

ICBM EAR Week of December 5th , prepared by Peter Huessy, President of Geostrategic Analysis and Senior Fellow at the National Institute for Deterrence Studies.

Summary: Our congratulations to General Anthony Cotton for his extraordinary service to this country and the USAF as he retires as Commander of US Strategic Command.

Our quotes of the Week are joined by extensive news from the December 6th Reagan Defense Forum. Senator McConnell's essay on defense spending is included, along with 2 analyses of the new National Security Strategy paper—one relatively supportive and the other critical from a European perspective. The EAR provides an updated analysis of the Dynamite movie as well as joins NIDS VP in a NIDS broadcast of an analysis of anti-nuke movies and recent literature. And on radio, the EAR also discusses with host John Batchelor the developments in China on nuclear forces, including a new China nuclear white paper, which is posted here. Two documents from the archives includes a great essay on nuclear matters by Admiral Rich Mies and a UCS paper on American causing a Cuban missile crisis. An ICBM update is included. And a new feature: The ICBM Year End Review of the nuclear enterprise. Hoover's General H.R. MacMaster reviews the current state of the world. And the ICBM EAR provides his own analysis of the President's National Security Strategy, with a companion review of Europe and threats to the US and Europe from Ken Abramowitz. And finally, a cartoon from our friend Michael Ramirez.

Quotes of the Week

Senator Mitch McConnell: Mr. Trump's advisers should encourage him to help Congress pass a defense appropriations bill that makes the historic investments needed to restore peace through strength.

Senator Mitch McConnell (Chair, SAC-D): A full-year bill capped at the OMB-requested level or another full-year continuing resolution would be devastating to the U.S. military. And it would imperil the president's military legacy.

Senator Deb Fischer, Chair, Strategic Forces Subcommittee, SASC: The movie “Dynamite” is a work of fiction.

General Dan Caine, Chairman, JCS: Deterrence is making sure that the bad guys are really fearful of getting in a gun fight with us. (Reagan Defense Forum, December 6th)

General Jack Keane: The fear of adverse consequences is normal but leaders have to have the spine to make the right decision. (Reagan Defense Forum, December 6th)

HASC Chairman Mike Rogers (R-AL): Vice Adm. Richard Correll is a proven leader—a former Deputy Commander of STRATCOM who has served at the tip of the spear defending America's nuclear deterrent. I'm ready to work alongside him as we modernize the nuclear triad, strengthen our missile defense, and advance President Trump's Peace Through Strength agenda.'

NNSA Administrator Brandon Williams: “I enjoyed my first trip to [the Y-12 National Security Complex] as NNSA Administrator! It was inspiring to meet the men and women who help keep our nation safe, while getting an up-close look at vital production facilities and the construction site for the upcoming Uranium Processing Facility.”

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung: Dismissed calls for the ROK to obtain its own nuclear weapons; it would be “impossible to gain the approval of the U.S. or the international community” for such a move.

President Lee: Wants to restore communication channels with North Korea, it will serve as a starting point for “peaceful coexistence” between Seoul and Pyongyang.

Australian defense officials: US submarines carrying nuclear weapons could potentially dock at Australian bases.

Gen. Anthony Cotton will relinquish command of USSTRATCOM to Adm. Richard Correll, officially handing over responsibility for global #StrategicDeterrence and more than 40,000 warfighters who keep the nation's #NuclearTriad

Strategic Developments for the Administration (And Commentary)

A missile launch from our Ohio class SSBN: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R0Dzo8DIUsM>

National Security Strategy:

The Administration released its new National Security Strategy while the Reagan Defense Forum devoted its December 6th event to restoring deterrence. The National Security Strategy calls for an increased focus on the Western Hemisphere, although it also identifies China as a top competitor.”

<https://www.scribd.com/document/961459165/2025-National-Security-Strategy>

Restoring Peace Through Strength: Reagan Defense Forum, December 6th, Simi Valley at the Reagan Library

Opening Address: Secretary Hegseth Remarks.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LAQbqbhV'sdc&pp=0gcJCSUKAYcqIYzv>

Remarks of OMD Director Russel Vought:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJ2W7UCVFuk>

Some Reagan Forum Highlights re Nuclear Deterrence and Missile Defense

Senator Fisher strong support for Golden Dome and nuclear modernization

General Guetlein says Golden Dome is in some senses multiple Iron Dome systems which is a combined Iron Dome, David's Sling and Arrow.

General Caine, Chairman of JCS, Nuclear Deterrence is the bedrock of US security and must go forward.

Reagan Defense Forum Session on Ukraine

General Kellog

17000 Soviets lost their lives in Afghanistan

58000 Americans lost their lives in Vietnam

2 millions have lost their lives in Ukraine/Russian War. US has provided defense technology but not boots on the ground. Ukraine should go after the “ghost tankers” used by Russia and further apply economic pressures. Things take a lot of time, however. It took 40 years after NATO to get unified Germany

Senator Coons (D-DE)

Need to have USAF patrolling the skies

And NATO troops protecting Ukraine

Full Ukraine security agreement

Putin is a gangster, and we have to stop him. The US should give Ukraine better cards with which to negotiate. It's a Ukraine decision not USA decision to determine whether Ukraine should be part of NATO.

USA should patrol the skies over Ukraine And at least the US should put Ukraine in NATO ON THE TABLE for discussion and not pre-emptively take it away.

Minister of Defense Finland

Europe purchasing of Russian energy assumed the energy revenue to Russia would be used for development but was used instead for war preparation and military buildup. In 2008 we failed to respond to Georgia. In 2014 we failed to protect Ukraine. And in 2022 we failed again to protect Ukraine. Weakness is provocative. For a few yards of land, the Russians are losing thousands ...not rational.

Need more sanctions on Russian energy to take away Chinese support for Russia via energy purchases. If we do that, that will become too much for Russia as it will significantly deplete the Russian cash flow. Need to pay .2% of GDP for preserving freedom in Ukraine. That is affordable. Russia and China goal is to wreck international rules and break alliances. To counter that, NATO will spend 5% of GDP—3.5% for base defense spending and 1.5% for additional defense/arms sales. That will increase spending to \$900 billion...and will bring Russia to table. The US-Finland Ice breaker production deal with USA is very good deal...4x cheaper built in Finland

General Kellogg

Europe has really stood up in support of Ukraine primary effort to end war. The balance for example, the USA has 700 advanced military patrol planes in Europe.... Russia has 400....

Europe stronger than assumed....

We could spend 5% but that's very high while USA is modernizing its nuclear weapons at the same time. We fund today war plans to do one war; but at the height of the Cold War, we planned to fight 2.5 wars simultaneously which was one in the Atlantic and one in the Pacific and then a contingency.

Senator Coons (D-DE):

Ukraine very innovative in fighting

Structural problem re enough troops is a problem. Other nations have given more funding than the USA has provided. If we stick to helping Ukraine Putin will not assume he can win and thus make a deal....

