

# 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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**Edition: Week of November 10, 2025**

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## ICBM EAR for the week of November 10, 2025

Prepared by Peter Huessy, President of Geo-Strategic Analysis, Potomac, Maryland and Senior Fellow, National Institute for Deterrence Studies (NIDS)

### Summary

The EAR this week has two of our recent seminars featuring Don Cook and Robert Peters detailing what the US government is doing re both strategic nuclear force modernization work within DoD and NNSA. That is followed by some interesting quotes and commentaries. Essays follow on whether the New START agreement should be extended along with a study by Keith Payne of NIPP re the state of the nuclear environment. An ICBM update including a video follow including information about the recent MMIII ICBM flight test. Bill Gert's lengthy report on the views of the new commander of US Strategic Command is included as well as an Epoch Times essay on whether China's drive to hegemonic status is working. Mr. Huessy writes on the Abolition Trilogy while Lawrence Kadish examines the recent Sec Def remarks on the industrial base. Some Congressional updates are included as well on the new agreement on funding and the current state of Hill retirements and redistricting. Finally, two Ramirez editorial cartoons about Congress end our report.

### News

***Congrats to Former Strategic Command head (Ret) Admiral Charles Richard who will become the new head of IDA, the Institute for Defense Analysis.***

### NIDS: Events of the Week

***Robert Peters, Heritage Foundation: video <https://youtu.be/KEO0Y0AwGgc?si=RjPuW4YS7pSgzlbE> and transcript:***



30HS Bob Peters  
Transcript.pdf

***Don Cook, former senior official with NNSA, Commentary on November 7, 2025, NIDS Nuclear Deterrent Seminars***

Video link: [https://youtu.be/7f3EzHP5C\\_s?si=O78V37m1F9HcxUp0s](https://youtu.be/7f3EzHP5C_s?si=O78V37m1F9HcxUp0s)

Transcript:



Transcript Don Cook  
seminar.pdf

## Quotes and Commentary of the Week

**James H. Anderson & David J. Trachtenberg:** The New START Treaty is a relic of a bygone era, and its expiration should be welcomed, not lamented. [Especially] given that China is unshackled from its limits, along with Russia's massive nuclear weapons buildup, violations of New START, frequent coercive nuclear threats, and desire to overturn the existing U.S.-led world order.

**Japanese Prime Minister:** "Japan is 'not at the stage' to comment on 3 non-nuclear principles."

**U.S. Strategic Command Deputy Commander Vice Adm. Richard Correll:** Would work with other Pentagon officials on the Golden Dome initiative to "ensure missile defense is effective against the developing and increasingly complex missile threats, to guarantee second-strike capability, and to strengthen strategic deterrence."

**Former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo:** "We shouldn't use the word competition and the Chinese Communist Party in the same sentence... The Chinese Communist Party wants to cut our heads off." Columbia University Forum, November 12, 2025

**Robert Peters (Heritage):** Without decisive prioritization and urgency, the U.S. risks falling behind adversaries in nuclear and missile defense capabilities. Heritage's roadmap calls for a multi-decade commitment to deterrence."

**From the archives: Former Secretary of State John Kerry:** History was supposed to have transcended the old-school hostilities and aggression of the past. Russia's 2014 aggression against Ukraine sprang not from an expansionist, aggressive agenda, but from its feelings of weakness. You see, Russia was more pathetic and unsophisticated than aggressive and expansionist. (From NIPP's new report on the strategic environment, posted below.)

## Strategic Congressional Developments

47 members of the House and Senate are not running for re-election and this includes 27 Republicans and 20 Democrats. Many members are seeking governorships and Senate seats, while others are retiring and not seeking other elected office.

Redistricting that has been completed may add 9 seats to the Republican House numbers and 6 to the Democrat numbers for a net gain of 3 for the GOP. Some other states considering redistricting have to go through constitutional amendments and that may take time pushing off any change until after the 2026 mid-term elections.

