

ICON Weekly Report
by
Peter Huessy, President of GeoStrategic Analysis
“Previews of Coming Distractions”
Week of July 2, 2020

**HASC Markup of H.R. 6395 - National Defense Authorization Act
for Fiscal Year 2021**

SUMMARY

For the first time in the 40 years I have been covering the defense budget deliberations in the Armed Services Committees of the US Congress, this is the first time that both HJASC and SASC have approved of a defense budget with not a single penny taken out of the nuclear accounts within DOD!! Amendments to slow down and defund GBSD and MM III were soundly defeated.

This is testimony to the military and civilian leadership in the US DOD and DOE/NNSA as well as the hard work of the ICON and member companies. And the White House deserves credit as well.

The nuclear accounts were fully funded and the HASC vote was 56-0 and the Senate vote was 25-2 so collectively the vote was 81-2 in favor of the Administration’s defense budget at the requested level.

A number of related amendments were dealt with re GBSD and the ICBM force. First, Garamendi offered an amendment to do another study of the land based ICBM program, explaining that General Clark had said there was “one more SLEP” available for the MMIII system, and that previous USAF estimates of the costs of a SLEP included the follow-on new system GBSD under the assumption that once the SLEP was completed, the ICBM force would have to be replaced. Garamendi says you could SLEP the MMIII missile 50 years but not 80 years and the USAF pulled a trick by comparing the cost of GBSD with the cost of an 80 year

alternative. Cheney responded citing all the studies done in 2013, 2014, 2016 and 2018 that concluded such SLEP is not viable. And other reports that also say the same thing. Turner says it would nice to have the ability to vote to delay the Russians and Chinese push for new missiles as well. Re General Clark's remarks Turner says we could send a letter to the General.

Cheney reminded the members what Gen Hyten said last year: MM III SLEP is not cost effective; and would not be technically capable of adapting to new threats from China and Russia. Turner rightly pointed out that nobody in DOD has called into question the validity of the previous MM III alternative/SLEP studies. Turner suggested to Garamendi that they jointly write General Clark a letter and put the matter to rest. Then Bishop and Cheney both made strong comments in favor of the GBSD and against the amendment, with Representative Cheney going through the various studies already completed on the subject, all of which she noted concluded that GBSD was needed. The voice vote was ruled by the Chairman to be against the amendment. Garamendi did not ask for a roll call vote. Chairman Smith concluded the debate and noted that building GBSD and other modernized elements of the Triad were adding to the nuclear force. He said "4000 weapons is enough to deter and we do not really need to build more and more nuclear weapons. Of course, an adequate deterrent is needed but the issue is what is an adequate deterrent?"

Second, a related amendment which the ICBM EAR had earlier notified the ICON about was by Ro Khanna and that was to strip \$1 billion from the GBSD program. A similar amendment was rumored to be under consideration by some Senate members during consideration of the NDAA by the SASC. Senator Cramer's office said such an amendment would probably not be considered and if it was it would be overwhelmingly defeated.

The Khanna amendment was defeated by a vote of 44 against ad 12 in favor. This is quite encouraging in that of the HASC 31 Democratic members, 12 or less than 40% supported Khanna's amendment.

Third, Representative Lamborn had an amendment dealing with mil con and the GBSD that was adopted by the *en bloc* amendments offered by the Chair and ranking member (which means usually there was also no objection by the USAF).

Some committee Democrats continued to pursue reports (request adopted in the managers *en bloc* amendments) re the prospects of accidental or inadvertent escalation to nuclear conflict, and in anticipation of the New START treaty expiring next year, there was a prohibition adopted against deploying any nuclear systems above the 700 launcher limit of the treaty (a backdoor way of extending New Start for the next fiscal year. There are no verifiable warhead limits under New START and the NNSA work would not be affected by the amendment.

Strategic Forces Subcommittee Chairman Cooper got an amendment adopted by a close vote to further examine the funding, and the schedule for the Savannah River project in South Carolina which has a serious history of major cost increases.

Khanna also offered an amendment on **Yemen which was adopted** 31 to 25 to bar logistical support for air strikes by the Saudi-led coalition against the Houthis in Yemen. Provisions to

withdraw U.S. support from the coalition were included in the House bill last year but were dropped in negotiations with the Senate.