Russia rearming to go further into NATO territory. NATO must guarantee Ukraine territorial integrity Must show Russia that aggression doesn't work or pay off. Peace deal cannot be done too early and cannot be done without good security guarantees

The final panel of the Reagan Defense Forum (From rough notes not an official transcript)

Keane says give Ukraine long range missiles to take out drone factory. US needs to do surveillance by air under cease fire. Deploy US brigade for training as well. Also upgrade Ukraine industrial base. Their Ukrainian Flamingo missile has range but need better guidance. [Audience applauds when Panetta proposes to send Keane and not Witkoff.] Keane also says if Putin again rejects a deal, the US should immediately make stronger sanctions and send better weapons.

China policy.....

Panetta says you cannot be weak on Russia and tough and strong on China.

Mr. Wong on China: first year 2025 both used economic pressure but Trump got concessions so that is better. 2026 is going to be critical.....who gets a better deal late in 2026---US needs to derisk and reduce dependency on China.

Panetta: Cannot deal with China from weakness. Such as protect Taiwan and South China Sea, as well as Space/AI. There must be lines Xi cannot cross, and the US is strong in making that clear. Xi didn't like the US to put our Navy in the Pacific. But he also told me years ago, we can work together on some things like trade and the DPRK. Xi told Panetta that the US/China can cooperate.

Keane: new deal with China on trade and fentanyl & we will have to see how that goes. But once you get within 1500 miles the military advantage switches to China. The US needs more forward deployed forces. Need more defenses for the Western Pacific. Must get unmanned ships....indeed our manned Navy keeps the trade routes and water ways opened. Put 100,000s of drones in and around Taiwan. Capital ships will take 5-15 years to build. Signal to our adversaries what is important to the US as the SecDef said. And then we must have the will to undertake all these actions, and we benefit that there is consensus in Congress and the public on the Chinese threat.

Fox Reporter: Is the China threat overblown?

Wong says China has made it clear they will use economic force/ The production of weapons is to intimidate. Do not want to give the PRC control of first island chain. Taiwan is a jewel of democracy---only Chinese democracy in the world.

Keane—intimidation and coercion most likely PRC action, probably blockade or quarantine, air, or sea. Taiwan’s answer would be to call 1600 PA avenue. Xi thinks the US decision will be “No.” Then Japan, Korea, Australia pull back and give China what it wants.

Panetta: We have been governed by crisis and not by leadership for at least 20 years, especially the budget. We go with CRs and shutdowns and not leadership. We are paying more for interest on the debt vs the defense budget. And we have still not reformed immigration—yes, we control the border but have not changed our legal immigration system. If we do not get back to leadership, we will decline.

Wong: this is a providential nation. Leadership comes from many levels. Family. Community. And Reagan said we could lose our providence in one generation.

Keane: *Lessons on weakness. Our enemies saw the video of the US Afghan withdrawal and saw the US in retreat. And our Afghan allies gave up which is what happened. Our enemies saw us walk away from our friends, after spending nearly 20 years trying to protect them. What happens then? Putin thus invades Ukraine. Iran attacked US forces over 100 times prior to October 7. The admin had a recommended plan to go after +100 Iran targets. They said no. Then we got the attacks on October 7. The Biden administration then forbids huge amounts of weapons cannot go to Israel and we forbid Israel from going into various areas. Now the fear of adverse consequences is normal but one must have the spine to make the right decision.*

Guest Essay of the Week: Trump’s New National Security Strategy: Key Takeaways

The strategy outlines a more selective American role abroad, elevating domestic resilience and regional dominance over decades of expansive global commitments. By [Tom Ozimek](#)

The Trump administration’s new national security strategy lays out the clearest articulation yet of a second-term doctrine: the United States will no longer act as “Atlas,” with the global order on its shoulders, but will instead prioritize border control, industrial strength, and uncontested influence in the Western Hemisphere while approaching the rest of the world with sharper selectivity. Here are five major takeaways from the [strategy](#) and how they redefine America’s global posture—reshaping U.S. priorities in Europe, China and the Indo-Pacific, Ukraine, the Middle East, and the wider Western Hemisphere.

Europe: A Continent Urged to Reclaim Its Own Security

The strategy presents Europe as a region confronting structural challenges—mass migration, demographic decline, and political polarization—and suggests the continent risks “civilizational erasure” if it fails to reverse these dynamics. It calls on European governments to “regain [their] civilizational self-confidence” and assume far greater responsibility for their own security.

For Washington, this means a shift in role. The strategy states that the United States will continue supporting NATO allies, but primarily as a strategic coordinator rather than the continent’s default security guarantor. Instead of relying on U.S. troops and funding, Europe is expected to rebuild its defense capacity, stiffen its borders, and stabilize its politics. “We want to support our allies in preserving the freedom and security of Europe, while restoring Europe’s civilizational self-confidence and Western identity,” the document notes. “We will oppose elite-driven, anti-democratic restrictions on core liberties in Europe, the Anglosphere, and the rest of the democratic world, especially among our allies.”

This shift underpins the administration’s stated goal of pursuing a negotiated end to the war in Ukraine—a “core interest” needed to halt the drain on European economies and allow the United States to reallocate military and industrial resources to higher-priority regions. The document describes Europe as a region that is “strategically and

culturally vital” to the United States, with transatlantic trade identified as a key pillar of both the global economy and American prosperity.

“Not only can we not afford to write Europe off—doing so would be self-defeating for what this strategy aims to achieve,” the document states, adding that it is in the United States’ national interest for a Europe to be “strong” and to “work in concert with us to prevent any adversary from dominating” the region.

Beyond security burden-sharing, the strategy also calls for a broader realignment of Europe’s economic and political posture. This involves expanding U.S. access to European markets, strengthening commercial and defense ties with Central, Eastern, and Southern European nations, ending both the perception and reality of NATO as a perpetually expanding alliance, and pressing European governments to combat “hostile economic practices” such as mercantilist overcapacity, technology theft, or cyber espionage.

China: Competition Refocused Around Economic Power

Although the strategy affirms that China remains the United States’ chief long-term competitor, it frames the contest as primarily economic rather than military.

The document emphasizes restoring supply-chain sovereignty, securing critical technologies, controlling mineral flows, and rebuilding domestic industrial capacity through tariffs and reshoring incentives.

“In the long term, maintaining American economic and technological preeminence is the surest way to deter and prevent a large-scale military conflict,” the document states, suggesting that the Trump administration sees economic power as the backbone of deterrence. **While military commitments in the Indo-Pacific are to remain firm, the strategy calls on U.S. allies to take on far more responsibility for regional defense.**

The strategy notes that “the American military cannot, and should not have to, do this alone,” signaling a long-term burden shift that extends from Australia to Japan and South Korea, as well as to other existing and emerging partners in Southeast Asia. **The strategy declares that the United States will preserve a regional military presence capable of “denying aggression anywhere in the First Island Chain,” reaffirming commitments to Taiwan and regional stability—but as a joint responsibility among allies, not unilateral U.S. coverage.**

“America’s diplomatic efforts should focus on pressing our First Island Chain allies and partners to allow the U.S. military greater access to their ports and other facilities, to spend more on their own defense, and most importantly to invest in capabilities aimed at deterring aggression,” the document states.

“This will interlink maritime security issues along the First Island Chain while reinforcing U.S. and allies’ capacity to deny any attempt to seize Taiwan or achieve a balance of forces so unfavorable to us as to make defending that island impossible.”

The strategy also calls for “strong measures” to prevent any “potentially hostile power” from controlling the South China Sea, a vital shipping lane that China has increasingly sought to dominate.

