

ICON Weekly Report
by
Peter Huessy, President of GeoStrategic Analysis
“Previews of Coming Distractions”
Week of July 10, 2020

HAC MARK-UP

The House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee has passed the defense budget and sent the bill to the full Committee for consideration next week. For the major RDT&E accounts the Committee approved \$306,682,000 for the continued development of the Columbia class ballistic missile submarine; and \$2,848,410,000 for the continued development of the B-21 bomber. As for the ICBM programs, over-all we received GBSB cuts of \$60 million and B-52 squadrons of \$52 million, with overall ICBM/GBSD cuts of \$87 million out of the \$2.2 billion ICBM related budget request or a 3.9% reduction. [The House Appropriations Committee will mark up its [fiscal 2021 defense spending bill](#) on Tuesday.]

Calendar of Events

14th of July Dr. Uzi Rubin of the BEA Center in Israel will be discussing the Iran ballistic missile threat and Middle East regional security issues as well as the cooperative US-Israel missile defense programs at the Huessy/Mitchell seminar series on nuclear deterrence and missile defense.

July 29 from 230-3pm the NNSA administrator will address the GWU/MI Nuclear Fellows on Capitol Hill in a video seminar under Chatham House rules; limited to Hill defense and national security staff.

July 29 Dr. Vernon of NNSA will speak as part of the MI/ANWA series of seminars on the Department of Energy/NNSA.

July 30, Admiral Charles Richard will speak as part of the Huessy/MI nuclear and missile defense seminars series by invitation only.

July 31, Huessy/MI Space seminar series features NASA Administration Jim Bridenstine

On September 22th is my annual Task Force 21 Triad event I host at the Capitol Hill Club—we are doing this online this year for obvious reasons. Featured speakers are Senator Cramer; Senator Hoeven; Tim Morrison, Bill Chambers, Frank Klotz, Michaela Dodge, Rick Fisher and Joe

Bosco, HASC members Turner and Cheney and Cooper (House members Invited); Drew Walter and Brad Roberts/Amb. Lehman. General Hyten and Secretary Barrett have both been invited to speak live, with audience participation in the Q&A session, by invitation only. I am asking ICON members to vote which speakers they would like to have presentations that are live and will enable ICON members to ask questions and participate in the discussion.



National Leadership Webinar featuring

IDF MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror and Dr. Michael Makovsky on:

Mysterious Explosions at Iran Nuke Sites



Aftermath of recent explosion at the Natanz uranium enrichment facility (AP)

Wednesday, July 15 - 3:00pm EDT

Register

This call is open exclusively to current JINSA National Leaders, program participants, and the press.

After Iran launched a cyberattack in April in an attempt to poison Israel's water supply, a series of mysterious fires and explosions have struck Iran's illicit nuclear infrastructure in the past week.

On his last call with JINSA, Israel's former National Security advisor and JINSA Distinguished Fellow IDF MG Yaacov Amidror said clearly that cyberattacks by countries like Iran that seek to create real world damage can, and will, be responded to with real-world force and consequences.

Was that a message to Tehran? Was that message delivered this past week? What is going on, and what impact do these attacks have on Iran and the region moving forward?

RONALD  REAGAN
INSTITUTE



National Defense in the Age of COVID-19
A Fireside Chat with Under Secretary Ellen Lord

ronaldreaganinstitute.org

The Ronald Reagan Institute's Center for Peace Through Strength invites you to join us for a virtual fireside chat with Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment Ellen Lord. In a conversation with Reagan Institute Director Roger Zakheim, Ms. Lord will discuss U.S. defense policy in the era of COVID-19, the national security innovation base, and how flat defense budgets will impact the Pentagon. This event is an extension of programming from the Reagan National Defense Forum.

Thursday, June 16th

12:00pm ET - 1:00pm ET

RSVP for viewing information

The Center for Peace Through Strength (CPTS) promotes President Reagan's belief that a strong American military is essential to securing peace. CPTS supports the Reagan Institute's National Security Innovation Task Force, the annual Reagan National Defense Survey, and the Reagan National Defense Forum held each December at the Reagan Library in Simi Valley, CA.

[Register Here](#)

[Biography](#)



New People on the NSC and in the Administration

The White House has tapped Ryan Tully to be the top Europe and Russian official on the National Security Council, the fifth person to hold the job in three and a half years, according to two people familiar with his hiring.

Tully, who assumes his new role on Monday, is currently the senior adviser for arms control and deputy senior director for the council's directorate on weapons of mass destruction, where he helped lead policy on counterproliferation and biosecurity.

The job of senior director for European and Russian affairs at the White House has seen rapid turnover in the last year. Tully replaces Tom Williams, who returned to the Defense Department on Friday after a two-year detail at the NSC. Other people who have held the role in the Trump administration include Fiona Hill and Tim Morrison, both of whom testified in the impeachment inquiry, and, briefly, Andrew Peek.