Some key issues other than strategic forces included whether to move or transfer U.S. troops from Germany and require DOD concurrence to any such troop change. The President has approved a plan to move 9,500 troops out of Germany to other nations within NATO such as Poland, capping the U.S. presence there to about 25,000 people. HASC adopted an amendment allowing such a change if the Pentagon presents a report showing that doing so wouldn't damage the security of the U.S. or its allies.

"It's more important than ever to ensure the continued security of our Baltic allies and therefore our own national security interests," said Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.), the amendment's sponsor.

The most contentious issue is whether the Pentagon will rename military property named after Confederate leaders, including 10 major Army installations honoring Civil War commanders that are located in former Confederate states. An adopted amendment would make that happen within a year after the National Defense Authorization Act is signed into law.

As noted earlier, following last year's extensive debate over nuclear modernization, lawmakers again examined whether to look into the prospect of keeping the Air Force's current Minuteman III nuclear missiles through another SLEP, and whether to cut 67% or \$1 billion from the new ICBM--GBSD program-- and move into a pandemic preparedness fund.

Shortly before midnight, members voted to name the bill after Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Texas), the retiring ranking member who led the committee from 2015 to 2019.

SENATE DEVELOPMENTS

Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) indicated senators have come up with their own bipartisan defense authorization bill that would win the chamber's approval.

"I want to thank all my colleagues and ... [Ranking Member Sen. Jack Reed] for working so hard today to come to an agreement," Inhofe said July 1. "We will be hotlining it tonight. The Senate will come back into session at 10 tomorrow morning, and hopefully we will be able to lock in our deal here."

As of noon Thursday, the Senate was considering the nomination of Russell Vought to be Director of OMB. Then Senator Toomey discussed a bipartisan measure re Hong Kong and the harsh Chinese imposed security laws newly placed on Hong Kong.

Committee on Armed Services

Wednesday, July 1, 2020 (10:00 AM)

1100 LHOB

Washington, D.C.

The markup will be held in 1100 Longworth House Office Building and online.

Text of Legislation

- Subcommittee on Strategic Forces Mark: H.R. 6395 - FY21 NDAA (As reported to the Full Committee) [[PDF](#)] Added 06/24/2020 at 11:21 AM
- Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces Mark: FY21 NDAA (As reported to the Full Committee) [[PDF](#)] Added 06/24/2020 at 11:21 AM
- Subcommittee on Intelligence and Emerging Threats and Capabilities Mark: H.R. 6395 - FY21 NDAA (As reported to the Full Committee) [[PDF](#)] Added 06/24/2020 at 11:21 AM
- Subcommittee on Military Personnel Mark: H.R. 6395 - FY21 NDAA (As reported to the Full Committee) [[PDF](#)] Added 06/24/2020 at 11:21 AM
- Subcommittee on Readiness Mark: H.R. 6395 - FY21 NDAA (As reported to the Full Committee) [[PDF](#)] Added 06/24/2020 at 11:21 AM
- Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces Mark: H.R. 6395 - FY21 NDAA (As reported to the Full Committee) [[PDF](#)] Added 06/24/2020 at 11:21 AM
- FY21 NDAA Chairman's Mark [[PDF](#)] Added 06/27/2020 at 10:38 AM

Amendments

- Subcommittee on Tactical Air & Land Forces En Bloc Package #1 [[PDF](#)] Added 07/01/2020 at 02:45 PM
- Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces En Bloc Package #1 [[PDF](#)] Added 07/01/2020 at 02:45 PM
- Subcommittee on Intelligence & Emerging Threats and Capabilities En Bloc Package #1 [[PDF](#)] Added 07/01/2020 at 02:53 PM
- Subcommittee on Readiness En Bloc Package #1 [[PDF](#)] Added 07/01/2020 at 03:05 PM
- Subcommittee on Military Personnel En Bloc Package #1 [[PDF](#)] Added 07/01/2020 at 03:12 PM
- Subcommittee on Military Personnel En Bloc Package #2 [[PDF](#)] Added 07/01/2020 at 03:17 PM