The combined approach of rebalancing America’s economic relationship with China while maintaining a robust focus on deterrence “can become a virtuous cycle as strong American deterrence opens up space for more disciplined economic action, while more disciplined economic action leads to greater American resources to sustain deterrence in the long term.”

The strategy outlines a broad agenda for countering China’s global influence, including reducing U.S. dependence on Chinese manufacturing, tightening protections on advanced technologies, securing critical mineral supply chains,

and expanding economic and security cooperation with Indo-Pacific partners to ensure the region cannot be coerced or dominated by Beijing.

Ukraine: Negotiated Peace as Strategic Necessity

The strategy casts the Ukraine war as a major drain on European stability and U.S. strategic bandwidth, arguing that resolving the conflict is essential for rebalancing America's global posture.

“It is a core interest of the United States to negotiate an expeditious cessation of hostilities in Ukraine, in order to stabilize European economies, prevent unintended escalation or expansion of the war, and reestablish strategic stability with Russia, as well as to enable the post-hostilities reconstruction of Ukraine to enable its survival as a viable state,” the document states.

The document describes Europe as increasingly strained by the conflict, noting that Russian aggression has left European states deeply unsettled—with many Europeans now regarding Russia as an “existential threat.”

“Managing European relations with Russia will require significant U.S. diplomatic engagement, both to reestablish conditions of strategic stability across the Eurasian landmass, and to mitigate the risk of conflict between Russia and European states,” the document states.

At the same time, the document faults certain European governments for maintaining “unrealistic expectations for the war” while suppressing political opposition, arguing that this has prevented the public's desire for peace from translating into policy.

Pursuing a negotiated settlement is portrayed in the document not as abandonment of Ukraine but as a prerequisite for a stable Europe capable of reforming itself and resuming its role as a reliable ally.

While the document does not outline a settlement plan, it characterizes the conflict as one Europe must increasingly manage, with Washington playing a supporting rather than leading role.

The new approach fits into the broader doctrine of reducing “forever global burdens,” pivoting away from the expectation that the United States should shoulder the long-term defense of other regions.

Western Hemisphere: A ‘Trump Corollary’ to the Monroe Doctrine

A central pillar of the new doctrine is a key geographic reorientation toward the Western Hemisphere, with the strategy explicitly reviving and updating the Monroe Doctrine.

“The United States must be preeminent in the Western Hemisphere as a condition of our security and prosperity—a condition that allows us to assert ourselves confidently where and when we need to in the region,” the strategy states, arguing that U.S. strength at home and abroad depends on securing the hemisphere first.

To that end, the document introduces a “Trump Corollary” to the Monroe Doctrine, pledging to block foreign adversaries—implicitly China—from acquiring key ports, telecommunications systems, or infrastructure across Latin America.

It calls for expanded naval and Coast Guard operations, aggressive targeting of drug cartels—including potential lethal force—and greater commercial engagement to displace foreign investment.

“We want a Hemisphere that remains free of hostile foreign incursion or ownership of key assets, and that supports critical supply chains,” the document states. “And we want to ensure our continued access to key strategic locations.”

Part of the administration's assertive hemispheric strategy entails ensuring regional stability and governance to discourage mass migration to the United States and crack down on cartels, "narco-terrorists," and other criminal networks whose operations harm U.S. communities.

Middle East: Security Commitments Without 'Nation-Building'

The strategy places the Middle East in a different category from earlier eras of U.S. foreign policy—still strategically relevant, but no longer a theater for open-ended military or political engineering.

The document argues that decades of large-scale interventions and state-building efforts delivered little lasting stability and often diverted U.S. resources from higher-priority regions. Going forward, Washington's approach is defined by a narrower set of objectives: protecting vital waterways, defending key partners, containing terrorism, and preventing adversaries from establishing footholds that threaten global energy security or U.S. interests.

"America will always have core interests in ensuring that Gulf energy supplies do not fall into the hands of an outright enemy, that the Strait of Hormuz remain open, that the Red Sea remain navigable, that the region not be an incubator or exporter of terror against American interests or the American homeland, and that Israel remain secure," the document states.

"We can and must address this threat ideologically and militarily without decades of fruitless 'nation-building' wars," it continues. "We also have a clear interest in expanding the Abraham Accords to more nations in the region and to other countries in the Muslim world."

The strategy notes that the shift in American foreign policy towards the Middle East is driven by the fact that the region is "no longer the constant irritant, and potential source of imminent catastrophe, that it once was," and is instead emerging as a place of investment and partnership. Overall, Trump's new strategy codifies a worldview in which U.S. power remains formidable but more narrowly concentrated. It demands greater self-reliance from allies, reduces America's footprint in distant theaters, and seeks to restore national strength by focusing first on closer-to-home priorities like border security, industrial revival, and stability in the Western Hemisphere.

Events of the Week

Adam Lotner and Peter Huessy: NIDS Seminar on the Abolition Trilogy: Oppenheimer, Sorensen and Dynamite. [31HS Hollywood vs. Reality: Nuclear Deterrence in the Age of Dynamite and Oppenheimer](#)

The EAR's Year in Review

For 2025, the Administration and Congress successfully upgraded the investment in nuclear deterrence, largely following the recommendations of the 2023 Strategic Posture Commission. This included adding \$1 billion to the Sentinel and B21 as well as major investments in the Columbia class submarine fleet, the hull of which was just recently delivered to the shipyard in Groton, Connecticut. The US is investing in a nuclear capable sea launched cruise missile and in the nuclear capable F-35 for the extended defense of NATO. The US continues to seek a cease fire between Ukraine and Russia, but Moscow maximalist and unlawful demands continue to prolong the conflict. And in a direct rebuff of China, the US is seeking to end most of the drug trafficking from Venezuela that also includes ending the Chinese production of precursor chemicals for Fentanyl.

In a new development, the administration with the support of Congress moved quickly to secure a plan and architecture for a Golden Dome missile and air defense for the United States and its allies.

Iran's nuclear capability was largely destroyed. Australia and the Republic of Korea are building with US cooperation a nuclear powered submarine force. The ROK President has ruled out seeking a nuclear weapons capability, although a significant majority of Korean citizens want such a deterrent. Japan has doubled its defense budget and has warned that any Chinese aggression against Taiwan would be a serious danger to Japan's security, a warning from the Japanese Minister that pushed China into a series of diplomatic blunders.

The US administration has secured minerals development and milling agreements with ROK, Japan, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand, while also laying out a mapping, mining and milling minerals plan that Epoch Times reports has pulled the rug out from under the Chinese rare earth minerals monopoly, giving the US much needed leverage on trade.

Updated Essay of the Week:

The Nuclear Abolition Trilogy: Bad Ideas for a Dangerous World

by Peter Huessy, Senior Fellow, the National Institute for Deterrence Studies

Dynamite is a new movie about a single nuclear tipped missile attack against the United States. The attacker is not identified. The attacker is unknown, although it could be a terrorist group like Al Qaeda. Maybe North Korea or Iran. Even the real bad guys, Russia or China.

The United States finds itself in this nuclear pickle because a lot of things we normally do in response to or prevent such an attack are not possible. The movie producers rigged the story so the US ends up helpless only knowing one thing: our BMEWS and X-Band radars systems are tracking a missile streaking over the Pacific and headed right for Chicago but we have no idea where the missile came from.

