand. In the end, the United States must be so strong and determined that Russia and other adversaries don't want to hazard actions that compel it to carry out its threats. That is successful deterrence, and it is the best and cheapest policy option, despite the inherent risk. If the United States is unwilling to make that gamble, it is letting the bad guys win.

SHORT OF FUNDS

The weakening of U.S. deterrence under the Biden administration is compounded by a failure to properly resource the U.S. military for the current security environment. Bipartisan congressional commissions have warned that the U.S. military and its industrial base are in urgent need of major investment. And Congress has more broadly recognized the deficiency of U.S. defense spending, with legislators from both parties voting to add \$28 billion to the president's first defense budget in 2022 and \$45 billion to his second in 2023, and likely adding between \$21.5 billion and \$37.4 billion to Biden's final budget submission, which is now pending.

But this is still not enough. The United States currently commits roughly the equivalent of three percent of GDP to defense, which is a historic low. This figure is particularly alarming given the rising threats the country faces today. China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran are increasingly belligerent and increasingly operating in concert. China's navy is growing rapidly, and its shipbuilding industry has a capacity 250 times that of the United States. In a potential conflict in Asia, the U.S. Navy is already at a disadvantage, as it would need to traverse an ocean. Reconstituting a war-winning navy should be the top priority of the U.S. defense program.

But a fight in the Pacific is not the only scenario the United States must be prepared for (and, ideally, deter), and readiness in other arenas will require addressing other deficiencies. The United States must also restock ammunition and air defenses, modernize its nuclear forces, and create redundancies in its communications channels. To make all of this possible, the Trump administration should advance a plan along the lines of one that Roger Wicker, the Republican senator from Mississippi, has proposed, which would increase defense spending to more than five percent of GDP.

Critics of this approach argue that the United States cannot afford more defense spending. This is manifestly untrue. Washington devised emergency spending mechanisms during the financial crisis and the pandemic; today, the country faces a defense shortfall of similar consequence. Arguments against defense spending increases often cite the ballooning of the national debt—but even though the debt is unquestionably a problem, defense spending is not its primary cause: entitlement programs such as Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid are. In the absence of changes to entitlement spending, which Trump has promised not to make, the best way to afford necessary upgrades to U.S. defenses is to expand GDP with growth-friendly policies on taxes and regulation.

A STEP TOWARD SECURITY

In his first term, Trump, to his credit, hewed closely to the ideas he campaigned on and kept faith with what voters endorsed. Despite his seeming attraction to the madman theory of international relations—the historian Lawrence Freedman has described Trump as “delighted by his own unpredictability and impulsiveness”—the former president actually has rather predictable policy views. He thinks that the globalized economy and immigration are bad for American workers and that allies take advantage of the United States. He admires authoritarian leaders, and tariffs are his favorite bludgeon.

Given those views, some elements of traditional Republican foreign policy are unlikely to reemerge under Trump. Free trade is out of the question in the foreseeable future, even though, according to a 2023 Chicago Council survey, three-quarters of Americans consider international trade good for the economy. The Trump administration is sure to shun multilateral trade deals and make bilateral agreements that are heavy on tariffs and focus on restricting U.S. market access and leveling the balance of trade. Trump is also unlikely to value alliances. American support will come with higher expectations of allies, in terms of both spending on their own defense and alignment with U.S. policies. Eventually, however, Trump may come to appreciate the need for healthy alliances if the United States is to assemble enough military and political power to confront the convergence of its adversaries.

On both deterrence and defense spending, by contrast, the Trump administration could be poised to address glaring vulnerabilities from the start. During the campaign, Trump vowed, “I would tell Putin, if you don’t make a deal, we’re going to give [Zelensky] a lot. We’re going to [give Ukraine] more than they ever got if we have to.” Turning that promise into policy would go a long way to reestablish American deterrence. Trump’s willingness in his first term to take offensive action, such as by striking the Iranian commander Qasem Soleimani in January 2020 and having U.S. troops attack Russian mercenaries in Syria in February 2018, suggests that he could once again use U.S. military force purposefully. Coupling that determination with investment in American defenses could dramatically improve U.S. national security—in other words, restoring peace through strength.