- Subcommittee on Strategic Forces En Bloc Package #1 [[PDF](#)] Added 07/01/2020 at 03:24 PM

- Log 266 - Cooper [[PDF](#)] Added 07/01/2020 at 03:33 PM
- Chairman's Mark En Bloc Package #1 [[PDF](#)] Added 07/01/2020 at 03:39 PM
- Log 329r1 - Banks [[PDF](#)] Added 07/01/2020 at 06:18 PM
- Log 233r4 - Speier [[PDF](#)] Added 07/01/2020 at 06:18 PM
- Log 63r2 - Norcross [[PDF](#)] Added 07/01/2020 at 08:45 PM

- Chairman's Mark En Bloc Package #2 [[PDF](#)] Added 07/01/2020 at 10:46 PM
- Chairman's Mark En Bloc Package #3 [[PDF](#)] Added 07/01/2020 at 10:46 PM

- Log 453r1 - Gallego [[PDF](#)] Added 07/01/2020 at 11:12 PM
- Log 9 - Slotkin [[PDF](#)] Added 07/01/2020 at 11:17 PM
- Log 73 - Norcross [[PDF](#)] Added 07/01/2020 at 11:20 PM
- Log 6r1 - Brown [[PDF](#)] Added 07/01/2020 at 11:22 PM
- Log 515 - Sherrill [[PDF](#)] Added 07/02/2020 at 01:32 AM
- Log 227r1 - Speier [[PDF](#)] Added 07/02/2020 at 01:36 AM
- Log 461r1 - Crow [[PDF](#)] Added 07/02/2020 at 01:36 AM

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Log 438r4 - Khanna [PDF] Added 07/02/2020 at 01:39 AM • Log 641 - Smith [PDF] Added 07/02/2020 at 01:42 AM |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Arm Control Negotiations and New Start News

Russia wants simply an extension of New Start without any changes. Informed State Department sources believe the Russians are not very concerned with any arms racing because the US has not begun deploying new nuclear platforms and cannot be seen as “racing”.

These sources also explain the US has the legal right under the treaty provisions to for example propose that new Russian “super weapons” which under the Treaty (four of them) are a “new kind” of strategic offensive arms (Article 5, paragraph 2). The Russian agenda is however not mentioned in the Treaty as a subject for negotiations.

Russia ready to live without New START Treaty - Deputy FM Ryabkov

Translated from the [Interfax : Russia & CIS General Newswire](#) [Moscow] 25 June 2020.

MOSCOW. June 25 (Interfax) - Russia is ready to live without the New START Treaty, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said.

"Yes, of course, we're ready for this, and the president of Russia has said this on a number of occasions," Ryabkov said on Thursday during an online session of the Primakov Readings, held by Interfax and the Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the Russian Academy of Sciences, when asked whether Russia is ready to live without the New START Treaty.

"The Americans know that we won't save this treaty at any cost, especially at the cost that they want from us," he said.

"We believe that it is mutually beneficial, that both sides need it, and that it is a significant factor ensuring international security and enhancing strategic stability, and that it would be optimal to extend it, if possible, by the maximum period envisaged in the text of the treaty itself, i.e., by five years," Ryabkov said.

When commenting on the agenda where Russia and the U.S. could take joint steps in the field of arms control, Ryabkov said that "it proved to be quite a challenge even to determine topics for the future expert working groups, which will have to gather and negotiate the relevant issues in the period leading up to the next interdepartmental meeting similar to the one held on June 22."

"We have a different scale of priorities and different views, even on the methods of work, but there is one conclusion: we need to meet more often," he said.