Why is that the case? A lot of questions immediately come to mind. Why would an enemy launch just one missile at the United States, knowing that our DSP—Defense Support Program—satellites would immediately know from where the missile was launched? And knowing this, the US Strategic Command in Omaha or the United States Air Force Global Strike Command in Barksdale, Louisiana would be able to retaliate at the command of the American President and take out the bad guys that launched the missile in the first place.

The movie fudges things by guessing that the satellite system was hacked or spoofed just when the missile was launched but nothing is confirmed.

This system of satellites and radar are the backbone of our nuclear deterrent. And have operated exactly as intended for upwards of 80 years, a detection capability that has prevented any such bomber or missile launch against the continental United States.

But the movie assumes the satellite system magically fails to work just as the attacking missile is launched so the United States has no idea what country or government or terror group launched the missile in the first place. Implicitly letting the audience know that maybe this might happen in the real world. And thus, deterrence could easily breakdown because some attacker might roll the dice, hack the satellite, and could assume the US won't retaliate against an enemy the US can't identify. They would have to assume the DSP technology actually failed or was hacked but it would not be able to detect a launch in the first place. But there is a risk the US after the fact determines where the launch originated from.

The second question would be why doesn't the United States missile defense command shoot down the one missile flying high over the Pacific ocean? The United States has intercepted such ballistic missiles nearly 20 times in demanding tests, including the last four in a row. The US and its allies, especially Ukraine and Israel, have also in the real world, successfully intercepted literally tens of thousands of drones, missiles and rockets with missile defenses and air defenses such as Patriot, THAAD, Aegis, Iron Dome, Arrow and David's Sling. Israel's military alone has knocked down and destroyed some 95% of the nearly 30,000 rockets and missiles launched by Iran, the Houthis, Hamas and Hezbollah at their country in the past two years.

Well, here is where the narrative takes another "rigged direction." The two interceptors launched from our missile defense system in Fort Greely, Alaska don't work—one fails to launch and the other interceptor fails to hit the incoming warhead. Even though the movie writer claims he understood that long range missile defense tests have worked 61% of the time, experts supposedly informed him the tests to date are scripted or rigged and thus not realistic.

In fact, the tests are perfectly normal, and high stressed. The interceptor has to find the target using on board seekers just as in the real world. A more realistic scenario would have been for the United States to launch 4 and not 2 interceptors. With a relatively high expectation of success. But alas, the Hollywood narrative must be one of US failure and incompetence, not heroism.

But there is another reason for the script making sure the interceptors do not work. The movie guides published by various nuclear abolition groups in synthesis with the movie folks gave the story away: they all emphasized that while it is rationale to think missile defenses would be the right thing for the United States to deploy---like Golden Dome---such systems are too expensive, won't work, will start an arms race, and will upset the strategic balance between the United States, Russia and China.

Thus, the deterrent American's have built to prevent a nuclear attack on the United States, and the insurance plan of missile defense built to take down an attack should deterrence fail, both do not work.

So, what is the United States left with? A sense of dread and helplessness. As the US cannot do anything to stop a nuclear bomb from detonating over the city of Chicago. Depending upon one's assumptions, some millions of people will perish or be casualties.

The movie was written by a veteran Hollywood movie maker, who has received many awards. She and the script writer, a former President of NBC News, recommended, when asked, that the United States should work on denuclearization, or the abolition of nuclear weapons. What first steps should be taken are not disclosed, or how to abolish nuclear weapons in even one nation let alone the nine now with such weapons. And during the time in which the abolition process takes place, the movie and its producers make no suggestions on how we sustain deterrence.

In a not dissimilar scenario, writer Annie Jacobsen in her 2023 book *Nuclear War: A Scenario* calls US nuclear deterrence strategy "mad" and "crazy." In interviews, Jacobsen also appears to recommend abolition. This theme of abolition was also the theme of the July 2023 movie *Oppenheimer*, which was the first of this anti-nuclear trilogy of movie, book and movie.

The *Oppenheimer* movie theme was that some of the top creators [such as Robert Oppenheimer] of the US nuclear bomb under the Manhattan Project subsequently were determined to get rid of all such weapons. But were not allowed to do so because of war mongers like Dr. Edward Teller who are blamed for developing the H-Bomb [1952] and thus starting an arms race that has left the United States in the helpless position as portrayed by *Dynamite*.

Not explained and left out of the movie is that the H-Bomb allowed the US to build a nuclear bomb small but powerful enough to be placed on a ballistic missile in both an invulnerable submarine and a land based silo. That force of Polaris, Poseidon, Trident and Minuteman missiles gave the United States both a prompt counterforce and an assured second strike capability that ungirded US nuclear deterrent strategy since at least 1958 when the first Polaris submarine went to sea and 1962 when Minuteman first went on alert. And kept US deterrence on solid ground for the past six-plus decades.

It is true that President Reagan at Camp David in 1983 did speak about the movie War Games. But what he noted was that the US needed to do something about improving nuclear command and control. As for arms reductions, President Reagan had already announced in November 1981 the US proposal to eliminate all INF missiles and to cut US and Soviet deployed strategic arsenals by 50% under the START I initiative. To say nothing about how the President had supported as early as 1976 when addressing the Committee on the Present Danger the idea of the US significantly reducing nuclear weapons.

It should be acknowledged that the major nuclear "arms control" groups at that time of President Reagan's proposals to cut nuclear forces, were supporting not reductions but the nuclear freeze, which was also endorsed by the USSR, as the Soviets were nearly completed their nuclear force modernization while the US was just beginning. These same groups complained the American INF and START I proposals were a "trick"---arguing that knowing the USSR would reject the proposals would leave the administration free to continue an arms race while modernizing our nuclear arsenal.

On these critical issues President Reagan was right and the arms control folks were wrong.

The screen writer for *Dynamite*, however, made his most serious mistake in describing missile defense programs as seeking an "impenetrable shield." Actually, missile defense was supported to make any disarming pre-emptive attack on the USA to be vastly more complicated (and thus less likely to happen). And if a single missile were launched by a rogue operator or terrorist group, it could be intercepted as the task would be vastly simpler than trying to stop a massive attack.

Contrary to the movie's script, missile defense was not designed to let the US ignore nuclear issues. Missile defense support faced straight on the possible coercive or blackmail leverage of nuclear weapons, seeking to make missiles obsolete as weapons of diplomacy or war. The Global Protection Against Limited Strikes (GPALS) or the Accidental Launch Protection System (ALPS), proposed by Presidents George Herbert Walker Bush and Boris Yeltsin, respectively, were designed precisely to meet such a threat. In fact, the American program executive office for missile defense was named GPALS in 2018.

There is no available alternative to deterrence, such as a path to abolition. While South Africa did finally give up its nuclear weapons in 1989, no other nation has since. Thankfully, the Reagan administration rejected the nuclear freeze, and modernized America's nuclear deterrent, which is the deterrent we now have, without which we would have eventually disarmed as our weapons would have rusted to obsolescence.

