

Weekly ICBM EAR Report



Image: Illustration of the Sentinel next-generation ICBM. Credit: Northrop Grumman - Space News

Prepared by Peter Huessy

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ICBM EAR Week of November 24, 2025, Prepared by Peter Huessy, President of Geostrategic Analysis and Senior Fellow at the National Institute of Deterrence Studies

Highlights and Summary

This week's highlights include the **Chinese communist government (CCP) verbal attack** on the Prime Minister of Japan for her support for Taiwan's security, the concurrent CCP publication of a fairy tale of good nuclear intentions. A number of items discuss the Iranian pursuit of nuclear weapons. In other strategic developments, **the Kremlin proposed that it could provide nuclear weapons** to Iran but then walked back these remarks. However, elements within Iran have discussed securing nuclear weapons as a tool for their export of Islamic revolution and the EAR provides a new research paper that concludes North Korea may have as many as 150 warheads.

ICBM news, a review of current nuclear dangers, the Italian proposal for a Golden Dome missile defense, a review of the constitutional issues that surround the counter drug military attacks on drug boats, and a list of NIDS resources are also included.

The NIDS nuclear deterrent seminar series begins again after the Thanksgiving holiday. On Friday, December 5th, Peter Huessy and Adam Lothar will discuss the movies Oppenheimer, Dynamite and the Annie Jacobsen book on nuclear war, over the objective of nuclear abolition and criticism of current US nuclear deterrent strategy. On December 11th, Mr. Huessy will speak at the University Club at an Asia-Pacific Conference hosted by the Gold Institute. Huessy will speak about the status of nuclear threats on the Korean Peninsula.

A debate is emerging over whether the United States might again test nuclear weapons, which the US has not done since 1992 under a voluntary self-imposed but not legally binding moratorium. When the US Senate voted 51-48 not to approve the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in 1996, the major argument against the treaty was over Russia and China testing at a very low level that could be detected by the United States. That very low testing is again the hinge upon which current views about new nuclear testing rests, especially given that the nuclear test threshold was never defined by the CTBT or in any supporting documents. The Nuclear Deterrent Seminar Series will address these issues in forthcoming seminars. Stay tuned.

Quotes of the Week

USSTRATCOM: "Silent, lethal and undetectable - The Sailors who comprise the #SilentService ensure that our SSBN force remains credible, effective and #AlwaysReady to project strategic deterrence."

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Ken Wilsbach: "My first trip as CSAF was to Air Force Global Strike Command because nuclear deterrence is the bedrock of national security and homeland defense."

Braham Chellaney: This revival is testing U.S. power at a moment when Washington faces a more complex and fragmented strategic landscape than at any time since the dawn of the nuclear age.

Braham Chellaney: The result is a world sliding toward an unconstrained arms race, with fewer safety valves and greater risks of miscalculation.

Prime Minister Takaichi of Japan: Warns that a PRC invasion of Taiwan would a "survival-threatening event."

The CCP Global Times replies: Prime Minister Takaichi "crossed China's red line and must be severely punished."

PRC's Foreign Ministry: "Those playing with fire on Taiwan will get burned" going so far as to call for the beheading of the Japanese Prime Minister.

Sen. Ed Markey (D-MA): "Restarting nuclear tests would threaten global security and our moral leadership. I am calling on the Trump administration to choose diplomacy over destruction."

ICBM News

CSAF Gen. Ken Wilsbach: Visited the 90th Missile Wing at F.E. Warren AFB, reinforced that the credibility of nuclear deterrence is anchored to the Airmen who operate the land-based leg of the nation's nuclear triad.

And an Air Force spokesperson told Inside Defense the service's MH-139 Grey Wolf program (to be used in the ICBM fields) is again delayed, with the helicopter now on track to enter the full-rate production phase in January 2026.

Congress and Strategic Developments

The Senate confirmed Vice Adm. Richard Correll as the next commander of USSTRATCOM in a voice vote last week,

Trump Administration Developments

The bow section of the future District of Columbia (SSBN 826), built by HII, has arrived at General Dynamics Electric Boat for final assembly and testing. This marks the completion of the majority of Newport News Shipbuilding division's work on this critical next-generation submarine. With all major modules at Electric Boat, we're one step closer to delivering this vital asset to our Nation's Fleet."

CSAF Gen. Ken Wilsbach visited Air Force Global Strike Command headquarters at Barksdale AFB, where he emphasized the strategic impact of AFGSC's mission and the enduring relevance of the nuclear triad in today's complex global environment.

