

ICON Report
Week of August 15, 2020
Prepared by Peter Huessy, President of GeoStrategic Analysis

House Budget Chair says Extra \$30B for Pentagon not Problem—Would Not Force Scuttle of Deal

More money for Pentagon programs shouldn't be a "red line" for lawmakers to scuttle a broader coronavirus economic relief package, House Budget Committee Chair [John Yarmuth](#) said Friday.

In a conference call hosted by the liberal Center for American Progress, the Kentucky Democrat dinged weapons spending proposed by Senate Republicans in their stimulus measure last month, but added the \$30 billion in extra Pentagon money in the GOP counteroffer pales in comparison to a broader deal that could total several trillions of dollars and renew expired unemployment benefits.

"I don't think that would be a red line," Yarmuth told reporters. "That \$30 billion out of, whether it's going to be \$2 trillion or whatever the final number is going to be, is not anything worth killing the deal over.

"I know, \$30 billion here, \$30 billion there. Pretty soon, you're talking about real money," he said. "First and foremost is the human impact, but there are real economic impacts of not getting this unemployment supplement done. And that's a lot more than the \$30 billion for defense."

Yarmuth added that he'd want to "scrutinize exactly how" the \$30 billion in supplemental money would be spent, and singled out the \$686 million the Senate measure set aside for extra F-35A fighters for the Air Force.

"How that has anything to do with Covid is beyond me," he said. "That would be the ultimate stretch, I think."

Context: Senate Republicans included \$29.4 billion for the Defense Department and to cover pandemic-related costs to the defense industry in their \$1 trillion coronavirus measure, including \$8 billion for weapons programs.

The move was [panned by top Democrats](#), who ripped Republicans for wanting to dole out more money for fighters and ships instead of renewing a full \$600 in additional weekly jobless benefits for unemployed Americans.

From Last Week: Interview with Hawk Carlisle, August 3, 2020, Remarks by USAF Chief David Goldfein

Q: Can you give us a little bit of a peak under the tent with the B-21 bomber program? How is it doing?

A: I actually visited [the Northrop Grumman facility in Palmdale, California] twice. I actually got there and took a look and touched the B-21 as it was being assembled. Of all the programs right now that we manage in our acquisition portfolio, I will tell you that — based on company performance and culture and what I've seen in the program — I put the B-21 right now at the top of the heap in terms of confidence that I have in it as chief. ... I'm very, very happy with where the B-21 is headed.

Q: How is the Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent program progressing? Do you have any concerns there as we go forward?

A: I hope that as we build GBSD we will build in new ways of doing business in addition to what we build [for the platform]. Because what we do is provide a safe, secure and effective nuclear deterrent with that incredibly important leg of the triad. How we do it should evolve and mature because we don't recapitalize very often. If we're not careful we're gonna build a new weapon system to be managed in the exact same old way. ... Shame on us if we let that happen. ... Shame on us if we don't use robotics and technology and build that into GBSD.

What I want is the requirements to evolve with technology as industry solves challenges. I'd like it to get to a point where we're able to do a little bit of development ops, even in the nuclear business, so that as we achieve technological advances they can be brought into the GBSD without having us go through a two-year-long requirements review process. ... We've got to become more agile than that.

Breakfast Video Seminar Series on Nuclear Modernization and Sustainment, Missile Defense, Arms Control, Proliferation, Space, NNSA and Defense Policy, April-August 2020

Updated Schedule: 2020 Nuclear Deterrent, Missile Defense & Arms Control Seminars NNSA Seminars Space Power to the Warfighter Seminars

Seminars Completed

- March 10: Secretary of the USAF, The Honorable Barbara Barrett
- April 1: General Daniel Goldfein, Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force
- April 17: Frank Miller: Franklin Miller, Principal, Scowcroft Group, “The Strategic Waterfront: Nuclear Modernization, Missile Defense and Arms Control”
- April 29: General Tim Ray, Commander, USAF Global Strike Command, “Nuclear Modernization in the Current Environment”
- May 4, General O’Shaughnessy, Northern Command C
- May 16: Drew Walters, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Nuclear Modernization & NNSA C