In his time at the NSC, policies Tully has worked to ban exports of component parts for Chinese telecom giant Huawei, the Trump administration's withdrawal from the Open Skies Treaty with Russia and efforts to punish Iran at the International Atomic Energy Agency for not properly disclosing nuclear material. He accompanied Marshall Billingslea last month to Vienna to assist the new special envoy for arms control's push for a trilateral arms control agreement between the U.S., Russia and China. Tully's promotion reflects the emphasis the Trump administration is placing on those issues, a person familiar with the staffing pick said.

Before joining the NSC in December 2018, Tully worked at the State Department, where he was senior adviser to the under secretary of State for arms control and international security. He also spent seven years working as a professional staff member on the Senate Intelligence Committee, where he worked on a number of issues, including Russia and Europe, counterproliferation, arms control and energy security.

From 2008 to 2018, Tully also served as a Navy reserve intelligence officer, where he has done work for the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service and at NATO.

In other staffing news at the NSC, Kash Patel recently returned to the NSC as senior director for counterterrorism, according to two administration officials.

Patel came back after a short stint at the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, where he was principal deputy to acting DNI Richard Grenell until former Rep. John Ratcliffe (R-Texas) got confirmed in late May.

1974 Strategic Stability and Arms Control, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Secretary of Defense

Witness: James Schlesinger: Major points made by The Secretary of Defense, March 4, 1974

Major Points by the Secretary:

Adopting a counterforce doctrine which the MMIII is suited for will not require the US to build more nuclear weapons and can in fact be done with fewer weapons. So counterforce is perfectly consistent with arms control.

The Soviet advantage built into the SALT I treaty "is more permanent" than the current US advantage of having MIRV, guidance and RV technology.

The Soviets have an ongoing nuclear development program which is "staggering to us in its size and depth", and thus when the Soviets acquire the improved guidance technology and exploit the throw-weight they are allowed under the treaty, "they could outclass US nuclear forces."

The USSR has something on the order of 10-12 million pounds of total ICBM throw-weight as compared to our own ICBM force of 2 million pounds throw-weight.

If the USSR then puts on each of their SS-18 and SS-19 missiles 10 warheads equivalent to our Poseidon, they could have on the order of 23,000-33,000 warheads.

On the SS-18 alone, they could have 8000 one-to-two megaton warheads.

Our massive retaliation doctrine has lost some credibility and having a more flexible response capability would bolster and make more credible deterrence.

It remains impossible for the Soviets to have high confidence that a first strike would be successful in disarming the United States. The evolution of a limited US hard-target kill capability will thus not be seen by the USSR as a first strike disarming preparation but as a flexible response capability. Schlesinger explain that even a first strike by the US would leave the Soviets with 280 surviving ICBMs with which to retaliate sufficient to destroy the US and European industrial base.

On the other hand, built into the Soviet forces now is a major counter-force capability, a potential to achieve a disarming first strike which would be a dangerous notion in the head of any political leader.

The larger the forces of throw-weight are in the force of any country we end up with less degree of strategic stability. But we hope through the SALT process to restrain the growth of nuclear forces of both nations. At this time, the USSR force structure has dramatically changed since 1969, so that the strategic balance in the last 5 years is not what it had been from the period from 1949-roughly 1966. And given the size of these warheads and better accuracy later in the decade would provide the Soviet Union a major counter-force capability, causing a serious imbalance between the forces of the USSR and US.

While arms control groups believe a counterforce capability would provide the US an unrealistic perception that such strikes would be an acceptable policy option to pursue in a crisis or conflict.

If US forces came to be seen as uncoupled from Western Europe, the danger would be the Soviets would seek to exploit such a division by engaging in dangerous aggression.

However, if one deals with the Soviet ICBM component alone, the growth of throw weights has the potential for the sort of destabilization but "there will never be a powerful incentive for a strike against land-based strategic forces taken by themselves."

And as for the option of eliminating our ICBMs, Schlesinger was clear: even as we place a higher proportion of our forces at sea, "I do not think we would be self-advised to eliminate the land-based component." This is underscored by there being "no possibility that a high confidence disarming first strike is attainable for either side, even against the ICBM components of the strategic forces on both sides, and certainly not against both sets of forces, SLBM's and ICBM's."

NUCLEAR NEWS NOW

NK poised to test submarine-launched ballistic missile: think tank

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200708000808>

By [Choi Si-young](#) for the Kores Herald // Published : Jul 8, 2020 - 15:40 Updated : Jul 8, 2020 - 18:02

North Korea appears to be weighing the timing to test a submarine-launched ballistic missile as part of the aggression it threatened to stage last month, a think tank that is part of Seoul's Defense Ministry said Wednesday.

“With an SLBM launch, Pyongyang could deliver strongest shockwaves it intends to the international community, while shunning the risk of being seen as defying the UN Security Council resolutions,” the Korea Institute for Defense Analyses said in a report. The resolutions denouncing the North’s weapons of mass destruction program so far have not specifically touched on SLBMs, it explained.