### **Congress Passes New CR: Refunding the Government: Some Notes**

**By a vote of 60-40, the US Senate approved funding for DoD and NNSA through January 30<sup>th</sup> at a Continued Resolution Level as well as full funding for the remainder of the fiscal year for FDA, for Agriculture, Veterans Administration and the Legislative Branch. Lindsey McPherson of the Washington Times explained** eight Senate Democrats showed their support on Sunday for a spending package to reopen the government through January in exchange for a vote next month on extending enhanced Obamacare subsidies that are set to expire at the end of the year. Those Democrats joined all but one Republican in approving a procedural vote needed to clear a filibuster on the spending package. The 60-40 vote earned the precise number needed to end the filibuster and begin the process of ending the 40-day government shutdown, which broke the record for the longest in history on Wednesday. "This was the only deal on the table," said Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, the New Hampshire Democrat who led the negotiations for her side. "It was our best chance to reopen the government and immediately begin negotiations" on Obamacare subsidies.

The spending package passed the Senate 60-40 and the House passed the bill 222-209. And the President signed the bill into law at an Oval Office signing ceremony. The spending package reinstates thousands of federal employees laid off during the shutdown and provides them with back pay. Other employees who have been furloughed or working without compensation will also receive back pay.

Even so, most Senate Democrats voted against the measure because it does not contain an extension of the enhanced Obamacare premium tax credits. The premium tax credits first created in the Affordable Care Act do not expire but expanded COVID-19 pandemic versions that Democrats enacted sunset on Dec. 31.

Those enhancements cap out of pocket costs at 8.5% of household income and cover families that earn more than 400% of the federal poverty level, currently \$62,600 for a single person or \$128,600 for a family of four. Many Republicans said the subsidies need to be overhauled so government money isn't used to pad the profits of insurance companies. I'm looking forward to seeing what solutions might be brought forward," Mr. Thune said.

"Regardless, as I have said for weeks to my Democrat friends, I will schedule a vote on their proposal, and I have committed to having that vote no later than the second week in December."

The new measure will include three full-year fiscal 2026 spending bills that fund the legislative branch and the departments of Agriculture and Veterans Affairs. The outstanding bills include funding for the departments of Defense, Homeland Security, Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, Energy, and Transportation.

### **Strategic International Developments**

**CNN reports: China** has embarked on a "massive expansion" of missile-related sites since 2020, strengthening its capacity to potentially deter the U.S. military and project dominance in the Indo-Pacific region.

**A French defense official** confirmed that the ASMPA-Renove nuclear-armed cruise missile has now officially entered service on the country's Navy Rafale M fighters

**NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte** responds to Russian dictator's nuclear threats© The New Voice  
His comments came amid Putin's statements about possible nuclear weapons tests in response to U.S. plans. Rutte emphasized the importance of NATO's nuclear capability for the alliance's security. He said NATO's nuclear deterrent is the main guarantee of safety, making it crucial that these forces remain "reliable, safe, and effective."

**On Oct. 26, Russia** announced a test of the long-range 9M730 Burevestnik cruise missile with a nuclear propulsion unit. Reuters later reported, citing Norwegian intelligence, that the missile was launched from the Arctic archipelago of Novaya Zemlya in the Barents Sea. On Oct. 29, Putin also announced the "successful" test of the Poseidon nuclear-powered underwater vehicle.

### **Administration Strategic Developments**

#### **"Lock and Load" by Lawrence Kadish**

U.S. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth knows something the rest of us should embrace.

For the last five years, Communist China's military spending has grown consistently. Published reports **suggest** annual budget increases of 6.8-7.2%, rising from approximately \$209 billion in 2021 to \$246 billion in 2025. And that is only what is reported. The real numbers are undoubtedly much higher.

In response, Hegseth has turned to America's defense industry and **told** them -- in no uncertain terms -- that they should consider production to be on a wartime footing. It is recognition that our nation's ability to design and field new weapons systems usually takes years, sometimes decades. If deterrence is to play a role in keeping China's pistol in its holster, we do not have the luxury of time.

China's enormous military investment has allowed it to modernize and strengthen virtually every facet of its armed forces. From naval expansion to personnel training to its nuclear arsenal, defense analysts note that China is **narrowing** the gap with the United States.