- May 22: Professor Stephen Blank and Mark Dr. Schneider, “Russian Nuclear Modernization and Implications of Escalate to Win” C
- June 11: Gordon Chang and Rick Fisher: “Chinese Nuclear Threats” C
- July 14: Uzi Rubin, “Iran’s New Missiles and US and Allied Missile Defenses: An Update” C
- July 30th, 10am, Admiral Charles Richard, Commander, US Strategic Command: “The Strategic Deterrent Challenges We Face”
- Future Events Confirmed and Being Scheduled
- August 6, 11am: Ilan Berman, Vice President of the AFPC, Iran Russia and China and Nuclear Proliferation <https://youtu.be/8qtaRh64IBw>

▪ **August 19th, 10am: General Richard Clark, HAF/A10, Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Deterrence and Nuclear Integration**

▪ **August 26th, 8am: Jim Bridenstine, Administrator of NASA/General Raymond, Commander, US Space Command. The NASA Administrator Remains on the Calendar but General Raymond will move his address to September).**

▪ **August 27, 3-430pm: Dr. Brent Park, Deputy Administrator for Defense Nuclear Non-Proliferation.**

- August/September: Dr. Brad Roberts, LLNL, Center for Global Research, Red/Blue Theories of Victory and Escalate to Win

▪ **September 2, 10am: Robert Soofer, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear and Missile Defense Policy: “Nuclear and Missile Defense Policy Review”**

- September: Israel Ministry of Defense, proliferation and the security environment.
- September 14: David Albright, Institute of Science and International Security, will discuss NK and Iran and nuclear proliferation threats and US Security
- Additional Seminar Events Currently in Discussion for Scheduling
- Representative Cheney (R-WY) In process for September.
- General (Ret) Richard Formica and General (Ret) Ken Todorov: “Air and Missile Challenges in a Multi-Polar World”
- Chris Ford, Assistant Secretary of State for International Security: “A Review and Update of New Start and Next Steps in Arms Control”
- Henry Sokolski, CNEP: “Avoiding the Coming Nuclear Proliferation Cascade”
- Jim Miller and Rebecca Heinrichs: “Nuclear Modernization, Arms Control and Missile Defense”

ICBM Opponents Pushing Hard to Unilaterally Kill GBSD, Cut Nukes Dramatically

The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists published this past week an essay in tribute to the late Bruce Blair of Princeton University and founder of Global Zero. The essay called those supporting the ICBM force an “Accidental Nuclear War Machine,” asserting that the chances of an ICBM being launched by mistake was so high the MM III missiles needed to be retired and GBSD stopped.

To review the history of the why Blair pushed for eliminating ICBMs from the US arsenal, here are the points you need to know:

- Blair said he could launch ICBMs as a USAF officer from a MM launch facility, all by himself and without any Presidential order or codes from any command authority...(Blair served in the airborne Looking Glass as well).....
- In the last year he changed his story twice; first saying he figured out how to launch ICBMs but only if two capsules, with 4 missileers simultaneously “hit the button.” Again, without any Presidential order and without any codes being sent.
- However, in a published essay within the last year he said no ICBM TODAY can be launched without Presidential order.
- Correcting the impression he had previously left that ICBMs could still be launched without Presidential order.
- He has also claimed that the USAF did not have an unlock code to make the missiles ready to launch—which he says he forced the AF into admitting in 1977—and Blair claimed the original unlock codes once added were set at 0000000.
- He also like Dr. Perry said in a crisis the US policy was to launch our ICBMs on computer warning, or on warning of an attack, but NOT launch after confirmation of attack (which Admiral Richard clarified in his recent video seminar to be US policy—the US would not launch our ICBMs or any other nuclear weapons on “warning.”
- Dr. Perry in his new book and FAS and others in the AC community now admit that a bolt out of the blue, disarming strike by the Russians is now very unlikely --in fact they admit such a threat is approaching a probability of zero. This threat was long of concern with all the Hill members that were worried about prompt launch of ICBMs and survivability and was the basis for Dr. Perry’s proposals to eliminate ICBMs. <https://thebulletin.org/2020/08/bruce-blair-challenging-the-accidental-nuclear-war-machine-at-every-turn/>

This is a special Congressional Recess edition of the ICBM Ear/Weekly ICON Report.