China dismisses US outreach on arms control talks saying it has 'no interest'

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/china-dismisses-us-outreach-on-arms-control-talks-saying-it-has-no-interest/ar-BB16y7TH?ocid=spartan-dhp-feeds>

By Nicole Gaouette and Jennifer Hansler, CNN // 1 hr ago

China issued a stinging response to a US statement Thursday that welcomed Beijing's willingness to engage in arms control talks.

China urges US to reduce nuclear arsenal

<https://thehill.com/policy/international/china/506353-china-urges-us-to-reduce-nuclear-arsenal>

By [John Bowden](#) for THE HILL // 07/08/20 09:38 AM EDT

Chinese officials said Wednesday that the country would gladly join trilateral nuclear negotiations with Russia and the U.S., provided that the U.S. is willing to reduce its nuclear arsenal to the scale of China's.

Trump Plan to Build Nuclear Bombs

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-07-09/trump-plan-to-build-nuclear-bombs-divides-a-scarred-factory-town>

By [Ari Natter](#) and [Charlie McGee](#) for Bloomberg News // July 9, 2020, 4:00 AM EDT

- Revamping plutonium ‘pits’ would bring jobs to South Carolina
- Enduring radioactive contamination adds to environmental fears

A factory along South Carolina’s Savannah River produced tritium and plutonium for U.S. nuclear weapons during the Cold War, employing thousands of workers but leaving behind a toxic legacy of radioactive waste.

UNCLE BOB LINDSETH SELECTED NEWS

1. [Air Force Bases Need Space-Based Missile Defenses As Soon as Possible](#)
 2. [Iranian Parliament to Debate Bill to Leave NPT Additional Protocol](#)
 3. [U.S. envoy arrives in South Korea as North Korea rejects talks](#)
 4. [North Korea talks tough as negotiator lands](#)
 5. [China 'happy' to join nuclear talks if US cuts arsenal to matching level](#)
 6. [Upgraded Nuclear Weapon Passes F-15 Test](#)
 7. [House Bill Would Block Trumps Plan To Resume Testing Nuclear Weapons](#)
 8. [Satellite Images Show Previously Undeclared Active North Korean Nuclear Facility](#)
 9. [China challenges U.S. to cut nuclear arsenal to matching level](#)
 10. [Communist China won't change — until its people and the West demand it](#)
 11. [US believes China willing to talk about 'dangerous' nuclear arms buildup](#)
1. [FY21 NDAA Summary](#) (Attach'd Above 20 pgs)
 2. [Energy Secretary Dan Brouillette fights to retain NNSA budget reins](#)
 3. [Israel launches spy satellite, hints at role in Iranian nuclear fire](#)
 4. [Iran Says It Is Negotiating 25-Year Bilateral Deal With China](#)
 5. [Two U.S. aircraft carriers in the South China Sea; Air Force B-52 joins them](#)
 6. [The Next Five Months Will Be The Most Dangerous in Generations](#)

Nuclear Policy: Whatever Happened to Common Sense? By Peter Huessy, July 7, 2020, Gatestone Institute

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- 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 US nuclear modernization and (3) would actually so upset the nuclear balance as to make a nuclear attack on the US 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 US economy was far smaller and the defense budget a fraction of what it is today.

- As soon as the US eliminates its ICBM force, Russia and China will get back in the business of seeking to disarm the United States, one top admiral reminded 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. Combined with the newly initiated discussions in Geneva with the Russians on arms control measures, the US is on the right path.
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The new US Department of Defense nuclear handbook notes that since 1997, the US has not designed and built a single new nuclear armed missile, submarine or bomber, and will not do so until 2029 at the earliest. Pictured: The ballistic missile nuclear submarine USS Rhode Island. (Image source: U.S. Navy photo by Lt. Rebecca Rebarich)

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 1994-1997 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.

Perry 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 US nuclear deterrence are unfortunately plain wrong.

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

He starts with pushing for the unilateral elimination of the US land-based Minuteman missiles, cutting the submarines that the US 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 US 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.

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 US has maintained for 60 years. No major US nuclear adversary is moving to a single nuclear technology.

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

[Perry further proposes](#) to make the US cuts unilaterally, amounting at least to one-third, and possibly to more than one-half, of the US 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 US Department of Defense nuclear handbook [notes](#) that since 1997, the US has not designed and 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 US 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 US 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 US 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 [explained](#) recently, 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 US missile silos is not likely to occur, he nonetheless proposes that the US eliminate the ICBMs, apparently out of a concern that in a crisis, the Russians would attack the American ICBM silos first.

He also proposes to [hamstring US 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 US, 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 US out of the nuclear business. As soon as the US eliminates its ICBM force, Russia and China will get back in the business of seeking to disarm the United States, one top admiral reminded 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 US.

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

Reagan reversed the Carter administration's [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 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.

President George W. Bush ("43") unburdened the USA of the ABM treaty in 2002-2003, 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 last month overwhelmingly passed the defense bill by a vote of 25-2, which included \$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. Combined with the newly [initiated discussions](#) in Geneva with the Russians on arms control measures, the US is on the right path.

Peter Huessy is Director of Strategic Deterrent Studies at the [Mitchell Institute](#). He is also senior consulting analyst at Ravenna Associates, a strategic communications company.