International Strategic Developments

The CCP's mouthpiece, the Global Times, hysterically reported Chinese netizens claiming that "the blood and tears of modern history must be repaid twofold" and that Prime Minister Takaichi "crossed China's red line and must be severely punished." More authoritatively, the PRC's Foreign Ministry not only warned "those playing with fire on Taiwan will get burned" but also "advised" Chinese tourists not to go to Japan and for Chinese students to reassess their studies and education in Japan. In China, "advice" from the CCP means "do what we say, or else." While the **PRC Foreign Ministry** alleged an increased risk to Chinese students' safety, it is clear that Xi Jinping and the CCP could have acted well before November 7 to warn their students if there really was a threat.

On the lawfare front, on November 16, **the PRC dispatched** a Chinese Coast Guard formation through the territorial waters (within 12 nm) of the Japanese-administered Senkaku Islands on an alleged "rights enforcement patrol"—aimed at asserting the PRC's false claim of sovereignty over these Japanese islands.

Prime Minister Takaichi dispatched Defense Minister Koizumi Shinjiro to a Japanese Ground Self-Defense base on Yonaguni Island, in the lower Ryukyu Islands, within 100 nm of Taiwan. Koizumi inspected the location for the planned installation of a Type 03 mid-range surface-to-air interceptor battery.

Japan and China: A Sea-Change in US Policy?

Commentary #1 of the Week: James Fanell, a retired Navy intelligence officer, pushes back on critics of President Trump who have long asserted that “America First is America Alone,” while others have worried about so-called “restrainers” within the President’s national security team, asserting that the President does not appreciate or value our allies. Both criticisms are, I believe, off base. President Trump’s visit to Japan and our combined naval forces, his public interactions with and support for Prime Minister Takaichi, and now the famous “two phone calls” make it abundantly clear that President Trump understands the threat to the national security of both America and Japan. Trump is clearly moving forward, speaking softly while carrying a big stick on behalf of America and our allies. Fanell continues “Most importantly, just as President Trump destroyed the unwritten policy of “unconstrained and unaccountable engagement” with the PRC during his first term, he has now busted the nearly 50-year myth of *The Relationship* between the PRC and the USA. America’s return to greatness took a huge step forward this past week, as we confront an expansionist and threatening Communist China with a united front with our ally, Japan.

James E. Fanell served as a career naval intelligence officer whose positions included senior intelligence officer for China at the Office of Naval Intelligence and chief of intelligence for CTF-70, Seventh Fleet, and the U.S. Pacific Fleet. He is the co-author of the book Embracing Communist China: America’s Greatest Strategic Failure.

CHINA: CCP White Paper on Nuclear Weapons--EXCERPT

Conclusion

For thousands of years, humanity has yearned for enduring peace, yet war lingers unresolved as an ever-present shadow. **Arms control, disarmament, and nonproliferation serve as an important barrier, preventing humanity from slipping into the abyss of war.** Over the past eight decades, a multilateral arms control regime with the UN at its core has progressively taken shape and become mature, playing a pivotal role in mitigating conflict and maintaining peace.

At present, change on a scale unseen in a century is accelerating: The trends towards peace, development, cooperation, and mutual benefit remain unstoppable, **while escalating risks of confrontation, conflict and war are exacerbating global instability and disorder, and the process of multilateral arms control has reached a low ebb.** A dangerous prospect is emerging, in which international relations are falling back into the law of the jungle, and the weak are at the mercy of the strong.

No matter how the world changes, **China stands firmly on the right side of history and on the side of human progress and serves as a staunch force for upholding world peace and security.** It will practice true multilateralism, take on its responsibility as a major country, and work tirelessly to promote international arms control, providing reliable stability in a turbulent world.

A noble cause is never a lonely pursuit, and collective efforts ensure sustained progress. **Chinese modernization follows the path of peaceful development, and China’s growth contributes to the growth of the world’s peaceful forces.** China stands ready to work with all peace-loving countries to build an equal and orderly multipolar world and promote universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization. It will consolidate and develop the UN-centered international arms control regime, work with all parties to build a community with a shared future for humanity and create a brighter future for all.

Taiwan’s Special Military Budget

Speaking at a news conference in Taipei on Wednesday, Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te said that his government would introduce a \$40 billion special budget for military spending that will focus on acquiring weapons from the United States to deter China’s far larger military forces more effectively.

ICBM EAR Guest Essay #1

[The nuclear arms race is back, and it's testing US power | Stagecraft and Statecraft](#)

By: Brahma Chellaney, for [The Hill](#) // Posted on [November 28, 2025](#)

One of the least-discussed but most consequential outcomes of the resurgence of major-power rivalries is the [return](#) of nuclear weapons to the center of international politics.

The global salience of nuclear weapons — once expected to diminish after the Cold War — is instead rising sharply. **This revival is testing U.S. power at a moment when Washington [faces a more complex and fragmented strategic landscape than at any time since the dawn of the nuclear age](#).** The problem is not just that nuclear arsenals are expanding. It is also that the geopolitical environment that once helped manage nuclear risks has eroded. Advances in non-nuclear strategic technologies — including precision-guided conventional strike systems, cyberwarfare.