These changes, however important, won’t solve all the problems a Trump administration will face or create. Trump may make deals with authoritarians over the heads of allies. Allies that feel exposed may make choices that damage their own security and that of the United States. Deploying U.S. troops for domestic law enforcement, border patrol, or deportations may fracture the bond between the American public and the military, as well as sow discord within the military itself. But a second Trump administration could also harness the country’s brilliant and sometimes brutal motion in productive ways, taking meaningful steps to make the United States more secure in a perilous world.

For a contrary view, Foreign Affairs sent around this essay :

The Reckoning That Wasn’t

Why America Remains Trapped by False Dreams of Hegemony

By [Andrew J. Bacevich](#)

[March/April 2023](#) *Published on February 28, 2023*

March 01, 2023

The Reckoning That Wasn’t : Why America Remains Trapped by False Dreams of Hegemony

The erudite [Foreign Affairs piece](#) dated 28 February 2023 by Andrew J. Bacevich, Professor Emeritus of International Relations and History at Boston University and Chair of the Board of his co-founded Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, describes how America's zeal to save the world for freedom and democracy was borne of its laudable successful role in ending the Second World War.

Empowered by the national imperative in NSC (National Security Council document) 68 (1950), and egged on by America's long-established "military-industrial complex", the United States has been trapped by its Second World War glory in continuing to play the role of world policeman, only to end in one monumental fiasco after another - e.g. Vietnam War, the World on Terror (Iraq) and the War in Afghanistan - at gigantic cost in blood and fortune to itself and many times over to its perceived adversaries.

The author's hope that this tragedy of self-imposed errors may be corrected is, however, a triumph of hope over reality. America's military-industrial complex remains deeply entrenched, its tentacles reaching to all levers of state power and politics, including influential privately-funded national thinktanks. The intricate power web is exposed in depth in Jane Mayer's revealing book -[*Dark Money: How a Secretive Group of Billionaires is Trying to Buy Political Control in the U.S*](#) (Scribe 2016)

What is more, the Ukraine war, which the author well defines as a truly proxy war, has in many ways a hidden agenda to break Russia first, so as to concentrate later on breaking China next. The latter is firmly held to be the greatest existential threat to the endurance of US hegemony, the bedrock of America's military-industrial complex.

Indeed, the groundwork for the "Contest of the Century" is well underway, including **intensifying, no-holds-barred, bipartisan pushback against and demonization of China, hyping it into a saber-rattling existential contest "between democracy and autocracy"**, oblivious to possibilities of "harmony despite differences" according to Chinese philosophy.

What the US Air Force Doesn't Want You to Notice on Election Night

As the warring ruling class seems to be pushing for nuclear brinkmanship, on this election night let us not be distracted.

LEAH YANANTON

Nov 05, 2024 [Common Dreams](#)

Much significance will happen at the end of Election Day, and a countdown will begin at 11:00 p.m. PDT on November 5th. While everyone's attention will be on who our next president will be, the U.S. Air Force will test-launch an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile with a dummy hydrogen bomb on the tip from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. The missile will cross the Pacific Ocean and 22 minutes later crash into the Marshall Islands. The U.S. Air Force does this several times a year. **The launches are always at night while Americans are sleeping.**

This is what nightmares are made of—between 1946 and 1958 the U.S. detonated 67 nuclear bombs in the Marshall Islands, and the result is that the Marshallese people have lost their pristine environment and face serious health problems. Our environment is threatened here as well. Not only did the indigenous Chumash people lose their sacred land to Vandenberg Air Force Base, but also America's Heartland presently has around 400 ICBMs stored in underground silos equipped with nuclear warheads that are ready to launch at a hair trigger's notice. Named "MinuteMen III," after Revolutionary War soldiers who could reload and shoot a gun in less than a minute, ICBMs not only put Americans at risk of accident, but they put all life on earth in danger.

ICBMs are not viable for national defense. They are a relic of a bygone era having been invented by Nazi Germany, and their presence only escalates the risk of nuclear accidents or conflicts. A single launch could lead to a nuclear exchange that would annihilate cities, contaminate the environment, and cause irreversible harm to our planet's ecosystem. Once an ICBM is launched, it cannot be recalled. I don't want a nuclear strike or accident to happen. We can change course

now, and our first step is to decommission the ICBM program also because it is a staggering financial burden to maintain.