<https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/16180/nuclear-policy-common-sense>

July 9, 2020, Peter Huessy on Secure Freedom Radio speaking on the subject Iran's nuclear ambitions, the future of the JCPOA and the arms embargo.

<https://simplecast.com/s/10d92acd>

DRAFT Report: The History of Strategic and Crisis Stability: The Role of ICBMs in US Deterrent Policy, 1956-2020 by Peter Huessy, Special Report for the ICON Team

What is Strategic Crisis Stability?

Strategic crisis stability is often defined as the state of international affairs where we have successfully prevented an adversary of the United States from threatening or actually using nuclear weapons in a crisis or conventional conflict. Over the 75 years of the nuclear age, no adversary has used nuclear weapons against the United States. And despite the positive arms control developments where there has been a nearly 85% reduction in deployed strategic nuclear weapons by the United States and Russia since the 1991 Start agreement, the threat of such nuclear weapons use has risen recently, making crisis stability an emerging concern for US policy makers.

As the 2018 NPR explains, “Nevertheless, global threat conditions have worsened markedly since the most recent 2010 NPR, including increasingly explicit nuclear threats from potential adversaries. The United States now faces a more diverse and advanced nuclear-threat environment than ever before, with considerable dynamism in potential adversaries’ development and deployment programs for nuclear weapons and delivery systems.”

Why is this important?

For the USAF nuclear deterrence mission, it has become increasingly important to deter Russia and China from potentially using or threatening to use nuclear force in a crisis or conflict, in particular having to do with the US protection of our NATO allies in the Baltics and the protection of Taiwan and other western Pacific nations from aggression.

While in both scenarios, an attack by Russia or China using nuclear weapons against the US mainland is less likely, the use of nuclear weapons by such adversaries regionally including potentially using hypersonic speed missiles is growing.

To meet this challenge, the USAF needs to sustain its current Triad of nuclear forces, enhance missile defenses, improve our regional conventional capability, but in particular ensure the building of our new GBSD or land-based ICBMs and our B-21 strategic bomber. Without these upgraded and modern elements, the US strategic nuclear deterrent would “rust to obsolescence”, the US deterrent would falter and be less credible, while emerging crises or conflicts could easily escalate to the nuclear level as our adversaries might not fear deteriorating US deterrent forces.

Effective U.S. deterrence of nuclear attack and non-nuclear strategic attack requires we ensure that potential adversaries not miscalculate the consequences of their nuclear first use, either regionally or against the United States itself. They must understand that there are no possible benefits from non-nuclear aggression or limited nuclear escalation.

As the 2018 NPR explained, “Correcting any such misperceptions is now critical to maintaining strategic stability in Europe and Asia. Potential adversaries must recognize that across the emerging range of threats and contexts: 1) the United States is able to identify them and hold them accountable for acts of aggression, including new forms of aggression; 2) we will defeat non-nuclear strategic attacks; and, 3) any nuclear escalation will fail to achieve their objectives, and will instead result in unacceptable consequences for them.

Early Stability Concerns

Concerns over strategic stability are not new for the United States Air Force. For example, early on in the nuclear age an important USAF concern was whether the Soviet Union would attack the US nuclear forces early in a crisis in order to disarm the United States. While the US did have at the time some 1500 strategic bombers at dozens of military bases in the United States and worldwide, the nuclear gravity bombs for the strategic airplanes were held at only 14 bases in the United States. At a hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee in 1956 during the Eisenhower administration, General Curtis Lemay, then Commander of the Strategic Air Command, expressed serious concern over this potential Soviet threat, explaining that the USAF could lose out if the Soviet Union took out the bases where the USAF bombs were stored.

Two crises early in the Kennedy administration highlighted strategic stability concerns. According to newly discovered archival material, Soviet general Secretary Khrushchev threatened to attack American conventional forces in Germany unless they were removed from Berlin. According to new research, Kennedy responded noting that would mean the US would have to use nuclear weapons against the USSR to stop such a threat. Apparently, Khrushchev thought better of attacking the American forces in Berlin but instead built the Berlin Wall.

The following year, Khrushchev again tried to bully the United States and placed nuclear armed missiles in Cuba. President Kennedy announced the presence of the missiles in Cuba on the same day as he also announced the first Minuteman missile doing on alert in North Dakota, Montana and Wyoming. As the President would later remark, "Minuteman was my ace in the hole" in pressuring Khrushchev to stand down and remove the nuclear armed missiles from Cuba.

Consequently, although it took a decade to materialize, the United States and the Soviet Union sought to create an "arms control" framework to better manage our nuclear arsenals so, ostensibly, crises such as occurred over Berlin and Cuba would not escalate into nuclear war and the end of civilization. The 1972 SALT agreement between President Nixon and General Secretary Brezhnev took three years to negotiate and while described as "arms control", the joint deal essentially endorsed a massive Soviet modernization and increase in Moscow's nuclear arsenal, to where by the end of the decade the USSR could deploy some 12,000 strategic weapons.