Anti-satellite weapons and layered missile defenses — **[are driving nuclear-armed states to harden, diversify and enlarge their arsenals to ensure survivable second-strike capabilities](#).** At the same time, regional flashpoints — from Ukraine to the Taiwan Strait to the Korean Peninsula — heighten the risk of escalation through miscalculation or coercion. **No shift is more momentous than China's sweeping peacetime military expansion — the [most ambitious](#) in modern history. Its naval output alone now surpasses the combined production of U.S. and Soviet shipyards at the height of the Cold War.**

Even more troubling is its [frenzied nuclear buildup](#): China has more than doubled its nuclear-weapons stockpile in just five years and is on track to field as many deployed warheads as the U.S. by the mid-2030s. Determined to supplant the U.S. as the world's leading power, **China is not only expanding but [diversifying its nuclear arsenal](#).** **The aim is to give Beijing an expanded set of coercive tools and create new escalation pathways. In effect, China has already diluted its own longstanding "no first use" nuclear pledge. Few now view that declaratory policy as credible.**

Although China's nuclear surge is framed domestically as defensive, its purpose extends beyond deterrence. Beijing's growing arsenal enables it to [pursue coercive territorial and strategic objectives](#) — from the South and East China Seas to the Himalayas. The implications for U.S. extended deterrence, especially in the Indo-Pacific, are [profound](#). Russia, meanwhile, has turned to nuclear weapons as the principal currency of its great-power status amid [economic stagnation](#). Its modernization program includes novel, destabilizing systems such as the nuclear-powered [Burevestnik cruise missile](#) and [Poseidon underwater drone](#).

These exotic weapons are explicitly designed to circumvent U.S. missile defenses. The Ukraine war has visibly increased the importance — and the coercive utility — of nuclear weapons in Russian strategy. The combined nuclear expansions of China and Russia pose a challenge the U.S. has never confronted before: deterring two peer or near-peer nuclear adversaries simultaneously. During the Cold War, Washington could focus its strategic posture on a single rival, the Soviet Union. Today, the geometry is [tripolar](#), and far more complex.

To make matters worse, the [arms-control framework](#) that provided essential guardrails for decades has nearly collapsed. Russia and the U.S. have withdrawn from key agreements, with Moscow recently suspending its participation in the New START Treaty and also withdrawing its ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. **China, for its part, refuses to enter any arms-control negotiation that might cap its rapidly rising arsenal.**

The result is a world sliding toward an unconstrained arms race, with fewer safety valves and greater risks of miscalculation. This shifting balance reverberates through America's alliance system. Allies who depend on the U.S. nuclear umbrella — particularly **Japan, South Korea, Australia and NATO's eastern members** — **are [increasingly anxious](#) about whether Washington would risk a nuclear exchange with China or Russia to defend them. Their concern is not theoretical: The simultaneous growth of Chinese and Russian nuclear prowess creates the very scenario U.S. strategists long feared — deterrence stress in multiple theaters.**

As credibility questions grow, so does the [risk](#) of allied nuclear proliferation. If countries with advanced nuclear fuel cycles come to doubt long-term U.S. protection, they may seek independent deterrents. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is already strained by the modernization programs of nuclear-weapon states. Moreover, the U.S. bombing of Iranian nuclear sites earlier this year — while successful tactically — may deepen incentives for [clandestine](#) nuclear development elsewhere.

The U.S. now faces a stark reality: It must modernize its nuclear forces, reassure anxious allies, deter two nuclear peers and revive some form of strategic dialogue — all while preventing a ruinous arms race.

America's challenge is to maintain credible deterrence across two theaters without overextending U.S. conventional forces. That pressure may tempt Washington to rely more heavily on nuclear weapons to compensate for shrinking force-projection margins vis-à-vis China in the Indo-Pacific and Russia in Europe. Such a shift would mirror the very trends that have made nuclear weapons so prominent in Russian and Chinese strategies. In this volatile environment, risk-reduction mechanisms are essential.

The world needs updated [norms](#) for emerging technologies — particularly artificial intelligence, hypersonic delivery systems and dual-use cyber capabilities — that could compress decision time or introduce new uncertainties in nuclear command and control. Ensuring that nuclear-use authority remains fully under human control is no longer simply a normative concern; it is becoming a [strategic imperative](#) in the age of AI.

Brahma Chellaney is a geostrategist and the author of nine books, including the award-winning [“Water: Asia’s New Battleground.”](#)

Missile Defense Corner

The Space Force awarded multiple small contracts to develop prototypes for space-based interceptors, according to Bloomberg News, which said the technology is expected to be a key component of the planned Golden Dome missile defense system.