Nuclear weapons only provide the terrifying threat of annihilation, either by command or by accident. Nuclear weapons and ICBMs only make the world less safe and strip us of security.

The U.S. plans to spend over \$1.2 trillion on nuclear modernization over the next 30 years, which means new, larger nuclear bombs and new, larger ICBMs called Sentinels that will need to be tested. This massive investment in outdated technology diverts critical funds away from humanitarian needs like healthcare, education, and healing climate change—issues that directly impact our quality of life, and our children’s future.

I teach 4th and 5th graders Creative Writing. I adore children’s imaginations, but when my students were given the assignment to write about something important to them, they wrote lines that broke my heart. This is a wake-up call for us adults to face the reality we have made for our children.

“Such a shame, a perfectly good planet, trashed.” Claire, age 9.

“What would you think about no nature in the world? No trees, no butterflies, no birds or bunnies at all! Most important of all, no people. There would be no technology, no schools, no history, no entertainment; everything we have worked for would be wasted. What would you think about a beautiful world that basically had nothing? I think I would absolutely hate it.” Brynn, age 9.

Other than destruction caused by industrial global warming and by war, which the children are all-too aware of, this child does not know what actually could turn nature and civilization to *nothing* in a matter of minutes; she doesn’t know about “nuclear winter” or how vulnerable we are to a nuclear accident. Most people don’t.

The claim is that nuclear weapons are deterrents, but it is diplomacy that creates alliances and peace. Nuclear weapons only provide the terrifying threat of annihilation, either by command or by accident. Nuclear weapons and ICBMs only make the world less safe and strip us of security.

As the warring ruling class seems to be pushing for nuclear brinkmanship, on this election night let us not be distracted. By decommissioning ICBMs, the U.S. could lead the world in reducing the nuclear threat and encourage other nations to do the same. For the sake of our health, environment, and the safety of future generations, it’s time to scrap the ICBM program. We owe it to our children to invest in a future that prioritizes peace and sustainability over destruction.

As it is we the people who possess the right of self-determination, we must confront the material reality of our homeland and face what it will take to protect it. Do we have the courage to change our country for the better and ensure our futures? Yes, we do, and now is the time to take action.

“Only we, the public, can force our representatives to reverse their abdication of the war powers that the Constitution gives exclusively to the Congress,” said [Daniel Ellsberg](#), U.S. military analyst, economist, and author of "The Doomsday Machine."

May we cancel this nightmare weapons program once and for all and give our children the security that they deserve.

Tell Congress: Cancel Sentinel Missile Program—More Than 700 Scientists Agree: <https://secure.ucsusa.org/a/2024-cancel-sentinel-letter>

The Great American Nuclear Weapons Upgrade

[The Great American Nuclear Weapons Upgrade \(undark.org\)](#)

New nuclear-capable planes will soon be distributed to U.S. bases. Will they deter warfare or lead to an arms race?

BY: [RAMIN SKIBBA](#) for UNDARK // 11.04.2024

IN THE PLAINS of western South Dakota

About 25 miles northeast of Mount Rushmore, the Ellsworth Air Force Base is preparing to receive the first fleet of B-21 nuclear bombers, replacing Cold War-era planes. Two other bases, Dyess in Texas and Whiteman in Missouri, will soon follow. By the 2030s, a total of five bases throughout the United States will host nuke-carrying bombers for the first time since the 1990s. The planes are part of an estimated \$1.7 trillion military program advancing the nuclear arsenal of the United States, as tensions continue to rise with nuclear-armed rivals Russia and China.

In addition to the B-21s, the Pentagon is upgrading larger aging bombers and may also restore nukes to the ones that had their nuclear capabilities removed. Leaders within the U.S. Department of Defense, such as Air Force General Anthony Cotton, argue that the nuclear modernization program, as it is called, is a “[national imperative](#).” While some nuclear and foreign policy analysts argue that the program is crucial to building — or rebuilding — a formidable arsenal that deters other nuclear powers, others say it raises questions for both nuclear deterrence and arms control.

