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National Institute for Public Policy, 9302 Lee Highway, Suite 750, Fairfax, VA 22031 USA,  
Telephone: 703-293-9181, Fax: 703-293-9198, [www.nipp.org](http://www.nipp.org)

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the first Issue of Volume 4 of National Institute's *Journal of Policy & Strategy*—a quarterly online peer-reviewed publication. In this first issue of 2024, the “Analysis” section features four essays. First, Dr. Mark Schneider explains the difficulty of estimating the size and composition of Russia's nuclear arsenal from open sources alone. Second, Mr. Michael Rühle examines NATO's history through the lens of one of its important early intellectual supporters, Norman Angell. Third, Dr. John Mark Mattox explores the definition and intersections of morality, ethics, and national power. Fourth, Dr. Stephen Blank explains why the United States should support Israel and Ukraine in their respective conflicts—both for similar reasons.

The “Interviews” section features questions and answers with Hon. Franklin Miller, Principal at the Scowcroft Group and Member of the bipartisan and Congressionally-mandated 2023 Strategic Posture Commission, and Dr. Nadia Schadow, Senior Fellow, Hudson Institute and former Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategy. The following “Proceedings” section contains participant remarks from two National Institute webinars, one titled “The Size and Characteristics of the Russian Nuclear Stockpile” from September 2023, and the other, “The Rejection of Intentional Population Targeting for ‘Tripolar’ Deterrence,” from November 2023. They contain fascinating insights on two particularly relevant topics of discussion currently.

The “Literature Review” section highlights three recently published works in the field: *US National Security: Policymakers, Processes, and Politics, Sixth Edition*, by John Allen Williams, Stephen J. Cimbala, Sam C. Sarkesian; *How Russia Loses: Hubris and Miscalculation in Putin's Kremlin*, by Thomas Kent; and, *Indo-Pacific Missile Arsenals: Avoiding Spirals and Mitigating Escalation Risks*, by Ankit Panda. These works were reviewed by Hon. David J. Trachtenberg, Dr. Michaela Dodge, and Mr. Matthew R. Costlow respectively.

The “Documentation” section, in its first feature, contains excerpts from the *Fiscal Year 2024 National Defense Authorization Act Conference Report*. The second document is the written testimony of Rear Admiral Douglas L. Williams, Acting Director of the Missile Defense Agency, titled *Demand for Theater Missile Defense Assets*. Finally, the third document is a discussion paper from the Estonian Ministry of Defence, titled, *Setting Transatlantic Defence up for Success: A Military Strategy for Ukraine's Victory and Russia's Defeat*.

The concluding section of this issue, “From the Archive,” begins with select excerpts from the highly-influential *Report of the President's Commission on Strategic Forces*, otherwise known as the Scowcroft Commission report, which has just celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary since its publication. The second document features select excerpts from Dr. Keith Payne's 1982 book *Nuclear Deterrence in U.S.-Soviet Relations*, which highlights two quotes from the recently-passed statesman Dr. Henry Kissinger.







## ANALYSIS

# THE CHALLENGES IN ESTIMATING THE NUMBER OF RUSSIAN NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Mark B. Schneider

The 2023 edition of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) *Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community* provides an ominous warning about the Russian nuclear threat. It states: 1) “Russian leaders thus far have avoided taking actions that would broaden the Ukraine conflict beyond Ukraine’s borders, but the risk for escalation remains significant”; (2) “Heavy losses to its ground forces and the large-scale expenditures of precision-guided munitions during the conflict have degraded Moscow’s ground and air-based conventional capabilities and increased its reliance on nuclear weapons”; and, 3) “Russia maintains the largest and most capable nuclear weapons stockpile, and it continues to expand and modernize its nuclear weapons capabilities.”<sup>1</sup> While the DNI report appears to provide a grim confirmation that Russia has achieved a growing margin of nuclear advantage, this level of detail does not allow for any real understanding of Russian nuclear capabilities or the nature of the nuclear threat Moscow poses to the United States and its allies.

### Sources of Information on Russian Nuclear Capability

Since the public generally receives minimal information from the U.S. government concerning the Russian nuclear threat, and this appears unlikely to change anytime soon, other sources of information must be examined. These include:

- Data from START, START II, and New START Treaties. (Unfortunately, the 1991 START Treaty data are old; the START II Treaty never entered into force and its data were never updated; and, New START Treaty data provided very little public information and the data flow is not likely to resume anytime soon, if ever);

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This article is adapted from, Mark B. Schneider, *How Many Nuclear Weapons Does Russia Have? The Size and Characteristics of the Russian Nuclear Stockpile*, *Occasional Paper*, Vol. 3, No. 8 (Fairfax, VA: National Institute Press, August 2023), available at <https://nipp.org/papers/how-many-nuclear-weapons-does-russia-have-the-size-and-characteristics-of-the-russian-nuclear-stockpile/>.

<sup>1</sup> Office of the Director of National Intelligence, *Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Director of National Intelligence, February 6, 2023), pp. 12, 14. (Emphasis in the original.) Available at <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/newsroom/reports-publications/reports-publications-2023/item/2363-2023-annual-threat-assessment-of-the-u-s-intelligence-community>.





- Information released under the Freedom of Information Act, although usually in a highly redacted form;
- Congressional hearings, one of the best Western sources;
- Russian press reports concerning Russia's strategic and non-strategic nuclear weapons, which until recently were almost entirely ignored in the Western press;
- Statements by active duty and retired senior Russian military officers;
- Russian journalists writing in Western aviation and other publications;
- Statements by senior Russian political officials concerning the scope of reductions from Soviet levels; and,
- Reports from Western journalists.

While these sources are useful, none of them is a good substitute for a responsible U.S. government policy to provide the public with information concerning Russian nuclear capabilities—the largest and most serious nuclear threat today. Thanks to Washington's apparent policy to provide scant information in this regard, the public has no sanity check on much of what is reported in the Western press or in the Russian press—the latter being the most abundant source of information on Russian nuclear capabilities. Unfortunately, as the Putin dictatorship expands, there is less and less of a free press in Russia and, hence, more dependence on Russian state media. For example, in 2012, Putin ended U.S. involvement in the elimination of Soviet-era nuclear forces, removing that source of insight.<sup>2</sup>

Today, few Western journalists consistently cover Russian nuclear weapons developments, although the information they provide can be very important. Congress has mandated annual reports that cover the nuclear threat from China, Iran and North Korea, *but not Russia*, despite the fact that the Russian nuclear stockpile is far larger and far more sophisticated. Russia is fighting a vicious war of aggression against Ukraine and issuing unprecedented nuclear threats to the United States and NATO. The only alternative today is to piece together information about Russian nuclear weapons capabilities from as many credible sources as possible.

The startling revelation starting in 2021 of hundreds of Chinese ICBM silos (reported publicly by NGOs *before it was confirmed* by the Pentagon) illustrates both the paucity of information provided by Washington and why numbers from such organizations as the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) should not be accepted at face value absent adequate documentation. The March 2023 FAS China nuclear weapons report registered an increase of only 60 Chinese nuclear warheads compared to their November 2021 report. Yet,

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<sup>2</sup> "Cooperative Threat Reduction Timeline," *Russia Matters*, no date, available at <https://www.russiamatters.org/facts/cooperative-threat-reduction-timeline>.

this number seems implausible—there are now hundreds of additional Chinese ICBM silos and China is MIRVing its ICBMs and SLBMs.<sup>3</sup>

During the Cold War, the U.S. government kept the American people well-informed about the Russian nuclear threat until the Clinton Administration gradually reversed this openness. This state of affairs deteriorated further during the George W. Bush Administration. It said virtually nothing about the Russian nuclear threat after the 2001 *Nuclear Posture Review* (NPR),<sup>4</sup> (which itself said little and was dominated by the apparent perception that Russia no longer posed a threat), until 2008 when U.S. threat perceptions slowly began to change following Russia's invasion of Georgia.<sup>5</sup> The Obama Administration's 2010 *Nuclear Posture Review Report* contained very little information concerning Russian nuclear capabilities.<sup>6</sup> The United States has not released an unclassified estimate for the size of Russia's total nuclear weapons inventory in more than 10 years and, with few exceptions, government officials and senior military leaders tend to be circumspect in what they say publicly about Russian nuclear forces.

The 2018 NPR is an exception to this data vacuum; it made available to the public significant information that had not previously appeared in the press. Even the February 2022 FAS report noted that it “constituted the first substantial official US public statement on the status and composition of the Russian nonstrategic nuclear arsenal in more than two decades...”<sup>7</sup> In contrast, the 2022 NPR report provided very little information. It merely recited the New START Treaty limit on accountable, deployed strategic nuclear warheads, ignored the fact that it grossly undercounted bomber weapons, provided no detail on Russian modernization programs, and ignored Russian non-compliance issues with the New START Treaty.<sup>8</sup> The one useful piece of information it contained was that its estimate of “up

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<sup>3</sup> Mark B. Schneider, “Will the Pentagon Ever Get Serious About the Size of China's Nuclear Force?,” *Real Clear Defense*, December 15, 2022, available at [https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2022/12/15/will\\_the\\_pentagon\\_ever\\_get\\_serious\\_about\\_the\\_size\\_of\\_chinas\\_nuclear\\_force\\_870335.html](https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2022/12/15/will_the_pentagon_ever_get_serious_about_the_size_of_chinas_nuclear_force_870335.html); Hans M. Kristensen, Matt Korda, and Eliana Reynolds, “Chinese Nuclear Weapons, 2023,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 79, No. 2 (2023); and, Hans M. Kristensen and Matt Korda, “Chinese Nuclear Weapons, 2021,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 77, No. 6 (2021).

<sup>4</sup> For example, see, Donald H. Rumsfeld, *Annual Report to the President and the Congress* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2002), p. 12, available at [https://history.defense.gov/Portals/70/Documents/annual\\_reports/2002\\_DoD\\_AR.pdf?ver=2014-06-24-153732-117](https://history.defense.gov/Portals/70/Documents/annual_reports/2002_DoD_AR.pdf?ver=2014-06-24-153732-117).

<sup>5</sup> Samuel W. Bodman and Robert M. Gates, *National Security and Nuclear Weapons in the 21st Century* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, September 2008), p. 8, available at <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA487443.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Nuclear Posture Review Report* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, April 2010), available at [https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/features/defenseReviews/NPR/2010\\_Nuclear\\_Posture\\_Review\\_Report.pdf](https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/features/defenseReviews/NPR/2010_Nuclear_Posture_Review_Report.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Hans M. Kristensen and Matt Korda, “Russian Nuclear Weapons, 2022,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 78, No. 2 (2022), p. 11. The FAS attack on the Trump Administration's assessment is inaccurate and ignores the critical role played by then-Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter in bringing public attention to the dangerous aspects of Russian nuclear strategy.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *2022 Nuclear Posture Review* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2022), p. 4, available at <https://media.defense.gov/2022/Oct/27/2003103845/-1/-1/1/2022-NATIONAL-DEFENSE-STRATEGY-NPR-MDR.PDF>.

to” 2,000 Russian non-strategic nuclear weapons counted only active weapons.<sup>9</sup> In March 2023, STRATCOM Commander General Anthony Cotton said, “Russia also has a stockpile of approximately 2,000 theater nuclear weapons that does not fall under the limits established by the NST [New START Treaty].”<sup>10</sup>

## Problems in Assessing the Number of Russian Nuclear Weapons

[Unclear what this sentence is referencing – a previous chapter? Additionally, this sentence seems to contradict Mark’s earlier sentence that the Pentagon used to keep the American people well informed about the Soviet nuclear arsenal. Potential suggested change →]The United States had difficulty estimating the size of the Soviet nuclear warhead stockpile during the Cold War. The same may be happening now regarding Russia. Why was this so? Dr. Fred Iklé, Under Secretary of Defense during the Reagan Administration, explained it as follows: “These things [nuclear weapons] don’t take that much space,” and so, “It’s conceivable that we could have missed them, as we did many other things in Russia, like the big fissures in their economy.”<sup>11</sup> Nuclear weapons, particularly those initially developed in the 1970s and 1980s,<sup>12</sup> are very small. They are *not* manufactured, stored, maintained, deployed and eventually dismantled in the open where they can be imaged by satellites and then counted.

Former Under Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller was mistaken with regard to the verification of the number and types of Russian nuclear weapons when she recently argued: [the font color appears to be gray in this paragraph – but please double check for the document as a whole]

The verification regime of the [New START] treaty has worked remarkably well, with the parties exchanging data twice a year on their weapon holdings and regularly—sometimes multiple times a day—informing each other of the movement of their nuclear systems.

Through these measures—backed up by its own national technical means (satellites, reconnaissance aircraft, radars, etc.)—the United States has been able to keep a close eye on developments in the Russian strategic nuclear forces. This effort

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Anthony J. Cotton, *Statement of Commander Anthony J. Cotton, United States Strategic Command* (Washington, D.C.: House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Strategic Forces), p. 8, available at <https://armedservices.house.gov/sites/republicans.armedservices.house.gov/files/2023%20USSTRATCOM%20Congressional%20Posture%20Statement%20-%20HASC-SF.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> William J. Broad, “Russian Says Soviet Atom Arsenal Was Larger Than West Estimated,” *The New York Times*, September 26, 1993, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/09/26/world/russian-says-soviet-atom-arsenal-was-larger-than-west-estimated.html>.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Nuclear Posture Review* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2018), p. 9, available at <https://media.defense.gov/2018/Feb/02/2001872886/-1/-1/1/2018-NUCLEAR-POSTURE-REVIEW-FINAL-REPORT.PDF>; and, Mark Schneider, “The Future of the U.S. Nuclear Deterrent,” *Comparative Strategy*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (2008), pp. 347-348.

has proven highly important in recent months. It has been a significant source of predictability, offering 24/7 insights into Russian nuclear operations.<sup>13</sup>

Secretary Gottemoeller did not acknowledge the fact that the most detailed and frequent information the United States obtained from Russia concerning deployed strategic nuclear weapons occurred *during on-site inspections which have now not taken place for more than three years*. The information provided to the inspectors included, “The number of reentry vehicles emplaced on each deployed” ICBM and SLBM.<sup>14</sup> While “satellites, reconnaissance aircraft, radars, etc.” do provide useful information relevant to assessing the capabilities of Russian missiles, none of these National Technical Means of Verification (NTM) can count the number of nuclear warheads actually deployed on any Russian missile. Indeed, in May 2020, Secretary Gottemoeller expressed a different opinion about the critical importance of on-site inspections. She argued, “...we discarded the counting rules in favor of confirming declared warheads on the front of missiles *through reciprocal inspections*; in fact, we did not need telemetry measures to confirm compliance with the warhead limits in the new treaty...”<sup>15</sup> This also is a problematic assessment. A decade earlier, Senator Christopher Bond (R-MO), then Vice Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, pointed out that the New START Treaty “discarded” the “critical counting rules” (sometimes called attribution rules) of the original START Treaty which were “...designed to work hand-in-glove with our satellites, in favor of reliance on no more than ten sample inspections a year—again, just 2 to 3 percent of Russia’s force.”<sup>16</sup> The Obama Administration even argued during New START ratification that less verification was adequate for New START because of the supposed benign nature of Putin’s Russia and the “reset.”<sup>17</sup>

A report by Republican Senators on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee—James Risch (ID), Jim DeMint (SC), James Barrasso (WY), Roger Wicker (MS), and James Inhofe (OK)—explained the deficiencies of the New START Treaty in counting deployed warheads:

Fortunately, START I did not rely on these inspections alone for verification; it wisely relied primarily on our National Technical Means (NTM) to verify an “attribution” rule that in general, counted warheads based on their demonstrated capability. (Under this rule, a missile type was considered to have a certain

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<sup>13</sup> Rose Gottemoeller, “Resuming New START Inspections must be a Critical Goal of Upcoming US-Russia Talks,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, November 23, 2022, available at <https://thebulletin.org/2022/11/resuming-new-start-inspections-must-be-a-critical-goal-of-upcoming-us-russia-talks/>.

<sup>14</sup> United States of America and the Russian Federation, *Protocol to the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms* (Washington, D.C.: Department of State, 2010), pp. 122-123, available at <https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/140047.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Rose Gottemoeller, “The New START Verification Regime: How Good Is It?,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, May 21, 2020. (Emphasis added.) Available at <https://thebulletin.org/2020/05/the-new-start-verification-regime-how-good-is-it/>.

<sup>16</sup> Christopher Bond, “The New START Treaty,” *Federation of American Scientists*, November 18, 2010, available at [https://irp.fas.org/congress/2010\\_cr/bond-nstart.html](https://irp.fas.org/congress/2010_cr/bond-nstart.html).

<sup>17</sup> Paula DeSutter, “Verification and the New START Treaty,” The Heritage Foundation, July 12, 2010, available at <https://www.heritage.org/arms-control/report/verification-and-the-new-start-treaty>.

attributed number of warheads, such that warhead verification became an exercise of simply multiplying numbers of missiles observed with satellites multiplied by the attributed warhead number.)<sup>18</sup>

No one argued at the time that NTM alone could verify the New START deployed warhead limits. When the United States lost on-site inspections, it lost virtually the entire New START deployed warhead verification regime. No one in 2010 could have anticipated: that the United States would abide three years without inspections; Russia's refusal to resume inspections; the illegal Russian "suspension" of the Treaty and the end of data notifications; or, that Washington would take no programmatic action in response to these Russian actions. Indeed, if the Russian termination of on-site inspections amid the geopolitical crisis in Ukraine had been anticipated, the New START Treaty clearly would not have been approved by the Senate. The 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan helped sink the SALT II Treaty.<sup>19</sup> Current events are much worse.

### **Russian Violations and "Suspension" of the New START Treaty**

The United States is now in a one-sided arms control arrangement with Russia in which the United States is complying with the New START Treaty limitations despite Russian violations of the Treaty and the growing possibility that it has expanded its strategic nuclear forces substantially beyond the Treaty limits. This is happening in the context of unprecedented Russian nuclear war threats.

In its 2023 report on implementation of the New START Treaty, the State Department for the first time acknowledged that it could not certify Russian compliance with New START because Moscow refused to resume on-site inspections required under the Treaty, which had temporarily ceased due to the Covid pandemic. The report states:

Based on the information available as of December 31, 2022, the United States cannot certify the Russian Federation to be in compliance with the terms of the New START Treaty. In refusing to permit the United States to conduct inspection activities on Russian territory, based on an invalid invocation of the "temporary exemption" provision, Russia has failed to comply with its obligation to facilitate U.S. inspection activities, and denied the United States its right to conduct such inspection activities. The Russian Federation has also failed to comply with the

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<sup>18</sup> Senate Foreign Relations Committee, *Treaty with Russia on Measures for Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Senate, October 1, 2010), Executive Report 111-6, pp. 115-116, available at <https://www.congress.gov/111/crpt/erpt6/CRPT-111erpt6.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> "Strategic Arms Limitations Talks/Treaty (SALT) I and II," *State.gov*, no date, available at <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1969-1976/salt>.

obligation to convene a session of the Bilateral Consultative Commission (BCC) within the timeline set out by the Treaty.<sup>20</sup>

However, by focusing on procedural violations the Department of State appears to create the impression that this merely reduces the level of confidence in Russian data declarations, even asserting that: “...the United States assesses that Russia did not engage in significant activity above the Treaty limits in 2022. The United States also assesses that Russia was likely under the New START warhead limit at the end of 2022.”<sup>21</sup>

This appears to be more wishful thinking than confident conclusion. NTM alone, without counting rules, cannot determine the actual number of warheads deployed on Russian missiles, particularly in an arms control environment where high levels of proof are required given Moscow’s systematic violation of arms control agreements. The only good measure available today may be the actual maximum potential of Russian missiles. Russia appears to want the United States to believe that although it first illegally refused on-site inspections and then “suspended” the New START Treaty—ending data notifications—it continues to comply with the Treaty’s numerical limitations. In the current Putin-created crisis atmosphere, the expectation of continued compliance lacks credibility. Why should Russia continue to comply when Treaty violations likely cannot be detected and there is little chance of Russia facing negative consequences for Treaty violations? The State Department report itself cites Russian data that put it only one warhead below the limit in September 2022.<sup>22</sup> This means that to deploy any new ICBMs or SLBMs legally, Russia *would have to download an existing missile or missiles* depending on how many warheads the new deployed missiles carried. This would have to be done before the new missiles were deployed to avoid a New START Treaty violation.

Even if NTM detected activity at a Russian missile launcher site, there may be no way to determine if Russia is downloading or uploading warheads. In its last data update, Russia declared it had 1,549 warheads in September 2022<sup>23</sup> (to be discussed below). Since Russia has announced the deployment of new ICBMs after its last data update, unless Russia has done further downloading of its other ICBMs or SLBMs, it now is likely above the Treaty limit of 1,550 deployed nuclear warheads. The Russian number would be much higher if Moscow decided to upload its missiles covertly in the absence of on-site inspections, coinciding with its attack on Ukraine—hardly a far-fetched proposition.

Like Amb. Gottemoeller, the Department of State apparently is presuming that Russia has been telling the truth about its force numbers and that Russian data declarations are accurate. Yet, Moscow is a serial violator of arms control agreements and, in fact, data

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<sup>20</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Report to Congress on Implementation of the New START Treaty Pursuant to paragraph (a)(10) of the Senate’s Resolution of Advice and Consent to Ratification of the New START Treaty (Treaty Doc. 111-5)*, (Washington, D.C.: Department of State, January 2023), p. 5, available at <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2022-New-START-Implementation-Report.pdf>.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> “Russian Missile Unit Puts Another Yars ICBM on Duty,” *Interfax*, December 15, 2022, available at <https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/18E6C6996F8859A8>.

exchanges do not verify any number; they only provide numbers that must be verified.<sup>24</sup> Regarding deployed warheads, there is no possible way to verify the total number without on-site inspections, and the Russian notification fig leaf no longer exists. In early March 2023, Congressman Doug Lamborn (R-CO), Chairman of the House Armed Services Strategic Forces Subcommittee, stated that, “*I understand that Russia has ceased providing the U.S. with treaty notifications, yet we continue to provide them to Russia.*”<sup>25</sup> The Department of State confirmed this was the case until March 30, 2023.<sup>26</sup> Jon Wolfsthal, who served as a Senior Advisor to the Obama Administration’s NSC wrote, “...if Russia is indeed stopping data exchanges and notifications, it would fundamentally change the nuclear relationship with Russia.”<sup>27</sup> The United States continued unilateral Treaty notifications until June 2023.<sup>28</sup>

### **NTM and Assessment of Russian Deployed Missile Warhead Loadings**

Thanks to the original 1991 START Treaty, which required the provision of technical data on ICBMs and SLBMs, telemetry tapes, and interpretative data, and contained a near ban on telemetry encryption, the United States likely has a reasonably good understanding of the *maximum* capabilities of most *existing* Russian strategic missiles. However, NTM without accepted attribution rules as part of an agreement cannot verify: 1) the number of warheads on newly deployed Russian ICBMs and SLBMs; 2) the strategic nuclear warhead reductions that have been made by means of downloading; and, 3) whether downloaded missiles have since been uploaded.

As is obvious from commercial satellite imagery, large platforms such as submarines and fixed missile silos are the easiest to monitor. Yet, even if the United States had counting rules to facilitate the counting of warheads, there would still be the problem of confirming the number of mobile ICBMs the Russians have produced and deployed, which would be necessary to confirm the number of Russia’s deployed warheads. This difficulty is the reason why the United States insisted on Perimeter Portal Continuous Monitoring of mobile ICBM

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<sup>24</sup> See the discussion in, The New START Working Group, “New START: Potemkin Village Verification,” The Heritage Foundation, June 24, 2010, available at <https://www.heritage.org/arms-control/report/new-start-potemkin-village-verification>.

<sup>25</sup> Doug Lamborn, “Lamborn Opening Statement at FY24 Strategic Forces Posture Hearing,” House Armed Services Committee, March 8, 2023. (Emphasis in the original.) Available at <https://armedservices.house.gov/news/press-releases/lamborn-opening-statement-fy24-strategic-forces-posture-hearing>.

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Department of State, “U.S. Countermeasures in Response to Russia’s Violations of the New START Treaty,” *State.gov*, June 1, 2023, available at <https://www.state.gov/u-s-countermeasures-in-response-to-russias-violations-of-the-new-start-treaty/>.

<sup>27</sup> Andrew Roth and Julian Borger, “Putin says Russia will halt Participation in New Start Nuclear Arms Treaty,” *The Guardian*, February 21, 2023, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/feb/21/putin-russia-halt-participation-new-start-nuclear-arms-treaty>.

<sup>28</sup> U.S. Department of State, “U.S. Countermeasures in Response to Russia’s Violations of the New START Treaty,” *State.gov*, June 1, 2023, available at <https://www.state.gov/u-s-countermeasures-in-response-to-russias-violations-of-the-new-start-treaty/>.

production in both the 1991 START and 1987 INF Treaties.<sup>29</sup> Washington lost this element of verification with the demise of the START Treaty in 2009 and Moscow would not allow it to continue under the New START Treaty.

Additionally, the Heritage Foundation's 2010 New START Treaty verification report incisively noted that, "Also gone [from New START] are the START requirements for 'cooperative measures' to enhance the capability of National Technical Means (NTM) to monitor mobile missiles at their bases (called 'restricted areas' in START I), the restriction on the size of ICBM bases, [and] the restriction on the size of deployment areas for road-mobile ICBMs."<sup>30</sup> It observed that the New START Treaty discarded the previous START Treaty provision that granted each party the right to "conduct suspect-site inspections to confirm that covert assembly of ICBMs for mobile launchers of ICBMs or covert assembly of first stages of such ICBMs is not occurring," and the restriction that limits an ICBM base to a single type of mobile ICBM.<sup>31</sup>

Combined with the complete loss of inspections, the inadequate verification regime in New START poses a serious problem. As noted in Chapter 3 above, Colonel General Karkayev's repeated statements that he had 400 ICBMs on "combat duty" could be part of a cheating scenario involving undeclared mobile ICBM deployments or circumvention of the Treaty by the rapid reload of launchers. In either case, it could mean that Russia has more deployed strategic nuclear warheads than the number it has declared. Again, given Moscow's history as a serial violator of agreements, such a scenario is not far-fetched.

During the 2010 New START Treaty deliberations, there was no Senate Select Committee on Intelligence report on the Treaty's monitoring regime, as had been the norm. An objective report would probably have sunk the Treaty. Then-Senator Christopher Bond stated on the floor of the Senate that, "The Select Committee on Intelligence has been looking at this issue closely over the past several months. As the vice chairman of this committee, I have reviewed the key intelligence on our ability to monitor this treaty and heard from our intelligence professionals. There is no doubt in my mind that the United States *cannot reliably verify the treaty's 1,550 limit on deployed warheads.*"<sup>32</sup> He offered his fellow members of the Senate a classified letter outlining the problems verifying Russian nuclear warhead numbers under New START.

Paula DeSutter, Assistant Secretary of State for Verification, Compliance, and Implementation during the George W. Bush Administration, has stated that the verification regime of the New START Treaty is so poorly designed that the U.S. capacity to confirm Russian warhead numbers is "very, very low," and it is "virtually impossible" to prove a

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<sup>29</sup> New START Working Group, "An Independent Assessment of the New START Treaty," The Heritage Foundation, April 30, 2010, available at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Reports/2010/04/An-Independent-Assessment-of-New-START-Treaty>; and, The New START Working Group, "New START: Potemkin Village Verification," op. cit.

<sup>30</sup> The New START Working Group, "New START: Potemkin Village Verification," op. cit.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Bond, "The New START Treaty," op. cit. (Emphasis added.)



substantive violation.<sup>33</sup> She also pointed out, “We do not have the independent satellite capabilities to be able to achieve the level of contribution to verification that we had in the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty or in the START treaty.”<sup>34</sup> This suggests an erosion of U.S. capabilities to count Russian nuclear warheads since the end of the Cold War. Moreover, like everyone else in 2010, she was *not* assuming there would be *no on-site inspections for more than three years*, or that Treaty suspension would be accepted without a U.S. programmatic response.

The traditional methodology for estimating foreign nuclear threats and force numbers involves assessing: 1) adversary objectives; 2) their technology; 3) their nuclear testing activities; 4) the amount of fissile material they have; 5) their nuclear warhead technology; 6) their production capability; and, 7) the number and characteristics of their delivery vehicles. Efforts are made to collect as much information as possible concerning the number of nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles that have been produced. In a situation like the current one in which Russia places its highest priority on its nuclear capability, has a massive amount of both fissile material and Cold War-level nuclear warhead production capabilities,<sup>35</sup> and is a serial violator of arms control treaties, the possibility for very large underestimates of Russia’s nuclear stockpile clearly exists. This is especially true of any estimates based—even in part—on Moscow’s arms control declarations regarding its force numbers in the absence of robust verification measures. Indeed, in the absence of a confident U.S. capability to confirm the number of Russian warheads, warhead numbers over Treaty limits may be expected. Russia is likely to try to get the most it can from the money that it is spending for its strategic nuclear forces and to optimize its delivery capabilities to meet its strategy requirements.

While Russia was below the New START Treaty deployed warhead limit on the first day of New START, it built up to well above the limit before it downloaded its forces mainly in the year before the Treaty limits went into effect.<sup>36</sup> Russia then had to download its missiles in order to meet the New START treaty limits.<sup>37</sup> Unfortunately, the traditional methodology of counting warheads does not work in an arms control environment where reductions are made by downloading strategic missiles because, as discussed above, that likely cannot be verified in the absence of rigorous, continuing on-site inspections, which no longer exist with Russian termination of inspections.

From early 2018, when the New START limits on force numbers went into legal effect, to early February 2022, the FAS reports indicated that Russia added 71 MIRVed SS-27 Mod

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<sup>33</sup> “Paula A DeSutter on Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START II),” The Heritage Foundation, 2010, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFdEAZt7GIw>.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Robert P. Ashley Jr., “Russian and Chinese Nuclear Modernization Trends,” *Defense Intelligence Agency*, May 29, 2019, available at <https://www.dia.mil/Articles/Speeches-and-Testimonies/Article/1859890/russian-and-chinese-nuclear-modernization-trends/>; and, Broad, “Russian Says Soviet Atom Arsenal Was Larger Than West Estimated,” *op. cit.*

<sup>36</sup> “New START Treaty Aggregate Numbers of Strategic Offensive Arms,” *Department of State*, June 1, 2011, available at <https://2009-2017.state.gov/t/avc/rls/164722.htm>; and, “New START Treaty Aggregate Numbers of Strategic Offensive Arms,” *Department of State*, April 1, 2016, available at <https://2009-2017.state.gov/t/avc/rls/2016/255377.htm>.

<sup>37</sup> Kristensen and Korda, “Russian Nuclear Weapons, 2022,” *op. cit.*, p. 100.

2/RS-24 Yars ICBMs and 32 MIRVed Bulava-30 SLBMs.<sup>38</sup> The FAS May 2023 report said that Russia had deployed an additional 18 SS-27 Mod 2/RS-24 Yars MIRVed ICBMs and one Avangard hypersonic missile.<sup>39</sup> The May 2023 number is close to what Russia announced it had deployed in December 2022.<sup>40</sup> Since February 2022, Russia apparently has added one Borei-A class ballistic missile submarine (armed with 16 MIRVed missiles) to its operational force, and put another submarine on sea trials.<sup>41</sup> Russia's announced plans for 2023 involve deploying: 1) a total of 22 MIRVed Yars ICBMs and Avangard hypersonic boost glide vehicles; 2) the new Sarmat heavy ICBM; 3) a new Borei-A class ballistic missile submarine; and, 4) three new Tu-160 heavy bombers.<sup>42</sup> Russia clearly has a nuclear warhead upload capability far above New START limits and may have used the end of on-site inspections to exploit it. The point here is that there is no way to verify the number of Russian warheads deployed after the end of on-site inspections. The only metric Washington can estimate with reasonable confidence is the maximum possible Russian warhead loads.

### Arms Control and Russian Nuclear Threat Assessment

It may be counterintuitive, but arms control agreements can complicate the public availability of information regarding the number and types of Russian nuclear weapons. In U.S. practice, a very high level of proof is required to charge Russia with a treaty violation. The intelligence on the treaty violation may be sensitive and it may not be possible to make it public. In addition, there are restrictions on what the Intelligence Community and the Department of Defense can say in public about Russian compliance. While compliance reports are issued by the State Department, compliance determinations are made by the National Security Council. This dates to Henry Kissinger's time in office and the beginning of strategic nuclear arms control restrictions in 1972 with the ABM Treaty and the SALT I Interim Agreement. In a 1978 report, the House Intelligence Committee reportedly said that, "Dr. [Henry] Kissinger wanted to avoid any written judgment to the effect that the Soviets have violated any of the SALT agreements. If the Director [of the CIA] believes the Soviets may be in violation, this should be the subject of a memorandum from him to Dr. Kissinger. The judgment that a violation is considered to have occurred is to be one that will be made at the NSC level."<sup>43</sup> The impact of this policy has been to turn ordinary intelligence and related discussions of Russian nuclear warhead numbers into major political decisions.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 99; and, Hans M. Kristensen and Robert S. Norris, "Russian Nuclear Forces, 2018," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 74, No. 3 (2018), p. 188.

<sup>39</sup> Kristensen, Korda, and Reynolds, "Russian Nuclear Weapons, 2023," op. cit., p. 175.

<sup>40</sup> "Meeting of Defence Ministry Board," *Kremlin.ru*, December 21, 2022, available at <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/70159>; and, "A Board Session of the Ministry of Defence was held in Moscow under the Leadership of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Russia Vladimir Putin," *Kremlin.ru*, December 21, 2021, available at <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67402>.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> "Meeting of Defence Ministry Board," December 21, 2022, op. cit.

<sup>43</sup> "The Select Committee Investigative Record," *The Village Voice*, February 16, 1978, p. 92.

In addition, there appear to be bureaucratic politics associated with compliance determinations. Sven Kraemer, who served on the NSC Staff as a senior official in three administrations, reported that, "...new interagency efforts to assess Soviet violations of the SALT II agreement were blocked by the Department of State during 1981..."<sup>44</sup> Kraemer also noted that "there were delaying tactics and resistance within the government bureaucracy, especially in the State Department, ACDA [Arms Control and Disarmament Agency] and parts of CIA."<sup>45</sup>

The same situation seems to be at play today. In 2017, Hans Kristensen wrote a report entitled, "NASIC [National Air and Space Intelligence Center] Removes Russian INF-Violating Missile From Report," which said, "... (NASIC) has quietly published a corrected report on the world's Ballistic and Cruise Missile Threats that deletes a previously identified Russian ground-launched cruise missile. The earlier version published on June 26, 2017, identified a 'ground' version of the 3M-14 [Kalibr] land-attack cruise missile that appeared to identify the ground-launched cruise missile the United States has accused Russia of testing and deploying in violation of the 1987 INF Treaty."<sup>46</sup> The lack of any unclassified U.S. government treatment of the ground-launched Kalibr issue before the 2020 State Department noncompliance report appears linked to the problems of dealing with compliance issues within the U.S. Intelligence Community. These cases illustrate the difficulties of noncompliance determinations and the public discussion of the subject.

Russian violations of the INF Treaty illustrate this difficulty. For example, well before the publication of the State Department's 2020 non-compliance report, the 2018 NPR finally announced to the public that the missile the Obama Administration determined to be a violation of the INF Treaty was the SSC-8/9M729.<sup>47</sup> The ground-launched Kalibr was another INF Treaty non-compliance issue.<sup>48</sup> Another Russian missile, the R-500/9M728 (sometimes called the Iskander-K), was the subject of many Russian press reports which stated it had a range (usually 1,000-km but sometimes higher) that was in the INF Treaty-prohibited range (500-5,500-km).<sup>49</sup> The 2017 NASIC report on ballistic and cruise missiles had a photograph

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<sup>44</sup> Sven F. Kraemer, "The Krasnoyarsk Saga," *Strategic Review*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Winter 1990), pp. 27, 29.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Hans M. Kristensen, "NASIC Removes Russian INF-Violating Missile From Report," *Federation of American Scientists*, August 22, 2017, available at <https://fas.org/blogs/security/2017/08/nasic-2017-corrected/>.

<sup>47</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, 2018 *Nuclear Posture Review*, op. cit., p. 10; and, Paul McLeary, "The Rest Of The Story: Trump, DoD & Hill Readied INF Pullout For Years," *Breaking Defense*, October 22, 2018, available at <https://breakingdefense.com/2018/10/the-rest-of-the-story-trump-dod-hill-readied-inf-pullout-for-years/>.

<sup>48</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Adherence to and Compliance With Arms Control, Nonproliferation, and Disarmament Agreements and Commitments* (Washington, D.C.: Department of State, June 2020), p. 14, available at <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-Adherence-to-and-Compliance-with-Arms-Control-Nonproliferation-and-Disarmament-Agreements-and-Commitments-Compliance-Report-1.pdf>.

<sup>49</sup> Mark B. Schneider, "Additional Russian Violations of Arms Control Agreements," *Real Clear Defense*, December 18, 2017, available at [https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2017/12/18/additional\\_russian\\_violations\\_of\\_arms\\_control\\_agreements\\_112795.html](https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2017/12/18/additional_russian_violations_of_arms_control_agreements_112795.html); and, Mark B. Schneider, "Russia's INF Treaty Violations: Evidence and Implications," *Journal of Strategy and Politics*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (2020), pp. 57-59, available at <https://studyofstrategyandpolitics.files.wordpress.com/2020/06/jsp-7-schneider-russias-inf-treaty-violations.pdf>.

of the R-500 but there was no data entry that would have revealed its range.<sup>50</sup> There was also no mention in the NASIC report that the supersonic ground-launched Bastion anti-ship/land attack cruise missile had an INF Treaty-prohibited range, which the Russian press was openly reporting. Indeed, in July 2016, *Interfax*, the Russian news agency, reported, “The Bastion coastal defense system has an operational range of 600 kilometers and can be used against surface ships of varying class and type...”<sup>51</sup>

The point of this discussion is to emphasize that, when a treaty compliance issue is involved with Russian force numbers, information about Russian missile systems seems to become politicized and may be withheld from the public. Because neither the Intelligence Community nor the Pentagon can make public information that would indicate a violation of an arms control treaty without NSC sanction, it appears that what the United States says about Russian systems often is incomplete or in some cases possibly inaccurate. Indeed, the 1979 report of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on the monitoring of the SALT II Treaty reported that, “It is clear from the SALT I record that intelligence of possible Soviet violation of the Treaty was, in some cases, and for a time, withheld from Executive branch officials who had a need for such information.”<sup>52</sup> This pattern may be continuing. While reports that would indicate Russian violation of the INF Treaty appeared in Russian state and non-state media going back to 2007,<sup>53</sup> Paula DeSutter has stated, “I can assure you that when I left the Department of State in January 2009, I had not been briefed on any INF Treaty violations.”<sup>54</sup>

In addition, DeSutter stated that her successor as Assistant Secretary of State, Rose Gottemoeller, did not inform the allies that Russia was violating the INF Treaty until it had been well-known for three years.<sup>55</sup> She also said that Congress was not informed and no

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<sup>50</sup> Defense Intelligence Ballistic Missile Analysis Committee, *Ballistic and Cruise Missile Threat* (Wright-Patterson AFB, OH: National Air and Intelligence Center, 2017), available at [https://www.nasic.af.mil/Portals/19/images/Fact%20Sheet%20Images/2017%20Ballistic%20and%20Cruise%20Missile%20Threat\\_Final\\_small.pdf?ver=2017-07-21-083234-343](https://www.nasic.af.mil/Portals/19/images/Fact%20Sheet%20Images/2017%20Ballistic%20and%20Cruise%20Missile%20Threat_Final_small.pdf?ver=2017-07-21-083234-343).

<sup>51</sup> “Russian Navy to get 5 Coastal Defense Missile Systems by end of 2016 - source (Part 2),” *Interfax*, July 22, 2016, available at <https://dialog.proquest.com/professional/professional/docview/1806232632?accountid=155509>. See also, “Russia to Boost its Baltic Fleet with Missile Ships – Paper,” *Izvestia / BBC Monitoring*, October 26, 2016, available at <https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/16046D09ED1F9ED8>; and, “Russian Paper Reports on Plans for Coastal Defence on Kuril Islands,” *Izvestia / BBC Monitoring*, November 29, 2017, available at <http://mutex.gmu.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/wire-feeds/russian-paper-reports-on-plans-coastal-defence/docview/1971759334/se-2?accountid=14541>.

<sup>52</sup> U.S. Senate, Select Committee on Intelligence, *Principal Findings on the Capabilities of the United States to Monitor the SALT II Treaty* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, October 1979), pp. 3-4, available at <https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/publications/96salt.pdf>.

<sup>53</sup> Mark B. Schneider, “Confirmation of Russian Violation and Circumvention of the INF Treaty,” *Information Series*, No. 360, February 2014, pp. 3-5, available at <http://www.nipp.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Confirmation-of-Russian-Violations-of-the-INF-Treaty8.pdf>.

<sup>54</sup> Paula A. DeSutter, *Statement of Paula A. DeSutter: INF Treaty Withdrawal and the Future of Arms Control* (Washington, D.C.: House Armed Services Committee, February 26, 2019), p. 2, available at <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/AS/AS29/20190226/108944/HHRG-116-AS29-Wstate-DeSutterP-20190226.pdf>.

<sup>55</sup> Paula A. DeSutter, “Paula DeSutter Discussing Russian Nuclear and Ballistic Missile Modernization,” George Marshall Institute, March 19, 2014, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x9rAqUXwVa8>.

serious effort was made to bring Russia back into compliance immediately following determination of violation.<sup>56</sup> In January 2014, Michael Gordon, then with *The New York Times*, reported that by 2011 the Intelligence Community was aware of the INF noncompliance issue.<sup>57</sup> Official confirmation of Russian press reports about prohibited ground-launched INF-range missiles was only made public by the State Department when it confirmed the Michael Gordon story.<sup>58</sup> Not until later in 2014 did the State Department's public non-compliance report reveal that Russia had violated the INF treaty.<sup>59</sup>

Hence, it can rightly be concluded that the existence of an arms control agreement and related compliance issue can reduce the availability of open source data on Russian nuclear capabilities and negatively impact efforts to make open source assessments of Russian nuclear warhead numbers.

### **Reports of Russian Non-Compliance With New START Treaty Substantive Limitations**

An examination of the Biden Administration's 2022 reports on arms control non-compliance reveals that Russia is violating all of the arms control treaties, most recently including New START.<sup>60</sup> Why would New START be an exception? There is substantial evidence of Russian non-compliance with the New START Treaty. Many of these issues involve cruise missiles, the very missiles Russia is using against Ukraine. This includes the Kh-101, a cruise missile which President Putin says has a range of 4,500-km and is nuclear-capable.<sup>61</sup> A long-range nuclear capable cruise missile deployed on any aircraft that is not a heavy bomber would violate the New START Treaty because a long-range, nuclear-capable cruise missile is recognized as nuclear-armed under the Treaty and would cause any aircraft carrying it to be counted as a heavy bomber under the Treaty. The Russian MoD has said the same thing.<sup>62</sup> In

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Michael Gordon, "US Says Russia Tested Missile, Despite Treaty," *The New York Times*, January 29, 2014, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/30/world/europe/us-says-russia-tested-missile-despite-treaty.html>.

<sup>58</sup> Jen Psaki, "Daily Press Briefing – January 30, 2014," *State.gov*, available at <https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2014/01/221045.htm>.

<sup>59</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Adherence to and Compliance with Arms Control, Nonproliferation, and Disarmament Agreements and Commitments* (Washington, D.C.: Department of State, July 2014), p. 8, available at <https://2009-2017.state.gov/t/avc/rls/rpt/2014/230047.htm>.

<sup>60</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Adherence to and Compliance with Arms Control, Nonproliferation, and Disarmament Agreements and Commitments* (Washington, D.C.: Department of State, July 2022), available at <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/2022-Adherence-to-and-Compliance-with-Arms-Control-Nonproliferation-and-Disarmament-Agreements-and-Commitments-1.pdf>.

<sup>61</sup> "Meeting of Commission for Military Technical Cooperation with Foreign States," *Kremlin.ru*, July 6, 2017, available at <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54993>; and, "Meeting with Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu," *Kremlin.ru*, December 8, 2015, available at <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50892>.