However, the genesis of the executive agreement came from the USSR concern over the possible US deployment of missile defenses, announced by US Secretary of Defense McNamara in 1967 as an objective of US policy to counter a then emerging Chinese nuclear threat. This possible deployment of missile defenses so worried the Soviets that immediately following the 1968 election, Brezhnev called the newly elected President Nixon and demanded that arms control talks begin but also include a ban on missile defenses.

While SALT as noted above "approvingly managed" a 500% increase in deployed Soviet strategic nuclear warheads, a companion ABM treaty eliminated all missile defenses for the United States except an allowed 100 interceptors around each nations Capitol or alternatively, an operational ICBM field. The USSR chose to defend Moscow, where upwards of 100 interceptors now the 5th generation technology are deployed. Given that the decade of the 1970's, subsequent to the SALT and ABM deals, saw the expansion of the Soviet empire and a change in the Soviets favor of the "correlation of forces", strategic stability cannot be said to have "improved." Especially as the decade culminated in the 1978 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the 1979 fall of Iran to Islamic radicals.

The Reagan Revolution

Strategic stability concerns heightened during the Eagan administration as Soviet deployments of heavily multi-warhead missiles grew exponentially under the SALT I agreement as well as the SALT II treaty that while agreed to between the USSR and American leaders was withdrawn from the US Senate by President Carter after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Facing a very robust strategic nuclear buildup by the Soviets, and the deployment by Moscow of thousands of SS-20 nuclear armed medium range missiles in Eastern Europe and Soviet Asia, as well as the inheritance of a seriously degraded US military (commonly referred to as a “hollow army”), the Reagan administration embarked on a major shift in strategic policy. No longer would the US support a policy of peaceful coexistence and détente with the USSR. As an alternative, the US adopted a multi-pronged strategy, to actually take down the Soviet empire and end the Cold War on terms favorable to the United States and its allies.

Reagan jump started the economy with major tax rate reductions and regulatory reform, while also significantly increasing the defense budget. This also included a push for an across the board strategic nuclear deterrent modernization including building the Ohio class submarines and the C-4/D5 missiles, the Peacekeeper ICBM, the B1 and B2 strategic bombers along with their associated cruise missiles.

The administration then produced GLCM and Pershing missiles for the first time to deploy in Europe and Asia to counter Soviet SS-20s, with an alternative offered to Moscow of an elimination of all such medium range ballistic missiles (<550 kilometers), which came to be known as the zero-zero option that led to the successful ban on all such missiles in the 1987 INF treaty.

To further give the US leverage over the Soviets, Reagan also proposed in the fall of 1981 a plan to radically reduce the nuclear arsenals of the USSR and the US by at least 50%, and then further, while in March 1983, Reagan proposed an SDI program to eventually deploy missile defenses to further complicate Soviet attack plans and make less coercive Soviet missiles.

Reducing Soviet heavy and multi-warhead first strike-type weapons through arms control, building defenses to further complicate Soviet war plans, and modernizing US nuclear forces across the board together markedly improved the US strategic position in the world. As a result, the correlation of forces moved decidedly in the direction of the United States as Reagan seized the high ground of “peace through strength” as well as the arms control initiative in pushing for major reductions in nuclear weapons.

The Soviet missiles, especial the SS-18, was widely seen even by arms control groups, as a “first strike weapon” and highly destabilizing. As long ago as 1974, the then Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird told Congress that with the pursuit of such heavy missiles as the SS-18, capable of carrying upwards of 20+ warheads per missile, the Soviets were definitely going for a first strike disarming strike against the United States, “and of that there is no doubt.”

Nearly twenty years later, START was finally agreed to by the newly created Russian Federation in 1991, and a follow on START II treaty was signed by President Bush and President Yeltsin in January 1993

which took the fifty percent cut of the START 1 and further reduced nuclear forces by an additional sixty percent.

However, key to stability concerns and mindful of Laird's warning decades ago, START II contained a critically important measure to improve strategic stability. The treaty while reducing overall countable, deployed strategic weapons to 3500, banned all multiwarhead land-based missiles, weapons widely seen as the lynchpin to Soviet plans to pre-emptively attack an adversary (the US) in the hopes of putting the United States out of the nuclear business.

Unfortunately, while START II was overwhelmingly approved by the US Senate in 1996, the Russian Duma in April 2000 while ratifying the agreement also insisted that the US had to also agree to keep all missile defense work in the laboratory and not deploy missile defenses, even to defend the United States against rogue state threats from the DPRK or Iran, for example. While Secretary of Defense Aspin in 1993 had killed most US missile defense work, particularly any space based elements considered by the previous administration, Congress had passed in 1998 legislation authorizing the US to proceed with a missile defense for the United States when technologically possible to defend against limited missile threats from North Korea, for example.

Though the Russian Duma placed a missile defense poison pill in their ratification document, the arguments within Russia against START II went considerably beyond missile defense concerns. For example, in 1996 former Soviet leader Gorbachev wrote in the New York Times that the ban on multiwarhead ICBMs contained in the treaty would force Russia to move increasingly to sea based nuclear forces which would in the former Soviet leaders view "bankrupt" Russia.

