

# WASHINGTON ICBM CONTRACTORS (ICons) GROUP



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## **Nov ICons:**

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## ADMINISTRATION/PROGRAM SPECIFICS

### **U.S. Air Force Reveals Details of First Hypersonic Missile**

<https://www.newsweek.com/us-air-force-hypersonic-missile-1538931>

BY DAVID BRENNAN for Newsweek // ON 10/14/20 AT 4:07 AM EDT

An Air Force general has revealed new details about what is set to be the service's first hypersonic missile as the U.S. tries to catch up with the hypersonic research of its Russian and Chinese rivals.

**Air Force Major General Andrew Gebara**—Air Force Global Strike Command's director of strategic plans, programs and requirements—told Air Force Magazine earlier this month that Lockheed Martin's coming AGM-183A air-launched rapid-response weapon, also known as ARRW, is "amazing." The hypersonic missile is made up of a solid-fuel rocket booster topped by an unpowered boost-glide vehicle. The rocket booster propels the missile to hypersonic speeds, after which the glide vehicle detaches and continues to its target.

These boost-glide vehicles will be able to carry nuclear warheads and maneuver in flight while maintaining hypersonic speeds, making it difficult for defensive missiles to track and intercept them. Gebara confirmed that the ARRW will be capable of hypersonic speeds, which means anything above Mach 5 or around 3,836 miles per hour. "This thing is going to be able to go, in 10-12 minutes, almost 1,000 miles," Gebara told Air Force Magazine. "It's amazing."

This means the ARRW could hit speeds of between 5,000 and 6,000 miles per hour—somewhere between Mach 6.5 and Mach 8. It is unclear whether Gebara meant this is the missile top speed or the average speed of the boost-glide warhead. The vehicle in the joint Lockheed Martin-Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency Tactical Boost Glide program has been touted as being able to hit speeds as high as Mach 20, according to the agency.

The Air Force has now completed the ARRW's early testing phase, successfully mounting a prototype of the weapon on a B-52 strategic bomber. The service is also considering the B-1 Lancer bomber as another delivery aircraft. Live-fire flight tests for ARRW prototypes are slated for October 2021, and the Air Force has said it plans to purchase at least eight such prototypes, The Drive reported. The service is aiming for initial operational capacity by September 2022, though the program is running behind schedule and costs have swollen by almost 40 percent to date.

The U.S. military is racing to catch up to Russia and China, both of which already have operational hypersonic missiles. Last week, Russia successfully tested a naval hypersonic missile known as the Tsirkon. The Russian air force already fields the Kinzhal nuclear-capable hypersonic missile. Earlier this year, President Donald Trump's administration proposed a 23 percent increase in funding for hypersonic weapons. The Army and Navy are already working together on their own hypersonic weapon known as the Common-Hypersonic Glide Body. The prototype had its first successful flight in March, hitting within six inches of its target according to U.S. Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy.

### **U.S. diplomat calls China 'elephant in the room'**

[https://washingtontimes-dc.newsmemory.com/?token=cdb52433bbf29ee5dc4c186abace3624\\_5f857b6a\\_d3019ac&selDate=20201013](https://washingtontimes-dc.newsmemory.com/?token=cdb52433bbf29ee5dc4c186abace3624_5f857b6a_d3019ac&selDate=20201013)

Biegun offers help with India's Pacific interests

BY SHEIKH SAALIQ AND AIJAZ HUSSAIN ASSOCIATED PRESS NEW DELHI // 13 Okt 2020

Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun said during a visit Monday to India that China is “an elephant in the room” and that Washington is keen to advance India's interests across the Indo-Pacific region.

Mr. Biegun, who spoke at the opening session of the India-U.S. Forum on a three-day visit, said the U.S. is exploring ways to empower India without altering what he called New Delhi's “strong and proud tradition of strategic autonomy.” “India has a strong and proud tradition of strategic autonomy, and we respect that. We do not seek to change India's traditions,” he said. “Rather, we want to explore how to empower them and India's ability to defend its own sovereignty and democracy and to advance Indian interests across the Indo-Pacific region.”

In that direction, Washington has increased its foreign military sales and intelligence-sharing with India, the No. 2 U.S. diplomat said. “But there is more that we can do, including strengthening India's ability to defend itself and by promoting interoperability among our militaries,” he said. Mr. Biegun cautioned about rising China in the region. “Of course, as we advance in this direction, there is an elephant in the room: China,” he said.

He and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo met last week in Tokyo with counterparts of India, Japan and Australia. Together, the four Indo-Pacific nations make up what is known as the Quad. The group is seen as a counterweight to China, which experts say is flexing its military muscle in the South China Sea, the East China Sea, the Taiwan Strait and along its northern border with India.

Mr. Pompeo said China's increasingly assertive

actions in the region make it more critical than ever for the Quad to cooperate and protect its partners and people from Chinese “exploitation, corruption and coercion.” Mr. Biegun also is visiting New Delhi amid a flare-up in military tensions between China and India over the disputed mountainous border in the Ladakh region. Washington has also increasingly criticized Beijing over the COVID-19 pandemic, trade, technology, Hong Kong, Taiwan and human rights.

China has denied allegations of covering up the spread of the coronavirus and said it acted quickly to provide information to the World Health Organization and the world. It says the U.S. is the biggest aggressor in the South China Sea. Beijing also denies human rights violations in its handling of Hong Kong and minority Muslims in the Xinjiang region. It accuses Western nations of meddling in its internal affairs.

Mr. Biegun said the partnership among the four Quad countries is driven by “shared interests, not binding obligations, and is not intended to be an exclusive grouping.” “Any country that seeks a free and open Indo-Pacific and is willing to take steps to ensure that should be welcome to work with us,” said Mr. Biegun, who is expected during his visit to India to lay the groundwork for the “2+2” dialogue later this month between Mr. Pompeo and Defense Secretary Mark Esper and their Indian counterparts, External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and Defense Minister Rajnath Singh.

## **U.S. Working to End Chinese Secrecy Around Nuclear Capabilities**

U.S. Naval Institute News, 15 Oct 20 John Grady

America's senior arms negotiator said Washington is taking diplomatic and military steps to put an end to Beijing's "great wall of secrecy" that surrounds its rapid and expanding strategic weapons program.

Speaking at a Heritage Foundation online forum this week, Marshall Billingslea, senior envoy for arms control, said Xi Jin-ping and the Communist Party leadership are engaged "in a crash nuclear build-up" with the intent of re-establishing China as the Middle Kingdom, the dominant global power.

China continues "to hide a dagger in a smile" diplomatically, Billingslea said.

Billingslea contrasted the more than 100-page document the United States has released on nuclear strategy to the five paragraphs China has publicly released on its nuclear program and strategy. He said in prepared remarks and in answers to questions that the United States is willing to engage in nuclear arms talks with Beijing and Moscow to avoid a new nuclear arms race.

Billingslea was speaking a little more than a month after the Pentagon released a report saying China has 200 operational nuclear weapons in its stockpile and is driving to at least double that number over the next decade.

Visible proof of Chinese intentions to build up strategic forces came most recently in the two-and-a-half-mile-long parade of cruise and ballistic missiles on Oct. 1. In marking the 70th anniversary of the Communist takeover of China, Xi unveiled a new mobile launched DF-41 intercontinental missile.

For the past several years, Beijing has "aggressively" been testing cruise and ballistic missiles. Billingslea said that as of August, China has conducted "at least 70 this year." The schedule "portends a major shift in Chinese nuclear posture." Several times during the forum, Billingslea noted that the shift was taking place as Beijing increased pressure on Taiwan, asserting its territorial claims in the South and East China Seas and escalating border tensions with India.

"This is a warmongering Communist Party," he said.

Billingslea said, "this cannot continue." The result of China's secrecy over the nuclear program, the aggressive cruise and ballistic missile testing and its refusal to join in serious arms control talks could lead to a three-way nuclear arms race.

The great danger is that Chinese nuclear "capability is likely outpacing their strategic thinking." He noted China is also operating as a major nuclear power without any hotline connections to Washington or protocols on data exchanges to avoid miscalculations in a crisis.

"Diplomacy has not yet run its course," he said. Billingslea argued countries would see Beijing in a better light internationally if China sat down to

talk with the United States and Russia, as its prestige has fallen for its aggressive behavior and its initial handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Billingslea noted the support from Washington's European allies — Austria, Sweden and expected support from New Zealand and Australia — on pressing the Chinese to honor their commitment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and become involved in writing a new strategic arms agreement.

As a way to entice China to participate in serious negotiations, “we’ll start with the Russians” on extending the START [Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty], he added. But any “new treaty has to be multilateral,” meaning China needs to come aboard at some point.

“We’re ready to strike the deal” to extend the treaty’s terms with the Kremlin, freezing nuclear weapon stockpiles, but with new verification methods in place. China has to come aboard at some point to make the treaty viable.

Other nuclear powers, especially India, are watching to see whether China chooses to engage in these new strategic arms limitation talks, Billingslea said.

For allies and other nations, he said “now’s time to ring up the Russians and tell them to take the deal.” The next step would be for Moscow to work to bring China into the wider negotiations. So far, they “are not going to us get there.”

Right now, the Chinese “want to finish the build-up before they sit down to talk,” he added.

The steps the United States is taking to counter Chinese and Russian nuclear build-ups include modernizing its nuclear triad — from systems like the Columbia class ballistic missile submarine to low-yield warheads and sea-launched missiles. Billingslea added that Washington is also developing land-based intermediate-range ballistic and cruise missiles for the Army and Marine Corps and hypersonic weapons.

Billingslea estimated China has “as many as 2,000 intermediate-range ballistic and cruise missiles.” Like START, China was never part of a treaty agreement to limit these weapons. The United States withdrew from Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in 2019, arguing Russia had violated its terms repeatedly by stationing missiles with a range of 500 TO 5,500 kilometers on its western border.

In addition, to show Beijing that China’s “wanton aggression to your neighbors has consequences,” Billingslea said the United States will field new missile defense systems throughout Asia and Europe.

### **Threaten decisive nuclear retaliation**

*NATO should thwart Russian use of nuclear weapons by threatening certain retaliation*

Atlantic Council, 14 Oct 20 David Gompert and Hans Binnendijk

The danger of nuclear war in Europe is greater than it has been since the Cold War—and growing. A sputtering economy dragged down by low energy prices impedes Russia from competing with the West in advanced technology and conventional military capabilities. Yet, under Vladimir

Putin, Russia is menacing its neighbors, including NATO's Baltic members, diverting attention from its domestic woes. As a result, Russia is increasing its reliance on nuclear weapons and the threat to use them first, and it is pursuing an advantage in nuclear forces in Europe. In the face of this challenge, NATO's stated nuclear strategy is too stale, vague, and timid to ensure deterrence. This essay offers an alternative strategy to reduce the danger of nuclear war in Europe.

Russia's growing emphasis on nuclear weapons is not confined to Europe. Russia is also fearful that the United States' missile defense, its unmatched global sensors, non-nuclear precision-strike weaponry, and cyberwar capabilities could weaken the credibility of Moscow's second-strike deterrent. At the same time, it appears to the Kremlin that the United States is walking away from arms control, including the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM), Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF), and Open Skies treaties. Taken together, Russia's adventurous foreign policy, conventional military disadvantages, and fear of US strategic nuclear intentions are causing it to develop and field new intercontinental and theater nuclear delivery systems, including hypersonic systems, which has grave implications for NATO. [1]

In this context, Russia's declared threat to use nuclear weapons first in the event of war should be of acute concern, as much to US allies as to the United States. Such a policy gives Russia an escalatory option if hostilities were to occur and persist until NATO could bring to bear its conventional military superiority. While the policy is meant to warn against conventional strikes on Russian territory, in practice the policy could provide a potential sanctuary from which Russia could conduct military operations against the Baltic States, for instance. It also supports Russia's nuclear intimidation of its neighbors, including NATO members.

Russia has undoubtedly taken note of the decline of support in Europe for NATO's nuclear deterrent. While ultimately the Alliance's deterrence rests on US, British, and French national systems, US B-61 nuclear gravity bombs delivered by allied dual-capable aircraft (DCA) from sites in Europe are the first-line Alliance deterrent. But that deterrent is under political threat. In Germany, the head of the Social Democratic Party's parliamentary group has called for the withdrawal of US weapons and troops from Germany.<sup>2</sup> There is also resistance in Germany to purchasing new DCA. In the Netherlands and Belgium, parliamentary opposition to nuclear deployments there periodically result in close votes on the issue. And instability in Turkey raises questions about the safety and security of any weapons that might be deployed there. While NATO does not need to match Russia missile for missile in Europe to ensure adequate deterrence, it does need some credible capability.

NATO lacks a credible nuclear doctrine to contend with this worrying and worsening situation. The current official formulation, first set out in the 2010 Strategic Concept and adopted before the new Russian threat emerged, is that NATO needs an "appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional weapons" to deter aggression. This policy contemplates nuclear use only in "extremely remote" circumstances.<sup>3</sup> In 2012, NATO's Deterrence and Defense Posture Review reiterated this basic policy, adding a reference to negative security assurances for adherents of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and noting the complementary role of missile defense as part of the "appropriate mix."<sup>4</sup> More recently, at its 2016 Warsaw Summit, NATO warned that Russia's use of nuclear weapons would "fundamentally alter the nature of a conflict," and stated that NATO has the "capabilities and resolve" to impose unacceptably high costs in response to threats to the "fundamental security" of a member nation.<sup>5</sup> Such woolly formulations imply that NATO is hesitant to say it would retaliate with nuclear weapons and, indeed, could be indecisive about nuclear retaliation—a stance that is hardly conducive to deterrence. It is high time that NATO fixed this problem.

NATO can reduce the dangers inherent in growing Russian reliance on nuclear weapons by warning unequivocally of symmetrical nuclear retaliation

for Russian first use. We call this “Decisive Response.”<sup>6</sup> Provided it is clear about its response if Russia were to resort to the use of nuclear weapons, NATO need not state categorically that it would refrain from using nuclear weapons for any other reason, thus finessing the contentious no-first-use issue. A statement by NATO that it needs nuclear weapons to deter Russian first use would be understandable and politically defensible. We use the term Decisive Response in that it conveys resolve and dispels any doubts the Russians might harbor about NATO’s willingness to use nuclear weapons in retaliation. Though NATO’s current policy does not exclude this possibility, present conditions make it necessary to eliminate any lingering ambiguity. We recognize that several nations may resist clarity on this issue, but that resistance reduces the effectiveness of nuclear deterrence.

By strengthening deterrence of Russian nuclear escalation of a conflict, Decisive Response would inhibit Russia from any aggression against any NATO member. It would help disabuse Moscow of the belief that NATO would hesitate to respond forcefully to Russian threats or acts of aggression, such as a quick “grab” of Baltic territory or an attempt to expand its control in the Arctic or Black Sea. And it would negate Russia’s strategy of making itself a sanctuary from which it could project force against NATO. Indeed, even irregular aggression toward NATO members, such as the insertion of paramilitary forces and cyberattacks, could be deterred more effectively insofar as the Russian threat to escalate to nuclear war would be spiked. Thus, Decisive Response could strengthen deterrence of all aggression.

To support a cogent nuclear deterrent policy, NATO nations who have a nuclear mission should reiterate their willingness to continue with their missions for the foreseeable future, whether stationing or delivering the weapons. Whereas previous nuclear strategies for NATO, such as “flexible response,” required nuclear weapons capabilities on every rung of the escalatory ladder, Decisive Response would not. It is only important that NATO have capabilities in theater to respond in kind to what might be a limited Russian first strike. The key to Decisive Response lies not in outsized arsenals of theater nuclear-delivery systems, but in unhesitating decision-making and action. The few hundred B-61 nuclear gravity bombs available in Europe<sup>7</sup> to be delivered by allied DCA provide an important deterrent capability provided they are linked with decisive decision-making. Of course, these systems need to be kept secure and modernized as needed.

Given continuing improvement of Russian air defenses and the need for a robust US role in retaliation, NATO DCA might, if needed, be augmented by US sea-based low-yield nuclear-tipped cruise missiles.<sup>8</sup> The United States may require new theater-range land-based missiles to deal with other threats, for example, China, but it does not require them to make Decisive Response credible in Europe.

At the same time, Decisive Response’s credibility depends on having an agreed policy on how NATO would retaliate if deterrence failed. The concept of symmetrical response balances the need to avoid further escalation with the need to convince Russia that it will always have far more to lose than to gain by initiating nuclear hostilities. Generally speaking, symmetry implies comparable levels and targeting priorities. To illustrate, if Russia opts to demonstrate its preparedness to use nuclear weapons by detonating a single weapon far from NATO territory or forces, NATO should do likewise. If the Russians use nuclear weapons against NATO forces, NATO should respond accordingly. In the latter case, NATO would endeavor to avoid Russian targets that Moscow might interpret as a precursor to a strategic first strike.

In parallel, the Alliance should work with the United States to initiate efforts with Russia to renegotiate a modified version of the INF Treaty. If Russia is unwilling to scrap its SSC-8 missiles, there are other options to provide greater security for Europe. One option would be to limit all permitted INF missiles globally that carry nuclear warheads, something China might be able also to accept. Adding an arms control component

would be consistent with NATO's long-standing tradition of having a dual-track approach to Russia.

With or without a NATO arms control initiative, the Russians will claim that Decisive Response is provocative and will gaslight the concept in Western political circles, hoping to stimulate opposition. Yet, such a strategy is irrefutably meant to reduce the danger of nuclear war. As such a concept is debated among and within NATO states, a harsh Russian reaction would suggest that Moscow takes such a declaratory policy seriously, which is exactly the aim. It would be unfortunate for NATO to water down its declaratory policy and thus imply indecisiveness.