With the anniversary of the atomic bombs dropped on Japan at the end of World War II, there have been a multitude of reports and essays on the need for the US to get rid of nuclear weapons, reduce dramatically such weapons in the near future, extend New Start, unilaterally eliminate all ICBMs, some submarines and bombers, as well as in general dramatically diminish the role and purpose of nuclear weapons in US security policy.

There has also been a significant push back from supporters of ICBMs and nuclear deterrence and a sampling of such material from 2019 and 2020 on both sides of the issue are listed below with a short excerpt and link included.

1. How to do trilateral arms control and keep China out of talks to extend New Start, “Responsible Statecraft”, by Jessica Budlong, August 2, 2020:

“The Trump administration appears to be holding the renewal of the bilateral New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, or New START, hostage with the fallacy that China should, and would immediately, join trilateral negotiations with the United States and Russia.”

<https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2020/08/02/trilateral-arms-control-china-new-start/>

2. Daniel Larison, “New Start and the China Diversion”, April 29, 2020, “New START has a little over eight months left to live, and the Trump administration remains fixated on its impossible and bizarre condition of bringing China into the treaty”,

<https://www.theamericanconservative.com/larison/new-start-and-the-china-diversion/>

3. William Perry and Tom Collina, “Who an We Trust With the Nuclear Button? No One”

Seventy-five years ago, President Truman gave himself exclusive power over nuclear war. Every president since has clung to it. It was bad policy then; it is inexcusable now. We no longer need to take these risks, and we can safely back away from the brink. It is time to retire the nuclear button. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/22/opinion/nuclear-weapons-trump.html>

4. “The Atomic Bomb Saved Millions”, John C. Hopkins, Wall Street Journal, August 6, 2020, The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, 75 years ago Thursday and Sunday, respectively, are regarded with horror and regret. But not using the atomic bomb would have been far worse. The overall Japanese deaths attributed to the two bombs are estimated at between 129,000 and 226,000. A July 1945 U.S. government report estimated that invading the Japanese Home Islands would cost five million to 10 million Japanese lives. The U.S. landing, planned for Nov. 1, 1945, was to be substantially larger than the 1944 Normandy...

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-atomic-bomb-saved-millionsincluding-japanese-11596663957>

5. Our Annual August Debate over the Bombs, Victor Davis Hanson, August 6, 2020,

Each year, Americans argue about our supposed moral shortcomings for being the only nation to have used an atomic weapon in war. Given the current cultural revolution that topples statues, renames institutions, cancels out the supposedly politically incorrect and wages war on America’s past, we will hear numerous attacks on the decision of Democratic President Harry Truman to use the two terrible weapons.

But what were the alternatives that Truman faced had he not dropped the bombs that precipitated Japan’s agreement to surrender less than a week after the bombing of Nagasaki and formally on Sept. 2?

One, Truman could have allowed Japan’s wounded military government to stop the killing and stay in power. But the Japanese had already killed more than 10 million Chinese civilians since 1931, and perhaps another 4 million to 5 million Pacific Islanders, Southeast Asians and members of the Allied Forces since 1940.

A mere armistice rather than unconditional surrender would have meant the Pacific War had been fought in vain. Japan's fascist government likely would have regrouped in a few years to try it again on more favorable terms.https://trib.com/opinion/columns/hanson-our-annual-august-debate-over-the-bombs/article_1008cae8-7e59-54ee-82d3-d9bab3f96ea0.html

6. Lamont Colucci, "75 years Ago the Bomb Saved the World", August 6, 2020, My last column concerned the legacy of the Yalta and Potsdam conferences that were the final summits at the end of the Second World War. The atomic bomb was integral to the outcome of those summits and completely altered both American foreign policy and American national security to this day.<https://www.newsmax.com/lamontcolucci/hiroshima-nagasaki-okinawa-truman/2020/08/06/id/980866/>

7. David Trachtenberg, "Is there a (New) Strategic Arms Race", August 5th, 2020, In a series of excellent analyses in the 1970s, strategist Albert Wohlstetter challenged the conventional wisdom that the United States was the leading cause of an arms race with the Soviet Union.<https://www.nipp.org/2020/08/05/trachtenberg-david-j-is-there-a-new-strategic-arms-race/>.