Italy Launches “Michelangelo Dome” to Shield Against Hypersonic Weapons and Drone Swarms [Italy's Michelangelo Dome Targets Hypersonic Threats - Technology Org](#)

Leonardo, Italy's aerospace giant, rolled out designs for the [Michelangelo Dome](#) on Thursday—a sophisticated air defense network that borrows its blueprint from Israel's Iron Dome.

Key takeaways & BLUF:

- ***The multi-layered system integrates sensors across space, air, land, and sea to detect and destroy threats before impact***
- ***Full deployment begins in 2028 following a phased rollout coordinated between Leonardo engineers and Italian military personnel***
- ***The architecture remains open for NATO allies to plug in their own defensive technologies, creating interoperable protection networks***

European nations are ramping up military infrastructure as tensions with Russia escalate and new aerial threats emerge. The Michelangelo Dome targets incoming rockets, missiles, and drones before they reach critical infrastructure. Leonardo CEO Roberto Cingolani described the project as “a model that is important for security in Italy, Europe and NATO countries in the coming years” during the Rome presentation. Leonardo plans to assemble a joint task force combining company engineers with Italian armed forces to build an architecture tailored to national defense requirements. After initial implementation, the system reaches full operational capacity in 2028. Senior Italian military leadership received detailed briefings this week.

Italian Defense Minister Guido Crosetto recently demanded solutions for hybrid warfare dangers threatening energy facilities and airports. “Each country can integrate its own technologies,” Crosetto said Thursday. Speaking from Paris after discussions with French counterpart Catherine Vautrin, he added: “Together, we can cooperate to create a highly advanced defense system against all types of threats, from hypersonic missiles to small drones, because threats now come in many different forms.” Italy has already initiated conversations with other European governments about the initiative, according to Crosetto.

The Italian announcement joins a growing roster of nations building Iron Dome variants. US President Donald Trump revealed plans in May for a Golden Dome missile shield designed to operate by the end of his second term, though government shutdown complications have stalled progress, according to recent reports. Turkish defense contractors secured \$6.5 billion in agreements Wednesday to strengthen Turkey's Steel Dome integrated

air defense network, the Turkish Defense Industries Presidency confirmed. Taiwan unveiled its T-Dome system in October, specifically designed to counter Chinese military threats.

The Michelangelo architecture doesn't rely on a single platform. Instead, it weaves together next-generation sensors from land, naval, airborne, and space sources with cyber-defense tools, command-and-control networks, artificial intelligence, and coordinated weapons systems. This creates a responsive security umbrella capable of identifying, tracking, and eliminating threats during mass attacks across all operational environments—from aerial and missile strikes (including hypersonic weapons and drone fleets) to maritime surface and underwater assaults and hostile ground forces.

The project introduces a fresh defense concept: simultaneous management of diverse threats through interconnected air, sea, land, and space domains within a cyber-protected framework powered by sophisticated artificial intelligence. Advanced data fusion from multiple sensors combined with predictive algorithms allows Michelangelo Dome to forecast hostile actions, optimize responses, and automatically coordinate the most effective countermeasures. The open-design infrastructure ensures complete compatibility with defensive assets and platforms from other nations while meeting NATO standards.

Leonardo reinforces its position as a European leader in multi-domain security with this initiative, advancing strategic autonomy, technological resilience, and deeper integration of European and NATO defense capabilities. The project aligns with major continental cooperation programs while highlighting industrial expertise across Italian territory. The name draws inspiration from Italy's engineering legacy—the dome symbolizing protection, structural balance, vision, and innovation. The project merges this cultural inheritance with cutting-edge technology, demonstrating Italian innovation, creativity, and technical prowess on the international stage.

Michelangelo Dome serves defense of national and European territory while remaining deployable to guard specific strategic locations—military installations, ports, airports, critical civilian infrastructure, industrial facilities, urban centers, major events, and strategic assets—neutralizing hostile platforms before they pose security risks.

Guest Essay

North Korea may already possess 150 nuclear warheads, could reach 400 by 2040: think tank
<https://www.koreaherald.com/article/10625110>

Russian assistance could speed Pyongyang's nuclear submarine ambitions, despite lingering technological gaps

By: Jung Min-kyung for the Korea Herald // Published : Nov. 27, 2025 - 15:11:09

North Korea's nuclear arsenal may be far larger — and expanding far faster — than widely believed, potentially reshaping the strategic landscape on the Korean Peninsula within the next two decades.