Of particular interest is China's growing nuclear stockpile, with [600](#) operational warheads this year. That is a doubling of warheads since the Center for Strategic and International Studies [report](#) issued in 2019. It will only grow in the decades to come.

Hegseth obviously sees highly classified information, so it would not be surprising that his mornings begin with conference calls to defense industry executives regarding the need for urgency, productivity and results. It is reported that he is looking at incentives for those firms that achieve his goals, while also identifying non-traditional defense contractors who know how to break through red tape.

America's planned "Golden Dome" anti-missile system is already being pursued at "wartime speed," but today's military threats are many and varied. Hegseth's "quick step" instructions to those who are tasked with developing our weapons will not only protect our nation but also send an unmistakable message to our adversaries that America will be forever vigilant.

*Lawrence Kadish serves on the Board of Governors of Gatestone Institute*

**Bill Gertz of the Washington Times writes** "The admiral slated to be the next commander of U.S. Strategic Command said recently that nuclear threats from [China](#) and other adversaries are 'unprecedented' and growing. Vice Adm. [Richard A. Correll](#), currently deputy commander at Stratcom, also warned [Congress](#) that [China's](#) rapid nuclear weapons expansion highlights the urgent need to fully modernize all elements of the aging U.S. nuclear arsenal. '[China's](#) ambitious expansion, modernization, and diversification of its nuclear forces has heightened the need for a fully modernized, flexible, full-spectrum strategic deterrence force,' Adm. [Correll](#) said in written answers to questions from the [Senate Armed Services Committee](#).

Here is the link: <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2025/nov/12/inside-ring-stratcom-nominee-nuclear-danger-growing/>

## **ICBM EAR 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. It is not a terrorist group like Al Qaeda. It is not necessarily North Korea or Iran. And apparently not the real bad guys, Russia or China.

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

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 in all likelihood 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.

That is called deterrence and in the nuclear deterrent business has operated perfectly for 80 years, preventing any such 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 and could assume the US won't retaliate against an enemy the US can't identify because our DSP technology failed to detect the launch in the first place.

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.

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 emphasize 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 Americans 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 don't work, and for the first time ever in the real world. The US has for decades known when a ballistic missile has been launched at the US or its allies. And the US has at least had some capability to intercept incoming missiles. But Dynamite—Hollywood—assumes nothing works.

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 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 abolition 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 how we sustain deterrence in the meantime.

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 enough to be placed on a ballistic missile in an invulnerable submarine that while at sea gave the United States an assured second strike capability that ungirded US nuclear deterrent strategy since at least 1958 when the first Polaris submarine went to sea. And prevented nuclear war.

*Read also on Warrior Maven:*

<https://warriormaven.com/news/community/the-nuclear-abolition-trilogy-bad-ideas-for-a-dangerous-world>

### **Guest Essays of the Week**

We provide two views re whether the Administration should accept Russia's offer to extend the New START treaty for an additional year. Former Biden Administration Official Pranay Vatta's essay and an excerpt from RUSE is here. Following that we post a new essay by James Anderson and David Trachtenberg of NIPP on the same subject arguing that New START should not be extended.

## **Pranay Vatta**

President Vladimir Putin's **offer** to maintain New START limits on US and Russian strategic nuclear forces for one more year deserves serious consideration by the Trump administration. However, rather than reflexively accepting what looks like an oasis in the arms-control desert of the new-nuclear era, US officials must consider why Putin is making this offer now. As part of a cold, serious analysis the Trump administration needs to establish its own priorities in a confrontational US-Russia relationship, its overall deterrence strategy and its nuclear arms control policy, and see whether Putin's proposal – or perhaps another deal – could serve those interests. In doing so, the US should take stock of what it can gain from Putin's offer, and what it risks losing if it rejects the deal in pursuit of something better.

Here is the link: <https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/beware-russia-bearing-arms-control-gifts>.