ICBM News of the Week

Sentinel shifting to Golden Dome under NDAA, GOP senators say **Sentinel shifting to Golden Dome under NDAA, GOP senators say - ExchangeMonitor**

By: Sarah Salem for the Exchange Monitor // December 02, 2025

North and South Dakota Sens. John Hoeven (R) and Mike Rounds (R), respectively, said the Northrop Grumman future intercontinental ballistic missile Sentinel will be under the Golden Dome project in upcoming defense bills.

"The project itself, it will be a part of an Iron Dome project, or a Golden Dome Project," Rounds told the Exchange Monitor in the halls of the Capitol in Washington Tuesday. "So, Sentinel is moving." The Air Force had not responded to a request for comment by press time on Tuesday. The direct reporting portfolio manager (DRPM) for Golden Dome is Space Force Gen. Michael Guetlein, while the White House last month nominated Lt. Gen. Dale White for his fourth star as the DRPM for Sentinel and the Northrop Grumman B-21 Raider stealth bomber, as well as the Boeing F-47 fighter and Air Force One.

The Golden Dome was originally dubbed "[Iron Dome for America](#)," after Israel's Iron Dome defense system. It is part of an executive order by President Donald Trump in [January](#). The order stated the Dome is intended to defend against hypersonic, cruise and nuclear-armed ballistic missile threats and a "countervalue attack by nuclear adversaries." While similar in name to Israel's system, the Golden Dome bears more similarities to former President Ronald Reagan's "Star Wars" initiative, which was never realized but envisioned a space-based missile defense system as well.

The Sentinel is the Air Force's future silo-based, ground-based strategic deterrent component of the nation's nuclear triad, and a nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM). Hoeven, when asked by the Monitor where and why Sentinel was moved under the Golden Dome project, said "if you think about it, Sentinel is Golden Dome right now." "What protects us from any type of incoming missile or nuclear attack is Sentinel," Hoeven said. "In other words, people know that they don't dare mess with this because nobody can take us and our nuclear arsenal. So that is what's protecting us today.

And so, the concept behind Golden Dome is to build on that and actually have counter drone, anti-ballistic missile and all those kinds of things as well." Hoeven added, "the fundamental Golden Dome today is Sentinel, so it's just a logical extension of that." When asked if that extension applied to today's Minuteman III, the current Boeing-made ICBMs Sentinel would replace, Hoeven said, "We'll see, but remember Sentinel is the continuity of that. It's really all the same. So, timing? We'll see." Hoeven also said there would be aspects of this shift in the 2026 National Defense Authorization Act and fiscal 2026 defense appropriations.

Sentinel will eventually replace Minuteman III sometime in the 2030s while the Minuteman III is still commissioned. The last Minuteman III was originally expected to be decommissioned in the mid-2030s, but Maj. Gen. Stacy Jo Huser, commander of the 20th Air Force in the Air Force Global Strike Command, told the Monitor in January Minuteman III would now be decommissioned by at least 2050.

Trump wants the Golden Dome completed by the end of his term

Events of the Week

The EAR on Wednesday December 3rd spoke on CBS Radio “Eye on the World” hosted by John Batchelor on the Chinese nuclear expansion and the CCP recent nuclear “White Paper.”

On December 5th, the EAR and NIDS VP Adam Lotter both spoke at a NIDS nuclear deterrent seminar on the movie “Dynamite” and the campaign to abolish nuclear weapons. Link provided above.

On December 11th, the EAR will speak at the Gold Institute at the University Club on the nuclear dangers on the Korean peninsula and the ROK response.

On the 12th, from 10-11am, the EAR will host a NIDS nuclear seminar on the new NIDS report on nuclear deterrence and the US nuclear posture.

A Look at the Document Archives

As we look at 2025 in review, the EAR reviewed two documents from some time ago, 2012 and 2014, to see what analysts were thinking. Admiral Rich Mies wrote a review of the status of the US nuclear deterrent which remains as a profound and on-target such analysis. Link is below and an excerpt.

On the other hand, the Carnegie Endowment posted essay on Iran speaks hopefully of a new supposed “moderate” Iran leadership and projects that US-Iran relations can markedly improve, including putting together a nuclear agreement, which indeed was done with the 2015 JCPOA. However, as we now know, the agreement was a smokescreen behind which Iran hid a continued advancement toward the production of nuclear weapons capability, while never implementing the key requirements which was to fully reveal military aspects of their nuclear program, Excerpt is below.

Carnegie Endowment 2014

After years of tension, sanctions, and deadlocked negotiations, **Hassan Rouhani, Iran’s relatively moderate new president, has provided an opening for improved relations between the Islamic Republic and the West. While Rouhani has not ushered in a new Iran; Tehran has adopted a more conciliatory tone on its nuclear program since he took office.** This shift is more than just talk, but the West will have to carefully calibrate its response to determine whether Rouhani’s changed rhetoric signals the beginning of a new direction for Iran.

Key Themes

- Tehran’s pursuit of a nuclear program can only be understood by looking at all four dimensions of Iranian politics—power, ideology, norms, and communication.
- Iran’s power dynamics and ideology are fueled by a fundamental antagonism with the West, making compromise in these areas unlikely.
- Iran does not accept all the norms governing today’s international system, but it claims to advance the aims of global nonproliferation.
- Rouhani has adopted a new approach to communication, indicating that **Iran is willing to increase its nuclear transparency, exploring new channels of communication with the West, and showing signs of wanting to open Iran up to the world.**
- **Iran has concluded an interim nuclear agreement with several global powers, which is a positive step toward** resolving the nuclear dispute and perhaps

toward improving relations more broadly.

By capitalizing on the changes Iran's new president has wrought—and by respecting those areas in which compromise is unlikely—Western policymakers may be able to find potential areas of agreement. Accepting that improvements in Tehran's communication on the nuclear issue are not “just talk” but a serious beginning on the way to compromise is key. The P5+1 should now focus on finding a common understanding in the norms dimension, with agreement on Iran's nuclear program being only the first step. Even if Iran's power rivalries are here to stay and Westerners have little chance of changing the Islamic Republic's ideology, reaching a lasting agreement on the rules of the international game would be a major success. [Editor's Note: Iran is dedicated to Islamic revolution which is hardly consistent with rules of the international game!]

Writer Cornelius Adebahr is an associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, DC. His research in part focuses on the European Union's role in the negotiations over Iran's nuclear program.

**Highly Recommend: From Admiral (Ret) Rich Mies, former Commander, US Strategic Command:
The Transformation of Warfare**

No discussion of deterrence strategy in the 21st century can be meaningful without a clear understanding of how nuclear weapons have revolutionized and transformed warfare. In a small book written at the dawn of the nuclear age, a group of scholars drew some profound and prescient conclusions about the significance for human warfare of what they termed “the absolute weapon.” The authors recognized that the atom bomb was revolutionary and fundamentally different from conventional weaponry. Pound for pound, nuclear weapons were several million times more potent; no adequate defense against them was known or foreseen to exist; and some proliferation of nuclear weapons technology to other nations was inevitable, barring international control. One of the most insightful, fundamental conclusions they reached reflected the atom bomb's revolutionary nature: “Thus far the chief purpose of our military establishment has been to win wars. From now on its principal purpose must be to avert them.