<sup>62</sup> "In the Course of the Last 24 hours, Aircraft of the Russian Aerospace Forces have Performed 82 Combat Sorties Engaging 204 Terrorist Objects in Syria," *Defense Ministry of the Russian Federation*, December 9, 2015, available at [http://eng.mil.ru/en/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12071355@egNew](http://eng.mil.ru/en/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12071355@egNew); and, "Strategic Tu-95MS Bombers

2022, Yury Borisov, then Russia's Deputy Prime Minister in charge of defense procurement, stated that "the Kh-101 airborne missile [is] carried by the Sukhoi Su-30 and Su-35 fighter-bombers."<sup>63</sup> Later, RT, which is Russian state media, deleted the pertinent information stating that, "This article has been amended in regards to a quote by Yury Borisov on the missiles carried by the Sukhoi Su-30 and Su-35 fighter-bombers."<sup>64</sup> Nuclear-capable Kh-101s on these fighter-bombers would put Russia far in violation of the deployed warhead and the deployed delivery vehicle limits of the New START Treaty since there are hundreds of them.

Russian state media have linked the Kh-101 and Kh-555 (reportedly nuclear-capable) cruise missiles to the Backfire bomber, which is not a heavy bomber counted under New START.<sup>65</sup> As noted, if Russia puts a long-range (i.e., 600-km or greater range) nuclear air-launched cruise missile (ALCM) on a non-heavy bomber, it turns every carrier of that type into a heavy bomber and *de facto* puts Russia in violation of the numerical limits of the New START Treaty on deployed warheads and deployed delivery vehicles.<sup>66</sup> This is one of the reasons U.S. fighter aircraft do not carry long-range nuclear ALCMs.

In 2012, then Commander of the Russian Air Force, Colonel General Alexander Zelin, stated that the Su-34 long-range strike fighter would be given "long-range missiles...Such work is under way and I think that it is the platform that can solve the problem of increasing nuclear deterrence forces within the Air Force strategic aviation."<sup>67</sup> This is likely to be another instance of deploying the nuclear-capable Kh-101 on an aircraft that is not a heavy bomber—making that aircraft accountable under the Treaty and a likely violation of New START ceilings.

There are similar non-compliance issues, often identified by Russian state media, involving the deployment of nuclear-capable Russian Kh-22 and the Kh-32 cruise missiles on the Backfire bomber.<sup>68</sup> Yet, these issues are missing in the February 2022 FAS report and

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Destroyed the ISIS Militants' Command Post and Storages in Syria with a Missile Attack," *Defense Ministry of the Russian Federation*, August 5, 2017, available at <http://eng.mil.ru/en/newspage/country/more.htm?id=12132186@egNews>.

<sup>63</sup> "Top Official Explains why Russia hasn't run out of Precision Missiles in Ukraine," RT, April 19, 2022. (*Emphasis in the original.*) Available at <https://www.rt.com/russia/554134-borisov-interview-defense-industry/>.

<sup>64</sup> Loc. cit. (*Emphasis in the original.*)

<sup>65</sup> "Russia: First Tu-22M3M bomber due 2018, 30 to be Upgraded," *BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union*, May 21, 2017, available at <https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/16486E6AB5806170>; and, Alexander Fedor, "Flexible Strategic Fist," *Oborona.ru*, December 12, 2015, available at <http://www.oborona.ru/includes/periodics/armedforces/2015/1214/145317358/detail.shtml>. (In Russian.)

<sup>66</sup> Mark B. Schneider, "Russia's Modernization Programs for Strategic Nuclear Bombers," *Real Clear Defense*, March 24, 2020, available at [https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2020/03/24russias\\_modernization\\_programs\\_for\\_strategic\\_nuclear\\_bombers\\_115141.html](https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2020/03/24russias_modernization_programs_for_strategic_nuclear_bombers_115141.html).

<sup>67</sup> "Russian strategic aviation to be reinforced with Su-34 frontline bombers," *Interfax-AVN*, March 19, 2012, available at <https://wnc-eastview-com.mutex.gmu.edu/wnc/article?id=40013181>.

<sup>68</sup> Mark B. Schneider, "Russian Air-Delivered Non-Strategic Nuclear Weapons," *Real Clear Defense*, June 15, 2018, available at [https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2018/06/15/russian\\_air-delivered\\_non-strategic\\_nuclear\\_weapons\\_113537.html](https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2018/06/15/russian_air-delivered_non-strategic_nuclear_weapons_113537.html); and, Jack Buckby, "Russia Is Using Old Missiles Designed to Kill Aircraft Carriers to Strike Ukraine," *19FortyFive.com*, July 31, 2022, available at <https://www.19fortyfive.com/2022/06/russia-is-using-old-missiles-designed-to-kill-aircraft-carriers-to-strike-ukraine/>.

in the State Department's non-compliance reports. They could potentially involve hundreds of undeclared warheads, putting Russia in violation of all three New START Treaty limits—deployed warheads, deployed delivery vehicles and deployed and non-deployed delivery vehicles.<sup>69</sup> The State Department's non-compliance reports have never addressed General Karakayev's repeated statements that he has 400 ICBMs on "combat duty."

This study is not a review of Russian arms control violations, per se. However, it provides this detailed review of the subject to demonstrate that when there are arms control compliance issues involved, the State Department, the Defense Department and the Intelligence Community may be far from candid about Russian nuclear force numbers and types. Scholars, commentators, and members of Congress can essentially be left in the dark and reliant on estimates of Russian force numbers that lack credibility and may be intended to advance an arms control agenda.

### **Assessing the Size of the Russian Nuclear Arsenal**

Making assessments of the total size of the Russian nuclear arsenal is much more difficult than assessing the number of its deployed strategic nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons are produced for purposes other than immediate deployment—for example, spares, upload hedges and destructive dissections to detect reliability problems. Russia does not announce the size of its arsenal. Indeed, the Russian nuclear weapons stockpile has never been subject to any inspections.<sup>70</sup> Hence, the information needed for confident U.S. government assessments of the size of the Russian stockpile is exceedingly difficult to obtain, and there is the ever-present problem of possible Russian deception in this regard.

Russian deception with regard to its arms control compliance and force numbers is potentially linked to accurately estimating the number of Russian nuclear weapons. An adversary's ability to implement successful deception is impacted by the U.S. counterintelligence capability. The same is true regarding cheating on arms control commitments, which usually relies on denial and deception.

Yet, one of the most significant U.S. national security weaknesses reportedly has been in the area of counterintelligence. In January 2023, Bill Gertz wrote that declassified documents just made public indicated that after the departure of James Angleton (then CIA chief of counterintelligence), "...the counterintelligence function ...was downgraded and removed as an independent function, an action critics say resulted in major failures at the agency years

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<sup>69</sup> Mark B. Schneider, "The Most Serious Russian Violation of the New START Treaty Yet," *Real Clear Defense*, May 16, 2022, available at [https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2022/05/16/themost\\_serious\\_russian\\_violation\\_of\\_the\\_new\\_start\\_treaty\\_yet\\_832443.html](https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2022/05/16/themost_serious_russian_violation_of_the_new_start_treaty_yet_832443.html).

<sup>70</sup> Pavel Felgenhauer, "Putin Delivers More Restrained National Address as Moscow Announces Partial Troop Withdrawal," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 18, No. 65 (April 22, 2021), available at <https://jamestown.org/program/putin-delivers-more-restrained-national-address-as-moscow-announces-partial-troop-withdrawal/>.

later.”<sup>71</sup> In September 2022, Michelle Van Cleave, the first person to serve as the statutory head of U.S. counterintelligence, told the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence that, “...the national CI [counter intelligence] office has failed to accomplish the principal goals for which it was created.”<sup>72</sup> She continued, “hostile penetrations and foreign deception operations that have grown far bolder and deeper than the resources we have available to counter them, [are] putting lives and treasure and U.S. supreme national interests at risk.” And, “Human intelligence is still Russia’s forte... By contrast, the West’s intelligence efforts against Russian targets were sharply reduced as the U.S. waged a global war on radical Islam—and also because we thought a post-Cold War Russia would no longer be counted among our adversaries.”<sup>73</sup> Absent effective counterintelligence, U.S. adversaries can manipulate U.S. threat assessments by passing disinformation. According to Van Cleave, “the practice of deception, [is] an ever-present feature in intelligence work.”<sup>74</sup>

In addition to arms control enthusiasm in Washington and possible Russian disinformation, there is the growing problem of a generation gap within the Washington bureaucracy resulting in the Soviet-era being increasingly forgotten. The de-emphasis of intelligence on Russia during the George W. Bush Administration and the retirement and deaths of most analysts with Soviet-era experience have also had a negative impact on intelligence assessments in general, and public assessments of Russian force numbers in particular.

In summary, the unfortunate reality in open source assessments of Russian nuclear capabilities is that Washington tells the American people relatively little about Russian nuclear forces, or the nature of the threat posed by Russia’s expanding and modernized nuclear arsenal. Furthermore, the existence of arms control agreements complicates assessments of Russia’s nuclear forces and activities, and appears to undermine the public release of information on the subject. Russian termination of on-site inspections under New START may have left Washington largely in the dark for years with regard to the count of Russian strategic nuclear warheads, and certainly defies estimates based on a presumption of Russian compliance with New START force levels. Lastly, the United States may not have good intelligence about the scope of the Russian threat because of the inherent difficulty in collecting intelligence as well as the potential deficiencies in the U.S. government’s counterintelligence capabilities.

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<sup>71</sup> Bill Gertz, “Once-secret Files Reveal New Details of CIA’s Divisive Defector Dispute,” *The Washington Times*, January 1, 2023, available at <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2023/jan/1/once-secret-files-reveal-new-details-cias-divisive/>.

<sup>72</sup> Michelle Van Cleave, Michelle Van Cleave Statement for the Record (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Senate, Select Committee on Intelligence, September 21, 2022) p. 1, available at <https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/os-mvcleave-092122.pdf>.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>74</sup> Michelle Van Cleave, “Strategic Counterintelligence: What Is It and What Should We Do About It?” *Studies in Intelligence*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (2007), available at <https://www.cia.gov/static/6adf09076081439a16d353b398420f33/what-is-what-do.pdf>.



*Dr. Mark B. Schneider is a Senior Analyst with the National Institute for Public Policy. Before his retirement from the Department of Defense Senior Executive Service, Dr. Schneider served as Principal Director for Forces Policy, Principal Director for Strategic Defense, Space and Verification Policy, Director for Strategic Arms Control Policy and Representative of the Secretary of Defense to the Nuclear Arms Control Implementation Commission. He also served in the senior Foreign Service as a Member of the State Department Policy Planning Staff.*



## FROM PACIFISM TO NUCLEAR DETERRENCE: NORMAN ANGELL AND THE FOUNDING OF NATO

Michael Rühle

On April 4, 1949, the foreign ministers of the United States, Canada and ten Western European countries met in Washington to sign a defense pact. Barely four years after the end of the Second World War, the United States committed itself to the military protection of Western Europe. While some observers on both sides of the Atlantic were deeply skeptical about this new arrangement, others felt that the Washington Treaty and all it symbolized were truly historic achievements. U.S. political commentator Walter Lippman put it best when he wrote that the new pact described a community of interests that was much older than the conflict with the Soviet Union and would therefore outlast it.<sup>1</sup> Lippman was proven right. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) that emerged from the Washington Treaty outlasted the Cold War and the Soviet Union and remains the world's most tightly-knit security alliance.

Another enthusiastic supporter of this new pact was Sir Norman Angell (1872-1967), journalist, peace activist, politician, best-selling author and 1933 Nobel Peace Prize laureate. His support for a defense community of Western democracies against the Soviet threat marked the end of a lifelong search for a recipe to overcome war. Over the course of Angell's political life, he went from being a pacifist and advocate of disarmament, to an advocate of collective security, the Atlantic Alliance and nuclear deterrence. This remarkable transformation can be viewed as a journey through the tragic first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. After witnessing how excessive nationalism and totalitarian ideologies had plunged Europe into two major wars, the world's most famous peace activist had to realize that an alliance of likeminded Western democracies was the best model for securing peace in an imperfect world.

Ralph Norman Angell Lane was an urbane British journalist who had spent several years in the United States and France. Always keen to attract public attention, the author of 40 books dropped his surname "Lane" early on and went by the euphonious name "Angell". In 1909, he self-published a pamphlet entitled "Europe's Optical Illusion," in which he argued that due to the ever-close economic interdependence of nations, modern war had become pointless: even for the victor the costs would exceed any conceivable benefit. Barely a year later, the expanded manuscript was published as a book and it became a bestseller. *The Great Illusion* was translated into 15 languages and sold two million copies.<sup>2</sup> At a time when the

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<sup>1</sup> See Michael Rühle, "NATO at 70: The Way Ahead, National Institute for Public Policy," *Information Series*, No. 440 (Fairfax, VA: National Institute Press, April 18, 2019), available at [https://nipp.org/information\\_series/ruhle-michael-nato-at-70-the-way-ahead-information-series-no-440/](https://nipp.org/information_series/ruhle-michael-nato-at-70-the-way-ahead-information-series-no-440/).

<sup>2</sup> Norman Angell, *The Great Illusion: A Study of the Relation of Military Power in Nations to their Economic and Social Advantage*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (London: William Heinemann, 1911). The two most comprehensive studies on Angell and his



European powers were preparing for a major war and nationalism was running high, Angell's rational arguments, with which he attempted to explain that the expected benefits of war were a great illusion, seemed like a long-awaited appeal to human reason. W.M. Hughes, Acting Premier of Australia, called *The Great Illusion* a "glorious book to read ... pregnant with the brightest promise to the future of civilized man." The German *Kölnische Zeitung* wrote that never before had the financial interdependencies of nations been laid out so well. And the *Königsberger Allgemeine Zeitung* praised the book as proving convincingly that wars of conquest with the aim of achieving material gain had become impossible.<sup>3</sup> In March 1912, Strickland, the cartoonist of the British Magazine "Vanity Fair," referred to him as an "Angel of Peace."<sup>4</sup>

In Great Britain, Angell's theses resonated tremendously. At Britain's major universities, students founded associations of "Angellists" who would propagate the message about the futility of war. Although Angell had never claimed that wars had become impossible, the fear of an impending war in Europe had led many contemporary observers to over-interpret his theses. Many also believed that Angell's views of the futility of war would be shared outside Britain – an assumption that others considered naïve. For example, in 1912, when Angell delivered a lecture before representatives of the British Banking Association, the audience argued that his theories would only lead to world peace if all nations shared his opinion on the unprofitability of war. Particularly with regard to the German Empire, doubts were justified.

However, many "Angellists" were convinced that warnings against German militarism were exaggerated. Lord Esher, President of the Imperial Defence Committee, opined that war was becoming "every day more difficult and improbable." Lord Esher was also convinced that Germany was "as receptive as Great Britain to the doctrine of Norman Angell."<sup>5</sup> Angell himself held similar views, although his lecture tour in Germany in February 1913 should have taught him otherwise.<sup>6</sup> In Göttingen, fraternities complained about the use of the English language at a German university, and in Berlin there were scuffles between Angell's supporters and opponents. Angell had managed to garner much publicity in Germany, yet the good sales of his book obfuscated the fact that unlike in Britain, where pacifism had become a true movement, pacifism in Germany remained limited to a small section of the political elite. Angell himself later admitted that it would probably have taken several more years of intensive education to raise awareness in Germany of the futility of war between the European powers.

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thinking are Martin Ceadel, *Living the Great Illusion: Sir Norman Angell, 1872–1967* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), and J.D.B. Miller, *Norman Angell and the Futility of War: Peace and the Public Mind* (London: Macmillan, 1986).

<sup>3</sup> For more such praise see the further editions of "The Great Illusion."

<sup>4</sup> Strickland, Sir Norman Angell ("Men of the Day. No. 1311, "an Angel of Peace") available at (<https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw260098/Sir-Norman-Angell-Men-of-the-Day-No-1311-an-Angel-of-Peace>).

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Barbara W. Tuchman, *The Guns of August* (New York: Macmillan, 1962) p. 25.

<sup>6</sup> See Philip D. Supina, "The Norman Angell Peace Campaign in Germany," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (June 1972), pp. 161-164.

Predictably, Angell's theses provoked considerable opposition. Alfred Thayer Mahan, the leading American thinker on naval strategy, accused Angell of arguing too materialistically and of conveniently ignoring non-quantifiable factors. He agreed that the cost-benefit ratio of wars was questionable, but insisted that wars did not arise merely from cold cost-benefit considerations: "Nations are under no illusion as to the unprofitableness of war in itself; but they recognize that different views of right and wrong in international transactions may provoke collision, against which the only safeguard is armament."<sup>7</sup> Mahan agreed with Angell that the disruption a war would cause to the international economic and financial system would also harm the victor. But merely acknowledging this fact did not mean the end of war. Nor could human behavior simply be reduced to mere self-interest: "Ambition, self-respect, resentment of injustice, sympathy with the oppressed, hatred of oppression" were factors that had to be considered as well. Because Angell excluded such factors, his "Great Illusion" was itself an illusion because it was based on a "profound misinterpretation of human action."<sup>8</sup> Numerous other critics also considered Angell's almost exclusively economic argumentation to be too narrow. When listening to Angell, a German reviewer noted in 1911, "one might think that the whole controversy of mankind revolves around stock shares ..."<sup>9</sup>

Angell's book was an attempt to counter the widespread fatalism in Great Britain regarding an "inevitable" war with Germany. He wanted to introduce rational arguments into a debate that he felt had become irrational. For example, when cabinet member Winston Churchill argued at a British university in 1913 that the best way to achieve security was to be stronger than one's opponent, a visibly annoyed Norman Angell put him on the spot by asking him whether he would give the same advice to Germany.<sup>10</sup> This episode was typical of the rather shy but rhetorically brilliant peace activist. However, the fact that he over-generalized his arguments, which were originally derived from his analysis of Anglo-German relations, lent his theses a degree of seemingly universal validity that the rather rambling collection of thoughts of *The Great Illusion* did not provide. Moreover, although Angell had never claimed that war was impossible, but only that the calculated use of military power had become counterproductive and unprofitable, the apparent plausibility of his reasoning and his tendency to exaggerate his arguments soon blinded him to reality. In October 1913, the American magazine *Life* quoted him as saying:

[T]he cessation of military conflict between powers like France and Germany, or Germany and England, or Russia and Germany . . . has come already ... [I]t has been visible to all who have eyes to see during the last six months that far from these great nations being ready to fly at one another's throats, nothing will induce them to take the immense risks of using their preposterous military instruments if they can possibly avoid it. ... Armed Europe is at present

<sup>7</sup> A. T. Mahan, "The Great Illusion," *The North American Review*, Vol. 195, No. 676 (March 1912), p. 322; for Angell's reply see *The North American Review*, Vol. 195, No. 679 (June 1912), pp. 754-772.

<sup>8</sup> Mahan, p. 332.

<sup>9</sup> O. Umfrid, *Der Kampf um den Boden*, Die Friedens-Warte, Vol. 13, No. 1 (January 1911), p. 9.

<sup>10</sup> C.E.M. Joad, *Why War?* (Harmondsworth/Middlesex: Penguin, 1939), pp. 71-72.

engaged in spending most of its time and energy rehearsing a performance which all concerned know is never likely to come off.<sup>11</sup>

The extent to which this naïve optimism had superseded rational considerations among British liberals was not evident only in Angell's statements, the reflex to ignore the challenges ahead was also prevalent in parliamentary circles. When, during the July Crisis of 1914, a Liberal MP approached Foreign Secretary Edward Grey to demand that Britain stay neutral under any circumstances, Grey asked him what should be done in the event of a German violation of Belgium's neutrality. "For a moment," Grey wrote in his memoirs, "he paused, like one who, running at speed, is confronted with an obstacle, unexpected and unforeseen. Then he said with emphasis, 'She won't do it'. 'I don't say she will, but supposing she does.' 'She won't do it' he repeated confidently, and with that assurance he left me."<sup>12</sup> As much as the pacifists and internationalists tried to de-romanticize war, as much as they opposed a view of world politics as a Darwinian struggle for power and survival, they could not deny the fact that the European powers were on a collision course.

The outbreak of the First World War discredited naïve pacifism. Economic arguments and philosophical debates had not prevented the war. However, Angell's popularity did not suffer. The immense destruction brought about by the "Great War" confirmed his thesis that the economic consequences of major wars would only produce losers. Angell remained a respected campaigner for international understanding and for a rational foreign policy. None of his subsequent books would achieve the popularity of *The Great Illusion*, but through his numerous essays Angell ensured his continuing visibility in the international debate. When he was knighted in 1931, one of his fellow campaigners felt that it was "the first knighthood for pacifism."<sup>13</sup> Angell, who had left school at the age of 14, had worked as a cowboy in California, and who, despite his eloquence, suffered throughout his life from a lack of academic honors, had made it to the top of British society. The "cowboy philosopher" – the title of a 1936 interview – had finally become a respected intellectual.

However, "Sir Great Illusion," as some of his friends now called him with a mix of admiration and irony, had long since begun to question some of his pacifist arguments. In 1933, when Angell received the Nobel Peace Prize, he was a mature, middle-aged man who no longer believed in the war-preventing power of economic interdependence. Worried by the rise of totalitarian ideologies, he had become interested in the principle of collective security. As a leading member of the British League of Nations Union, he advocated the principle of international dispute settlement. In this context, Angell argued that the refusal of arbitration by a third party constituted an act of aggression that should be punished. However, Angell, like many of his contemporaries, shied away from arguing for military punishment. Given British war-weariness, his focus was on economic sanctions – a mistake,

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<sup>11</sup> Life, October 2, 1913, quoted in Christopher Cerf and Victor Navasky, *The Experts Speak: The Definitive Compendium of Authoritative Misinformation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (New York: Villard, 1998), p. 110.

<sup>12</sup> Viscount Grey of Fallodon, *Twenty Five Years, 1892-1916*, Vol. 1 (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1925), pp. 327-328.

<sup>13</sup> George Benson, quoted in Ceadel, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

as he later admitted, because this meant that collective security was misunderstood as an alternative to military action.

The pacifist thus became sceptical of his own earlier positions. He had come to realize that his theses from *The Great Illusion* had not only become partially obsolete, but even counterproductive. All too often, his key statements were reduced to the simple formula that wars were no longer worthwhile. However, as Angell increasingly realized, this promoted the erroneous conclusion that peace could be secured simply by educating people about the irrationality of war. When Japan occupied Manchuria in 1931, threatening a new era of wars of conquest, some of Angell's earlier theories seemed hopelessly naïve. Angell also took issue with the perennial pacifist argument that war was a consequence of capitalism. The opponents of sanctions against Japan, he wrote in 1932, were primarily businessmen who feared for their lucrative trade with the Asian empire. From the mid-1930s, Angell consistently warned of the danger posed by Hitler's Germany, and he came out in favor of British rearmament. He no longer repeated his view, expressed shortly after the First World War, that Germany should have been granted access to raw materials in order to avoid war. He now considered concessions to a potential aggressor, as still propagated by the classical pacifists, to be disastrous. In July 1914 he had hastily set up a "Neutrality League" to keep Britain out of the war. Now, at the beginning of the Second World War, he sided with his government's policy.

Angell was aware that Britain owed its victory in the Second World War largely to the support of the United States. For the former Labour MP, the anti-Americanism that had started to spread among the British Left, was anathema. Angell, who held British and U.S. dual citizenship, was also concerned about the isolationism that was spreading in the United States. In 1917, at the urging of his fellow U.S. journalist Walter Lippmann, Angell had written an essay in which he called on the United States to enter the war. Now, after the Second World War, it was obvious to the convinced Atlanticist that the new political and military challenge posed by the Soviet Union could only be met by an alliance of like-minded democracies.

When negotiations on a transatlantic defense pact began in 1948, they met with Angell's approval. Such a pact, he argued in February 1949, a few weeks before the signing of the Washington Treaty, should serve as a bulwark against Soviet expansionism. He argued that if Germany had known what a high price it would have to pay for its aggression, the two world wars would probably never have happened. The same logic, he said, also applied to the Soviet Union. If Moscow was made aware of the resistance against its aggressive policies, the Third World War would not take place, either.<sup>14</sup> This argument was a far cry from the pacifist ideas on which *The Great Illusion* was based. However, the repeatedly revised passages for the numerous new editions of this book had already indicated that his views were evolving. Pacifism, he suggested, may be based on morally noble convictions, but could lead to deeply immoral results.

For Angell, a system of collective security, as he had promoted after the First World War, still remained the best option. But just as Germany could not be integrated into such a system

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<sup>14</sup> See "Pact Held a Bar to Soviet Inroads," *New York Times*, February 22, 1949.

in the 1930s, it was equally impossible to integrate the Soviet Union into such an arrangement in the late 1940s. As much as Angell was pleased with the founding of the United Nations, he was also aware of the limits of this institution. Common security, he argued, could only be organized among like-minded nations. Hence, the new transatlantic defense community, which was enshrined in the Washington Treaty of April 1949, and which soon turned into NATO, came closer to his ideas of a system for maintaining peace than any other model. Unlike some of his pacifist admirers, Angell also understood the logic of nuclear deterrence as an instrument for preventing war. After all, the nuclear revolution meant that “the pleasures of belligerent nationalism” had become “suicidal.”<sup>15</sup> Consequently, he harshly criticized the British “Campaign on Nuclear Disarmament” for instrumentalizing nuclear fears in order to pursue an unacceptable policy of “benevolent neutrality” towards the Soviet Union. The erstwhile pacifist was endorsing nuclear deterrence.

It is part of Norman Angell's tragedy that, although he is now regarded as one of the first theorists of modern international relations, his name is still widely associated with a claim that he never made: that war had become “impossible” due to the economic interdependence of nations.<sup>16</sup> Angell had instead argued that traditional wars of conquest had become economically ruinous and therefore pointless. But despite his fame and tremendous workload, he ultimately failed in his attempt to argue against what he saw as irrationality in politics and public opinion. Angell's support for a defense community of Western democracies after the Second World War was an admission that ensuring peace and security required much more than an appeal to human reason.

*Michael Rühle is a former Head of the Climate and Energy Security Section, NATO.*

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<sup>15</sup> Norman Angell, *The Steep Places. An Examination of Political Tendencies* (London: Hamish Hamilton 1947), pp. 27-28.

<sup>16</sup> Angell himself distinguished between the book's critical success and its failure “to influence policies to any visible extent. It failed, moreover, in another sense: the case it tried to present not only came to be distorted in the public discussion; some of its basic ideas were turned completely upside down, and it was interpreted as advocating policies which were the exact contrary of what it did advocate.” Norman Angell, *After All: The Autobiography of Norman Angell* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1951), p. 150.



# ANALYSIS

## MORALITY, ETHICS, AND NATIONAL POWER<sup>1</sup>

John Mark Mattox

### Introduction

That states have only a finite number of tools at their disposal to make their influence felt in the world is a well-established concept. These tools are regularly referred to as the elements of national power. These elements include ways or methods broadly characterizable as diplomatic, informational, military, economic, financial, intelligence, and law enforcement. Each of these ways or methods can be realized through the exercise of corresponding instruments—means or resources—such as the armed forces for the military, international police organizations for law enforcement, the banking system for finance, etc. All of these elements and instruments play significant—and in many cases essential—roles in the life of the state.

By their very nature, tools are designed to perform specific functions, within certain limits. Their proper application produces constructive results: the hammer for the builder, the scalpel for the surgeon, the knife for the butcher, and so on. Conversely, their improper application can result in destructive—even disastrous—results. The tools of national power are no different. The well-ordered state consistently observes the boundaries of proper and constructive use associated with the tools at its disposal, with the understanding that their misuse can be expected to produce destructive (and in the case of the case of the state, even grave and enduring) consequences. Implicit in this understanding is the role of morality and ethics in the life of the state and in its power-wielding actions. Properly understood, morality is as much an element of national power, and ethics as much an instrument of nation power, as any of the other, more commonly acknowledged elements and instruments, even if their critical role often receives only implicit acknowledgment.

Implicit understandings are adequate for states when general agreement exists among the body politic concerning the state's organizing principles, its basic set of values, etc. However, when basic understandings become fractured—or worse, are no longer shared, that which previously was implicit must be made consciously explicit. As the United States approaches the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its experiment in democracy, it may be that the time has come to make explicit the role of morality and ethics in the exercise of national power.

### American Exceptionalism

Although the term “American exceptionalism” has been much politicized in recent decades—and not always in a positive way, the idea of American exceptionalism is unmistakably rooted

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<sup>1</sup> The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the National Defense University, the Department of Defense or the U. S. Government.





in the founding of the republic. The reverse side of the Great Seal of the United States (practically unnoticed in the teaching of American history but visible for inspection by anyone who has ever looked at the back-side of a one-dollar bill) contains two Latin phrases that clearly herald this claim. The first is, *Annuit cœptis*—“Providence has favored our undertakings”, the unmistakable claim by the nation’s Founders that no less than God Himself paved the path for America’s rise. The second is “*Novus ordo seclorum*”—“New order of the ages”, the equally unmistakable claim that the rise of the United States signaled a fundamental conceptual change in human political affairs. These claims are strong medicine; but regardless of where one stands in terms of personal belief with respect to the literal embrace of them, that these and similar claims provide the bedrock upon which the idea of America was conceived by its Founders is an established fact of history. Even before the birth of the nation, the continent’s earliest European immigrants sensed something exceptional about their undertakings. As John Winthrop, Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony for 12 of its first 20 years, famously observed in 1630: “[W]e must consider that we shall be a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us.”<sup>2</sup> Implicit in this conceptualization was the understanding that—if not from the perspective of heaven, then certainly from the perspective of onlookers in other nations—American “power” ultimately resided in the good ends of its stated purposes and in the good lives of its citizens. As George Washington aptly summarized, “[V]irtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government.”<sup>3</sup> For, “Without virtue, and without integrity, the finest talents and the most brilliant accomplishments can never gain respect, and conciliate the esteem, of the truly valuable part of mankind.”<sup>4</sup> Hence, “The foundations of our national policy will be laid in the pure and immutable principles of private morality; and the pre-eminence of free government, be exemplified by all the attributes which can win the affections of its citizens, and command the respect of the world.”<sup>5</sup> In other words, the acknowledgment by the political world at large that America occupies a commanding place in the world would flow from the world’s recognition of America’s moral virtue.

While this sentiment is readily discerned in the writings of many of the nation’s Founders, perhaps nowhere is it clearer than in those of John Adams: “The happiness of man, as well as his dignity, consists in virtue.”<sup>6</sup> “If there is a form of government, then, whose principle and foundation is virtue, will not every sober man acknowledge it better calculated

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<sup>2</sup> John Winthrop, *A Modell of Christian Charity*, written on board the *Arbella*, on the Atlantic Ocean, 1630, in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society* (Boston, 1838), 3rd series 7:31–48, available at <https://history.hanover.edu/texts/winthmod.html>.

<sup>3</sup> George Washington, *Maxims of Washington: Political, Social, Moral, and Religious*, collected and arranged by John Frederick Schroeder (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1855) p. 308.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *The speeches, addresses and messages, of the several Presidents of the United States, at the openings of Congress and at their respective inaugurations: Also, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and Washington's farewell address to his fellow-citizens* (Philadelphia: Robert Desilver, publisher; Thomas Town, printer, 1825), p. 32.

<sup>6</sup> John Adams, *Letters, Addressed to His Wife*, ed. Charles Francis Adams (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1841), Vol. 1, p.277.

to promote the general happiness than any other form?”<sup>7</sup> “[H]ave you ever found in history one single example of a Nation thoroughly Corrupted—that was afterwards restored to Virtue—and without Virtue, there can be no political Liberty.”<sup>8</sup>

Public Virtue cannot exist in a Nation without private [Virtue], and public Virtue is the only Foundation of Republics. There must be a positive Passion for the public good, the public Interest, Honour, Power and Glory, established in the Minds of the People, or there can be no Republican Government, nor any real Liberty: and this public passion must be superiour to all private passions.”<sup>9</sup> For, “When public Virtue is gone, when the national Spirit is fled, ... the Republic is lost in Essence, though it may still exist in form.”<sup>10</sup>

Conversely, the implication is, that America’s success on the stage of history will flow from its being viewed as a place of virtue; and this essence will be the inward, motivating and empowering force of the political form. Hence, Adams asks rhetorically, “If the people are capable of understanding, seeing and feeling the differences between true and false, right and wrong, virtue and vice, to what better principle can the friends of mankind apply than to the sense of this difference[?]”<sup>11</sup> And thus, as America becomes *empowered*, through its recognizability as a place of moral commitment and standard, it becomes a friend of mankind—in other words, the “city on a hill” that John Winthrop prophesied that it would be. When the world sees America in that light, that vision confers *power*. When that power informs the other elements of national power, the instruments by which the nation exerts its political will receive an inject of power that can come in no other way. As America’s friends and adversaries alike take note of the wellsprings of the nation’s power, they form opinions concerning where foundational commitment ends and rhetorical flourish begins; and it is they, not Americans themselves, that assign to America the only meaningful ascription of national power.

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<sup>7</sup> John Adams, “III. Thoughts on Government, April 1776,” Founders Online, National Archives, available at <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/06-04-02-0026-0004>.

<sup>8</sup> “From John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 21 December 1819,” Founders Online, National Archives, available at <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-02-02-7287>.

<sup>9</sup> “From John Adams to Mercy Otis Warren, 16 April 1776,” Founders Online, National Archives, available at <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/06-04-02-0044>.

<sup>10</sup> “From John Adams to Benjamin Rush, 27 September 1808,” Founders Online, National Archives, available at <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-02-02-5258>.

<sup>11</sup> John Adams, “Addressed To the Inhabitants of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay”, January 23, 1775, in John Adams et al., *Novanglus and Massachusettensis; or, Political Essays, Published in the Years 1774 and 1775, on the Principal Points of Controversy, between Great Britain and her Colonies; the Former by John Adams, Late President of the United States; The latter by Jonathan Sewall, Then King’s Attorney General of the Province of Massachusetts Bay. To which are added a number of letters lately written by President Adams to the Honourable William Tudor; Some of which were never before published* (Boston: Hews & Goss, 1819), p. 11.

## Virtue, Morality, and Ethics

As noted above, George Washington, equated “virtue” with “morality.” Others of the Founders expressed a close relationship between the two in similar ways. The precise relationship between the two has been a matter of learned discourse since at least the time of Plato and Aristotle. What has never been in serious dispute is the claim that there exists an important and positive relationship between the two. That relationship is apparent in the ancient Greek conception captured in the word *ἀρετή* (*areté*), which is frequently rendered in English as “virtue” or “excellence”; and while both renderings can be broadly applied, at the core of their relationship, one finds morality—*moral* virtue and *moral* excellence, morality itself standing as a clear acknowledgement that some human choices are good, and some are evil. “Morality” is perhaps best understood as the claim that there exists such a thing as objective right and wrong, and that virtue is evidenced in good and right choices.

For a committed realist of the ilk that recognizes nothing beyond that which is expedient, the conversation can stop right here. However, America has never fundamentally embraced the idea that genuine “goodness” is nothing more than window dressing for political advantage, even if the deeds of some of its leaders and citizens have suggested the contrary—sometimes dramatically so. America’s fundamental operating premises have always included the notion that there is such a thing as “virtue” and hence, that there is such a thing as “the moral.” “Ethics” is perhaps best understood as the rational procedures by which the quest for virtue and “the moral”—two sides of the same coin—is operationalized. Ethics consists of decision procedures, rationally deduced throughout the development of the Western intellectual tradition, for adjudicating cases where claims of what counts as good or what counts as the “greater” good, come into conflict.

The need for such adjudication is obvious in matters of private conduct, but it is no less essential in the course of decision making that affects the larger body politic. As international political theorist Martha Finnemore notes,

Any policy decision of consequence is taken within a dense web of normative claims that often conflict with one another and create serious ethical dilemmas for decision makers. After all, if the prescriptions of norms and values were always clear or if they never conflicted with one another, we would not have to make any decisions; we would just follow the prescriptions. In this sense, normative conflict is what creates decisions since, absent conflicting normative claims, there would be nothing to decide.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, while many bureaucratic decisions are accomplished as the routine, work-a-day business of government, those requiring adjudication—including ethical adjudication—are a special province of strategic leaders. Thus, ethics, and its subject matter, morality, must be

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<sup>12</sup> Martha Finnemore, “Paradoxes in Humanitarian Intervention,” in *Moral Limit and Possibility in World Politics*, ed. Richard M. Price (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 198.

seen as belonging to the finite set of tools that states can bring to bear in their interactions with the world.

### **(Mis)understanding the Role and Place of Morality and Ethics in Strategy**

America's contemporary strategic policy documents invoke endless references to the nation's "values." Indeed, taken together, the list of things so designated is so long as to leave the thoughtful observer to wonder how the nation prioritizes its stated goals; for, if *everything* is valuable, then *nothing* is valuable—merely a list of fungibles that change with the time and with political administration. Indeed, one of the fundamental characteristics of fungibles is the malleability of their valuation. Perhaps that is why the nation's Founders did not speak in terms of values; they spoke in terms of *virtues*—*moral virtues*. Values change. Values rise and fall. Values come into vogue and then pass from popular favor. Virtues, on the other hand, have an enduring quality—another point that philosophers have recognized since the dawn of the Western intellectual tradition. America's friends and adversaries know that any avowed commitment merely to "values" is tantamount to a commitment to hold a puff of smoke in one's hand. They know this, because they observe the same phenomenon in their own countries; and the less stable either their form of governance or their actual government, the more ethereal the whole idea of "values" becomes: nothing more than political fiat or dictatorial whim. Perhaps that is why that states on the autocratic end of the "value" spectrum have an emigration problem—*not* an immigration problem. The problem of immigration belongs to states, like America, that are perceived to have committed themselves to the practice, even though imperfectly, of virtue such that, even if the nation's challenges are significant and its contradictions large, its most fundamental commitments are seen to embody a quest for "the Good" rather than merely for the expedient; and that perception gives a nation thus committed access to a kind of *power* that can be obtained in no other way.

It follows, then, that a great deal hinges on the degree to which morality (and its implementing system of tools, ethics) factor into calculations of national interest. When this nexus becomes clear, chimerical concepts like "values" become more profitably supplanted by concepts like morality and ethics. But how do these concepts fit into larger conceptual schemes for wielding national power?

### **Morality as Element, Ethics as Instrument**

For as long as the concept of nation-state has existed, there has coexisted at least the tacit recognition that the state has only a finite set of ways (methods) and means (resources) for exercising power. The former are largely conceptual (for example, power exercised via diplomacy, intelligence, armed force, or the economy, etc.) while the latter tend toward the tangible (for example, a diplomatic corps, intelligence services, actual armed forces, the

producers of goods and services, etc.). In the current century, recognition has been accorded to a larger set of tools,<sup>13</sup> to include finance (as manifested, for example, in the state's ability to modulate the transfer of funds), information (as manifested, for example, in the state's ability to modulate the flow of data), and law enforcement (as manifested, for example, in the state's ability to pursue criminals through cooperative international networks). The well-ordered state is cognizant of all these ways and means, understands their intricate interrelationships, and is able to apply them to realize its national interests.

Note that each of the elements of national power identified above is associable with government institutions: Specific bureaucratic departments and agencies exist to serve as the locus or loci for the operationalization of each element of national power. In this respect, ethics is different. There simply exists no granite building with the words "Department of Ethics" engraved over the entrance. However, that does not mean that ethics is any less instrumental (or morality any less elemental) than any of the other elements and instruments of national power—far from it. Indeed, in order for America to achieve the high purposes it claims for itself, these are things that must supervene upon and permeate how all other elements of power are conceived and all other instruments of power are applied. Indeed, for a nation to be guided by virtue in the way contemplated by the Founders, every strategic calculation of national power must be inseparably wedded to the ethical question, "Do the ways and means associated with politically acceptable policy X comport with the ends of morality *as well as* the ends of political interest? If the answer is "yes," then the policy deserves serious consideration. If the answer is "no," the policy requires substantive review. In either case, the question must be asked; and it is the fact that the question must be asked in the first instance that identifies morality as an element and ethics as an instrument of national power.

### **In the Eyes of the World**

In the final analysis, what counts as national power is far more dependent upon the perception of the external observer than it is upon self-admiring view of the state that claims the power. For example, a state might claim to possess great military prowess; but unless a potential military adversary views the claim with trepidation if not awe, the claim of prowess does not actually generate much power. The same can be said with respect to all attempted displays of national power. However, when such displays are ethically informed in a way that resonates with onlooking, external powers, the need for trepidation and awe can, in some instances at least, give way to mutual respect and cooperation. Of course, some actors in the anarchic international world will always resort to brute force and intimidation and will have it no other way. However, that present reality does not mean that America's policy choices—

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<sup>13</sup> Cesar Augusto Rodriguez, Timothy Charles Walton, and Hyong Chu, "Putting the 'FIL' into 'DIME': Growing Joint Understanding of the Instruments of Power," *Joint Force Quarterly*, 97, available at <https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/2106566/putting-the-fil-into-dime-growing-joint-understanding-of-the-instruments-of-pow>.

even the ones that appropriate brute force and intimidation—cannot or should not be ethically informed. Indeed, if America is to assert itself in the world without laying aside its claim to be “a city upon a hill,”<sup>14</sup> those policy choices *must* be so informed.

Examples can be found throughout American history—and for that matter, throughout the history of humanity—both of leaders who rationalized ethical demands to suit their own ends and those who made difficult ethical choices for which they risked paying a high political price. When faced with the constitutionally unprecedented exigencies of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln found himself confronted with ethical dilemmas unparalleled in the history of the nation up to that time and was forced to settle for imperfect solutions subject to criticisms from multiple vantage points. However, he sought to resolve those vexing conundrums “with malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right as God [gave him] to see the right”<sup>15</sup>—all toward the end of “achiev[ing] and cherish[ing] a just and lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.”<sup>16</sup> Clearly, Lincoln possessed a clear understanding of the conscious and conscientious application of ethical principles to meet the ends of morality in the enduring service of the state.

Perhaps no 20th-century example of this same conscious weighing of moral considerations is more prominent than that of President Harry S Truman as he weighed the consequences of dropping the world’s first atomic bomb. The literature on the rightness or wrongness of Truman’s decision is a cottage industry all its own; and whether or not a nuclear weapon is ever again detonated in anger, his deliberations will continue to be the touchstone case for ethical inquiry. Not surprisingly, hindsight assessments of Truman’s decision are far from uniform, spanning the entire spectrum from strong condemnation to high praise. As with all political decisions of great moment, his decision involved world-altering tradeoffs, both with substantial, negative consequences; but such is the nature, as Finnemore reminds us above, of ethical dilemmas. What is beyond dispute is that Truman was not oblivious to the ethical dilemma, and he made his decision in light of the dilemma, attempting to weigh all moral considerations bearing on the question and successfully balancing at least some of them. As this example illustrates, it was not the *end* alone—important as that was—that Truman’s decision yielded but also his *ways* and *means* that incorporated morality and ethics in his final determination of that end. One may disagree with the decision of a President in whose shoes he or she did not have to walk, but one cannot dismiss out of hand the claim that Truman understood morality and ethics as included among the elements and instruments of national power, respectively.

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<sup>14</sup> John Winthrop, *A Modell of Christian Charity*, written on board the *Arbella*, on the Atlantic Ocean, 1630, in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society* (Boston, 1838), 3rd series 7:31–48, available at <https://history.hanover.edu/texts/winthmod.html>.

<sup>15</sup> Image 8 of Abraham Lincoln papers: Series 3. General Correspondence. 1837-1897: Abraham Lincoln, [March 4, 1865] (Second Inaugural Address; endorsed by Lincoln, April 10, 1865), manuscript copy, including Lincoln’s emendations, available at Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/mal.4361300/?sp=8&st=image&r=-0.439,0.406,1.739,1.032,0>.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

In the depths of the Cold War, President Ronald Reagan (who not infrequently invoked the “city upon a hill” metaphor<sup>17</sup>) found himself in ideological combat with an adversary whose world view diametrically opposed that of his own, but concerning which he was able to ease the tensions built up over multiple decades with a rapprochement that included an appeal to his adversary’s foundational human sensibilities. In a toast to General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev at the conclusion of a 1987 summit in Washington, Reagan recounted a story from V-E Day, reported by a U.S. diplomat, who was deeply moved by the words of a Red Army major standing near him: “Now it’s time to live.”<sup>18</sup> Of those words, Reagan said,

I’m convinced that history will ultimately judge this summit and its participants not on missile count but on how far we moved together to the fulfillment of that soldier’s hopes.

We have prided ourselves, Mr. General Secretary, on our realism, that we’ve come to this summit without illusions, with no attempts to gloss over the deep differences that divide us, differences that reach to the core values upon which our political systems are based. But we said, even so, we can make progress; even so, we can find areas of agreement and cooperation.

But perhaps . . . we should look at an even deeper and more enduring realism. It is a reality that precedes states and governments, that precedes and surpasses the temporary realities of ideology and politics. It is the reality that binds each of us as individual souls, the bond that united Soviets and Americans in exultation and thanksgiving on that day of peace, 42 years ago.<sup>19</sup>

For Reagan, the best and most productive kind of realism—the common currency of most politics—was a realism informed by morality and ethics. While Reagan was well known for his commitment to the principle of “peace through strength,”<sup>20</sup> he understood too that the elements and instruments of national power, shorn of morality and ethics, would not yield the kind of peace to which democracies rightly aspire. That he succeeded in communicating this vision to General Secretary Gorbachev is evident from Gorbachev’s post-summit report “to the Politburo that the people he dealt with in Washington were ‘guided by the most

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<sup>17</sup> The author is indebted to an anonymous peer reviewer for this observation.