According to new assessments by South Korean defense researchers, at a forum hosted by the Korea Institute for Defense Analyses on Wednesday, Lee Sang-kyu, head of KIDA's nuclear security research division, assessed that Pyongyang likely possesses between 127 and 150 nuclear weapons. The estimate — based on North Korea's known fissile-material production rates and recent facility expansion — is more than double the figures commonly cited by other global institutes, which place the stockpile at about 50.

Lee projected that the North's arsenal could grow to around 200 weapons by 2030 and surpass 400 by 2040, should Pyongyang continue its current trajectory of expanding uranium enrichment and plutonium production. "North Korea has been broadening and modernizing its sites to enhance its ability to manufacture nuclear material," Lee said, noting that Kim Jong-un's order to "exponentially" increase warhead production continues to drive a sustained push for more enrichment capacity. According to Lee's internal analysis, the North may already hold 115-131 uranium-based warheads and 15-19 plutonium-based weapons, producing a total inventory far beyond previous assumptions.

International bodies such as the Congressional Research Service, continue to estimate the North's arsenal at around 50 warheads — a gap that underscores how opaque and contested assessments of Pyongyang's nuclear program have become. KIDA researchers argue that the rapid acceleration is partly explained by North Korea's newly expanded enrichment infrastructure. International Atomic Energy Agency reports from August noted a newly

identified building at Yongbyon that appears suited for uranium enrichment, raising concerns that the regime may be preparing to broaden production capacity.

Lee also cautioned that North Korea's ongoing nuclear-powered submarine project — unveiled publicly for the first time this year — is likely incomplete in critical areas. The reactor, combat systems, launch tubes and sonar equipment are all unlikely to be fully integrated at the current stage, he assessed. Developing a compact, submarine-compatible nuclear reactor with enrichment levels of 20 percent or greater would take at least a decade, Lee said. But he added that this timeline could shift if Russia provides covert technological help.

He pointed to a “possibility” that Moscow may supply designs, materials, components or know-how required for submarine construction — a concern that has grown amid deepening military cooperation between North Korea and Russia following their September 2023 summit. **Despite Pyongyang's escalating rhetoric about being able to mount a second-strike threat against the US, KIDA analysts cautioned against overestimating the North's operational readiness. Jeon Gyeong-ju, a research fellow at KIDA, noted during the Wednesday event that while the North is clearly trying to field forces capable of waging a limited nuclear conflict, the underlying systems remain far from mature.**

“Outwardly, North Korea has assembled the appearance of such a capability,” he said. “But substantial improvements and further development are still needed for real military effectiveness.” Meanwhile, recent satellite monitoring by the US website 38 North indicates that the North's nuclear sector has been undergoing continuous upgrades in 2025. The group reported that imagery from October and November shows ongoing modernization and enlargement across the Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center — the heart of North Korea's fissile-material production.

One suspected enrichment complex northeast of the radiochemical laboratory — first spotlighted earlier this year — has emerged as the most active subsite in the area. Exterior work on new support buildings is reportedly complete, with paved surroundings added and six potential heat exchangers installed along the main building, equipment typically used to cool centrifuges. According to 38 North, “activity over the course of 2025 reflects these directives,” referring to Kim Jong-un's January orders to accelerate production of weapons-grade material. The group noted steady operation of the 5-megawatt reactor and preoperational testing of the experimental light-water reactor as evidence of an intensified push. “These improvements all serve to help fulfill Kim's call for exponential growth of its nuclear weapons arsenals,” the report said. ---- mkjung@heraldcorp.com

ICBM Guest Essay

The US Has the Right to Strike Narcoterrorist Boats Before They Reach Our Shores

By Alan Wilson November 28, 2025

President Trump's decision to authorize targeted strikes on drug-running vessels leaving the Venezuelan coast has drawn predictable criticism from academics and international bureaucrats. The truth is simple. These actions are lawful, justified, and long overdue. And the Maduro regime created the very threat the United States is now forced to confront. As a state Attorney General and a former combat veteran, I believe the legal case is solid and the national security need is undeniable.

For years, Venezuela has acted less like a sovereign nation and more like a staging ground and willing host for transnational cartels, terrorist affiliates, and organized criminal networks. Under Nicolás Maduro's corrupt and collapsing regime, this rogue country has become a launchpad for cocaine [traffickers](#), a sanctuary for violent groups, and a partner of convenience for every anti-American actor in the hemisphere.

These drug boats do not leave Venezuelan shores by accident. They leave because the regime profits from them. They leave because Caracas has abandoned any pretense of controlling its own territory. And they leave because Maduro could not care less how many Americans overdose and die as a result. That's why President Trump is right to act. These are not harmless fishing skiffs. They are stateless, unflagged ghost vessels and semi-submersible craft designed to evade detection while carrying tons of deadly [narcotics](#) and fentanyl precursors. They have become the maritime arm of cartel empires that kill tens of thousands of Americans each year.