8. David Trachtenberg, "Should New Start Be Extended", November 25, 2019, Rather than extending New START on the pretense that it is better than nothing, perhaps it is time to consider renegotiating it in favor of an agreement that truly serves American security interests. Arms control is not an end unto itself. As I testified to Congress last year, New START should not be viewed in isolation from Russia's overall arms control behavior and nuclear weapons activities.[x] While arms control can play a useful role in helping to manage strategic competition, New START in its current form fails this critical.
https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2019/11/25/should_new_start_be_extended_114866.html

19th Annual Nuclear Triad and Deterrence Symposium
December 9th & -10th Bossier City Community College
Hosted by LTRI, CIC and the Mitchell Institute in association with United States Air Force Global Strike Command

- ❖ Registration and Continental Breakfast 7:00-7:40
- ❖ 7:45am Introductory Remarks: Executive Director, LTRI
- ❖ 7:55am Keynote Remarks: General Tim Ray, Commander, USAF Global Strike Command
- ❖ 8:40am Drew Walter, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear Matters
- ❖ 9:20am Mark Gunzinger, Fellow, Mitchell Institute, "Hypersonic Technology, Strategic Bombers and Nuclear Weapons: Resetting Deterrence"
- ❖ 10:00am Break
- ❖ 10:10am Henry Sokolski, NPEC: The Coming Nuclear Proliferation Challenge
- ❖ 10:50am General (Ret) Frank Klotz, Rand Corporation: The New Start and Arms Control Environment
- ❖ 11:30am Luncheon Buffet
- ❖ 12:00 Noon Congressman Mike Johnson, (R-LA) HASC

- “The Look from the Hill: America’s Nuclear Deterrent Enterprise”
- ❖ 12:40pm: Ambassador Ron Lehman, LLNL and Peter Huessy, Mitchell Institute: “Getting in the Way of Consensus: Nuclear Arms Control Mythologies and Misconceptions”
 - ❖ 1:15pm: General Garret Harencak, (Ret) Jacobs Engineering: “The Consequences of National Nuclear Holidays”
 - ❖ 1:45pm: Brad Thayer, University of Texas at San Antonio: “China’s Nuclear Strategy and Great Power Competition”
 - ❖ 2:30pm: Colonel Morgan, and Captain Williams: “GBSD and Columbia: Key Deterrent Factors, An Update”
 - ❖ 3:15: Dr. Craig Spohn, Executive Director, CIC Closing Remarks

Peter Huessy and Minot Task Force 21 Virtual Symposium September 22, 2020

- Live Keynote Remarks: General John Hyten, Vice Chairman of the Joint C
- ❖ Live Remarks Senator Kevin Cramer, (R-ND, Member of the SASC): “The Congressional Consensus on Strategic Nuclear Modernization, GBSD, Columbia, B-21 and NC3” (Confirmed)
 - ❖ Live Address: The Honorable Barbara Barrett, the Secretary of the United States Air Force, (Invited)
 - ❖ \Tim Morrison, National Security Fellow, Hudson Institute: “The Strategic Environment: The Current Russian Challenge (Confirmed)
 - ❖ Professor Stephen Blank and Mark Schneider, “Russian Nuclear Forces: Is There a Strategy of Escalate to Win?” (Confirmed)
 - ❖ Rick Fisher and Joe Bosco: “Are Nuclear Weapons a Hegemonic Tool in Chinese Security Policy?” (Confirmed)
 - ❖ Frank Miller former OSD and White House official, “The Strategic Deterrent Environment: An Update” (Confirmed)
 - ❖ General Bill Chambers: “Strategic Deterrence and Great Power Competition” (Confirmed)
 - ❖ ichaela Dodge, NIPP, “Budget Realities and the Cost of Strategic Nuclear Deterrence” (Confirmed)
 - ❖ Honorable Drew Walter, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear Matters: “Getting Nuclear Deterrence and Modernization Right” (Confirmed)
 - ❖ USAF Major General (Ret) Bill Chambers, “Nuclear Deterrent Strategy, NC3 and Major Power Competition” (Confirmed)
 - ❖ Remarks: John MacMartin, Minot Task Force 21 (Confirmed)

Special for the ICON: ICBM Ear Commentary on William Perry’s op-ed this week in the New York Times and new book “The Button”, where he calls for the unilateral elimination of the GBSD and the lands based leg of the nuclear Triad.