Still, the costly and massive nuclear modernization program enjoys bipartisan support, said Geoff Wilson, a defense policy researcher at the Stimson Center, a Washington, D.C.-based think tank. “The United States has committed itself to one of the largest arms races in history. We’re spending about \$75 billion a year on new nuclear weapons,” he said, citing figures from the [Congressional Budget Office](#). In comparison, the entire Manhattan Project cost about \$30 billion in today’s dollars, spread over multiple years.

Leaders within the U.S. Department of Defense argue that the nuclear modernization program, as it is called, is a “national imperative.” In addition to new bombers and nukes returning to bases that haven’t seen them since around the end of the Cold War, the U.S. and some of its rivals are building new missiles and nuke-launching subs. At the same time, the U.S. and Russia have announced their withdrawal from pacts or have suspended their participation in them, including the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, and New START.

With the international arms control regime eroding, experts say, there is little incentive for nuclear powers to reduce their arsenals. Instead, the U.S. and other military powers are advancing or expanding their nuclear weaponry, with few international rules remaining in place.

THOUGH THE Cold War ended more than 30 years ago

The U.S. and Russia maintain the biggest bomber fleets in the world. The U.S. Air Force currently has bombers that date back to the Cold War — mainly B-1 “Lancer” bombers and B-2 “Spirit” stealth bombers — and it aims to gradually replace them with the new B-21s, which cost an estimated [\\$700 million](#) apiece. The Air Force also still maintains more than 70 B-52 Stratofortress bombers built more than 60 years ago, now housed at two bases in Louisiana and North Dakota.

These geriatric bombers are also part of the nuclear modernization; the Pentagon’s plans include upgrades to the planes’ engines and radar systems, and the planes will also be equipped with a new type of nuclear-armed cruise missile. “Oh, they’re old, but they’re still cooking,” said Christopher Yeaw, an associate executive director at the National Strategic Research Institute in Nebraska and a former Air Force chief scientist.

“Yes, some grandchildren fly the very same jet their grandfather did, but they are still very relevant, because the airframe itself is extremely resilient.” Unlike the B-21s, the much larger B-52s can each currently carry up to eight bombs and 20 air-launched cruise missiles, and they’re relatively easy to spot on radar, he added. They aren’t “something that we would fly into heavy air defenses.” “The United States has committed itself to one of the largest arms races in history. We’re spending about \$75 billion a year on new nuclear weapons.”

Like the Lancer and the Spirit bombers, the B-21s have a nickname as well: the Raiders, named after the Doolittle Raiders pilots who attacked Tokyo and other major Japanese cities in 1942. The modern B-21s are stealth bombers, with a specialized coating and design intended to make the aircraft difficult to detect on radar. They aren’t small, but with a wingspan of less than 150 feet and length of 54 feet, they’re around half the length of common commercial jets and of the long-since-retired B-29 bombers.

Which remain the only aircraft that any country has used to drop nukes on a civilian population — namely, Hiroshima and Nagasaki. (Survivors of those atomic bombs, represented by a group called Nihon Hidankyo, were [recently awarded](#) the Nobel Peace Prize for their “efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.”) For Ellsworth and other bases, and for the [Air](#)

[Force](#) itself, hosting and maintaining the new nuclear forces has become a point of pride. “I’ve been to Ellsworth twice this year.

They’re ecstatic about that mission, the B-21 coming to their base,” Yeaw said. The Air Force is purchasing at least [100 B-21s](#) from Northrop Grumman, to be distributed among Ellsworth, Dyess, and Whiteman. These bases haven’t had a nuclear mission for a long time, Yeaw said, and the new B-21 program comes with a panoply of needs, as each bomber gets its own hangar, and the bases will require top-level security measures, more personnel for training and operations, nuclear weapon storage sites, and other infrastructure.

All that adds up to just one part of the nuclear modernization program, which began during the first term of the Obama administration and includes upgrading all three components of the nuclear triad: bomber aircraft, missile-launching submarines, and ground-based ballistic missiles. The U.S. nuclear arsenal has changed a bit since the modernization began, such as by the Trump administration’s addition of so-called low-yield nuclear warheads that are launched by subs, with a destructive power equivalent to 5 kilotons of TNT.

(The Hiroshima bomb’s explosive yield was about 15 kilotons.) And in October 2023, the Biden administration [announced](#) a new type of nuclear gravity bomb to be added to the stockpile, which could be dropped by bombers like the B-21s. While massive, the U.S.’s nuclear arsenal has actually shrunk considerably since its peak in the 1960s, when the military maintained tens of thousands of warheads.