Calendar of Events UPDATE

➤ **Nuclear Deterrence Forum with Dr. Schneider & Dr. Blank**

Event Date: 22 May 2020

Speakers: Dr. Mark Schneider, Senior Analyst with the National Institute for Public Policy, and Dr. Stephen Blank, Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute

➤ **Nuclear Deterrence Forum with General Ray**

Event Date: 29 April 2020

Speaker: Gen Ray, Commander, Air Force Global Strike Command

➤ **Nuclear Deterrence Forum with Frank Miller**

Event Date: 17 April 2020

Speaker: Frank Miller, Principal, The Scowcroft Group

➤ **NNSA Nuclear Deterrence Forum with Mr. Drew Walter**

Event Date: 26 May 2020

Speaker: Drew Walter, Performing the Duties of Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear Matters at U.S. Department of Defense

➤ **Nuclear Deterrence Forum with Mr. Gordon Chang and Mr. Rick Fisher**

Event Date: 11 June 2020

Speakers: Mr. Gordon Chang, renowned author and China expert, and Mr. Rick Fisher, Senior Fellow on Asian Military Affairs at the International Assessment and Strategy Center

➤ The video with General Harrigian is now up on Youtube. Here's the link to the video:

<https://youtu.be/2Zf871SU5xw>

- **July 1, 2020, Peter Huessy discusses US and Russian-Chinese strategic nuclear balance on the ABC John Batchelor Show, link will be in next weekly.**
- **July 8th, 2pm, Lt Gen Anthony Cotton, Deputy Commander, USAF Global Strike Command [Register Now!](#)**
- **July 7th at 3pm the Energy and Water Subcommittee of Appropriations will mark up the NNSA budget in 2118 Rayburn, House of Representatives**
- **Defense Secretary Mark Esper and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Mark Milley are scheduled to testify before the House Armed Services Committee on Thursday, July 9.**
- **Peter Huessy guest speaker at the Institute of World Politics July 26th on “Did the Global Zero Folks Kill Arms Control?”**
- **Lisa Gordon-Hagerty is our speaker for the GWU-Mitchell Institute forum for Congressional Nuclear Fellow, August 20th 2-230PM. For Congressional defense staff as well if interested in being invited please let the ICBM Ear know soonest. Special guests also invited by Peter Huessy and Madelyn Creedon.**
- **Uzi Rubin will be speaking July 14th on missile defense and missile threats in the Middle East;**
- **Rob Soofer wants to delay his remarks until late August. Schedule being worked.**
- **STRAATCOM’s Admiral Charles Richard is now scheduled for July 30th.**
- **NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine is scheduled for July 31st.**
- **September 24th TRIAD conference will be done on-line.**
- **December 9-10 Triad conference will be live in Barksdale and Bossier City University in Louisiana.**

NEW: Russian Non-Compliance with Arms Control Agreements

New INF Violation Discovered

Here are the findings of the new compliance report of the US Department of State and conclusions of the intelligence community. It is only the second time since January 18, 1993, (nearly 30 years), that we have an unclassified report that meets the legal requirement to assess Russian compliance with arms control agreements. There is a lot of open source evidence than is included in the report. For example, the PNI’s had a commitment for no additional Tu-160 production which the Russians have violated. Key also is the finding that the Russians were violating the INF treaty in a second instance. Here is a summary of the compliance report findings.

Second INF Treaty Violation

“Beginning in 2013, Russian’s defense industry and military officials publicly suggested that they would arm select ship classes with a cruise missile system designed to resemble a

standard 40-foot shipping container and notionally called Kalibr-K, but they did not specify which weapons it would contain. Among other weapons, the Kalibr missile complex includes the intermediate-range RS-SS-N-30a/Sagaris land-attack cruise missile (LACM), according to a Western defense journal report, which Russia has employed from naval platforms against targets in Syria. In early February 2019, several senior Russian officials, including President Putin, publicly endorsed proposals to base sea-based Kalibr missiles on land. Additional information is provided in the higher classification Annex

....As stated above, some sea-based missiles in the Kalibr missile complex have a demonstrated range equal to or in excess of 500 km. In February 2019, several senior Russian officials, including President Putin, publicly endorsed proposals to base Kalibr missiles on land. The mere endorsement of these proposals did not amount to a violation of the INF Treaty, both because the parties' obligations were suspended at the time and because proposals for potential ground-launched INF-range systems are not themselves violations absent actual production, testing, or possession of such systems.