William Perry's new book, "The Button" declares the US is spending too much on nuclear modernization, an estimated \$1 trillion over the next thirty years. To remedy the situation, the former Secretary of Defense recommends the US unilaterally kill all our 400 ICBMs, cut out two of the planned twelve submarines the US is building, and cut the USAF conventional/nuclear capable bombers by twenty-five percent.

These big cuts save only \$5 billion a year, what in a normal year the United States federal government now spends every 10 hours. Far worse, however, is that Perry's recommendation unilaterally cuts 800 warheads out of the 1550 force levels the United States is allowed by the New Start treaty.

Apart from the budget savings, Dr. Perry's says his primary motive is to avoid an accidental nuclear war. Dr. Perry thinks a US national leader might launch America's missiles or bombers by mistake. How would that happen? A US president, if warned of an impending attack by the US early warning radars, might automatically retaliate against the country from where the missiles originated. Without confirming an attack actually occurred.

Now it is true during the height of the Cold War, the Soviet Union had some 12,000 nuclear warheads. Thus, the United States during that period did worry about what was termed a "bolt out of the blue. This scenario had the Soviets launch a surprise attack on the US from a normal, day-to-day peacetime posture. With over ten thousand warheads available to use, the Soviet could easily attack all the 1050 land-based missile silos. And the Soviets would still have left thousands of warheads in reserve to hold hostage the rest of the US.

One would normally ask, well that doesn't make any sense, wouldn't the US retaliate with its remaining nuclear weapons and thus annihilate the Soviets as well? Well, that is exactly the deterrence strategy upon which the US relied throughout the nuclear age.

But during the period after the 1972 SALT treaty between the US and Soviet Union was signed, the danger of just such a Soviet first strike increased. And the deterrent strategy the US relied upon was thought to be inadequate.

From 1972-1982, the Soviet strategic nuclear deployed warheads grew from 2500 to 12,000. It was thought by US military experts the Soviets could execute a strike eliminating America's most lethal weapons—the Minuteman land-based missiles—and still have in reserve nearly ten thousand more warheads

with which to hold hostage American cities and other military targets such as bomber and submarine bases.

This “window of vulnerability” as it was called, was solved, however, by successive American administrations through a three-part process. Starting with President Reagan, the US reduced Soviet and then Russian nuclear weapons by 90% through arms control while simultaneously building a better and more survivable nuclear force of submarines and bombers.

The US made all ICBMs only single warhead missiles, thus making the missiles unattractive targets. Given Russia would have to use two attacking warheads to eliminate each US missile silos, the Russians would expend nearly one thousand warheads to eliminate only four hundred ICBM warheads. Another difference is the US now has other highly accurate missiles available which the US did not have at the height of the Cold War. But now the US deterrent can now effectively hold at risk key Russian targets, but with submarine launched missiles. In short, the deterrence America thought was lost because of the window of vulnerability was restored.

Now those nuclear forces built under President Reagan are all well beyond their service life and need to be replaced. The Trump administration, using roughly similar plans put forward by the Obama administration, is rebuilding our nuclear Triad. But the first ICBM and bomber won't be put into the force until 2029. Completion of the entire Triad is not scheduled until 2042. Unfortunately, this rebuilding Dr. Perry wants to tear down unilaterally. And do this despite Russia already finishing its own nuclear modernization of its 700 new missiles, submarines and bombers allowed by the New Start treaty.

Where did Dr. Perry go wrong?

At the end of the Cold War, the US went on what retired USAF General Garrett Harenak described as a “procurement holiday.” The US has not put a new nuclear bomber, submarine or ICBM in the field since 1996. The US is hardly starting an arms race. If anything it is trying to catch up.