### **Time To End New START: The Treaty Is Not in America's Security Interest\***

#### **James H. Anderson**

*Dr. James H. Anderson is an adjunct faculty member at Missouri State University's graduate School of Defense and Strategic Studies.*

#### **David J. Trachtenberg**

*David J. Trachtenberg is Senior Scholar and former Vice President of the National Institute for Public Policy. Both served as Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Policy in the first Trump Administration.*

Various analysts and arms control proponents are salivating over President Trump's recent comment that Vladimir Putin's proposal to extend the numerical limits of the New START arms control treaty for one year after its formal expiration next February "sounds like a good idea."<sup>[1]</sup> Arms control advocates see New START—the last remaining strategic nuclear arms control treaty still in force—as a necessary brake on a nuclear arms race that could spiral out of control and lead to massive increases in nuclear weapons. Even foreign governments are urging Trump to agree to Putin's proposal and to negotiate further arms reductions. For example, the Austrian Foreign Ministry stated, "We welcome the readiness by Russia & the U.S. to adhere to the #NewSTART limits for a year after expiry. More nuclear weapons won't make anyone safer – neither the U.S., nor Russia nor the rest of the world. Let us use this time to get to deeper cuts through a new agreement."<sup>[2]</sup>

Such thinking is misplaced and naïve. It ignores the lessons of history, the extensive record of Russian arms control cheating, the disparity in Russian and U.S. nuclear modernization programs, and the wildly divergent strategic goals and objectives of both sides. New START also imposes no restrictions on China's burgeoning nuclear force while restricting America's flexibility to adapt its nuclear force posture to meet dynamic and increasingly demanding deterrence requirements. This includes preventing the United States from uploading nuclear weapons to strengthen deterrence in the face of extensive nuclear weapons buildups by both Russia and China. In short, the New START Treaty is not in America's national security interest and President Trump should kill it or at least let it die a natural death.

Here is why proponents of extending the treaty are mistaken. First, the treaty was negotiated 15 years ago when the relationship between Russia and the United States was thought to be improving. That world no longer exists. Since then, Russia has illegally annexed Crimea, invaded Ukraine, signed a "no limits" friendship treaty with China, expanded military cooperation with North Korea and Iran, launched aerial incursions into NATO airspace, upgraded its existing nuclear arsenal, developed more modern and exotic nuclear weapons unrestricted by any arms control agreement, and brandished nuclear threats against the United States, NATO, and Ukraine. Clearly, Russian actions belie Putin's expressed desire to avoid "steps that would undermine or disrupt the existing balance of deterrence."<sup>[3]</sup>

Second, Russia has been violating the treaty for years. Despite President Biden agreeing in 2021 to extend the treaty for five years, Moscow ceased allowing mandatory inspections required by New START in August 2022, effectively eviscerating the transparency and predictability that the treaty was intended to guarantee.<sup>[4]</sup> In February 2023, Russia officially "suspended" its participation in the treaty.<sup>[5]</sup> Moscow has reportedly armed some of its bombers with long-range cruise missiles, refusing to count them as strategic systems even though the treaty

makes them legally accountable. This would place Russia above the New START limits. And there is mounting evidence of other Russian missile and warhead deployments that exceed allowable New START levels.<sup>[6]</sup> It makes no sense to extend the numerical limits of a treaty when the other party is a serial violator of it.

Third, Moscow has been engaged in a massive, across-the-board nuclear modernization program that has resulted in the deployment of an up-to-date, sophisticated nuclear arsenal and has used coercive nuclear threats to deter the United States and NATO from providing more robust support to Ukraine. Early last year, Putin declared Russia's strategic modernization efforts to be 95 percent complete.<sup>[7]</sup> By contrast, the U.S. nuclear modernization program has been long delayed and is under constant siege by those who support an anti-nuclear, pro-disarmament agenda.<sup>[8]</sup> Moreover, virtually all U.S. nuclear forces are accountable under New START while thousands of Russian nuclear warheads are unconstrained by the agreement.<sup>[9]</sup> Given this gross asymmetry, the assertions of arms control advocates that New START is necessary to cap the "arms race" lacks credibility when only one side—Russia—is racing.