<sup>18</sup> Ronald Reagan, “Toast at a Dinner Hosted by Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev” December 9, 1987, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, available at <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/toast-dinner-hosted-soviet-general-secretary-mikhail-gorbachev>.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, Keeghan Sweeney and Roger I. Zakheim, eds., *Peace Through Strength: Reflections on President Reagan’s Guiding Principle for our National Defense* (Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute, 2018), available at [https://www.reaganfoundation.org/media/356470/peace\\_through\\_strength\\_booklet.pdf](https://www.reaganfoundation.org/media/356470/peace_through_strength_booklet.pdf).

natural human motives and feelings.’<sup>21</sup> He no longer spoke of political dinosaurs and cavemen.”<sup>22</sup>

America neither possesses any element of power nor exercises any instrument of power in perfect measure. However, the degree to which its elements of power are viewed as understood, and instruments of power are viewed as being exercised, in ethical ways that yield truly moral ends, those elements and instruments become endowed with greater *power* in the eyes of those viewing America from the outside. The reverse is also true: When America’s elements and instruments of power are viewed as being understood or exercised by the state in other than virtuous ways, the elements become diluted, and the instruments become blunted. For example, promises made by America’s diplomats but not honored in practice diminish American power. Intelligence misused by America for devious ends diminishes American power. Military deployments that leave far-flung places in a state of impoverishment and ruin rather than improved and flourishing diminish American power. American economic ventures that exploit and suck the livelihood or even life out of vulnerable populations diminish American power. Law enforcement apparatuses that employ techniques like extraordinary rendition or endless detention without trial diminish American power. Information organs that propagandize but do not inform diminish American power. Financial penalties levied on leaders of adversary states, but which actually do untold harm to the lives of the innocent and powerless, diminish American power. In sum, the very fact that diminution of national power occurs when the element of morality and the instrument of ethics are omitted—or worse, flouted—is likely the surest evidence of their indispensable role as element and instrument of national power respectively.

Wide divergences of view exist as to which national ends should be pursued and how these ends should be sought. However, the fact that both morality and ethics occupy a place in the American psyche and factor into its political equations, even though imperfectly, is the fact that principally distinguishes American governance from the kind found in tyrannical or illiberal regimes. This fact serves as a beacon of hope for peoples of the world who find their most basic rights denied; and the fact that these same peoples turn to the American model rather than to alternative totalitarian models confers *power* on America. It follows, therefore, that when America blurs, of its own policy volition, distinction between itself and less desirable alternatives, the answer is almost always a result of its having ignored the supervening role of morality and ethics.

## Conclusion

Not only are ways and means important, but the ends are important as well. Policies that are morally well-founded and ethically coherent in ways and means that are aimed at morally

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<sup>21</sup> Anatoly S. Chernyaev, *My Six :Years with Gorbachev* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), p. 142, quoted in Jack F. Matlock, Jr., *Reagan and Gorbachev: How the Cold War Ended* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2005), p. 282.

<sup>22</sup> Matlock, p. 282.



well-founded and ethically coherent ends will be more influential both domestically and abroad and far more likely to endure the test of time<sup>23</sup>—no small consideration for a nation that seeks to be a “city on a hill”. When the elemental concept of moral virtue and the instrumental tools of ethics by which virtue is sought to be realized in the public sphere become properly acknowledged, not only as elements and instruments but indeed the very *wellsprings* of national power, there will be no need to announce to other nations that America is prioritizing itself before other nations; for other nations will recognize for themselves the advantages that accrue from those wellsprings of power. America’s exercise of its other instruments will become, in some measure at least, viewed by others with a less jaundiced eye and possibly even with a more welcoming one. Adversaries will be more likely to fear America’s strengths because they see them as founded upon solid moral principle rather than on shifting sands of partisan expediency. Friends will be more likely to embrace America with greater confidence because they understand that virtue has a more enduring quality than will ever derive from espousing any value *du jour*.

Is America a land of moral virtue? Does it actually embrace a commitment to ethically informed public conduct that gives vitality to principle, without which, principle would become mere political pretense? Those are important questions, but they are questions that lie beyond the scope of the present essay. For now, it is sufficient to understand, as Winthrop did, as Washington did, as Adams did, and as many others who have hoped for the durability of America have understood, that morality is so deeply woven into the fabric of national power and ethics into the successful employment of the associated instruments of national power that morality and ethics themselves become inseparable from these elements and instruments. A nation may, for example, exercise its diplomatic instruments without exercising its military ones, or exercise its informational instruments without exercising its economic ones, but any exercise will be diminished or augmented by the way in which it exercises, in tandem, the elemental concepts of morality and the instrumental tools of ethics in pursuit of its national aims.

*John Mark Mattox is an Associate Professor of Strategy and Policy at the National War College, National Defense University, and the College’s inaugural Chair in Leadership, Character, and Ethics.*

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<sup>23</sup> The author is indebted to an anonymous peer reviewer for this incisive observation, which appropriates many of the reviewer’s own words.



## **TWO THEATERS BUT ONE WAR: WHY WE SHOULD SUPPORT UKRAINE AND ISRAEL**

**Stephen Blank**

### **Introduction**

President Biden has rightly identified Russia's war against Ukraine and Hamas' terror on Israel as two theaters in the same war against global liberalism, democracy, and the rules-based order.<sup>1</sup> Secretary of State Blinken's recent congressional testimony reconfirmed this assessment.<sup>2</sup> This article argues that despite mounting attacks from the right against aiding Ukraine and the left against supporting Israel (much of which amounts to either concealed or outright anti-Semitism), U.S. policy in support of both is correct and the critics are wrong. Both countries are pro-American democracies under attack from terrorists and genocidaires. They merit staunch, steady, and ongoing U.S. and Western support that must be aligned to a strategy aimed at victory in both wars.

Victory's meaning is clear. In Ukraine it comprises restoring Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty, and unhampered right to join the European Union (EU) and NATO. In Israel's case it means the irreversible destruction of Hamas as a military-political actor. Only that outcome allows for reconstituting a new governing body in Gaza and a broader peace process that also blocks Iran, its proxies, and Russia.

It is important to deconstruct the arguments of the critics and to expose their unfounded biases.<sup>3</sup> Many of them claim to be either idealists and left-wingers in Israel's case or, in Ukraine's case, self-proclaimed adherents of Realism, a doctrine of international relations theory. Nevertheless, the more one scrutinizes their repetitive arguments, the more unrealistic they become.

### **Faulty Premises**

The critics often cite the following misleading or erroneous propositions:

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<sup>1</sup> "Remarks by President Biden on the United States' Response to Hamas's Terrorist Attacks Against Israel and Russia's Ongoing Brutal War Against Ukraine," October 20, 2023, available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/10/20/remarks-by-president-biden-on-the-united-states-response-to-hamass-terrorist-attacks-against-israel-and-russias-ongoing-brutal-war-against-ukraine/>.

<sup>2</sup> Jennifer Hanssler, "Blinken and Austin Make the Case That Separating Israel and Ukraine Funding Would Embolden America's Enemies," *CNN*, October 31, 2023, available at <https://www.cnn.com/2023/10/31/politics/blinken-austin-ukraine-israel-funding/index.html>.

<sup>3</sup> "Russia Tells UN Israel Does Not Have Right Of Self-Defense In War With Hamas," *The Times of Israel*, November 2, 2023, available at [https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog\\_entry/russia-tells-un-israel-does-not-have-right-of-self-defense-in-war-with-hamas/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/russia-tells-un-israel-does-not-have-right-of-self-defense-in-war-with-hamas/).



- Most wars end in negotiations, not battlefield victory.<sup>4</sup> The Russo-Ukrainian war, therefore, cannot engender a decisive military outcome because neither side can prevail. Similarly, although Israel might prevail operationally over Hamas, it cannot bring about peace or a political solution in Gaza by itself; therefore, its campaign will further poison the Middle East's environment of bitterness and readiness for war.<sup>5</sup>
- Ukraine is secondary to U.S. interests, and that focusing on Ukraine and Russia erodes our ability to focus on the Chinese threat, which must take priority.<sup>6</sup> In addition, Israel is an apartheid, settler colonialist state scheming to drive Palestinians off their land and conduct ethnic cleansing.
- Because of U.S. domestic economic challenges, the United States should not be spending so much money on Ukraine, which the United States can ill-afford to spend in defense of a country that is riddled with corruption. Instead, the United States should spend that money at home.<sup>7</sup> This habitual advocacy also pertains to U.S. military aid and cooperation with Israel.

Each of these propositions is decisively refutable by facts, history, and common sense.

Those who believe in the primacy of negotiations argue that Kyiv's insistence on recovering all its lands through military action, particularly Crimea, is misguided. Any attempt to do so, given Crimea's symbolic and political importance to Putin, would likely drive him to nuclear escalation. Therefore, they contend, a Ukrainian victory is unattainable, undesirable, and even dangerous,<sup>8</sup> and a negotiated settlement should be sought. Likewise, with respect to Israel, a cease-fire followed by negotiations to establish a fuller, more permanent peace process, is necessary. Israel's insistence on destroying Hamas could foster a regional escalatory and destabilizing process throughout the Middle East.<sup>9</sup> Therefore there must be a pause, cease-fire, etc.<sup>10</sup>

Of course, it is untrue that all wars end in negotiation. Neither Afghanistan nor Vietnam, the U.S. Civil War, nor both World Wars ended this way unless one equates surrender with

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<sup>4</sup> "How Wars End: The Role of Negotiation," Fall 2022, available at <https://hls.harvard.edu/courses/how-wars-end-the-role-of-negotiation/>.

<sup>5</sup> Richard Haass, "Israel's War Must Distinguish Between Hamas and the People Of Gaza," *Financial Times*, October 27, 2023, available at <https://www.ft.com/content/779d082a-efdc-4ae4-86b4-aaebec88f810>.

<sup>6</sup> Ian Hanchett, "Cotton: We Should Provide As Much Support to Taiwan as We Are to Ukraine, 'China Is a Bigger Threat Than Russia,'" *Briartbart*, January 25, 2022, available at <https://www.breitbart.com/clips/2022/01/25/cotton-we-should-provide-as-much-support-to-taiwan-as-we-are-to-ukraine-china-is-a-bigger-threat-than-russia/>.

<sup>7</sup> Yasmeen Abutaleb and John Hudson, "Inside the growing Republican fissure on Ukraine aid," *The Washington Post*, October 31, 2022, available at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/10/31/republican-split-on-ukraine-aid/>; Stephen Blank, "Western Progressives and Reactionaries for Putin," Center for European Policy Analysis, October 27, 2022, available at <https://cepa.org/article/western-progressives-and-reactionaries-for-putin/>.

<sup>8</sup> "Why Negotiating An End To the Russia-Ukraine War Should Be a Priority," *NPR*, January 8, 2023, available at <https://www.npr.org/2023/01/08/1147737177/why-negotiating-an-end-to-the-russia-ukraine-war-should-be-a-priority>.

<sup>9</sup> "Israel's war in Gaza could spread beyond Middle East: Russia's Putin," *Al Jazeera*, October 27, 2023, available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/26/israels-war-in-gaza-could-spread-beyond-middle-east-russias-putin>.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

negotiation. This argument willfully misreads the history of American, not to mention, other wars and therefore cannot serve as an adequate basis for policy advocacy.

Those clamoring for negotiations fail to recognize the true nature of Russia's war, which is a genocidal war, by definition. By the standards of international law, it can only truly end with the decisive defeat of the aggressors, acknowledgement of their crimes, restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity as of 2013 and of its full sovereignty (i.e., the right to join alliances like NATO), and some form of reparation that includes accountability of war criminals. Negotiations merely let Putin and his henchmen off the hook, confirm their possession of Ukrainian territory, and subject millions of unwilling people to unspeakable tortures and war crimes, while the perpetrators avoid accountability and reparation for war crimes. That outcome corrodes any concept of international order and justice and merely invites Moscow to resume its efforts to subvert and destroy Ukraine and/or other states with impunity at a time and place of its choice.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, negotiating before Russia is defeated mocks both Ukrainian determination to win and liberate its territory, and the suffering of its people and their jubilation when liberated as we saw in Kherson.<sup>12</sup>

Partisans of negotiation contend that Putin cannot and will not accept defeat but will rather continue escalating even up to possible nuclear use.<sup>13</sup> They almost never concede that a negotiated settlement leaves Russia in possession of some or all of the territories it seized by aggression from Ukraine, allowing Putin to claim a victory, and as Secretary Blinken, German President Steinmeyer, Premier Scholz, and Foreign Minister Baerbock have publicly observed, any Russian retention of Ukrainian territory merely resets the stage for another future Russo-Ukrainian war. Equally importantly, these arguments, like those now being utilized against Israel, either implicitly or explicitly deny each country's ability to defend itself and arbitrarily deny that they can or should prevail over invaders and terrorists.

Critics hold that an Israeli effort to destroy Hamas necessarily entails a large-scale attack on innocent civilians amounting to collective punishment, forfeits global support, and thwarts peace due to the bitterness and devastation it unleashes.<sup>14</sup> However, this argument denies Israel its sovereign right and obligation to protect its citizens from foreign attack. It also negates the fact that Hamas' brutal attack represented, in accord with its charter, a form of collective punishment upon Israeli Jews and—like Putin's attack on Ukraine—an intentionally genocidal operation. Accepting this argument would deprive Israel of its

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<sup>11</sup> Department of State, "Secretary Antony J. Blinken, With German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba At the Munich Security Conference," February 18, 2023, available at <https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-with-german-foreign-minister-annalena-baerbock-and-ukrainian-foreign-minister-dmytro-kuleba-at-the-munich-security-conference/>.

<sup>12</sup> Andrew E. Kramer and Marc Santora, "Jubilant Ukrainian soldiers sweeping into Kherson," *The New York Times*, November 11, 2022, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/11/11/world/ukraine-war-news-russia-updates#ukrainian-soldiers-sweeping-into-kherson-are-greeted-with-jubilant>.

<sup>13</sup> Samuel Charap and Miranda Priebe, "Avoiding a Long War: U.S. Policy and the Trajectory of the Russia-Ukraine Conflict." RAND, January 2023, available at <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PEA2510-1.html>.

<sup>14</sup> Richard Haass, "Israel's War Must Distinguish Between Hamas and the People Of Gaza," *Financial Times*, October 27, 2023, available at <https://www.ft.com/content/779d082a-efdc-4ae4-86b4-aaebec88f810>.

deterrence, encourage unending attacks by all of its enemies, and be more permanently destabilizing than anything Israel might do.

Additionally, this argument subordinates Israel's right and obligation of self-defense to fear of the "Arab Street" and its influence upon Arab governments. While many Arab governments fear their populations, who have been aroused by decades of anti-Israeli propaganda, that cannot be a decisive factor in Israeli decision-making. Israel cannot forfeit its rights under these circumstances merely to avoid what is an inconvenience to Arab governments. Finally, virtually every high-ranking official in Arab governments wants Hamas destroyed but is unable or unwilling to say so publicly because, having systematically inflamed Arab public opinion since 1948, they now are hostages of their own propaganda.<sup>15</sup>

A corollary argument contends that recent tactical and policy changes in 2022-23 have strengthened the Russian army to the point where the war will probably remain one of attrition where nobody wins. Furthermore, that is the best Ukraine can hope for, especially given the aforementioned undesirability or unlikelihood of a Ukrainian victory.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, to prevent the prospect if not reality of nuclear use while attrition leads nowhere, the Administration must induce Ukraine to negotiate and refrain from escalatory moves that might provoke Russian escalation.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, numerous analysts contend that an Israeli military victory, though tactically and operationally conceivable, entails such costs in manpower and political support without achieving a viable political solution for Gaza that victory might be either unattainable or not worth the costs and risks associated with such a campaign. In the Middle East, many have cited the likelihood that Hezbollah and even possibly Iran will have to escalate as Iran has threatened to do if Israel invades Gaza.<sup>18</sup> Yet none of these scenarios appears likely despite numerous threats from Iran, Hezbollah, and Russian invocations of "red lines."

Many proponents of this view regarding Ukraine have complained that the United States is not communicating with Russia or has closed the channels necessary to a bilateral dialogue, a dangerous move in a situation fraught with escalatory tendencies.<sup>19</sup> Yet this charge, too, is belied by continuing if frigid bilateral contacts.<sup>20</sup> Here, too, there is an implicit argument that Israel's refusal to deal with Hamas helps explain the roots of the ongoing crisis. Yet, this ignores the facts that third-party mediation has had some limited success in

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<sup>15</sup> Dennis Ross, "I Might Have Once Favored a Cease-Fire With Hamas, But Not Now," *The New York Times*, October 27, 2023, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/27/opinion/hamas-war-gaza-israel.html>.

<sup>16</sup> Christopher Caldwell, "Russia and Ukraine Have Incentives to Negotiate. The U.S. Has Other Plans," *The New York Times*, February 7, 2023, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/07/opinion/russia-ukraine-us-tanks.html>.

<sup>17</sup> "Why Negotiating An End To the Russia-Ukraine War Should Be a Priority," *op. cit.*

<sup>18</sup> Maziar Motamedi, "Iran Warns Israel Of Regional Escalation If Gaza Ground Offensive Launched," *Al Jazeera*, October 15, 2023, available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/15/iran-warns-israel-of-regional-escalation-if-gaza-ground-offensive-launched>.

<sup>19</sup> Samuel Charap and Jeremy Shapiro, "The U.S. and Russia Need To Start Talking Before It's Too Late," *The New York Times*, July 27, 2022, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/27/opinion/ukraine-russia-us-diplomacy.html>.

<sup>20</sup> Annabelle Timsit, White House Says 'Lines Of Communication' With Russia Are Still Open," *The Washington Post*, November 8, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/11/08/white-house-us-conversations-russia-ukraine/>.

releasing hostages. Moreover, it cannot explain why Israel should confer legitimacy upon Hamas by negotiating with it when Hamas' charter and policies explicitly contemplate elimination of Jews, and its torture of prisoners was unspeakable.<sup>21</sup>

The groundless argument that Ukraine is only of tangential importance to the United States betrays the shocking ignorance of both history and of U.S. interests that has become a virtual given in America's contemporary shrill polemics. These polemics ignore the real facts in each case. It ignores the fact that the United States participated in two World Wars and led the Cold War to prevent hostile imperialist powers from dominating Europe. The United States remains the only force capable of stopping Russian imperialism in Europe and U.S. vital interests still dictate that the United States and its allies oppose such empire-building. Thus, U.S. vital interests are at stake in Ukraine because that war is actually a war over European security. Those contending that this is not a U.S. priority obscure or ignore the fact that Moscow embarked upon an ongoing global war against the West in 2005, largely because its earlier efforts to subvert Ukraine failed ignominiously.<sup>22</sup>

Similarly, the attacks on Israel as an example of settler colonialism, apartheid, ethnic cleansing, and even genocide, are equally groundless and derive from the same anti-Semitic logic perpetrated fifty years ago by the UN that Zionism is racism and a fashionable but false decolonization narrative sponsored by left-wing scholars that bears no connection to the facts or this conflict's actual history. This groundless but typical example of Soviet and now Russian propaganda appeals to these audiences because it not only fits into the lunatic reality that pervades all forms of bigotry but also because it offered Arab and Palestinian alike a self-serving exculpatory explanation of their failure to destroy Israel that absolved them and their leaders of any responsibility for the series of debacles into which they still lead their people. Indeed, this is true as well for the present war.

The assertion that the United States should spend American taxpayer dollars on domestic priorities instead of supporting pro-American democracies abroad has no factual basis. The United States has spent roughly 4 percent of the Pentagon's budget on support to Ukraine and has destroyed over 50 percent of Russia's conventional capability. Surrendering Ukraine to Russia by terminating aid would actually invite a much larger, costlier, and longer future European war that would obligate the United States to intervene due to its NATO commitments, resulting in higher economic and human costs. Meanwhile, demonstrating the Russian military's failings devalues Moscow's ability to assist China and its value as an ally while highlighting our alliances' capacity to undermine Russia and/or China peacefully. It also ignores the fact that allowing Russia to undermine European security constrains the U.S.' ability to deal with China. Regrettably, both main political parties appear focused more on arguing over deficits rather than supporting remedies consonant with national interests, and the economics argument is merely another unrealistic and demagogic attack that demonstrates a lack of understanding of U.S. national interests.

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<sup>21</sup> Hamas Covenant 1988, available at [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/hamas.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp).

<sup>22</sup> MG I.N. Vorob'ev (RET) and Col. V.A. Kisel'ev (Ret), "Strategies of Destruction and Attrition," Moscow, *Military Thought*, in English, No. 1, 2014, January 1-2014-March 31, 2014.

The U.S. support for Ukraine reveals the lessons from Sun Zi, namely, that one favored course of action to defeat an enemy is to deprive him of his allies rather than to confront him head on. Although the Sino-Russian alliance is real and dangerous, China has real doubts about Russia and is restoring a dialogue with the United States. Since Russia behaves so aggressively partly to prove its value as an ally to China, assisting Ukraine strikes at the Russo-Chinese alliance and Beijing's strategy at little cost.

### Further Rebuttals

Further analysis of these arguments quickly reveals other defects. For example, the critics' universal precept that neither Israel nor Ukraine can and should win lest that provoke escalation fundamentally misreads these wars' true nature and the facts. Ukrainian forces have decisively defeated the Russian Navy and continue to rebuff Russian attacks. They have also brought the war to Russia by their drone strikes on Russian territory. As a result, Moscow has turned to North Korea and Iran for weapons and Cuba for volunteers, a signal that does not signify optimism or victory but rather anxiety about possible defeat.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, Russian policies, including mass murders, torture, rapes, deportations, particularly of children, and destruction of Ukrainian cultural treasures, have already led the International Court of Justice to indict Putin and other officials for crimes fitting the UN's legal and the classic definition of genocide.<sup>24</sup> The evidence of Hamas' torture of prisoners should drive the ICJ to similar conclusions.<sup>25</sup>

In addition, all these arguments presuppose that the United States has the power, the right, and the duty to compel Ukraine and/or Israel to subordinate themselves to a fundamental misreading of U.S. interests and values, i.e., appeasement, as if those arguments rather than Ukraine or Israel's right to exist were at stake. In Ukraine's case there is also the implicit postulate that Washington can and/or should determine its future bilaterally with Russia lest an already fraught situation escalate out of control. This argument also advocates negotiating with Russia over Ukraine's head and without its presence, thereby validating Moscow's claim that Ukraine is merely an American creation to whom Russia ascribes a diminished sovereignty, i.e., imperialism. That position ignores the 1938 Munich precedent

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<sup>23</sup> Robert E. Kelly, "Commentary: If Putin Needs North Korean Weapons, He's In Trouble," *Channel News Asia*, September 8, 2023, available at <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/commentary/putin-kim-meeting-russia-north-korea-ukraine-war-weapon-nuclear-trade-3752886>; Ellie Geranmayeh, Nicole Grajewski, "Alone Together: How the War In Ukraine Shapes the Russian-Iranian Relationship," European Council on Foreign Relations, September 6, 2023, available at <https://ecfr.eu/publication/alone-together-how-the-war-in-ukraine-shapes-the-russian-iranian-relationship/>; Eydar Peralta, "Cuba says it dismantled human trafficking ring recruiting for Russia's war in Ukraine," *NPR*, September 5, 2023, available at <https://www.npr.org/2023/09/05/1197617372/cuba-dismantles-human-trafficking-ring-recruiting-for-russias-war-in-ukraine>.

<sup>24</sup> Antoinette Radford and Frank Gardner, "Putin Arrest Warrant Issued Over War Crime Allegations," *BBC News*, March 18, 2023, available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-64992727>; United Nations Office On Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility To Protect, available at <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.shtml>.

<sup>25</sup> Rob Picheta, Joseph Ataman, and Amir Tal, "First Testimonies Shed Light On the Conditions Endured By Hamas' Israeli Hostages," *CNN*, November 28, 2023, available at <https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/27/middleeast/israel-hamas-hostages-testimony-conditions-intl/index.html>.

where Western powers negotiated with Nazi Germany over the heads and in the absence of Czechoslovakia. This argument also tallies with the mendacious Arab critique that if not for America there would be no Israeli state, which is an illegitimate artifact of Western imperialism and subject to American dictation. Finally, this stance also aligns with the abiding but misguided belief that ties with Moscow must supersede relations with post-Soviet states who are still perceived as dependencies of Russia.<sup>26</sup>

These arguments also ignore the devastating impact that Russian aggression has not only on European security and NATO, but on the very foundations of international order. They also ignore Moscow's undeviating policy since the 1990s to reject the finality of Europe's post-Cold War order and the sovereignty and integrity of every state east of Germany.<sup>27</sup> As Jeffrey Feltman, former American diplomat and Under Secretary-General For Political Affairs for the UN, wrote, "Russia dropped a barrel bomb on the fundamental principle of the international system: respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity."<sup>28</sup> Moreover, this war underscores the fragility of conventional deterrence in Europe if not elsewhere. Therefore, NATO's largely U.S. nuclear deterrent and the presence of U.S. forces there are major components of deterrence to preserve peace in Europe and elsewhere. So, abdicating the defense of Ukraine and thus Europe returns them and the world to an environment of permanent war.

Likewise, it should be equally clear that the argument for pauses or cease-fires, ostensibly to spare Palestinians from Israel's legitimate retaliation against Hamas, is at best naïve and misguided and at worse an anti-Semitic double standard. Pauses represent a surrender to Hamas, who will use them to retain their hostages, solidify their hold on Gaza, devise new tactics against Israel's justified retaliation, and prepare, if not execute, new attacks on Israel. They will also incite Iran and its other proxies like Hezbollah to attack Israel and bring Russian forces and weapons further into the Middle East.<sup>29</sup> And the refusal of cease-fire advocates to admit Hamas' savagery against Israel reveals the usual double standard associated with anti-Semitism and denial of Israel's right of self-defense. Russia's support for this argument merely reinforces its essential hypocrisy and intrinsic falsity.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Eugene Fishel, *The Moscow Factor: U.S. Policy Toward Sovereign Ukraine and the Kremlin* (Harvard Series in Ukrainian Studies), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press for the Harvard Ukrainian Institute, 2022

<sup>27</sup> Stephen. Blank, "The Values Gap Between Moscow and the West: The Sovereignty Issue," *Acque et Terre*, no. 6 (2007) pp. 9-14 (Italian), pp. 90-95 (English); S. Blank, "Russia and the Black Sea's Frozen Conflicts in Strategic Perspective," *Mediterranean Quarterly* 19, no. 3 (Summer 2008), pp. 23-54; James Sherr, *Hard Diplomacy and Soft Coercion: Russia's Influence Abroad*: London: Chatham House, 2013, pp. 61-62; Susan Stewart, "The EU, Russia and Less Common Neighborhood," *SWP Comments*, Stiftung Wissenschaft Und Politik, January, 2014, pp.2-3.

<sup>28</sup> Jeffrey Feltman, "War, Peace and the International System After Ukraine," Brookings Institution, March 28, 2023, available at <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/war-peace-and-the-international-system-after-ukraine/>.

<sup>29</sup> Stephen Blank, "Russia's Role In the Gaza War," *The Jerusalem Strategic Tribune*, October 25, 2023, available at <https://jstribune.com/blank-russias-role-in-the-gaza-war/>.

<sup>30</sup> "Russia Tells UN Israel Does Not Have Right Of Self-Defense In War With Hamas," *The Times of Israel*, November 2, 2023, available at [https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog\\_entry/russia-tells-un-israel-does-not-have-right-of-self-defense-in-war-with-hamas/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/russia-tells-un-israel-does-not-have-right-of-self-defense-in-war-with-hamas/).



The critics' arguments are at their root unfounded, factually wrong, unrealistic, and often contrary to the U.S.' real interests and values, which actually align with Ukrainian and Israeli interests and values.

Analysts who understand the stakes in Ukraine grasp not just the moral but strategic implications of negotiations now. Sir Lawrence Freedman emphasizes this profound moral-strategic nexus by writing that,

The effect has also been to bring a moral clarity to all strategic calculations. Having now seen what happens when Russia occupies Ukrainian territory, Western governments know that they cannot push President Zelensky to make any territorial concessions simply to bring the war to an end. Of course, the West is in no position to bring regime change to Moscow. Nor can Ukraine. Only the Russians can do that. So, all that can be done is to support Ukraine until Russian troops have left, leaving Putin to face the consequences of his catastrophic folly.<sup>31</sup>

One could substitute the word "Israel" for Ukraine here and the same logic would apply to it. Elsewhere Freedman observes that Western governments dare not let Ukraine fail now.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, Nigel Gould-Davies writes that,

The war crimes show that, as long as Russia occupies Ukrainian territory, an end to fighting does not mean an end to violence. On the contrary: a ceasefire would allow Russian forces not only to regroup and rearm, but to brutalize and murder civilians unhindered. As the "Realist School" of international relations does not appear to recognize, not just geopolitical space but human lives are at stake. All Ukrainians now know for certain what awaits them if Russian forces enter their town or village, and will resist accordingly. It follows that partition or negotiated compromise will bring neither peace nor stability.<sup>33</sup>

Consequently, Putin is no longer credible as a reliable interlocutor vis-à-vis European governments, Canada, the United States or his neighbors. As Gould-Davies also wrote: "These crimes have strategic consequences that will shape the course of the war. Above all, they make it more likely that any outcome will be defined not by compromise and settlement, but by victory and defeat."<sup>34</sup> And these observers' insights apply word for word to Israel's cause

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<sup>31</sup> Lawrence Freedman, "The Russo-Ukraine War: Phase Two," April 6, 2022, available at <https://samf.substack.com/p/the-russo-ukraine-war-phase-two?token=eyJ1c2VyX2lkIjozOTY0OTcxLCJwb3N0X2lkIjo1MTY4MDMyMiwiXyI6InFQWVFLliwiaWF0IjoxNjQ5MjUwOTg3LCJleHAiOjE2NDkyNTQ1ODcsImZcyI6InB1Yi02MzE0MjliLCJzdWIiOiJwb3N0LXJlYWNoaW9uIn0.7MtSwsln8Du8w7qluQmzH6-XWdk-zDmiZkM2WY32PpA&s=r>.

<sup>32</sup> Lawrence Freedman, "NATO and Ukraine," April 13, 2022, available at <https://samf.substack.com/p/nato-and-ukraine?s=r>.

<sup>33</sup> Nigel Gould-Davies, "The Strategic Meaning of Russian War Crimes in Ukraine," *The Moscow Times*, April 13, 2022, available at <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/04/13/the-strategic-meaning-of-russian-war-crimes-in-ukraine-a77345>.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

against Hamas. Hamas is not a credible negotiator for Israel while its crimes exclude the possibility of cease-fires and negotiations.

In addition, annexing four Ukrainian provinces and claiming that this procedure is “irreversible” since they are forever part of Russia, and therefore a precondition for negotiations underscores’ Putin’s refusal of negotiation since no Ukrainian political figure can accept this precondition or aggression.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, the Norwegian analyst, Hans Peter Midtun writes that,

Every hint of the need for talks and negotiations from the West is a subtle sign of a lack of confidence in a Ukrainian win or a lack of will to support a military success. Every indication of lack of will reinforces the Russian conviction that the US and Europe lack the strength, resilience and resolve to defeat Russia.<sup>36</sup>

These anti-Ukraine and anti-Israel arguments alone should disqualify the idea of negotiation anytime soon.

Beyond these points the clamor for a negotiated end to fighting continually overlooks other fundamental and basic facts relevant to these wars, specifically:

- First, by invading Ukraine, Russia’s actions confirmed its disregard for its neighbors’ sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- Second, advocates of negotiations simply omit the fact that in invading Ukraine in 2014 and 2022 Russia deliberately and “with malice aforethought” broke eight international treaties and agreements that openly and fully acknowledged Ukraine’s territorial integrity and sovereignty.<sup>37</sup> Already by 2018, according to Ukrainian authorities, apart from these treaties Moscow had unilaterally broken almost 500 separate agreements with Ukraine.<sup>38</sup> When added to this the number of arms control agreements Russia has violated, e.g., its suspension of the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty, violation of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty, exiting the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), and the New START treaty,<sup>39</sup> all

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<sup>35</sup> Jeffrey D. McCausland, “Putin Chooses Between a Series of Bad Options,” *Parameters*, LII, No. 4, Winter 2022-23, pp. 20-21, available at <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters/vol52/iss4/9/>.

<sup>36</sup> Hans Peter Midtun, “[ukraineworld\_international] Situational Awareness - 20 November – E-mail communication, November 20, 2022.

<sup>37</sup> These are the Helsinki Treaty, the Tashkent Treaty of 1992 among former Soviet Republics recognizing their internal Soviet boundaries as international ones and their territorial integrity, the Budapest accords with the U.S., UK, Ukraine in 1994, the Russo-Ukrainian treaty of 1997, the Russo-Ukrainian treaty of 2010, the NATO-Russian Founding Act of 1997, and the UN Charter, and the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty.

<sup>38</sup> “Russia violates almost 500 agreements, treaties by annexation of Crimea,” UNIAN, June 4, 2018, available at <https://www.unian.info/politics/10072253-russia-violates-almost-500-agreements-treaties-by-annexation-of-crimea.html>.

<sup>39</sup> Humeyra Pamuk, “U.S. Says Russia Violating New START Nuclear Arms Control Treaty,” *Reuters*, January 31, 2023, available at <https://www.reuters.com/world/russia-not-complying-with-inspection-obligation-under-nuclear-arms-treaty-us-2023-01-31/>.

agreements with Russia, including arms control accords, are now utterly devalued.<sup>40</sup> Therefore on what basis do advocates of negotiations with Russia believe that Russia will adhere to any agreement's terms?

- Third, Russia's crimes against international law and Ukraine oblige us to reject the idea that Ukraine either cannot, or worse, should not win because its victory runs directly counter to Western interests.
- Fourth, negotiations allow Putin to spin the war as some sort of victory and preserve Putinism in power while repressing indigenous Russian protest movements, an outcome incompatible with U.S. interests and values. Putin's anti-Western conviction stands behind him and the government's determination to fight to the bitter end in the misplaced and deluded belief that Russia's willingness to suffer, i.e., willingness to impose further suffering on Russia and Ukraine, will allow it ultimately to prevail.<sup>41</sup> Hamas too, shares much of this mentality.<sup>42</sup> Consequently, moving to negotiations now will reinforce their deep-rooted belief in their superiority due to their willingness to suffer. On that basis the United States could then expect stronger and growing strategic-ideological bonds among these hostile powers.
- Fifth, that denouement also ensures that the Kremlin's multi-domain war against the West that has continued since 2005 and the first, abortive, Russian effort to subvert Ukrainian independence, will receive a reprieve and new lease on life.<sup>43</sup> Russia already claims that this is a war against the West, not just Ukraine. Therefore, this war justifies the global deployment of all the instruments of power to resist the West and assert Russia's God-given global great power status.
- Sixth, calls for negotiations completely ignore Russia's already stated terms for negotiation in December, 2021 that would undermine Ukrainian independence and integrity, repudiate NATO's ability to defend its members, and preserve Russia's unlimited freedom of action in its sphere of interest even as it wages a multi-domain war against the West.<sup>44</sup> Those ridiculous terms were non-starters then and

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<sup>40</sup> "Russia Mulls Banning US Nuclear Arms Inspections—Source," *RIA Novosti*, March 9, 2014, available at <http://www.en.ria.ru/military>; Mark B. Schneider, "Confirmation of Russian Violation and Circumvention of the INF Treaty," *Information Series*, No. 360 (Fairfax, VA: National Institute Press, February 2014).

<sup>41</sup> McCausland, op. cit., p. 26

<sup>42</sup> "How Hamas frames the civilian casualties of war in Gaza," *CNN*, November 6, 2023, available at <https://www.cnn.com/videos/world/2023/11/06/the-lead-protectors-call-for-ceasefire.cnn>.

<sup>43</sup> M.A. Gareyev, *Srazheniya na Voenno-Istoricheskom Fronte*, Moscow: ISAN Press, 2010, p. 729 cited in MG I.N. Vorob'ev (RET) and Col. V.A. Kisel'ev (Ret), "Strategies of Destruction and Attrition," Moscow, *Military Thought*, in English, No. 1, 2014, January 1-2014-March 31, 2014.

<sup>44</sup> "The Foreign Ministry Called the Conditions For a Dialogue With the West To Reduce Tensions," October 30, 2022, available at <https://ria.ru/20221030/dialog-1827881114.html>; Françoise Thom, "What Does the Russian Ultimatum to the West Mean?," December 30, 2021, available at <https://en.desk-russie.eu/2021/12/30/what-does-the-russian-ultimatum.html>; Oleg Ladogin, "Putin's Message: Peace At the Expense Of Russia and On the Ruins Of Russia Is Over," December 22, 2021, available at <https://russtrat.ru/analytics/22-dekabrya-2021-0010-7741>; Statement by the Russian Foreign Ministry On the Dialogue With the United States and Other Western Countries Regarding the Development of

unacceptable as a basis for negotiation before the war. Now that Russia is losing the war, or is at least stalemated, it is inconceivable that those terms can furnish a basis for a new negotiation.

- Seventh, those urging negotiations who fear that a Ukrainian victory that restores its territorial integrity and full sovereignty is either impossible or risks escalation implicitly contradict themselves. The evidence of declining Russian military capability, even as Moscow has readjusted its tactics, is multiplying. Numerous accounts of plummeting morale and mounting casualties within the armed forces cannot be hidden.<sup>45</sup> Neither is it possible to simply disregard the intensifying crisis within Russian defense industry that has forced Putin to urge it to do more to bring more missiles to the front and Russia's resort to Iran and North Korea for arms.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, as former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson observed, every time people said that new weapons for Ukraine would trigger escalation, they were wrong.<sup>47</sup>
- Eighth, for obvious and convergent moral and strategic reasons the Russian army cannot be allowed to climb back into the ring. As many have noted, doing so puts not only Ukraine but all of European security at risk. Indeed, it should be clear from this war that the continuation in power of Putinism (i.e., not only Putin but his system) puts international security at risk. Here we must grasp that a Russian victory in Ukraine places not only Europe but the entire post-Soviet order at risk including Belarus, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. Thus, the precondition for European, Eurasian, and international security is foreclosure of Russia's imperial option. That entails winning an unmistakable and decisive victory in Ukraine and then fully integrating it into European political, economic, and security structures like the EU and NATO.
- Ninth, beyond these strategic, political, and moral considerations, advocates for negotiations largely misread this war and its accompanying crisis. This appears in their implicit argument that neither Ukraine nor the West, primarily Washington, can deter Russia, while Moscow can escalate with at least some measure of impunity. This argument leaves the field open to Moscow and its unrelenting threats of nuclear escalation even if they are increasingly unbelievable and unlikely due to Chinese and

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Security Guarantees," December 10, 2021, available at [https://mid.ru/ru/press\\_service/spokesman/official\\_statement/1789855/](https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/spokesman/official_statement/1789855/).

<sup>45</sup> Karolina Hird, Riley Bailey, Grace Mappes, Madison Williams, Yekaterina Klepanchuk, and Frederick W. Kagan, "Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, November 16," November 16, 2022, available at <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-november-16>.

<sup>46</sup> "Meeting With Members Of the Government Coordination Council On the Needs Of the Russian Armed Forces," October 25, 2022, available at <http://www.en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/69676>; Lara Jakes and Marc Santora, "How Was Russia Able to Launch Its Biggest Aerial Attack on Ukraine?," *The New York Times*, November 18, 2022, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/18/us/politics/ukraine-russia-missiles.html>.

<sup>47</sup> Tatiana Vorozhko, "Every Time We Said That New Weapons For Kyiv could Lead To Escalation, We Were Wrong – Boris Johnson In Washington," *Voice of America*, January 31, 2023, available at <https://ukrainian.voanews.com>.

global opposition as well as Western capabilities.<sup>48</sup> This view also ignores the remonstrations made by Western governments to Moscow concerning the consequences of nuclear use.<sup>49</sup> It also surrenders escalation control by conventional means to Moscow while repudiating the whole idea of Western escalation or escalation control within a purely conventional context.

The arguments for negotiations now also contend that Western, and especially U.S. nuclear weapons, will not be used or factor into Russian decision-making. This, too, is inherently false. Moscow has shunned escalation to the nuclear level precisely due to its awareness of Western capabilities and Western diplomatic contacts with it.<sup>50</sup> Thus, this argument for negotiation based on the outsized fear of deliberate Russian nuclear escalation clearly flies in the face of well-established facts.

These facts alone render such arguments dubious if not invalid. Nevertheless, their continuing prevalence betrays a fear of U.S. power that leaves the initiative regarding escalation in Putin's hands and is apparently based more on an indiscriminate fear of nuclear weapons than sound strategic analysis or thinking.

This argument also confirms to Putin that Russia's nuclear threats continue to inhibit Western responses to Russia's aggression and are therefore useful to him.<sup>51</sup> While the credibility of Russian nuclear threats remains a matter for rigorous assessment given the contradictory statements emanating from Moscow and cannot be taken lightly, the question here is whether these calls for negotiation rather than victory truly serve either the American/Western or Ukrainian interest.<sup>52</sup> Given recent official Russian statements dismissing the use of nuclear weapons and foreign resistance to such escalation, the argument based on the West's fear of escalation has evidently lost much of its credibility because it is based on dubious assumptions.<sup>53</sup> Yet it continues.

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<sup>48</sup> Pavel K. Baev, "Putin's Nuclear Blackmail Hits US Resolve and Chinese Wall," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, November 21, 2022, available at <https://jamestown.org/program/putins-nuclear-blackmail-hits-us-resolve-and-chinese-wall/>.

<sup>49</sup> Chloe Folmar, "US Has Privately Warned Russia Of Consequences Of Using a Nuclear Weapon," *The Hill*, September 23, 2022, available at <https://thehill.com/policy/international/3657842-us-has-privately-warned-russia-of-consequences-of-using-a-nuclear-weapon/>.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Stephen Blank, "Russian Nuclear Strategy In the Ukraine War: An Interim Report," *Information Series*, No. 525 (Fairfax, VA: National Institute Press, June 15, 2022), available at <https://nipp.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/IS-525.pdf>.

<sup>52</sup> Helene Cooper, Julian E. Barnes, and Eric Schmitt, "Russian Military Leaders Discussed Use of Nuclear Weapons, U.S. Officials Say," *The New York Times*, November 2, 2022, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/02/us/politics/russia-ukraine-nuclear-weapons.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pgtype=Article>.

"Vladimir Putin Meets With Members of the Valdai Discussion Club. Transcript of the Plenary Session Of the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting," October 27, 2022, available at <https://valdaiclub.com/events/posts/articles/vladimir-putin-meets-witmembers-of-the-valdai-club/>.

<sup>53</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, "Statement of the Russian Federation on the Prevention of Nuclear War," November 2, 2022, available at [https://www.mid.ru/ru/press\\_service/spokesman/official\\_statement/1836575/](https://www.mid.ru/ru/press_service/spokesman/official_statement/1836575/).

Finally, the domestic argument that we should sacrifice Ukraine to the priority Chinese threat (an argument with long antecedents among some conservative Republicans<sup>54</sup>), overlooks the fact that a clear defeat of Russia might engender domestic upheaval in Russia, inhibit Chinese threats against Taiwan, and have comparable repercussions in Iran and North Korea. Similarly, an Israeli victory enhances deterrence throughout the Middle East against Iran and its proxies. Indeed, Russia's profound miscalculations and lackluster conduct of the war have arguably already inhibited China's aggressive plans while also galvanizing America's allies in both Asia and Europe.<sup>55</sup> Thus, support for Ukraine must be seen as an investment in peace, not some unmerited extravagance.<sup>56</sup>

## Conclusions

The arguments for pressuring Ukraine and Israel to desist and/or negotiate due to Western impatience or fear of escalation are unfounded and often based on distortion of the facts. Indeed, this advocacy of negotiations is fundamentally unrealistic. This does not mean the United States can simply dismiss calls for negotiations or label Russian nuclear threats as literally incredible. But it does mean that the current arguments for negotiation stem from unwarranted assumptions and ignorance of reality. While negotiations backed by the West may at some point become desirable in either or both these wars, this is not that time. Putin, Hamas, and other Arab leaders, including the Palestinian Authority are not interested in negotiating.<sup>57</sup> Instead, given the nature of these wars and the affinities and linkages between Hamas and Russia, in these wars there really is no substitute for victory.