True, banning multi-warhead ICBMs makes it more expensive to build forces because at sea platforms cost more than ICBMs and a smaller percentage of submarine-based warheads are on alert compared to the close to 100% of land-based missiles. But such deployments are also markedly more stabilizing in that to use a high percent of such a deployed force would require the Russians to put at sea more of their day-to-day naval forces, an action readily seen by US warning satellites and thus giving the US time to put its own forces on higher alert and make more survivable, making any Russian plan to strike the US and take out our nuclear forces highly improbable and in fact in reality impossible. Thus, stability in a crisis would be strengthened.

Here one has to mention that the Russian signature on START II was Yeltsin, who spoke at the United Nations and endorsed not only START II and the ban on multi-warhead land based missiles, but also a parallel worldwide missile defense system—a global protection against limited strikes—to be initiated by the US and Russia together. Yeltsin obviously did not seek to maintain a Soviet-era first strike type arsenal as did the Duma and President Putin in 2000 when the Duma rejected that idea of combining stabilizing missile defenses and START II compliant forces.

The US Senate did not agree to such a constraint and thus ratified the START II treaty without placing any conditions on the treaty which was of course consistent with the language of the START treaty itself. With the Duma action in early 2000, however, the START II treaty was a dead letter, but later replaced by the 2002 Moscow treaty or SORT (Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty) that went into effect in June 2003. While avoiding the extensive detail of other nuclear agreements and going into effect on the last day of the treaty on December 31, 2012, SORT did reduce nuclear forces to 2200 warheads while avoiding tying such reductions to a ban on missile defenses.

In fact, while securing over a 70% reduction in deployed strategic nuclear weapons, the SORT treaty was accompanied by the near simultaneous US withdrawal from the 1972 ABM Treaty, which had all but banned missile defenses protecting the United States. Both the DUMA and United States Senate concurred with the new nuclear arms agreement.

Subsequently, the US began building an initial missile defense system in California and Alaska, which now includes 44 interceptors with plans to grow them to 66, while also seeking to deploy an underlayer of Navy Aegis ashore standard missile interceptors to further protect the continental United States from missile threats as well as space-based sensors to pick up enhanced missile threats especially those of hypersonic speed.

Additionally, in 2010, the Obama administration successfully negotiated another nuclear arms control deal with Russia. And with New Start, nuclear warheads were reduced to a notional 1550, although each of 60 allowed strategic bombers only counted as 60 warheads, even though fully loaded bombers would boost the deployed warhead total to around 2100-2200, but with the advantage that the expired START I verification measures would be replaced, albeit with significantly less effective verification measures dealing with mortal monitoring, telemetry rules, and accountable warhead loadings.

Now the issue facing the US is whether to extend the New START agreement an additional five years as allowed by the treaty, or to seek changes and improvements to the agreement, or to seek to bring China into the discussions to at the very least secure some transparency in Chinese nuclear forces and doctrine, which at this time is non-existent. In fact, the Chinese continue to assert they do not even deploy their nuclear warheads on their missiles, bombers or submarines.

Future Considerations

From over 2500 missiles and bombers to a cap of no more than 700 strategic deployed systems, and from 12,000 deployed nuclear warheads to some number between 1550-2200 warheads, the nuclear landscape between the US and Russia has markedly changed since the 1972 SALT agreement. However, with the failure of the ban on multi-warhead land based missiles and the uncertainty over how many warheads do the Russians and the Chinese deploy, strategic stability remains a critical concern of US policy makers and will impact the work of our USAF missileers and pilots for some time.

It may be that “arms control” as we know it has reached a certain limit where further reductions would have to eliminate one leg of the US nuclear Triad, and thus create heightened instability if for example the ICBM leg of the Triad is eliminated as some have proposed. In the absence of an additional arms deal, the US through its deployment policy has reached the extent to which it can demonstrate a commitment to stability. Our land-based missiles are all deployed with one-warhead; an ICBM upload capability is possible as a hedge against a possible Russian breakout, but to do so would require some 4 years to implement. Our submarines are deployed on a limited basis of a percent only being at sea on a day to day basis, while our bombers are not on alert nor are their bombs or cruise missiles loaded.

Although not addressed in this chapter of growing concern is the Russian adoption of a doctrine of “escalate to win”, which we discuss more thoroughly in the chapter on CNI, or Conventional/Nuclear Integration. Here the Russian leadership has openly discussed the use of limited numbers of nuclear weapons in a crisis or early in a conventional conflict as a means of stopping the US from engaging and coming to the defense of our allies. In short, getting the US and its allies to stand down and surrender.

While as Keith Payne in his new book, *Shadows on the Wall*, explains in great detail, the US has gone beyond MAD or Mutual Assured Destruction where it was assumed literally upwards of ten thousand nuclear warheads were needed to deter a Soviet attacks on Western Europe, for example. And further, while the United States has moved to adopt a largely counterforce strategy to sustain deterrence (holding at risk our adversaries military targets not their cities), the United States has not engaged in civil defense or building a robust missile defense to further enhance deterrence, while significantly reducing the potential damage to the US from any kind of nuclear weapons use by an adversary.