Nuclear weapons were a central focus of discussions on deterrence in NATO during the Cold War. Today, similar discussions are taboo. But given the growing Russian nuclear challenge to Europe, continued silence on this topic is no longer viable. There is a path that can reverse the current unstable state of affairs. We urge NATO to follow that path.

*--David Gompert is a distinguished visiting professor at the US Naval Academy. He previously served as the acting director of national intelligence, special assistant to the US president, deputy undersecretary of state, and vice president of the RAND Corporation; Hans Binnendijk is a distinguished fellow at the Atlantic Council. He previously served as senior director for defense policy at the US National Security Council, acting director of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff, and director of the US Institute for National Strategic Studies*

### **North Korea's nuclear, missile programs 'serious threat' to security – Pentagon chief**

Reuters, 14 Oct 20 Idrees Ali

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper on Wednesday said North Korea's nuclear and missile programs pose a global threat, after Pyongyang's unveiling of previously unseen intercontinental ballistic missiles at a predawn military parade.

The appearance of a new intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) during a weekend parade in North Korea captivated many Western analysts. But officials in South Korea were far more concerned by the display of new multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS) and fast, maneuverable short-range missiles that would be ideal for striking targets in the South.

Speaking before the start of a meeting with South Korean Defense Minister Suh Wook at the Pentagon, Esper said: "We agree that North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs remain a serious threat to the security and stability of the region and the world."

"The United States remains committed to the security of the Republic of Korea," Esper said.

He added, however, that South Korea and the United States must find a more equitable way of sharing defense costs so it "doesn't fall unequally on the American taxpayers."

U.S. President Donald Trump, who has touted his relationship with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, has repeatedly said Seoul should pay for a larger share of the cost of U.S. military forces deployed in the South.

Some 28,500 American troops are deployed in South Korea, in what is seen as a deterrent to Pyongyang that also sends a message to China about U.S. influence and capability in Asia.

Separately, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, citing a lack of ICBM tests by Pyongyang last year, told reporters on Wednesday there was a reduced risk to the United States from North Korea due to Trump's policy of engagement.

South Korea's national security advisor Suh Hoon is also in Washington this week for previously unannounced meetings with his U.S. counterpart as well as Pompeo, South Korea's presidential Blue House said in Seoul on Thursday.

*--Additional reporting by David Brunnstrom in Washington and Josh Smith in Seoul*

### **U.S. military chief vows to provide 'extended deterrence' to South Korea**

Yonhap News Agency (South Korea), 14 Oct 20 Choi Soo-hyang

SEOUL -- The United States has reaffirmed its commitment to South Korea's security, including providing "extended deterrence," during annual talks between the military chiefs of the two countries, both sides said Wednesday.

U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman (JCS) Gen. Mark Milley made the remark Tuesday during the 45th Military Committee Meeting (MCM) via videoconference with his South Korean counterpart, Gen. Won In-choul, days after North Korea unveiled a massive new intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and other weapons.

"Gen. Milley reiterated the United States' firm commitments to the Republic of Korea and to providing extended deterrence," a joint statement said.

Extended deterrence refers to the U.S. commitment to use a full range of military capabilities, including its nuclear umbrella, to protect its allies from enemies' nuclear and missile threats.

During the talks, the two leaders recognized that the alliance has "remained the linchpin" for regional security for the past seven decades, and discussed specific measures to strengthen their defense posture and enhance cooperation. This year marks the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of the 1950-53 Korean War.

Gen. Won praised joint efforts to maintain the alliance's "Fight Tonight" readiness despite COVID-19 difficulties.

Tuesday's meeting was also attended by Maj. Gen. Jung Sang-hwa, acting chief director of JCS Directorate for Strategic Planning. From the U.S. side, Indo-Pacific Command leader Adm. Philip Davidson and U.S. Forces Korea Commander Gen. Robert Abrams joined the meeting.

The MCM is held every year, usually a day before the defense ministers of the two countries hold the Security Consultative Meeting (SCM). This year's SCM is slated to be held in Washington on Wednesday.

### **STRIKEWERX gets innovative for ICBM maintenance**

Air Force Global Strike Command Public Affairs, 8 Oct 20

1st Lt. Kaylin P. Hankerson

BARKSDALE AIR FORCE BASE, La. -- Air Force Global Strike Command's innovation hub, STRIKEWERX, hosted a "Design Sprint" event to aid the development of equipment for missile fields across the command Sept. 14-18.

The five-day Design Sprint took place at STRIKEWERX in Bossier City, Louisiana, bringing together industry and academia partners to weigh-in on improving an Airmen's concept cover for the command's Transporter Erector jack stands.

The current T.E. jack stand design, which is used by all AFGSC missile handling teams, lacks a cover for the tie down slots, allowing the slots to become filled with dirt, gravel and snow. This design flaw was a problem that Maj. Ryan Chapman, Air Force Global Strike Command executive chief scientist, and his team thought the STRIKEWERX program would be able to help address.

"The lack of T.E. tie down slot covers is costing our Airmen 361 man-hours a year," Chapman said. "It's also a morale issue, as Airmen have to dig up ice, rocks and debris to perform routine maintenance."

To remedy the problem, Airmen got innovative to find a way to resolve the issues they face with the current equipment.

Tech. Sgt. Joshuwa Bolton, 90th Missile Wing maintenance supervisor, developed the homemade solution used in the Design Sprint.

"I am not the first person to think of this concept," Bolton said. "I am just the person who has had support in getting the idea to reality."

While the first of its kind, this Design Sprint event exemplifies how the STRIKEWERX program enables an AFGSC Airman's idea to transform from concept to reality.

"This [Design] Sprint brought together an intricate team to work toward finding a scalable solution," Chapman said. "We brought in Mechanical Engineering and Design PhDs, industry experts and partnered with a facility containing over 30 3D printers to invest in our Airmen's ideas."

The event was not only successful in producing two prototypes that are headed into the testing phase within the command, but also showcased the command's commitment to Airmen innovation.

"What I love about the Design Sprint is that we took one of our Tech. Sergeant's ideas, invested in it and showed our Airmen how committed we are into making their lives better," Chapman said. "So many times we hear that ideas die at certain points in the chain of command but here we went all-in with STRIKEWERX's resources to scale it up across all of our missile wings."

STRIKEWERX Director, Russ Mathers, is enthusiastic to see the innovation hub making an impact.

"Our first design sprint was a huge success," Mathers said. "The Airmen from the missile wings who had the grassroots idea to create a cover were able to help design it [prototypes], and see their idea fully supported by the AFGSC headquarters staff."

STRIKEWERX will continue to host Design Sprint iterations to tackle various issues from around the command.

“We’re excited by our successful week and look forward to many more design sprints to solve problems in the future,” Mathers added.

**Air Force seeks input on environmental impacts of replacing region's nuclear missiles**

Great Falls Tribune Online (Montana), 9 Oct 20 Karl Puckett

The U.S. Air Force is taking comments from the public on an environmental study it is preparing on its plan to modernize the nation's land-based nuclear arsenal, an overhaul that will require thousands of workers and temporary workforce housing camps to get the job done.

The Air Force says the major modernization effort will ensure that land-based missiles remain viable for at least another half-century.

The project involves replacing 400 Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) in missile fields at Montana's Malmstrom Air Force Base, Francis E. Warren Air Force Base in Wyoming and Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota with a more technologically advanced ICBM called Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent.

Science:New missile work to begin at Malmstrom in 2026, Air Force says

Work would begin in the late 2020s.

The new missiles would remain viable until at least 2075, the Air Force said.

Minuteman III missiles were designed to be in the ground for 10 years, said Steve Grooms, acting chairman of the Montana Defense Alliance, a subcommittee of the Great Falls Chamber of Commerce that promotes Malmstrom and supports the modernization effort.

"Then it was expanded and now we're going on 60 years," Grooms said. "It is cheaper for us to revamp the missiles and the silos, savings on the maintenance going forward, then upgrading what we currently have."

Barrack-style modular housing camps would be needed to accommodate a workforce that would be on the job for two to five years, including up to 2,000 workers in Montana, the Air Force said.

Malmstrom Air Force Base in Great Falls maintains 130 to 133 Minuteman III ICBMs at 150 missile alert facilities spread across 13,800 square miles in Cascade, Chouteau, Fergus, Judith Basin, Lewis and Clark, Teton and Wheatland counties.

The Air Force published a notice in the Federal Register Sept. 29 of its plans to prepare an environmental impact statement to look at the potential impacts of constructing the new GBSD weapons system.

During the "scoping" period, residents are being asked to identify issues they would like the Air Force to study in the environmental analysis.

A draft study is expected to be out in the spring of 2022 with a final decision on the plan completed by spring of 2023.

The work involves updating missile alert facilities and launch facilities, establishing new utility corridors and deploying the GBSD system.

Missile alert facilities are underground launch control centers that monitor and control launch facilities. Launch facilities are cylindrical underground structures for storing and launching ICBMs.

All 150 of the launch facilities in the northcentral Montana missile field would be modernized along with eight of the 15 missile alert facilities. It will take about seven months to renovate each launch facility and a year for the missile alert facilities. The missile alert facilities that aren't renovated would be dismantled.

"The first missiles for the ICBMs were put in during the Cuban Missile Crisis," Grooms, of the Montana Defense Alliance, said of ICBMs in northcentral Montana.

On Oct. 26, 1962, launch facility Alpha-06, which is near Monarch 60 miles southeast of Great Falls, went on alert after it was discovered the Soviet Union had placed nuclear missiles in Cuba.

The number of land-based missiles would not change, the Air Force said.

The old weapons systems would be temporarily stored at F.E. Warren, Malmstrom and Minot Air Force bases.

Then they would be disassembled at Hill Air Force Base in Utah or Camp Navajo, a munitions storage facility in Arizona.

The proposal doesn't involve generating or disposing of nuclear material, the Air Force said.

The purpose of replacing the old system is to continue to offer "long-term, tangible evidence of U.S. nuclear weapons capabilities to both allies and potential adversaries," the Air Force said.

While certain components of the Minuteman III have been upgraded, most of the fundamental infrastructure is 50 years old, the Air Force said.

The project will require 761 miles of underground utilities and associated 16-foot-wide property easements in northcentral Montana, the Air Force said.

Four construction staging areas, five to 10 acres in size, will be needed, with smaller staging areas near each facility.

The public has until Nov. 13 to comment but can't do it in person because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Instead, materials are available for review at <https://www.gbsdeis.com>.

The Air Force also is soliciting comments from local communities and Native American Tribes.

Great Falls City Manager Greg Doyon told the City Commission this week that he had received a letter from the Air Force Oct. 5 notifying the city about the chance to offer input on what should be studied in the environmental impact statement.

### **NNSA Administrator visits Kansas City National Security Campus**

OCTOBER 14, 2020 <https://www.energy.gov/nnsa/articles/nnsa-administrator-visits-kansas-city-national-security-campus-0>

WASHINGTON – Lisa E. Gordon-Hagerty, Administrator for the National Nuclear Security Administration and U.S. Department of Energy Under Secretary for Nuclear Security (DOE/NNSA), continued her tour of the Nuclear Security Enterprise, visiting the Kansas City National Security Campus (KCNSC) on Oct. 13.

Coinciding with the 20th anniversary of NNSA's creation, the Administrator is making her way across the Nation visiting the agency's eight laboratories, plants, and sites. Having begun the tour in July with visits to the Savannah River Site in Aiken, South Carolina, she has now visited all NNSA facilities, including other sites in California, Nevada, New Mexico, Tennessee, and Texas. While at KCNSC, Administrator Gordon-Hagerty and NNSA Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs Charles Verdon observed ongoing mission projects and expressed their appreciation, in person and via livestream, to the more than 5,000 employees that make up the site's workforce.

“Visiting our Kansas City site provided me with an opportunity to thank those who have contributed to NNSA's vital operations during the pandemic,” Administrator Gordon-Hagerty said. “You are part of the reason why NNSA as a whole has not missed any deliverables or milestones during the COVID-19 crisis. Thanks to you, we have continued to achieve our national security missions while maintaining as safe a working environment as possible under truly unique circumstances.”

During the Administrator's visit to KCNSC, she hosted a town hall to commemorate achievements like the \$1 billion cost savings realized in August 2020 by the site's Supply Chain Management Center, recognized the intensive work conducted by the site's COVID-19 Task Force, and toured production facilities where vital national and global security work is conducted. She and Dr. Verdon also met with new site leadership after the retirement of longtime Kansas City Field Office Site Manager Mark Holecek, who departed after 28 years of federal service.

### **U.S. diplomat calls China ‘elephant in the room’**

[https://washingtontimes-dc.newsmemory.com/?token=cdb52433bbf29ee5dc4c186abace3624\\_5f857b6a\\_d3019ac&selDate=20201013](https://washingtontimes-dc.newsmemory.com/?token=cdb52433bbf29ee5dc4c186abace3624_5f857b6a_d3019ac&selDate=20201013)

*Begun offers help with India's Pacific interests*

BY SHEIKH SAALIQ AND AIJAZ HUSSAIN ASSOCIATED PRESS NEW DELHI // 13 Okt 2020

Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun said during a visit Monday to India that China is “an elephant in the room” and that Washington is keen to advance India’s interests across the Indo-Pacific region.

Mr. Biegun, who spoke at the opening session of the India-U.S. Forum on a three-day visit, said the U.S. is exploring ways to empower India without altering what he called New Delhi’s “strong and proud tradition of strategic autonomy.” “India has a strong and proud tradition of strategic autonomy, and we respect that. We do not seek to change India’s traditions,” he said. “Rather, we want to explore how to empower them and India’s ability to defend its own sovereignty and democracy and to advance Indian interests across the Indo-Pacific region.”

In that direction, Washington has increased its foreign military sales and intelligence-sharing with India, the No. 2 U.S. diplomat said. “But there is more that we can do, including strengthening India’s ability to defend itself and by promoting interoperability among our militaries,” he said. Mr. Biegun cautioned about rising China in the region. “Of course, as we advance in this direction, there is an elephant in the room: China,” he said.

He and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo met last week in Tokyo with counterparts of India, Japan and Australia. Together, the four Indo-Pacific nations make up what is known as the Quad. The group is seen as a counterweight to China, which experts say is flexing its military muscle in the South China Sea, the East China Sea, the Taiwan Strait and along its northern border with India.

Mr. Pompeo said China’s increasingly assertive

actions in the region make it more critical than ever for the Quad to cooperate and protect its partners and people from Chinese “exploitation, corruption and coercion.” Mr. Biegun also is visiting New Delhi amid a flare-up in military tensions between China and India over the disputed mountainous border in the Ladakh region. Washington has also increasingly criticized Beijing over the COVID-19 pandemic, trade, technology, Hong Kong, Taiwan and human rights.

China has denied allegations of covering up the spread of the coronavirus and said it acted quickly to provide information to the World Health Organization and the world. It says the U.S. is the biggest aggressor in the South China Sea. Beijing also denies human rights violations in its handling of Hong Kong and minority Muslims in the Xinjiang region. It accuses Western nations of meddling in its internal affairs.

Mr. Biegun said the partnership among the four Quad countries is driven by “shared interests, not binding obligations, and is not intended to be an exclusive grouping.” “Any country that seeks a free and open Indo-Pacific and is willing to take steps to ensure that should be welcome to work with us,” said Mr. Biegun, who is expected during his visit to India to lay the groundwork for the “2+2” dialogue later this month between Mr. Pompeo and Defense Secretary Mark Esper and their Indian counterparts, External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and Defense Minister Rajnath Singh.

## News & Opinion

### **ICBMs Are Obsolete and Dangerous, And Should Be Eliminated**

*America would actually be more secure if it only had nuclear submarines and nuclear bombers*

National Interest Online, 14 Oct 20 William D. Hartung

In a [recent essay](#), Rebecca Heinrichs of the Hudson Institute outlines the traditional case for building a new Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM), known officially as the Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent (GBSD). In a number of critical respects, her arguments fall short of the mark.

The first and most obvious question is whether we need ICBMs in the first place. The answer is an emphatic no. Because of their extreme vulnerability to attack, ICBMs are kept on high alert status, leaving the president a matter of minutes to decide whether to launch them on warning of an impending attack. This increases the chances of launching a nuclear war by mistake due to false warning, a risk not worth taking given the deterrent capabilities of the other components of the U.S. nuclear arsenal.

As former Secretary of Defense William Perry and Tom Collina, the Director of Policy at the Ploughshares Fund, note in their new book, *The Button: The New Nuclear Arms Race and Presidential Power from Truman to Trump*, the greatest risk of nuclear conflict is not an intentional, “surprise attack,” but rather the danger of “blundering into a nuclear war” in response to a false alarm. And no matter what measures are taken to bolster U.S. early warning capabilities or create checks, systems fail and humans make mistakes. And just one mistake in detecting a nuclear attack could end civilization as we know it.

The reality is that ICBMs are not needed to deter Russia or any other nation from attacking the United States with nuclear weapons. Invulnerable nuclear-armed submarines and a force of bombers that can be put on alert but—crucially—recalled if needed are more than enough to dissuade any potential attacker. The common sense case for a dyad of submarine-launched ballistic missiles and a reserve bomber force is made in detail in the organization Global Zero’s alternative nuclear posture review, which would shift U.S. nuclear strategy from one that engages in planning for elaborate and dangerous nuclear warfighting to one that establishes the nuclear arsenal as a second-strike force meant to deter nuclear attacks against the U.S. and its allies—a “deterrence-only” strategy.