Now why is the US building a Triad of forces? The US has a multiplicity of forces for a number of reasons. First, defense planners do not want a technical failure to take down the deterrent. That requires a redundant capability. While bombers can be recalled, and thus can signal resolve, their required time to get to the target is very long. Here land-based ICBMs are really valuable because

they can reach Russian targets in 30 minutes. And given the land-based missiles are in known, fixed silos, submarines at sea are needed which the Russians can't find to make sure a certain portion of the US nuclear deterrent can survive a possible Russian first strike.

America thus spends a lot of money on a Triad of forces rather than rely upon only one technology. This Triad assures the President does not have to launch nuclear forces early in a crisis or on warning of an attack. The US is thus guaranteed the ability to retaliate while sustaining crisis stability.

And though the cost to modernize the force over 30 years is high, Dr. Perry's budget books are cooked. The cost of the three legs of the Triad in today's budget is \$8.5 billion. Two-thirds of the nuclear budgets simply sustains and operates the old, legacy systems that are being replaced. For all intents and purposes nuclear modernization is cheap.

Even cheaper if one takes into account that the \$8.5 billion annually includes 100% of the cost of the new B-21 bomber which while it will be nuclear capable, primarily serves a conventional mission. As Obama era defense official Jim Miller acknowledged, the "nuclear" cost of the B-21 bomber is actually only 3% of the total bomber cost so even the estimated annual \$8.5 billion annual modernization price tag is too high.

Even if the cuts Perry proposes saved a lot of money, the unilateral cuts would still not be smart. If the US followed Perry's lead, the US would not have sufficient capability to deter our adversaries. Who says so? The past 11 American administrations, all of whom supported a robust ICBM force.

But Perry's ideas are also quite reckless for an additional reason. They would make the US highly vulnerable to a disarming first strike, the very threat Perry says the US has to prevent. For example, unilaterally eliminating the nearly 500 missile silos and launch control facilities making up the ICBM leg of the triad would leave the United States with 10 or fewer nuclear assets. Three bomber bases, two sub-bases, and 3 submarines at sea would be the entirety of the US nuclear force.

What's the point of making it easy to disarm the United States given that today the US has over 500 nuclear targets that the Russians and Chinese cannot eliminate, assuring the survivability of the US nuclear deterrent. Why reduce that number to less than 10?

Nearly 40 years ago Bill Perry was a member of the 1983 Scowcroft Commission that recommended building a new ICBM, the Ohio class submarines, the D5 missile for the submarines, and the B1 and B2 nuclear capable bombers. All these nuclear systems comprised the entirety of the Reagan proposed nuclear modernization program. And the Scowcroft Commission recommendations were accepted by Congress and thus together the Reagan administration and Congress roundly rejected the Soviet proposed alternative of a nuclear freeze.

Dr. Perry unfortunately thinks the men and women of the industrial base which builds the nuclear deterrent do so just for the money. Perry says the industry is only interested in profits and thus effectively lobbies Congress to support such systems. Nothing could be further from the truth. Industry and Congress support this modernization effort because we need to do so to protect the country.

That is why Perry's efforts to eliminate America's ICBMs received a paltry 12 votes out of 56 in the House Armed Services Committee this summer. While last year getting defeated on the House floor by a vote of 166-266.

Now the past two administrations placed the new GBSD ICBM in the budget. And the last ten administrations before that —during and after the Cold War— supported a robust ICBM force and nuclear Triad.

As for arms control, Perry apparently believes the country should be punished because the INF Treaty has been discarded. But the Russians walked out of the INF treaty, not the United States. And the Chinese refuse to even talk about nuclear weapons, despite having the third highest number of nuclear weapons of any country in the world.

The plans Dr Perry has for a world of zero nuclear weapons are all well and good. But until the nine nuclear armed nations all agree to go to zero, the USA will in the meantime keep a strong, credible deterrent, seek reasonable and verifiable arms control where possible and build stabilizing missile defenses to better protect our people. And a new GBSD land-based ICBM force is integral to that effort.