Instead, the United States must plan for and show strong support for a Ukrainian victory – i.e., restoration of its sovereignty and full territorial integrity, economic reconstruction, and integration into the EU and NATO. Only that posture can ensure not only Ukraine's but also European security far into the future. Such opportunities to take giant steps to enhance international security as are now possible rarely occur. Indeed, Russia's criminal aggression against Ukraine and military failures offer the West a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reshape European and international security. Moreover, it is increasingly urgent to take advantage of the challenge posed by Russia's aggression sooner rather than later. As knowledgeable observers know, only the decisive defeat of Russia can bring peace to Ukraine and Europe and offer Russia the chance to reclaim its European vocation.

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<sup>54</sup> Nigel Hamilton, *The Mantle Of Command: FDR At War, 1941-42*, New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014.

<sup>55</sup> "Ukraine War Forcing China To Rethink 'How and When' It May Invade Taiwan, CIA Chief Says," *The Guardian*, July 21, 2022, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/21/ukraine-war-forcing-china-to-rethink-how-and-when-it-may-invade-taiwan-cia-chief-says>.

<sup>56</sup> Anthony Cordesman, *The Lasting Strategic Impact Of the War In Ukraine*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2023, available at [https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2023-07/230705\\_Cordesman\\_StrategicImpact\\_WarUkraine.pdf?VersionId=DbYdDMdHvBcZ5wfVhMkBQXWA39GRRMYJ](https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2023-07/230705_Cordesman_StrategicImpact_WarUkraine.pdf?VersionId=DbYdDMdHvBcZ5wfVhMkBQXWA39GRRMYJ).

<sup>57</sup> John J. Sullivan, "Opinion: A Diplomatic Charade: An Eye-Opening Account Of US Negotiations With Russia," CNN, February 20, 2023, available at <https://www.cnn.com/2023/02/20/opinions/us-ambassador-russia-invasion-negotiate-sullivan-ctrp/index.html>.

Likewise, Israeli victory alone opens the way to a broader peace process in the Middle East and deterrence of Iran and its proxies while negotiations are a mirage that only perpetuate and justify further aggressions and terrorism.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, it is imperative to seize the day and not be fooled by the mirage of negotiations that would only compromise U.S. interests. This is the only true “Realist” approach with any chance of success. A genuine realism should be made of sterner stuff.

*Stephen Blank is Senior Fellow with the Foreign Policy Research Institute. This article is adapted from a speech he delivered at Tulane University in November 2023.*

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<sup>58</sup> Mary Glantz, “Ukraine: A Real Peace Will Require Change from Russia,” United States Institute of Peace, January 26, 2023, available at <https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/01/ukraine-real-peace-will-require-change-russia>.



## INTERVIEWS

As part of its continuing effort to provide readers with unique perspectives on some of the most significant national security issues of our time, National Institute has conducted a series of interviews with key subject matter experts on a variety of contemporary defense and national security topics. These expert views add important perspectives on current debates and how the United States can best prepare to address forthcoming challenges successfully. In this issue of National Institute's *Journal of Policy & Strategy*, we present an interview with Hon. Franklin Miller, Principal, the Scowcroft Group, and a Commissioner on the congressionally mandated 2023 Strategic Posture Commission, and Dr. Nadia Schadlow, Senior Fellow, Hudson Institute and former Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategy. Mr. Miller discusses key findings in the bipartisan Commission's recently released consensus report on America's strategic posture, including the imperative of proceeding with a timely nuclear weapons modernization program and communicating to the U.S. public the vital national interests at stake in the worsening threat environment. This interview was conducted in November 2023. Dr. Schadlow discusses the dangerous changes in the international strategic environment and the relative decline in American power over the past several decades. She also comments on the Biden Administration's *2022 National Security Strategy* and how it differs from the Trump Administration's *2017 National Security Strategy*.

### **An Interview with Hon. Franklin C. Miller\* Principal, the Scowcroft Group and a Commissioner on the congressionally mandated 2023 Strategic Posture Commission**

***Q. Regarding the findings of the Commission, what are the most important developments in U.S. thinking and/or policy regarding: deterrence; extended deterrence; and the U.S. force posture, including Integrated Air and Missile Defence (IAMD)?***

I believe there are several extremely important findings:

- First, international developments and the increased threat require the United States on an urgent basis to recognize that we now have to deter Russia and China simultaneously.
- Second, we need to realize that the strategic modernization program is necessary but not sufficient and that in the out years (mid-2030s and beyond), unless the threat picture improves dramatically, we will need to procure additional (i.e., more than

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\* This interview is adapted from, "Conversations on National Security: An Interview with Hon. Franklin C. Miller," *Information Series*, No. 573 (Fairfax, VA: National Institute Press, January 22, 2024), available at [https://nipp.org/information\\_series/conversations-on-national-security-the-honorable-franklin-c-miller-no-573-january-22-2024/](https://nipp.org/information_series/conversations-on-national-security-the-honorable-franklin-c-miller-no-573-january-22-2024/).





twelve) Columbia Ballistic Missile Submarines (SSBNs), additional B-21s, and additional Long-Range Stand-Off Weapons (LRSOs).

- Third, in a change to U.S. policy of many decades, the Commission found that the United States needs to deploy an IAMD to deter and protect the U.S. homeland against limited “coercive” strikes by Russia and/or China. If adopted by the administration this would be the first time the United States would seek to deter and defend the homeland against ballistic or cruise missile attacks by Russia and China.
- Fourth, the Commission report highlights the need to modernize the infrastructure of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) production complex and of the U.S. defense industrial base.
- All of the above said, there are 81 recommendations in the report and I believe all of them point to steps the United States must take in the near future to enhance deterrence and reduce the possibility of aggression and war.

***Q. What is the most important message articulated in the report?***

- The most important message is that the world has become a much more dangerous place over the past 10-15 years and that as a result the United States must recognize this and take urgent steps to enhance deterrence.
- A second message is that America’s leaders in both the Executive and Legislative branches need to inform the American people of the changes in the world described immediately above. Part of that message must include the fact that just as we are vital to our allies’ security so too are they vital to our security.

***Q. What do you see as the critical “to do’s” for implementing the Commission’s recommendations?***

- If the Commission’s recommendations are to be implemented, they need to be embraced by institutions which can make things happen. We have seen some enthusiasm from the Hill, from the Armed Services Committees on a bi-partisan basis. We have not had any official reaction from the administration. Speaking bureaucratically, writing “policy” (while often painful) is easy compared to implementing that policy. We need to have the administration and the Hill step up.

***Q. What would be the consequences of a failure to implement the Commission’s recommendations?***

- The Commission is clear that if its recommendations are not acted upon the United States will see a continued diminishment of its ability to deter aggression against itself and its allies.

***Q. How do the Commission’s conclusions compare to those of the 2022 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR)?***

- In general, the Commission report is more robust than the 2022 NPR. That is certainly the case with respect to the urgency of the threat (and of the need to deter Russia and China simultaneously) and the need to expand the modernization program in the out years. On missile defense, the Report goes well beyond the 2022 NPR/*Missile Defense Review* by recommending a major shift in U.S. policy and calls for IAMD deployments to support that.

***Q. Critics of the report at the Federation of American Scientists claim that implementing the Commission's recommendations would “likely kick the arms race into an even higher gear.” How would you respond to these charges?***

- Those charges stem from what the late Ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick dubbed the “Blame America First” school and are risible. Russia has been fielding modernized nuclear forces since around 2008 and continues to do so. China has been fielding new nuclear systems for at least the past five years. The U.S. modernization program has not fielded a new nuclear system since the late 1980s/early 1990s. To the degree there is a nuclear arms race today it exists between Russia and China; the United States has not even entered the race. Only in Russian and Chinese propaganda and within the “Blame America First” school could one characterize the U.S. effort to modernize our forces due to increasing age and the actions by the other two as “starting a nuclear arms race.” It’s truly a “through the looking glass” charge.

***Q. Why did the Commission recommend moving all “050” programs that are in NNSA under Defense appropriations subcommittees (House Appropriations Committee-Defense (HAC-D), Senate Appropriations Committee-Defense (SAC-D))?***

- The Commission believes that the expertise of the Senate and House Energy and Water Committees resides with energy and water programs—not nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons are part of our national defense, a subject under the auspices of the Senate and House Defense Appropriations Committees. The Commission believes therefore that the SAC-D and HAC-D are best equipped to deal with Department of Energy “050” programs.

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**An Interview with  
Dr. Nadia Schadlow  
Senior Fellow, Hudson Institute and former Deputy  
National Security Advisor for Strategy**

***Q. How do you assess the changes in the international strategic environment that have occurred over the past few decades? Is the United States facing a more or less dangerous strategic situation and are we better prepared now to confront likely security challenges in the future?***

A. Over the past few decades, the international strategic environment has shifted - to the detriment of the United States. U.S. relative power has declined, and some of the key “foundations” of American strength have eroded. These erosions include, for example, the lack of manufacturing in this country, the continuing decline in America’s public schools, and the difficulty of getting our defense establishment to make the reforms needed to absorb the innovations that abound in the private sector... and more.<sup>1</sup>

These trends are juxtaposed with the relative economic and military growth of China since its accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), the proliferation of increasingly potent weapon systems around the world, and most recently, the determination of countries like Russia, China, Iran and North Korea to collude against the United States to challenge our interests and create dilemmas for us around the world. Today, relatively small armed groups such as the Houthis, with a handful of missiles, can wreak havoc on international shipping.

I am not sure that there is a great deal of disagreement over this observation of relative U.S. decline. It has been several years since the National Defense Panel pointed out that U.S. military superiority had “eroded to a dangerous degree.”<sup>2</sup> Policy makers from the left and from the right concur.

Disagreements, however, do rest in identifying the drivers of this decline. This is where the policy differences emerge. So, for example, those on the left will blame problems on “systemic racism,” climate change, and too much defense spending—assessments which then lead to a wrong set of policy choices. Most Republicans would argue that the problems are due to a lack of economic opportunity, the need for sensible energy policies, bloated entitlements, and a weaker defense enterprise.

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<sup>1</sup> For over twenty years alarm has been raised. See this 2003 essay: Paul E. Peterson, “The Decline and Fall of American Education,” *Hoover Digest*, The Hoover Institution, available at <https://www.hoover.org/research/decline-and-fall-american-education>. Also see this 2023 commentary: George F. Will, “Why K-12 education’s alarming decline could be a dominant 2024 issue,” *The Washington Post*, June 28, 2023, available at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/06/28/education-decline-campaign-issue/>. More examples abound.

<sup>2</sup> National Defense Strategy Commission, *Providing for the Common Defense: The Assessments and Recommendations of the National Defense Strategy Commission*, United States Institute of Peace, November 13, 2018, p. v, available at <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2018-11/providing-for-the-common-defense.pdf>.

Fifteen years ago, in 2009, Charles Krauthammer gave a speech: “Decline is a Choice.”<sup>3</sup> In it he offered that “nothing is inevitable. Nothing is written. For America today, decline is not a condition. Decline is a choice.” But he also noted that “facing the choice of whether to maintain our dominance or to gradually, deliberately, willingly, and indeed relievedly give it up, we are currently on a course towards the latter.” Are we? And if so, what are the consequences?

Currently, we are debating the nature of American dominance and strength and specifically, the degree to which that strength is linked to maintaining a leading role abroad. Does the United States need to shape international developments, or should we just be prepared to react to them?

Even if we could agree on the need for a path of sustainable growth and American strength, and we elect the right people to drive the right policies, actually getting things done remains hard. Any description of what we are facing must be paired with an assessment of whether we are able to craft and implement effective policies. On the latter, I’m worried. For example, we have seen well over 150 efforts on “acquisition reform.” Yet recommendations go unimplemented. Schools have been getting worse and presidents have lamented that for over two decades.

The sclerosis of government is a big problem and one which has gotten worse. We need to shift our focus from “new ideas” to understanding why past efforts at reform have failed.

Having said that, it is difficult to win from a position of doom. Thus, I like to remind myself of Samuel Huntington’s observation from the late 1980s: “Declinism is a theory that has to be believed to be invalidated.”<sup>4</sup> We need to believe we are on the cusp of it, and change course.

***Q. You have argued that the United States often fails to effectively implement its strategy and achieve its objectives “because we’ve failed to take into account the crucial element of time.” You have also noted that “Without incorporating time into our strategic calculations, we will always be too late.” Can you explain what you mean and what you believe the United States should do to avoid such an outcome in the future? <sup>5</sup>***

A. The essay in which I made that point, *The Forgotten Element of Strategy*, argued that we can no longer live off of the effectiveness of past generations: on the accomplishments of leaders and individuals who set forth ideas and were able to bring them to fruition, whether in building America’s national highway system, developing a nuclear arsenal, teaching children how to read, or putting Americans into space. In the past, leaders were encouraged to take risks; they were not suffocated by an overwhelming bureaucratic and regulatory system and culture.

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<sup>3</sup> Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3jrrFycd3Y>.

<sup>4</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, “The U.S.—Decline or Renewal?” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol 67, No. 2 (Winter 1988), p. 96.

<sup>5</sup> Note that portions of this answer are taken from that essay, available at <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2023/06/us-national-security-strategy-pentagon-time/674472/>.

One anecdote I like is about Col. Leslie Groves. Groves would later become a general officer and lead the Manhattan project. (He has a brief appearance in the Oppenheimer film). When Groves was in charge of building the Pentagon, he was known as the “biggest S.O.B. around,” someone who “had the guts to make difficult decisions” and demanded decisions in 24 hours or less—or an explanation. Can you imagine a Human Resources department today dealing with that type of leader? Are there many leaders today who have the authority to drive real change and have the backing of their superiors? If one goes back to most examples of America’s greatest moments, it is that kind of atmosphere that prevailed. Today, that’s much harder to find, especially in government.

The United States, for example, maintains that a key part of the effort to help Taiwan deter China is to provide Taiwan with the military equipment it needs. We do this through Foreign Military Sales (FMS). Yet in this critical theater of the world, Taiwan still waits years for the weapons systems it has been promised, which in turns degrades their deterrent effects. There is a three-year backlog in the delivery of \$14.2 billion worth of military equipment, including everything from F-16 fighters to the components needed for Patriot missile systems.<sup>6</sup> Sales of the F-16s were approved in 2019 but Taipei does not expect delivery until 2026.<sup>7</sup> DoD has blamed the backlog on Covid,<sup>8</sup> but delays like these have been problematic for years, all around the world.

The need to act faster has only become more important given the intense competition between the United States and China, in which our freedom is at stake. Technological advances will only increase the disconnect between what we promise and what we actually accomplish. Technology now disrupts existing political, economic, and regulatory architectures faster than they can be rebuilt. The ability to shift supply chains to improve U.S. resilience and reduce our vulnerabilities depends upon our ability to build manufacturing facilities faster, and more of them.

The data, while imperfect, exists today to allow the input of time as a consideration in a way that was not possible in the past. How long has it taken to develop a particular weapon system? How long has it taken to build a new recycling facility? How many regulations come into play for the permitting of a new mine? Requiring the input of such data forces an injection of realism onto the policy process. If we are naïve or willfully ignorant about time as an input, the promises of policy makers are in effect, hollow. On the international stage, this means disappointment, and on the domestic stage, it leads to disappointment and cynicism in our democracy.

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<sup>6</sup> Bryant Harris, “Taiwan is buying US weapons, but Washington isn’t delivering them,” *Defense News*, August 30, 2022, available at <https://www.defensenews.com/congress/2022/08/25/chinas-neighbors-are-buying-us-weapons-washington-isnt-delivering/>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Bryant Harris, “Document reveals \$14 billion backlog of US defense transfers to Taiwan,” *Defense News*, April 14, 2022, available at <https://www.defensenews.com/pentagon/2022/04/14/pandemic-delays-spark-14-billion-backlog-of-us-defense-transfers-to-taiwan/>.

***Q. U.S. officials have referred to China as the “pacing challenge” to the United States today. How big of a threat to U.S. security is China? And is Russia today as much of a threat to the West as the Soviet Union was then?***

A. China is the most pressing challenge for the United States—not the only one but perhaps the most complex given our economic interdependence. As the 2017 *National Security Strategy* (NSS) noted, China seeks to displace the United States in the Indo-Pacific and expand the reaches of its state-driven economic model. Biden was right to call China the most “consequential” threat to the United States. As is now well-appreciated, China is competing militarily, economically, and technologically. Its technological ambitions are inextricably linked to the development of its military. Its diplomatic overtures around the world are a problem too, because these efforts are fundamentally rooted in an ideology that aims to directly counter the American system. We are in a systemic rivalry with China—the President of the European Union (EU) was right to call it that.<sup>9</sup> Russia doesn’t offer much of a model for anyone; nor does Iran or North Korea. But China, even as it is now struggling with lower rates of growth and facing economic difficulties, fundamentally offers other countries an alternative form of governance—an orderly, techno-authoritarian system. This ideological component of the competition worries me because it comes at a time when so many American leaders continue to sow doubts about the United States and to divide our society into ever more granular (and often absurd) racial, ethnic, and religious differences—as opposed to what binds us together as Americans, as citizens of the country that has flourished on the basis of liberty and that, while imperfect, has been among the greatest forces for good in the world.

***Q. What are some elements that you might change in the 2017 National Security Strategy? How did the Biden Administration’s 2022 National Security Strategy differ? It acknowledges the threats to U.S. interests posed by both China and Russia. But its prescriptions and recommendations for dealing with these dual challenges appear to diverge significantly from the 2017 document that you helped to prepare. How do you assess the Biden Administration’s national security approach? Is it sufficient to ensure that the United States remains the dominant power in the world?***

A. Virtually all of the policy issues and lines of effort identified in the 2017 *National Security Strategy* still hold. The four pillars of that strategy—protect the homeland, grow the American economy, preserve peace through strength, and advance American influence—remain sound and provide a basis for specific operational lines of effort. Of course, the issue is the specific policies undertaken within each broad strategic pillar. In this case, too, much of the Trump plan was correct and remains so. Protecting the homeland requires not only increased funding for missile defenses but also a crackdown on our border—sovereignty

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<sup>9</sup> Today, I’d add the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP’s) displacement objectives may indeed be broader than the Indo-Pacific.

matters. On growing the American economy, reducing taxes and regulatory burdens remain critical, as does the position of the United States (then) as a net energy exporter—which makes it economically and geostrategically strong. The Trump strategy highlighted the importance of U.S. energy dominance and used that phrase. The 2017 NSS also highlighted the importance of hard power and advocated for a larger military and greater defense spending. On advancing American influence, the acknowledgement was the United States can catalyze developments but can't do everything itself. But it did acknowledge unabashedly that the United States is the greatest nation out there. On many of these issues, the Biden policy has drifted from these policy prescriptions. While the Biden NSS does highlight China as a key threat, elevating climate issues as an existential threat creates inherent tensions and reduces the focus on China. The Biden strategy deemphasizes the importance of hard power and elevates multilateral processes and institutions. And most recently, the Biden Administration has taken steps to slow or halt the ability of the United States to export liquefied natural gas (LNG) from new projects. This reduces a key source of economic strength for the United States and ignores the fundamental disconnects in a Biden climate strategy that is focused on wishful thinking as opposed to the practical reality of how to achieve a sensible energy transition.

One of the key geopolitical shifts since the 2017 strategy, however, is the growing collusion among Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea. It is real and it is worrying and will shape geopolitical events that will be problematic for the United States in the near and longer term. This development will need to be addressed in a future strategy.



## THE SIZE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RUSSIAN NUCLEAR STOCKPILE

*The remarks below were delivered at a symposium on “The Size and Characteristics of the Russian Nuclear Stockpile” hosted by the National Institute for Public Policy on September 27, 2023. The symposium keyed off an Occasional Paper by National Institute’s Senior Analyst Mark Schneider that examined widely published Western estimates of Russia’s nuclear arsenal and whether those estimates reflect an accurate picture of Russia’s nuclear capabilities.*

**David J. Trachtenberg**

***Vice President of the National Institute for Public Policy and former Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy***

As I noted in the invitation to this webinar, this discussion will highlight a recent National Institute *Occasional Paper* by Mark Schneider, which argues that the size and composition of Russia’s nuclear weapons arsenal—both strategic and non-strategic forces—may be significantly larger and more capable than is generally assumed. Further, the unclassified estimates often cited in the Western press regarding Russia’s nuclear stockpile—estimates that are generally accepted uncritically—may substantially undercount Russia’s actual arsenal and, in doing so, may have the effect of diminishing or eroding support in the United States for the required nuclear modernization efforts necessary to strengthen deterrence.

This latter point, I believe, is especially important, as underestimating the size and characteristics of Russia’s nuclear force may lead U.S. policymakers to make decisions about U.S. nuclear strategy, nuclear force programs, or arms control proposals, that are not necessarily in the best security interests of the country and may risk undermining the effective functioning of deterrence. In today’s highly volatile international security environment, this could have dangerous consequences.

Indeed, for more than three years there have been no on-site inspections as required under the New START Treaty; therefore, it is not possible to say with any degree of certainty that Russia is in compliance with the treaty’s numerical ceilings. If Russian force loadings exceed the number of “accountable” systems under the treaty, then that carries significant implications for deterrence, especially if Russia believes it enjoys an exploitable advantage that encourages provocation. The implications of this for NATO and the assurance of allies, and for the credibility of the U.S. extended deterrent, are also significant.

As Mark’s comprehensive report demonstrates, the estimates of Russian nuclear forces often cited by Western sources are highly questionable at best, often lacking credible sourcing and making certain assumptions regarding force loadings that may not reflect reality. In fact, the report contends that Russia probably has substantial advantages in both strategic and non-strategic or tactical nuclear forces and that the most commonly cited unclassified Western estimates of Russia’s nuclear forces likely underestimate Russia’s nuclear capabilities by a significant margin and may lead to a false sense of security.





The report is meticulously detailed, citing numerous Russian sources and experts who openly state that Russia's nuclear forces may be substantially greater than Western estimates suggest. It concludes that "a sober public understanding of the threat is necessary" to ensure the United States can adequately develop and deploy the capabilities necessary to deter and defend against adversaries.<sup>1</sup>

The study also concludes with a stark warning. It states: "It is unclear if the United States can successfully deter Russian nuclear escalation under plausible circumstances if Russia has such a large quantitative and qualitative advantage in nuclear weapons."<sup>2</sup> An imbalance in nuclear capabilities is important, the study notes, "because it almost certainly shapes Russian decision-making regarding nuclear employment."<sup>3</sup> And it states that "Putin's decision to introduce the use of nuclear weapons potentially could turn on his perception of the scope of Russia's nuclear advantage and options, which involve very large asymmetries in numbers, modernization and force diversity."<sup>4</sup>

Given the possibility of Russian nuclear escalation in connection with Moscow's ongoing war against Ukraine, this is a sobering conclusion.

The study is posted on our website. At more than 230 pages, it is the most comprehensive treatment of this important issue that I have seen and, I would argue, is critically important now, when the issue of nuclear weapons and the potential for nuclear use is of growing concern, and when the requirements for effective deterrence are more complicated in a world of not one, but two nuclear peer competitors.

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### **Mark B. Schneider**

***Senior Analyst with the National Institute for Public Policy and former Principal Director for Forces Policy in the Office of the Secretary of Defense***

In light of Russia's vicious war against Ukraine, its constant nuclear threats, and the Biden Administration's announcement that it will *not* maintain nuclear parity with Russia and China, an accurate assessment of the balance of nuclear weapons is critical.

Nuclear warhead numbers are important because they shape: 1) what type of nuclear strategy and target coverage is possible, 2) the damage expectancy that can be achieved, and 3) the ability to penetrate or saturate defenses.

Since the 1990s, the USG has said little to the public about the scope and details of Russian nuclear capability and very little information was released under the New START Treaty. The last official USG estimate of the total number of Russian nuclear weapons (4,000-6,500) dates from 2012. Public statements involve only ominous one-liners. For example:

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<sup>1</sup> Mark B. Schneider, *How Many Nuclear Weapons Does Russia Have? The Size and Characteristics of the Russian Nuclear Stockpile, Occasional Paper*, Vol, 3, No. 8 (Fairfax, VA: National Institute Press, August 2023), p. 232.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 231.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.232.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

- “Russia maintains the largest and most capable nuclear weapons stockpile, and it continues to expand and modernize its nuclear weapons capabilities.” – Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines, February 2023.
- “Russia is also modernizing and expanding its nuclear arsenal.” – Secretary of Defense. Lloyd Austin in December 2022.

This was echoed by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg who, in June 2023, stated, “...Russia has modernised [its] nuclear weapons, deployed more nuclear weapons...”

An internet search for the number of Russian nuclear weapons will reveal, courtesy of the Federation of American Scientists (FAS), that Russia has approximately 5,977 nuclear weapons. Suggesting this level of accuracy is misleading, since Russia may have about six thousand weapons but it is also possible that it may have about double that number, and the Russian force is increasing.

The FAS supports what it calls “minimal deterrence” and opposes most U.S. nuclear modernization and the Triad; hence, it has an incentive to minimize public awareness of the scope and capability of Russian nuclear forces.

The annual FAS report on Russian nuclear weapons is obviously the product of much research. However, its numbers that much of the media treats as fact are largely undocumented, and I do not believe for most of them that such documentation exists.

The FAS “Russian nuclear forces” chart, which is frequently cited, appears to be a combination of the authors estimates of: 1) the maximum upload capability of Russian strategic offensive forces, 2) either the total inventory or the number of “assigned” Russian non-strategic (or tactical) nuclear warheads, and 3) the number of Russian nuclear weapons awaiting dismantlement. This does not match the categories in U.S. announced nuclear weapons data – active, inactive and awaiting dismantlement.

It is clear that the FAS strategic force numbers are much less than Russia’s maximum potential and assume, with little justification, New START Treaty compliance.

The FAS warhead numbers for Russian ICBMs and SLBMs are mainly 15-30 year old START Treaty accountability numbers which do not always represent the maximum potential of the Soviet-era systems and mainly do not apply to post-Cold War systems. All of the post-Soviet Russian ICBMs and SLBMs can reportedly carry several times as many warheads than can possibly be deployed under New START – 6-10 for the SS-27 Mod 2/RS-24 Yars ICBM and the Bulava-30 SLBM. Ten warheads would require a new lighter and smaller reentry vehicle (RV). The Russian Layner/Liner reportedly can carry up to 12 nuclear warheads of existing types.

Russia has just announced it has deployed the new Sarmat heavy ICBM, probably prematurely. The FAS credits it with ten 500-kiloton warheads, about the same as it did with the Cold War-era Soviet SS-24 (not the RS-24/Yars) ICBM with about 40 percent of its throw-weight. According to *RT* (Russian state media), the Russian Ministry of Defense (MOD) said the “...Sarmat will be able to carry up to 20 warheads of small, medium and high power classes.” This apparently means 100-150-kt, 300-350-kt and 800-kt, respectively. The

reports of a 10-15 warhead capability refer to a much smaller version of the missile (100 vs. 200 tons) that was never built.

The FAS conclusion that Russia has only 200 deployed heavy bomber weapons is only about one-fourth of almost all estimates of Russian capability.

Because of the end of New START Treaty on-site inspections since March 2020, it is possible that Russian ICBMs and SLBMs have been covertly uploaded. In December 2019, former Under Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller warned that Russian upload capability was up to 1,000 warheads. I believe this number is quite low.

The desired Russian strategic nuclear warhead level may not be to the maximum possible warhead loadings, but it may be much higher than a New START Treaty-limited force. There was significant evidence of Russian cheating even before the end of New START Treaty-mandated on-site inspections. This involves both mobile ICBMs and long-range nuclear-capable air-launched cruise missiles on fighter aircraft and Backfire bombers. If these reports are true, Russian strategic nuclear forces are larger than the current high estimates.

In December 2017, Bill Gertz reported, "Russia is aggressively building up its nuclear forces and is expected to deploy a total force of 8,000 warheads by 2026.... The 8,000 warheads will include both large strategic warheads and thousands of new low-yield and very low-yield warheads to...support Moscow's new doctrine of using nuclear arms early in any conflict."<sup>5</sup> In August 2019, then-Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear Matters Rear Admiral (ret.) Peter Fanta stated that, "The Russians are going to 8,000 plus warheads."<sup>6</sup>

In September 2019, James R. Howe wrote that planned Russian strategic nuclear forces could carry between "2,976 WHs [warheads], and a maximum of 6,670 WHs" plus over 800 bomber weapons.<sup>7</sup> His estimates are the best that are available in open sources. He will present some updated numbers today.

In 2019, then-DIA Director Lt. General Robert P. Ashley observed that, "Russia has improved and expanded its production complex, which has the capacity to process thousands of warheads annually,"<sup>8</sup> which could almost support Cold War warhead levels.

Sergei Rogov has recently said Russia has about 6,000 strategic nuclear warheads. In 2018, Strategic Missile Troops (RVSN) commander Colonel General Karakayev suggested Russia had over 3,300 deployed strategic nuclear warheads.

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<sup>5</sup> Bill Gertz, "Russia Sharply Expanding Nuclear Arsenal, Upgrading Underground Facilities," *Washington Free Beacon*, December 13, 2017, available at <http://freebeacon.com/national-security/russia-sharply-expanding-nuclear-arsenal-upgrading-underground-facilities/>.

<sup>6</sup> Peter Fanta, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear Matters, speaking at the NWSC Crane Triad Symposium, August 23, 2019.

<sup>7</sup> James R. Howe, "Future Russian Strategic Nuclear and Non-Nuclear Forces: 2022," in Stephen J. Blank ed., *The Russian Military in Contemporary Perspective* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, September 2019), p. 358, available at <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/monographs/907/>.

<sup>8</sup> Robert P. Ashley Jr., "Russian and Chinese Nuclear Modernization Trends," Defense Intelligence Agency, May 29, 2019, available at <https://www.dia.mil/Articles/Speeches-andTestimonies/Article/1859890/russian-and-chinese-nuclearmodernization-trends/>.

Russia has a very diverse force of non-strategic or tactical nuclear weapons at least ten times greater than those of the United States and is now deploying nuclear-capable hypersonic missiles. The typically reported Russian number is 2,000, which the *2022 Nuclear Posture Review* (NPR) states counts only active warheads, a figure that can be much smaller than the total inventory.

Since 2005, Russia has consistently claimed a 75 percent reduction in its tactical nuclear weapons from late Soviet levels, which equates to 5,000 or more retained weapons. In 2014, *Pravda.ru* reported 5,000 tactical nuclear weapons, which it says was a “conservative” estimate. Dr. Philip Karber, President of the Potomac Foundation, has stated that roughly half of Russia’s 5,000 tactical nuclear weapons have been modernized with new sub-kiloton nuclear warheads for air defense, torpedoes and cruise missiles. In 2023, Dr. Karber wrote that Russia had 2,050 modern non-strategic nuclear warheads, including enhanced radiation warheads and weapons with yields as low as 20 tons of TNT.

In September 2022, *Politico* quoted a Biden Administration official as saying the Russians “...have warheads we call micro-nukes, with tens to hundreds of tons of explosive yield.”<sup>9</sup> Noted Russian journalist Pavel Felgenhauer reported Russia was developing them over 20 years ago.

In 2020, Ambassador Marshall Billingslea and, in 2021, then-Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General John Hyten both stated that Russia had thousands of low-yield nuclear weapons.

Russian sources have reported much higher numbers for its non-strategic nuclear weapons. For example, in April 2011, Colonel General (ret.) Viktor Yesin, a very well-connected former Chief of Staff of the Strategic Missile Forces, stated that estimates of the Russian tactical nuclear stockpile ranged from “tens of thousands to 4,000 - 4,500.”<sup>10</sup> At the time, the United States’ unclassified estimate was 2,000-4,000. Noted Russian journalist Pavel Felgenhauer has written that assessments of Russian non-strategic nuclear weapons range between several thousand and more than 10,000. He also said that the total Russian nuclear inventory may “...have more (maybe twice as many overall) than all the other official or unofficial nuclear powers taken together.”<sup>11</sup>

The higher estimates are important because, if correct, they could signal a shift toward substituting precision low-yield/low-collateral damage nuclear strikes for precision conventional strikes, which have not worked well for them in the Ukraine war.

In the 2022 NPR, the Biden Administration took action to reduce the U.S. nuclear deterrent and presented arms control as “the most effective, durable and responsible path

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<sup>9</sup> Bryan Bender, “U.S. Steps Up Intel, Surveillance after Putin’s Nuke Threats,” *Politico*, September 22, 2022, available at <https://www.politico.com/news/2022/09/27/putin-nuke-russiaukraine-intel-surveillance-00059020>.

<sup>10</sup> “Moscow, Washington Must Demonstrate Openness Regarding Nuclear Potentials – Expert,” *Interfax*, April 18, 2011, available at <https://wnc-eastview-com.mutex.gmu.edu/wnc/article?id=31236848>.

<sup>11</sup> Pavel Felgenhauer, “Putin Delivers More Restrained National Address as Moscow Announces Partial Troop Withdrawal,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 18, Iss. 65 (April 22, 2021), available at <https://jamestown.org/program/putin-delivers-more-restrained-national-address-as-moscow-announces-partial-troop-withdrawal/>.

to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our strategy and prevent their use.”<sup>12</sup> This is unrealistic because Russia has no intent to agree to a verifiable agreement that reduces nuclear weapons and has a terrible record of noncompliance with arms control obligations.

Arms control virtually guarantees undercounting Russian nuclear weapons because compliance issues are decided by the National Security Council (NSC), which makes them fundamentally different from routine intelligence and threat assessments and it appears to impact the information about Russian nuclear weapons numbers that is made public.

The low and largely undocumented FAS estimates of Russian nuclear capabilities appear to be aimed at justifying its arms control agenda. Misleading low numbers concerning Russian nuclear capability can reduce public and congressional support to sustain a credible U.S. nuclear Triad, which badly needs modernization against the unprecedented nuclear threats that the United States and its allies face today.

It is unclear if the United States can successfully deter Russian nuclear escalation *under all plausible circumstances* if Russia has a large quantitative and qualitative advantage in nuclear weapons, and the threat to U.S. national security will get worse with the rapid Chinese nuclear buildup.

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**James Howe**  
***President of Strategic Concepts and Analysis***

Russia’s objective is to achieve nuclear escalation dominance and ultimate victory. This objective guides Russian theater and strategic nuclear force development.

Following is an example of the type of nuclear escalation ladder Russia likely follows to guide theater and strategic nuclear force development, starting at the top and working down to the bottom rung of the escalation ladder. Self-interest dictates keeping force applied consistent with conflict objectives and minimizing collateral damage—but those considerations are ignored when Russia reaches the top rung of the escalation ladder.

1. Step 1 is integrated cyber/electromagnetic warfare and influence operations—these are integrated at all levels and used in peace and war, with the magnitude of use scenario dependent. All elements of national power are also applied as needed all along the escalation ladder.
2. Step 2 is to expand conventional global strike capability—air, ship, and submarines with long-range cruise missiles. Conventional ICBMs remain aspirational. The Russian long-range cruise missile (LRCM) performance in Ukraine shows severe reliability/survivability issues with up to 80-90 percent being intercepted. This raises questions about the true capability of Russia to develop a credible global conventional

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<sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *2022 Nuclear Posture Review* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, October 2022), p. 16, available at <https://media.defense.gov/2022/Oct/27/2003103845/-1/-1/1/2022-NATIONAL-DEFENSE-STRATEGY-NPR-MDR.PDF>.

strike capability and capacity that could pose a credible threat to the United States or other nations' major interests, much less vital or survival interests.

3. Step 3 is to develop policy (e.g., strategic operation for the destruction of critically important targets (SODCIT)) and capability for future theater and strategic nuclear warfare employing limited destruction but extensive nuclear attacks with accurate (<5 meters), low yield (<1 kt), clean (<10 percent fission) and tailored effects nuclear weapons (Neutron, EMP, X-Ray). Russia will continue to rely on theater and strategic nuclear weapons to deter, threaten, coerce, and employ in warfare to achieve national interests.
4. Step 4 is the modernization and expansion of current strategic nuclear forces to dominate any adversary. This will enable a major nuclear attack on adversary nuclear forces, bases, administrative/political centers, and war production capacity with the objective of victory. Within this step there are a number of execution options to keep force applied consistent with conflict objectives.
5. Step 5 is the threat or actual employment of terror weapons for intra-war deterrence, coercion, and if necessary, destruction of the adversary nation--militarily, politically, and economically, These terror weapons include:
  - a. Nuclear powered torpedoes with 100 MT warheads to destroy coastal cities, ports, and naval bases;
  - b. ICBMs with 50 MT warheads to precipitate geophysical damage, i.e., earthquakes and volcanic eruptions;
  - c. Unrestricted cyber-attacks to disrupt and physically destroy critical infrastructure;
  - d. Unrestricted use of super EMP attacks to destroy electronics (e.g., power grid) for the entire continental United States; and
  - e. Nuclear powered cruise missiles for nuclear or repeated high-power microwave (HPM) attacks.

Despite Russia's rhetoric concerning their goal to remain the dominant nuclear superpower, there are significant uncertainties as to Russia's future strategic nuclear forces (SNF). Some considerations are:

- a. The numbers, types, and capabilities of future Russian SNF required for new missions enabled by advanced technologies, such as improved accuracy and tailored effects;
- b. Improved missile accuracy, which enables use of low-yield warheads, and in turn enables a missile to carry more warheads;
- c. Russia has conducted extensive warhead tests. Open sources suggest some of these involved exo/endo-maneuvering RVs in order to defeat missile defenses. Might others have been maneuverable reentry vehicles (MaRVs) or terminal sensors to enable low-yield weapons?

- d. Russia has been conducting extensive hydro-nuclear tests, which enable new/improved warhead development;
- e. There are also significant uncertainties with regard to ICBM/SLBM production: For example, Votinsk has been upgraded and modernized and can produce up to 40 Yars ICBMs and Bulava SLBMs per year; Krasnoyarsk, which produces liquid SLBMs, also has been upgraded and modernized and will be producing the liquid engine Sarmat (>10/year?) and reportedly a new liquid SLBM. Khrunichev produced the SS-19 and currently produces the Angara space launch vehicle. For comparison, the Soviet Union at its peak produced about 200 ICBMs and SLBMs each year.
- f. Russia is in decline and combination of sanctions, and limitations on technology, resources and financing will limit ICBM, SLBM, and bomber development and production even though SNF production and deployment is the top priority—many programs (e.g., Sarmat, PAK-DA, S-500, Borei/Bulava, Rubezh IRBM and the Barguzin rail mobile ICBM) have been delayed and Russia has very significant Ukraine war production issues, as major weapon systems are being destroyed faster than they can be produced.
- g. Russia's SNF will be integrated with defense forces (active & passive), which will have a significant impact on the future strategic nuclear force structure as active defenses are deployed. The S-500 is capable of defending against threat ICBMs and SLBMs and Russia plans on deploying a nation-wide ABM defense based on the S-500. Ten S-500 battalions currently are to be deployed (~320 interceptors?). An integrated offense/defense force will provide a more effective deterrent and coercive power, as well as a more effective warfighting force, significantly impacting an adversary's policy, strategy, force requirements and application calculus.

Russia's history of secrecy, deception and treaty violations further limits U.S. visibility into Russia's intentions, capabilities, and capacities, in spite of the U.S. intelligence community's massive and highly capable technical collection capabilities.

According to the Federation of American Scientists (FAS), "All warhead numbers come with considerable uncertainty because of limited transparency of Russian nuclear capable forces."<sup>13</sup> Yet, the FAS consistently undercounts. Why?

One assumption may be that Russia will abide by the New Start Treaty limits, so FAS considers that Russia will download or retire systems as needed to stay within treaty limits. Given Russia's current SNF upload capability, it is obvious that Russia has produced significantly more strategic nuclear delivery vehicles than required to stay within New Start treaty limits. If Russia truly wanted to honor the treaty limits, they would produce new weapons at a rate to replace weapons being retired—instead, they have been producing

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<sup>13</sup> Hans Kristensen, Matt Korda, and Eliana Johns, "Nuclear Notebook: Russian Nuclear Weapons, 2023," Federation of American Scientists, May 8, 2023, available at <https://fas.org/publication/nuclear-notebook-russian-nuclear-weapons-2023/>.

ICBMs (e.g., Yars/Sarmat) with significantly greater warhead capacity than the ICBMs being replaced (e.g., Topol/SS-18). If Russia keeps to the announced schedule of PAK-DA bomber and Arcturus SSBN production, there could also be a larger bomber and SSBN force than forecast; however, considering Russia's ailing economy, sanctions, technology limitations, workforce, and other issues, this is unlikely, even for top priority programs.

What follows below is a 2043 forecast of Russian SNF delivery vehicles and warheads. ICBM/SLBM warhead numbers are based on the maximum number tested, although this is an area which could rapidly change based on SNF mission and warhead capabilities.

**Russian ICBMs:** The current Russian ICBM force structure was used as a 2043 forecast upper limit, although Russian industry certainly could produce more, depending on financing and resources available.

Russia's SS-18 ICBM is being replaced by the Sarmat ICBM and is expected to be replaced on a one-for-one basis in upgraded (possibly super-hardened and defended) silos, although timing is critical. The SS-18 is far past retirement age and the Sarmat was reported as being on combat duty in 2023, yet testing and full rate production continues to be delayed. Nevertheless, the conversion should be completed by 2028-30, depending on the Sarmat production ramp-up rate and the actual rate of Sarmat production (which is unlikely to exceed 10/year for a deployed force of 46-55 and another 20-30+ for operational test and evaluation launches). Russia has an unknown number of additional SS-18 silo's available and additional silo's (possibly super-hardened) can be constructed. The Sarmat will carry 15-20 warheads (depending on yield) but could carry up to 50 warheads that weigh 100 kg. A force of 46 Sarmats with 20 warheads each could carry a total of 920 warheads. The FAS estimates only 10 warheads per Sarmat, even though the Sarmat has a significantly greater range and payload capability than the SS-18.

The SS-19 (of which some 43 may currently be deployed) carries 6 warheads each (for a total of 258 warheads) and is currently programmed to carry the Avangard (1 Avangard/SS-19 M4). Seven of 12 Avangards have already been deployed. However, the FAS shows no SS-19 deployed and the SS-19 is expected to be retired by 2030. The Avangard will transition to the Sarmat as the Sarmat is deployed. The Sarmat reportedly can carry 5 Avangard warheads, so the total number of Avangards to be deployed is still unknown. The primary Avangard mission is defeat of missile defenses using speed (Mach 15-27) and maneuvering, and to penetrate missile defenses to destroy high-value, time-urgent targets with a 2 MT warhead and accuracy that is significantly better than ballistic warheads.

The SS-25 Sickle ICBM likely will be retired by 2025, and the SS-27 Mod 1 Topol will be retired in the 2030s and replaced by the Yars. There currently are 18 mobile and 60 silo-based SS-27 Mod 1s, each with 1 warhead, although they could carry up to a maximum of 7 warheads, for a total of anywhere from 78 warheads to 546 warheads.

The RS-24/SS-27 Mod 2 Yars ICBM carries 4 warheads and has the throw-weight to carry 7 smaller warheads. There are reports of 10 warheads, although it has never been tested with more than 6. There are currently 22 silo-based and 135 mobile Yars, for a total of 132 silo-based and 810 mobile warheads (a total of 942 warheads), with the number of deployed Yars growing as Topols are retired. The 2043 forecast is 36 silo-based and 108 mobile Yars



as the new Kedr ICBM begins to replace the Yars around 2030. Although the bulk of the Yars will only be about 15 years old by 2030, they could be kept on duty, with Kedr production adding to the force. It is unknown if additional Yars have been produced for operational test and evaluation, or if operational missiles will be used and replaced by the Kedr. There are also 36 RS-24 "S" versions, each with 3 larger warheads, for a total of 108 warheads. It is believed this is the number that will be deployed. There is also the Yars RS-24 "M", with 2 Independently Propelled Ballistic Vehicles (IPBV) to counter missile defenses. None are currently deployed, although it is assumed 27 could be deployed by 2043 for a total of 54 warheads.

According to the FAS, the total number of ICBM warheads deployed on 321 ICBMs in 2023 is 1197. However, they could actually be upgraded to 2,337 warheads. By 2043, the number of warheads could reach anywhere from 2,726 to 3,246 on 383 ICBMs, depending on upload assumptions. The number of ICBM warheads could further increase if larger numbers of smaller, lower yield warheads were deployed, and/or the number of ICBMs deployed increased (e.g., Kedr produced and Yars not retired, or more than 46-55 Sarmat are deployed).

**Russian SSBN/SLBMs:** Russia has stated a requirement for 14 SSBNs, and this assessment was considered the upper limit, although if 12-14 Borei SSBNs are produced and the Arcturus is produced starting around 2030, then Russia could have more than 14 SSBNs.