ICBM boosters argue that absent ICBMs, U.S. nuclear forces would be more vulnerable to attack. But as the Trump administration’s own 2018 Nuclear Posture Review noted about nuclear-armed submarines (SSBNs), “when on patrol, SSBNs are, at present, virtually undetectable, and there are no known, near-term credible threats to the survivability of the SSBN force.” And given that eight to ten nuclear-armed submarines are at sea at any one time and nuclear bombers can be put on alert during a crisis and deployed to the skies on warning of an attack, there would be no realistic risk of a surprise strike that would disable America’s nuclear deterrent.

It’s important to remember that the creation of the nuclear triad of sea-, land- and air-launched nuclear weapons had more to do with interservice rivalry and the fight for shares of the budgetary pie than it did with a carefully crafted nuclear strategy. As Perry and Collina point out in their book, “the triad emerged over time mainly as the result of interservice rivalry between the Air Force and the Navy in the 1950s and 1960s. As nuclear

weapons became a central arena of Cold War competition, defense spending began to flow, and no branch of the military wanted to be left out.” Add to that the intense lobbying activities of the Senate ICBM Coalition—composed of senators from states that host ICBM bases or maintenance activities—and contractors like Northrop Grumman that will profit from the more than \$110 billion that is slated to be spent on the procurement and development of a new ICBM, and the power of the non-strategic factors nourishing the ICBM force becomes apparent.

Overcoming the power of the ICBM lobby is no small challenge. Fortunately, there are steps that can be taken now to reduce the risk of accidental nuclear war. As the Union of Concerned Scientists argues in its June 2020 report, “Rethinking ICBMs,” (of which I am a co-author) taking ICBMs off of high alert and eliminating launch on warning could considerably reduce the chances of a mistaken launch. Doing so while forgoing the development of a new ICBM would be a welcome first step towards the larger goal of eliminating ICBMs altogether. Getting rid of ICBMs would reduce the risk of nuclear war while saving billions of dollars that could be applied to other urgent security challenges.

*--William D. Hartung is the director of the Arms and Security Program at the Center for International Policy*

### **The U.S. Strategic Posture in 2030 and Beyond**

<file:///C:/Users/Owner/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/YNURDOSO/The-US-Strategic-Posture-in-2030-and-Beyond.pdf>

*By: BRAD ROBERTS, EDITOR // Center for Global Security Research Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory October 2020*

**Strategic Environment** The changed and changing strategic landscape is apparent in two broad dimensions: geostrategic and technological.

The requirements for the U.S. nuclear security enterprise can be derived from a cascade of national policy documents in effect today. The 2017 National Security Strategy is “guided by a return to principled realism... clear eyed about global competition...and acknowledges the central role of power in world affairs.”<sup>4</sup> It describes a broad range of threats, foremost strategic challenges from Russia and China, as well as destabilizing aims of North Korea and Iran, and the persistent threat of terrorism.

Maintaining deterrence, sustaining and modernizing U.S. nuclear forces and infrastructure, de-nuclearizing the Korean peninsula, denying Iranian pathways to nuclear weapons, and securing nuclear materials and weapons against terrorist access are key priorities in the face of these threats. The 2018 National Defense Strategy highlights these same aspects of the strategic environment, and in addition addresses challenges to U.S. military advantage due to the increasingly disruptive and multi-domain aspects of warfare, the accelerating speed of technological advancement, and ease of access to commercially available technologies which have military utility.<sup>5</sup>

The 2018 Nuclear Posture Review was initiated by an executive order to “ensure that the United States nuclear deterrent is modern, robust, flexible, resilient, ready, and appropriately tailored to deter 21st-century threats and reassure our allies.”<sup>6</sup> The resulting report clearly states that great power competition has replaced terrorism as the number one U.S. nuclear security concern.<sup>7</sup> The importance of stockpile modernization is highlighted, and additional supplements to the force structure, such as a Sea-Launched Cruise Missile and a prompt low-yield option, are called for to address the evolving threat context.

Critical shortcomings in the production infrastructure are highlighted with increased urgency. Assurance commitments to our allies, as well as to the broad arms control and nonproliferation agenda, are reaffirmed.

### **The Status of US Military Power in 2020**

[https://www.dailysignal.com/2020/10/15/the-status-of-us-military-power-in-2020/?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=EBB%2010.16.20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief](https://www.dailysignal.com/2020/10/15/the-status-of-us-military-power-in-2020/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2010.16.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief)

By: [Dakota Wood](#) for The Daily Signal // October 15, 2020 /

America's competitors are developing and deploying new technologies that will make their conventional forces far more effective in open combat.

The question before Congress is: Will the U.S. try to keep up? Unprecedented spending in response to the pandemic has driven the national debt to new heights. As Congress struggles to pass a now overdue federal budget, defense spending—both how much and how it should be spent—is under the microscope. Those on the left bewail the “militarization of foreign policy” and insist the money would be better spent on beans rather than bullets. Others say the Pentagon should abandon plans for high-end ships and planes in favor of robots and cyber tools.

Advocates for more robust military spending argue that the world has grown increasingly dangerous, with major powers actively working to impose their will on other countries at the expense of U.S. interests. To deter or defeat such aggressive competitors, they insist, nothing beats physically owning key terrain. They note that if the cyber and electronic systems of opposing sides essentially neutralize each other, it is the sustained use of physical equipment and forces that will carry the day in protecting essential national interests.

China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea, among others, have invested heavily to modernize their forces and equip them with the most up-to-date technologies. Russia's military is the [most modern](#) it has fielded since the collapse of the Soviet Union. China's navy is nearly [20% larger](#) than the United States' and is [15 years ahead](#) of the U.S. in modernization and expansion. North Korea recently revealed its largest and most capable [intercontinental ballistic missile](#) ever, adding it to its growing inventory of nuclear weapon delivery options.

Meanwhile, [Iran](#) has redoubled its efforts to support terrorist groups, expanded its missile inventory to threaten all other countries in the Persian Gulf region, and employed nuclear blackmail to keep European countries compliant with Iran's nuclear aspirations. All of these countries have proven [cyber capabilities](#) and are now refining a wide array of unmanned systems and their tactical use.

Meanwhile, the U.S. is faced with the challenge of rebuilding its military after a decade of neglect following the end of the Cold War, two decades of sustained use since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and 10 years of irresponsible underfunding stemming from the Budget Control Act of 2011. In [2014](#), when The Heritage Foundation began tracking the status of the U.S. military with the Index of U.S. Military Strength, the services were consistently deferring maintenance, postponing modernization programs, and not even considering force expansion.

Job No. 1 was as basic as it gets: to improve readiness to assure the success of ongoing operations. The equipment and platforms the services possessed were very old, consuming unnecessarily high levels of funding for maintenance and repair. Readiness was at worrisome levels due to

limited flight hours for pilots, inadequate funding for field exercises, and little time available for the troops to do anything other than prepare for the next deployment.

Over the next few years, conditions across the Joint Force did not change much, and in some cases worsened. It was not until Congress provided supplemental funding in 2017 that the Pentagon was able to start turning the tide in readiness. From 2018 onward, gains were made in unit and personnel readiness, maintenance backlogs were reduced, and major acquisition programs were stabilized.

Meanwhile, policy decisions to reduce operations in the Middle East and South Asia brought much-needed relief to the force, allowing the Pentagon to assess and begin adjusting to the reorientation demanded by the new [National Defense Strategy](#). That strategy adopted a marked shift from counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations to meet the rapidly evolving challenges posed by major powers such as China and Russia.

The 2020 [Index of U.S. Military Strength](#) still finds the U.S. military to be too small for the tasks it is assigned, and its old equipment is not being replaced as quickly as it should be. But the services now have a better sense of what they need to do nearly 20 years after 9/11 and are now enabled by a stronger executive branch commitment to fixing problems in readiness and modernization that have been a quarter-century in the making.

Americans expect that the U.S. military will defeat any foreign physical threat to the country and its interests. As captured by the upcoming 2021 Index of U.S. Military Strength, to be released in mid-November, the services are getting there, but still have much work to do. The pace of modernization must increase. The services must be able to buy new equipment faster than legacy items are retired. And readiness must increase for more of the force than just those units that are readying for deployment.

Additionally, the service still must expand in size to reverse three decades of shrinkage. At present, the U.S. military remains marginally capable of defending the country and its interests. It is big enough, modern enough, and ready enough to defeat one major opponent in one part of the world, but it's not prepared to accomplish much more than that. Congress and the next administration must ensure that, going forward, the defense budget for fiscal year 2021 serves as a floor rather than a ceiling for securing our country and its future. The goal should be to increase funding by at least 3% above the rate of inflation, so that our military can regain the capability it needs to defend America in a new era of great power competition.

### **U.S. Working to End Chinese Secrecy Around Nuclear Capabilities**

[https://news.usni.org/2020/10/15/u-s-working-to-end-chinese-secrecy-around-nuclear-capabilities?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=EBB%2010.16.20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief](https://news.usni.org/2020/10/15/u-s-working-to-end-chinese-secrecy-around-nuclear-capabilities?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2010.16.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief)

By: [John Grady](#) for the USNI // October 15, 2020 3:16 PM

America's senior arms negotiator said Washington is taking diplomatic and military steps to put an end to Beijing's "great wall of secrecy" that surrounds its rapid and expanding strategic weapons program.

Speaking at a Heritage Foundation online forum this week, Marshall Billingslea, senior envoy for arms control, said Xi Jin-ping and the Communist Party leadership are engaged "in a crash nuclear build-up" with the intent of re-establishing China as the Middle Kingdom, the dominant global power. China continues "to hide a dagger in a smile" diplomatically, Billingslea said.

Billingslea contrasted the more than 100-page document the United States has released on nuclear strategy to the five paragraphs China has publicly released on its [nuclear program and strategy](#).

He said in prepared remarks and in answers to questions that the United States is willing to engage in nuclear arms talks with Beijing and Moscow to avoid a new nuclear arms race. Billingslea was speaking a little more than a month after the Pentagon released a report saying China has 200 operational nuclear weapons in its stockpile and is driving to at least double that number over the next decade.

Visible proof of Chinese intentions to build up strategic forces came most recently in the two-and-a-half-mile-long parade of cruise and ballistic missiles on Oct. 1. In marking the 70th anniversary of the Communist takeover of China, Xi unveiled a new mobile launched DF-41 intercontinental missile. For the past several years, Beijing has “aggressively” been testing cruise and ballistic missiles. Billingslea said that as of August, China has conducted “at least 70 this year.” The schedule “portends a major shift in Chinese nuclear posture.”

Several times during the forum, Billingslea noted that the shift was taking place as Beijing increased pressure on Taiwan, asserting its territorial claims in the South and East China Seas and escalating border tensions with India. “This is a warmongering Communist Party,” he said. Billingslea said, “this cannot continue.” The result of China’s secrecy over the nuclear program, the aggressive cruise and ballistic missile testing and its refusal to join in serious arms control talks could lead to a three-way nuclear arms race.

The great danger is that Chinese nuclear “capability is likely outpacing their strategic thinking.” He noted China is also operating as a [major nuclear power](#) without any hotline connections to Washington or protocols on data exchanges to avoid miscalculations in a crisis. “Diplomacy has not yet run its course,” he said. Billingslea argued countries would see Beijing in a better light internationally if China sat down to talk with the United States and Russia, as its prestige has fallen for its aggressive behavior and its initial handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Billingslea noted the support from Washington’s European allies — Austria, Sweden and expected support from New Zealand and Australia — on pressing the Chinese to honor their commitment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and become involved in writing a new strategic arms agreement. As a way to entice China to participate in serious negotiations, “we’ll start with the Russians” on extending the START [Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty], he added. But any “new treaty has to be multilateral,” meaning China needs to come aboard at some point.

“We’re ready to strike the deal” to extend the treaty’s terms with the Kremlin, freezing nuclear weapon stockpiles, but with new verification methods in place. China has to come aboard at some point to make the treaty viable. Other nuclear powers, especially India, are watching to see whether China chooses to engage in these new strategic arms limitation talks, Billingslea said. For allies and other nations, he said “now’s time to ring up the Russians and tell them to take the deal.”

The next step would be for Moscow to work to bring China into the wider negotiations. So far, they “are not going to us get there.” Right now, the Chinese “want to finish the build-up before they sit down to talk,” he added. The steps the United States is taking to counter Chinese and Russian nuclear build-ups include modernizing its nuclear triad — from systems like the Columbia class ballistic missile submarine to low-yield warheads and sea-launched missiles.

Billingslea added that Washington is also developing land-based intermediate-range ballistic and cruise missiles for the Army and Marine Corps and hypersonic weapons. Billingslea estimated China has “as many as 2,000 intermediate-range ballistic and cruise missiles.” Like START, China was never part of a treaty agreement to limit these weapons. The United States [withdrew](#) from Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in 2019, arguing Russia had violated its terms repeatedly by stationing missiles with a range of 500 TO 5,500 kilometers on its western border.

In addition, to show Beijing that China’s “wanton aggression to your neighbors has consequences,” Billingslea said the United States will field new missile defense systems throughout Asia and Europe.

**North Korea's new massive missiles 'not much more of a threat,' Gen. Jack Keane says**

<https://www.foxbusiness.com/politics/north-korea-massive-missiles-not-a-threat>

*The rogue nation showed off what appeared to be its biggest-yet ICBM*

By: Joshua Nelson for FOX Business // Published October 13

North Korea displayed what appeared to be the largest display of intercontinental ballistic missiles during a demonstration at a military parade.

Fox News senior strategic analyst Gen. Jack Keane with more. North Korea's new massive missiles are "not much more of a threat," Gen. Jack Keane said on Tuesday in reaction Kim Jong Un showing off what appeared to be one of the largest displays of intercontinental ballistic missiles [ICBM] ever made. “These authoritarian regimes use these military displays more as a political statement actually, to gain psychological leverage,” he told FOX Business' Maria Bartiromo on "Mornings with Maria."

Keane added that while it’s uncertain whether the missiles are real or a “mockup, because they have used mockups in the past,” if “it is real,” he said, “it is a much larger ICBM than they have ever displayed before.” The rogue nation celebrated this weekend the 75th anniversary of its ruling party with a parade displaying a number of weapons and military equipment. The weapons included what was possibly the North’s biggest-yet ICBM, which was mounted on an 11-axel launch vehicle that was also seen for the first time.

North Korea also displayed a variety of solid-fuel weapon systems, including what could be an advanced version of its Pukguksong family of missiles designed to be fired from submarines or land mobile launchers. The missiles' display highlighted how the North has continued to expand its military capabilities during a stalemate in nuclear negotiations with the Trump administration. Keane pointed out that North Korea “already [has] ICBMs that have been tested as late as November 2017 that can reach the entirety of the United States.”

He went on to say that "there's not much more threat here, except that they can likely put more nuclear warheads on it." "This is a mobile system which would mean it is more difficult to detect than a silo system where a missile is in the ground someplace. But, nonetheless, it is a fuel system in terms of wet fuel versus solid fuel and it would take a considerable amount of time to load it so we would still know where it is," Keane explained.

Keane added that if there was a threat, the objective of the U.S. concerning ICBMs is to "shoot them down before they lift off and not have to deal with the air defense system that we have." "The reason why North Korea has nuclear weapons and ICBMs is to guarantee the preservation of their regime. They don't want to go to war with the United States which would end their regime," said Keane.

## **North Korean missile able to target U.S.**

[https://washingtontimes-dc.newsmemory.com/?token=347d985c441db3ccd965eb27d03505e2\\_5f842a08\\_d3019ac&selDate=20201012](https://washingtontimes-dc.newsmemory.com/?token=347d985c441db3ccd965eb27d03505e2_5f842a08_d3019ac&selDate=20201012)

*Kim shows expansion of illegal arsenal despite Trump pressure*

BY GUY TAYLOR AND BILL GERTZ THE WASHINGTON TIMES

North Korea's rollout over the weekend of an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of targeting the U.S. with a nuclear warhead showed that Pyongyang continues to expand its illegal weapons arsenal despite increased sanctions and diplomatic pressure from the Trump administration.

The communist regime of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un unveiled the road-mobile ICBM during a massive military parade in Pyongyang that U.S. experts said was clearly designed to send a message to Washington and its allies in the region, including South Korea. "This parade was orchestrated to show that despite the sanctions and hardships, [North Korea] has continued to advance its capabilities across the spectrum, from nuclear weapons and missiles to conventional systems to individual soldier equipment," said David Maxwell, a former U.S. Special Forces colonel focused on North Korea.

"Most important, it laid the foundation for continued blackmail diplomacy with the South and the U.S.," said Mr. Maxwell, a senior fellow with the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. He circulated his comments via email as U.S. officials scrambled to gauge the technical implications of what they had seen over the weekend on North Korean state-controlled TV broadcasts. The ICBM that rolled through a parade marking the 75th anniversary of the Kim regime's ruling Workers' Party appeared to be a significantly ramped-up version of the Hwasong-15 missile that Pyongyang test-launched in 2017.

The ICBM, which had not been shown before in public, was rolled onto a transporter-erector launcher with 11 axles, two more than the Hwasong-15 — also known as the KN-22. It marks the fourth ballistic missile that the North Koreans have developed in a class that also includes the Taepodong, KN-20 and KN-22. The parade in Pyongyang also showcased the KN-20 and a submarine-launched ballistic missile called the KN-11.

The larger, newer ICBM is expected to have a longer range than the others, with a potential capability of flying some 7,000 miles — notably farther than the distance from Pyongyang to Washington. National security sources have predicted for months that North Korea might use the Workers' Party anniversary parade for a missile reveal, delivering an "October surprise" to capitalize on perceived policy uncertainty in Washington surrounding the impending U.S. presidential election.

A senior Trump administration official expressed frustration over the reveal. "It is disappointing to see the DPRK continuing to prioritize its prohibited nuclear and ballistic missile program over working towards a brighter future for the North Korean people," the official told Reuters, using the acronym for North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The development appears to fly in the face of the Trump administration's pursuit of a major denuclearization deal with the Kim regime.