However, the endorsement of these proposals demonstrated Russia's lack of interest in returning to full compliance with the treaty. In February 2019, the United States had made clear that it would rescind its notice of withdrawal if Russia returned to full compliance by destroying the treaty-violating SSC-8 missile system and associated launchers. Russian officials' endorsement of proposals to base Kalibr missiles on land indicated that, instead of seeking to conform its conduct to the treaty, Russia was contemplating additional conduct that could be inconsistent with the treaty

PRESIDENTIAL NUCLEAR INITIATIVES CONCERNING TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS

FINDING

The United States assesses that Russia is not adhering to all of its PNI commitments. Although Russia has consolidated its Non-Strategic Nuclear Weapons into fewer nuclear weapons storage sites, Russia's efforts to retain dual-capable non-strategic systems for its ground forces are inconsistent with its PNI pledge to eliminate nuclear warheads for such systems. Despite a 2014 statement by a Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) official that force posture changes were made based on the PNIs "that are still carried out by Russia," and other carefully worded statements by Russia that the PNIs are still "relevant" to it, the United States assesses, based on Russian activities and statements from Russian officials and military officers from 1994 through the mid-2000s, that Russia no longer feels bound by its PNI pledge to eliminate all nuclear warheads for the ground forces.

ANALYSIS OF ADHERENCE CONCERNS

The PNIs, which were announced in Presidential speeches in 1991 and 1992, are non-legally-binding unilateral political commitments. There are no specific verification measures associated with these political commitments. As a result, monitoring and assessment of Russia's adherence to its PNI pledges relies primarily upon intelligence collected unilaterally. Based on the information reported above, Russia's efforts to retain a dual-use capable system for its Ground Forces are inconsistent with its PNI pledge to eliminate its stockpile of warheads for these weapons.

THRESHOLD TEST BAN TREATY (TTBT)

FINDING

The United States assesses that Russia has conducted nuclear weapons-related experiments that have created nuclear yield. The United States does not know how many, if any, supercritical or self-sustaining nuclear experiments Russia conducted in 2019. Russia may be testing in a manner that releases nuclear energy from an explosive canister, which raises compliance concerns with Russia's TTBT notification obligation. Russian intent to carry out at its test site an underground nuclear weapons related experiment that is supercritical (creates a self-sustaining chain reaction) and that is anticipated to result in a release of nuclear energy through a physical breach of the explosive canister, regardless of the magnitude of its planned nuclear yield, would require an affirmative TTBT notification to the United States. A Russian nuclear test notification would alert the United States of the forthcoming opportunity to conduct specified verification activities in accordance with the TTBT Protocol. A failure on the part of Russia to provide an accurate annual notification of planned nuclear tests, as defined in the treaty and set out above, for the following calendar year, and to provide timely revised notifications as may be required, would prevent the United States from exercising its verification rights, as specified in paragraph 2(b) of Section III of the Protocol. Based on available information, Russian activities during the 1995-2019 timeframe raise concerns about Russia's compliance with its TTBT notification obligation.

NUCLEAR TESTING MORATORIA AS INTERPRETED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE U.S. "ZERO-YIELD" STANDARD

FINDING

The United States finds that Russia has conducted nuclear weapons experiments that have created nuclear yield and are not consistent with the U.S. “zero-yield” standard. The United States does not know how many, if any, supercritical or self-sustaining nuclear experiments Russia conducted in 2019. Despite Russia renewing its nuclear testing moratorium in 1996,

TREATY ON MEASURES FOR THE FURTHER REDUCTION AND LIMITATION OF STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE ARMS (NEW START OR NST)

For a discussion of Russia’s implementation of its obligations under New START , see the Report on Implementation of the New START Treaty, dated April 2020, submitted pursuant to Section (a)(10) of the Senate Resolution of Advice and Consent to Ratification of the Treaty Between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (also known as the “Condition (a)(10) Report”), and appended to this Report. An excerpt on Russian compliance from the Condition (a)(10) Report is below:

“Based on the information available as of December 31, 2019, the United States certifies the Russian Federation to be in compliance with the terms of the New START Treaty. The United States has raised some implementation-related questions with the Russian Federation through diplomatic channels and in the context of the Bilateral Consultative Commission (BCC). Discussions of these questions were ongoing as of December 31, 2019. The New START Treaty established the BCC to promote the objectives and implementation of the provisions of the treaty. This confidential forum for resolving questions relating to implementation and compliance consists of members from both the United States and Russian Federation and met two times in 2019. For a detailed discussion of issues the United States has raised with the Russian Federation between January 1, 2019, and December 31, 2019, and updates on issues raised previously, please see the classified version of this Report.”

CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (CWC)

The United States certifies that Russia is in non-compliance with the CWC for its use of a military grade nerve agent in March 4, 2018, in an assassination attempt on UK soil. This attack indicates Russian retains an undeclared chemical weapons program. The United States cannot certify that Russia has met its obligations for complete declarations of its: (1) CWPFs; (2) CW development facilities; and (3) CW stockpiles. The United States has concerns regarding Russian assistance to the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the regime’s use of chlorine against Douma in April 2018. Furthermore, the United States has concerns that Russia’s pharmaceutical-based agents (PBAs) program is for offensive purposes.

BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION

FINDING

For this reporting period, available information does not allow the United States to conclude that the Russian Federation (Russia) has fulfilled its Article II obligation to destroy or to divert to peaceful purposes BW items specified under Article I of its past BW program.

Historically, the issue of compliance by Russia with the BWC has been of concern for many years. Though the assessments have changed over time, as noted in the 2005 report, the United States assessed that Russia maintained an offensive BW program in violation of Article I of the Convention. The United States continues to have concerns about Russian activities.

OPEN SKIES

FINDING

In 2019, the United States continued to assess that Russia was in violation of the Treaty on Open Skies (OST) in two respects, and also assessed one new violation. Specifically, in 2019, Russia was in violation of the treaty in the following respects:

- 1) Section III of Annex A to the treaty and Open Skies Consultative Commission (OSCC) Decision 3/04 for imposing and enforcing a sublimit of 500 kilometers over the Kaliningrad Oblast for all flights originating out of Kubinka Open Skies Airfield.
- 2) Article VI of the treaty for refusing access to observation flights within a 10 kilometer corridor along Russia's border with the Georgian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia; and
- 3) Article VI of the treaty for improperly denying a planned U.S.-Canadian flight segment over Russia's TSENTR 2019 military exercise on September 20, 2019.

VIENNA DOCUMENT ON CONFIDENCE- AND SECURITY-BUILDING MEASURES

FINDING

The United States assesses that the Russian Federation's (Russia's) selective implementation of certain provisions of VD11 and the resultant loss of transparency about Russian military activities has limited the effectiveness of the CSBM regime and raises concerns as to Russia's readiness to provide transparency regarding its military forces.

Russia's continued occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea, which remains part of the sovereign territory of Ukraine, as well as its arming, training, and fighting alongside anti-government forces in eastern Ukraine, is contrary to paragraphs 2 and 3 of VD11, in which the participating States stress the continued validity of commitments on refraining from the threat or use of force contained in the Helsinki Final Act and the Document of the Stockholm Conference, as seen in light of the Charter of Paris and the Charter for European Security.

TREATY ON CONVENTIONAL ARMED FORCES IN EUROPE (CFE)

RUSSIAN FEDERATION (RUSSIA)

In 2007, Russia “suspended” its implementation of the Treaty, which the United States does not view as legally available under the Treaty or customary international law. 6 Since its “suspension,” Russia has continued to violate its Treaty obligations and has made clear that it will not resume implementation of the Treaty. In addition, Russia’s stationing of forces on the territories of Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine without the host country’s consent continued through 2019.

Nuclear Policy: Whatever Happened to Common Sense?

By Peter Huessy (Special to the ICON)

William Perry’s proposals [in his new book, *The Button*] (1) ignore the current Russian and Chinese nuclear threats, (2) widely exaggerate the costs of USA nuclear modernization and (3) would actually so upset the nuclear balance as to make a nuclear attack on the USA more likely.

For some strange reason, Perry does [not ask for cuts from Russia or China](#), perhaps heralding a new faith-based arms control strategy? Both countries are completing massive nuclear modernization build-ups. Putin’s defense minister announced Russia’s nuclear modernization would be [nearly 90% complete](#) by the end of 2020 while China is on pace [to double its nuclear](#) forces by 2030.