The five Delta IV SSBN are each equipped with 16 SS-N-23 SLBMs, and each have the Layner front-end, which could carry 8-12 warheads according to Makeyev, the designer (the FAS assumes only 4) for a total of 640-960 warheads. The Delta IVs were built at a rate of 1 per year from 1984-1990 and are expected to remain in service until approximately 2030, as they have been modernized and equipped with the new Layner front-end for the upgraded SS-N-23. They will then transition out by 2035 as the new Arcturus SSBN is expected to enter service in the 2030 timeframe armed with 12 new liquid fueled SLBMs, and each SLBM is also expected to carry 8-12 warheads.

There are currently six Borei SSBNs, each with 16 Bulava SLBMs and each carrying 6 warheads (the most the Bulava has been tested with) resulting in a total of 576 warheads. Four more Borei SSBNs are under construction and another 2-4 are planned, for a total of 12-14 Borei SSBNs. The 2043 forecast is for 14 Borei SSBNs, each with 16 Bulava SLBMs, and each SLBM carrying 6 warheads for a total of 1,344 warheads. The FAS estimates 896 SLBM warheads, but the current force can be upgraded to between 1,216 and 1,536 warheads, which is 320 to 640 warheads more than the FAS estimates.

The Arcturus SSBN is reported to be in research and development and should be laid down in approximately 2024 for a 2030 initial operating capability, although with the Borei still under construction it may be delayed. The Arcturus reportedly will only carry 12 new liquid fueled SLBMs with greater performance than the Bulava or Layner. It is assumed that it will also carry 8-12 warheads. Three Arcturus SSBNs are forecast by 2043, for a total of 216-360 warheads. In addition to replacing the Delta SSBNs, the Arcturus will also start replacing the Borei, as the oldest will be 30 years old in 2042. However, Russia may decide

to maintain a larger SSBN force and keep the Borei for 40 years, as they appear to be planning for the Delta IVs. The total SLBM warhead numbers for 2043 would be 1,370-1,704.

There are currently two Poseidon torpedo launchers, one a modified Oscar II SSGN and the other based on a modified Borei SSBN hull. Each carries six Poseidon torpedoes, which are nuclear powered and carry a 100 MT warhead. As they are nuclear powered, they have near unlimited range and endurance. Two to four more Poseidon launchers are reportedly planned, based on the Borei SSBN hull—as yet none have been laid down, another indication of finance and resource problems in Russia. If they are laid down, there would be 24-36 Poseidon torpedoes in the force structure by 2043.

While not considered strategic, the homeland attack potential of the Yasen SSGN with Tirsikon hypersonic missiles needs to be closely monitored. The Tirsikon can travel 1,000 km in less than 5 minutes—4 Yasen are currently deployed and 12 are planned, each capable of carrying up to 32 missiles, for a total of 384 warheads. There are open-source reports that U.S. anti-submarine warfare forces cannot maintain track of the Yasen SSGN,<sup>14</sup> creating the potential for surprise attack against the U.S. National Command Authority and command, control, and communication (C3) nodes in support of a Russian strategic nuclear attack. While time-of-flight may be 5 minutes or less, U.S. defenses may not detect and provide warning of the hypersonic missile prior to impact.

**Russian Bomber Force:** It is forecast that there will not be a large increase in the bomber force, the biggest change being the replacement of the Bears by new production Blackjack bombers and continued delay of the PAK-DA stealth bomber in the forecast period. Russia currently has a force of 27 TU-95-H6 Bear bombers, which can carry 6 long-range air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs), for a total of 162 warheads; 28 TU-95-H16 Bear bombers, which carry 16 long-range ALCMs, for a total of 448 warheads; and 16 TU-160 Blackjack bombers, which can carry 12 long-range ALCMs for a total of 192 warheads. The Bears are all being modernized, and each will carry 16 long-range ALCMs and will stay in service until about 2040. The 16 original Blackjacks are being modernized to the same specifications as the 50 new Blackjacks that have been ordered, and at 12 ALCMs each, the force will carry 600 long-range ALCMs, providing a bomber force which could deliver a total of 792 warheads in an initial strike—and of course, bombers can be reloaded, if the weapons are available. The FAS estimates the bomber force can carry 580 weapons, when they can actually be uploaded with 766 ALCMs. There are 10 Blackjacks currently under contract with 50 planned and will be produced at a rate of approximately 3 per year, requiring about 17 years for completion, in the 2040 timeframe. By comparison, the United States built 100 B-1 bombers in 5 years, roughly 20 per year. The 2043 forecast is 792 ALCMs, taking into account the production of 50 new Blackjack bombers and the retirement of 55 Bear bombers. Under New Start Treaty counting rules, bombers count as one weapon, irrespective of how many weapons they can carry.

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<sup>14</sup> Caleb Larson, "Russia's Yasen-Class Submarines: Why Can't the U.S. Navy Track It?," *The National Interest*, March 24, 2021, available at <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/reboot/russia%E2%80%99s-yasen-class-submarines-why-cant-us-navy-track-it-180936>.

Russia's stealth bomber, the sub-sonic PAK-DA is to be developed along with the Blackjack; however the PAK-DA continues to be delayed and given Russia's finance and technology problems it may never be built in the mid-term, leaving Russia to instead rely on the 50 or so new production Blackjack bombers. The continued delay of the Su-57 stealth fighter and reports of its relatively poor stealth capabilities may be indicative of the problems Russia faces in building a stealth bomber.

In addition to the bomber force, Russia is developing a nuclear-powered cruise missile, the 9M730 Burevestnik (the NATO-designated SSC-X-9 Skyfall), reportedly armed with a 2 MT warhead, or even up to 10 smaller warheads. Another possibility is a High-Power Microwave (HPM) warhead powered by the nuclear reactor for multiple strikes against a large target set, as well as repeated HPM strikes against individual targets. With nuclear propulsion, the missile would have unlimited range and could stay airborne for weeks or months and attack from any direction. There is considerable speculation as to size, with some estimates being 1½ - 2 times larger than a Kh-101 missile, or more. The missile had a successful test on 5 October 2023 according to President Putin. The number of Burevestniks to be produced is unknown.

According to the 2023 FAS estimate, the total number of Russian nuclear warheads is 1,197 for ICBMs, 896 for SLBMs and 580 for bombers, for a grand total of 2,673 warheads. These 2023 forces have the capability to be upgraded to 2,337 ICBM warheads, 1,216-1,536 SLBM warheads, and 766 bomber warheads, for a grand total of 4,319-4,639 warheads, depending on force loadings. For 2043, there could be 2,726-3246 ICBM warheads, 1,370-1,704 SLBM warheads, and 792 bomber warheads, for a grand total of 4,888-5,742 warheads. Numbers do matter. If the Yars and Bulava carried 10 small (90 kg/75-100 kt) warheads, that would add an additional 1,012 WH. The Sarmat carrying 50 small warheads would add another 1,500—but smaller warheads may also require greater accuracy.

If advanced technology nuclear weapons enable theater nuclear warfare to achieve national interests, what are the implications for strategic nuclear warfare?

- Col-Gen Muravyev, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Strategic Missile Forces, stated that "Strategic missile systems should be capable of conducting 'surgical' strikes... using both highly accurate, super-low yield nuclear weapons, as well as conventional ones..." and that "...groupings of non-nuclear MBR (ICBM's) and BRPL (SLBM's) may appear..." – Moscow *Armeyskiy Sbornik*, 1 December 1999.
- Viktor Mikhaylov, former Minister of Atomic Energy, stated "existing strategic nuclear warheads are to be upgraded so they can be rapidly and simply reprogrammed to deliver strikes with a yield of hundreds of tons of TNT "...and reprogrammed [back]."<sup>15</sup>
- Russia reportedly has deployed precision nuclear warheads with 50-200-ton yields on some Layner and Bulava SLBMs, as well as Kh-102 cruise missiles. The Yars ICBM

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<sup>15</sup> Viktor Mikhaylov, in "Russia Mulls 'Precision Use of Nukes'," Moscow, *Segodnya*, May 6, 1999. By Pavel Felgengauer. Translated in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Doc. ID: FTS19990506000851.

can carry the same warhead as the Bulava SLBM. (If so, is it possible that their improved accuracy is aided by Glonass?)

- Russian SNF policy, strategy, and forces (numbers, types, and capabilities) are undergoing significant changes to ensure Russia retains its status as a great power.
- Without accurate information on Russian SNF to inform the American public of the scope and character of the Russian threat, it becomes impossible for the United States to formulate a credible deterrence policy, strategy, and force structure to maintain U.S. security and national interests, especially in light of China's massive strategic nuclear breakout creating a two-nuclear-peer dilemma for the United States.

In short, strategic nuclear forces armed with new technology nuclear warheads provide game-changing capabilities.

The following is an analysis based on a 1986 study titled "The Consequences of 'Limited' Nuclear Attacks on the United States."<sup>16</sup> In the Soviet attack against U.S. strategic nuclear forces, there were a total of 1,215 SNF targets and 2,837 warheads were used, with most targets getting both a 0.5-1 MT air and ground burst weapon, for a total of 1,342 MT. The targets consisted of ICBM silos, bomber bases, SSBN bases, nuclear C3, early warning radars and nuclear weapon storage sites. Casualties from the Soviet nuclear attack on U.S. SNF targets and resulting fatalities were as follows: Blast & Fire casualties—14.7-19.7 million; Fallout casualties—6.8-60.6 million, using February and October wind patterns; Total U.S. casualties—21.5-80.3 million.

Repeating the Soviet attack using essentially the same target set, but with updated numbers (e.g., 400 vs. 1,016 ICBM silos) and applying accurate, low yield weapons (only a single airburst weapon was necessary), casualties were significantly reduced: Blast & Fire casualties—12-16,000; Fallout casualties—None; Total casualties--12-16,000 (approximately the same target set).

According to Mikhaylov, nuclear weapons were so terrible that no one dared to use them: "The [Russian] nuclear shield, which hundreds of billions of dollars were spent developing, has today become a useless, burdensome pile of metal."<sup>17</sup> He further stated that thermonuclear weapon development philosophy changed from high-yield weapons creating massive destruction to very low-yield weapons with political/military utility enabled by highly accurate guidance. This is why Mikhaylov was advocating, and Yeltsin approved the creation of a force of 10,000 accurate, low-yield and tailored effects nuclear weapons to "once again make nuclear weapons an instrument of policy."<sup>18</sup>

Food for thought.

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<sup>16</sup> William Daugherty, Barbara Levi, and Frank von Hippel, "The Consequences of 'Limited' Nuclear Attacks on the United States," *International Security*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Spring 1986), pp. 3-45.

<sup>17</sup> Mikhaylov in "Russia Mulls 'Precision Use of Nukes'," *Moscow, Segodnya*, May 6, 1999, op. cit.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

**David Lonsdale**

*Senior Lecturer in War Studies at the University of Hull, UK*

## Introduction

The age of Minimum Deterrence is over, or at least it should be. The modernisation and build-up of Russian and Chinese nuclear forces make that inevitable. Since the end of the Cold War, many in western defence communities have largely neglected nuclear strategy. Those that have engaged with the subject, with some notable exceptions, have tended to fall into two, not mutually exclusive, camps. Firstly, there are those who subscribe to the disarmament agenda, often with the ultimate objective of a nuclear free world. Secondly, those who accept the necessity of the continued possession of nuclear weapons often do so within a minimum deterrence framework. The latter refers not only to small numbers of warheads, but also limited detail on operational matters. These approaches have found policy expression in certain U.S. administrations (most obviously under Obama) and UK nuclear weapons policy. At different times, both countries have sought to set the agenda by either reducing warhead numbers and/or deliberately de-emphasising nuclear weapons in national security policy.

In response to Russian and Chinese developments, Western powers have had to reassess their nuclear weapons policy. This paper focuses on the response of the United Kingdom, perhaps acting as an indicator of more general trends in Western nuclear strategy during the third decade of the twenty-first century. It will identify several positive and negative steps in the process of response. The paper concludes that the UK is now better placed to deal with the challenges of a deteriorating security environment, but that there is more that needs to be done.

## The Positives

### *Adaptive Security Policy*

In 2021, the UK government published *Global Britain in a Competitive Age, the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy*. In response to the deteriorating security environment, most notably Russia's invasion of Ukraine and attendant aggressive nuclear rhetoric, in 2023 the government published an updated policy, *Integrated Review Refresh 2023: Responding to a more contested and volatile world*. This integrated policy refresh was supplemented by a new *Defence Command Paper*, which was introduced earlier than originally intended. Taken together, this rush of defence and security policy documents reveals that the UK is not standing still, but is rather acting responsively to the growing threat from Russia.

### *Increased Budget*

In support of its evolving security policy, the UK has allocated an additional £9 billion over five years for what it describes as the UK's "defence nuclear enterprise." This extra

funding will be invested in infrastructure, maintenance, and skills to support the submarine fleet and “increase the capacity and capability of our nuclear enterprise over the coming decades.”<sup>19</sup> Additional funding is welcome as it provides concrete evidence that the UK’s commitment to its nuclear forces is not merely rhetoric.

### ***Robust Language***

That is not to say that language and public statements are unimportant. The nuclear theorist Thomas Schelling is clear that language and behaviour are essential components of an effective nuclear posture.<sup>20</sup> In that vein, government ministers have used quite robust language when responding to Russian threats and nuclear sabre rattling. For example, in October 2022, in a statement to the House of Commons, the then-Secretary of Defence, Ben Wallace, noted that “The resolve [of NATO members to support Ukraine] is absolutely rock solid. When it comes to the nuclear issue, the line is consistent that there would be severe consequences for Russia if it uses tactical nuclear weapons.”<sup>21</sup> In its policy statements, Britain has not given any indication that it is intimidated by Russian nuclear threats.

### ***Trident Replacement***

From a capability perspective, it is significant that Britain has continued its commitment to stay in the nuclear game. Although the decision to replace Trident was initially made in 2006, and further endorsed by the House of Commons in 2016, it is still noteworthy that in a period of economic uncertainty the UK continues to see the necessity of nuclear forces. The significance of this decision is especially evident when one considers that the cost of Trident replacement is estimated at £31 billion, with a £10 billion contingency. This is not a small amount for a country with a defence budget of just over £55 billion.

### ***Increased Warhead Cap***

Of arguably even greater significance is the decision to increase the UK’s warhead cap to 260. This is a significant policy change. Prior to 2021, Britain had aimed at a warhead reduction from 225 to 180 warheads by the mid-2020s. There has been much speculation on the motives behind the decision to increase Britain’s nuclear arsenal. Some have suggested that it is designed to increase the number of so-called “sub-strategic” Trident warheads, and

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<sup>19</sup> Ministry of Defence, *Defence’s Response to a more Contested and Volatile World*, 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023, available at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64b55dd30ea2cb000d15e3fe/Defence\\_Command\\_Paper\\_2023\\_Defence\\_s\\_response\\_to\\_a\\_more\\_contested\\_and\\_volatile\\_world.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64b55dd30ea2cb000d15e3fe/Defence_Command_Paper_2023_Defence_s_response_to_a_more_contested_and_volatile_world.pdf), p.56.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, (New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1966), Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980).

<sup>21</sup> James Goddard, *War in Ukraine: Could Russia Use Nuclear Weapons?*, House of Lords Library, 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2022, available at <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/war-in-ukraine-could-russia-use-nuclear-weapons/>.

thereby give Britain greater operational flexibility.<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile, the Ministry of Defence and the Secretary of Defence have cited heightened Russian threats, including modernisation, especially in its missile defence capabilities.<sup>23</sup> The decision to increase warheads was taken in 2021, before the invasion of Ukraine. It will be interesting to see if additional increases are announced as the nuclear threat from Russia intensifies. At the moment, it seems unlikely that Britain would go beyond 260. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the UK did once have over 500 nuclear warheads.

### ***Nuclear Posture Flexibility***

Flexibility in nuclear posture has also been slightly enhanced by changes to the negative security guarantee and an increase in the policy of strategic ambiguity. On the former, the UK now reserves the right to reassess its security guarantees on the basis of increased threats from chemical and biological weapons, or from emerging technologies. On strategic ambiguity, the UK will no longer provide “public figures for our operational stockpile, deployed warhead or deployed missile numbers.”<sup>24</sup> This is noteworthy, because prior to this change the UK was one of the more transparent of the nuclear powers. Taken together, these two changes suggest that the UK is taking the operational aspects of nuclear strategy more seriously.

## **Lingering Negatives**

### ***Arms Control and Disarmament***

As noted, the UK is increasing its nuclear arsenal. That does not mean, however, that the UK is abandoning the ultimate objective of multilateral nuclear disarmament. Indeed, although the government recognises that the arms control and disarmament architecture has been eroded, in the 2023 *Integrated Review Refresh* the government confirmed that it remains committed to the full implementation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).<sup>25</sup> As

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<sup>22</sup> Claire Mills, *Integrated Review 2021: Increasing the Cap on the UK's Nuclear Stockpile*, House of Commons Library, 19<sup>th</sup> March 2021, available at <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9175/>.

<sup>23</sup> Heather Williams, *UK Nuclear Weapons: Beyond the Numbers*, War on the Rocks, 6<sup>th</sup> April 2021, available at <https://warontherocks.com/2021/04/u-k-nuclear-weapons-beyond-the-numbers/>.

<sup>24</sup> HM Government, *Global Britain in a Competitive Age: The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy*, March 2021, available at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/975077/Global\\_Britain\\_in\\_a\\_Competitive\\_Age\\_the\\_Integrated\\_Review\\_of\\_Security\\_Defence\\_Development\\_and\\_Foreign\\_Policy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/975077/Global_Britain_in_a_Competitive_Age_the_Integrated_Review_of_Security_Defence_Development_and_Foreign_Policy.pdf), p. 77.

<sup>25</sup> Cabinet Office, *Integrated Review Refresh: Responding to a More Contested and Volatile World*, 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/integrated-review-refresh-2023-responding-to-a-more-contested-and-volatile-world>.

noted by the MoD, “The UK has taken a consistent and leading approach on nuclear disarmament.”<sup>26</sup>

Why is the UK’s position on arms control and disarmament important? By remaining committed to a world without nuclear weapons, the UK may give the impression that it is a reluctant nuclear weapons power. In this sense, akin to David Trachtenberg’s analysis of the United States’ *2022 Nuclear Posture Review*, there is a degree of schizophrenia about the UK’s nuclear posture.<sup>27</sup> On the one hand, the UK has taken steps to bolster the credibility of its nuclear deterrence. On the other hand, its statements on disarmament may lead one to suggest that Britain sees little positive strategic use for nuclear weapons beyond its stated strategy of minimum nuclear deterrence. As noted earlier, language and behaviour impact bargaining reputation in the challenging world of nuclear deterrence and compellence. Ultimately, the UK is giving off somewhat mixed messages in an increasingly threatening and competitive security environment.

Whilst it is conceptually correctly to note the potential negative strategic impact of Britain’s continued commitment to the NPT, there are two qualifying statements that need to be made. Firstly, there is an air of pragmatism about the commitment, in that the UK recognises that the NPT can only be fully implemented when the international security environment allows such a step. Secondly, there is a notable tonal difference in the 2023 and 2021 documents. The 2021 *Integrated Review* contains a long paragraph on nuclear disarmament, in which the UK proudly states that it has the smallest stockpile of the major powers and the only one with a single delivery system. These arms control badges of honour are absent from the 2023 *Review Refresh* and *Defence Command Paper*.

### ***Single Delivery System***

Since 1998, the UK remains the only major nuclear power with a single delivery system. This is problematic. Sticking to a single delivery system limits Britain’s operational and strategic flexibility. Clearly, Britain sees the need for increased operational flexibility, as is evidenced by its introduction of sub-strategic warheads. However, the glaring problem with Britain’s current stance is that when a Trident missile is launched it will not be apparent to the intended target the number of warheads the missile is carrying, or the warhead yields. What Britain intends as a sub-strategic attack may be perceived as a much larger strategic strike. Indeed, as noted by Mark B. Schneider, one of the declared scenarios for possible Russian nuclear usage is “arrival of reliable data on a launch of ballistic missiles attacking the

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<sup>26</sup> Ministry of Defence, *The UK’s Nuclear Deterrent: What You Need to Know*, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-nuclear-deterrence-factsheet/uk-nuclear-deterrence-what-you-need-to-know>.

<sup>27</sup> David J. Trachtenberg, “The 2022 Nuclear Posture Review: A Case of Schizophrenia,” in Keith B. Payne (ed), *Expert Commentary on the 2022 Nuclear Posture Review*, Occasional Paper, 3/3, March 2023, National Institute for Public Policy, available at <https://nipp.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/OP-Vol.-3-No.-3.pdf>.



territory of the Russian Federation and/or its allies.”<sup>28</sup> It is proposed, therefore, that for the so-called sub-strategic role, Britain requires a distinctly different means of delivery. A return to an air-launched system would provide such a capability. One possible option is to go down the French route, with the SSBN force supplemented with sea (carriers) and land-based air-launched nuclear options. Air-launched systems would give Britain the ability to forward deploy nuclear weapons to signal resolve. Unfortunately, there are no easy options in this respect. Britain could potentially adapt low-yield warheads for delivery via its F35B fleet, or more easily choose to buy the A version of the F35.<sup>29</sup>

### ***Minimum Deterrence***

Ultimately, the above problems stem from the third negative, Britain’s commitment to minimum deterrence. The UK government defines minimum deterrence as “the minimum amount of destructive power needed to guarantee our deterrent remains credible and effective against the full range of state nuclear threats.”<sup>30</sup> This is a logical, but quite bold statement. One wonders whether Britain’s extant force structure and posture can continue to produce this deterrent effect in the face of expanding adversary arsenals. Can a minimum deterrence posture adjust to changes in adversary capabilities and doctrine ad infinitum? Can it deal with an expanding range of threatening contingencies? Can it deal with escalation?

It is undoubtedly true that the UK has limited resources to commit to its nuclear forces. Britain cannot match the arsenals of the United States, Russia or China. As a follow-on, nor can it develop the range of operations common to the larger nuclear powers. However, as potential adversaries, especially Russia, continue to develop more flexible force postures, if Britain is to deter the widening range of threats it must increase its own flexibility. As noted above, this will likely require an additional delivery option for its sub-strategic warheads. It will also require greater engagement with operational issues in a post-deterrence world. At minimum, Britain must have some capability to respond with nuclear weapons at different levels of escalation, perhaps including a limited battlefield role. On the positive side, Britain continues to reject a no-first-use option in its nuclear posture.

Moreover, there is the challenge of operationalising minimum deterrence. With limited nuclear warheads, inflicting the required amount of destruction on the enemy may be challenging. This is especially the case if the enemy has superior forces, and the UK restricts itself to counterforce targets. Countervalue targeting, attacking the adversary’s political, industrial and population centres, introduces no less severe problems. As indicated in a

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<sup>28</sup> Mark B. Schneider, *How Many Nuclear Weapons Does Russia Have? The Size and Characteristics of the Russian Nuclear Stockpile*, Occasional Paper, 3/8, August 2023, p. 32, National Institute Press, available at <https://nipp.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Vol.-3-No.-8.pdf>.

<sup>29</sup> Wyn Bowen and Geoffrey Chapman, *The UK, Nuclear Deterrence and a Changing World*, Freeman Air and Space Institute, King’s College London, available at <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/warstudies/assets/kcl-fasi-paper13-uk-nuclear-deterrence-changing-world-web.pdf>.

<sup>30</sup> Ministry of Defence, *What You Need to Know*, op. cit.

recent study by Keith Payne, such an approach raises extraordinary moral and legal problems, and consequently undermines the credibility of deterrence, especially in relation to limited provocations.<sup>31</sup>

## Conclusion

Overall, within the limits of its resources, the UK has responded reasonably well to increased nuclear threats from Russia. As a result, the flexibility and credibility of Britain's nuclear posture have arguably been enhanced. However, the lingering commitment to the NPT, single delivery system, and minimum deterrence, somewhat undermine the good work that has been done. If Britain remains in the nuclear game, it must do so fully. That is to say that it must abandon minimum deterrence as a guiding principle. In particular, Britain must embrace a wider range of nuclear operations and acquire the capabilities that support such a stance. Only then can it have a more flexible credible deterrence posture and be able to make an effective contribution should deterrence fail. Undoubtedly, such a change in nuclear posture would require difficult policy decisions. However, as is reflected in the 2023 policy documents, the security environment is deteriorating rapidly and requires an appropriate response.

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<sup>31</sup> Keith B. Payne, *The Rejection of Intentional Population Targeting for "Tripolar" Deterrence*, Occasional Paper, 3/9, September 2023, National Institute for Public Policy, available at <https://nipp.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Vol-3-No-9.pdf>.





## THE REJECTION OF INTENTIONAL POPULATION TARGETING FOR “TRIPOLAR” DETERRENCE

*The remarks below were delivered at a symposium on “The Rejection of Intentional Population Targeting for ‘Tripolar’ Deterrence” hosted by the National Institute for Public Policy on November 17, 2023. The symposium keyed off a jointly authored Information Series article that examined the history of U.S. nuclear targeting policy and the arguments against targeting civilian populations for deterrence that have enjoyed strong bipartisan support for decades.*

**David J. Trachtenberg**

***Vice President of the National Institute for Public Policy and former Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy***

The issue of nuclear targeting has once again become an item of contemporary interest. In a recent jointly authored National Institute *Information Series* article, several of our panelists explained the history of U.S. nuclear targeting policy and the fallacy of moving away from counterforce targeting for deterrence and back toward the deliberate targeting of “soft targets” such as cities and urban-industrial areas. Links to this *Information Series* and the more detailed National Institute *Occasional Paper* on which it was based were provided in the email invitation to this webinar.

One school of thought that has reappeared lately suggests that the United States should intentionally threaten to target an opponent’s cities and civilian population with nuclear weapons as a means of ensuring deterrence. Indeed, as two advocates of this policy recently wrote, “the United States should reconsider its current prohibition on deliberately targeting enemy civilians with nuclear weapons—a policy that prohibits counter-city targeting even in retaliation for a major Chinese or Russian nuclear attack on the US homeland.... In an era of rapid adversary nuclear enhancements, this ‘counterforce-only’ approach to nuclear planning is a recipe for large nuclear requirements and a likely three-party arms race”<sup>1</sup>

Now, as the authors of the NIPP *Information Series* note, these arguments are not only reminiscent of Cold War thinking but are grounded in flawed reasoning that is easily refutable. For example, the notion that a counterforce targeting posture invariably leads to an increase in nuclear requirements and an excessive and costly nuclear weapons buildup is belied by the fact that a minimum deterrence, countervalue approach is more likely to undermine deterrence and require a significant expansion in conventional forces that would be exorbitantly expensive.

In addition, the notion that counterforce targeting will drive an arms race with Russia and China ignores the fact that both adversaries have been engaged in a massive expansion of their own nuclear arsenals well in advance of the current U.S. nuclear modernization

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<sup>1</sup> Keir Lieber and Daryl G. Press, “US strategy and force posture for an era of nuclear tripolarity,” *Atlantic Council Issue Brief*, April 2023, available at <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/issue-brief/us-strategy-and-force-posture-for-an-era-of-nuclear-tripolarity/>.



program. It also dismisses decades of evidence that disproves the discredited notion of an action-reaction dynamic fueled by U.S. nuclear developments.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the belief that adopting a counter-city targeting approach will moderate either Russia's or China's extensive nuclear buildups lacks any empirical justification.

And, of course, as some of our panelists have noted, the deliberate targeting of civilian populations runs counter to “the principles of distinction and proportionality drawn from the Just War Doctrine and codified in the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC) and the Department of Defense's Law of War Manual.”<sup>3</sup> How such an approach can be considered morally superior to any attempt to limit damage to innocent non-combatants strains credulity.

I also find it troubling that a double standard exists regarding the desirability of minimizing civilian casualties in conflict. As I have noted previously, “When it comes to the employment of conventional forces in U.S. military operations, there is little debate or argument over the importance and necessity of reducing inadvertent civilian casualties and damage to property... to the maximum extent possible.”<sup>4</sup> One need look no farther than the current conflict in the Middle East to understand the near-universal agreement with this principle. Yet when it comes to nuclear weapons, those who favor the deliberate targeting of civilian populations stand this commonsense principle on its head. The inconsistency in their position is striking.

Recently, the arguments raised by some of our panelists in their joint article were challenged as “persistent myths” in a lengthy rebuttal by an author who argued that “the United States should abandon targeting nuclear forces, their command-and-control systems, and an adversary's leadership” because “targeting those forces does not enhance deterrence—but it does create serious risks and costs.” He noted, “I do not believe the Law of Armed Conflict provides sound guidance for nuclear targeting....”<sup>5</sup>

In light of these assertions, the discussion today will seek to separate the myths from the facts.

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Hon. David J. Trachtenberg, Dr. Michaela Dodge, and Dr. Keith B. Payne, *The “Action-Reaction” Arms Race Narrative vs. Historical Realities* (Fairfax, VA: National Institute Press, March 2021), available at [https://nipp.org/monographs\\_cpt/the-action-reaction-arms-race-narrative-vs-historical-realities/](https://nipp.org/monographs_cpt/the-action-reaction-arms-race-narrative-vs-historical-realities/).

<sup>3</sup> Keith B. Payne, John R. Harvey, Franklin C. Miller and Robert Soofer, “The Rejection of Intentional Population Targeting for ‘Tripolar’ Deterrence,” *Information Series*, No. 563 (Fairfax, VA: National Institute Press, September 26, 2023), available at [https://nipp.org/information\\_series/keith-b-payne-john-r-harvey-franklin-c-miller-and-robert-soofer-the-rejection-of-intentional-population-targeting-for-tripolar-deterrence-no-563-september-26-2023/](https://nipp.org/information_series/keith-b-payne-john-r-harvey-franklin-c-miller-and-robert-soofer-the-rejection-of-intentional-population-targeting-for-tripolar-deterrence-no-563-september-26-2023/).

<sup>4</sup> David J. Trachtenberg, “Mischaracterizing U.S. Nuclear Deterrence Policy: The Myth of Deliberate Civilian Targeting,” *Information Series*, No. 542 (Fairfax, VA: National Institute Press, December 14, 2022), available at [https://nipp.org/information\\_series/david-j-trachtenberg-mischaracterizing-u-s-nuclear-deterrence-policy-the-myth-of-deliberate-civilian-targeting-no-542-december-14-2022/](https://nipp.org/information_series/david-j-trachtenberg-mischaracterizing-u-s-nuclear-deterrence-policy-the-myth-of-deliberate-civilian-targeting-no-542-december-14-2022/).

<sup>5</sup> James Acton, “Two Myths about Counterforce,” *War on the Rocks*, November 6, 2023, available at <https://warontherocks.com/2023/11/two-myths-about-counterforce/>.

**Keith B. Payne**

***President of the National Institute for Public Policy and former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Forces Policy***

Thank you, Dave, for that introduction.

The renewed push by some academics for intentional population targeting was inevitable. Their stated goal is to provide a rationale for rejecting new U.S. nuclear programs in response to the rapid expansion of opponents' nuclear capabilities and threats.

Their policy recommendation is that Washington respond to the Russian and Chinese nuclear threats and buildup by adopting a deterrence strategy that intentionally threatens an opponent's population (or more euphemistically, its "society") as the basic strategic deterrent. This mode of deterrence would mandate a limited target set for U.S. forces, which would, in turn, allow the United States to skip new nuclear capabilities in response to Russian and Chinese expanded nuclear capabilities and threats. City targeting advocates essentially redefine down the force requirements for U.S. nuclear deterrence—the problem of new threats is thus solved without the call for robust, new U.S. forces.

Advocates of population targeting present this as new thinking for a new era. But it is not possible to overstate what nonsense is that characterization; the arguments heard today for intentionally targeting population date back to the early 1960s.

For example, in 1963 Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara defined the requirements for deterrence in terms of the destruction of Soviet population and industry, i.e., "assured destruction." He called this the "very essence of the whole deterrence concept." McNamara's population and industry targeting standard became synonymous with deterrence. For decades, commentators criticized Democratic and Republican administrations' policy moves away from McNamara's "assured destruction" deterrence standard as being for nuclear warfighting, *not* deterrence. This was, and remains, a wholly vapid criticism given the deterrence goals of those moves.

McNamara and others in DoD, along with academic commentators, argued that the assured destruction definition of deterrence served five related purposes. It would:

1. Deter Moscow's extreme provocations;
2. Limit U.S. force requirements by limiting targeting requirements;
3. Give Washington the basis for denying military requests for nuclear weapons beyond the assured destruction standard;
4. Avoid an action-reaction arms race by stopping U.S. nuclear programs from triggering an action-reaction arms race cycle; and,
5. Create stable deterrence. If U.S. forces are limited to city targeting, opponents will not feel the need to strike first for fear of suffering a U.S. first strike against their deterrent forces. So there will be secure mutual stability.

These were *powerful claims*. They provided a seemingly sophisticated basis for limiting spending and forces. Recent advocacy of population targeting repeats precisely these same arguments from the 1960s—nothing has been added, changed or lost.

I will take a few minutes to discuss why these arguments for population targeting are as misleading and bogus now as they were in the 1960s.

First, Washington does not have the privilege of threatening just whatever target set it wants for deterrence: the enemy gets the *only* vote regarding what must be threatened for deterrence, and how. Thinking otherwise conflates what we would like with what is necessary.

In short, the U.S. deterrent must be able to threaten what opponents care about most. A less severe deterrence threat would give them room to calculate that some provocation of Washington could be worth the risk. Threatening what opponents value most has rightly been the bipartisan standard for U.S. deterrence policy for 50 years. It is a key element of tailoring deterrence, and the beginning of wisdom on deterrence.

This is a key point because multiple studies going back to the 1960s conclude that Moscow values most highly its military capabilities, political power and control, and war recovery capabilities. This is understandable given Russia's history and vast multi-ethnic empire. These are the values that must be held at risk for deterrence; Washington does not have the luxury of choosing a target set that conveniently minimizes U.S. force requirements rather than the target set that makes deterrence as effective as possible—particularly as nuclear threats to the West expand and intensify.

Targeting cities or society now for deterrence actually would place priority on U.S. arms limitation goals rather than on deterrence. This is an extreme diversion from long-established, bipartisan policy and likely would increase the probability of deterrence failure and war.

Second, a consistent claim by city targeting advocates is that by not acquiring additional nuclear arms for deterrence, the United States will not trigger opponents' responsive buildups—precluding an “action-reaction arms race” cycle before it begins.

Yet, we know that past arms competitions have not been the result of an action-reaction cycle led by the United States. The most comprehensive, serious Cold War studies concluded that the United States did not lead an action-reaction arms race. Rather, Moscow was “self-stimulated” by its own nuclear requirements that followed from its own unique strategy demands, i.e., preparing to fight and win a nuclear war should one occur.

This inconvenient reality regarding Soviet arms racing was reflected in Harold Brown's famous quip: “Soviet spending...has shown no response to U.S. restraint—when we build, they build, when we cut, they build.”

Asserting that limiting U.S. forces now by targeting cities or society will prevent an action-reaction arms race is deeply mistaken when Russia and China have been racing for years, while Washington has largely sat on the sidelines enjoying a post-Cold War “strategic holiday” and wondering what went wrong. The proposition of an action-reaction arms race now led by Washington is political fiction at its finest.

Third, the argument that deterrence via U.S. city targeting is more stable than deterrence via threatening opponents' military forces has been popular for decades. But this argument, despite its constant repetition, is, frankly, illogical and ahistorical.

The claim is built on the proposition that, if the United States has counterforce capabilities, an opponent will be driven to strike first to pre-empt Washington striking first. This problem supposedly is solved by rejecting U.S. counterforce capabilities.

Yet, unless the opponent is irrational, it is not going to launch a nuclear war that will surely result in its own destruction for fear of a possible U.S. attack that would be destructive. That would be equivalent to jumping off the cliff intentionally for fear of being pushed off, and thereby ensuring the most catastrophic outcome. Irrational, reckless behavior is, of course, possible. But the entire edifice of deterrence theory is based on the proposition that opponents will prioritize self-survival. Consequently, this argument for intentional city targeting is inconsistent with any notion of deterrence stability, while advanced as the preferred route to deterrence stability.

Finally, I would like to address very briefly a point that city targeting advocates continually distort, with seeming intent: that is the casualty levels associated with their city targeting recommendation vs. those of counterforce targeting.

In an apparent effort to deflect culpability for an inherently immoral targeting policy, advocates of city targeting continually claim that intentionally targeting cities or society for deterrence would not meaningfully increase civilian casualties over a counterforce targeting policy. So, their proposed approach to deterrence is no more morally culpable than others.

They attempt to prove this supposed truth by projecting the casualties from an essentially unlimited counterforce strike seemingly designed to inflict high civilian casualty levels. Predictably, they conclude that the civilian casualty levels from such a strike would be high. No kidding.

This projection may be true, but it is misleading because it fails to take into account that a U.S. counterforce strike would be limited by the requirements for distinction and proportionality, which could reduce civilian casualties significantly. Unlike city targeting advocates and their casualty models, the Pentagon does not have the luxury of ignoring the targeting restrictions of distinction and proportionality. Anyone with relevant experience in DoD knows that full well.

There is little doubt that counterforce targeting with required distinction and proportionality limitations would entail far fewer civilian casualties than intentional city or society targeting. Yet, advocates of city targeting appear so desperate to deflect culpability for their morally insufferable proposal that they engage in this misrepresentation of reality to deflect blame. This analytical slight-of-hand has been going on for decades and continues.

The moral quandary for those now pushing a return to population targeting is so strong that one noted advocate shifted, *in a matter of weeks*, from publicly recommending deterrence via targeting opponents' societies to deterrence through the targeting of conventional military targets—with the suggestion that this latter approach is somehow original to him.<sup>6</sup> In fact, the notion of targeting conventional forces is a long-familiar element of a counterforce approach to deterrence.

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<sup>6</sup> James Acton, "Two Myths About Counterforce," *War on the Rocks*, November 6, 2023, available at <https://warontherocks.com/2023/11/two-myths-about-counterforce/>.



In summary, the return of advocacy for intentional city targeting was inevitable—it tells Washington to do almost nothing in response to a dramatically more dangerous nuclear threat environment. Doing almost nothing is what many in Washington always prefer with regard to nuclear weapons—no matter the threat realities.

The choice confronting Washington in this regard is not simplistic, but it is straight forward: 1) build the forces needed to sustain deterrence in the face of multiple, mounting threats; or, 2) take the extreme risk of not doing so based on the empty arguments advanced by city targeting advocates—that is the choice Russia and China have presented to U.S. leaders. The proper answer here is not difficult.

I will conclude with four very short points:

1. The arguments advanced for a population-targeting approach to deterrence are no different now than they were 60 years ago. They conceal a mode of deterrence that is immoral and insufficiently effective.
2. The fact that they are current shows, yet again, that in Washington, the defeat of bad ideas is never permanent—with every new generation they return and need to be put down again.
3. Democratic and Republican administrations deftly put down this particularly bad idea beginning 50 years ago. This built on the work of great individuals at the time, including Dr. John Foster, James Schlesinger, and Harold Brown.
4. The question now is whether clear heads in contemporary Washington can once again provide this badly needed service to the nation. In that regard, I am eager to hear from others on today's panel.

Thank you. I look forward to hearing from the rest of the panel.

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### **John Harvey**

***former Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Defense Programs and former Director of the Policy Planning Staff of the National Nuclear Security Administration***

## **Introduction**

My plan is to walk you through a few specific points with regard to our joint paper<sup>7</sup> to provide further clarification, and a few debating points, on several issues addressed.

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<sup>7</sup> Keith B. Payne, John R. Harvey, Franklin C. Miller and Robert Soofer, “The Rejection of Intentional Population Targeting for ‘Tripolar’ Deterrence,” *Information Series*, No. 563 (Fairfax, VA: National Institute Press, September 26, 2023), available at [https://nipp.org/information\\_series/keith-b-payne-john-r-harvey-franklin-c-miller-and-robert-soofer-the-rejection-of-intentional-population-targeting-for-tripolar-deterrence-no-563-september-26-2023/](https://nipp.org/information_series/keith-b-payne-john-r-harvey-franklin-c-miller-and-robert-soofer-the-rejection-of-intentional-population-targeting-for-tripolar-deterrence-no-563-september-26-2023/).

Oftentimes in these papers, there is a disclaimer along the lines of “not every co-author agrees with every word in this paper, but on balance . . .” I will highlight one or two areas where “not every co-author agrees,” mostly myself, but let me add that these are minor points and in no way detract from the main point regarding the case for rejecting intentional targeting of population. I will also offer some additional points in bolstering several of our arguments.

The paper highlights key arguments for why we reject counterpopulation (CP) targeting:

- Less credible, unlikely to provide desired deterrence effect;
- More, not less, costly over the long term; and,
- Inconsistent with U.S. legal and moral obligations, not to mention the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC).

On the other hand, CP advocates argue that Counterforce (CF) targeting:

- Destabilizes a mutual deterrence relationship;
- Is not suited to arms limitation or preventing an arms race;
- Will produce comparable casualties to a CP nuclear strike.

Our joint paper addresses each of these criticisms.

### ***Counterforce vs Countervalue***

Many of you will note that not once in this paper will you find the term “countervalue.” We refer to the more precise term: “counterpopulation” targeting. But this has been a point of such confusion in the academic community that I must say a few words about it.

By the way, this is not the only area where academics get it wrong, e.g., many university professors often characterize deterrence in terms of two concepts: denial and punishment. Denial is OK—we do indeed seek in deterrence to utterly convince adversaries that they cannot achieve war aims via the use of nuclear weapons.

But punishment is problematic. When I was in the DoD involved in nuclear planning, terms like punishment, revenge, retribution were verboten. The lawyers went ballistic if they found such terms in a planning document. Punishment is not a legitimate war aim.

Academic papers often ignore the role of nuclear weapons in “damage limitation,” a component of U.S. nuclear policy and strategy. Notwithstanding statements by James Schlesinger quoted in the paper, arguing that we had no hope of achieving a disarming first strike against the then-Soviets, nor presumably now against Russia, there are other countries where such a capability could be achieved. This argues that appropriate options be included in strike packages. And I would offer that in a shooting war with Russia with nuclear overtones, folks would be thinking hard about options to offer a president who seeks to minimize damage to the United States and its allies.

Back to CF vs CV. What do I mean by CF targeting? Specifically:

- *Counterforce targets* include conventional and nuclear forces whether stationary or on the move, associated infrastructure, industry that supports these forces, and

national political/military control. Nuclear CF targets include ICBM silos, mobile ICBMs, submarine bases, strategic bomber bases, elements of the nuclear command and control system, ballistic missiles and bombers enroute to targets and air and missile defenses.

I think many, but not all, of my community might agree with this definition. Not so clear regarding CV targets. Consider the following:

- *Countervalue targets* include certain installations, industry or economic assets that do not directly support an adversary's war fighting potential. For some, it includes intentional targeting of cities and population centers which is not/not legitimate under the LOAC.

One of the key areas of confusion is that academics often conflate CV and CP to mean the same thing. CP is actually a subset of CV. The nuance here is that there could be installations that do not directly support warfighting potential, are not intentional targeting of population or civilian infrastructure but, for other reasons, could still be very high value installations for an adversary leadership. Certain of these could well be legitimate targets once appropriate assessment of necessity, proportionality and discrimination is carried out.<sup>8</sup> Even if few installations on today's U.S. target list meet the CV definition, future assessments of the value structure of future adversary leaders might determine otherwise. I would not like to rule out this possibility by casting our entire deterrence strategy as CF-only.

### ***Is CF Destabilizing?***

The issue here is that the substantial prompt hard-target-kill capability posed by modern ICBMs causes those on the other end of those ICBMs to worry about a disarming first strike, driving a posture which includes options for early ICBM launch. This does indeed introduce an element of instability in deterrence relationships. The paper states along the lines:

There has been little or no indication that US policy has destabilized deterrence. This does not prove that a CF-oriented deterrent holds no potential to destabilize deterrence, but the burden of proof surely is on those who claim with such certainty that it does so.

As one who has spent a significant portion of his working days on the important yet non-career-enhancing strategy of advancing survivable ICBM basing modes, and as one who participated in official nuclear exercises where the overriding factor was to ensure that a president could communicate a launch order to forces in the tens of minutes before enemy

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<sup>8</sup> For example, the president's 1974 Nuclear Employment Policy (NSDM 242) identified as a critical deterrence factor "(d)estruction of the political, economic, and military resources critical to the enemy's postwar power, influence, and ability to recover at an early time as a major power." Determining what was meant by impeding long-term "recovery," and identifying associated targets, was not, as I understand, straightforward, although a good argument could be made that it did not fit within the CF rubric. Some targets that may indeed have been identified may not have met the LOAC criteria. In any case, "impeding recovery as a major power" has not, to the best of my knowledge, been an explicit deterrence goal in subsequent presidential guidance.

ICBMs arrived at U.S. silos, I can attest that, when one looks at these concerns from both sides, they do indeed introduce an element of instability in otherwise stable deterrence. There is no way around it.