Talks toward such a deal have been stalled since the breakdown of the February 2019 Hanoi summit between President Trump and Mr. Kim. Mr. Trump said he walked away from the summit early because Mr. Kim demanded sweeping sanctions relief in exchange for only a limited commitment

to destroy part of his nuclear arsenal. The period since has been marked by on-again, off-again provocations from Pyongyang, including months of short-range missile launch tests that the Trump administration has largely ignored.

Mr. Trump has repeatedly pointed out that, despite the tests, the Kim regime has thus far held to a promise he said Mr. Kim made at the first summit between the two men in June 2018 in Singapore: not to carry out any more ICBM or nuclear launches. This weekend's action was considered a parade rollout, not a test launch. While the Trump administration remains eager to resume dialogue with the North Koreans, it has gradually increased sanctions on the Kim regime.

U.S. officials have vowed to maintain a "maximum pressure" campaign until Pyongyang denuclearizes. But Washington has struggled to get a full buy-in for the sanctions from China, which shares a border with North Korea and is Pyongyang's main strategic and economic backer. Hawkish foreign policy advisers in Washington have called on the Trump administration to level sanctions directly against Chinese banks doing business with the Kim regime.

The regime, meanwhile, has shown an ongoing ability to produce nuclear bombs and increasingly sophisticated missiles, exposing the limitations of U.S. and international sanctions. North Korea has been under United Nations backed sanctions and a nuclear embargo for more than two decades and has repeatedly violated past diplomatic nuclear agreements with the wider international community.

A U.N. panel of experts reported several years ago that North Korea's mobile missiles were built on transporter-erector launchers converted from Chinese lumber-carrying vehicles exported in the early 2000s. The display of missile force over the weekend was the first since 2018, when the Trump administration began its push for diplomacy with the Kim regime. Video of the Saturday parade in Pyongyang showed Mr. Kim opening the proceedings with a midnight speech.

"We will continue to strengthen war deterrence for self-defense to deter, control and manage all dangerous attempts and threatening acts, including ever-growing nuclear threats, from hostile forces," said the North Korean leader, who was dressed in a light-gray suit, according to South Korea's Yonhap News Agency. North Korea uses the term "war deterrence" in referring to nuclear arms.

Mr. Kim also said North Korean military power would not be used preemptively. "But," he said, "should anyone undermine our national security and mobilize military power against us, I will retaliate by using the most powerful offensive force at our disposal and in a preemptive manner." North Korean long-range missile development in recent years has forced the Pentagon to reevaluate its strategic missile defenses.

"I believe we have the capability today to deter North Korean aggression, but given where we think the North Korean capability might be in terms of their missiles in the next five years, I think we must continue to explore, improve and resource our entire missile defense capabilities," Adm. Philip Davidson, commander of the military's Indo-Pacific Command, said in 2018. Upgraded defenses include Theater High-Altitude Area Defenses (THAAD) in Guam and South Korea, missile defense ships in the Pacific and near Japan.

"I support planned improvements to the [ballistic missile defense] of the homeland architecture via the new Homeland Defense Radar for Hawaii, additional purchase of Ground Based Interceptors, and a detailed study that ascertains the efficacy of positioning interceptors in Hawaii," Adm.

Davidson said. The admiral also said he wanted to see improvements in the capabilities and numbers of ballistic and cruise missile interceptors that he said would “further enhance homeland defense capabilities and protect key regional nodes from North Korea’s aggressive action against the United States.”

Richard Fisher, a military affairs specialist with the International Assessment and Strategy Center, said the new North Korean ICBM unveiled over the weekend appears to have the same diameter as the previously revealed KN-22, “but is longer, to accommodate a new warhead bus and possible third stage.” “The warhead bus is large enough to carry multiple warheads, but how many would depend on their size, something not clear from North Korean sources,” Mr. Fisher said.

The new 22-wheeled ICBM vehicle, a transportor erector launcher (TEL), appears to be a variant of the 16-wheel transporters that China sold to North Korea in 2010. “With 22 wheels, this new ICBM has the largest mobile TEL in the world, exceeding the previous record of the HS-15’s 18-wheel TEL,” Mr. Fisher said. “It is either made in China or assembled in North Korea with substantial Sanjiang Space Group/China Science and Industry Corp. assistance,” he said. “It is safe to conclude this is yet another massive Chinese violation of the North Korea sanctions regime.”

### **MAD Is Bad U.S. Policy for Iran and North Korea**

[https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2020/10/15/mad\\_is\\_bad\\_us\\_policy\\_for\\_iran\\_and\\_north\\_korea\\_580803.html](https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2020/10/15/mad_is_bad_us_policy_for_iran_and_north_korea_580803.html)

By [Norm Haller](#) & [Peter Pry](#) for Real Clear Defense // October 15, 2020

Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) is the deterrence concept developed in the 1960s by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara in response to the Soviet nuclear threat.

For the 2020s and beyond, America should not acquiesce to entering this mutual suicide pact with Iran or North Korea. Various formulations of MAD were based on having enough surviving weapons after a Soviet first strike to kill 1/5 to 1/3 of the Soviet population and destroy half its industry. Henry Kissinger’s response to MAD was prescient: “The doctrine of ‘assured destruction’ led to the extraordinary conclusion that the vulnerability of our civilian population was an asset reassuring the Soviet Union and guaranteeing its restraint in a crisis.

For the first time, a major country saw an advantage in enhancing its own vulnerability.” [1] MAD proponents still believe the U.S. population should remain vulnerable against large Russian and Chinese nuclear missile attacks. The proponents argue that defending against such attacks would be destabilizing, even as both adversaries continue to deploy more deadly nuclear armaments in the absence of significant U.S. defenses, and the U.S. contemplates spending hundreds of billions to modernize its own nuclear arsenal.

MAD also appears to be the only U.S. deterrent to even very small nuclear attacks from space by emerging nuclear powers Iran and North Korea. With one or at most a few space-based nuclear explosions, both adversaries could mount electromagnetic-pulse (EMP) attacks that could disable America’s electricity supply for very long times, possibly resulting in the deaths of 2/3 or more, up to 90%, of the U.S. population (well over 200 million fatalities) after a year and collapse of American society. [2]

Incredibly, nuclear weapons like the Soviet's Fractional Orbital Bombardment System (FOBS), which in theory could complete multiple orbits before attacking a target, are deemed acceptable in space [3a]. In contrast, non-nuclear space-based defense systems are vilified [3b]. Both Iran and North Korea have demonstrated the ability to orbit nuclear-weapon-carrying satellites. Iran may also have an initial nuclear capability (on its own or from a partner). [2] One FOBS-type orbiting nuclear weapon could be used against a U.S. city with tragic results.

However, a nuclear EMP attack from space could be much worse, a catastrophic number of eventual U.S. deaths, and the end of most U.S. industrial activity. With EMP, a nuclear Iran and already-nuclear North Korea would possess abundant assured destruction capability against America. To deter them, does it make sense for the U.S. to rely on a retaliatory threat of immediately killing perhaps 1/3 of their much smaller populations (Iran: ~84 million; North Korea: ~26 million), destroying much of their relatively meager industries? The answer is NO! Kill 2/3 instead?

### **Still NO!**

To illustrate, Iran's mullahs could decide it is worth accepting the favorable MAD death ratio (possibly as high as 10 U.S. deaths for 1 Iranian death, or 10:1) of an EMP attack to destroy the Great Satan. On the world stage, Iran could deny the attack by shifting blame, such as to a secret U.S. space-defense weapon that went awry or to terrorism. A U.S. response would likely not be immediate as various leaders argue in Washington, D.C., and nations debate in the United Nations, where Russia and China would support Iran.

Stressful or disastrous outcomes could follow. For example, Russia, China, or both could offer Iran protection by threatening massive nuclear attacks on an already suffering America. Suppose the U.S. did eventually retaliate against Iran. In that case, Russia, China, or both could decide to finish off a much weakened America, possibly by starting with more EMP attacks to destroy feeble recovery efforts. With EMP-damaged electronics, prolonged national power outages, and already having expended part of its arsenal on Iran, a U.S. response to Russian-Chinese attacks could be fragmented and much less effective than before Iran's EMP attack.

Similar discussions would apply to North Korea, except that North Korea's MAD death ratio relative to America could be on the order of 30:1 for an EMP attack. With one or a few nuclear weapons and delivery mechanisms, small nations and tiny terrorist organizations can gain tremendous leverage over MAD-obsessed large nations! If not MAD, what? The EMP Commission and President Trump's Executive Order on Coordinating National Resilience to Electromagnetic Pulses call for protecting America's electric grids by hardening transformers and control systems and protecting other life-sustaining critical infrastructures from the catastrophic consequences of EMP. [4a] [4b]

Glacial-paced responses to the Executive Order and to related needs for implementing protection measures must be accelerated. In parallel with hardening the national grid, U.S. military systems and bases worldwide should no longer remain vulnerable to extended offsite power outages and associated fuel shortages stemming from EMP attacks. The U.S. should ensure that (a) its key military bases and federal emergency centers have their own off-grid protected power supplies, like very small nuclear power plants (including mobile nuclear-powered generators), to provide grid-independent backup for military operations and recovery assistance; and (b) adequate fuel storage for extended periods.

Also, the electronics in all essential military systems and federal civilian-assistance systems should be certified to withstand anticipated severe EMP-generated effects. Finally, the Space Force should immediately deploy capabilities to examine space-based systems suspected of carrying nuclear weapons. An example would be a fleet of X-37Cs (modified X-37Bs [5]), which could also assist in deploying advanced missile-tracking satellites

and space-based interceptors, adding a space layer of defenses against hostile global launches of ballistic missiles, new Russian and Chinese hypersonic missiles, and suspect satellites.

Diplomatic and economic steps to curtail Iran's and North Korea's nuclear and missile developments should continue, but it is probably too late for non-military measures to nullify their EMP-delivery capability. More U.S. offensive weapons won't work either. However, adding non-threatening space-based defenses to protect America would strengthen deterrence against nuclear attacks by balancing and complementing the current offense-dominated posture preferred by MAD proponents. The result would be SANE (Strategic Assured National Existence).

The costs of all of these steps would be far less than the many trillions America has already lost and spent while battling the Chinese virus. The costs would be trivial compared to America's ultimate losses experiencing an Iranian or North Korean EMP attack!

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### **Artificial Intelligence, Autonomy and Nuclear Stability – Towards a More Complex Nuclear Future**

Valdai Discussion Club, 15 Oct 20

Andrew Futter

*There aren't any easy answers to potential risks posed by the AI-Automation-Nuclear nexus, but a starting point has to be a greater understanding of the key concepts and an appreciation of how the deployment of such technologies could play out. In the nuclear realm, and especially now in the increasing digital global nuclear realm, perceptions and the potential for misunderstanding will be as important as reality, writes Andrew Futter, Professor of International Politics at the University of Leicester.*

The possible negative impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Automation is the latest iteration in a growing concern about the impact of “disruptive emerging technology” on nuclear politics and stability. AI can be traced back to the 1950s, but hype about nuclear-armed “killer robots” or nuclear weapons systems acting autonomously are increasingly dominating military planning and debates. While some applications might sound like something from the plot of a science fiction movie, the reality is that the impact of AI and Automation (including systems that range from Automated to Autonomous) is likely to be more diverse and perhaps subtle than is often portrayed. Indeed, AI and Automation already play a role in certain nuclear operations, especially in support systems, and this will almost certainly increase and expand in the years ahead. The key to understanding the impact therefore is in breaking down the phenomenon into its component parts, looking at where AI and Automation are currently applied, where they might be applied, and where it might be possible but unlikely or at least undesirable to be applied. AI and Automation don't necessarily have to undermine strategic stability and nuclear security, and in some cases they could enhance it, but there is certainly the potential for detrimental future implications if development across the nuclear realm is left unchecked.

#### **What are AI and Automation?**

There seems to be some confusion when the terms Artificial Intelligence and Automation are used, especially in relation to international politics. This

is because they can refer to quite different activities and applications, which in turn have quite different implications for nuclear stability and security.

AI is essentially coding, computer systems and software capable of performing tasks that usually require intelligence if carried out by humans. Thus, it is not really one discrete system, but rather something that can be applied in many different ways depending on the particular task at hand. It is useful though to distinguish between narrow and general AI. Narrow AI has specific goals and is limited by the boundaries of its programming and the specific “problem” to be solved. General AI or “machine learning” involves writing software that allows systems to “learn” through analysing vast datasets to “train” and then to make their own decisions. The vast majority of what we term AI, and especially the systems currently used across the nuclear enterprise are rules-based narrow “if-then” types (principally because they are predictable), but the computer and information technology revolution, or as some have termed it “the fourth industrial age” mean that the requisite processing power and expertise has created the possibility for wider applications and especially intelligent machines.

Autonomy/Automation is effectively the application of a type of AI to particular tasks, some of which might involve robotics, and therefore Automated or Autonomous weapons systems. Like AI, there are different variations of Autonomy when it comes to weapons and support systems. Automation can vary considerably in terms of levels of autonomy, function and sophistication. We can think of these distinctions as existing along a continuum from discrete Automated Systems to more capable and goal-orientated Autonomous Systems). We can think of these distinctions as existing along a continuum from discrete Automated Systems to more capable and goal-orientated Autonomous Systems). It also ranges from Autonomy at rest (which is computer software) and Autonomy in motion (which is software that might be used in robotics and machines). Also, like AI, Automation has been used for decades in high-risk applications such as airlines and nuclear power plants, and in nuclear early warning, targeting and delivery systems (though most involve human control). AI essentially allows robotic systems to operate without human intervention, based on interaction with their environment, albeit to different extents.

Applications of AI, robotics and general neural machine learning are theoretically endless and could be applied right across the nuclear enterprise. However, at the moment, the applications of these technologies are limited by the huge datasets (and security of data) required for training (especially for systems performing functions where there simply isn’t much data that can be used), the problem of control and unpredictability, computational power, and by a desire to keep humans “in the loop” (though as is discussed below this can be a double-edged sword).

### **How might these technologies be applied in nuclear and strategic systems?**

The US, Russia, China and others already use narrow AI and various levels of Autonomy for certain functions within their nuclear enterprise. But plans seem to be afoot to deploy AI and increasingly Autonomous weapons and support systems across a greater variety of roles and across different military domains in the future.

One area where AI and Autonomy are likely to play an important role is in the software, computer and associated systems that support decision making and nuclear command, control and communications. There is some precedent here: both the US and Russia built nuclear early warning systems during the Cold War that contained a degree of Automation, with the most extreme example being the semi-automated Dead Hand nuclear response system. But it is likely that AI and Automation could become increasingly important in data collection and data cleaning, and maybe complex data analysis, for enhanced warning systems, targeting plans, and to support situational awareness for commanders and leaders.

A second area of nuclear operations that seems likely to benefit enormously from AI and greater Autonomy is in the ability to locate, track and target an adversary's concealed and mobile nuclear systems. The combination of enhanced sensor capabilities across all domains (potentially deployed on semi or autonomous platforms or in "swarms"), the ability to transfer enormous caches of data quickly and analyse in real-time, and to deploy uninhabited systems to attack targets, is changing the game of "nuclear hide and seek". Two applications in particular stand out: first, the potential ability to target mobile land-based missiles (especially important for Russia), and second, the possibility of locating and tracking very quiet nuclear-armed ballistic missile submarines under the ocean. If possible, this would have considerable implications for strategic stability based on "secure second strikes" (discussed below).

A third impact of AI and Automation will be for guidance and accuracy of both nuclear and conventional weapons systems. This could be achieved through making missiles and bombs "smarter" and able to respond to their environment potentially before and after being launched. A basic version of this type of AI is included in current cruise missiles, and will almost certainly be key to future hypersonic missiles. If weapons can become more accurate, it raises the possibility of carrying out surgical long-range counterforce strikes with conventional rather than nuclear weapons.

Fourth, and linked to the point above, AI and Automation could facilitate the development and deployment of increasingly autonomous nuclear and non-nuclear delivery platforms. The best example here is the Russian Status-6 nuclear-armed torpedo, but it is possible that other nuclear delivery platforms in the future could have a degree of autonomy (or at least be uninhabited), such as the US B21 bomber. In the future, nuclear delivery platforms could conceivably be able to "loiter" stealthily near targets waiting to strike like the autonomous "Harpy" UAV fielded by Israel. Though this would pose significant issues for command and control.

Other applications could include more effective and powerful cyber operations (both in terms of defending nuclear networks and essential computer systems, but also for offensive means such as "left of launch" attacks on an adversary's nuclear, missile and command and control systems. It is also possible that AI might be used to create "Deep Fakes" that might be used in disinformation campaigns that precipitate or deepen a nuclear crisis.

### **What is the likely impact on arms control and nuclear stability?**

Each of the applications discussed above appear to have potentially damaging implications for nuclear and strategic stability. In particular, the deployment of weapons systems that might undermine secure second-strike forces or create new pressures and unforeseen pathways towards escalation may well necessitate a re-thinking of how to maintain a peaceful global nuclear order. Moreover, perceptions of technical trajectories will probably matter as much, if not more than, technical realities when it comes to these challenges.

It is at least conceivable that advances in sensing and processing capabilities, perhaps deployed on autonomous platforms, combined with new and more accurate kinetic and digital weapons could be seen as a major threat to stable deterrence, and drive arms racing across a range of technologies. Military planners might have to adopt worst-case scenario interpretations of the risk environment, not least due to the intangibility of the key driving technologies (in stark contrast to the much more tangible weapons of the past). It is also possible that the threats posed—both real and perceived—could create new problems and pressures for escalation and crisis management. In an absolute worst-case scenario, military planners might become so concerned about the vulnerability of their nuclear forces that waiting to strike second may no longer be an option.