Fourth, the treaty is a bilateral agreement between the United States and Russia. China is not a party to it and its nuclear forces are unconstrained by its limitations. Beijing is engaged in an extensive, quantitative and qualitative nuclear expansion program that the former commander of U.S. Strategic Command has referred to as "breathtaking" and a "strategic breakout."<sup>[10]</sup> Indeed, the Department of Defense has considered China to be the "pacing threat" governing the development, acquisition, and deployment of U.S. military capabilities. Beijing has been developing and deploying nuclear capable systems—including intermediate-range nuclear forces—that the United States was prohibited from fielding for just over three decades because of its strict adherence to the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty it signed with Moscow.<sup>[11]</sup> China's consistent refusal to engage in arms control discussions with the United States exposes the fallacy of abiding by a treaty that allows the nuclear forces of America's main rival to grow unconstrained.

Fifth, continuing to abide by the numerical limits of New START will prevent the United States from uploading weapons on existing delivery platforms. As a recent National Institute for Public Policy study concluded, weapons upload is the only near-term and affordable option to strengthen deterrence against Russia and China in the face of their extensive nuclear modernization programs.<sup>[12]</sup> This is consistent with the 2023 bipartisan recommendations of the Strategic Posture Commission, which called on the Air Force and Navy to "[P]repare to upload some or all of the nation's hedge warheads" and to do so "with urgency."<sup>[13]</sup> Uploading nuclear weapons will also bolster the credibility of the U.S. extended deterrent and help assure allies in both Europe and Asia of America's unwavering commitment to their own security, especially in light of repeated coercive nuclear threats by Moscow and Beijing.

Sixth, continuing to lock the United States into strict numerical force levels limits U.S. flexibility to respond to changes in the overall strategic environment. In today's dynamic international environment, where the United States now faces not one, but two, major nuclear adversaries—both of which are significantly expanding their own nuclear weapons and capabilities—preventing the United States from adding, as necessary, to its nuclear force levels will ensure a period of U.S. nuclear inferiority vis-à-vis America's two main geopolitical rivals. When considering Moscow's and Beijing's escalatory nuclear threats and penchant for provocations, such a situation is the antithesis of stability, which is what the New START Treaty was supposed to promote.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, arms control treaties cannot address the profound underlying political differences that define the U.S.-Russian relationship. The United States has looked to arms control in general, and New START in particular, to enhance strategic stability. Yet, Russia is not interested in preserving the stability of a world in which the United States is the dominant power. Indeed, Russia is seeking to overturn the existing world order and displace the United States as the predominant global power.<sup>[14]</sup> Putin himself has declared that "a serious, irreconcilable struggle is unfolding for the development of a new world order."<sup>[15]</sup> Under these conditions, where the strategic goals and objectives of the parties are intractably at odds, the belief that arms control can benefit U.S. national security interests is wishful thinking at best and dangerous naivete at worst.

The New START Treaty is a relic of a bygone era, and its expiration should be welcomed, not lamented. Given that China is unshackled from its limits, along with Russia's massive nuclear weapons buildup, violations of New START, frequent coercive nuclear threats, and desire to overturn the existing U.S.-led world order, Washington should move expeditiously to strengthen its deterrent by fully modernizing its own ageing nuclear arsenal and deploying a robust Golden Dome missile defense system to protect the American people in the event deterrence fails.

After Biden extended New START, Putin suspended it. President Trump should not make the same mistake. The president should rethink his initial reaction to Putin's "good idea" and just say "nyet." It is time to end new START.

\* This is an expanded and adapted version of an article that originally appeared in *RealClearDefense* on October 10, 2025.