Our Congress recognized long ago that the United States has the authority to act against these threats before they make landfall. The Maritime Drug Law Enforcement Act allows the United States to interdict stateless vessels

or foreign flagged vessels with flag state consent. The Drug Trafficking Vessel Interdiction Act makes it a federal crime simply to operate certain unregistered craft on the high seas with intent to evade detection. These laws form a clear legal foundation for decisive action, and President Trump is operating well within that authority.

The president's critics try to frame this as reckless escalation. It is not. It is the natural extension of congressional judgment and the president's constitutional authority to defend this nation. International law supports it too. Stateless vessels enjoy no protections under the law of the sea, and every nation retains the inherent right of self-defense. When drug networks operating openly off the coast of Venezuela push toxic chemicals and narcotics toward our border, the United States has every right, and our president has a sworn duty, to stop them.

Maduro stole his last election and can't be trusted to clean up this mess. A functioning, responsible government would never allow its coastal waters to become a superhighway for narcoterrorism groups. But [Venezuela](#) under Maduro is nothing more than a failed state propped up by criminal profit. Its institutions are hollow. Its military is corrupt. And while its people suffer, its leaders enrich themselves by enabling the very cartels tearing American communities apart.

As Attorney General of South Carolina, I see firsthand the devastation these drugs inflict on my state's families. Our sheriffs, police chiefs, and prosecutors do everything they can, but they are fighting a tough battle to protect our families. The challenge for all of us begins long before the poison reaches our borders, and President Trump is right to take that fight to the source.

Strong leadership means confronting threats where they originate, and President Trump understands that. Venezuela has enabled the cartels. And America is now safer because the President of the United States is taking action. God bless President Donald Trump.

Alan Wilson was elected South Carolina's 51st Attorney General in 2010. His X handle is @AGAlanWilson.

Essay

Trafficking, Drugs and Crime: Unrestricted Warfare Against the United States **By Peter Huessy, President, Geostrategic Analysis**

China, Russia Iran, North Korea and Venezuela are working together to engage in unrestricted warfare against the United States. Such warfare includes what the Chinese Communist Party describes as a reverse opium war against the United States. This includes the smuggling of literally tons of illicit drugs into the United States primarily from South and Central America.

A central point of origin is Venezuela and Columbia. The drug cartels work as a team with the government of Venezuela and the government leaders including Maduro, the President of the country. China and its triad organized crime groups also are part of this campaign including working in most American cities. This coordinated attack on the USA citizenry killed 109,000 Americans in 2024, as the drugs are laced with Fentanyl to make them more deadly.

Such an attack on the culture, family, society and community here in the United States is a deliberate attempt to cause the USA harm. No different than an invasion across the border with a battalion of skilled soldiers. As in conventional warfare, the USA has no obligation to arrest such drug smugglers and go through a court based due process. Such rights were given up when the drug cartels joined national governments to make war against the United States.

That the cartels and governments make hundreds of billions from the drug trade doesn't magically transform what is a war against the United States into a sole commercial activity. The administration has pushed hard to get the PRC to stop shipping fentanyl precursors to the Mexican drug cartels. This new effort has resulted in the "drying up" of the supply after FBI Director Patel laid down a tough agreement with the Chinese government.

The very fact that the Chinese government is directly linked to the supply of these drugs is proof of a drug war not dissimilar to a country-to-country military conflict. With the Chinese beginning to shut off the fentanyl precursor supply, cartels in Mexico, Venezuela, and Columbia are looking for alternatives, but there are not any. Said the FBI Director: "We know where they are, we know who they are, we know how they do it. And when we surveil and

monitor and investigate these folks, we see that they are complaining about not having the necessary ingredients and mechanics to make fentanyl...That is an immediate impact that they haven't complained about in years."

In early November, according to one press story, Patel traveled to "China for a meeting on the logistics of how Beijing would make good on its agreement to curb fentanyl precursor exports after the U.S.–China bilateral meeting in South Korea. It resulted in export bans on 13 fentanyl precursors and seven additional chemicals."

A twin campaign is the FBI's crack down on violent crime, in part through better staffing of local FBI offices, as well as apprehending and deporting criminal illegal aliens. According to sources, the result has been 25,000 arrests of violent offenders, many linked to the drug trade. This is double the previous year and has resulted in a historically unprecedented drop in the murder rate according to Epoch Times. This tripartite campaign—going after fentanyl, human trafficking, and financial crimes—require international cooperation, much as a military campaign would, including getting India and Japan to stop the transshipment of such chemicals.