Of course, the deployment of AI-enabled weapons systems is unlikely to happen unopposed, and the software and programming that makes these weapons so capable and attractive may also prove to be their Achilles Heel. All AI would be vulnerable to hacking, spoofing and data poisoning, and the risk would presumably increase the closer any system comes to more general machine-learning type-AI. Likewise, the Automated/Autonomous platforms used for sensing, communications and weapons delivery would also be vulnerable to opposing forces, whether they be air defence against Uninhabited Aerial Vehicles, jammers, cyber-attacks, or similar techniques that might be deployed underwater. Such high-value targets are unlikely to be unprotected.

What this all means for arms control is less clear, but future agreements will need to take into account this more complex and entangled nuclear picture. Specific AI arms control will be difficult if not impossible given its ubiquitous applications and intangible nature, but a focus on types of delivery systems might be more practicable, or an agreement not to deploy fully Autonomous nuclear weapons without any human control. On the flip side, as Michael Horowitz et al note, it is at least conceivable that AI and Autonomy could have a role to play in enhancing “reliability, reduce the risk of accidents, and buy more time for decision-makers in a crisis.”

### **Conclusion: Towards a more automated nuclear future**

Artificial Intelligence and Automation are not going away, and it is difficult to see how both won't play an ever-greater role in all aspects of nuclear operations and global nuclear politics going forward. However, so far nuclear-armed states have appeared determined to keep a “human in the loop” and are reluctant to delegate the most safety critical nuclear operations to machines. But as the technical ability to do this increases, and if key strategic nuclear relationships continue to deteriorate, we could see a move from specific applications of “if-then” narrow AI in the nuclear realm to increasingly Autonomous weapons and support systems that rely on general AI and machine learning.

An often-quoted “solution” to the risks posed by AI and Automation across the nuclear enterprise is to “keep humans in the loop” and keep away from “Terminator-style” Autonomous nuclear systems. But human control is not necessarily a panacea: there are risks that humans become too trusting of machines (automation bias) or that data from machines may not be trusted because of the difficulty in understanding how a decision was made (trust gap). There is also the issue of how much knowledge military operators are likely to have about the context on which to base any assessment of the veracity of choices made by machines.

For sure, infusing nuclear weapons complexes with AI and Automation won't be cheap, and perhaps maybe some of the most worrying developments might be curtailed as much due to budgetary pressure as to strategic wisdom. But given that the much of the drive for AI and Automation will come from the commercial and in some cases private sector, controlling the impact may not be straightforward as for different disruptive technologies in the past.

There aren't any easy answers to potential risks posed by the AI-Automation-Nuclear nexus, but a starting point has to be a greater understanding of the key concepts and an appreciation of how the deployment of such technologies could play out. In the nuclear realm, and especially now in the increasing digital global nuclear realm, perceptions and the potential for misunderstanding will be as important as reality.

### **After the parade, North Korea's steady progress matters more than its big new missile**

Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 16 Oct 20 Jenny Town

Everyone loves a good parade, North Korea included. And the military parade in Pyongyang on October 10 to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Workers' Party of Korea did not disappoint. It included intricate troop formations, an array of military equipment, lights, cameras, drones, and even fireworks. And the middle-of-the-night setting created the perfect dramatic backdrop for Kim Jong Un to show off shiny new things as symbols of the country's strength and perseverance despite the hardships of 2020.

And show off he did, making good on his earlier promise to reveal a "new strategic weapon." The stars of the parade were a new larger intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and a new submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM). While the reveal may not have happened as "soon" as his original statement last December might have suggested, it certainly was done with flair and stole international headlines, as the world scrambled to assess what to make of these two new missiles.

While the new ICBM is touted as the "largest" road-mobile, liquid-fueled ICBM in the world, that feat is actually not much to brag about. As Vann Van Diepen and Michael Elleman point out in an article published on 38North, most countries that have ICBMs work to create smaller, solid-fueled systems to make them more mobile, more concealable, and faster to deploy. A liquid-fueled missile of this size makes little strategic sense given the difficulties it would have traversing most of North Korea's bumpy roads, and because it would likely need to be fueled only after it was erected at a launch site, making it vulnerable to preemptive attacks.

So the potential advantages that such a large missile may have—being able to carry heavier payloads or potentially multiple reentry vehicles down the road—come at a great cost. And the new Pukguksong-4 SLBM, given the limited information about its dimensions and potential range, seems to provide only marginal improvements over the Pukguksong-3 SLBM North Korea tested last year.

But the fixation on the two new ballistic missiles has obscured a far more important story about North Korea's overall military modernization. While the new ballistic missiles themselves may ultimately bring little in the way of strategic benefits, the level and pace of North Korea's broader military modernization should compel US policy makers to rethink the current approach to denuclearization.

In an article for NK News, Joost Oliemans and Stijn Mitzer broke down a long list of what else was new during last Saturday's parade that didn't make headlines, from camouflage patterns, uniforms, and accessories, to small arms and artillery systems, to main battle tanks and short-range air defense systems, to new aircraft. Importantly, the list also includes new and varied types of transporter-erector-launchers (TELs) for missiles, suggesting that North Korea has overcome earlier shortages and has found a way to make its mobile missile force more robust. Notably missing from the parade lineup was North Korea's old Scuds and Nodongs, which seemingly have been replaced with newer systems.

Kim Jong Un even drew special attention to the new look of North Korea's military, noting that compared to even five years ago, "the modernity of our military forces has remarkably improved, and anyone can easily guess the speed of its development... Our military capability has developed and changed to such an extent that no one can make little of and keep parallel with it." Although perhaps a bit overstated, these changes do indeed require serious assessment, especially by South Korean and allied forces.

Despite Kim's emphasis on the defensive nature of North Korea's military, the parade put a fine point on where North Korea relations stand today with respect to the United States and South Korea. They are a far cry from the optimism and goodwill that existed in 2018 at the beginning of the

summit-driven diplomatic process. Even the friendly shoutout to South Korea in the middle of Kim’s speech, expressing hopes for the day to come “when the north and south can take each other’s hand again,” was rather offset by the new short range and combat equipment that improves the North’s capabilities against the South.

Moreover, while Kim’s messaging was largely aimed at a domestic audience—creating the optics that the party is strong, the military is stronger, and the nation will overcome the hardships of 2020—the external message was clear: North Korea is not waiting to see if its relations with the United States will improve, but will continue to advance its military development until it does, regardless of how difficult that may be.

After the dust settles following the US presidential election and a winner is announced, the issue of North Korea’s evolving nuclear threat will remain. A second Trump administration or a new Biden administration will be dealing with a North Korea that has expressed a waning belief that the bilateral relationship will actually change, making the return to negotiations a hard sell.

While both the Trump and Biden camps have expressed a desire to get back to “serious” diplomacy, Saturday’s military parade was a vivid depiction of how the whole US approach—whether summit-driven or working-level talks—is outdated. Long, difficult negotiations for a grand, comprehensive deal may have been the right approach when dealing with a country with a burgeoning nuclear capability. But the level and pace of North Korea’s conventional and strategic weapons development and the deep mistrust on both sides calls for a more agile and incremental approach to curb development now, while still working toward more ambitious long-term goals.

The framework for the range of issues that need to be addressed already exists in the Singapore Joint Statement. Working within that framework, a series of small agreements negotiated step-by-step would create small, early, and potentially frequent wins for both sides and help build trust and momentum for further negotiations. While this might not be politically palatable in Washington, if both sides start to see modest payoffs and gain confidence that this is more than a publicity stunt, more can be on the table in the future. Such an approach also has the advantage of halting North Korea’s advancement now, preventing its further refinement of weapons under development.

This does not mean “giving up” on denuclearization. It means differentiating a denuclearization process from what the United States has done in the past to try to prevent countries from going down the nuclear path in the first place. The tools and steps needed to slow or stop a moving train are not the same as those needed to keep the train parked at the station. As such, the United States needs a new approach that works to curb North Korea’s advancement and buildup of its nuclear capabilities in the short term, but simultaneously works to build the kind of relationship it would take to eventually get Pyongyang to the end of the nuclear disarmament road.

The rate of change North Korea has demonstrated in its military modernization and strategic weapons development over the past five years is telling. Despite “biting” sanctions, Pyongyang has consistently shown a superior ability to adapt to the times and find ways to meet its strategic goals. The question is whether US policy makers can be equally as adept at adjusting their approach to one that will bring about incremental results to prevent a repeat modernization story five years from now.

# NOVEMBER ELECTIONS

## **Trump's China policy — Pence would extend, Biden and Harris would end**

<https://thehill.com/opinion/international/520673-biden-and-harris-would-end-trumps-china-policy-pence-would-extend-it>

BY JOSEPH BOSCO, CONTRIBUTOR for THE HILL // 10/13/20 10:00 AM EDT

The presidential and vice presidential debates and other developments over the past few weeks have raised troubling questions.

The prospect of one of the running mates becoming an early, unelected president appears greater than it has since John Tyler succeeded the suddenly ill and deceased William Henry Harrison a month after their inauguration in 1841. Concerns are rising over the physical and mental fitness of both President Trump, 74 and diagnosed with COVID-19, and former Vice President Joe Biden, who at 78 would be the oldest person to take office and at times appears to have cognitive issues.

That makes the suitability of Vice President Mike Pence, 61, and Sen. Kamala Harris, 55, to confront current national security and foreign policy challenges a matter of critical national importance. An aggressive Communist China — which President Obama's national intelligence director called America's "greatest mortal threat" — is the most urgent international issue he or she would face. The discussion of China in the vice presidential debate was limited, but revealing and concerning.

Moderator Susan Page, of USA Today, asked both candidates this question: "How would you describe our fundamental relationship with China? Competitors? Adversaries? Enemies?" Pence answered: "Fortunately, President Trump, in dealing with China from the outset of this administration, [is] standing up to China, that had been taking advantage of America for decades, in the wake of Joe Biden's cheerleading for China. President Trump has stood up to China and will continue to stand strong.

We want to improve the relationship, but we're going to level the playing field." Harris said: "Let's talk about America's standing. Pew, a reputable research firm, ... shows that leaders of all of our formerly allied countries ... hold a greater esteem and respect [for] Xi Jinping, the head of the Chinese Communist Party, than they do Donald Trump, the president, the commander in chief of the United States. This is where we are today, because of a failure of leadership by this administration."

(The Pew Research Group describes its findings this way: "Ratings for Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping are overwhelmingly negative, although not as negative as those for Trump.") Page then followed up with Harris: "What is your definition of the role of American leadership in 2020?" Harris's response: "Joe, I think, he said, quite well ... 'Foreign policy: it might sound complicated, but really it's relationships there — just think about it as relationships. ...

Got to be loyal to your friends. People who have stood with you, got to stand with them. You got to know who your adversaries are, and keep them in check.' But what we have seen with Donald Trump is that he has betrayed our friends and embraced dictators around the world. [I]t's about relationships. And the thing that has always been part of the strength of our nation, in addition to our great military, has been that we keep our word. But Donald Trump doesn't understand that, because he doesn't understand what it means to be honest."

According to Pew, the pandemic has taken a toll on the reputation of both China and the United States. In its poll taken in February, Pew found: “Views of the U.S. remain strongly favorable when compared with those of China in the Asia-Pacific.” Harris’s answers were telling because, like Pence, she was reflecting the views of the person at the top of the ticket, and Biden often has touted his personal relationships with other world leaders, just as has Trump. But both make the mistake of conflating personal rapport with state-to-state relations.

National leaders determine policies and behavior based on their perception of their nation’s interests. And China’s leaders define their interests even more rigidly — what is good for the Communist Party, rather than the nation. Biden may have enjoyed cordial relations with Putin and Xi, but the Obama-Biden administration neither kept America’s adversaries in check nor showed loyalty to our friends, such as our Philippines ally whose South China Sea territory was seized by China; the Syrian victims of Bashar al-Assad’s chemical weapons; democratic Taiwan when Washington refused to provide needed self-defense weapons; or the people of Crimea and Eastern Ukraine who were invaded by Russia.

Even Trump’s severest critics are reluctantly coming around to acknowledge that his administration’s China policies often have been correct. Pence is perfectly situated to continue those policies. Along with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Pence has led in setting the most moral, realistic tone on the nature of the existential China danger of any administration in the past four decades. In a landmark speech last year, which some saw as declaring a new Cold War, Pence identified the long-growing China threat:

“[S]oon after it took power in 1949, the Chinese Communist Party began to pursue authoritarian expansionism. ... America had hoped that economic liberalization would bring China into a greater partnership with us and with the world. Instead, China has chosen economic aggression, which has in turn emboldened its growing military.” Pence’s clear-eyed vision on the nature of the China threat matches Trump’s own instincts and would make for a seamless presidential transition, should that be necessary.

The president could even conclude that the polls are right this time and step aside before Nov. 3 to avoid not only personal defeat but repudiation of his policies and performance over the past four years. A successful Pence substitute candidacy, unfettered by the animus directed at Trump’s character and personal style, would ensure vindication of his administration’s policies, and their continuation. Completion of the Trump administration without Trump would seal the positive aspects of his historic legacy. More importantly for the national interest, a Pence presidency would prevent a Biden or Harris return to the failed China policies of a quarter-century of the Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Obama administrations.

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### **Is Change Coming? Smartly Reshaping and Strengthening America’s Nuclear Deterrent**

WarOnTheRocks.com, 14 Oct 20 Christine Parthemore and Andy Weber

How might America’s nuclear weapons plans change in the years ahead? Buoyed by the revelation of President Donald Trump describing a potential secret new nuclear weapon system to Bob Woodward, continuing U.S.-Russian dialogue on nuclear weapons, and the upcoming November elections, experts are speculating about what the next four years may mean for U.S. nuclear policy.

Former Vice President Joe Biden has indicated that, if elected, he would seek a posture aligned with his stated belief “that the sole purpose of the U.S. nuclear arsenal should be deterring — and, if necessary retaliating against — a nuclear attack.” This would be a pivot from Trump’s 2018 Nuclear Posture Review, which elevated the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. defense planning by, among other things, describing America’s nuclear forces as a hedge against large-scale conventional attacks and strategic cyber attacks. The declaratory shift — along with elevation of so-called low-yield nuclear options that are considered more usable, and support for more dual conventional and nuclear systems that could be indistinguishable in the absence of verification measures — increased concern that the Trump administration viewed nuclear weapons as acceptable for warfighting, not just deterrence.

If re-elected, Trump would likely continue this posture and may even go beyond these expansions. However, there remains hope that recent changes may be reversed, given the budget pressures exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, or if ongoing arms control talks with Russia succeed in creating an agreement to cap or reduce nuclear capabilities beyond what the current New START Treaty mandates.

Notably, there is a bit of bipartisan, common ground emerging. Language in the Democratic Party platform indicates a President Biden would likely pursue future nuclear arms control approaches more creatively than the bilateral U.S.-Russian paradigm of the past, to include new technologies and other nations. The platform names China specifically, but experts in both U.S. parties and internationally are also weighing the pros and cons of involving the United Kingdom and France, and even including non-nuclear weapons-possessing states, signing onto agreements to show broader political support or to take on narrow roles like contributing to verification. Trump takes this approach as well, albeit for somewhat different reasons, namely to target China and because he generally believed he could get better deals — and that if not, existing arrangements harmed U.S. security anyways.

Even with some similarities in arms control ideas, the execution between the two parties would likely differ starkly. Regardless, this emerging bipartisan agreement on some characteristics of future arms control work could create political space for reducing exorbitant U.S. nuclear weapons plans.

Adjusting U.S. nuclear weapons plans is notoriously difficult, as nearly every president has experienced. Yet it is urgent to halt and reverse the trend of increasing nuclear capabilities that lower the threshold for nuclear war and increase miscalculation risks. Any changes will require clear instruction from the president right at the start of his term. We humbly offer that such presidential direction should center on reducing or eliminating new “low-yield” capabilities and systems that increase uncertainty over whether assets are conventional or nuclear, whether by new arms control arrangements or by bold unilateral action.

#### *Arms Control Steps for the Next Four Years*

In the first weeks after being sworn in next Jan. 20, the president should sign a national security directive that provides clear instruction for shaping an updated Nuclear Posture Review. Declaring that the sole purpose of U.S. nuclear forces is for deterrence or responding to nuclear attacks would be an important shift for either commander-in-chief and a good start.

However, even that would require further presidential direction. Otherwise, the related instruction to nuclear planners would be overly vague. The Pentagon could easily respond that the full, current plan for modernizing and expanding U.S. nuclear forces already fits this rubric. Current arms racing could continue unchecked. While some argue that current U.S. efforts are simply replacing aging assets, many do in fact introduce new capabilities — for example, in the enhanced accuracy and stealth of a new nuclear air-launched cruise missile transcending the abilities of its Cold War era predecessor.

This presidential directive should then make clear that matching Russia tit for tat on every type of nuclear capability is not required for effective deterrence and war planning — and nor is it desirable. While the current Nuclear Posture Review acknowledges that the United States doesn't need to quantitatively “match or mimic” Russia's arsenal of non-strategic nuclear capabilities, plans and statements from some Obama and Trump administration officials spoke of the need to qualitatively match or exceed Russia's nuclear forces. Even this step leaves room for debate in terms of the potential roles of specific weapons systems, and so the presidential directive should indicate what parts of current U.S. nuclear plans should be prioritized for alteration.

Some nuclear experts argue that planned upgrades to U.S. intercontinental ballistic missiles should be reduced or eliminated in the near term. True, these plans are incredibly expensive, and the intercontinental ballistic missile forces have been plagued by numerous issues, including coming far too close to potentially catastrophic incidents. However, they are not altering the already complex geopolitical landscape as significantly as other planned changes in U.S. nuclear weapons capabilities.