But the Cold War continues to serve as a backdrop, with the U.S. and Russia leading the world’s nuclear inventory: Each have around [1,700 warheads deployed](#), with many more in their stockpiles. China has around 500 in its stockpile, with France and the U.K. close behind, according to the Federation of American Scientists, or FAS, an authority on nuclear forces. China in particular has been experimenting with its current weaponry.

[In September](#), it [tested an intercontinental ballistic missile](#) with a simulated warhead, the first time in decades that it test-fired such a missile into international waters. A few days earlier, [Russia attempted its own test](#) of a nuclear-capable missile, which [appeared to have failed](#). Yeaw, the former Air Force chief scientist, believes the FAS’s assessment substantially underestimates China’s growing arsenal, in part citing recent signs from satellite images of newly constructed missile silo fields in northern China.

He argues that the Chinese nuke counts could overtake the U.S.’s and Russia’s by 2035. Hans Kristensen, director of the FAS’s Nuclear Information Project, played a role in discovering those silo fields, but he disputes the larger nuke number claims. “They don’t have the force structure to have more,” he said. “So, this makes absolutely no sense to claim they have more nuclear weapons.”

EACH OF THESE new nuclear bombers

And storage sites come with safety and security concerns. After all, numerous military nuclear accidents occurred during the Cold War. For example, in 1958 at Dyess Air Force Base, a fire

erupted on a nuke-carrying B-47. The aircraft crashed, causing an explosion that created a crater on the ground. The nuke didn't detonate, and while three crew members were able to eject safely, one was killed. In 1959 at Barksdale, a transport aircraft nicknamed "Old Shakey" crashed.

According to [reporting](#) from the Shreveport Times, three thermonuclear devices were destroyed. Then in 1964 at Ellsworth, a small explosion popped off a missile's cone, which contained a nuclear warhead, and it fell to the bottom of a silo. Fortunately, it did not detonate. More recently, a non-nuclear [B-1 bomber crashed](#) in January 2024 at Ellsworth, and following an investigation, the Air Force fired a commander there.

In response to Undark's request for comment, Ann Stefanek, the chief of Air Force media operations, shared a statement that noted Department of the Air Force "weapons safety policy is developed for all weapon systems to include design certifications, mishap prevention programs, and continuous safety oversight. This has driven several important updates to safety features over the past 60 years, to include conventional explosives safeguards within nuclear weapon designs — a mainstay of current nuclear weapons carried by aircraft."

As tensions worsen, especially between the U.S. and Russia over Ukraine and between the U.S. and China over Taiwan, analysts fear conventional conflicts could escalate into nuclear ones.

The new and upgraded nukes come with arms control and geopolitical concerns as well. During the Cold War, negotiators from the U.S. and USSR hammered out at least five major nuclear treaties, but most of those have since fallen by the wayside. Last year, Putin suspended Russia's participation in the [New START treaty](#) — the final remaining nuclear treaty between the U.S. and Russia — which is now set to expire in February 2026.

The accord limits each country to 1,550 nuclear warheads, but there's a loophole: Each bomber counts as one weapon even though it can carry multiple nukes. Neither country has a nuclear agreement [with China](#), but considering its arsenal is estimated to be much smaller than those in the U.S. and Russia, China's position has been, "when you come down to our force level, then we'll talk," Kristensen said.

A new treaty or a revived New START might not be in the offing, but he argues that a handshake agreement might still be possible, such as to not exceed the force levels limited by the treaty. The U.S. has deployed nuclear-capable bombers [in Australia](#) near China, near [Russia-occupied Ukraine](#), [near North Korea](#), and [near Iran](#), which suspended its nuclear program, according to U.S. intelligence reports. The U.S. has been more frequently doing these deployments than before, though such bombers haven't carried nukes abroad in decades, Kristensen said.