Simple further reductions of nuclear weapons without an assessment how this might affect the stability of the strategic balance is wrong headed. And adding significant missile defenses does not necessarily cause an imbalance in deterrence yet that is often a central assumption of arms reduction enthusiasts.

For example, with 44 and possibly 66 GBIs (Ground based interceptors) as well as THAAD and Aegis missile defenses deployed in the regional defense of Japan/ROK, how can either of these deployments challenge China's doubling of its nuclear arsenal to 600-800 warheads, let alone the official Russian inventory of 2200 deployed strategic warheads? Even with 200 interceptors protecting CONUS, how would that fundamentally challenge deterrence except it would make limited coercive strikes or threats of such strikes far less credible or likely on the part of Russia and China. This factor alone leads one to reasonably believe China and Russia opposition to US missile defenses is based largely on how US military power checkmates Russia and China planned aggression, and to use the words of Bill Keller, how the two powers are worried their ambitions will not "remain unfettered."

Furthermore, again as Payne emphasizes, arms control cannot change the strategic great power competition between the US and its allies on the one hand and our adversaries Russia and China on the other. So, both civil defense and missile defense are required to add to deterrence, which enhances and not undermines deterrence and crisis stability.

Thus, given the view of Russia and China that the US is there strategic enemy, there is a conflict between assuming more "arms control" or movements toward global zero will improve the strategic stability between the US and Russia and China, as opposed to a realization that arms control, especially simple reductions in deployed arsenals, cannot fundamentally change our adversaries perception of the United States as well as their hegemonic ambitions.

Significantly, this would doubly involve whether US unilateral restraint, as advocated by former Defense Secretary William Perry and others, for example, such as phasing out ICBMs, stopping cruise missile production or cutting the number of Columbia class submarines, will in fact have a reciprocal impact on China and Russia to also show such restraint.

Strategic and crisis stability remains an important watchword from which to judge the requirements for US security and the adequacy of our nuclear deterrent. With added elements such as missile defense and credible, verifiable and sound arms control, the revolution started by President Reagan that triggered the end of the Cold War may still pay dividends for the free world.

Sources:

[Pre-emptive nuclear strike - Wikipedia](#)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_strike

Although it is widely accepted that USSR **never had a first-strike strategy** (due to its conventional arms superiority in Europe), some experts [who?] believed that the single-warhead 25 megaton version of **R36-M (SS-18, CEP 250 m.)** was a **first-strike weapon**, targeted against Minuteman III silos. However, a much more logical explanation comes from retired **Soviet military officers** who report that the 25

[R-36M / SS-18 SATAN - Russian / Soviet Nuclear Forces](#)

<https://fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/icbm/r-36m.htm>

It was **seen as a first-strike weapon** and a very destabilizing presence in the bilateral relationship. US negotiators allowed the Russian Federation to retain 90 of the **SS-18 silos**. After complying with the **START II silo conversion protocol**, the **Russian Rocket Forces** will be permitted to replace 90 of the **SS-18s** with a smaller, single-warhead missile.

[R-36M / SS-18 SATAN - GlobalSecurity.org](#)

<https://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/russia/r-36m-variants.htm>

The START II Treaty specifically banned land-based MIRV systems, in part, because of the threat the **SS-18** posed to the **balance of power**. It **was seen as a first-strike weapon** and a very..

COVID-19 CORNER

Jim McAleese provides this write-up re defense firms receiving assistance for dealing with CV-19.

There are five major "take-aways" from Defense CEO Letters to both OMB Acting Dir. Russell Vought & USD(A&S) Ellen Lord, requesting additional DoD funding for COVID-19 contractor-reimbursement, in upcoming Congressional "Fourth Stimulus" package. **[McAleese estimates likely ceiling of ~\$12B-\$15B, to fully-shield ~\$249B 2020 DoD Investment Accounts, (\$105B 2020 DoD RDT&E + \$144B 2020 DoD Procurement)]**

- **Recently, Treasury Sec. Steve Mnuchin has tele-graphed that "Fourth Stimulus" will likely be narrowly-focused on a handful of devastated-industries, (including frugal "re-purposing" of ~\$130B of unspent funding from \$2.2T CARES Act). **Sec. Mnuchin has warned that upcoming Fourth Stimulus will likely be smaller than previously-expected, because ~+8M jobs were re-added during May-June, (with ~+10M jobs still to be re-added, from April COVID-19 shut-down).****

1. While the July 7th letters were signed by almost all of the "top six primes", (Lockheed; Boeing Defense; Raytheon Technologies; GD; BAE Systems; L3Harris; Textron; HII), **note the visible-absence of Northrop CEO Kathy Warden's signature. [Northrop CEO Warden committed to absorbing as much of the COVID-19 costs as possible, during Northrop's 1Q**

2020 Results Call; because of potential for public misperception of excessive DoD funding, (from increasing Progressive demands to slash defense funding)]