The more dangerous trends in current U.S. nuclear plans do not involve these Cold War weapons, as problematic as they are. Instead, nuclear weapons that represent increased blurring between conventional and nuclear warfare, and those that are intended to have lower thresholds for use and thereby weaken deterrence, are a more pressing issue.

Topping that list are the new long-range standoff nuclear air-launched cruise missile, the resurrection of previously retired nuclear submarine-launched cruise missiles, and lower-yield nuclear warheads for submarine-launched ballistic missiles. Each of these convey that the United States is expanding its envisioned roles of nuclear weapons. They also introduce greater ambiguity into the strategic environment by expanding the scenarios in which an adversary in combat would not know if they were being attacked by a conventional weapon or with a lower- or higher-yield nuclear blast — raising uncertainty and the risk of escalation in ways that no country needs more of these days.

Each of these capabilities is unnecessary and counterproductive if the sole purpose of the U.S. arsenal is to deter or respond to a nuclear attack. Some argue that the standoff cruise missile and other weapons enhance U.S. capabilities for limited retaliatory strikes in the event of a limited nuclear strike by an adversary. However, the United States already has nuclear options capable of such limited strikes. More important, strategic nuclear weapons are better suited for deterring such a first strike by an adversary, as they better convey that any use of nuclear weapons against the United States or its protected allies would be met with an unacceptable level of devastation.

A vital question then becomes whether to unilaterally remove these excessive nuclear weapons from U.S. plans, echoing the smart changes made by President George H.W. Bush in his Presidential Nuclear Initiatives, or to seek to use them in bargaining with Russia (and potentially others) in new arms control agreements. Either way, this is a discussion to hold at the highest levels with allies, with the president then sending resulting instructions

down to his defense and diplomatic leaders to implement.

The next administration should pursue a modern follow-on to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty that Russia breached, and that the United States, to Russia's relief, then unilaterally scrapped. A new nuclear INF-like treaty should seek to prohibit putting nuclear warheads on the tips of ground-launched cruise missiles of any range. The United States and Russia are both concerned that the other will deploy systems capable of swapping in a nuclear warhead without their knowledge. The high risks brought by the dual conventional-nuclear capabilities of these systems mean they make everyone less secure. They may therefore present optimal conditions for arms control dialogue. If so, verification concepts could mimic past processes or include newer approaches such as a recent U.N. Institute for Disarmament Research design for verifying the absence of nuclear warheads on dual-capable systems at specific sites.

Both Russia and the United States wished to end the INF Treaty in part because China was not a part of it. In the past several decades, China has significantly ramped up its conventional intermediate range missiles. Thankfully, China has not yet put nuclear weapons on its cruise missiles. The challenge of this buildup is one to be addressed diplomatically at the high political level and through non-nuclear means of deterrence. The spread of conventional cruise missiles makes the prospect of mixing-in indistinguishable nuclear variants a recipe for nuclear miscalculation. Focusing such an agreement on just nuclear-armed, ground-launched cruise missiles would be an important first step. Hopefully it would be followed by efforts to ban similar nuclear ballistic missile systems. The United States should lead this effort.

Washington should also develop arms control measures for cutting off future nuclear options that are (hopefully) not yet under serious consideration, but that nevertheless concern many countries. These should include concepts to help prevent the proliferation of nuclear-armed hypersonic missiles and nuclear drones.

### *Arms Control Is Challenging but Necessary*

No matter who is elected in November, changes may be coming to U.S. nuclear plans and programs. This would be a welcome shift, but it will require strong leadership and clear direction from the president. This instruction should prioritize reversing the trend toward new U.S. nuclear weapons capabilities, especially those that heighten risks of escalation and miscalculation. The next administration should take full advantage of the growing bipartisan agreement that the future of nuclear arms control will take new forms and include more players.

This work is not easy, of course, for any president. But these measures warrant serious consideration, as they could drive a critical shift in reducing the roles of weapons of mass destruction in how the United States pursues national security, and serve to strengthen America's nuclear deterrent, while lowering the palpable risk of nuclear war.

--Christine Parthemore is the chief executive officer of the Council on Strategic Risks, where she also leads the Janne E. Nolan Center on Strategic Weapons. She was formerly senior advisor to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Defense Programs; Andy Weber is a senior fellow at the Council on Strategic Risks. His decades of U.S. government service included five-and-a-half years as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Defense Programs

### **Trump says the US nuclear arsenal is now 'tippy top' thanks to him, but nuke experts say he's out of touch with reality**

BusinessInsider.com, 9 Oct 20

Ryan Pickrell

President Donald Trump boasted Friday that the US nuclear arsenal is "tippy top" thanks to him, but nuclear weapons experts told Insider that the arsenal hasn't changed much during his presidency.

Trump told conservative radio host Rush Limbaugh that "our nuclear is all tippy top now," adding that China and Russia dream of the weapons the US military has. Trump regularly boasts about US military strength, sometimes with somewhat nonsensical phrases such as "super-duper missile."

Trump has repeatedly called for a stronger nuclear force both before and during his presidency.

At a campaign rally in 2016, Trump enviously praised Russia's military while expressing concerns about the US. "Putin has built up their military again and again and again," he said. "Their military is much stronger. He's doing nuclear, we're not doing anything. Our nuclear is old and tired and his nuclear is tippy top from what I hear."

Later that year, shortly before becoming president, he tweeted: "The United States must greatly strengthen and expand its nuclear capability until such time as the world comes to its senses regarding nukes."

In the summer of 2017, a little over seven months into his presidency, Trump tweeted that he modernized the nuclear arsenal. "My first order as President was to renovate and modernize our nuclear arsenal," he wrote. "It is now far stronger and more powerful than ever before."

The president was referring to the order (not actually his first) to launch the nuclear posture and strategy review, which would not come out until the following year.

Last September, Trump argued that he had revitalized the US nuclear arsenal. "Our nuclear was getting very tired. Now we have it in, as we would say, tippy-top shape. Tippy top. We have new and we have renovated and it's incredible. We should all pray we never have to use it."

After Trump bragged again Friday that he had made the US nuclear arsenal "tippy top," Hans Kristensen, a nuclear weapons expert at the Federation of American Scientists, told Insider that "his statement implies the nuclear forces were 'tippy-top' before he became president because he has made no substantial change to the arsenal since."

The US military has been working to modernize the aging nuclear triad, but that work began before Trump took office.

Trump's "claim has no relationship to reality," explained Jeffrey Lewis, a nuclear weapons and nonproliferation expert at the Middlebury Institute. "The modernization program started under Obama."

The Trump administration has continued to fund that modernization, often pushing for increases in funding, but the new systems are still in the works.

"We won't see the first of a dozen or so new ballistic missile submarines until next year," Lewis said, adding that the US military "won't see the new nuclear-capable B-21 and its new air-launched cruise missile until the mid-2020s and will be lucky to see a new ICBM by 2030."

"The only notable thing Trump has done is convert some existing W76 warheads on our submarines to a low-yield variant," he said, referring to the low-yield W76-2 now deployed on US submarines. Three other nuclear weapons experts identified this as the only substantial change to the nuclear arsenal during Trump's presidency.

The Trump administration continues to express interest in the development of new nuclear weapons. In the president's fiscal year 2021 budget, the Trump administration revealed an interest in building the W93, a new warhead for its submarine-launched missiles, but that work has not yet started.

"Nuclear weapons are on Donald Trump's mind today for some reason," Stephen Schwartz, a nuclear weapons expert affiliated with the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, tweeted Friday.

"Since August 2017, he has boasted about singlehandedly modernizing and strengthening our nuclear arsenal. He hasn't," Schwartz wrote. "His 'tippy-top' claim is as absurd and baseless today as when he last made it in September 2019.

"Boastful, detached from reality rhetoric from Trump about weapons systems is commonplace," Kingston Reif, a disarmament expert, told Insider after Trump's "tippy top" remarks.

"But, we shouldn't lose sight of the fact that Trump has proposed a significant expansion of the role and capability of the US nuclear arsenal," he added. "Though much of the proposed expansion is still in the early stages, it is unnecessary, poses a crushing affordability challenge, and would increase nuclear risks — especially when coupled with the administration's trampling of arms control."

Vipin Narang, a security studies expert at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, told Insider that the Trump's approach to nuclear policy and arms control has put US security in jeopardy.

"The administration added the W76-2, but took away the [Iran nuclear deal], [Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty], and is now threatening to rip up New START so, on balance, has probably made us less safe in the nuclear domain," Narang said, pointing to international agreements that Trump has ended or threatened during his time in office.

# CONGRESSIONAL

*By Susan Cornwell*

## CONTINUING RESOLUTION

- **December 11: Current CR (HR 8337) will end**
  - The last 13 of 18 years we have been operating under CRs
  - DOD has been operating under a CR for the last 9 out of 10 years
  - This years CR will fund Defense at \$738 Billion
    - ✦ This is last years Appropriated budget of :
      - \$666.5B for Base Funding
      - \$71.5 B for OCO
        - It does NOT include last years funding of
          - \$8B for Natural Disaster Relief OR
          - \$10.5B for COVID relief under the CARES Act
- **HR 8337 does NOT allow for “new starts” meaning programs that were not funded for production in FY20**
  - Congress can grant “anomalies” which are exceptions to this rule
  - Only one was granted in HR8337.
    - ✦ It is for the Procurement of 2 Columbia class submarines in FY21

## HASC PRESS RELEASE

### Top National Security Democrats to Esper: Commit to Current U.S. Troop Levels on Korean Peninsula

*Smith, Engel, Menendez & Reed Call for Clear Statement of Support for U.S.-ROK Alliance at Upcoming Security Meeting*

**October 9, 2020**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Today, Representatives Adam Smith, Chairman of the House Committee on Armed Services, and Eliot L. Engel, Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, and Senators Bob Menendez, Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, and Jack Reed, Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Armed Services urged Secretary of Defense Mark Esper to offer a clear statement in support of maintaining current U.S. troop levels on the Korean peninsula. In a letter to Secretary Esper, the lawmakers pointed to the upcoming Security

Consultative Meeting with the Republic of Korea as an opportunity to reiterate U.S. support for the ROK in the face of ongoing threats from North Korea.

They wrote, “A robust forward-deployed posture by the Alliance, including US forces, is crucial to maintain our deterrence posture with North Korea and assure that the alliance remains prepared to ‘fight tonight’ to deter our adversaries. Anything less risks eroding the alliance’s deterrent posture with dangerous implications for destabilization on the Peninsula, and will make only success in pursuing peace, stability and denuclearization with North Korea more challenging to achieve.”

A provision of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 prohibited the use of funds to reduce the number of U.S. Forces serving on active duty in South Korea below 28,500 subject to a stringent Congressional certification and 90-day waiting period.

Full text of the letter [can be found here](#).

### **DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION**

**SASC and HASC have passed their respective Bills**

- *ALL ICBM PEs at PB*

### **AUTHORIZATION CONFERENCE**

- **November:** Tentative timeframe for markup

### **DEFENSE APPROPRIATION**

#### **HAC**

- **July 8: HAC-D Marked up the FY21 Defense Bill**
  - *GBSD lost \$60M*
  - *Missile Repl/Eq Ballistic lost \$1.53M*
  - *ICBM Fuze Mod lost \$3.458M*
  - *MM Mods lost \$23.684M and transferred \$4.173 to another line*

**SAC Markup:** TBD

**APPROPRIATION CONFERENCE:** TBD: Possible that Conference may occur without a SAC bill

### **Congress approves funding transfer to Air Force's NC3 programs**

InsideDefense.com, 13 Oct 20 Sara Sirota

Congress has approved a Pentagon request to transfer \$63.7 million from the Air Force's fiscal year 2020 operations and maintenance account to the E-4B National Airborne Operations Center and Nuclear Command, Control and Communications Center.

The Defense Department asked lawmakers to permit the transfer in a reprogramming request sent to congressional defense committees in August. The Pentagon comptroller's office has released an updated copy of the document with feedback from the panels. Lawmakers in total allowed DOD to shift \$1.4 billion of the \$1.7 billion the department sought to transfer.

The Pentagon argued in the request that NAOC and the NC3 Center have been underfunded historically and require an additional \$63.7 billion to maintain lines of communication between the president and the nuclear task forces. DOD further stated the Air Force fully funded both programs in the FY-21 budget proposal.

NAOC is an emergency jet where the president can direct military forces and civil authorities in the event of a nuclear conflict or another doomsday scenario where ground C2 platforms are wiped out. The Air Force is currently in the early stages of replacing the 1980s-era aircraft.

The NC3 Center, meanwhile, is an organization within Air Force Global Strike Command that provides technical and operational support to maintain a secure communication path between the National Military Command Authority and airmen overseeing nuclear forces.

## AROUND THE WORLD



### RUSSIA:

#### **Top Russian diplomat skeptical about nuclear pact extension**

Associated Press, 14 Oct 20 Vladimir Isachenkov

MOSCOW -- Russia's top diplomat voiced doubt Wednesday that Moscow and Washington could negotiate an extension of their last arms control pact still standing, even as the United States offered a more optimistic view.

Speaking in an interview with several Russian news outlets, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that Russia can't accept the conditions put forward by the United States for the extension of the New START treaty.

"I personally don't see the prospect," Lavrov snapped when asked if the extension is possible before the pact expires in February. "We will never say that we will shut the door and cut all contacts. But we explain that it's impossible to talk on the basis of an ultimatum they put forward that fully ignores the principles which were acknowledged as the basis for all our agreements for decades."

Lavrov's pessimistic view contrasted with the statements from U.S. diplomats, who said that Moscow and Washington were close to a deal.

"We would welcome the opportunity to complete an agreement based on understandings that were achieved over the last couple weeks about what the range of possibilities look like for an extension of New START and an outcome that benefits the entire world, increased stability of the most dangerous weapons in the world," U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Wednesday.

Pompeo said that "I am hopeful that the Russians will find a way to agree to an outcome that, frankly, I think is in their best interest and in our best interest," voicing hope that China will eventually join the talks too.

A person familiar with the talks told The Associated Press Friday that U.S. and Russian negotiators have agreed in principle to continue freezing their nuclear warhead stockpiles in a bid to salvage the New START. The person, who was not authorized to discuss the negotiations publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity, said it's not yet clear if the agreement for a freeze will succeed or translate into an extension of the pact.

If it works, the person said an agreement could be announced before the Nov. 3 presidential election with an eye toward extending the accord and eventually bringing China into it, a longtime demand by President Donald Trump's administration.

The New START treaty was signed in 2010 by U.S. President Barack Obama and then Russian President Dmitry Medvedev. The pact limits each country to no more than 1,550 deployed nuclear warheads and 700 deployed missiles and bombers, and envisages sweeping on-site inspections to verify compliance.

After both Moscow and Washington withdrew from the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty last year, the New START is the only remaining nuclear arms control deal between the two countries.

Russia has offered its extension without any conditions, while the Trump administration has pushed for a new arms control agreement that would also include China. Moscow has described that idea as unfeasible, pointing at Beijing's refusal to negotiate any deal that would reduce its much smaller nuclear arsenal.

Lavrov specified Wednesday that Russia can't accept the U.S. proposal to limit battlefield nuclear weapons alongside nuclear warheads that arm strategic missiles and bombers until the U.S. agrees to withdraw its tactical nuclear weapons from Europe.

He also noted that Moscow wouldn't agree to the U.S. demand to have intrusive verification measures like those that existed in the 1990s when inspectors were positioned at missile factories.

*--Associated Press diplomatic writer Matthew Lee in Washington contributed to this report*

### **Russian Strategic Missile Forces to prepare for deployment of 2 Avangard missile complexes by yearend - Shoigu**

From: [Interfax : Russia & CIS Military Newswire](#) [Moscow] 13 Oct 2020.

MOSCOW. Oct 13 (Interfax) - The Orenburg formation of the Russian Strategic Missile Forces will prepare infrastructure for the deployment of two Avangard missile complexes by the end of this year, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said. "As many as 597 facilities of the strategic nuclear forces have now been commissioned. For instance, construction works were finalized in the Kaluga region and the planned positioning of two Yars missiles in silos was accomplished in September.

By the end of this year, infrastructure will be prepared in the Orenburg region in order to put two more Avangard missile complexes on combat duty," Shoigu said during a teleconference in Moscow on Tuesday. Avangard is Russia's new strategic missile system equipped with a hypersonic glide vehicle capable of reaching Mach 27 velocity. It was developed at the Reutov-based NPO Mashinostroyenia.

The first missile regiment armed with the Avangard strategic complex featuring the hypersonic glide vehicle was put on combat duty in the Orenburg region in December 2019.

It was reported that Avangard warheads would first be mounted on UR-100N UTTKh intercontinental ballistic missiles. Then, new Sarmat intercontinental missiles will be used as their carriers.

te jk ek (Our editorial staff can be reached at [eng.editors@interfax.ru](mailto:eng.editors@interfax.ru))

### **Russian Navy nuclear-powered sub strikes target with cruise missile in Barents Sea drills**

<https://tass.com/defense/1211853>

Last week, the sub's crew practiced anti-submarine warfare and mine countermeasures in interaction with a nuclear-powered submarine of a submarine force unit of the Northern Fleet and minesweepers of the Kola Flotilla of All-Arms Forces

MURMANSK, October 13. /TASS/. The crew of the nuclear-powered submarine Oryol struck a target with a Granit anti-ship cruise missile from its submerged position in the Barents Sea, the press office of the Northern Fleet reported on Tuesday. "Today, as part of measures to practice planned combat training assignments for the summer training period, the crew of the Northern Fleet's nuclear-powered missile-carrying underwater cruiser Oryol fired a Granit anti-ship cruise missile against a naval target at the Fleet's combat training ranges in the Barents Sea.