The various courts, groups like Antifa and members of various legislators, mayor's offices and governors refusing to cooperate with law enforcement, especially with respect to unlawful migrants under their jurisdiction, is tantamount to taking the enemy's side in a war against the United States and its allies. It is simply not a coincidence that so many of those subject to deportation are not just illegally in the country but have a long rap sheet in the sanctuary cities and states where they operate.

Just think: some six nations, all sworn enemies of the United States, operate human trafficking rings, drug cartels and criminal organized crime groups, in most major American cities, as well as out of their own nations, using the oceans and airspace or the public domain. Those claiming the US must find, arrest, indict, try and convict literally tens of thousands of such violent criminals, each with a pathway to appeal any conviction up to numerous additional courts, have turned the US constitution into a suicide pact. The US is at war, and the Chinese declared it years ago in the unrestricted warfare campaign they created. As Secretary of State Marco Rubio has explained: "The United States is under attack from organized, criminal narco-terrorists in our hemisphere - and the president is responding in the defense of our country." Thankfully, the US is finally fighting back

Instead of suggesting an immediate return to nuclear testing, then, Trump should focus on returning to arms control measures to ensure strategic stability with Russia and with China. Hopefully, these measures would lead to a reduction in U.S. and Russian nuclear forces and reduce incentives for China to increase its arsenal. For nuclear testing, he should help erect the highest possible barriers for any country to test by leading an effort to ratify the CTBT. To settle the question of evasion of low-yield tests or hydronuclear experiments, the president and his counterparts in Beijing and Moscow would need to show the political will to agree on a verifiable low-yield limit. That will almost surely require onsite inspections, which were demonstrated to be possible in 1988.

The bottom line is that even though the United States could derive important benefits from resumed nuclear testing, it would lose more than it stands to gain.

The Iran Corner

According to one *Iranian lawmaker, former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has indicated Moscow might be prepared to provide Iran with nuclear weapons.*

Iran member of Parliament, Kamran Ghazanfari, said Russia and China would support Iran's potential withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), adding that the move would increase the country's "nuclear and military capability."

"China and Russia support this decision (to withdrawal from the NPT). Medvedev, Putin's deputy, even hinted indirectly that Russia is willing to provide Iran with nuclear weapons," he said in an interview with the Iran24 news outlet.

Medvedev, an arch-hawk who serves as deputy chairman of Russia's Security Council, had written in a post on X in June that "a number of countries are ready to directly supply Iran with their own nuclear warheads."

ICBM EAR Guest Essay

Iran's New Race to the Bomb

by **Majid Rafizadeh**

November 30, 2025 at 5:00 am

- Iran's leaders appear to see nuclear weapons not simply as a strategic tool, but as an existential necessity — a shield for the regime's survival and a sword to advance its revolutionary ideology.
- Iran's leadership sees that one nuclear-armed missile aimed at Israel could accomplish what decades of proxy warfare, rhetoric, and regional maneuvering have failed to do. A nuclear weapon, in their ideological worldview, offers the possibility of wiping out Israel, fulfilling what they see as a historic, strategic, and religious prophecy.
- In the minds of Iran's rulers, a nuclear weapon is doubtless the ultimate insurance policy. They believe it can secure the regime's longevity by projecting an image of strength similar to North Korea's strategy: a nuclear-armed dictatorship that cannot be toppled from within or pressured from abroad. In their thinking, nuclear weapons elevate them to invulnerability.
- Iran has repeatedly used talks as a tactical pause, a chance to ease sanctions, gain financial relief, and reconstitute its nuclear capabilities behind closed doors. A flawed or partial agreement would allow Iran to continue enriching uranium, advance in missile technology, and expand its scientific base under the protection of international diplomacy. Far from slowing down Iran's nuclear ambitions, weak negotiations risk institutionalizing them.
- The Iranian regime clearly wants nuclear weapons – desperately – driven by strategic weakness, ideological ambition and fear for its own survival. The West must not give Iran the time or space it needs to complete its mission. The free world's objective must be to dismantle Iran's nuclear program completely, preserve no loopholes, and maintain pressure until Tehran's path to nuclear armament is permanently blocked. Anything less risks empowering a regime that seeks both regional dominance and ideological Islamist conquest under the secure shield of nuclear weapons.

Iran's leaders appear to see nuclear weapons not simply as a strategic tool, but as an existential necessity — a shield for the regime's survival and a sword to advance its revolutionary ideology. They see that one nuclear-armed missile aimed at Israel could accomplish what decades of proxy warfare, rhetoric, and regional maneuvering have failed to do.

The Iranian regime has always sought nuclear weapons, but at the moment, this ambition may have taken on an unprecedented urgency. For decades, the ruling clerics have perceived nuclear capability as a symbol of power and ideological triumph. Now, more than ever before, the regime may be prepared to use every trick, tactic, and deception it has cultivated over the years to achieve that goal. Iran's leaders appear to see nuclear weapons not simply as a strategic tool, but as an existential necessity — a shield for the regime's survival and a sword to advance its revolutionary ideology.