Whether a president would ever carry out an early launch of ICBMs is an open question; my hunch is that ride-out would be preferred. Still, it's important for deterrence that Russia understand that the capability for early launch exists and is exercised whether or not any president would ever order it. Schlesinger's words are unlikely to be given much credence by an adversary who, quite rightly, is concerned not about words but capabilities.

All that said, over the past few decades both U.S. and Russian forces have evolved in way that mitigates first strike concerns. I can go into that in the Q&A if desired.

### ***Casualties***

The CP folks argue that there won't be much difference in the number of casualties that would occur under either targeting strategy. The paper cites studies by, among others, the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC), the former Office of Technology Assessment, and the Princeton folks, to include Frank von Hippel and his colleagues, who would differ. And they're right. Consider two cases:

- A strike with 200 modern warheads on cities with the primary goal of killing people and destroying civilian urban/industrial infrastructure.
- A counter-nuclear attack on ICBM silos, SSBN bases, and bomber airfields carried out in accordance with the LOAC.

In the first case, in order to kill the maximum number of people the strike would no doubt include ground bursts producing substantial fallout that would kill not just city folks, but folks in ex-urban areas as well. Estimates range from 50-70 million casualties from such an attack.

A counter-nuclear strike would use many more warheads to cover several hundred silos, two SSBN bases, and a few strategic bomber airfields. Except for the bases, many of these warheads would explode in ICBM fields not generally co-located with population centers. To minimize fallout, the necessary destruction could be achieved at burst heights greater than the fireball radius. If the fireball does not touch the ground, it cannot entrain dirt, ground debris, etc. into large clouds that deposit lethal radioactivity as they move across the Russian (or U.S.) landmass. Estimated casualties in such a strike: in the range of 10-12 million.

Now one can argue if the difference between 10 million and 50 million casualties has any meaning at all. I believe it does. In any case, such calculations show the fallacy of those who argue that city-killing and counterforce strikes produce essentially the same results.

### ***Cost of Strengthened Deterrence to Conventional Conflict***

One other area where I might quibble with my colleagues is whether any specific nuclear strategy will have a substantial impact on the resources needed to bolster conventional

forces. For example, CP savings resulting from some truncation of the strategic modernization program currently underway are likely to be dwarfed by needed spending on conventional forces.

The most likely path to peer nuclear conflict involves escalation from an ongoing regional conventional conflict. Increased forward-deployment of U.S. conventional forces, and forward stationing of weapons and equipment, could help to deter such conflict in the first place by the ability to bring force to bear more quickly and reduce reliance on vulnerable reinforcement routes. The goal is to prevent *faits accomplis*.

In recent years, progress has been made in NATO Europe, but more could be done there and in Asia.<sup>9</sup> Weapons and command and control assets must be sufficiently hardened to moderately-severe nuclear environments, and U.S. regional commands, supported by Strategic Command, must adapt their plans to fight the war once nuclear weapons have been introduced to the conventional battlefield. Additional deployment of new types of U.S. conventional and non-strategic nuclear forces, to include possibly a precision-strike hypersonic glide vehicle and a modern nuclear, land-attack sea-launched cruise missile (SLCM-N), would strengthen conventional, strategic and extended deterrence. As an example, fielding new long-range precision conventional strike, in certain cases, could replace a low-yield nuke in responding to limited first use, providing additional flexibility to the president. On this last point, adversary limited nuclear first use should not automatically lead to a U.S. nuclear response. Fulsome consideration of the multiple pathways to such use, however, will help to provide the president with the detailed information, consultative mechanisms, pre-planned options, and hardware needed to respond appropriately, whether nuclear or otherwise.

We must do all this independent of any specific nuclear employment strategy.

Let me stop here. Thanks for your attention.

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<sup>9</sup> For details about the European Reassurance Initiative, renamed the European Deterrence Initiative, see White House Fact Sheet, June 3, 2014, available at <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/06/03/fact-sheet-european-reassurance-initiative-and-other-us-efforts-support->. For more recent initiatives on US defense contributions to Europe see, DoD Fact Sheet, June 29, 2022, available at <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3078056/fact-sheet-us-defense-contributions-to-europe/>. For recent initiatives to bolster NATO's rapid response force, and its first time deployment after Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, see NATO issue paper, "NATO Response Force," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, July 11, 2022, available at [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_49755.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49755.htm).



# LITERATURE REVIEW

**John Allen Williams, Stephen J. Cimbala, Sam C. Sarkesian, *US National Security: Policymakers, Processes, and Politics, Sixth Edition* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2022), 390 pp.**

The formulation of U.S. national security policy involves competing interests, divergent organizational equities, and unanticipated bureaucratic and political challenges, as various government and private sector communities jockey for influence. The policy process itself is cumbersome, confusing, and often lethargic. Understanding how official U.S. government policy is created, modified, or overturned requires an understanding of multiple actors, institutions, and processes. This can be a frustrating endeavor for those unacquainted with the details of what is often described as “sausage making.”

This is where John Allen Williams, Stephen J. Cimbala, and Sam C. Sarkesian add transparency to a process that often seems opaque to the average citizen. The sixth edition of their book, *US National Security: Policymakers, Processes, and Politics*, is a detailed and comprehensive primer on the national security process, looking at the actors and issues that establish the parameters of official decision making.

The book is well organized, containing chapters on the roles of both the executive and legislative branches of government in the creation and execution of national security policy. From the president and the National Security Council to the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the intelligence community, the authors explain the critical elements of policy making, the various phases of the policy process, and the factors that influence various policy outcomes, including the important role of Congress and the various checks and balances that constrain a president’s freedom of action. Using examples drawn from history as well as contemporary developments, they illuminate the seemingly mystifying and incomprehensible world of American national security policy in a way that is detailed and thorough, yet easily understandable.

The book begins with a basic explanation of national security, national interests, and U.S. values. It defines national security policy as “primarily concerned with formulating and implementing national strategy involving the threat or use of force to create a favorable environment for US national interests.” [p. 3] (The authors later call for rethinking the concept of national security “based on core (first-order priorities).” [pp. 322, 324] It also explains the distinction between “vital” interests, “critical” interests, “serious” interests, and “peripheral” interests. [pp. 7-8]. It then discusses the role of international actors, focusing on allies (e.g., NATO) and adversaries (e.g., Russia, China), and the impact they have on U.S. decision making. There are also chapters reviewing the spectrum of conflict, looking at how the United States has dealt with unconventional conflicts such as counterterrorism, as well as discussions of nuclear weapons, arms control, and proliferation issues. The authors also explain the national security impact of various external and bureaucratic interest groups’ role in the domestic political process, as well as the status of, prospects for, and controversies surrounding civil-military relations.



Throughout the volume, the authors attempt to assess the evolution of U.S. policy dispassionately and objectively, drawing on seminal scholarly works to bolster their arguments. In most cases they succeed. Occasionally, however, a perceptible, if unintentional, bias seeps into their narrative. For example, they assert that the difference between “insurgents” and “terrorists” is simply “a matter of semantics.” [p. 70] Given the current outbreak of Middle East violence ignited by Hamas’ October 7, 2023 terrorist attack, Israelis may beg to differ. Though asserting that the lack of a clear, universally accepted definition of terrorism leads to “the view that one person’s terrorist is another person’s freedom fighter,” the authors acknowledge that “such a perspective ignores the characteristics of terrorist acts and the impact on their victims. Furthermore, this view is based on convoluted moral principles that elevate assassination and murder to humanistic ventures.” [p. 77]

Perhaps a more illustrative example of subjectivity is when the authors discuss nuclear weapons and arms control. To wit, they contend that:

...the arms control regime that obtained as between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, and afterward between the United States and Russia, fell victim to a worsening in political relations between Moscow and Washington, challenges from a rising China, changes in technology and states’ aspirations for nuclear modernization, and a lack of political resolve to maintain or improve existing arms control agreements that not only improved transparency and supported deterrence stability, but also served as symbolic reaffirmations of leaders’ awareness that, as former US and Soviet leaders Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev jointly affirmed: a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. [p. 95]

Unfortunately, the above explanation of the contributory reasons for the demise of traditional arms control does not mention Soviet (and later, Russian) cheating on agreements, which undermined the transparency and predictability that the arms control process was supposed to provide. In addition, the notion that arms control agreements “supported deterrence stability” is belied by the actual results of the agreements themselves, which led the Soviet Union and Russia to exploit them for unilateral advantage while the United States was self-restrained—hardly a stabilizing development. Moreover, the Reagan-Gorbachev statement on the inability to win a nuclear war and the commitment to avoid one—reiterated most recently by President Biden—reflects a Western worldview that apparently was not shared by the Soviet Union (and given the multitude of recent outrageous Russian nuclear threats, may similarly be rejected by Russian officialdom).

In addition, the authors appear to praise the Biden Administration’s early extension of the New START Treaty [p. 98], noting that the arms control dialogue helped reduce political tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union through a process that promoted nuclear weapons restraint on both sides [p. 105]. Such a characterization is inconsistent with

historical realities, perhaps best expressed by former Secretary of Defense Harold Brown, who stated: “when we build, they build; when we cut, they (the Soviets) build.”<sup>1</sup>

Interestingly, the authors’ view that “Improvements in Russia’s conventional military forces after 2007 have reduced Russia’s dependency on nuclear coercion” [p. 110] seems oddly inconsistent with what has been a clear *expansion* of Russia’s reliance on nuclear weapons for coercive purposes, especially in light of Moscow’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Indeed, this has been recognized by multiple parties across the political spectrum, including the bipartisan Strategic Posture Commission, which stated that “Russia’s increasing reliance on nuclear weapons and potentially expanded nuclear arsenal are an unprecedented and growing threat to U.S. national security and potentially the U.S. homeland.”<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the authors appear to confuse correlation with causality by suggesting Russia’s illegal 2014 annexation of Crimea and its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 were responses to American support for the overthrow of the pro-Russian Viktor Yanukovich regime in Kyiv. [p. 341]

Also questionable is the authors’ suggestion that because of President Trump’s “abrogation” of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA—the so-called Iran nuclear deal—“a military confrontation (with Iran) cannot be ruled out.” [p. 120] In this regard, the authors seem to imply that Trump’s action was a mistake that could have potentially disastrous consequences. In addition, President Trump’s policies regarding the southern U.S. border are described as “draconian” and “harsh.” [pp. 260, 295]

These subjectively nuanced statements are relatively minor given the nearly 400 pages of detailed and well-informed tutorial on the workings of the policy making apparatus of the U.S. government. Despite ongoing concerns about the resilience of the American democratic experiment, the authors are bullish on American democracy, arguing that “Despite all the disadvantages open systems face in their dealings with authoritarian systems, rogue regimes, and international terrorists, in the long run democracy has the advantage.” [p. 134]

In their assessment of the struggle for policy primacy between the executive and legislative branches, the authors note disagreements over the use of covert operations and attempts by Congress to assert its authority over war powers. But they argue “The president

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<sup>1</sup> Testimony of Secretary of Defense Harold Brown before the Senate Budget Committee, February 21, 1979, in “The Administration’s Defense Budget,” *First Concurrent Resolution on the Budget—Fiscal Year 1980, Hearings Before the Committee on the Budget, United States Senate, Ninety-Sixth Congress, First Session, Volume II*, p. 111, available at [https://books.google.com/books?id=i0hLAQAIAAJ&pg=PA140&lpg=PA140&dq=%25252525E2%2525252580%252525259CSoviet+spending+has+shown+no+response+to+U.S.+restraint%25252525E2%2525252580%2525252594when+w e+build+they+build;+when+we+cut+they+build,%25252525E2%2525252580%252525259D&source=bl&ots=JqsyNhE5 QS&sig=ACfU3U0JZRL8YINyxK6YxNOQIOOg1ksbdQ&hl=en&ppis=\\_e&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi\\_2cvd3qvmAhUiqlkKHdQ3C-8Q6AEwAHoECAkQAg#v=onepage&q=%25252525E2%2525252580%252525259CSoviet%2525252520spending%2525252520has%2525252520shown%2525252520no%2525252520response%2525252520to%2525252520U.S.%2525252520restraint%25252525E2%2525252580%2525252594when%2525252520we%2525252520build%2525252520the y%2525252520build%252525253B%2525252520when%2525252520we%2525252520cut%2525252520they%2525252520build%252525252C%25252525E2%2525252580%252525259D&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=i0hLAQAIAAJ&pg=PA140&lpg=PA140&dq=%25252525E2%2525252580%252525259CSoviet+spending+has+shown+no+response+to+U.S.+restraint%25252525E2%2525252580%2525252594when+w e+build+they+build;+when+we+cut+they+build,%25252525E2%2525252580%252525259D&source=bl&ots=JqsyNhE5 QS&sig=ACfU3U0JZRL8YINyxK6YxNOQIOOg1ksbdQ&hl=en&ppis=_e&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi_2cvd3qvmAhUiqlkKHdQ3C-8Q6AEwAHoECAkQAg#v=onepage&q=%25252525E2%2525252580%252525259CSoviet%2525252520spending%2525252520has%2525252520shown%2525252520no%2525252520response%2525252520to%2525252520U.S.%2525252520restraint%25252525E2%2525252580%2525252594when%2525252520we%2525252520build%2525252520the y%2525252520build%252525253B%2525252520when%2525252520we%2525252520cut%2525252520they%2525252520build%252525252C%25252525E2%2525252580%252525259D&f=false)

<sup>2</sup> *America’s Strategic Posture: The Final Report of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States*, October 2023, pp. 7, 90, available at <https://www.ida.org/-/media/feature/publications/A/Am/Americas%20Strategic%20Posture/Strategic-Posture-Commission-Report.pdf>.



has the key role, the constitutional authority, and much latitude in foreign and national security policy” [p. 264] and that “Ultimately it is the president who is held responsible for national security policy, regardless of the actions of Congress.” [p. 262] Importantly, the authors also discuss the role of the media and a free press in a democracy, noting the rise of “adversarial journalism” and the impact “journalistic excesses” and perceived biases can have on policy implementation. [p. 279]

The book concludes with a call for visionary approaches to national security and an understanding of geostrategic theory that includes a recognition of other strategic cultures, ideologies, and philosophical systems, as well as the impact of modern technological advances. It argues that “the focus of US policy and strategy, in geostrategic terms, should be to stabilize balances or create equilibrium among competing ideologies and systems in order to establish a basis for resolving conflicts through alliances.” [p. 340] It notes that “Alliances can serve as roadblocks (to the expansionist goals of totalitarian or authoritarian systems) as well as containment, deterrent, and defensive forces.” [pp. 341-342] While the authors acknowledge the need to revise and reform the structural aspects of national security policy making, they conclude that it falls upon the president to provide the necessary vision and direction to adapt U.S. national security policy to the contemporary and emerging challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

*US National Security: Policymakers, Processes, and Politics* is an impressive volume and should be required reading for students of American politics and government. Its explanations are clear, the currency of its examples add context and value, and the book’s sources are extensive and well documented. Anyone interested in the workings of the U.S. government can benefit from this book, and (to the extent they still exist in physical form) it deserves a place of prominence on the bookshelves of college and university libraries.

*Reviewed by David J. Trachtenberg  
National Institute for Public Policy*

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**Thomas Kent *How Russia Loses: Hubris and Miscalculation in Putin’s Kremlin* (Washington, D.C.: The Jamestown Foundation, 2023), 379 pp. (available at <https://jamestown.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/How-Russia-Loses-Web-Version.pdf>).**

In his latest book, *How Russia Loses: Hubris and Miscalculation in Putin’s Kremlin*, Thomas Kent analyzes a lesser-known aspect of Russia’s influence operations, namely those that were unsuccessful. While this topic receives less attention within the general discourse, its study ought to be a quintessential part of a comprehensive strategy to defeat the Russian Federation’s belligerent strategy against the West. Kent draws on his decades of experience in the communications field and deep knowledge of Russia. Expert interviews provide additional nuance and depth to a complicated subject. Together, these elements make for a

riveting read and offer a fresh perspective on a topic in which one usually does not indulge in optimism.

Amid the ever-deteriorating national security environment and the West's increasing domestic polarization, fostered in part by Moscow's aggressive exploitation of modern technologies and social media, it is easy to forget that failures are as known to Russia's propaganda machine as successes. Moreover, Moscow's failures share common attributes that, with a little bit of ingenuity, the West may be able to exploit to become more effective in countering Russia's actions.

Kent examines six case studies in which Russia's aggressive leaders squandered away what should have been their advantage. They are: Russia's activities in Ukraine and later its full-scale invasion that turned an overall friendly state to Russia's enemy for generations; the case of mismanaging relations with the Republic of South Africa; Moscow's blundered launch of the Sputnik V vaccine; missteps that led to delays in building the now defunct Nord Stream 2 pipeline; the inability to effectively compete with the West and sway Macedonia from its pro-Western course; and, a short-sightedness in underestimating Ecuador's pro-Western course. Each of these failures cost Russia political and diplomatic prestige plus billions of dollars in mismanaged resources.

These cases shared one or more traits that contributed to or caused Russia's failure to achieve its objectives. For example, Russia tends to focus on building relations with a thin layer of top political and business figures, which also means that its political fortunes can easily change whenever these figures leave the picture. Such were the cases of Russia investing in relationships with Nikola Gruevski in Macedonia, Jacob Zuma in South Africa, and Rafael Correa in Ecuador. Russia's focus on advancing its self-interest and lack of prioritization of public diplomacy and aid leads it to view relationships with other countries narrowly and undermine the potential for building a lasting beneficial partnership. Russia also often overestimates its own strength and underestimates the strength of democratic institutions, civil society activists, and Western nations. Russia tends to be surprised and unable to effectively respond when these institutions show their decisiveness, as they did in thwarting Russia's campaign to stop Macedonia joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Russia's contempt of international organizations, independent regulators, and legal processes leads it to underestimate obstacles to reaching its goals, particularly those that are controversial, as was the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. Russia's conflicting goals, driven by Vladimir Putin's desire to concentrate power, and his commitment to autocratic nationalism, is not universally appealing and diminishes Russia's foreign policy's cultural appeal. Each of these weaknesses offers an avenue for countering Russia's influence and frustrating its foreign policy goals.

If there one disconcerting aspect to the book, it has nothing to do with the author's masterful handling of the subject, but rather with the grim realization that more often than not, Russia's ineptitude, rather than the West's counter-efforts, is more responsible for its

foreign policy failures. Kent's recommendations are a good start to impose discipline on the currently disjointed enterprise of countering Russia's malicious influence.

Reviewed by Michaela Dodge  
National Institute for Public Policy

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**Ankit Panda, *Indo-Pacific Missile Arsenals: Avoiding Spirals and Mitigating Escalation Risks* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2023), 136 pages.**

To what extent is the proliferation of missiles in the Indo-Pacific the cause or effect of worsening political relations? Many analysts within the realist theory of international relations would agree with the scholar Colin Gray, who stated, "States do not fight because they are heavily armed; rather they are heavily armed because they judge war to be a serious possibility."<sup>3</sup> While weapons can be signals or manifestations of a state's intentions, the root causes of political tension and war are to be found less in the weapons themselves and more in the degree of aggression and revisionism of a state's leadership.

Other scholars, such as Ankit Panda, do not appear willing to cede the point and are focusing their analyses on the broad danger of unintentional escalation—encompassing inadvertent escalation and accidents. In an argument reminiscent of Thomas Schelling's "threat that leaves something to chance," Panda maintains that as the missile arsenals of states like North Korea, Taiwan, Japan, China, and the United States grow, so too do the pathways for unintentional escalation—even if all sides do not wish to engage in conflict. Panda's purpose in his new monograph *Indo-Pacific Missile Arsenals*, is to identify how "proliferation could intensify already complex security dilemmas and heighten nuclear escalation risks in crises." (p. 1)

The report begins with a useful taxonomy of missile types present or under development in the region, with particular emphasis on missiles below intercontinental range. The dizzying array of missile types and sub-types is indicative of the wide variety of missions each state envisions for its missile arsenal. Panda provides a fairly comprehensive summary of each state's missile types and the primary drivers behind their development and procurement. Panda restricts the scope of his analysis to the major players in the region with missiles, the United States, China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, and those with ambitions to become major missile procurers, namely Australia.

While Panda saves most of his commentary on the strategic implications of these missile-related developments for the final third of the report, there are a number of comments in each country profile that foreshadows his conclusions and recommendations. For instance, he states that North Korea and South Korea "... have strong incentives to shoot first under

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<sup>3</sup> Colin S. Gray, *Weapons Don't Make War: Policy, Strategy, and Military Technology* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1993), p. 55.

certain circumstances and increasingly credible missile capabilities to make good on their plans in a crisis.” (p. 23) Or, “A positive feature of the planned deployments of new ground-launched U.S. Army missiles is that they are all unlikely, initially, to have the capability to range deep within China, where they might otherwise hold nuclear weapons facilities, launchers, and other related infrastructure at risk.” (p. 57)

The common thread through these and other comments are that the weapons themselves, or more precisely, their proliferation, is the cause of growing political tensions and the potential cause of inadvertent escalation during a crisis or wartime. Realists in the mold of Colin Gray will likely wince at this assertion since it is not at all clear the potential increase in the risk of inadvertent escalation (far from a certainty itself) outweighs the potential increase in maintaining deterrence against revisionist states like China and North Korea. Panda does not attempt a net assessment of the risks and benefits of increasingly numerous and capable allied missile arsenals in the Indo-Pacific. Instead, he maintains that a mix of confidence building measures could mitigate at least some portion of the inadvertent escalation risks.

In his words, “The growing pursuit of conventional counterforce strategies presents serious escalation risks [incentive for preemption] that continue to be largely discounted by planners and policymakers.” (p. 63) And, “Regional policymakers should understand that because large-scale conventional war is the most likely immediate antecedent to nuclear war and because missiles are likely to play an especially prominent role in any large-scale conventional war in Asia, measures of negotiated and unilateral restraint around missile capabilities can substantially contribute to reducing nuclear risks.” (pp. 79-80)

Panda states that the risk reduction measures he recommends need not weaken deterrence, and indeed, the bulk of his recommendations concern increased dialogue between partners (the United States and allies) and adversaries (the United States and China) about the risk of inadvertent escalation. For Panda, these dialogues would ideally lead to political commitments like missile launch notification regimes and eventually a verifiable arms control agreement that limits at least some missile types. To his credit, Panda is not sanguine about the chances for arms control in the foreseeable future, but as before, he takes it as a given that some arms control is better than no arms control when this may not be the case.

The growing proliferation of missiles in the Indo-Pacific, and subsequent calls for restraint through arms control, bears some resemblance to the international conditions shaping the region 100 years ago. Japanese aggression combined with the U.S. and its allies’ desire to avoid arms races produced the 1922 Washington Naval Treaty that constrained the number of capital ships—the primary means for projecting military power then. The technical solution (arms control) to the technical problem (increasing numbers of capital ships) did nothing to diminish irrepressible Japanese revisionism, the root cause of conflict in World War II in the Pacific. Those capital ships that were said to be the cause of political tensions were in fact most needed for deterrence—a fact the allies discovered too late.

The parallels with missiles today in the Indo-Pacific are not perfect, but similar enough that they should cause the reader to pause before endorsing Panda’s ideal goal of binding

arms control treaties on missiles in the region. That said, Panda's informational summaries on missile types in each country are valuable contributions to the literature and provide the reader with a good overview of a particular subset of increasingly important military capabilities. The recommendations on increased dialogue between adversaries on inadvertent escalation are sensible, but the fact that even that seems out of reach should indicate that states like China and North Korea may not hold the same Western values about avoiding strategic instability in all cases.

*Reviewed by Matthew R. Costlow  
National Institute for Public Policy*



## DOCUMENTATION

This Issue’s “Documentation” section includes relevant select excerpts from the Fiscal Year 2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The law authorizes defense funding and provides Congress an opportunity to set or comment on policy on a range of important defense and national-security issues. This year, these issues include U.S. missile defense policy, alliances in the Indo-Pacific, and nuclear matters, among many others. For example, the NDAA contains a provision to repeal the requirement for a review of nuclear deterrence postures. The *Journal* also features RADM Williams’s submitted statement from the House Armed Service’s Strategic Forces Subcommittee’s hearing on regional missile defense capabilities. The statement provides an overview of U.S. theater missile defense programs. Lastly, the “Documentation” section brings to a reader’s attention the Estonian Ministry of Defense’s proposal for a strategy to achieve Ukraine’s victory and Russia’s defeat. The proposal provides important guidelines behind which the West could unite in order to accomplish these vital objectives.

### **Document No. 1. Fiscal Year 2024 National Defense Authorization Act, Conference Report, Select Excerpts**

#### **SEC. 1301. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON DEFENSE ALLIANCES AND PARTNERSHIPS IN THE INDO-PACIFIC REGION.**

It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of Defense should continue efforts that strengthen United States defense alliances and partnerships in the Indo-Pacific region so as to further the comparative advantage of the United States in strategic competition with the People’s Republic of China, including by—

(1) enhancing cooperation with Japan, consistent with the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security Between the United States of America and Japan, signed at Washington, January 19, 1960, including by developing advanced military capabilities, fostering interoperability across all domains, and improving sharing of information and intelligence;

(2) reinforcing the United States alliance with the Republic of Korea, including by maintaining the presence of approximately 28,500 members of the United States Armed Forces deployed to the country and affirming the United States commitment to extended deterrence using the full range of United States defense capabilities, and with deeper coordination on nuclear deterrence as highlighted in the Washington Declaration adopted by President Biden and President Yoon Suk Yeol during President Yoon Suk Yeol’s state visit on April 26, 2023, consistent with the Mutual Defense Treaty Between the United States and the Republic of Korea, signed at Washington, October 1, 1953, in support of the shared objective of a peaceful and stable Korean Peninsula;

(3) fostering bilateral and multilateral cooperation with Australia, consistent with the Security Treaty Between Australia, New Zealand, and the United States of America, signed at San Francisco, September 1, 1951, and through the partnership among Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States (commonly known as “AUKUS”)—

(A) to advance shared security objectives;



(B) to accelerate the fielding of advanced military capabilities; and

(C) to build the capacity of emerging partners;

(4) advancing United States alliances with the Philippines and Thailand and United States partnerships with other partners in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to enhance maritime domain awareness, promote sovereignty and territorial integrity, leverage technology and promote innovation, and support an open, inclusive, and rules-based regional architecture;

(5) broadening United States engagement with India, including through the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue—

(A) to advance the shared objective of a free and open Indo-Pacific region through bilateral and multilateral engagements and participation in military exercises, expanded defense trade, and collaboration on humanitarian aid and disaster response; and

(B) to enable greater cooperation on maritime security;

(6) strengthening the United States partnership with Taiwan, consistent with the Three Communiques, the Taiwan Relations Act (Public Law 96– 8; 22 U.S.C. 3301 et seq.), and the Six Assurances, with the goal of improving Taiwan’s defensive capabilities and promoting peaceful cross-strait relations;

(7) reinforcing the status of the Republic of Singapore as a Major Security Cooperation Partner of the United States and continuing to strengthen defense and security cooperation between the military forces of the Republic of Singapore and the Armed Forces of the United States, including through participation in combined exercises and training;

(8) engaging with the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, and other Pacific Island countries with the goal of strengthening regional security and addressing issues of mutual concern, including protecting fisheries from illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing; and

(9) collaborating with Canada, the United Kingdom, France, and other members of the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to build connectivity and advance a shared vision for the region that is principled, long-term, and anchored in democratic resilience.

#### **SEC. 1631. ESTABLISHMENT OF MAJOR FORCE PROGRAM FOR NUCLEAR COMMAND, CONTROL, AND COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMS.**

Chapter 9 of title 10, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section: “**§ 239e. Nuclear command, control, and communications: major force program and budget assessment.**”

“(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF MAJOR FORCE PROGRAM.—The Secretary of Defense shall establish a unified major force program for nuclear command, control, and communications programs pursuant to section 222(b) of this title to prioritize such programs in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Defense and national security.

“(b) BUDGET ASSESSMENT.—(1) The Secretary shall include with the defense budget materials for each of fiscal years 2025 through 2030 a report on the budget for nuclear command, control, and communications programs of the Department of Defense.

[...]

**SEC. 1633. AMENDMENT TO ANNUAL REPORT ON THE PLAN FOR THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS STOCKPILE, NUCLEAR WEAPONS COMPLEX, NUCLEAR WEAPONS DELIVERY SYSTEMS, AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS COMMAND AND CONTROL SYSTEMS.**

Section 492a of title 10, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(d) INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT BY UNITED STATES STRATEGIC COMMAND.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 150 days after the submission to Congress of the budget of the President under section 1105(a) of title 31, for each fiscal year the Commander of United States Strategic Command shall complete an independent assessment of any operational effects of the sufficiency of the execution, as of the date of the assessment, of the acquisition, construction, and recapitalization programs of the Department of Defense and the National Nuclear Security Administration to modernize the nuclear forces of the United States and meet current and future deterrence requirements.

“(2) CONTENTS.—Each assessment required under paragraph (1) shall include an evaluation of the ongoing execution of modernization programs associated with—

“(A) the nuclear weapons design, production, and sustainment infrastructure;

“(B) the nuclear weapons stockpile;

“(C) the delivery systems for nuclear weapons; and

“(D) the nuclear command, control, and communications system.

[...]

**SEC. 1634. MATTERS RELATING TO THE ACQUISITION AND DEPLOYMENT OF THE SENTINEL INTERCONTINENTAL BALLISTIC MISSILE WEAPON SYSTEM.**

[...]

(b) ASSESSMENT FOR NEEDED OR MODIFIED ACQUISITION AUTHORITIES.—

(1) ASSESSMENT REQUIRED.—The Secretary of the Air Force shall conduct an assessment of the Sentinel weapon system program to determine if any existing, modified, or new acquisition authorities could be used in future years to—

(A) ensure the program meets current timelines; or



(B) ensure the defense industrial base can adequately plan for and deliver components, subsystems, and systems in accordance with the integrated master schedule.

(2) MULTI-YEAR PROCUREMENT AUTHORITY.—

In conducting the assessment required under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall evaluate the potential need for multi-year procurement authority.

(3) REPORT.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Air Force shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report on the findings of the assessment required under paragraph (1). The report shall include—

(A) an identification of all authorities covered by the assessment;

(B) a determination of the effect of each such authority on the successful delivery of initial- and full-operational capability to the Sentinel weapon system program; and

(C) in the case of any new authority, an identification of the year during which the authority should be granted.

**SEC. 1636. STUDY OF WEAPONS PROGRAMS THAT ALLOW ARMED FORCES TO ADDRESS HARD AND DEEPLY BURIED TARGETS.**

Section 1674 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (Public Law 117-263) is amended—

(1) in subsection (e), by inserting “or fiscal year 2024” after “2023”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(g) AUTHORIZATION.—For fiscal year 2024, the Secretary of Energy may carry out activities related to the development and modification of a nuclear weapon to provide near-term capabilities that address portions of the strategy required by subsection (b)(3) using amounts authorized and appropriated for the sustainment of the B83-1 nuclear gravity bomb.”.

**SEC. 1637. REPEAL OF REQUIREMENT FOR REVIEW OF NUCLEAR DETERRENCE POSTURES.**

Section 1753 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 (Public Law 116-92; 133 Stat. 1852) is repealed.

**SEC. 1638. RETENTION OF CAPABILITY TO REDEPLOY MULTIPLE INDEPENDENTLY TARGETABLE REENTRY VEHICLES.**

Section 1057 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 (Public Law 113-66; 10 U.S.C. 495 note) is amended by inserting “and Sentinel” after “Minuteman III” both places it appears.

**SEC. 1639. AUTHORIZATION TO ESTABLISH TECHNOLOGY TRANSITION PROGRAM FOR STRATEGIC NUCLEAR DETERRENCE.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Commander of Air Force Global Strike Command may, through the use of a partnership intermediary, establish a program—

(1) to carry out technology transition, digital engineering projects, and other innovation activities supporting the Air Force nuclear enterprise; and

(2) to identify capabilities for the Air Force nuclear enterprise that have the potential to generate life-cycle cost savings and provide data-driven approaches to resource allocation.

[...]

**SEC. 1640. MATTERS RELATING TO THE NUCLEAR-ARMED, SEA-LAUNCHED CRUISE MISSILE.**

(a) PROGRAM TREATMENT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense, acting through the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, shall—

(1) establish a program for the development of a nuclear-armed, sea-launched cruise missile capability;

(2) designate such program as a major defense acquisition program (as defined in section 4201 of title 10, United States Code) for which the milestone decision authority (as defined in section 4251 of such title) is the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment;

(3) initiate a nuclear weapon project for the W80–4 ALT warhead, at phase 6.2 of the phase 6.X process (relating to feasibility study and down select), to adapt such warhead for use with the capability described in paragraph (1);

(4) submit to the National Nuclear Security Administration a formal request, through the Nuclear Weapons Council, requesting that the Administration participate in and support the W80–4 ALT warhead project described in paragraph (3); and

(5) designate the Department of the Navy as the military department to lead the W80–4 ALT nuclear weapon project for the Department of Defense.

[...]

(b) INITIAL OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY.—The Secretary of Defense and the program and project described subsection (a) achieve initial operational capability, as defined jointly by the Secretary of the Navy and the Commander of the United States Strategic Command, by not later than September 30, 2034.

[...]

(c) **LIMITATION ON AUTHORITY TO APPROVE PRODUCTION.**—The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment may not approve a Full Rate Production Decision or authorize Full Scale Production (as those terms are defined in the memorandum of the Nuclear Weapons Council titled “Procedural Guidelines for the Phase 6.X Process” and dated April 19, 2000) for the W80–4 ALT project until authorized by Congress.

[...]

(e) **ASSESSMENT AND REPORT.**—

[...]

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of the Navy shall complete an assessment, in response to the courses of action developed by the Joint Staff in response to the report of the Secretary of Defense under subsection 1642(a) of the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (Public Law 117–263; 136 Stat. 2945), of the actions required to effectively deploy a nuclear sea launched cruise missile from a Virginia class submarine and such other platforms as the Secretary determines appropriate.

[...]

#### **SEC. 1641. REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO OPERATIONAL SILOS FOR THE SENTINEL INTERCONTINENTAL BALLISTIC MISSILE.**

The Secretary of the Air Force shall refurbish and make operable not fewer than 150 silos for the LGM–35A Sentinel intercontinental ballistic missile at each of the following locations:

- (1) Francis E. Warren Air Force Base, Laramie County, Wyoming.
- (2) Malmstrom Air Force Base, Cascade County, Montana.
- (3) Minot Air Force Base, Ward County, North Dakota.

#### **SEC. 1642. LONG-TERM SUSTAINMENT OF SENTINEL ICBM GUIDANCE SYSTEM.**

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Prior to issuing a Milestone C decision for the program to develop the LGM–35A Sentinel intercontinental ballistic missile system (referred to in this section as the “Sentinel”), the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment shall certify to the congressional defense committees that there is a long-term capability in place to maintain and modernize the guidance system of the Sentinel over the full life cycle of the Sentinel.

[...]

**SEC. 1644. OPERATIONAL TIMELINE FOR STRATEGIC AUTOMATED COMMAND AND CONTROL SYSTEM.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Air Force shall develop a replacement of the Strategic Automated Command and Control System (SACCS) by not later than the date on which the LGM-35A Sentinel intercontinental ballistic missile program reaches initial operational capability.

[...]

**SEC. 1645. PILOT PROGRAM ON DEVELOPMENT OF REENTRY VEHICLES AND RELATED SYSTEMS.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Air Force may carry out a pilot program, to be known as the “Reentry Vehicle Flight Test Bed Program”, to assess the feasibility of providing regular flight test opportunities that support the development of reentry vehicles to—

- (1) facilitate technology upgrades tested in a realistic flight environment;
- (2) provide an enduring, high-cadence test bed to mature technologies for planned reentry vehicles; and
- (3) transition technologies developed under other programs and projects relating to long-range ballistic or hypersonic strike missiles from the research and development or prototyping phases into operational use.

[...]

**SEC. 1646. PROHIBITION ON REDUCTION OF THE INTERCONTINENTAL BALLISTIC MISSILES OF THE UNITED STATES.**

(a) PROHIBITION.—Except as provided in subsection (b), none of the funds authorized to be appropriated by this Act or otherwise made available for fiscal year 2024 for the Department of Defense may be obligated or expended for the following, and the Department may not otherwise take any action to do the following:

- (1) Reduce, or prepare to reduce, the responsiveness or alert level of the intercontinental ballistic missiles of the United States.
- (2) Reduce, or prepare to reduce, the quantity of deployed intercontinental ballistic missiles of the United States to a number less than 400.

[...]

**SEC. 1648. CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION OF DECISION TO DELAY STRATEGIC DELIVERY SYSTEM TEST EVENT.**

(a) NOTIFICATION.—Not later than five days after the Secretary of Defense makes a decision to delay a scheduled test event for a strategic delivery system, the Secretary shall submit to the congressional defense committees written notice of such decision.

(b) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (3), not later than 60 days after the submission of a notification required under subsection (a) with respect to a decision to delay a scheduled test event, the Secretary shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report on the decision.

[...]

#### **SEC. 1649. CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION OF NUCLEAR COOPERATION BETWEEN RUSSIA AND CHINA.**

If the Commander of the United States Strategic Command determines, after consultation with the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, that militarily significant cooperation between the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China related to nuclear or strategic capabilities is likely to occur or has likely occurred, the Commander shall submit to the congressional defense committees a notification of such determination that includes—

(1) a description of the military significant cooperation; and

(2) an assessment of the implication of such cooperation for the United States with respect to nuclear deterrence, extended deterrence, assurance, and defense.

#### **SEC. 1650. PLAN FOR DECREASING THE TIME TO UPLOAD ADDITIONAL WARHEADS TO THE INTERCONTINENTAL BALLISTIC MISSILE FLEET.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Air Force, in coordination with the Commander of the United States Strategic Command and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Space Policy, shall develop a plan to decrease the amount of time required to upload additional warheads to the intercontinental ballistic missile force in the event Presidential direction is given to exercise such a plan.

[...]

(b) ELEMENTS.—The plan required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) An assessment of the storage capacity of weapons storage areas and any weapons generation facilities at covered bases, including the capacity of each covered base to store additional warheads.

(2) An assessment of the current nuclear warhead transportation capacity and workforce of the National Nuclear Security Administration and associated timelines for transporting additional nuclear warheads to covered bases.

(3) An evaluation of the capacity and limitations of the maintenance squadrons and security forces at covered bases and the associated timelines for adding warheads to the intercontinental ballistic missile force.

(4) An identification of actions that would address any identified limitations to upload additional warheads.

(5) An evaluation of courses of actions to upload additional warheads to a portion of the intercontinental ballistic missile force.

(6) An assessment of the feasibility and advisability of initiating immediate deployment of W78 warheads to a single wing of the intercontinental ballistic missile force as a hedge against delay of the LGM-35A Sentinel intercontinental ballistic missile.

(7) Any policy considerations that would need to be addressed, including any guidance and direction that would be required, to execute the plan.

(8) An identification of all funding required to carry out actions identified in paragraphs (4) and (5).

[...]

#### **SEC. 1663. NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE POLICY.**

Subsection (a) of section 1681 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (Public Law 114-328; 10 U.S.C. 4205 note) is amended to read as follows:

“(a) POLICY.—It is the policy of the United States—

“(1) to research, develop, test, procure, deploy, and sustain, with funding subject to the annual authorization of appropriations for National Missile Defense, systems that provide effective, layered missile defense capabilities to defeat increasingly complex missile threats in all phases of flight; and

“(2) to rely on nuclear deterrence to address more sophisticated and larger quantity near-peer intercontinental missile threats to the homeland of the United States.”.

#### **SEC. 1666. PROGRAMS TO ACHIEVE INITIAL AND FULL OPERATIONAL CAPABILITIES FOR THE GLIDE PHASE INTERCEPTOR PROGRAM.**

(a) PROGRAM TO ACHIEVE INITIAL OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense, acting through the Director of the Missile Defense Agency and in coordination with the officials specified in subsection (d), shall carry out a program to achieve, by not later than December 31, 2029, an initial operational capability for the Glide Phase Interceptor as described in paragraph (2).

(2) REQUIRED CAPABILITIES.—For purposes of paragraph (1), the Glide Phase Interceptor program shall be considered to have achieved initial operational capability if—

(A) the Glide Phase Interceptor is capable of defeating, in the glide phase, any endo-atmospheric hypersonic vehicles that are known to the Department of Defense and fielded as of the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(B) not fewer than 12 Glide Phase Interceptor missiles have been fielded.

(b) PROGRAM TO ACHIEVE FULL OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY.—

(1) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Defense, acting through the Director of the Missile Defense Agency and in coordination with the officials specified in subsection (d), shall carry out a program to achieve, by not later than December 31, 2032, full operational capability for the Glide Phase Interceptor as described in paragraph (2).

(2) REQUIRED CAPABILITIES.—For purposes of paragraph (1), the Glide Phase Interceptor program shall be considered to have achieved full operational capability if—

(A) the Glide Phase Interceptor is capable of defeating, in the glide phase, any endo-atmospheric hypersonic vehicles—

(i) that are known to the Department of Defense and fielded as of the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(ii) that the Department of Defense expects to be fielded before the end of 2040;

(B) not fewer than 24 Glide Phase Interceptor missiles have been fielded; and

(C) the Glide Phase Interceptor has the ability to be operated collaboratively with space based or terrestrial sensors that the Department of Defense expects to be deployed before the end of 2032.

[...]

#### **SEC. 1668. LIMITATION ON AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS FOR OFFICE OF COST ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM EVALUATION UNTIL SUBMISSION OF REPORT ON MISSILE DEFENSE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.**

Of the funds authorized to be appropriated by this Act or otherwise made available for fiscal year 2024 for operation and maintenance, Defense-wide, for the Office of Cost Assessment and program evaluation, not more than 50 percent may be obligated or expended until the date on which the Secretary of Defense submits to the congressional defense committees the report required by section 1675(b) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022 (Public Law 117-81).

#### **SEC. 1669. STRATEGY FOR INTEGRATED AIR AND MISSILE DEFENSE OF HAWAII AND THE INDO-PACIFIC REGION.**

(a) STRATEGY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commander of United States Indo-Pacific Command, in coordination with the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, the Commander of United States Northern Command, the Director of the Missile Defense Agency, and the Director of the Joint Integrated Air and Missile Defense Organization, shall develop a comprehensive strategy for developing, acquiring, and operationally establishing an integrated air and missile defense architecture for area of responsibility of the United States Indo-Pacific Command.

[...]

**SEC. 1670. REPORT ON POTENTIAL ENHANCEMENTS TO INTEGRATED AIR AND MISSILE DEFENSE CAPABILITIES IN EUROPE.**

19 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 240 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the officials specified in subsection (c), shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report on potential enhancements to U.S. and allied air and missile defense capabilities that could contribute to the integrated air and missile defense capability of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

[...]

**SEC. 1671. INDEPENDENT ANALYSIS OF SPACE-BASED MISSILE DEFENSE CAPABILITY.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense, acting through the Director of the Missile Defense Agency, shall seek to enter into an arrangement with an appropriate federally funded research and development center to update the study referred to in subsection (c).

[...]

**SEC. 1690. RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS ON MULTIPOLAR DETERRENCE AND ESCALATION DYNAMICS.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall seek to enter into an agreement with a university affiliated research center with expertise in strategic deterrence to conduct research and analysis on multipolar deterrence and escalation dynamics.

[...]

**SEC. 3117. PLUTONIUM MODERNIZATION PROGRAM MANAGEMENT.**

Section 4219 of the Atomic Energy Defense Act (50 U.S.C. 2538a), as amended by section 3116, is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(h) Not later than 570 days after the date of the enactment of this subsection, the Administrator for Nuclear Security shall ensure that the plutonium modernization program established by the Office of Defense Programs of the National Nuclear Security Administration, or any subsequently developed program designed to meet the requirements under subsection (a), is managed in accordance with the best



practices for schedule development and cost estimating of the Government Accountability Office.”.

**SEC. 3126. LIMITATION ON AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS PENDING SUBMITTAL OF SPEND PLAN FOR DEVELOPMENT OF SEA-LAUNCHED CRUISE MISSILE WARHEAD.**

Of the funds authorized to be appropriated by this Act or otherwise made available for fiscal year 2024 for the Office of the Administrator for Nuclear Security, not more than 50 percent may be obligated or expended until the date on which the Administrator submits to the congressional defense committees the spend plan for the warhead associated with the sea-launched cruise missile required by section 1642(d) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (Public Law 117–263; 136 Stat. 2946).