The fire was conducted from the submerged position against the target that simulated a notional enemy's large surface ship. The target was located at a distance of over 120 km from the missile launch site," the press office said in a statement. The missile firing was successful and the target that was struck was examined from the air by the crew of an Il-38 anti-submarine warfare plane of a separate composite air regiment of the Northern Fleet's Air Force and Air Defense Army and the command noted high professionalism and naval skills of the crew of the nuclear-powered submarine Oryol, the press office specified.

The area of missile firings was closed for shipping and air flights in advance. Ships of the Kola Flotilla of All-Arms Forces sealed off the area for the drills, the statement says. Last week, the sub's crew practiced anti-submarine warfare and mine countermeasures in interaction with a nuclear-powered submarine of a submarine force unit of the Northern Fleet and minesweepers of the Kola Flotilla of All-Arms Forces.

The third-generation nuclear-powered submarine K-266 'Oryol' (Project 949A 'Antey') was laid down on January 19, 1989 at the Sevmash Shipyard in Severodvinsk in Russia's northwest under factory No. 650. The sub was put on the list of the Soviet Navy's warships on January 15, 1990. The sub was named Severodvinsk in 1991. The submarine was floated out on May 22, 1992 and made operational on December 30 that year. The Russian Navy's flag was raised on the vessel on January 20, 1993 and the sub was named Oryol in April 1993.

### **Top Russian Diplomat Skeptical about Nuclear Pact Extension**

<https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2020-10-14/top-russian-diplomat-skeptical-about-nuclear-pact-extension>

By Associated Press, Wire Service Content Oct. 14, 2020, at 4:01 p.m. // Wednesday, 14 October 2020 05:00 PM

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia's top diplomat voiced doubt Wednesday that Moscow and Washington could negotiate an extension of their last arms control pact still standing, even as the United States offered a more optimistic view.

Speaking in an interview with several Russian news outlets, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that Russia can't accept the conditions put forward by the United States for the extension of the New START treaty. "I personally don't see the prospect," Lavrov snapped when asked if the extension is possible before the pact expires in February. "We will never say that we will shut the door and cut all contacts.

But we explain that it's impossible to talk on the basis of an ultimatum they put forward that fully ignores the principles which were acknowledged as the basis for all our agreements for decades." Lavrov's pessimistic view contrasted with the statements from U.S. diplomats, who said that Moscow

and Washington were close to a deal. “We would welcome the opportunity to complete an agreement based on understandings that were achieved over the last couple weeks about what the range of possibilities look like for an extension of New START and an outcome that benefits the entire world, increased stability of the most dangerous weapons in the world,” U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Wednesday.

Pompeo said that “I am hopeful that the Russians will find a way to agree to an outcome that, frankly, I think is in their best interest and in our best interest,” voicing hope that China will eventually join the talks too. A person familiar with the talks told The Associated Press Friday that U.S. and Russian negotiators have agreed in principle to continue freezing their nuclear warhead stockpiles in a bid to salvage the New START.

The person, who was not authorized to discuss the negotiations publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity, said it’s not yet clear if the agreement for a freeze will succeed or translate into an extension of the pact. If it works, the person said an agreement could be announced before the Nov. 3 presidential election with an eye toward extending the accord and eventually bringing China into it, a longtime demand by President Donald Trump's administration.

The New START treaty was signed in 2010 by U.S. President Barack Obama and then Russian President Dmitry Medvedev. The pact limits each country to no more than 1,550 deployed nuclear warheads and 700 deployed missiles and bombers, and envisages sweeping on-site inspections to verify compliance. After both Moscow and Washington withdrew from the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty last year, the New START is the only remaining nuclear arms control deal between the two countries.

Russia has offered its extension without any conditions, while the Trump administration has pushed for a new arms control agreement that would also include China. Moscow has described that idea as unfeasible, pointing at Beijing’s refusal to negotiate any deal that would reduce its much smaller nuclear arsenal. Lavrov specified Wednesday that Russia can’t accept the U.S. proposal to limit battlefield nuclear weapons alongside nuclear warheads that arm strategic missiles and bombers until the U.S. agrees to withdraw its tactical nuclear weapons from Europe.

He also noted that Moscow wouldn't agree to the U.S. demand to have intrusive verification measures like those that existed in the 1990s when inspectors were positioned at missile factories.

Associated Press diplomatic writer Matthew Lee in Washington contributed to this report.

### **Russia Rules Out Nuclear Deal With Trump Before Election**

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/russia-rules-out-nuclear-deal-with-trump-before-u-s-election/ar-BB1a0rWG?ocid=uxbndlbing>

By: Ilya Arkhipov and Henry Meyer for Bloomberg News // Wednesday, 14 October 2020 06:19 AM

Russia dashed hopes of a deal on nuclear weapons with U.S. President Donald Trump before next month’s presidential election, dismissing a call by Washington for a freeze on their arsenals as “unacceptable.”

“If the Americans need to report to their superiors that they allegedly reached agreement with Russia before their elections, they won’t get it,” Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said late Tuesday in comments to local media that he confirmed Wednesday to Bloomberg News. The U.S. proposal for a nuclear freeze that also covers tactical weapons “has long been known to us” and is rejected by Russia because “we need to

deal with their new strategic-range” conventional arms too, including in space and missile defense, said Ryabkov, who leads the Russian negotiating team.

He was responding a day after U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Arms Control Marshall Billingslea said there was an agreement in principle for a deal between Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin. “If the Americans would agree with the documents we gave them, then an agreement could be reached tomorrow,” Ryabkov said. “But as the differences are too big, I can’t imagine what grounds our colleagues in Washington have to suggest such things.”

The negotiations are taking place as the clock ticks down on the expiry in February of the New START treaty, the last remaining accord limiting the nuclear arsenals of the two former Cold War adversaries. The Trump administration has been resisting Russia’s call for the treaty to be extended, saying it first wants to negotiate a broader arms-control agreement. Despite Ryabkov’s tough stance, the Kremlin has signaled it still wants a deal. Putin’s spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, said Monday it’s “the priority” for Russia to reach an agreement with the U.S. before New START expires, and he expressed concern it may become harder after the Nov. 3 U.S. elections.

### **US, Russia said close to deal on nuclear warhead freeze**

[https://www.stltoday.com/news/article\\_f532ed13-ceaf-502c-8af2-0699ace0d49f.html](https://www.stltoday.com/news/article_f532ed13-ceaf-502c-8af2-0699ace0d49f.html)

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer for St. Louis Today // Oct 9, 2020

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. and Russian negotiators have agreed in principle to continue freezing their nuclear warhead stockpiles in a bid to salvage their last remaining arms control pact before it expires next year, a person familiar with the talks said Friday.

The person said it’s not yet clear if the agreement for a freeze will succeed or translate into an extension of the New START treaty that expires in February. But, if it works, the person said an agreement could be announced before the Nov. 3 presidential election with an eye toward extending the accord and eventually bringing China into it, a longtime Trump administration demand. The person said President Donald Trump and Russian leader Vladimir Putin have signed off on the freeze, but negotiators still need to iron out details, including compliance and verification issues.

The person spoke to reporters after the last round of U.S.-Russia arms control talks in Helsinki this week. The person, who was not authorized to discuss the negotiations publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity, said follow-up discussions between Washington and Moscow would take place next week. The Russians have been told that if a freeze is not agreed to in the coming weeks, the United States may harden its conditions.

Word of a potential freeze comes as Trump is seeking foreign policy victories during a difficult reelection campaign against former Vice President Joe Biden, who has vowed to extend New START even without Chinese participation. An announcement ahead of the election could raise eyebrows, coming as U.S. intelligence officials say Russia favors Trump and has been working to denigrate Biden.

The person familiar with the negotiations said Nov. 3 was not a drop-dead date for a freeze agreement with Russia and stressed that the Trump administration would continue to negotiate no matter what the result of the election. But the person said the U.S. would be looking for additional

Russian concessions should negotiations drag out beyond the vote. Currently, the U.S. envisions a broad cap on nuclear warheads under which the numbers of multiple weapons systems could be adjusted with some flexibility, according to the person.

After the last talks in Helsinki on Monday, lead U.S. negotiator Marshall Billingslea, Trump's special envoy for arms control, said the meeting had yielded "important progress." That meeting was a follow up to earlier discussions between Billingslea and his Russian counterpart, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov, in Vienna and talks between the U.S and Russian national security advisers in Geneva.

But Russia has had a more skeptical view of the talks, with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on Monday accusing Washington of "unilateralism." He said the New START treaty would likely cease to exist because the conditions the U.S. has put forward for extending it "don't take into account our interests or the experience of many decades when arms control has existed to mutual satisfaction."

Russian diplomats have repeatedly emphasized that Moscow considers the limits on launch platforms — missiles, bombers and submarines — much more important than the restrictions on the number of warheads. Russia likely would be unwilling to accept a separate freeze on the number of warheads unless it is part of a full-fledged deal.

—Associated Press writer Vladimir Isachenkov in Moscow contributed.



## **CHINA:**

### **Chinese President Xi Jinping tells troops to focus on 'preparing for war'**

CNN.com, 14 Oct 20 Ben Westcott

Chinese President Xi Jinping has called on troops to "put all (their) minds and energy on preparing for war" in a visit to a military base in the southern province of Guangdong on Tuesday, according to state news agency Xinhua.

During an inspection of the People's Liberation Army Marine Corps in Chaozhou City, Xinhua said Xi told the soldiers to "maintain a state of high alert" and called on them to be "absolutely loyal, absolutely pure, and absolutely reliable."

The main purpose of Xi's visit to Guangdong was to deliver a speech Wednesday commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone, which was established in 1980 to attract foreign capital and played a vital role in helping China's economy become the second-largest in the world.

But the military visit comes as tensions between China and the United States remain at their highest point in decades, with disagreements over Taiwan and the coronavirus pandemic creating sharp divisions between Washington and Beijing.

The White House notified US Congress Monday that it was planning to move ahead with the sale of three advanced weapon systems to Taiwan, according to a congressional aide, including the advanced High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS).

In a stern response from Beijing, Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian called on Washington to "immediately cancel any arms sales plans to Taiwan" and cut all "US-Taiwan military ties."

Even though Taiwan has never been controlled by China's ruling Communist Party, authorities in Beijing insist the democratic, self-governing island is an integral part of their territory, with Xi himself refusing to rule out military force to capture it if necessary.

Despite the Chinese government's disapproval, relations between Washington and Taipei have grown closer under the Trump administration. In August, US Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar became the highest-level US official to visit Taiwan in decades, when he traveled to the island ostensibly to discuss the pandemic.

In response, Beijing increased military drills around Taiwan. Almost 40 Chinese warplanes crossed the median line between the mainland and Taiwan on September 18-19 -- one of several sorties the island's President Tsai Ing-wen called a "threat of force."

In a speech to the RAND Corporation on September 16, US Secretary of Defense Mark Esper said China "cannot match the United States" in terms of naval power and labeled Beijing a "malign influence."

"(China and Russia) are using predatory economics, political subversion, and military force in an attempt to shift the balance of power in their favor, and often at the expense of others," he told the audience.

In early October, Esper announced his "Battle Force 2045" plan, which calls for an expanded and modernized US Navy of 500 manned and unmanned vessels by 2045.

### **China 'ready to work with Russia' to resist US global dominance**

South China Morning Post Online (Hong Kong), 15 Oct 20 Catherine Wong

China will work with Russia to defend multilateralism and resist US attempts at global dominance.

That was the message Beijing's ambassador to Moscow, Zhang Hanhui, delivered in an interview with Russian media.

"History and practice have proven that multilateralism is the right path to take. Upholding multilateralism and democratisation of international relations is not only the choice for China, but also the choice for most countries in the world," Zhang said, according to a transcript of the interview posted on the embassy's website on Tuesday.

"China is willing to work with the international community, including Russia, in upholding cooperation and multilateralism, opposing hegemony and

power politics, jointly safeguarding the international system with the United Nations at the core, and jointly addressing common challenges of the coronavirus pandemic, terrorism, and climate change.”

With both countries in a competitive relationship with the United States, China and Russia have had close political, economic and military ties and supported each other on various global issues.

In July, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov that the US had “lost its mind, morals and credibility”.

But speculation about cracks in relations between Beijing and Moscow have surfaced in recent months as America, under President Donald Trump, has sought to reset relations with Russia to draw it away from China.

Divisions already exist between China and Russia over China’s ambitions and growing influence in Central Asia, an area traditionally seen by Russia as its own backyard. They are also at odds over Vladivostok, Russia’s arms sales to India and delays in the delivery of Russian missiles to Beijing.

But the two countries again presented a united front this week, with China and Russia gaining seats on the UN Human Rights Council, moves the US labelled a “mockery” of the body’s intended purpose.

Echoing Chinese President Xi Jinping, Zhang said China would not demand countries choose sides between China and the US, adding that China sought to develop equal and mutually respectful relations with all countries.

Zhang said there had been good momentum in trade and economic cooperation between the two countries and they would deepen cooperation in agriculture, finance and tourism.

He said China imported more than US\$2.1 billion in Russian agricultural products in the first six months this year, 29.1 per cent more than the same time last year.

The two countries have vowed to increase their trade in soybeans, frozen meat, and barley.

“As long as Russian agricultural products are competitive, the proportion of agricultural trade in our bilateral economic relationship will increase,” he said.

Zhang also said the two countries were aiming to replace US dollars in their transactions with Chinese yuan and Russian rouble.

#### **Chinese ships remain in Japanese waters near Senkakus for record time**

*<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/10/13/national/china-senkakus-record/>*

From” KYODO News Agency // Oct 13, 2020

**NAHA** – Chinese Coast Guard ships that entered Japanese territorial waters near the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea over the weekend have remained there for a record length of time, the Japan Coast Guard said Tuesday.

The two ships entered the waters near the islands, which are claimed by China, at around 10:45 a.m. Sunday, and attempted to approach a Japanese fishing boat, the coast guard said. They have remained in the waters since then, although Japanese coast guard vessels in the area have repeatedly urged them to leave while protecting the fishing vessel. “The situation has continued for more than two full days, and it is very regrettable,” said Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato, adding that Japan has repeatedly warned the vessels to leave the waters and “strongly protested” to China over the intrusion through diplomatic channels.

The top government spokesman said Japan is determined to protect its territory. It is the longest period Chinese vessels have intruded in the waters since the Japanese government put the islets under state control in September 2012 after buying out a private Japanese owner. The previous record was set in July, when Chinese vessels intruded into the waters for 39 hours and 23 minutes. On Tuesday, the coast guard said it also spotted another pair of Chinese vessels sailing in the so-called contiguous zone outside Japan’s territorial waters.

Chinese vessels were seen sailing near the Senkakus for the 37th straight day, according to the coast guard. China, which has aggressively asserted its territorial claims in the East and South China seas, continues to send vessels to waters around the Japan-controlled islands, which it calls the Diaoyu. China created a digital museum earlier this month that it says “helps viewers further understand the indisputable fact” that the uninhabited islands are part of Chinese territory. Japan has protested the move.

#### **Chinese Increasing Nuclear Submarine Shipyard Capacity**

[https://news.usni.org/2020/10/12/chinese-increasing-nuclear-submarine-shipyard-capacity?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=EBB%2010.13.20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief](https://news.usni.org/2020/10/12/chinese-increasing-nuclear-submarine-shipyard-capacity?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2010.13.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief)  
By: H I Sutton for USNI News // October 12, 2020 11:42 AM

As China pushes to become a blue-water power, nuclear-powered submarines are critically important to Beijing’s plan.

Historically the Chinese Navy’s (PLAN) nuclear-powered submarine fleet has been constrained by its limited construction capacity. There is only one shipyard in the country up to the task. But that yard has been undergoing a massive enlargement. And now, recent satellite imagery suggests an additional capacity expansion. China’s nuclear-powered submarine fleet was already expected to get much larger in the coming years. This latest development suggests that China could pump out submarines at an even greater rate.

Just how many nuclear submarines China will build over the next ten years is a hot topic. The Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) recently forecast China’s submarine fleet to grow by six nuclear-powered attack submarines by 2030. Other observers, such as retired Capt. James Fanell who was Director of Intelligence and Information Operations for the U.S. Navy’s Pacific Fleet, place their estimates even higher. What seems clear is that the number of nuclear submarines will increase.

Analysis of commercial satellite imagery reveals work on a new construction hall at the Bohai Shipyard at Huludao. The building appears to be essentially identical to the one built there in 2015. That is widely believed to be for the construction of a new generation of nuclear submarines. The new hall is estimated to be large enough to allow construction of two submarines simultaneously. When added to the other hall recently constructed, that would allow four boats to be in the sheds at once.

And there is another much older construction hall at the other end of the site which, if still active, could add another. So four or five boats at once. The nuclear submarines include both ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) and attack submarines (SSN). All nuclear submarines are built at the Bohai shipyard, so its capacity will be a major factor in the total fleet strength. China's naval growth has not gone unnoticed in Washington. In response, the U.S. Navy will have to adjust.

Outlining the proposed Battle Force 2045, Defense Secretary Mark Esper said that the U.S. must begin building three Virginia Class submarines per year as soon as possible. This would build a "larger and more capable submarine force". The proposed force will include 70-80 attack submarines, described as "the most survival strike platform in a future great powers conflict". There are three new classes of submarine which might be built at Bohai. The most straightforward is the Type-09IIIB (also written Type-093B).

This is an iterative improvement on the current Type-09IIIA Shang-II Class submarine. The main improvement expected is the inclusion of cruise missiles in vertical launch tubes. These will allow it to carry an increased load of cruise missiles, improving its strategic strike capability. The YJ-18 cruise missiles are generally analogous to the Russian Kalibr family of missiles. China already operates Kalibr from some of its submarines.