The Pentagon also recently deployed nuclear-capable B-2 bombers [to strike Houthi targets in Yemen](#), their first use in combat in years, perhaps intended to threaten Iran as well. The Air Force declined to comment on nuclear-capable bombers overseas. U.S. Air Force footage of the B-2 Spirit, a stealth bomber capable of delivering both conventional and nuclear weapons, which

was first unveiled in the late 1980s. The Air Force plans to gradually replace them with the new B-21s. Credit: Military Archive/YouTube

As tensions worsen, especially between the U.S. and Russia over Ukraine and between the U.S. and China over Taiwan, analysts fear conventional conflicts could escalate into nuclear ones, such as [if Putin feels his government is threatened](#) or if a direct war between Russia and NATO erupts. These conflicts and geopolitical tensions have been a boon for defense contractors, including Northrop Grumman, which is building the B-21 and B-2 bombers for the Air Force.

The company has seen its [stock rise](#) during Israel's expanding bombing campaigns and the Russia-Ukraine war, and it has been one of the U.S.'s main contractors for military aid packages to both Israel and Ukraine, along with Boeing, Lockheed Martin, RTX Corporation (formerly Raytheon), and others. (Northrop Grumman did not respond to Undark's requests for comment.) Since the Cold War, the U.S. and Russia have operated with the goal of nuclear deterrence, each maintaining a sufficient arsenal to deter its rival from using a nuke.

But there's a risk that such notions could give way to a new arms race, especially when one country cites its rival's nuclear modernization in order to expand its arsenal, Wilson argues. Deterrence, he said, "has become an excuse to ramp up defense spending and pay more money towards defense contractors who are woefully behind schedule and over-budget on all these things already." "I think that people have forgotten what deterrence means," he added. "It's based on stability — it's not based on dominance."

[Nuclear Armageddon May Be Closer Than We Think](#) An Essay from 2017 calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

<https://www.cna.org/reports/2024/09/Moscow-Does-Not-Believe-in-Tears.pdf>

Report to Congress on LGM-35A Sentinel ICBM

U.S. NAVAL INSTITUTE STAFF

OCTOBER 23, 2024 9:12 AM

The following is the Oct. 17, 2024, Congressional Research Service In Focus report, Defense Primer: LGM-35A Sentinel Intercontinental Ballistic Missile.

From the report

The LGM-35A Sentinel is an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) system that is expected to replace the Minuteman III (MMIII) ICBM in the U.S. nuclear force structure. MMIII has served as the ground-based leg of the U.S. nuclear triad—land-based ICBMs, submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and nuclear-capable bombers—since 1970. (See CRS In Focus IF10519, Defense Primer: Strategic Nuclear Forces.) The Biden Administration included \$3.7 billion for the Sentinel in its FY2025 Department of Defense (DOD) budget request, and \$1.1 billion in the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) budget request for the W87-1 nuclear warhead that is being developed for the missile. In 2024, DOD conducted a

congressionally mandated review of the Sentinel program following an increase in cost projections.

What Is an ICBM?

A U.S. ICBM can reach targets around the globe in approximately 30 minutes after launch. During the first three minutes, three solid fuel rocket motors power the missile's flight. After the powered portion of flight, the missile follows a parabolic trajectory toward its target. The missile releases its warhead during the mid-course portion of its flight, and the warhead continues to the target.

The United States began deploying nuclear-armed ICBMs in 1959 and has maintained these systems "on alert," or able to launch promptly, since that time. The Air Force has tested MMIII missiles to a range greater than 6,000 miles, or 5,000 nautical miles. The United States bases its ICBMs solely in hardened concrete silos, known as launch facilities, located in North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, and Nebraska. Russia and China use both silos and road-mobile launchers for their ICBMs.

Once the President authorizes the launch of any U.S. ICBM, the missile cannot be recalled or destroyed in flight. The same is true for nuclear missiles launched from U.S. submarines. In contrast, U.S. bombers can return to their bases, without releasing their weapons, although their weapons also cannot be recalled after their release.

The Transition from Minuteman III

The U.S. Air Force first deployed Minuteman ICBMs in the 1960s. MMIII, which is currently deployed in a single-warhead configuration, entered the force in 1970. The Air Force has replaced and updated many of the component systems on the missile—a process known as life-extension—several times over the past 50 years. The Air Force has stated that some of these components may face reliability concerns as they reach the end of their intended lifespans. After conducting an Analysis of Alternatives in 2014, the Air Force decided to replace MMIII with a new missile system (originally Ground Based Strategic Deterrent) that would serve through 2075. The Air Force argued that when compared with a life-extended MMIII, the new ICBM would meet current and expected threats, maintain the industrial base, produce a modular weapon system, and reduce life cycle cost. The Air Force and Northrop Grumman, the Sentinel's lead defense contractor, planned for the Sentinel to begin replacing MMIII in 2029.