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**Document No. 2. Demand for Theater Missile Defense Assets, Statement by Rear Admiral Douglas L. Williams, USN, Director (Acting), Missile Defense Agency, Before the House Armed Services Committee Strategic Forces Subcommittee December 7, 2023**

Chairman Lamborn, Ranking Member Moulton, and distinguished Members of the subcommittee, it is an honor to appear before you today to discuss the demand for U.S. theater missile defenses. The Missile Defense Agency (MDA) mission is to design, develop, and deploy a layered Missile Defense System to defend the United States and its deployed forces, allies, and international partners from increasingly diverse missile threats. Threats posed by missile delivery systems are likely to continue increasing and grow more complex. Adversary missile systems are showing more maneuver capability as well as greater survivability, reliability, and accuracy. MDA has already delivered significant capabilities to the Warfighter and is developing, delivering, sustaining, and improving affordable, proven, and leading-edge capabilities to counter advanced ballistic and hypersonic missiles in different regions of the world. In addition, MDA is actively supporting U.S. Central Command and our regional partners with analysis and assessments to detect, track, and intercept threats in the region.

Since its inception in 2002, MDA has developed numerous missile defense capabilities to enhance the regional defense posture of geographic Combatant Commanders. Utilizing its non-standard acquisition authorities, MDA has been able to quickly develop, procure, and field missile defense systems. In recent years, the Defense Department, with considerable input from the Combatant Commands, Services and MDA, has analyzed the missile defense system capability transfer process and agreed the current approach is the best course of action for the Department as outlined in the Department’s May 2020 Report to Congress titled: “Transition of Ballistic Missile Defense Program Elements to the Military Departments.” Under the agreed-to construct, once a missile defense system has been

fielded to a military department, the military department mans, operates, and sustains the service-common equipment of the missile defense system for the life cycle of the system. MDA modernizes, procures, and provides sustainment support of the missile defense system-unique equipment for the life cycle of system. This process is codified in cost-sharing agreements between the military departments and MDA. This construct enables MDA to continue to upgrade systems over time to achieve, for example, Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) -PATRIOT integration, which enables Warfighters to improve self-defense, conserve interceptors, and enlarge coverage areas.

Over the years, MDA has transitioned operations and sustainment of critical theater missile defense capabilities to the military departments, including the Navy's Standard Missile (SM)-3, the Army's THAAD system and Army/Navy Transportable Radar Surveillance and Control – Model 2 (AN/TPY-2), and Space Force's ground-based radars, such as the Upgraded Early Warning Radars and Long Range Discrimination Radar for homeland defense. In the event of any future regional conflict, these systems will play a crucial role in protecting both U.S. and allied forces and key regional infrastructure.

### **Current Theater Missile Defense Capabilities**

The Missile Defense System requires a Command and Control, Battle Management and Communication (C2BMC) system that operates in a Joint, multi-domain environment and connects ground, air, sea, and space sensors and shooters. This globally deployed system interfaces with Joint, Army, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, NATO and international commands and provides continuous, real-time Missile Defense Command and Control, and Battle Management operations to six Combatant Commands. It also integrates U.S. and coalition operations with allies and partners. The C2BMC program enables the U.S. President, Secretary of Defense, and Combatant Commanders at strategic, regional and operational levels to systematically plan missile defense operations, collectively see the battle develop, and dynamically manage networked sensors and weapons systems to achieve global and regional mission objectives. C2BMC provides a common operating missile defense picture for decision makers and the Combatant Commands and is capable of generating and distributing fire control quality data to enable, for example, Launch- and Engage-on- Remote capabilities. The Warfighter also uses this system to understand what is happening in real time in current conflict zones, such as Ukraine and the Middle East.

MDA jointly develops Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) weapon systems for theater defense with the U.S. Navy. Globally deployed ship-based and land-based Aegis BMD capabilities are critical to the Nation's defense of our deployed forces, allies, and partners against short-, medium-, and intermediate-range missile threats. There are currently 49 Aegis BMD-capable ships with Aegis Ashore sites in Romania and Poland.

The SM-3, which uses hit-to-kill technologies, engages the target in space and is a key part of a layered theater missile defense architecture. The SM-3 Block (Blk) IA/IB provides BMD mission capabilities across Fleet areas of responsibility. The SM-3 also is a critical part of the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) Phases 1 and 2, which is the U.S.

contribution to NATO missile defenses. The SM-3 Blk IA/IB capability also support the defensive capability of Aegis Ashore.

SM-3 Blk IA/IB capabilities were first deployed in 2006 (for Blk IA) and 2013 (for Blk IB). This interceptor can be launched from BMD-capable ships as well as Aegis Ashore sites to defeat short- and medium-range ballistic missile threats. In October 2023, Flight Test Aegis Weapon System (FTM)-48 demonstrated an Aegis Weapon System Integrated Air and Missile Defense raid scenario consisting of BMD engagements of two short-range ballistic missile targets presented as a raid with two SM-3 Blk IA interceptors, while concurrently demonstrating Anti-Air Warfare engagements of two BQM-177A targets. This test was the first BMD raid engagement with SM-3 interceptors and was accomplished with the longest fielded SM-3 (Blk IA) variant, demonstrating residual capability against raids. Japan is currently a Foreign Military Sales (FMS) partner for the SM-3.

SM-3 Blk IIA capabilities, first deployed in 2021, were cooperatively developed by the United States and Japan to address rogue nation missile threats. SM-3 Blk IIA expands ship operational areas and increases the areas within which we can engage threats and the types of missiles the Navy can engage. Aegis Ashore Poland and the Blk IIA capability supports EPAA Phase 3. Engage-on-remote technologies further increase the Blk IIA engagement battlespace. The SM-3 Blk IIA increases capability in Defense of Japan scenarios and will eventually replace Japan's Blk IA inventory, along with FMS Blk IBs. Japan Flight Test Aegis Weapon System (JFTM)-07 was a four- event Japanese-funded FMS flight test campaign that was successfully executed in November 2022 to support the Japan Maritime Defense Force BMD modernization and certification of the Japanese Aegis Weapon System Baseline J7. All four JFTM-07 events were successfully executed and support the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force combat system certification of the SM-3 Blk IIA deployment and qualification of the Maya Class Destroyers. JFTM-07 was a significant milestone in the cooperation between Japan and the U.S. in the area of missile defense.

Aegis Ashore is a land-based variant of the Aegis BMD weapon system. Aegis Ashore Missile Defense System Romania (AAMDSRO) is located in Deveselu and is the first delivered and operational Aegis Ashore Missile Defense System. AAMDSRO was delivered to the U.S. Navy in May 2016 and joined the NATO Operational Capability in July 2016. AAMDSRO completes the EPAA Phase 2, which protects Europe against medium- and intermediate-range ballistic missiles and provides capability to launch SM-3 Blk IA, IB, and IIA missiles.

Aegis Ashore Poland, located in Redzikowo, was added to the Operational Capability Baseline in September 2023 with upgrades over the original design and state-of-the-art Integrated Electronic Security System. Aegis Ashore Poland was delivered to the U.S. Navy on October 1, 2023 for operational use and maintenance.

The Navy will formally accept Aegis Ashore Poland into their inventory on December 15, 2023. This will complete EPAA Phase 3, originally established in 2009. The Navy will install additional upgrades at Aegis Ashore Poland through May 2024, after which it will transfer to NATO in July 2024 for command and control of Aegis Ashore Poland in the defense of NATO European states against ballistic missile threats originating outside the Euro-Atlantic area.

The Aegis Ashore Missile Defense Test Complex (AAMDTC) is a test site only and is

located at the Pacific Missile Range Facility, Kauai, Hawaii. Initially developed to support Aegis Ashore fielding in Europe, AAMDTC has taken on a larger role to support Aegis BMD baseline integration and provide support for operational tests and innovation of new concepts and systems interoperability. With the delivery of Aegis Ashore Poland, the AAMDTC will continue to evolve with an increased focus on innovation, integration, test and operational support, all with a limited emergency activation capability to support the Missile Defense System.

Today, the SM-6, which uses a blast fragmentation kill mechanism, is the only interceptor available for a limited defense against hypersonic missile threats. Sea-Based Terminal (SBT) defense Increment (Inc) 1 initially fielded in 2016, and SBT Inc 2 was fielded in 2018. In March 2023, FTM-31 E1a successfully completed an endo-engagement with a salvo of two SM-6 Dual II missiles against a medium-range ballistic missile (MRBM) target. This test allowed MDA to add the SM-6 Blk IA Dual I and Dual II with Software Upgrade missiles to the Missile Defense System Operational Capability Baseline, adding significant defense capability to the Navy fleet against advanced threats.

MDA develops, produces, and fields the THAAD weapon systems for theater defense with the U.S. Army. The THAAD Weapon System is a globally transportable, ground-based system that is highly effective against short-, medium- and intermediate-range missile threats inside and outside the atmosphere in the terminal phase of flight. THAAD is combat-proven, and it has a perfect operational flight test record to date.

AN/TPY-2 radars deployed abroad support THAAD batteries for regional defense. These radars are also deployed abroad in forward-based mode to support regional and homeland defense by providing early warning, precision tracking, discrimination capabilities, and space domain awareness.

We have delivered 800 operational Interceptors to the U.S. Army and FMS customers as of October 23, 2023 and MDA continues to deliver and sustain THAAD interceptors in support of fielded U.S. batteries and FMS customers. Eight THAAD Batteries have been procured and seven are currently fielded to the U.S. Army to support the ballistic missile defense of the United States, its deployed forces, allies, and friends. The eighth THAAD Battery is currently in production and hardware availability will be in third quarter FY 2025.

MDA currently supports forward-deployment of two THAAD batteries stationed in the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) area of responsibility under 94th Army Air and Missile Defense Command (AAMDC). One THAAD battery is forward deployed in U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) and one is forward deployed in Guam. As of November 17, 2023, both batteries are on THAAD System Build 4.0, which supports tighter integration between upper and lower tier missile defense systems in INDOPACOM. THAAD/MSE Integration was demonstrated during Flight Test THAAD Weapon System- 21 (FTT-21) in March 2022. All remaining U.S. THAAD batteries are on THAAD System Build 3.0 and are scheduled to be upgraded to THAAD 4.0 beginning in FY2024.

## Improving Theater Missile Defenses

In line with the Department's *2022 Missile Defense Review*, MDA continues to strengthen defenses against all regional missile threats from any source, to include the development of active defenses against regional hypersonic missile threats, and pursue a resilient sensor network to characterize and track all hypersonic threats, improve attribution, and enable engagement. MDA also works closely with select Allies and partners to improve missile defense capability, integration, and interoperability. We are pursuing opportunities for joint research and development on hypersonic defense programs with key Allies and partners.

Current plans for improving Aegis BMD and THAAD system performance to meet increasingly sophisticated emerging threats involve the growth in the number of interceptors and system batteries and platforms to increase missile defense quantities and to improve the quality of missile defense through greater integration of deployed capabilities and development of systems. The missile proliferation challenge is expected to worsen and lead to diverse and unanticipated missile threats to the United States and our forces, allies, and partners.

MDA is continuing our cooperative missile defense relationship with Israel, jointly developing and delivering systems to strengthen their missile defenses and to increase interoperability between U.S. and Israeli forces. Our two nations continue to cooperate on engineering, development, co-production, testing, and fielding of the Arrow Weapon System, the David's Sling Weapon System, and co-production for the Iron Dome Defense System. I would like to highlight that since October 7, 2023, during Operation Swords of Iron, each of these multi-tiered defense elements have successfully intercepted multiple air and ballistic missile attacks against Israel and deployed US personnel. MDA will continue to work with Israel to enhance defense capabilities.

## Growing Theater Missile Defense Inventory and Integration

In the President's Budget 2024, MDA will continue to meet the quickly advancing threat through improvements to the Aegis BMD capability, including procuring and delivering SM-3 Blk IB and Blk IIA missiles, improving SBT defense, advancing weapon system and missile reliability, and enhancing Aegis BMD engagement capacity and lethality. Deliveries of FMS SM-3 Blk IB and Blk IIA missiles are ongoing. The Navy Munitions Requirements Process (NMRP) aggregates the demand from each Combatant Command and informs MDA of the demand for SM-3 Blk IA, IB and IIA interceptors. By the end of FY 2025, we will increase capacity to 56 ships plus two Aegis Ashore sites (Romania and Poland), and by FY 2030 we will increase capacity to 69 ships.

MDA is working closely with the Navy to develop, field, and upgrade SBT defenses to counter more advanced maneuvering and hypersonic threats. SBT Inc 2 is deployed. MDA is analyzing the evasion maneuvers that hypersonic weapons may perform and addressing them in Aegis SBT Inc 3. SBT Inc 3 upgrade and delivery are in 2025 and include terminal defense capability against hypersonic threats. MDA will conduct flight tests against

advanced threat-representative targets in FY 2024 and FY 2025.

MDA will continue to produce THAAD interceptors to address the proliferating missile threat. Urgent Materiel Release for THAAD System Build 4.0 Global was granted by the US Army on September 27, 2023. One of the forward deployed INDO- PACOM batteries was upgraded to 4.0 Global in November 2023, and the remaining batteries will begin upgrades in 2024. Redesigned components are scheduled to enter into Interceptor production units in FY 2026. These hardware redesigns ensure production of THAAD Interceptors can continue uninterrupted and will also facilitate potential increases to THAAD Interceptor capability in future development increments.

THAAD/PATRIOT Missile Segment Enhancement (MSE) Integration capability TH 4.0 was fielded in October 2022 to U.S. Indo-Pacific Command Area of Responsibility. THAAD Weapon System integrates the Army's PATRIOT M903 MSE launchers and missiles into the system enabling a more tightly integrated upper/lower tier defensive capability. THAAD/MSE Integration enables increased Shoot-Assess- Shoot opportunities to conserve interceptors, improved self-defense without a dedicated PATRIOT battalion, additional engagement opportunities, and enhanced performance against ballistic missile threats.

### **New Theater Missile Defense Developments**

The *2022 Missile Defense Review* encourages the development of new technologies and systems to hedge against continuing adversary missile developments and emerging capabilities. Future sensors must transition seamlessly between theater- level threats, to homeland defense, to global threats by sharing and transmitting data with command and control, and they must be Joint and all-domain integrated and have survivable command and control networks that allow for improvements to battle management.

The *2022 National Defense Strategy* and *Missile Defense Review* reference a layered defensive system to defend Guam. MDA will continue to support the Army to meet the INDOPACOM requirement to deliver a persistent 360-degree Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD) layered capability to defend the people, infrastructure, and territory of Guam from the scope and scale of advanced ballistic, hypersonic, and cruise missile threats. The Guam Defense System integrates existing DoD systems and programs in development distributed across the island under a single command and control facility and organization. MDA's contribution includes the Aegis Guam System with AN/TPY-6 radar, SM-3, SM-6, THAAD Weapon System, and C2BMC.

Currently, the Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS) Overhead Persistent Infrared (OPIR) Architecture (BOA) integrates OPIR data from national overhead sensors to support Missile Defense System mission needs. BOA uses this data to detect, type, and track missile threats and then forwards track reports to C2BMC. C2BMC correlates BOA tracks with other sensor tracks and uses BOA data to cue downrange sensors.

MDA initiated the Hypersonic and Ballistic Tracking Space Sensor (HBTSS) program in 2018 to address the requirement to have capability to detect and track hypersonic threats and ballistic missiles much sooner than terrestrial radars. MDA is collaborating with the U.S.

Space Force's Space Development Agency (SDA) and Space Systems Command (SSC) to deliver integrated capabilities that meet Warfighter requirements for missile warning, tracking, and defense and to develop HBTSS as an OPIR sensor uniquely providing fire-control-quality data that will enable the engagement and defeat of advanced missile threats. HBTSS will track maneuvering threats that can otherwise evade terrestrial radars. Early next year, HBTSS will launch and begin demonstration of unique tracking and targeting capabilities needed to defend against hypersonic glide vehicles, followed by two years of on-orbit testing. Operationally, the HBTSS, a prototype demonstrator, will have a fire-control capability that will be part of SDA's Medium-Field-of-View sensors within the Proliferated Warfighter Space Architecture and provide hypersonic threat-tracking data for hand-off through linked missile defense weapons. Following the successful demonstration of HBTSS capabilities, the responsibility for HBTSS operational fielding will be transferred to Space Force and MDA will continue the development of the next generation of space-based fire-control sensors for missile defense.

Additionally, MDA is working closely with the Navy to develop, field, and upgrade SBT defenses to counter more advanced maneuvering and hypersonic threats. We anticipate delivering these SBT Inc 3 capabilities in 2025. We are also engaged in a competitive development effort to significantly enhance hypersonic missile defense capabilities. MDA is developing a layered defense capability against regional hypersonic threats and have initiated a development program for Glide Phase Intercept (GPI) to defend the sea-base and regional forces ashore, leveraging existing systems where possible, including proven engage-on-remote and launch-on-remote capabilities. Layered defenses provide more opportunities to engage and potentially neutralize hypersonic threats in-flight. We are focusing on the proven Aegis Weapon System to provide the depth-of-fire needed for a layered defense against hypersonic threats.

Today, MDA is funding technology maturation of two GPI concepts on the path to preliminary design.

The Aegis Sea-Based GPI, planned for delivery in 2034, includes the ability to plan, detect, track, and defeat threats, and support integrated layered multiple engagement opportunities. GPI is developing a missile and updates to the existing Aegis Weapon System to counter hypersonic threats. The GPI interceptor will be hypersonic, multistage, and compatible with the Navy's MK-41 Vertical Launch System. MDA also is pursuing a Cooperative Development of the GPI Interceptor with the Japan Ministry of Defense. This project will focus on interceptor updates, and the United States will be responsible for the overall missile system design and integration. Japan will fund and develop all Japan workshare elements (to include rocket motor assemblies and control systems)

THAAD System Build 5.0 is in development and is the largest hardware refresh to-date, with planned delivery in July 2026. TH 5.0 includes hardware upgrades that address obsolescence and enhances the mission assurance and cybersecurity posture of the weapon system. TH 5.0 incorporates system safety enhancements and engagement refinements resulting in improved performance against the current THAAD assessed threat set. A capability demonstration is planned for FTT-26 in 3QFY2027.

THAAD System Build 6.0 is planned to deliver in fourth quarter of calendar year 2027 and will provide the initial capability against non-ballistic threats and increase the threat engagement space. TH.6.0 will also improve THAAD Integration with the Army's Integrated Air and Missile Defense Battle Command System (IBCS) via Link-16 and continue to improve the cybersecurity risk posture and program protection. THAAD System Build 7.0 is planned to deliver in fourth quarter calendar year 2032 and allocates additional requirements to THAAD to increase threat space and engage representative threats. MDA is currently reviewing specific capabilities included in this future system build.

Chairman Lamborn, Ranking Member Moulton, Members of the Subcommittee, we are committed to addressing the theater missile threats of today and tomorrow by working with Warfighter to prioritize missile defense capabilities that allow us to protect our forces and our international partners and win regional engagements. I appreciate your continued support for MDA and the missile defense mission, and I look forward to answering the committee's questions. Thank you.

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**Document No. 3. *Setting Transatlantic Defence up for Success: A Military Strategy for Ukraine's Victory and Russia's Defeat, Discussion Paper, December 2023* (available at [https://kaitseministeerium.ee/sites/default/files/setting\\_transatlantic\\_defence\\_up\\_for\\_success\\_0.pdf](https://kaitseministeerium.ee/sites/default/files/setting_transatlantic_defence_up_for_success_0.pdf))**

## GLOSSARY

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| AFU        | Armed Forces of Ukraine  |
| ATACMS     | Army Tactical Missile System   |
| DCA        | Defensive Counter Air  |
| EUMAM      | European Union Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine                     |
| EW         | Electronic Warfare   |
| GBAD       | Ground-Based Air Defence   |
| GMLRS      | Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System   |
| HIMARS     | High Mobility Artillery Rocket System  |
| IRIS-T SLM | InfraRed Imaging System Tail/Thrust Vector-Controlled, Surface-Launched Medium-Range |
| IRIS-T SLS | InfraRed Imaging System Tail/Thrust Vector-Controlled, Surface-Launched Short-Range  |
| LRPF       | Long-Range Precision Fires   |
| MANPADS    | Man-Portable Air-Defence Systems   |
| NASAMS     | National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System                                      |
| R&D        | Research & Development   |
| RISS       | Russia's Intelligence and Security Services  |
| SAM        | Surface-to-Air Missile   |
| SAMP-T     | Sol-Air Moyenne-Portée/Terrestre, Surface-to-Air Medium-Range/Land-Base              |
| UAS        | Unmanned Aerial System   |
| UAV        | Unmanned Aerial Vehicles   |
| UDCG       | Ukraine Defense Contact Group, also known as Ramstein Group or Ramstein Coalition    |
| VKS        | Воздушно-космические силы, Russian Aerospace Forces                                  |



In 1989, the fall of the Berlin Wall paved the way for a Europe 'whole, free, and at peace' – a vision set forth by President George H. W. Bush a few months earlier. The prospect that had been denied to generations before has thereafter evolved into the greatest success story for hundreds of millions of Europeans. Today, this very aspiration is at stake in Ukraine.

It is inherently simple to fall into a state of despair as Russia continues to wage its brutal war for the second year, with its appetite to inflict and sustain devastation seemingly endless and its war resources equally limitless. Shaping the information space in such a way is exactly what Russia is counting on – hoping to create gloom and defeatism amongst Ukrainians and their international supporters.

Let us not be misled that easily. It is we who have the upper hand in this fight.

Ukraine's victory and Russia's defeat in this war is achievable. In fact, this war can be won within the next three years or less, by adjusting and increasing the Euro-Atlantic community's military production output and assistance to Ukraine, and imposing the perspective of an intolerable level of attrition on Russia.

A renewed strategy for providing the Armed Forces of Ukraine the necessary training and military equipment will bring about the conditions for defeating Russia's imperialist theory of victory. With Ukraine's admirable fighting spirit and the transatlantic community's unparalleled military-technological advantage and resources, Ukraine's victory will come at a fraction of the cost in comparison to the alternative consequences.

Furthermore, accelerated and scaled-up investments into defence industrial production that are critical for Ukraine will fundamentally contribute to NATO's credibility, ability and readiness to provide for the deterrence and defence of the Euro-Atlantic area and beyond.

This military strategy will make way for a renewed and enduring vision of peace and strength, in conjunction with a revived Ukraine that is independent, sovereign, free in its entirety, and prospering as a fresh member of both the European Union and NATO.

Ending Russia's war in Ukraine with Ukraine's victory and Russia's defeat is the single possible first step towards this aim.

## **TACKLING THE ABUNDANCE OF THREATS**

The global security environment is spiralling downwards at a rapid pace. Freedom and democracies are increasingly threatened across continents. The Euro-Atlantic community faces a multitude of crises, which are increasingly declining into security challenges, that neither the United States nor Europe could tackle alone.

The credibility, capability and readiness of our deterrence posture and forward defences bear an essential role that will likely be tested at an unprecedented scale by adversarial powers and non-state actors for years to come – also after the war in Ukraine.

Our efforts and resources must be mobilised to this end immediately, because each delay will be converted into a high price to be paid, when history stops being on our side. Every characteristic of this moment is being shaped on the vast battlefields in Ukraine.

Russia remains the most significant and direct threat for Euro-Atlantic security. Russia has a long-term objective of fundamentally reshaping the security landscape to its liking.

Russia continues to demonstrate its intent and readiness to fulfil this objective in words and deeds alike.

While exact estimates vary, there is general consensus that *in the very short term* (up to 2 years) Russia lacks the conventional capability required for escalating against NATO directly, because of its force degradation and commitments in the Ukrainian theatre. Furthermore, the Russian state has mobilised its defence industry at a scale unseen in decades to wage this war against Ukraine and the negative effects are clearly visible in the Russian state and defence budgets and the economic environment.

However, *should Russia prevail in this war within the next 12-18 months*, it would validate its assumptions about our collective weakness that can militarily be challenged and exploited in the short term (up to 5 years). Favourable global developments and opportunities for Russia can further expedite such negative scenarios.

## WAR OF ATTRITION

Together with global partners, the Euro-Atlantic community has contributed remarkably towards supporting Ukraine. Yet, escalation concerns have guided us to a strategy of attrition that fundamentally hinges on strategic patience.<sup>1</sup> This war can be won on the battlefield, but only after we have convincingly excluded the viability of any theory of victory in the heads of the Kremlin regime. While Russia is still impervious to the logic of reason, it is continuously sensitive to the logic of force.

The Russian strategic objective in Ukraine remains the subjugation of the country. To this end, the Russian military is operationally pursuing five lines of effort against Ukraine.

1. *Prolonging the conflict.* After Russia's initial plan of a quick capture of Ukraine failed, the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation have been seeking to protract the conflict on the ground through the deliberate defence in depth of occupied terrain, comprising about 18% of Ukraine – an area that would span over two thirds of the Baltic states, and that is larger than the individual territories of more than 30 other countries in Europe. By fighting from prepared positions, Russia can ensure that Ukrainian territory would not be liberated rapidly, if at all, and only with a heavy expenditure of personnel and materiel.
2. *Expanding the occupied territory.* While Russian-controlled Ukrainian territory has more than doubled compared to 23 February 2022, from 42,000 km<sup>2</sup> to 108,000 km<sup>2</sup>, Russia continues to attempt offensive operations with formed elements of its ground forces to try and further expand the occupied territories, at a minimum to the administrative borders of the annexed oblasts of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia. Ukraine's defences, Russia's limited training capacity and operational

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<sup>1</sup> For more, see discussion paper Russia's War in Ukraine: Myths and Lessons at [https://kaitseministeerium.ee/sites/default/files/myths\\_and\\_lessons\\_0.pdf](https://kaitseministeerium.ee/sites/default/files/myths_and_lessons_0.pdf).

pressures have prevented these efforts from making headway, but attempts persist nevertheless. Russia has conquered more land in 2023 than it has lost<sup>2</sup>.

3. *Exhausting Ukraine's sustainability.* A sustained long-range precision strike campaign, combined with the intent to blockade and disrupt Ukraine's Black Sea ports, is aimed at the economic paralysis of Ukraine, making it almost entirely dependent upon its international partners.
4. *Destroying critical assets.* Russia conducts strikes against critical national infrastructure, with the aim of making Ukraine's cities uninhabitable in winter. Furthermore, the exhaustion of Ukraine's air defence network would allow the Russian Aerospace Forces (VKS<sup>3</sup>) to commence medium altitude bombing over the front, enabling the destruction of Ukrainian ground forces.
5. *Undermining resolve.* An unconventional campaign waged by Russia's Intelligence and Security Services (RISS) and cohered by the Centres of Special Influence under the Presidential Administration is orchestrating active measures aimed at undermining the political support for Ukraine among its international partners.<sup>4</sup>

Russia's regime remains confident that it has more resolve than we do, still believing it is able to outlast Ukraine and the Euro-Atlantic community. Whether this conviction is based on facts and analysis or fundamental misinformation is insignificant. It is clear that our strategy so far has not convinced the Russian regime in its cost-benefit calculation to bring them to the conclusion that they can only lose. As things stand:

1. The Russian military leadership assesses that it can sustain losses in fighting forces and military materiel for longer than the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU). Thus, even the ineptly executed operations will ultimately weaken and defeat Ukraine's ability to absorb Russian attacks indefinitely.
2. Russian industry, including in cooperation with other adversarial powers (notably Iran<sup>5</sup> and North Korea<sup>6</sup>), is aiming to outperform and outproduce the Western industrial base in the quantity of war materiel supplied. Mass matters, particularly when concerns about escalation risk and exposing technological advancements on the battlefield persist.
3. By protracting the conflict, Russia seeks to exhaust our collective will to support Ukraine. Deeming democracies an inherently inferior form of governance, the Kremlin regime is convinced that our centre of gravity – democratic unity – can be successfully challenged and defeated.

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<sup>2</sup> J. Holder, Who's Gaining Ground in Ukraine? This Year, No One., The New York Times, 28 September 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Воздушно-космические силы

<sup>4</sup> V. Bergengruen, Inside Russia's Year of Ukraine Propaganda, Time, 22 February 2023.

<sup>5</sup> D. Bennett and M. Ilyushina, Inside the Russian effort to build 6,000 attack drones with Iran's help, The Washington Post, 17 August 2023.

<sup>6</sup> J. Byrne, J. Byrne, G. Somerville, Report: The Orient Express: North Korea's Clandestine Supply Route to Russia, Royal United Services Institute, 16 October 2023.

4. The long-range strike campaign is executed in the belief that Russian munitions will exhaust Western interceptors. Offensive, deep strike capabilities are inherently cheaper than defensive systems, while NATO Allies have reservations about providing them and capability gaps in both categories.
5. By targeting these long-range strikes at civilian infrastructure, Russia aims to cause painful civilian losses, migration surges and social tensions. Russia is convinced that eventually the will and morale of the Ukrainian people would begin to break down and force the Ukrainian leadership to seek negotiations from a position of weakness, having no other choice than to make territorial and political concessions to Russia.
6. On the occupied territories, Russia's Intelligence and Security Services are conducting a brutal and methodical KGB-style repression campaign aimed at the liquidation of potential resistance cells, filtrating the population, suppressing any expression of Ukrainian culture, and progressively integrating occupied areas into Russia's domestic security and administrative structures<sup>7</sup>.
7. Internationally, Russia is working to build an axis power of countries willing to work with the Kremlin in defiance of international sanctions. Further efforts are targeted at bringing about Western demand and pressure against Ukraine for ending the war.

## SETTING UKRAINE UP FOR SUCCESS

We are in the midst of a battle of wills. Our strategic task is to change Russia's war calculation and remove any outlook for success via military force or diplomatic means at the expense of Ukraine. The prospect of Ukraine having no other choice than to negotiate with Russia from a position of weakness is not only daunting, but undercuts our values, interests and objectives.

It is pertinent to follow a renewed military strategy that will ensure Ukraine's victory, Russia's defeat, and sets the transatlantic defence up for success.

With decisive political will, we can afford to increase both military and economic pressure and bring attrition on the Russian side in the war against Ukraine to a breaking point.

We are larger than the task. The sheer size of our collective political, economic and military power should guarantee a victory over Russia. The Ukraine Defense Contact Group (UDCG), also known as the Ramstein group, has a combined GDP of €47 trillion. Total commitments of military aid to Ukraine<sup>8</sup> thus far are around €95 billion – *0.2% of that*. At the same time, the combined defence budgets of the Ramstein coalition are more than 13 times greater than Russia's heavily inflated one: €1.24 trillion against €0.09 trillion in 2023. There should be no doubt in who has the advantage to prevail.

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<sup>7</sup> J. Watling, O. V. Danylyuk, N. Reynolds, Preliminary Lessons from Russia's Unconventional Operations During the Russo-Ukrainian War, February 2022-February 2023, Royal United Services Institute, 29 March 2023.

<sup>8</sup> All data on military aid to Ukraine here and hereafter: Kiel Institute for the World Economy, Ukraine Support Tracker, total commitments of military aid from 24 January 2022 until 31 July 2023, published on 7 September 2023.

Waging the war in Ukraine costs Russia around a *trillion rubles* (€10.2 billion per current exchange rate) per month in military expenses alone. Assessments suggest that hidden war-related expenditures veiled under a variety of other categories in the federal budget could account for an extra 30% on top of this, co-funding by regions and private entities further adding to the total.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, the Ramstein coalition's *monthly cost of military support averages at €5.3 billion* (including still undelivered and multi-year commitments).

Russia's military budget for 2023, after being doubled mid-year, comprises a third of the entire federal budget. A similar share (29.4%) has been planned for military expenditure in 2024, effectively at the expense of essential state functions such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, and social policy.<sup>10</sup> Concurrently, the war effort is biting into Russia's National Wealth Fund reserves substantially and at a significant pace – and will almost certainly continue to do so as long as the war lasts. Given the setbacks in health and social sphere budgets as well as the announced increase of pensions<sup>11</sup>, other federal funds such as The Pension Fund of the Russian Federation and The Federal Fund for Mandatory Medical Insurance are unlikely to provide any shelter for uncovered costs.

The international sanctions regime has limited Russia's access to additional financial instruments, reduced government revenues from key sources such as oil and gas, and could do more with enhanced targeting and enforcement. Russia therefore increasingly faces the *prospect of consistent and expanding war costs flooding the budgetary agenda under the conditions of rapidly declining resources and a very short stack of backup plans*. Internal means such as further cuts into budget sectors outside military needs, further tax increases and emissions of government bonds for the internal market or even bypassing the law to go for the central bank's reserves could provide temporary refuge, but would either risk straining the tolerance limits of the society or offer a shortlived extra resource.

By credibly preparing and signalling readiness for a long war and boosting our support to Ukraine accordingly, the *sustained war cost and particularly its enduring outlook for Russia can be raised to the level, where it becomes intolerable for the Kremlin*. The stronger Ukraine is, the sooner this tipping point could be reached.

The immediate and urgent objective is changing Russia's assessment that the war could be wrapped up in 2024. Instead, 2024 will be a year of *strategic defence for Ukraine* – a time to build up the necessary military and industrial base to defeat Russia.

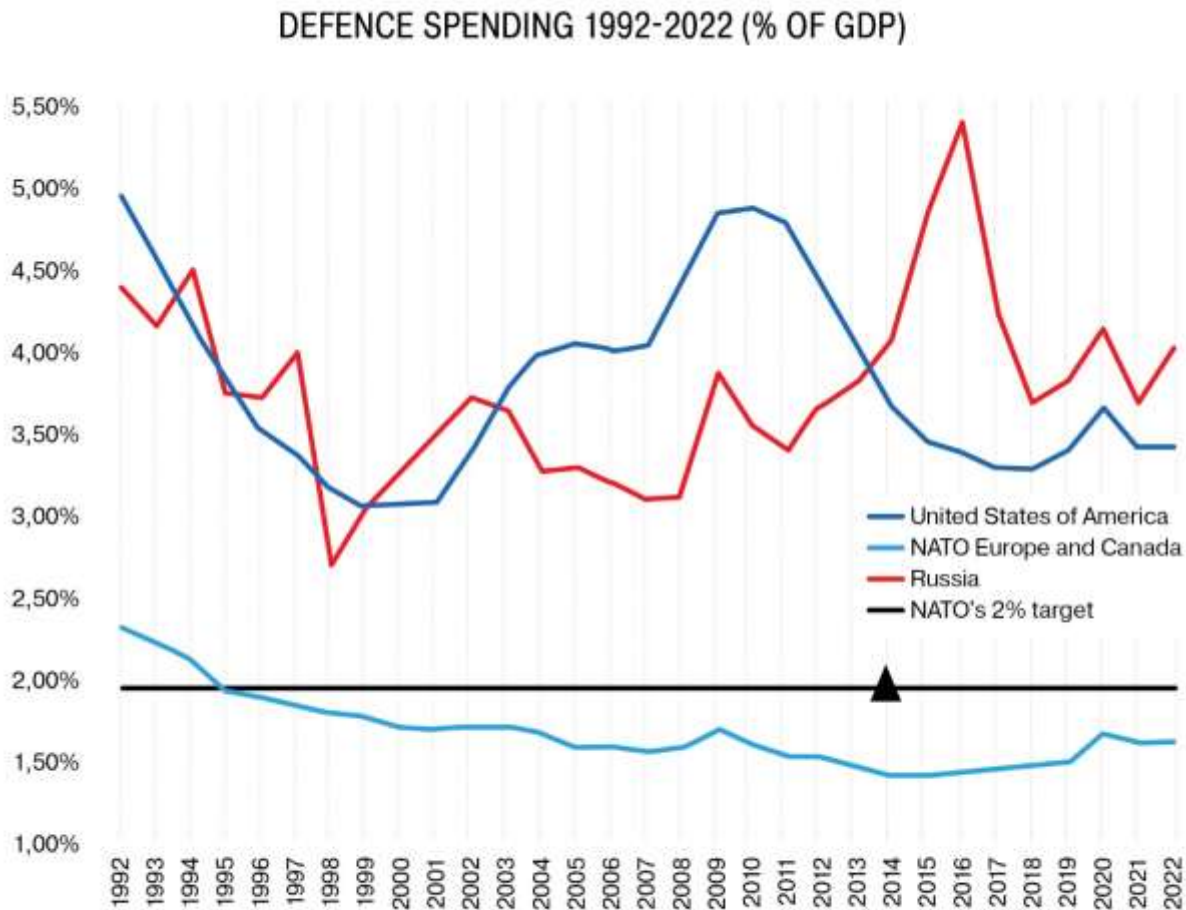
To this end, it is pertinent to support the training of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) and tailor the defence industrial output accordingly to *provide the AFU the artillery, munitions, UAVs, strike systems, air defences and fighter aircraft required to liberate their territory*. Investment in the production of these capabilities at scale is also critical for delivering NATO's strategy for the defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area, and meeting Allied commitments made at the NATO Summits in Vilnius and Madrid.

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<sup>9</sup> B. Grozovski, Russia's Unprecedented War Budget Explained, Wilson Center, 7 September 2023.

<sup>10</sup> D. Korsunskaya and A. Marrow, 'Everything for the front': Russia allots a third of 2024 spending to defence, Reuters, 2 October 2023.

<sup>11</sup> The State Duma, С 1 января 2024 года страховые пенсии по старости вырастут на 7,5 %, 14 November 2023.



Defence spending from 1992 to 2022 as share of GDP. Based on information from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Military Expenditure Database, <https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex>.

Most NATO Allies have significantly depleted their already small conventional military stockpiles and capabilities by donating their equipment to Ukraine. The Allies also have a very limited industrial base that is unfit for meeting the security challenges of the 21st century and unable to reconstitute these capabilities unless defence investments are substantially and urgently increased.

This state of affairs is the direct outcome of a decades-long underinvestment in defence. The inability of 20 out of 31 Allies to meet the Defence Investment Pledge to spend at least 2% of GDP is *limiting our combined defence budget by €79 billion this year alone*<sup>12</sup>. The total deficit since 2014 amounts to more than €920 billion. While the defence budgets in absolute figures have slightly increased throughout most of the past decade, the average yearly

<sup>12</sup> All data on NATO defence expenditure here and hereafter unless stated otherwise: NATO Public Diplomacy Division, Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2014-2023), 7 July 2023.

growth in real terms<sup>13</sup> among European NATO members and Canada collectively remains around €10 billion – below 1% of NATO’s total budget estimate this year.

## THE TASK

In order to bring about Russia’s defeat in Ukraine, it is necessary for Ukraine and its partners to pursue the following operational objectives:

### **Circumventing Russian defences by**

- severing Russia’s ground lines of communication and making resupplying troops (either under the threat of artillery or by air and sea) disproportionately costly and more time-consuming,
- inflicting sustained and increased attrition on Russian forces,
- sea denial to the Russian Black Sea fleet,
- conducting a sustained campaign to degrade Russian Aerospace Forces (VKS),
- training and preparing Ukrainian forces to be able to undertake offensive operations at an increased scale.

### **Continue to blunt Russian offensive operations**

- If undisrupted, *Russia has the capacity to train approximately 130,000 troops every six months into cohered units and formations available for launching operations. Additional troops can be mobilised and pushed into Ukraine as untrained replacements, but these do not provide effective combat power.*
- The Russian training system can be put under pressure and disrupted by inflicting sustained and increased attrition on Russian units in Ukraine, forcing the newly mobilised personnel to be deployed to the theatre prematurely. This would constrain the Russian training system to deliver *approximately 40,000 additional troops* instead of 130,000 every six months as cohered units (command and control, artillery, and other critical personnel must be trained to create a unit of action, irrespective of its size). Deployments above this figure would serve as rapidly expendable gap fillers rather than an offensive fighting force.
- The objective therefore should be to inflict a sustained rate of attrition of *at least 50,000 killed and severely wounded Russian troops per six months to consistently degrade the quality of Russian force*, preventing Russia from regenerating offensive combat power – which Ukraine has so far successfully achieved.
- Additional quantitative and qualitative training of Ukraine’s troops, together with the necessary military assistance, will further increase Russia’s attrition, forcing Russia to enact full national mobilisation – accelerating the desired attrition rate and increasing the risk of domestic strife for the Russian regime.

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<sup>13</sup> Based on 2015 prices and exchange rates.

**Economic curtailment of Russian defence industrial output to increase the cost and consequences of military attrition**

- It is a priority to move from the passive passing of sanctions to their proactive and aggressive enforcement, combined with the use of economic coercion to constrain trade with Russia. The acquiescence of several states with significant exposure to the EU in enabling Russian evasion of sanctions and export controls must be robustly contested.
- Russia's war resources should be diminished by all means. Following the initial effects of measures such as the oil price cap adopted by G7 and the EU, Russia has found ways to successfully circumvent these, returning its oil and gas revenues to a steady increase recently. With the oil and gas sales accounting for more than 28% of Russia's budget proceeds,<sup>14</sup> properly targeted and effectively enforced measures can provide a powerful tool for stifling the inflow to Russia's war chest.

**Raising the cost of the war of aggression by allocating Russia's confiscated or frozen assets for the benefit of Ukraine**

- With more than €330 billion frozen by the international community, of which more than €200 billion are controlled by the EU, it is necessary to create a credible leverage, which would ensure that these funds would not be returned to Russia, unless a full withdrawal from the sovereign territory of Ukraine in its internationally recognized borders is completed and attacks on Ukraine are ceased. Whilst the EU leaders have taken the first steps to use the profits from these assets,<sup>15</sup> further ones are needed. Additionally, the implementation of this measure serves as a powerful and credible political and military tool to deter other malign actors in the future.

***Manpower***

To enable the Armed Forces of Ukraine to liberate key objectives, it is necessary to provide sufficient training to expand the scale at which the AFU can conduct operations. At present, the AFU are unable to reliably train inside Ukraine above company-level because of the long-range strike threat to training areas. Ukrainian units therefore struggle to operate in a synchronised way in larger formations above a company.

Ukraine's army expanded from 150,000 ground forces to over 700,000 in 2022, while over the course of 2022 there was heavy attrition among experienced field officers and soldiers alike. As a result, AFU brigades lack sufficiently trained staff officers to enact commander's intent and synchronise the actions of sub-units laterally. The effective span of control of a brigade for offensive operations is therefore approximately two companies. The

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<sup>14</sup> Russian oil and gas budget revenues more than doubled in October, Reuters, 3 November 2023.

<sup>15</sup> P. Tamma, J. Barigazzi, L. Hülsemann, EU leaders approve using profits from frozen Russian assets, Politico, 27 October 2023.



result is that the AFU plans and executes operations with a horizon of exploitation limited to approximately 1200 meters. Furthermore, larger formations are missing or are not structured as combat formations.

By the end of 2023, European training efforts under the EU Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine (EUMAM) and the UK-led Operation Interflex will have collectively trained 60,000 Ukrainian troops. With additional training provided by the United States and the greater coalition, the total Western effort since Russia's full-blown invasion in February 2022 has therefore reached close to 100,000 personnel over 20 months. The 30,000-troop European effort is estimated to have cost slightly over €100 million, *placing the total cost estimate as low as approximately €350 million* (or €3500 per trained soldier).

Despite this, the training was set up when Ukraine desperately needed more trained soldiers to defend an extended front. Because speed mattered, and defensive operations are simpler than offensive operations, training was expedited to five weeks. This is not sufficient to prepare soldiers for offensive operations. During the Second World War, British infantry would receive over 20 weeks of training before they were considered basically proficient and the U.S. Army operated with 13-17 weeks of basic training.<sup>16</sup> We must therefore develop our training packages to better prepare our Ukrainian partners for offensive operations.

It is time for us set new objectives, a new pace and a new standard of quality in training Ukrainian troops. In 2024, the aim should be to expand Ukrainian operations from brigade enabled company actions, to the ability to execute brigade attacks. In 2025, the aim should be for the AFU to conduct simultaneous brigade attacks, enabled by larger formations at a joint level.

There are three critical lines of effort in enabling this expansion of the scale of Ukrainian offensive operations:

1. *Staff officers need to be trained to work at brigade and battalion levels to plan, synchronise, and control a greater span of battlespace.* Leadership courses for field grade officers can contribute towards this, provided that the syllabus taught is tailored to build upon rather than supplant the existing workflow of Ukrainian command posts. Therefore, the syllabi must be drafted based upon the observation of these command posts. Considerable improvements could be brought about in 2024 already, starting with a 10-week training programme building on the skills of an initial cadre of 250 officers, which can enable conducting battalion-plus sized attacks. At the same time, it is highly likely that better training could limit losses among officers, therefore extending the sustainability of Ukrainian forces.
2. *Collective training in Europe at a battalion level needs to be expanded and extended to give Ukrainian units that are rotated out the ability to improve their cohesion at echelon.* It is critical that exercises at a battalion level would be supported by the necessary policies and permissions to realistically simulate battlefield realities in Ukraine, particularly including the density of unmanned aerial systems (UAS).

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<sup>16</sup> J. Anderson-Colon, Marine Corps Boot Camp during World War II: The Gateway to the Corps' Success at Iwo Jima, Marine Corps History, Vol 7 No 1 Summer 2021.