More advanced than the Type-09III family is the next-generation Type-09V Tang Class (aka Type -095). This is expected to be everything the Type-09IIIB is, and also stealthier. The third projected type is a next-generation ballistic missile submarine (SSBN). The Type-09VI (Type-096) will follow the current generation Type-09IV Jin Class (Type-094). They are expected to augment the six Type-09IV instead of replacing them, leading to a net increase in China's SSBN fleet.

The 2020 China Military Power Report to Congress projected an increase to eight SSBNs by 2030. At this stage we are still learning new details of the Bohai shipyard expansion. We have yet to see any submarines roll out of the new halls. And it is possible that the newest shed may be intended for some other purpose. But the takeaway is that China is transforming its submarine construction capabilities. The work at Huludao will remove the physical constraint which previously limited their nuclear navy.



## **NORTH KOREA:**

### **North Korea unveils 'monster' new intercontinental ballistic missile at parade**

<https://ca.news.yahoo.com/north-korea-state-media-quiet-011515276.html>

By: Hyonhee Shin and Josh Smith for Reuters // October 9, 2020

**SEOUL (Reuters)** - North Korea unveiled previously unseen intercontinental ballistic missiles at an unprecedented predawn military parade on Saturday that showcased the country's long-range weapons for the first time in two years.

Analysts said the missile, which was shown on a transporter vehicle with 11 axles, would be one of the largest road-mobile intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) in the world if it becomes operational. "This missile is a monster," said Melissa Hanham, deputy director of the Open Nuclear Network. Also displayed were the Hwasong-15, which is the longest-range missile ever tested by North Korea, and what appeared to be a new submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM).

Ahead of the parade, which was held to mark the 75th anniversary of the founding of its ruling Workers' Party, officials in South Korea and the United States said Kim Jong Un could use the event to unveil a new "strategic weapon" as promised earlier this year. A senior U.S. administration official called the display of the ICBM "disappointing" and called on the government to negotiate to achieve a complete denuclearization. The parade featured North Korea's ballistic missiles for the first time since Kim began meeting with international leaders, including U.S. President Donald Trump, in 2018. The U.S. official said Washington was holding fast to four commitments made by Trump and Kim at their historic meeting in June of that year, including a pledge by Pyongyang to "work toward complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula."

Kim made no direct mention of the United States or the now-stalled denuclearization talks. "We will continue to build our national defence power and self-defensive war deterrence," Kim said, but vowed that the country's military power would not be used preemptively. Kim blamed international sanctions, typhoons, and the coronavirus for preventing him from delivering on promises of economic progress.

"I am ashamed that I have never been able to repay you properly for your enormous trust," he said. "My efforts and devotion were not sufficient to bring our people out of difficult livelihoods." The video showed Kim make an appearance as a clock struck midnight. Dressed in a grey suit and tie, he waved to the crowd and accepted flowers from children while surrounded by military officials in Pyongyang's recently renovated Kim Il Sung Square.

Kim spoke for nearly half an hour, often visibly sweating despite the cool morning air, shedding tears when thanking the troops, and smiling and laughing as he watched the missiles. The parade was highly choreographed, with thousands of troops marching in formation, displays of new conventional military equipment including tanks, and fighter jets launching flares and fireworks. Experts said that the new, larger ICBM is likely designed to carry multiple independent reentry vehicles (MIRVs), allowing it to attack more targets and making interception more difficult.

Michael Elleman, director for Non-Proliferation and Nuclear Policy at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, estimated on Twitter that the new large missile could potentially deliver 2,000-3,500 kg "to any point on CONUS," making it more capable than Soviet R-16 or R-26 ICBMs that were never deployed. The new ICBM is likely intended to dispel doubts about North Korea's ability to strike the continental United States, and an implicit threat that they are preparing to test the larger missile, said Markus Garlauskas, a former U.S. intelligence officer for North Korea.

"If the Hwasong-15 could carry a 'super-large' nuclear warhead to anywhere in the U.S., then the natural question is what can this larger missile carry?," he said. Pyongyang is widely expected to test the larger missile in coming months, said Riki Ellison, founder of the non-profit Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance, sending a message to both Trump and his Democratic challenger Joe Biden.

Jenny Town, a fellow at the Stimson Center, said it was unclear if the missile shown was a conceptual or engineering mock-up or a workable prototype. "It seems highly unlikely they would try to deploy this system without testing it at least once," she said.

## **CORONAVIRUS MEASURES**

Kim became visibly emotional as he thanked the troops for their sacrifice in responding to natural disasters and preventing a coronavirus outbreak. He said he was grateful that not a single North Korean had tested positive for the disease, an assertion that South Korea and the United States have previously questioned. While attendees at other celebratory events were shown wearing masks, no one at the parade appeared to be wearing them. Kim said he hoped that North and South Korea would join hands again when the global coronavirus crisis is over. South Korean officials said this week that Kim could use the event as a "low intensity" show of power ahead of the U.S. presidential election on Nov. 3, as denuclearisation talks with Washington have stalled. In a congratulatory message to Kim for the anniversary, Chinese President Xi Jinping said he intended to "defend, consolidate and develop" ties with North Korea, its state media said on Saturday.

(Reporting by Hyonhee Shin and Josh Smith; Additional reporting by Hyunyoung Yi in Seoul; Andrea Shalal, Idrees Ali and David Brunnstrom in Washington; Editing by William Mallard, Ros Russell, Frances Kerry and Marguerita Choy)



## **SOUTH KOREA:**

### **South Korea worries about missile shown in North Korea military parade**

<https://news.yahoo.com/skorea-worries-missile-shown-nkorea-091927363.html>

By: HYUNG-JIN KIM for the Associated Press // October 11, 2020

**SEOUL, South Korea (AP)** — South Korea on Sunday urged North Korea to commit to its past disarmament pledges while expressing concerns over the North's unveiling of a suspected new long-range missile during a military parade.

During celebrations marking the 75th birthday of its ruling party in Pyongyang on Saturday, North Korea paraded a variety of weapons systems, including two missiles that were disclosed for the first time to a foreign audience. One is what appeared to be an intercontinental ballistic missile that is larger than any of the North's known ICBMs, and the other would likely be an upgraded version of a missile that can be fired from submarines.

While some experts say they could be mock-ups of missiles under development, their disclosures suggest North Korea has been continuously pushing to boost its weapons capability amid a stalemate in nuclear diplomacy with the United States. South Korea's Defense Ministry said Sunday it was

expressing concerns about the fact that “North Korea unveiled weapons including what was suspected to be a new long-range ballistic missile.” A ministry statement demanded North Korea abide by 2018 inter-Korean deals aimed at lowering animosities.

South Korea’s Foreign Ministry issued a separate statement urging North Korea to return to talks to produce progress in its past commitment to achieving denuclearization and peace on the Korean Peninsula. After an emergency National Security Council meeting, council members in South Korea said they’ll continue to analyze the strategic significance of the North Korean weapons systems disclosed Saturday and review South Korea’s defense capabilities.

Ties between the Koreas remain strained amid the deadlocked nuclear diplomacy between Pyongyang and Washington. During a speech at the military parade, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un warned he would fully mobilize his nuclear force if threatened but avoided direct criticism of Washington. The fact that Kim maintains his self-imposed moratorium on nuclear and long-range missile tests indicates he still wants to keep chances for diplomacy with the U.S. alive. But some experts say he’ll eventually carry out a major weapons test after the U.S. presidential election in November to boost his leverage in potential new negotiations with the U.S., whoever wins the election.



## **IRAN:**

### **U.S. Sanctions Have Caused ‘Serious’ Damage to Iran, Tehran Says**

[https://freebeacon.com/national-security/u-s-sanctions-have-caused-serious-damage-to-iran-tehran-says/?utm\\_source=actengage&utm\\_campaign=FreedomMail&utm\\_medium=email](https://freebeacon.com/national-security/u-s-sanctions-have-caused-serious-damage-to-iran-tehran-says/?utm_source=actengage&utm_campaign=FreedomMail&utm_medium=email)

By: Jack Beyrer for the WFB // OCTOBER 14, 2020 6:35 PM

Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Monday that American sanctions "have caused serious monetary and financial damages to Iran," Radio Farda reported.

Saeed Khatibzadeh, spokesman for Iran's foreign ministry, said that Washington's "maximum pressure" campaign has created a shock effect on Iran's financial stability. He also said that Tehran will pursue legal recourse by filing for compensation from the United States via the International Court of Justice. "The United States must make up for all the damage it has done to Iran," Khatibzadeh said. "Iranian people should not doubt that we will cash compensation for all damages cent by cent."

In recent years, American sanctions have decimated the Iranian economy. The rial—Iran's chief currency—has seen its value drop by over a third since June and now sits at an all-time low. Last week, the Treasury Department further isolated Iranian financial networks by hitting 18 Iranian banks with sanctions. "Our sanctions programs will continue until Iran stops its support of terrorist activities and ends its nuclear programs," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said. "Today's actions will continue to allow for humanitarian transactions to support the Iranian people."

In response to Washington's crippling sanctions regime, Iran has reached out to American adversaries like Russia and China for support. While Tehran reaches out to Moscow and Beijing, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo [met](#) Wednesday with Saudi foreign minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud to affirm bilateral ties between the United States and Saudi Arabia and combat Iranian malign activity. "We are both committed to counter and deter Iran's destabilizing behavior," Al Saud said.

### **Iran's Nuclear Chief and Top Rouhani Aide Contract Coronavirus**

<https://www.bloombergquint.com/business/iran-s-nuclear-chief-and-top-rouhani-aide-contract-coronavirus>

By: Golnar Motevalli Arsalan Shahla for Bloomberg // October 11 2020, 4:03 PM October 12 2020, (Bloomberg)

-- Iran's chief nuclear scientist and another top aide to President Hassan Rouhani have tested positive for the coronavirus.

Ali Akbar Salehi, Rouhani's deputy for nuclear affairs and head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, is resting and self-isolating at home, the semi-official Iranian Student's News Agency reported on Sunday. Salehi tested positive for the virus on Oct. 3, according to the state-run Islamic Republic News Agency reported on Saturday. Iran, its finances stretched and weakened by U.S. sanctions, has struggled to contain the Middle East's worst coronavirus outbreak.

Cases have surged over the past month after schools and universities reopened following the summer break and some public religious gatherings went ahead in August. The country reported a record 251 daily deaths from the disease on Sunday, and total cases now stand at 500,075, a Health Ministry spokeswoman, Sima Sadat Lari, said in a statement on state TV news. Iran Hits New Coronavirus Record as Lockdown Returns to Tehran Photographs on Rouhani's official website, [president.ir](http://president.ir), appear to show Salehi attending a cabinet meeting that the president led on Sept. 30. Nobakht appears to have been last photographed at a cabinet meeting on Oct. 4, according to the website.



### **INDIA:**

**NSTR**



### **PAKISTAN:**

**NSTR**



## UNITED KINGDOM:

NSTR



## FRANCE:

NSTR



## ISRAEL:

### **Israel hopes to collaborate with US on anti-missile lasers**

[https://www.defensenews.com/digital-show-dailies/ausa/2020/10/12/israel-hopes-to-collaborate-with-us-on-anti-missile-lasers/?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=EBB%2010.14.20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief](https://www.defensenews.com/digital-show-dailies/ausa/2020/10/12/israel-hopes-to-collaborate-with-us-on-anti-missile-lasers/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2010.14.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief)

By: Aaron Mehta for Defense News

WASHINGTON — Israel's Missile Defense Organization is looking to develop directed-energy capabilities, and is in early talks with the Pentagon about collaborating on those efforts, according to agency director Moshe Patel.

“Directed energy is something that we — I can tell you it’s playing a major role for the future in Israel, [and in] the U.S. also. And we are looking for ways to do some more cooperation with the U.S. on that,” Patel told Defense News during an Oct. 9 interview. “We need to overcome some classification issues, some policy issues, and hopefully we can enlarge those capabilities together as well.”

The U.S. and Israel have a history of collaboration on missile defense programs. The two teamed to co-develop the Arrow and David's Sling systems, and while the Iron Dome system was developed by Israel, the U.S. government helped finance production. The Arrow is a collaboration between Israel Aerospace Industries and Boeing; the latter two efforts are a collaboration between Israeli firm Rafael and American company Raytheon.

Patel noted there is a 10-year agreement in place for collaboration between his office and the American Missile Defense Agency, focused on the three current programs, including hardware and software changes. But what may be most interesting going forward are what he described as “some new initiatives, together with MDA, that may prove to be part of their interest.” Asked what those might look like, Patel said some of the work is classified and “we have just started the dialogue. But I think that you could imagine, you know, where the world is going to.

And what is important. We have some ideas that we are sharing with MDA, you know, some of the technologies already are well developed and we just need to modify them so they will fit the future threats.” But, he acknowledged, directed energy seems an obvious area of collaboration, particularly given what he described as continued interest from members of Congress. “Everything is open for [the MDA]. Everything is open,” Patel said. “There on the table some other topics that they might consider, and we will be more than happy to assist.”

Tom Karako, a missile defense expert with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said that directed energy “has to be part of the overall solution to countering the increasing number and types of air and missile threats.” “Both the U.S. and our allies will benefit from incorporating directed energy into composite air defense units, as well as for strike capability,” he said. “There will need to be a mix of kinetic and non-kinetic, and different types of DE. The diversity and intensity of the threat demands it.”

Karako added that the 10-year agreement between the MDA and Israel could serve as a viable baseline for the two sides working together on the technology, saying it should be possible to shift some of the annual money toward directed-energy programs. Another area for potential collaboration that Patel flagged is hypersonic missile defense. As both the U.S. and Israel are in the early stages of developing that capability — the MDA in August hit pause on a plan to develop a hypersonic interceptor — there would be clear advantages to partnering up.

Patel said he is “sure” there will be a future dialogue on hypersonic defense with the MDA, potentially including discussions about space-based assets to deal with that threat. But he also indicated that while hypersonic weapons are all the rage as a talking point, the true threat is still a ways out. “OK, we are hearing about the threat, but the threat is a little bit, you know — we have some time to develop our capabilities,” he said. “It’s something that can be solved.”



## **JAPAN:**

### **Japan unveils new submarine in face of China's growing assertiveness**

<https://www.msn.com/en-my/news/national/japan-unveils-latest-3000-tonne-submarine/ar-BB1a50Lw>

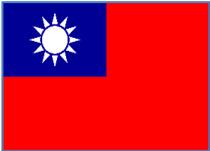
From Kyodo News Agency // Oct 14, 2020

Kobe – Japan's newest submarine was unveiled Wednesday at a shipyard in Kobe as part of efforts to boost the country's maritime security amid China's growing assertiveness in the region.

The 3,000-ton warship, named the Taigei, was built by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd. and is scheduled to go into service in March 2022, becoming the 22nd vessel in the Maritime Self-Defense Force's submarine fleet. Under its 2010 National Defense Program Guidelines, Tokyo set a goal of increasing the number of its submarines from 16 to 22 in light of increasing activities by Beijing in waters near Japan, especially around a group of Japan-administered islands claimed by China in the East China Sea.

The Taigei, whose name means big whale, measures 84 meters in length and 9.1 meters in width and cost around ¥76 billion (\$720 million) to build, according to the MSDF. The submarine, which can accommodate a crew of 70, has a stealth-like design and is equipped with lithium-ion batteries so that it can remain underwater longer than previous models, it also said. About 150 people, including Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi and MSDF Chief of Staff Hiroshi Yamamura, attended a ceremony held at Mitsubishi Heavy's Kobe Shipyard in Hyogo Prefecture.

Japan currently operates nine 2,750-ton Oyashio-class submarines and 11 2,950-ton Soryu-class warships, and is planning to introduce a 12th Soryu-class sub next year. The Taigei will be the first in the new Taigei-class category, following the Oyashio and Soryu classes.



## TAWIAN:

### **US advances three arms sales packages to Taiwan**

[https://www.defensenews.com/congress/2020/10/12/us-advances-three-arms-sales-packages-to-taiwan/?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Air%20Force%20DNR%2010.12.20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Air%20Force%20-%20Daily%20News%20Roundup](https://www.defensenews.com/congress/2020/10/12/us-advances-three-arms-sales-packages-to-taiwan/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Air%20Force%20DNR%2010.12.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Air%20Force%20-%20Daily%20News%20Roundup)

By: Joe Gould for Defense News

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration plans to sell three advanced weapons systems to Taiwan after notifying Congress of the deals on Friday, Defense News has confirmed.

The administration sent Congress an informal notification that it plans to sell Taiwan the systems amid rising tensions between China and Taiwan, but also the United States. First reported by Reuters, the notification follows reports the Trump administration was pushing the sale of seven large packages of weapons to Taiwan. The move is likely to further anger China, as the country claims Taiwan as its territory and has recently stepped up its threats to use force against the island if necessary.

This week, in the wake of Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen's calls for peaceful dialogue, China released new footage showing a large-scale military exercise simulating an invasion. The U.S. sales involve the Lockheed Martin-made High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, a truck-mounted rocket

launcher; the Boeing-made over-the-horizon, precision strike missile Standoff Land Attack Missile-Expanded Response; and external sensor pods for Taiwan's F-16 jets.

In recent weeks, the Trump administration announced a deal to sell Taiwan 66 new F-16 fighter jets, a high-level visit from the U.S. State Department, and plans for a new economic dialogue with Taiwan focused on technology, health care, energy and other sectors. Reuters reported that notifications for the sale of other weapons systems, including large, sophisticated aerial drones, land-based Harpoon anti-ship missiles, and underwater mines to deter amphibious landings have yet to reach Capitol Hill, but these were expected soon, the sources said.



## SAUDI ARABIA:

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## TURKEY:

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