At its peak, then, the complete nuclear enterprise would amount to 6-7% of the defense budget to modernize, operate and maintain, [while modernization alone would be 3%](#). This still is some one third of what it was at the height of the Cold War when the USA economy was far smaller and the defense budget a fraction of what it is today.

As soon as the USA eliminates its ICBM force, Russia and China will get back in the business of seeking to disarm the United States, as one top admiral told Gatestone.

In the new defense bill, the administration and Congress are building better missile defenses, including space-based sensors, and advanced national and regional systems. [Particularly important](#) are America’s allies in Israel, Japan, Korea, Saudi Arabia, Romania and Poland. Combined with the newly [initiated discussions](#) in Geneva with the Russians on arms control measures, the USA is on the right road.

Dr. William Perry is considered [one of the fathers of stealth](#) aircraft; he started directing research on the B2 program when a senior official in the DOD back in the 1970s.

He later [became secretary of defense](#) from 1994-7 during the Clinton administration and was often seen in Ukraine at photo-ops where Soviet-era ICBM silos were eliminated, both between Russia and the USA, as part of the 1992 Nunn-Lugar and 1991 Start treaty.

He has a new book—[“The Button”](#)—about US nuclear policy and his support for global nuclear disarmament. He makes numerous proposals that he claims will lessen nuclear dangers and bring us closer to global zero, the end state when presumably all nuclear weapons have been destroyed.

Unfortunately, his proposals are seriously misguided and his numerous assumptions about USA nuclear deterrence are unfortunately plain wrong.

[His proposals](#) (1) ignore the current Russian and Chinese nuclear threats, (2) widely exaggerate the costs of USA nuclear modernization and (3) would actually so upset the nuclear balance as to make a nuclear attack on the USA more likely.

He starts with pushing for the unilateral elimination of the US land-based Minuteman missiles, cutting the submarines that the USA is acquiring from 12 to 10, and lopping off 25% of America’s 100 new bombers while stopping all related cruise missile production.

The effect would be for the USA to rely solely on one key technology — submarines at sea—for a timely deterrent as bombers would take multiple hours to fly through heavy enemy defenses and then to find targets only long after nuclear conflict will have begun.

No other major USA nuclear adversary is moving to a single nuclear technology. In fact, Russia, China, India, Israel and Pakistan all are moving to, or already possess, nuclear deterrent forces that are a Triad—made up of submarines, bombers and land-based missiles--which the USA has maintained for 60 years.

Moreover, nowhere does the author call for any nuclear armed adversary of the USA to eliminate any of their current or projected nuclear forces. Such demands made only of the USA.

[Perry further proposes](#) to make the USA cuts unilaterally, amounting at least to one-third, and possibly to more than one-half, of the USA day-to-day on-alert nuclear deterrent.

For some strange reason, Perry does [not ask for cuts from Russia or China](#), perhaps heralding a new faith-based arms control strategy? Both countries are completing massive nuclear modernization build-ups. Putin's defense minister announced Russia's nuclear modernization would be [nearly 90% complete](#) by the end of 2020 while China is on pace [to double its nuclear](#) forces by 2030.

By contrast, the new Department of Defense nuclear handbook notes that since 1997, the [USA has not built a single new](#) nuclear armed missile, submarine or bomber and will not do so until 2029 at the earliest.

For more than 30 years after the end of the Cold War, the USA became so complacent, it apparently believed that its security would take care of itself.

The cost of nuclear deterrence is, of course, critical. But the land-based ICBMs Perry wants to discard do not cost \$150 billion, as he claims. According to USAF and industry studies, the ICBM leg of America's nuclear triad is the least costly to build and operate -- and at \$65 billion over 20 years it is a bargain.

Moreover, the entire planned 30-year USA nuclear modernization effort, overall, costs half of what it now costs just to operate and maintain the current legacy nuclear forces without any modernization at all. In short, old forces cost a lot to keep, and as these platforms are in danger of "rusting to obsolescence," modernization is an imperative.

Is this modernization affordable? Here [Perry's fuzzy math](#) needs correcting. Even counting everything nuclear, the cost would be \$850 billion over 30 years, not the \$2 trillion claimed by Perry.