Repetitions are vital in order to improve tactical battle drills. Costwise, a two-week exercise for an infantry battalion costs around €1 million only.

3. At present, Ukrainian fire control systems limit the ability to concentrate fire missions. There is a significant cost to replacing these because personnel knows how to use them. *Working with the Ukrainians to continue to develop the command and control tools* they employ to increase the scale of effects the AFU can coordinate will be vital if increased manoeuvre forces are to be supported by appropriate fires and electronic warfare.

While the needs for basic and specialist training persist, it is a matter of priority to expand the scope of the AFU in order to allow turning overall manpower into an even more lethal fighting power.

Each of these lines of effort can bring enormous improvement to AFU in support of scaling the reach and effect of its operations, for a modest amount of resources and within a relatively short timeframe. In return, it will provide a highly cost-effective and attainable toolbox for promoting Ukraine's success on the battlefield.

## **Hardware**

### *Artillery*

For both Russia and Ukraine, artillery is the primary means of destruction of troops. Whoever retains fire superiority retains the initiative. Ensuring the sustainment of Ukraine's fires is therefore critical for both attack and defence.

Europe and the U.S. alike have directed their efforts towards meeting Ukraine's artillery requirements, providing hundreds of platforms along with millions of ammunition rounds in total. Advanced systems such as MLRS and HIMARS, as well as long-range strike missiles have proved crucial in striking operationally significant targets, while the frontlines continue to require a sufficient supply of ammunition for shorter ranges. The EU has delivered around 300,000 out of the one million artillery rounds agreed, in addition to earlier bilateral contributions. The U.S. has provided more than 2,000,000 155mm artillery rounds, complemented by more than a million rounds of other calibres.

Allied 155mm artillery systems outrange equivalent Russian 152mm systems, have a higher rate of fire, and better accuracy. Ukraine requires a minimum of 200,000 rounds per month to retain localised fire superiority. Sustaining this rate of fire will empty European and U.S. stockpiles over 2024 and will require significant foreign purchases of ammunition. *Allies can ramp up their munitions production to meet this rate by 2025 at the latest. While transparency on both European companies' current production rates as well as planned increases remains limited, estimates based on public data would place the 2023 rate between 480,000 and 700,000 rounds. Current monthly figures could therefore average at 50,000 rounds, doubling the capacity from early 2023. The U.S. has similarly doubled its monthly production since early 2023, now producing 28,000 rounds per month, and aiming to reach the 100,000 per month rate by end of 2025. Meeting Ukraine's minimum demand*

rate collectively during 2025 would *therefore require a European effort of 140% increase over 2024.*

Efforts to increase European production have been stymied by each European state pursuing separate – and relatively small – orders from industry. The business case presented by these orders does not justify defence manufacturers increasing production capacity, because there is no clarity on the scale of orders over time. European Allies and Member States therefore should work together to consolidate orders into larger and longer term contracts that would justify investment in production capacity in the defence industrial base.

Russia's total production and recovery of artillery ammunition will reach 3.5 million units in 2023, representing a more than threefold increase from the previous year's production. In 2024, production and recovery will increase further and would likely reach up to 4.5 million units. This volume significantly exceeds the amount of artillery ammunition available to Ukraine. If the Ramstein coalition is unable to ensure the sufficient increase in ammunition production and supply to Ukraine as a matter of urgency, Russia's advantage in the use of artillery ammunition and thus in the war will increase.

An additional limiting factor so far in the sustainability of Ukrainian fires is artillery barrels. It is assessed that *Ukraine will need 1500-2000 barrels per year* with each unit costing up to €900,000. Given the limited number of barrel machines, particular focus should be provided for companies to expand barrel manufacturing. The United States and the European Allies need to critically reassess the unsustainable fragmentation that has led to Ukraine using at least 17 different artillery platforms. The goal should be to reduce this number by several times.

Another assurance of Ukraine's fire superiority is to force the dispersal of logistics for Russia's fires through the persistent threat of Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System (GMLRS) strikes. 24 GMLRS rockets per day has been sufficient to achieve the suppression of Russian fires. GMLRS are also vital for the large number of European armies purchasing HIMARS. As a minimum, industrial investment therefore should *aim to provide Ukraine a supply of 8760 GMLRS per year by 2025.* To date, Lockheed Martin has produced more than 60,000 in total<sup>17</sup>, and is aiming to up its current full annual capacity of 10,000 to 14,000 in 2024<sup>18</sup>. With the estimated cost per one rocket approximately €160,000, the total cost of minimum military requirement annually is *approximately €1.4 billion.*<sup>19</sup>

The targeting of Russia's air defence systems and thereafter targets of strategic significance in depth, including infrastructure, C2 nodes, airheads, and assets of the Black Sea fleet requires the *continued provision of long-range strike systems.* The effect delivered by the air-launched cruise missile Storm Shadow can be extended via the employment of the air-launched cruise missile Taurus and the Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) in the short-term.

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<sup>17</sup> Lockheed Martin, GMLRS: The Precision Fires Go-To Round, accessed 24 November 2023.

<sup>18</sup> S. Skove, Why It's Hard to Double GMLRS Production, Defense One, 30 March 2023.

<sup>19</sup> D. Parsons, Ukraine To Get Guided Rockets, But Not Ones Able To Reach Far Into Russia (Updated), The Drive, 31 May 2022.

While the U.S. continues its long-range precision fires programme (LRPF), by introducing the Army's Precision Strike Missile (PrSM), the Strategic Mid-Range Fires, and the developmental Long-Range Hypersonic Weapon (LRHW), it is equally *critical that Europe invests in renewed production of relevant long-range strike systems*, such as SPEAR-4 and SCALP-EG.

However, those programmes will also require additional investment and prioritisation as they are currently configured around the assumption that rounds would be created by *refurbishing and upgrading existing stocks* – most of which have since been supplied to Ukraine. To underpin the sustainability of this production for the defence requirements of the Euro-Atlantic Area, the assurance of European access to relevant supply chains is equally necessary. A critical capability in this regard is the manufacture of explosive energetics. There is a strong argument for the EU to pioneer the funding of R&D of new explosive energetics and new methods of manufacturing.

European funding could further support the manufacture of legacy Soviet materiel, including 152mm ammunition and barrels. This could have a significant short term benefit for Ukraine as it would extend the timeframe over which a large number of its own Soviet legacy systems can be used. However, it makes less sense to replace the barrels on these systems.

Refurbishing expired ammunition is another alternative for temporarily mitigating the constraints on new production. It is assessed that the EU could refurbish approx. 15,000 rounds per month. *Refurbishment is estimated to be priced at 30-50% of the new ammunition price*, while delivery times could be considerably faster. The feasibility of this line of effort depends on the readiness of the countries with stocks of suitable ammunition as well as the availability of components required for the refurbishment process.

Consideration should be given to the extent to which specialised munitions, including sensor-fused munitions and thermobaric payloads, are priorities for production. Although such specifics would considerably increase the cost per munition, they would also reduce the number of rounds the AFU must fire to deliver the necessary scale of effect. Yearly production rates of such munitions currently remain very limited, but increasing these capacities would concurrently allow Allies to better meet NATO's future requirements.

### *Unmanned Aerial Vehicles*

The most efficient means of maximising the situational awareness of the force and the accuracy of artillery are Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs).

The demand for UAVs is ubiquitous, with a density of approximately two per platoon of infantry deployed, three per artillery battery, and five per battalion command post. The sophistication and requirements for UAVs increase by echelon as the area of interest extends further into the enemy deep. All classes of UAVs have a limited life expectancy. Tactical systems at the platoon level may last half a day; long-range UAVs often have a lifespan of up to 16 flight hours. The demand for UAVs at all levels is constant and increasing.

Both Russia and Ukraine are heavily dependent upon Chinese DJI UAVs. Having conquered the civilian market, DJI benefits from a sufficient economy of scale to produce the necessary number of airframes at a viable price point. NATO manufactured UAVs are often just as effective as DJIs, but are orders of magnitude more expensive because they are produced at small scale, for limited numbers of orders and almost exclusively for military customers.

For NATO members to meet Ukraine's and their own needs for UAVs in conflict and to have a resilient supply chain to build them, it is necessary for Europe to *make a simple platoon UAV at scale*. The aim should be to produce *5000 per month at a price below €2500 per unit (€150 million annually)*. These same UAVs should be used to compete with DJI on the civilian market, while regulatory measures should also be explored, as the manufacturer's collection of vast amounts of data across European civilian and military enterprises is a threat to national security<sup>20</sup>.

In addition, European NATO members *must collaborate to scale the production of fixed wing UAVs* with a range beyond 80 km that are able to transmit data in real time and reliably fly in a dense electronic warfare (EW) and GPS-denied environment. This should be able to operate day or night, have a modular payload, and fly at medium altitude. It should be producible at a unit price below *€200,000 and in volumes of at least 3168 airframes per year (€633.6 million annually)*.

Although basic designs that can be scaled are important, it is also vital that the sensors and software enabling UAVs to fly can be iteratively updated to stay ahead of counter-UAV capabilities. No UAV should therefore be seen as a finished product, but must instead be understood as an evolving capability. For this reason, the UAV should have an open architecture and contracts should avoid capture by a single company to manage the updates of its software and payloads.

If UAVs are able to iteratively develop, then it is necessary to have a regulatory environment where each alteration to the UAV does not require recertification of its airworthiness. Furthermore, if the regulatory threshold for a UAV to fly remains comparable to an aircraft, then it is unlikely that a competitive price point or the required agility can be met as the overheads in production become too onerous. It is therefore critical for NATO countries to *develop legislation to enable a competitive UAV industry*.

The development of one-way attack UAVs will likely remain more fragmented, because it is precisely in the diversity of threats and their operating logic that such capabilities retain their effectiveness. Scaling such capabilities is persistently difficult because of the development of hard and effective counters by the adversary.

### *Ground-Based Air Defence*

The exhaustion of Ukraine's air defence system would enable the Russian Aerospace Forces (VKS) to bomb from medium altitude and decisively shift the balance of advantage in the

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<sup>20</sup> D. Shepardson, US House panel seeks ban on federal purchases of China drones, Reuters, 1 November 2023.

war. Allies have already provided Ukraine various air defence systems, such as the Patriot, Hawk, IRIS-T, NASAMS, and Gepards. Yet, as Russia continues to focus its efforts on effectively wearing out Ukraine's air defence assets, it is crucial that partners help make Ukraine's Ground-Based Air Defence (GBAD) sustainable.

Russia has significantly expanded the production of various long-range strike systems. This includes stockpiling approximately 1500 Shahed one-way-attack UAVs, now produced in Russia, alongside cruise missiles, ballistic missiles and aero-ballistic missiles<sup>21</sup>. In October 2022, it was producing approximately 40 such systems per month. A year later it is now producing approximately 100. Production could reach 200 strike systems per month over 2024. With intercepts usually requiring the launch of two interceptors, this suggests that there is a *sustained demand trending towards 400 interceptors per month* as a requirement, noting that some missiles will get through undefended sectors, and some will be shot down by other systems such as man-portable air-defence systems (MANPADS).

Russia has had very little success in its periodic efforts to destroy Ukrainian long range surface-to-air missile (SAM) systems, so the bulk of Ukraine's upgraded Soviet-origin S-300 systems remain intact. However, ammunition stocks are heavily depleted. Efforts by Ukraine's partners to source additional SAM ammunition for the S-300 from third party nations around the world have been essential to sustaining air defence coverage. Ukraine's partners should *assist the local defence industry in producing these interceptors*.

Ukraine's SA-11 'Buk' and SA-8 'Osa' tactical SAM systems are the reason why Russia has not been able to establish air superiority and defeat Ukraine. As with S-300, there is also a shortage of ammunition. *Acquiring additional missiles for Ukraine's SA-11 'Buk' systems* should be a short-term priority to manage the transition to other systems. European allies need to continue to support efforts to *develop and integrate alternative ammunition for existing SA-11 launchers*, such as Hawk missiles of which there remain significant stocks.

The U.S. is addressing this gap with its so-called FrankenSAM project<sup>22</sup>, designed to combine elements of Western and Soviet systems into operative air defence assets, such as Western-calibre surface-to-air missiles with refitted Soviet-era launchers or radars. While the project is limited in scope due to its experimental nature, the pilot successes have reached the front lines and suggest the efforts are worth continuing. Further European options should be explored.

As expected, the Patriot system supplied to Ukraine in late 2022 has performed exceptionally well against cruise and ballistic missiles. It will be critical for defeating Iskander and Kinzhal missiles. However, the number of batteries is still limited and can only provide coverage over a few key areas at any given time. With competing demands from the Indo-Pacific and the Middle-East theatres, the production is limited and ammunition demand is substantial. To date, Raytheon has produced over 240 systems<sup>23</sup> and the company is

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<sup>21</sup> Kh-555, Kh-101, 3M54-1 Kalibr, 9M727, 9M723, Kh-47M2 Kinzhal

<sup>22</sup> L. Jakes, Desperate for Air Defense, Ukraine Pushes U.S. for 'Franken' Weapons, The New York Times, 28 October 2023.

<sup>23</sup> Raytheon, Global Patriot Solutions, accessed 28 November 2023.

poised to increase annual production to 12 systems total, with one battery costing approximately over €1 billion<sup>24</sup>.

To help alleviate this bottleneck, European nations should substantially invest in the *increased production capacity of launchers, radars and interceptors for complementary systems such as SAMP-T, NASAMS, Sky Sabre, Narew, and IRIS-T SLM*, which are also highly effective against most Russian missile types and can reduce the pressure on Patriot and S-300 over time.

European states should also *manufacture and supply additional NASAMS and IRIS-T short and medium-range (SLS and SLM) systems* to allow these to be used more in the tactical role near the frontlines, slowly replacing the Buk and Osa systems that currently form the backbone of tactical air defence for the AFU.

Current European production capacity of the required systems remains very limited in both quantity and speed: based on narrow public sources, annual production figures per system are still in single-digit figures<sup>25</sup>, while delivery and replacement times exceed years<sup>26</sup>. Ground-based air defence systems are also critically needed to improve NATO's own air and missile defence, so significantly enhanced production capacity would almost certainly be utilised for some time even after the conflict and decrease unit costs for NATO nations.

### *Fighter Aircraft*

Ultimately, Ukraine will need to supplement its air defences with defensive counter air (DCA) sorties by the Ukrainian Air Force. The Ukrainian Air Force will therefore need Western Fighter Aircraft by 2025 to sustain DCA.

The Netherlands, Denmark, Norway and Belgium have already committed to donating F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine. While the total number of the jets is undisclosed, the first deliveries are scheduled to take place before the end of this year, with additional ones spread over 2024 and 2025. A number of Allies will contribute to Ukrainian pilots' training, lasting between five to eight months<sup>27</sup>. Beyond flight training, the F-16s require significant logistics and maintenance training for ground support personnel to ensure that the aircrafts remain combat capable, as well as appropriate equipment and infrastructure for operating and maintaining the fighters.

Considering additional possibilities of the Euro-Atlantic fleet, Gripen C/D could be a suitable platform to be supplied alongside the longer-term F-16 plan.<sup>28</sup> Gripen was designed

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<sup>24</sup> Congressional Research Service, IF12297: PATRIOT Air and Missile Defense System for Ukraine, 18 January 2023.

<sup>25</sup> German arms maker Diehl to ramp up production of IRIS-T air defence system, Reuters, 5 September 2023.

<sup>26</sup> C. Pocock, MBDA Accelerates Missile Production in Response to Ukraine War, Aviation International News, 17 March 2023.

<sup>27</sup> Statement on a joint coalition on F-16 training of the Ukrainian Air Force, Diplomatic statement by the Ministers of Defence of Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden and the United Kingdom, 7 November 2023

<sup>28</sup> J. Bronk, N. Reynolds, J. Watling, The Russian Air War and Ukrainian Requirements for Air Defence, Royal United Services Institute, 7 November 2022.

for efficient dispersed multirole operations against Russian forces, while fighting outnumbered from relatively rough dispersed locations. As such, it is designed to be serviced, refuelled and rearmed on road bases by teams of five conscripts with 2-3 months training led by a single more experienced supervisor, using universal tools carried on two light vehicles – therefore, requiring less to enable Ukrainian teams to operate the jets rapidly in-country. Gripen can carry and fire an effective European-produced Meteor air-to-air missile.

With this longer ranged missile capability (and internal electronic warfare suited for self-defence), Gripen would allow Ukrainian pilots to be effective in smaller numbers as a deterrent to Russian aircraft near the front, since they would not have to rely on more complex tactics in large, self-supporting formations. For achieving DCA capacity, Ukraine would need 20 aircraft for two squadrons of eight each, to fly 2x two-ships per day, plus four reserves/attrition replacements. The total cost estimate for the aircraft would be around €3 billion, with additional export agreement and supply from European Meteor partner nations.

#### *Maintenance, Repair and Recovery*

Maintenance of equipment, its recovery, and repair are all key factors to the sustainability of the force. This line of effort gains particularly critical importance during the upcoming months, while coalition donations of new equipment narrow down due to increasingly limited stocks, and as additional production has not yet picked up the necessary pace at scale to meet the supply needs.<sup>29</sup> Expanding the training to maintain donated systems and to avoid cannibalisation, where possible, will therefore be important in increasing the availability of key systems at the front.

### **BRACING UKRAINE AND OURSELVES**

The world continues to witness the courageous fight of the Ukrainian people and its Armed Forces against Russia's brutal war of aggression. The international community has come together in an unprecedented unity of effort by supporting Ukraine with military, humanitarian and economic assistance and by imposing sanctions against Russia.

Ukraine's resistance has been greatly empowered by the European and American weapons that conjointly have squashed the Kremlin regime's dreams of a quick and easy military victory, decimated some of the best units of the Russian Armed Forces, and liberated sizeable parts of Ukraine's occupied territories. The arsenal of democracy is fulfilling its mission in Ukraine's hands.

Ukraine's victory remains our shared goal, enforcing the lesson that aggression will never pay off and will always backfire. The Kremlin regime is sorely mistaken in its belief that by

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<sup>29</sup> P. McLeary, Allies' 'main effort' for Ukraine shifting from donating weapons to fixing them, Politico, 19 July 2023.



gearing for a multi-year conflict and by switching to a war-time economy, they could outlast and outperform us. In fact, Russia has yet to see our real strength.

Collectively, we can and we will win the war of attrition against Russia. We can pave the way for the Ukrainian Armed Forces to defeat Russia militarily, provided that we start building now. Together, it is affordable and viable.

2024 will provide a building year for beefing up Ukraine's manpower and lifting the production volumes of critical equipment and ammunition to required levels. This will put Ukraine in a position of strategic defence.

The current stance on the battlefield enables a shift into positional warfare that would favour Ukraine. Complemented by precision strikes into Russia's depth – targeted at wearing out Russia's command and control, logistics and a variety of operationally significant targets –, will allow Ukraine to limit the attrition rate, reconstitute its forces, ration systems and supply, while keeping Russia at bay. Even as it would provide Russia time to bolster its own efforts, it will lack the necessary offensive power for decisive action.

By 2025, the collective efforts in support of Ukraine will have provided a sufficient increase of critical skills, capabilities and stockpiles for Ukraine, unlocking the power for inflicting the required level of attrition on Russia. Concurrently, it will send a powerful deterrence message to any state or non-state actor globally of what the real cost of aggression against the Euro-Atlantic community will be.

## **CONCLUSION: A STRATEGY OF SUCCESS**

The success that allows NATO to celebrate its 75th anniversary in 2024 was shaped in the vast battlefields of Europe and the Pacific by shared values, tremendous sacrifices and immense resources – a battle of wills on a scale unprecedented in contemporary history.

Similarly, the outcome of Russia's aggression war will be a defining moment for the future of Ukraine and the Euro-Atlantic area. Anything short of Ukraine's victory – whereby its desired sovereignty and territorial integrity is respected – will be a strategic and costly mistake that will reverberate across the world. It will set a dangerous blueprint and opportunity for adversarial powers to challenge us again.

At a time when freedom is on the line, the sacrifices of the greatest generation must not only be remembered, but fundamentally defended. To date, all members of the Euro-Atlantic community have given some, but a lot of Ukrainians have given their all.

With its enduring strategic objectives set on redrawing the map of Europe, including by re-establishing spheres of influence and recreating buffer zones, the Kremlin regime questions the very existence of Ukraine and threatens NATO. Russia will rebuild its military posture to achieve its aims and, depending on the outcome of the fighting in Ukraine, could have significant conventional forces, supported by a fully mobilised defence industry, in a position to threaten European security in the very near-term.

Setting transatlantic defence up for success against this threat requires a renewed political will and resource commitment, worthy of the past and present sacrifices. Effectively, committing merely *0.25% of GDP* annually towards military assistance to Ukraine would

provide approximately €120 billion – more than sufficient resources to implement this strategy.

It is only appropriate that *this would be agreed upon at the level of Heads of State and Government under the auspices of the Ramstein coalition.*

Having trained close to 100,000 Ukrainian fighters for the total cost of approximately 350 million euros only, there is ample capacity to scale up training, but even more so – *increase and focus on setting and implementing new qualitative targets to the Armed Forces of Ukraine to fight properly at battalion, brigade and higher echelon levels.*

While not an exhaustive list, this strategy identifies and sets the required production volumes for *artillery, UAVs, ground-based air defence, fighter aircrafts, and the associated stocks of ammunition as the most significant capabilities that shape the battlefield.* A unity of effort is required to consolidate, coordinate and ramp up overall production of existing capabilities to desired levels. Capability coalitions being formed within the Ramstein group are already laying down important groundwork in several priority areas.

*Ukraine has succeeded in killing or severely wounding at least 50,000 Russian troops per every six months on the battlefield.* By redoubling our military support efforts, the attrition pace of Russian manpower and particularly the associated military equipment is bound to accelerate to unsustainable levels for Russia, whilst simultaneously decreasing Ukraine's attrition.

From a historic and strategic perspective, this cost to the Euro-Atlantic community of further arming and training Ukraine and accelerating investments into defence is both *affordable and sustainable.* The defeat of Russian forces in Ukraine and the maximal attrition of its military is also a direct means of lowering the threshold of what is needed to achieve conventional deterrence in Europe. And lastly, the increased investment commitments into defence will *directly translate into accelerated and expanded defence-industrial output* that is urgently required to address the threats and adversarial powers across the globe.

Guided by this reinforced vision and strategy, *2024 will be a year of strategic build-up and defence for both Ukraine and the Euro-Atlantic community.* It will continue to systematically attrite Russian economy, finances, manpower and equipment, before the pace and outlook of defeat for Russia will rapidly accelerate through 2025 as the United States' and Europe's defence-industrial output reaches new levels. With that ever-growing and strengthening resolve, *Ukraine will indeed win and Russia will lose by 2026 the latest.*





## FROM THE ARCHIVE

The first selection in the “Archives” includes excerpts from the 1983 President’s Commission on Strategic Forces (commonly known as the “Scowcroft Commission”). Despite being over four decades old, the Commission’s report remains surprisingly contemporary. Its call for national unity in the face of a totalitarian belligerent adversary is as relevant today as it was in 1983. The United States is learning again the hard way that the failure to keep up with an adversary’s nuclear modernization efforts and U.S. conventional weakness lead to international instability and undermine U.S. alliances. The Commission also emphasized that a key deterrence requirement is to understand the unique characteristics of the opponent, and to target U.S. deterrent threats accordingly. Lastly, the Commission challenged policymakers to recognize the importance of a moral dimension of a strategic competition “as citizens of a great nation with the humbling obligation to persevere ... both peace and liberty for the world.”

The second selection includes several paragraphs excerpted from Keith Payne’s 1982 text, *Nuclear Deterrence in U.S.-Soviet Relations*. These excerpts are again of contemporary value. They illustrate the late Dr. Henry Kissinger’s intellectual movement from the view, expressed rhetorically in 1974 immediately following arms control negotiations with Moscow, that strategic nuclear superiority was meaningless, to his 1979 view that U.S. superiority had been of value, while looming Soviet superiority was cause for concern.

### **Document No. 1. *Report of the President’s Commission on Strategic Forces, April 1983, Select Excerpts***

#### **I. Deterrence and Arms Control**

[...]

At the same time the Commission is persuaded that as we consider the threat of mass destruction we must consider simultaneously the threat of aggressive totalitarianism. Both are central to the political dilemmas of our age. For the United States and its allies the essential dual task of statecraft is, and must be, to avoid the first and contain the second.

It is only by addressing these two issues together that we can begin to understand how to preserve both liberty and peace. Although the United States and the Soviet Union hold fundamentally incompatible views of history, of the nature of society, and of the individual’s place in it, the existence of nuclear weapons imbues that rivalry with peril unprecedented in human history. The temptation is sometimes great to simplify—or oversimplify—the difficult problems that result, either by blinking at the devastating nature of modern full-scale war or by refusing to acknowledge the emptiness of life under modern totalitarianism. But it is naive, false, and dangerous to assume that either of these, today, can be ignored and the other dealt with in isolation. We cannot cope with the efforts of the Soviet Union to



extend its power without giving thought to the way nuclear weapons have sharply raised the stakes and changed the nature of warfare. Nor can we struggle against nuclear war or the arms race in some abstract sense without keeping before us the Soviet Union's drive to expand its power, which is what makes those struggles so difficult.

[...]

By the same token, however, our task as a nation cannot be understood from a position of moral neutrality toward the differences between liberty and totalitarianism. These differences proceed from conflicting views regarding the rights of individuals and the nature of society. Only if Americans believe that it is worth a sustained effort over the years to preserve liberty in the face of challenge by a system that is the antithesis of liberal values can our task be seen as a just and worthy one in spite of its dangers.

We do have many strengths in such an effort. Over the long run, strengths lent by liberty itself are our greatest ones—our abilities to adapt peacefully to political change, to improve social justice, to innovate with technology, to produce what our people need to live and prosper. What we have most to fear is that confusion and internal divisions—sometimes by products of the vigorous play of our free politics—will lead us to lost purpose, hope, and resolve.

We have good reason to maintain all three. Neither time nor history is on the side of large, centralized, autocratic systems that seek to achieve and maintain control over all aspects of the lives of many diverse peoples. We should, with calm persistence, limit the expansion of today's version of this sort of totalitarian state, the Soviet Union. We should persuade its leaders that they cannot successfully divert attention from internal problems by resorting to international blackmail, expansion, and militarism—rationalized by alleged threats posed by us or our allies. We should also be ready to encourage the Soviets to begin to settle differences between us, thorough equitable arms control agreements and other measures. But moral neutrality and indifference or acquiescence in the face of Soviet efforts to expand their military and political power do not hasten such settlements—they delay them, make them less likely, and ultimately increase the risk of war.

Deterrence is central to the calm persistence we must demonstrate in order to reduce these risks. American strategic forces exist to deter attack on the United States or its allies—and the coercion that would be possible if the public or decisionmakers believed that the Soviets might be able to launch a successful attack. Such a policy of deterrence, like the security policy of the West itself, is essentially defensive in nature. The strategic forces that are necessary in order to support such a policy by their very existence help to convince the Soviet Union's leaders: that the West has the military strength and political will to resist aggression; and that, if they should ever choose to attack, they should have no doubt that we can and would respond until we have so damaged the power of the Soviet state that they will unmistakably be far worse off than if they had never begun.

There can be no doubt that the very scope of the possible tragedy of modern nuclear war, and the increased destruction made possible even by modern non-nuclear technology, have

changed the nature of war itself. This is not only because massive conventional war with modern weapons could be horrendously destructive—some fifty million people died in “conventional” World War II before the advent of nuclear weapons—but also because *conventional* war between the world’s major power blocs is the most likely way for *nuclear* war to develop. The problem of deterring the threat of nuclear war, in short, cannot be isolated from the overall power balance between East and West. Simply put, it is war that must concern us, not nuclear war alone. Thus we must maintain a balance between our nuclear and conventional forces and we must demonstrate to the Soviets our cohesion and our will. And we must understand that weakness in any of these areas puts a dangerous burden on the others as well as on overall deterrence.

Deterrence is not, and cannot be, bluff. In order for deterrence to be effective we must not merely have weapons, we must be perceived to be able, and prepared, if necessary, to use them effectively against the key elements of Soviet power. Deterrence is not an abstract notion amenable to simple quantification. Still less is it a mirror image of what would deter ourselves. Deterrence is the set of beliefs in the minds of the Soviet leaders, given their own values and attitudes, about our capabilities and our will. It requires us to determine, as best we can, what would deter them from considering aggression, even in a crisis—not to determine what would deter us.

Our military forces must be able to deter war even if the Soviets are unwilling to participate with us in equitable and reasonable arms control agreements. But various types of agreements can, when the Soviets prove willing, accomplish critical objectives. Arms control can: reduce the risk of war; help limit the spread of nuclear weapons; remove or reduce the risk of misunderstanding of particular events or accidents; seal off wasteful, dangerous, or unhelpful lines of technical development before either side gets too committed to them; help channel modernization into stabilizing rather than destabilizing paths; reduce misunderstanding about the purpose of weapons developments and thus reduce the need to over-insure against worst-case projections; and help make arsenals less destructive and costly. To achieve part or all of these positive and useful goals, we must keep in mind the importance of compliance and adequate verification—difficult problems in light of the nature of the Soviet state—and the consequent importance of patience in order to reach fair and reasonable agreements.

This is a vital and challenging agenda. In some of these areas of arms control our interests coincide closely with those of the Soviets. In others, their efforts to undermine the effectiveness of our deterrent and to use negotiations to split us from our allies will make negotiations difficult.

But whether the Soviets prove willing or not, stability should be the primary objective both of the modernization of our strategic forces and of our arms control proposals. Our arms control proposals and our strategic arms programs should thus be integrated and be mutually reinforcing. They should work together to permit us, and encourage the Soviets, to move in directions that reduce or eliminate the advantage of aggression and also reduce the risk of war by accident or miscalculation. As we try to enhance stability in this sense, the Commission believes that other objectives should be subordinated to the overall goal of

permitting the United States to move—over time—toward more stable strategic deployments, and giving the Soviets the strong incentive to do the same. Consequently it believes, for the reasons set forth below, that it is important to move toward reducing the value and importance of individual strategic targets.

## **II. Soviet Objectives and Programs**

Effective deterrence and effective arms control have both been made significantly more difficult by Soviet conduct and Soviet weapons programs in recent years. The overall military balance, including the nuclear balance, provides the backdrop for Soviet decisions about the manner in which they will try to advance their interests. This is central to our understanding of how to deter war, how to frustrate Soviet efforts at blackmail, and how to deal with the Soviets' day-to-day conduct of international affairs. The Soviets have shown by word and deed that they regard military power, including nuclear weapons, as a useful tool in the projection of their national influence. In the Soviet strategic view, nuclear weapons are closely related to, and are integrated with, their other military and political instruments as a means of advancing their interests. The Soviets have concentrated enormous effort on the development and modernization of nuclear weapons, obviously seeking to achieve what they regard as important advantages in certain areas of nuclear weaponry.

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## **III. Preventing Soviet Exploitation of Their Military Programs**

In our effort to make a strategy of deterrence and arms control effective in preventing the Soviets from political or military use of their strategic forces, we must keep several points in mind.

The Soviets must continue to believe what has been NATO's doctrine for three decades: that if we or our allies should be attacked—by massive conventional means or otherwise—the United States has the will and the means to defend with the full range of American power. This by no means excludes the need to make improvements in our conventional forces in order to have increased confidence in our ability to defend effectively at the conventional level in many more situations, and thus to raise the nuclear threshold. Certainly mutual arms control agreements to reduce both sides' reliance on nuclear weapons should be pursued. But effective deterrence requires that early in any Soviet consideration of attack, or threat of attack, with conventional forces or chemical or biological weapons, Soviet leaders must understand that they risk an American nuclear response.

Similarly, effective deterrence requires that the Soviets be convinced that they could not credibly threaten us or our allies with a limited use of nuclear weapons against military targets, in one country or many. Such a course of action by them would be even more likely

to result in full-scale nuclear war than would a massive conventional attack. But we cannot discount the possibility that the Soviets would implicitly or explicitly threaten such a step in some future crisis if they believed that we were unprepared or unwilling to respond. Indeed lack of preparation or resolve on our part would make such blackmail distinctly more probable.

In order to deter such Soviet threats we must be able to put at risk those types of Soviet targets—including hardened ones such as military command bunkers and facilities, missile silos, nuclear weapons and other storage, and the rest—which the Soviet leaders have given every indication by their actions they value most, and which constitute their tools of control and power. We cannot afford the delusion that Soviet leaders—human though they are and cautious though we hope they will be—are going to be deterred by exactly the same concerns that would dissuade us. Effective deterrence of the Soviet leaders requires them to be convinced in their own minds that there could be no case in which they could benefit by initiating war.

Effective deterrence of any Soviet temptation to threaten or launch a massive conventional or a limited nuclear war thus requires us to have a comparable ability to destroy Soviet military targets, hardened and otherwise. If there were ever a case to be made that the Soviets would unilaterally stop their strategic deployments at a level short of the ability seriously to threaten our forces, that argument vanished with the deployment of their SS-18 and SS-19 ICBMs. A one-sided strategic condition in which the Soviet Union could effectively destroy the whole range of strategic targets in the United States, but we could not effectively destroy a similar range of targets in the Soviet Union, would be extremely unstable over the long run. Such a situation could tempt the Soviets, in a crisis, to feel they could successfully threaten or even undertake conventional or limited nuclear aggression in the hope that the United State would lack a fully effective response. A one-sided condition of this sort would clearly not serve the cause of peace.

In order, then, to pursue successfully a policy of deterrence and verifiable, stabilizing arms control we must have a strong and militarily effective nuclear deterrent. Consequently our strategic forces must be modernized, as necessary, to enhance to an adequate degree their overall survivability and to enable them to engage effectively the targets that Soviet leaders most value.

Also, as described below, we should seek to use arms control agreements to reduce instabilities and to channel both sides' strategic modernization toward stabilizing developments, deployments, and reductions. Regardless of what we are able to accomplish with arms control agreements, however, two aspects of deterrence are crucial. The problems of maintaining an effective deterrent and of reaching stabilizing and verifiable arms control agreements cannot be addressed coherently without keeping in mind the nature of Soviet expansionism. Second, the deterrent effect of our strategic forces is not something separate and apart from the ability of those forces to be used against the tools by which the Soviet leaders maintain their power. Deterrence, on the contrary, requires military effectiveness.



## IV. U.S. Strategic Forces and Trends

### A. Strategic Forces As A Whole

The development of the components of our strategic forces—the multiplicity of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and bombers—was in part the result of an historical evolution. This triad of forces, however, serves several important purposes.

First, the existence of several strategic forces requires the Soviets to solve a number of different problems in their efforts to plan how they might try to overcome them. Our objective, after all, is to make their planning of any such attack as difficult as we can. If it were possible for the Soviets to concentrate their research and development efforts on putting only one or two components of U.S. strategic forces at risk—e.g., by an intensive effort at anti-submarine warfare to attempt to threaten our ballistic missile submarines—both their incentive to do so and their potential gains would be sharply increased. Thus the existence of several components of our strategic forces permits each to function as a hedge against possible Soviet successes in endangering any of the others. For example, at earlier times uncertainties about the vulnerability of our bomber force were alleviated by our confidence in the survivability of our ICBMs. And although the survivability of our ICBMs is today a matter of concern (especially when that problem is viewed in isolation) it would be far more serious if we did not have a force of ballistic missile submarines at sea and a bomber force. By the same token, over the long run it would be unwise to rely so heavily on submarines as our only ballistic missile force that a Soviet breakthrough in anti-submarine warfare could not be offset by other strategic systems.

Second, the different components of our strategic forces would force the Soviets, if they were to contemplate an all-out attack, to make choices which would lead them to reduce significantly their effectiveness against one component in order to attack another. For example, if Soviet war planners should decide to attack our bomber and submarine bases and our ICBM silos with simultaneous detonations—by delaying missile launches from close-in submarines so that such missiles would *arrive* at our bombers bases at the same time the Soviet ICBM warheads (with their longer time of flight) would arrive at our ICBM silos—then a very high proportion of our alert bombers would have escaped before their bases were struck. In such a case the Soviets should have no confidence that we would refrain from launching our ICBMs during that interval after we had been hit. It is important to appreciate that this would not be a “launch-on-warning,” or even a “launch under attack,” but rather a launch *after* attack—after massive nuclear detonations had already occurred on U.S. soil.

Thus our bombers and ICBMs are more survivable together against Soviet attack than either would be alone. This illustrates that the different components of our strategic forces should be assessed collectively and not in isolation. It also suggests that whereas it is highly desirable that a component of the strategic forces be survivable when it is viewed separately, it makes a major contribution to deterrence even if its survivability depends in substantial measure on the existence of one of the other components of the force.

The third purpose served by having multiple components in our strategic forces is that each component has unique properties not present in the others. Nuclear submarines have the advantage of being able to stay submerged and hidden for months at a time, and thus the missiles they carry may reasonably be held in reserve rather than being used early in the event of attack. Bombers may be launched from their bases on warning without irretrievably committing them to an attack; also, their weapons, though they arrive in hours, not minutes, have excellent accuracy against a range of possible targets. ICBMs have advantages in command and control, in the ability to be retargeted readily, and in accuracy. This means that ICBMs are especially effective in deterring Soviet threats of massive conventional or limited nuclear attacks, because they could most credibly respond promptly and controllably against specific military targets and thereby promptly disrupt an attack on us or our allies.

[...]

## **VI. Arms Control.**

It is a legitimate, ambitious, and realistic objective of arms control agreements to channel the modernization of strategic forces, over the long term, in more stable directions than would be the case without such agreements. Such stability supports deterrence by making aggression less likely and by reducing the risk of war by accident or miscalculation. The strategic modernization program recommended herein and the arms control considerations contained in this report are consistent with an important aspect of such stability. In light of the developments in technology set forth at in Section IV.B. above, they seek to enhance survivability by moving both sides, in the long term, toward strategic deployments in which individual targets are of lower value. The recommended strategic program thus proposes an evolution for the U.S. ICBM force in which a given number of ballistic missile warheads would, over time, be spread over a larger number of launchers than would otherwise be the case.

[...]

Arms control agreements of this sort—simple and flexible enough to permit stabilizing development and modernization programs, while imposing quantitative limits and reductions—can make an important contribution to the stability of the strategic balance. An agreement that permitted modernization of forces and also provided an incentive to reduce while modernizing, in ways that would enhance stability, would be highly desirable. It would have the consideration benefit of capping both sides' strategic forces at levels that would be considerably lower than they would otherwise reach over time. It would also recognize, realistically, that each side will naturally desire to configure its own strategic forces. Simple aggregate limits of this sort are likely to be more practical, stabilizing, and lasting than elaborate, detailed limitations on force structure and modernization whose ultimate consequences cannot be confidently anticipated.

Encouraging stability by giving incentives to move toward less vulnerable deployments is more important than reducing quickly the absolute number of warheads deployed. Reductions in warhead numbers, while desirable for long-term reasons of limiting the cost of strategic systems, should not be undertaken at the expense of influencing the characteristics of strategic deployments. For example, warhead reductions, while desirable, should not be proposed or undertaken at a rate that leads us to limit the number of launching platforms to such low levels that their survivability is made more questionable.

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Finally, the Commission is particularly mindful of the importance of achieving a greater degree of national consensus with respect to our strategic deployments and arms control. For the last decade, each successive Administration has made proposals for arms control of strategic offensive systems that have become embroiled in political controversy between the Executive branch and Congress and between political parties. None has produced a ratified treaty covering such systems or a politically sustainable strategic modernization program for the U.S. ICBM force. Such a performance, as a nation, has produced neither agreement among ourselves, restraint by the Soviets, nor lasting mutual limitations on strategic offensive weapons.

[...]

The Commission believes that all of the difficult issues discussed in this report—including the devastating nature of modern war and the totalitarian and expansive character of the Soviet system—must be considered fairly in trying to reach a national consensus about a broad approach to strategic force modernization and arms control that can set a general direction for a number of years. Clearly there will be, and should be, many different views about specific elements in that approach. But the Commission unanimously believes that such a new consensus—requiring a spirit of compromise by all of us—is essential if we are to move toward greater stability and toward reducing the risk of war. If we can begin to see ourselves, in dealing with these issues, not as political partisans or as crusaders for one specific solution to a part of this complex set of problems, but rather as citizens of a great nation with the humbling obligation to persevere in the long-run task of preserving both peace and liberty for the world, a common perspective may finally be found.



## FROM THE ARCHIVE

**Document No. 2. *Nuclear Deterrence in U.S.-Soviet Relations*, Keith B. Payne (Foreword by Colin S. Gray), Westview Press: Boulder, CO, 1982, pp. 3-4**

Strategic stability, superiority, inferiority, and parity are terms used widely in American defense and arms control debates. Despite the widespread use of these terms, they are woefully misunderstood. They have become primarily buzz words generally employed for their political effect rather than as analytically useful concepts. Various measures of United States and Soviet strategic offensive forces are often compared (typically in a highly politicized fashion) to “prove” Soviet or American advantages, or more recently, continued American “rough parity.” However, the relevance of strategic superiority or parity on United States-Soviet relations usually is assumed to be significant or benign without reference to any supportive reasoning.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the typically shallow use of the terms “stability” and “superiority/parity/inferiority,” they have had a profound impact. The United States has accepted the vast expansion of Soviet strategic capabilities with relative passivity because of the policy influence of a particular model of stability that permits a logical conclusion to the effect that increments of strategic nuclear superiority/inferiority entail negligible political-military consequences. Henry Kissinger’s well known rhetorical statement in defense of the asymmetrical ICBM and SLBM launcher ceilings in the SALT I Interim Agreement captures the essence and policy relevance of this model.

What in the name of God is strategic superiority? What is the significance of it, politically, militarily, operationally, at these levels of numbers? What do you do with it?<sup>7</sup>

Such a comment has always been answerable conceptually, and from the perspective of the 1980s it can be illustrated that the model of stability it reflects lacks integrity as the basis for United State strategic nuclear doctrine. That said, it must be acknowledged that such a critique of Kissinger’s statement and its underlying rationale cannot be made lightly as they represent much of the “responsible” American strategic theorizing of the nuclear age.

An object of this study is to examine the suitability for the 1980s of the model of stability that has dominated United States strategic thought so thoroughly for over a decade, and continues to exert an overwhelming effect on United States strategic thinking.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, one

<sup>6</sup> Some of the useful exceptions to this generalization are Paul Nitze, “Deterring our Deterrent,” *Foreign Policy*, no. 25 (Winter 1976-77), pp. 195-210; and Nitze, “Assuring Strategic Stability in an era of Détente,” *Foreign Affairs* 54, no. 2 (January 1976), pp. 207-232; Colin S. Gray, *The Future of the Land-Based Missile Force*, Adelphi Papers, no. 140 (London: IISS, Winter 1977); and Edward Luttwak, *Strategic Power: Military Capabilities and Political Utility*, the Washington Papers, Vol. 4, no. 38 (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, 1976).

<sup>7</sup> See “News Conference at Moscow, July 3,” *Department of State Bulletin* 71, no. 1831 (July 29, 1974), p. 215.

<sup>8</sup> For example, Secretary of Defense Brown stated, “In the interests of stability, we avoid the capability of eliminating the other side’s deterrent, insofar as we might be able to do so. In short, we must be quite willing—as we have been for some



could view the *leitmotiv* of this analysis as an attempt to determine the theoretical and immediate validity for Kissinger's rediscovery of the political significance of superiority in 1979.

On at least one occasion, I contributed to the existing ambivalence. After an exhausting negotiations in July 1974, I gave an answer to a question at a press conference I have come to regret: "What in the name of God is strategic superiority?" I asked, "What is the significance of it at these levels of numbers? What do you do with it?" My statement reflected fatigue and exasperation, not analysis. If both sides maintain the balance, then indeed the race becomes futile and SALT has its place in strengthening stability. But if we opt out of the race unilaterally, we will probably be faced eventually with a younger group of Soviet leaders who will figure out what can be done with strategic superiority.<sup>9</sup>

And,

Our strategic doctrine has relied extraordinarily, perhaps exclusively, on our superior strategic power. The Soviet Union has never relied on its superior strategic power. It has always depended more on its local and regional superiority. Therefore even an equivalence in destructive power, even assured destruction for both sides is a revolution in NATO doctrine as we have known it.<sup>10</sup>

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time—to accept the principle of mutual deterrence and design our defense posture in light of that principle." (Emphasis added) *Department of Defense Annual Report Fiscal Year 1980* (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, January 25, 1979), p. 61.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *The SALT II Treaty*, Hearings, Part 3, 96<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess. (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 1979), p. 169.

<sup>10</sup> Quotation from Henry Kissinger's September 1, 1979 speech in Brussels, reprinted in "Kissinger Looks at the future of NATO," *Congressional Record*, September 6, 1979, p. E4292.