One of the core reasons Iran has reportedly been ratcheting up its pursuit of nuclear weapons again might be the shock it experienced during the recent 12-day war. The conflict exposed, in a brutally clear manner, how deeply inferior Iran's military capabilities are compared to Israel and the United States, especially its air force and advanced warfare infrastructure. Iran watched its proxy forces struggle and realized that in a direct confrontation, it lacks the conventional military strength either to deter or defeat its adversaries. This realization may well have intensified the regime's belief that a nuclear weapon is "the great equalizer."

Iran's leadership sees that one nuclear-armed missile aimed at Israel could accomplish what decades of proxy warfare, rhetoric, and regional maneuvering have failed to do. A nuclear weapon, in their ideological worldview, offers the possibility of wiping out Israel, fulfilling what they see as a historic, strategic, and religious prophecy. This belief is embedded in the regime's revolutionary narrative, and the recent military vulnerabilities may well have made the pursuit of nuclear arms feel both urgent and inevitable to Tehran's elite.

Iran currently faces a convergence of internal and external pressures that most likely make the regime feel cornered. Externally, renewed sanctions — particularly under Washington's tougher policies — have squeezed Iran's economy. Regionally, Iran finds itself more isolated now that the Assad regime in Syria collapsed, weakening the backbone of Tehran's influence corridor stretching from Iran through Iraq and Syria to Lebanon. With Assad's departure, Iran's regional leverage suffered a severe blow: its power projection capabilities have been disrupted.

Internally, for the regime, the situation must seem even more alarming. Domestic dissatisfaction is widespread, driven by unemployment, inflation, and the deteriorating quality of life for ordinary Iranians. The country faces a

worsening water crisis that threatens agriculture, industry, and social stability. Such conditions create fertile ground for mass protests and uprisings — something the regime has repeatedly struggled to contain. In the minds of Iran's rulers, a nuclear weapon is doubtless the ultimate insurance policy. They believe it can secure the regime's longevity by projecting an image of strength similar to North Korea's strategy: a nuclear-armed dictatorship that cannot be toppled from within or pressured from abroad. In their thinking, nuclear weapons elevate them to invulnerability.

Some Western politicians and policymakers argue that negotiations remain the best path forward. Negotiations, however, which provide stretchable time, have historically empowered and emboldened the Iranian regime rather than restrained it. A diplomatic agreement that does not require dismantling Iran's nuclear infrastructure — fully, permanently, and verifiably — would only give the regime the opportunity to race to a nuclear weapons breakout, legitimacy, and room to maneuver. Iran has repeatedly used talks as a tactical pause, a chance to ease sanctions, gain financial relief, and reconstitute its nuclear capabilities behind closed doors. A flawed or partial agreement would allow Iran to continue enriching uranium, advance in missile technology, and expand its scientific base under the protection of international diplomacy. Far from slowing down Iran's nuclear ambitions, weak negotiations risk institutionalizing them.

The regime must be confronted with a clear choice. Either Tehran cooperates fully and dismantles its nuclear weapons program once and for all, or it must face escalating consequences. These consequences must be meaningful — stronger economic sanctions, greater diplomatic isolation, and, if necessary, credible military pressure. Equally important, the West needs to increase its support for the Iranian people rather than for the regime. Supporting dissidents and amplifying the voices of Iranians who seek democratic change can weaken the regime's grip and challenge its belief that nuclear weapons guarantee eternal survival. The longer the West waits, the more entrenched the regime becomes.

The Iranian regime clearly wants nuclear weapons – desperately – driven by strategic weakness, ideological ambition and fear for its own survival. The West must not give Iran the time or space it needs to complete its mission. The free world's objective must be to dismantle Iran's nuclear program completely, preserve no loopholes, and maintain pressure until Tehran's path to nuclear armament is permanently blocked. Anything less risks empowering a regime that seeks both regional dominance and ideological Islamist conquest under the secure shield of nuclear weapons.

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About the ICBM EAR

Peter Huessy's ICBM EAR Report was originally prepared for the USAF in 1981 to help inform US nuclear deterrent policy professionals at the height of the Cold War. Eventually it was provided only to key elements of the Nuclear related Aerospace Industry. The objective: help build an informed political community on nuclear deterrent issues, especially the deployment of the US nuclear deterrent, especially the MX (Peacekeeper) missile. The report covered developments in the nuclear arena on a weekly basis, including developments in Congress, key events, threat assessments, remarks of top US officials, international activity key to US security interests, nuclear budget and program element issues, and arms control and proliferation matters as well.

Weekly ICBM EAR Report

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