At its peak, then, the complete nuclear enterprise would amount to 6-7% of the defense budget to modernize, operate and maintain, [while modernization alone would be 3%](#). This still is some one third of what it was at the height of the Cold

War when the USA economy was far smaller and the defense budget a fraction of what it is today.

The key to Perry's push to get rid of America's ICBMs is his long concern that because America's ICBM silos are in known locations, the Russians, in a crisis, might strike them. Therefore, an American president who feared losing them would launch US missiles first. Perry has described this potential problem [as a "hair trigger"](#) phenomenon too dangerous to keep.

During the 75 years of the nuclear age, however, these American missiles have been on alert, ready to deter, for 65 million minutes, but not once has an American president ever ordered them launched. President John F. Kennedy, in fact, said the just-deployed nuclear-armed Minuteman missile-force at the time of the Cuban missile crisis ["Was my ace in the hole"](#) that ended the crisis without any missiles having to be launched.

As the USAF Chief David Goldfein [recently explained](#) [at a Mitchell Institute forum](#), the 400 Minuteman missiles pose an insurmountable obstacle to the Russians: they cannot with their current nuclear arsenal effectively target *all* of them or avoid a certain retaliatory response from US bombers and submarines and surviving ICBMs, as the [Scowcroft Commission report of 1983](#) concluded when supporting keeping America's ICBMs silo-based.

Although Perry says that such a Russian strike on USA missile silos is not likely to occur, he nonetheless proposes that the USA eliminate the ICBMs apparently out of a concern that in a crisis, the Russians would attack the US ICBM silos first.

He also proposes to [hamstring USA commanders](#). He pushes the adoption of a no-first-use nuclear policy while still allowing Congress—with one exception—the power to fight wars if nuclear force is involved. His view seems largely postulated on a conviction that it is necessary to rein in the USA – meanwhile doing nothing to curtail any real aggression by Russia and China.

Finally, Perry would reduce America's nuclear deterrent from more than 500 key assets to roughly a small number of submarines on patrol at sea, with America's other nuclear forces stationed at two submarine and three bomber bases.

Altogether, the US would have fewer than 10 key nuclear assets. If they were eliminated, that would put the USA out of the nuclear business. As soon as the USA eliminates its ICBM force, Russia and China will get back in the business of seeking to disarm the United States, as one top admiral told Gatestone.

In conclusion Perry's idea of a nuclear free world is simply not going to happen. One certainly does not get there through wishful thinking and initially disarming the USA.

We would be wiser to [follow the lead of President Ronald Reagan](#), who created a revolution in strategic affairs.

Reagan reversed the Carter administration [failed policies](#) of near-zero nuclear force modernization. **Carter** agreed to arms deals that allowed huge increases (not reductions) in Soviet nuclear warheads **and continued the ban on all US missile defenses**. **Reagan** also successfully fully modernized a more effective -- and eventually smaller-- nuclear force, all the while calling for both the deployment of global missile defenses and [verifiable](#) major [reductions](#) in nuclear arms-- to a Russia in severe economic decline. [That is how he ended](#) the Soviet empire and won the Cold War.

George H. W. Bush ("43") unburdened the USA of the ABM treaty in 2002-3, and, surprisingly, the subsequent Moscow and New Start nuclear deals followed, reducing nuclear warheads by another 70%. The surprise was that despite near the [universal conventional wisdom](#) and "expert" opinion that US missile defenses were incompatible with arms reductions, Bush both secured reductions and built defenses.

Reagan's "Peace through strength" was not just a slogan. [It was a strategy](#).

"Trust but verify" was a [serious response to Soviet cheating](#).

The good news is that the US today is once again following President Reagan's lead.

The Senate Armed Services Committee this week by a vote of 25-2 overwhelmingly passed the defense bill including \$8.5 billion for a new strategic B-21 bomber, new Columbia-class submarines and a new land-based missile -- exactly what the administration requested.

In addition, in the new defense bill, the administration and Congress are building better missile defenses, including space-based sensors, and advanced national and regional systems. [Particularly important](#) are America's allies in Israel, Japan, Korea, Saudi Arabia, Romania and Poland. Combined with the newly [initiated](#)

[discussions](#) in Geneva with the Russians on arms control measures, the USA is on the right road.