USW_Spring_2012.p
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**Issues for 2026/2028: Restraint or Intervention and American Security Policy: Remarks of General H.R.
McMaster at the Hoover Institute:**

Some have suggested that U.S. foreign policy should be one of retrenchment. America should withdraw U.S. forces from Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan, reduce other military commitments to alliances like NATO, and shrink the presence of U.S. forces overseas. The bywords for retrenchment are *restraint* and *offshore balancing*.

Retrenchment, supporters argue, would not only reduce costs, but also *improve* American security.

The argument for retrenchment is an archetype of strategic narcissism because it disregards the agency that other nations have over the future course of events. In this view, other states have no authorship over their future, no aspirations or objectives of their own. The most adamant advocates of disengagement believe that the United States is the principal *cause* of the world's problems. Our presence abroad, they argue, *creates* enemies. Our absence would restore harmony.

The United States, therefore, is to blame for antagonizing Russia and China. America, they believe, causes jihadist terrorism because Americans' presence in predominantly Muslim countries generates a natural backlash. The United States drives nuclear proliferation, they feel, because states like Iran and North Korea need those weapons to defend against an overly aggressive United States.

But history makes clear that American behavior did not cause Russian and Chinese aggression, jihadist terrorism, or the hostility of Iran and North Korea. Nor would disengagement solve any of those challenges.

While retrenchers are correct that American military history contains examples of unwise or inept interventions, they fail to acknowledge cases where disengagement led to costlier interventions.

For example, our 2011 withdrawal from Iraq set conditions for the rise of ISI and a humanitarian and refugee crisis of colossal scale. Disengagement permitted the establishment of a terrorist caliphate the size of Great Britain and required a subsequent five-year-long military campaign to regain control of that territory.

There are other compelling examples in American history. It would have been far cheaper to maintain a military presence on the Korean Peninsula beyond 1950 than it was to fight a costly three-year war after the North invaded. Today it is much cheaper to deter Russia or China with strong alliances and forward-positioned American forces than it would be to bear the costs of a catastrophic war triggered by Kremlin or Chinese Communist Party aggression.

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic reinforced a fundamental lesson of the September 11 mass murders: threats that originate abroad, if not checked, can move rapidly across our world. Once they penetrate our shores, the cost to the American people can prove difficult to bear.

The United States must possess the confidence to sustain a foreign policy based on the reality that American security and prosperity at home depend on sensible engagement abroad.

The retrenchers are correct when they argue that the American way of life or style of democratic government cannot be imposed upon others, but support for democracy and the rule of law is the best means of promoting peace and competing with those who promote authoritarian, closed systems. Free and open societies are a natural defense against hostile and authoritarian powers. The United States and other nations should continue to promote basic and unalienable rights while recognizing that they cannot be the guarantor of those rights.

It is clear that there is work to do at home to overcome the triple crises of a pandemic, an economic recession, and the social divisions laid bare by George Floyd's murder. But our efforts to learn from those crises, improve our nation, and regain confidence in what Americans hold dear should not encourage retrenchment. Introspection should provide an opportunity to clarify what Americans stand for and what Americans must defend— individual liberty, the rule of law, freedom of expression, democratic governance, tolerance, and opportunity for all.

Internation Strategic Development

Chinese Nuclear White Paper

In a white paper on arms control published last week, China's State Council Information Office said that "certain countries continue to adjust their nuclear policies, stubbornly maintaining massive nuclear arsenals, enhancing nuclear deterrence and combat capabilities, **thereby heightening the risk of global nuclear conflict,**" according to Bloomberg News, which described the document **as a "veiled swipe" at the United States for plans to change** its nuclear policies, including the possible resumption of atomic weapons testing.

[Home News](#) [MFA News](#) China releases white paper on arms control in new era

India Nuclear Armed Submarine

"INS Aridhaman, a Made-in-India nuclear ballistic submarine, to be commissioned soon: Navy Chief,"

U.S. Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program: "Exciting times for the future District of Columbia (SSBN 826), the first of its class! Constructed by Newport News Shipbuilding, the bow has arrived at Electric Boat for Assembly. BZ to the shipbuilders for their expertise and dedication in advancing submarine technology!"

And NNSA Administrator Brandon Williams: posted: "President Trump's Genesis Mission provides a clear mandate, and NNSA is responding with immediate action. We are ready to work with the brightest minds across the nation to ensure that America continues to lead in AI and its critical applications."

At a NATO conference in Brussels on Wednesday, European foreign ministers pledged that their countries would continue substantial additional purchases of U.S. arms for Ukraine.

Missile Defense Updates

The Missile Defense Agency announced that over 1,000 companies had qualified to supply technology for the Golden Dome missile defense system, though only those who receive orders later will get a piece of a prize pool worth up to \$151 billion.

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GUEST ESSAY: PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH IS WORTH PAYING FOR WALL STREET JOURNAL, DEC. 3, PG. A15 | SEN. MITCH MCCONNELL (R-KY)

What time is it in America? "This is a 1939 moment. Or, hopefully, a 1981 moment. A moment of mounting urgency," Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth recently said. He is right about the gathering threats to America's national security. But the lesson of 1939 is that fighting war is far costlier than deterring it. Defeating the Axis powers saw U.S. defense spending hit 37% of gross domestic product.

The defense budget request for fiscal 2026 from the Office of Management and Budget shows America risks forgetting this hard-won lesson. If our goal is to make this a "1981 moment" -- as in the first year of the Reagan administration, when under-investment in the U.S. military was turned around -- we must deliver more consistent support for defense. President Reagan's peace-through-strength Cold War budgets allocated about twice as much as we spend now as a percentage of GDP. Today, in the face of many significant adversaries, spending more on defense is simply necessary. It must not be controversial.

I urged President Trump at the beginning of his second term to reject calls to narrow the scope of U.S. strategic interests and to invest in the armed forces and defense industrial base. Mr. Trump rightly disregarded the advice of isolationists and conducted decisive strikes against Iran while sustaining the Aukus partnership with Australia and the U.K. The president wants the best possible military for America and has set ambitious priorities such as a comprehensive missile defense, aka Golden Dome, and a shipbuilding renaissance. I have supported him in these endeavors.

But with 59 days until interim government funding runs out, it remains to be seen whether Mr. Trump's administration and Congress will seize the opportunity provided by the Senate's full-year defense appropriations bill for 2026 and invest accordingly. Senior Pentagon officials have expressed a commitment to rebuilding American hard power. **But others in the administration have balked at the resources required for these overdue efforts.** In March, the president's budget advisers pushed the first-ever full-year continuing resolution for defense, effectively extending President Biden's anemic defense budget.

In June, OMB submitted a request for 2026 that would hold annual defense spending stagnant against inflation. In the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, administration officials then created budgetary chaos by pressing Congress to squeeze multiyear efforts like shipbuilding into a one-time spending measure using a process known as budget reconciliation. This complicated maneuver left critical programs on the cutting-room floor. Pentagon leaders have since acknowledged that total 2025 shortfalls after reconciliation exceed \$25 billion.

Presidential priorities like Golden Dome and restoring shipbuilding are necessary to keep America safe, but they will fail without sustained long-term investment. In recent weeks, Pentagon officials have acknowledged a \$20 billion to \$30 billion shortfall in critical munitions. Despite the complaints of senior administration officials about our limited production capacity, the administration's 2026 budget request failed even to make use of that capacity to begin addressing the issue. Pentagon leaders now seem eager to support multiyear procurement to address the challenges ahead, but these plans are wishful thinking without additional funding.