Program Status

The Air Force plans to procure 634 Sentinel missiles, plus an additional 25 missiles to support development and testing, to enable the deployment of 400 missiles. According to the Air Force, the program also includes modernizing "450 silos and more than 600 facilities across almost 40,000 square miles" (see Figure 1). To facilitate the MMIII to Sentinel transition, the Air Force stood up an ICBM Modernization Directorate in the Air Force Global Strike Command, as directed by Section 1638 of the FY2023 NDAA

Download the document [here](#).

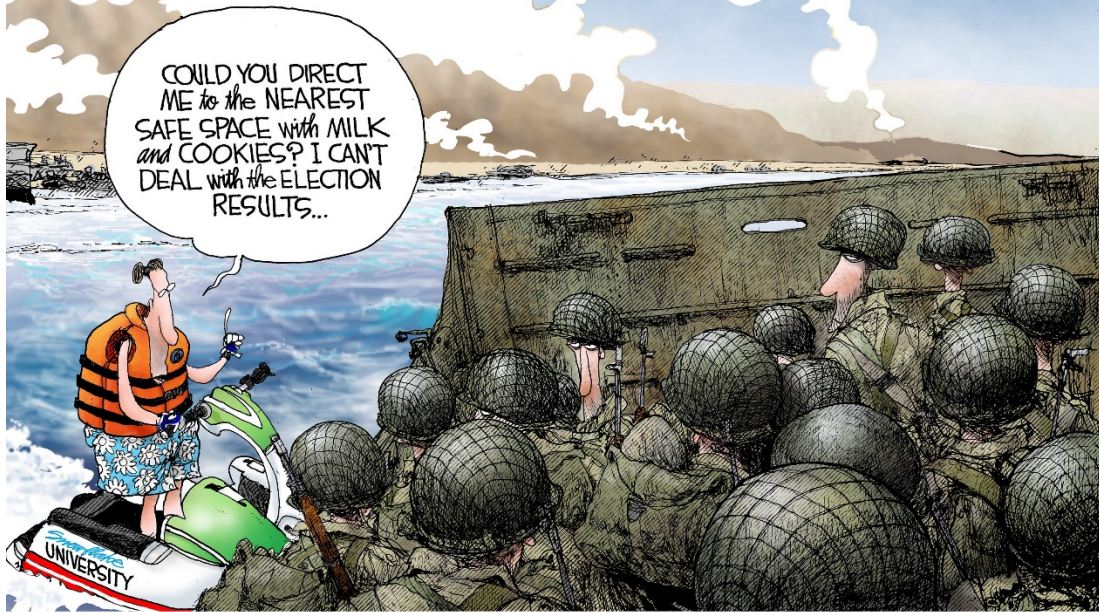
Can Humanity Achieve a Century of Nuclear Peace?

The EAR took part in an extensive research project of the Forecasting Research Institute on Nuclear Peace. Said the report:

While the world has avoided large-scale nuclear war, questions remain about the role of chance versus policy choices in preventing such events. This study systematically assesses expert beliefs about the probability of a nuclear catastrophe by 2045, the centenary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Through a combination of expert interviews and surveys, 110 domain experts and 41 expert forecasters (“superforecasters”) predicted the likelihood of nuclear conflict, explained the mechanisms underlying their predictions, and forecasted the impact of specific tractable policies on the likelihood of nuclear catastrophe.

The findings of this survey highlight a few noteworthy patterns. NATO-Russia tensions emerged as the geopolitical hotspot most likely to trigger a nuclear exchange. Crisis communication networks and failsafe reviews emerged as the most popular policies for reducing the risk of nuclear catastrophe. Another key finding was that expert forecasters (superforecasters) estimated the overall risk of a nuclear catastrophe at 1%, while the aggregate view among nuclear experts was 5%. These trends offer valuable indications that warrant deeper discussion among experts and policymakers.

See the full report [here](#).



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