2. Note the threat of “significant job losses in pivotal states”, during the critical November Election. [Most defense primes 1Q 2020 sales grew ~+5%-9%]

- [Lockheed 1Q 2020 sales grew +9%; Boeing Defense Sector 1Q 2020 sales grew +4%, (excluding -\$827M USAF KC-46 charge); Northrop 1Q 2020 sales grew +5%; GD 1Q 2020 sales grew +1%, (excluding Gulfstream business jets); Legacy Raytheon 1Q 2020 sales grew +6% (excluding Collins Aerospace and Pratt & Whitney); HII 1Q 2020 shipbuilding sales grew +6%; L3Harris 1Q 2020 sales grew +5%]

3. All of the companies have formally-committed to submitting their respective “rough-order-of-magnitude” COVID-19 cost estimates, (including all suppliers), (“Section 3610” employee-wage-reimbursement, (cost, but no profit), and equitable adjustments, (cost + profit)), to USD Lord, “by the end of this week”.

4a. It is widely-believed that Lockheed’s ~\$2.5B COVID-19 cost estimate is significantly-larger than any of the other primes, primarily-driven by ~-15% slippage of planned 2020 F-35 aircraft deliveries, (-18-24 aircraft, from previous ~141 2020 delivery plan), (suggesting that Lockheed will still be ~1.5-2 months behind schedule by end of 2020). [Lockheed 2Q 2020 Results Call is July 21, 2020]

- Lockheed has also signaled potential COVID-19 cost impacts to C-130J production, plus delayed delivery of micro-electronics for its ~\$11B Missiles & Fire Control Sector, (e.g., GMLRS; Hellfire; ATACMS; JASSM; PAC-3 MSE; THAAD), (with juicy ~14% MFC sector operating margins).

4b. Boeing Defense is presumably-focused on Section 3610 employee-wage-reimbursement, for both plant shutdowns of USAF KC-46 (~2.7K FTE in Puget Sound, WA, after COVID-19 death of adjacent 787 worker), and also Army CH-47 & USMC/Navy V-22 (Philadelphia, PA), (presumably also impacting Textron, as 50/50 V-22 JV partner). [Boeing 2Q 2020 Results Call is July 29, 2020]

4c. Raytheon Technologies specific-impacts are not yet known, but commercial aerospace ~\$26B Collins Aerospace & ~\$19B Pratt & Whitney are slashing costs, to “down-size” for projected ~-50% drop in 2020 commercial aircraft OEM production, (Boeing & Airbus), and projected ~-50% drop in 2020 Aftermarket/MRO/Spares, (commercial airlines). [Raytheon Technologies 2Q 2020 Results Call is July 28, 2020]

4d. BAE Systems is presumably-focused on York, PA plant shutdown, (M109; Bradley; AMPV; ACV 1.1). [Investors have historically-challenged BAE Systems for sub-optimal ~8% operating margins in US Platforms & Services Sector, (which includes both higher-margin ground combat vehicles, but also lower-margin Navy ship repair O&M), versus peer GD Combat Systems Sector (at ~14%-15% operating margins)] [**BAE Systems 1H 2020 Results Call is July 30, 2020**]

- BAE Systems also issued a “market update”, (on June 25th), warning that 1H 2020 sales will be flattish, but 1H 2020 profit will likely be ~-15% lower, due to both COVID-19 costs in its defense sectors, plus slumping commercial aerospace avionics sales. **This makes it likely that BAE Systems will submit at least modest Section 3610 claims.**

4e. Presumably, both GD Bath Iron Works (union on-strike since June 22nd), plus HII, may suffer from Overhead-absorption, (driving up Navy SCN costs), if ship deliveries potentially-stretch into ~2021-2022. [HII has vowed to attempt to recover lost schedule during 3Q-4Q] [GD BIW was already behind schedule on ~six DDG-51 hulls, before COVID-19 onslaught. However, strong appearance that GD Electric Boat will maintain Virginia-class submarine schedule, because GDEB immediately broke its workforce into alternating-shifts, for social-distancing] [**GD 2Q 2020 Results Call is July 29, 2020**] [**HII 2Q 2020 Results Call is August 6, 2020**]

5. Note demand for “streamlined and accelerated claims-processing methodology”. [Lockheed CFO Ken Possenriede has publicly-reinforced need for “accelerated corporate settlement(s)” in recent investor briefings. Lockheed has committed to investors, to deliver at least \$7.6B of Cashflow in 2020 (see below); plus at least ~\$7.7B of Cashflow in 2021; and at least ~\$7.8B of Cashflow in 2022] [**Investors are generally-expecting major 2020 Lockheed Cashflow upside, from both 2Q-4Q increase to 90% DoD Progress-payments, (61% fixed-price & 39% cost-type), plus \$460M payroll-tax-deferral until 2021-2022 under CARES Act]**

While unspoken, there is likely to be to growing industry-wide urgency, to “lock-in” ~2020-2022 Cashflow, before potential for severe-turbulence in November Election.