By independent estimates, Golden Dome alone could cost upward of \$3.5 trillion over the next 20 years, but the program is likely underfunded even this year. The president announced his selection of a sixth-generation fighter aircraft for the Air Force, the F-47, but this program is underfunded in 2026 by \$500 million. Pentagon dithering over the Navy's sixth-generation fighter, the F/A-XX, has delayed its development and led to hundreds of millions in contract-extension costs. **If the department made a decision, Mr. Trump could launch a program that ensures the aircraft carrier remains America's premier power-projection platform for decades.**

The pace of military operations in the Middle East and Western Hemisphere has also exacerbated a shortfall in operations and maintenance, another consequence of the full-year continuing resolution. Combine that with the shortfall for Navy ship operations and the total operations and maintenance shortfall likely exceeds \$2 billion.

These shortfalls aren't breaking news. They are why the Senate passed, 77-20, a National Defense Authorization Act delivering \$32 billion above the OMB request and on top of the money authorizers included in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

The Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, which I chair, worked with Pentagon leaders to build in an extra \$7 billion to address urgent munitions requirements. It included nearly \$8 billion to address shortfalls from reconciliation. And it addressed billions of dollars in unfunded requirements submitted by the armed services and combatant commands. To do so, we set our top line at \$21.7 billion above the administration's 2026 request.

As we look ahead to conferencing this bill with the House, Congress ought to ensure that this higher allocation is what the president signs into law. Mr. Trump's advisers should encourage him to help Congress pass a defense appropriations bill that makes the historic investments needed to restore peace through strength.

A full-year bill capped at the OMB-requested level or another full-year continuing resolution would be devastating to the U.S. military. And it would imperil the president's military legacy.

--Mr. McConnell, a Republican, is a U.S. senator from Kentucky.

From the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists:

Another “lets always blame America first” episode:

The recent decisions by Finland and Sweden to join NATO and defense cooperation agreements between the Nordic countries and the United States have also put Russia's Northern Fleet naval forces at risk. These forces can't be easily relocated, increasing the risk of a missile crisis in Northwest Russia, near the Barents Sea. Simply put, a variety of military agreements now give the United States the ability to quickly deploy missiles in Norway and Finland that could reach Russia's Northern Fleet and other strategic assets in a matter of minutes. Any decision to make such a deployment could create a Cuban Missile Crisis situation between NATO and Russia that could lead to war. The defense cooperation agreements that the United States signed with the Northern European countries have certainly advanced US security interests. But their implementation could lead to a more dangerous situation in which conventional forces—not limited by any agreements—may alter the effective balance of strategic forces in the region.

[Editor's Note: Russia could deploy their submarines at sea as the US does, with those remaining on base certainly able to be destroyed.] However, the essay goes on to say “To increase the availability of its submarines, Russia's military doctrine considers a submarine at the pier as being on combat duty if its equipment and crew are ready to start the pre-launch preparations. This allows the submarine to potentially launch ballistic or cruise missiles directly from the pier if necessary.” [Read more.](#)

Cinema ModeOff

The Multi-Front War with Ken Abramowitz

[The Multifront War with Ken Abramowitz](#)

Threat analyst, Ken Abramowitz joins us today to talk about the many threats and challenges to western civilization from multiple enemies like, Iran, China and Russia. Save the West: <https://savethewest.com/> The Multifront War: <https://tinyurl.com/4n68nbfc> Sun City Silver and Gold: sovereignize@protonmail.com Zstack Protocol: [https://zstacklife ...](https://zstacklife...)

Trump strategy shifts from global role and vows 'resistance' in Europe

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, DEC. 5 | SHAUN TANDON

President Donald Trump laid out a radical realignment of US foreign policy Friday, shifting the longtime superpower's focus from global to regional, brutally criticizing Europe as facing "civilizational erasure" and putting a top priority on eliminating mass migration.

The national security strategy, meant to flesh out Trump's norms-shattering worldview, elevates Latin America to the top of the US agenda in a sharp reorientation from longstanding US calls to focus on Asia to face a rising China.

"In everything we do, we are putting America First," Trump said in a preamble to the long-awaited paper. Breaking with decades of attempts to be the sole superpower, the strategy said that the "United States rejects the ill-fated concept of global domination for itself. "It said that the United States would also prevent other powers, namely China, from dominating but added: "This does not mean wasting blood and treasure to curtail the influence of all the world's great and middle powers."

The strategy called for a "readjustment of our global military presence to address urgent threats in our Hemisphere," starting with migration. "The era of mass migration must end," the strategy said. The strategy made clear that the United States under Trump would aggressively pursue similar objectives in Europe, in line with far-right parties' agendas. In extraordinary language in addressing close allies, the strategy said the administration would be "cultivating resistance to Europe's current trajectory within European nations."

Germany quickly hit back, saying that it does not need "outside advice. "The strategy pointed to Europe's slide in share of the global economy -- which is the result largely of the rise of China and other emerging powers -- and said: "This economic decline is eclipsed by the real and starker prospect of civilizational erasure. "Should present trends continue, the continent will be unrecognizable in 20 years or less."

Trump seeks an end to the Ukraine war that would likely favor Russia gaining territory, the strategy accused Europeans of weakness and said the United States should focus on "ending the perception, and preventing the reality, of NATO as a perpetually expanding alliance."

Updated 'Monroe Doctrine'

Trump since returning to office in January has ordered sweeping curbs on migration, [illegal migration!] after a political career built on fanning fears that America's white majority is losing its status. The strategy speaks in bold terms of pressing US dominance in Latin America, where the Trump administration has been striking alleged drug traffickers at sea, intervening to bring down leftist leaders including in Venezuela, and loudly seeking to take charge of key resources such as the Panama Canal.

The strategy cast Trump as modernizing the two-century-old Monroe Doctrine, in which the then young United States declared Latin America off-limits to rival powers. "We will assert and enforce a 'Trump Corollary' to the Monroe Doctrine," it said. The strategy paid comparatively little attention to the Middle East, which has long consumed Washington. Pointing to US efforts to increase energy supply at home and not in the oil-rich Gulf, the strategy said: "America's historic reason for focusing on the Middle East will recede. "The paper said it was a US priority for Israel to be secure but stopped short of the fulsome language on Israel used even in the first Trump administration.

China still competitor

On China, the strategy repeated calls for a "free and open" Asia-Pacific region but focused more on the nation as an economic competitor. After much speculation on whether Trump would budge on Taiwan, the self-ruling democracy claimed by Beijing, the strategy made clear that the United States supports the decades-old status quo but called on allies Japan and South Korea to contribute more to ensure Taiwan's defense from China. The strategy predictably puts little focus on Africa, saying the United States should transition away from "liberal ideology" and an "aid-focused relationship" and emphasize goals such as securing critical minerals.

Facing Facts & Rolling Back Mythologies: The New National Security Strategy
by Peter Huessy, Senior Fellow, National Institute for Deterrent Analysis

The new National Security Strategy is addressing some established foreign policy mythologies, a long overdue analysis. Though a relatively new way of laying out the US strategy, it was very important that it do so.

The biggest drawback of the strategy is the lack of assessment of what security danger Russia poses to the US and its allies even should the war in Ukraine be ended.

But the importance of the document is that it does address ten mythologies that have been largely conventional wisdom over the past many decades for the US foreign policy establishment. These are rejected by the Trump administration with many additional details part of Secretary War Hegseth's remarks at the Reagan Defense Forum on December 6th at the Simi Valley Reagan Library.

The most provocative section is the analysis of the direction which Europe has been moving---very low birthrates, massive and often illegal migration of people that reject western civilization, an absence of a commitment to defense spending, rejecting a robust nuclear deterrent and missile defense, (currently being adjusted), vastly too much regulation and government coercion (being partially undone with Brexit), and a deliberate policy of making energy expensive and scarce (also currently being partially rolled back).

Important is the high priority given to both nuclear deterrence and missile defense. After the breakup of the USSR, it was assumed nuclear weapons were largely irrelevant. And that Russia and China would become largely cooperative nuclear powers, such as with the Nunn-Lugar program cutting down "loose nukes" in the former USSR.

By 2010, the Nuclear Posture Review emphasized both the benefits of US restraint in nuclear deployment and seeking a general policy of seeking the eventual abolition of nuclear weapons.

The new strategy underscores how nuclear deterrence is and remains central to US security and for the need for major investments in nuclear modernization. In 1991, even with the collapse of the USSR, Senator Sam Nunn urged that the National Defense University Foundation (NDUF) continue a long standing program of Hill nuclear seminars as he warned that nuclear dangers were not going away and would certainly re-emerge. Instead, the elites went on a 40-year holiday from history and put nuclear investments at the bottom of the priority requirements for the past Cold War era.

The new strategy also jettisons the false assumption that missile defense is dangerous or destabilizing, firmly foot-stomping that defenses are a critical adjunct and insurance policy for the US as General Michael Guetlein Director of Golden Dome emphasized on December 6th at the Reagan Defense Forum.

The strategy also captures an entire series of economic initiatives that are critical to US security, for which it has been strangely criticized. In 1981, the National Governors Association assumed the US did not need a steel industry as we could always buy cheap steel from China. The new Japanese investment in the US steel industry and reshoring of US industry is a welcome rebuff to the multiple decade hollowing out of US manufacturing and heavy industry. And the key understanding that US mineral mapping, mining and milling is also critical to US security is also welcome, as the recent mineral/trade deals have made clear.

On the Middle East, the strategy rejects the false notion that as former President Clinton noted in 2014, terrorism was largely related to Israel failing to offer the Palestinians a state. And implicitly reject the idea that Islamic jihad is some kind of peaceful religious individual empowerment as opposed to an ideology of conquest and murder. Keeping Iran from dominating the Middle East hydrocarbon reserves and engaging in terrorism while also being allied with Israel are priorities which is a welcome change from the embrace of Oslo, "the peace process" and Palestinian demands.

The strategy's western hemisphere embrace is a welcome switch. For decades, the US assumed open borders was a welcome adjunct to US economic requirements. It was assumed migrants were largely agricultural workers, unrelated to a massive illegal drug and human trafficking business closely associated with a campaign of "unrestricted warfare" by China against the United States and also including North Korea, Iran, Russia and

Venezuela. And conventional wisdom assumed 100,000 drugs deaths a year was just the price one pays for a free and open society.

Critical to reforming our Western Hemisphere strategy is to understand the problem with an open border for agricultural workers is that it opens the borders to all potential “workers” including drug dealers and traffickers. And an open border with Mexico is also open to the rest of the world. That is why the section on Europe addresses that Europe is killing itself with mass migration of people that do not accept western civilization, but embrace Hamas and Jihad, condemn Israel, all of which itself will undermine the extent to which Europe can be an effective NATO ally and strengthen its western civilization heritage. As one top scholar recently surmised, Christendom may lose upwards of 1 billion or 50% of its adherents given current trends, especially in Europe, where hundreds of mosques are being built on top of what were Christian churches.

The requirement to keep Iran from its terrorism ways and its search for a nuclear weapons lever is also a welcome security plank. Gone is the strange notion the US engineered a coup in Iran in 1954 or that because Khomeini was a “man of the cloth” his regime was benign.

Gone too is the notion that scarce, expensive and hard to secure energy is a great idea as the former Secretary of Energy and green energy mandates assumed. Coupled with establishing secure sources of minerals, both mining and milling, as recent deals with Australia, Malaysia, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and others have done will further improve US security and end our reliance upon China for rare earth and other key minerals.

For decades, NATO did not even meet its own 2% of GDP for defense spending as an unstated assumption was that NATO was special and although 80 years removed from WWII, NATO was special and couldn’t spend a lot on defense because Europe had to have a huge welfare state to prevent another Hitler from coming to power.

The strategy also drowns the idea that military strength is provocative and unnecessarily aggressive, a widespread assumption embraced by foreign policy elites through the Cold War, the era of détente and peaceful coexistence and most loudly during the Reagan “peace through strength” military buildup, which of course successfully led to the end of the USSR which fundamentally was in fact an explicit economic war against the USSR, as outlined by Warren Norquist in his 2000 essay in the National Intelligentser. The extent to which the Reagan administration used economic measures to dissolve the USSR is seriously underappreciated and leads to a continued inability to understand how effective such measures could be especially as the US confronts two nuclear armed peer adversaries.

Warren Norquist details what Reagan confronted in 1981, not unlike what President Trump also faced when in 2025 taking office for a second time. “The incoming Reagan Administration faced many challenges: Western Europe was making loans to the USSR at half the normal interest rate. Sweden was buying restricted high technology needed by the Soviets and reselling the items with all the necessary instructions. Many western firms were selling restricted technology to companies fronting for the USSR. The technologies the Soviets could not buy they were trying to steal.

The USSR was earning hard currency by selling oil at three times its production cost. The USSR was earning hard currency by selling weapons to oil rich countries like Iran, Iraq and Libya. Europe was financing two gas pipelines from Siberia. If completed, West Germany, for instance, would become dependent on Moscow for 60 percent of its energy and Soviet hard currency earnings would double to \$60 billion per year. The Soviets had effectively taken over Angola and Mozambique, and the Soviet military was providing aid and advice to many countries in Africa.

U.S. military spending had declined from 9.2 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) under President John Kennedy in 1962 to less than 4.6 percent under President Jimmy Carter in 1979 according to the Federal Government Historical Budget, Tables 3.1 and 10.1.

In Nicaragua, the USSR financed equipment and thousands of trainers to ‘... build ... an army of 60,000 regulars backed by an equal number ... militia’ ... armed with heavy weapons.” The plan was to expand to 500,000 under arms according to General Jack Singlaub. The Soviets were positioning themselves to threaten Western Europe into less cooperation with the United States. And the USSR had invaded and was assumed to be winning in Afghanistan.”

The economic agenda for the new security strategy is very innovative but also most needed. The security strategy gets many things right especially including China, the Middle East, the Western Hemisphere as well as the twin defense needs of nuclear modernization and missile defense. Particularly welcome is the emphasis on preserving elements of Western civilization and the implied negative impact of rejecting religious faith, rejecting the need to acculturate legal immigrants and to halt illegal immigration and its companion twin evils of trafficking and drug running. .



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