- [1] Andrea Shalal, "Trump says Putin's offer on nuclear arms control 'sounds like a good idea'," *Reuters*, October 5, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/trump-says-putins-offer-nuclear-arms-control-sounds-like-good-idea-2025-10-05/>.
- [2] MFA Austria, X Post, October 6, 2025, [https://x.com/MFA\\_Austria/status/1975265278444642357](https://x.com/MFA_Austria/status/1975265278444642357).
- [3] Xiaodon Liang, "Russia Proposes One-Year New START Extension," *Arms Control Today*, October 2025, <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2025-10/news/russia-proposes-one-year-new-start-extension>.
- [4] "Russia halts US inspections of nuclear arsenal under New START treaty," *BBC*, August 8, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-62466998>.
- [5] "Putin: Russia suspends participation in last remaining nuclear treaty with U.S.," *Reuters*, February 21, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/putin-russia-suspends-participation-last-remaining-nuclear-treaty-with-us-2023-02-21/>.
- [6] Mark B. Schneider, "Recent Evidence of Russian Arms Control Violations," *RealClear Defense*, September 12, 2025, [https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2025/09/12/recent\\_evidence\\_of\\_russian\\_arms\\_control\\_violations\\_1134367.html](https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2025/09/12/recent_evidence_of_russian_arms_control_violations_1134367.html).
- [7] "Putin says nearly all of Russia's nuclear forces have been modernized," *Reuters*, February 23, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/putin-says-95-russias-nuclear-forces-have-been-modernised-2024-02-23/>.
- [8] Robert Peters, "Modernizing America's Nuclear Arsenal," The Heritage Foundation, July 2, 2025, <https://www.heritage.org/defense/commentary/modernizing-americas-nuclear-arsenal>.
- [9] Pranay Vaddi, "Beware Russia Bearing Arms Control Gifts," *RUSI*, October 3, 2025, <https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/beware-russia-bearing-arms-control-gifts>.
- [10] Aaron Mehta, "STRATCOM Chief Warns Of Chinese 'Strategic Breakout'," *Breaking Defense*, August 12, 2021, <https://breakingdefense.com/2021/08/stratcom-chief-warns-of-chinese-strategic-breakout/>.
- [11] The Trump Administration withdrew the United States from the INF Treaty in August 2019 as a result of Russian cheating.
- [12] Dr. Keith B. Payne, et al., *A New Strategic Review for a New Age: 2025* (Fairfax, VA: National Institute Press, 2025), [https://nipp.org/monographs\\_cpt/a-new-strategic-review-for-a-new-age/](https://nipp.org/monographs_cpt/a-new-strategic-review-for-a-new-age/).
- [13] Madelyn R. Creedon Jon L. Kyl, et al., *America's Strategic Posture: The Final Report of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States*, October 2023, pp. 48, 99, <https://www.ida.org/-/media/feature/publications/a/am/americas-strategic-posture/strategic-posture-commission-report.ashx>.
- [14] David J. Trachtenberg, "Why Arms Control Must Fail," *Information Series*, No. 627 (Fairfax, VA: National Institute Press, June 12, 2025), available at [https://nipp.org/information\\_series/david-j-trachtenberg-why-arms-control-must-fail-no-627-july-12-2025/#\\_edn16](https://nipp.org/information_series/david-j-trachtenberg-why-arms-control-must-fail-no-627-july-12-2025/#_edn16).
- [15] Vladimir Putin, "Valdai Discussion Club Meeting," November 7, 2024, available at <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/75521>.

### **NIPP President Keith Payne Essay on Strategic Nuclear Environment**

The President of NIPP, Dr. Keith Payne shared with the nuclear community the following essay on the state of the US nuclear deterrent and strategy. Link is below. A key summary excerpt from the report is posted here. .

"Contemporary U.S. plans for nuclear force modernization and the New START Treaty were established in tandem approximately 15 years ago, at a time when U.S. officials generally still believed that U.S. relations with Russia and China were relatively benign and would *improve further*.

"Great power conflict was considered a thing of the past and the need for strategic deterrence and nuclear weapons was vanishing rapidly. The only remaining threats were from a few third-tier rogue states and terrorists. Nuclear weapons were considered irrelevant to these remaining threats. Consequently, many American officials considered the need for nuclear weapons and deterrence to be greatly diminished or non-existent.

"The 2010 *Nuclear Posture Review* explicitly identified non-proliferation as the priority goal, not nuclear deterrence, and reducing the role and number of U.S. nuclear weapons was considered a key to nuclear non-proliferation.

“As my former Hudson Institute colleague, Professor Paul Bracken, said of the time: “All were on board to oppose nuclear arms.... Academics, think tanks and intellectuals quickly jumped on the bandwagon. For a time, it really looked like there was going to be an antinuclear turn in U.S. strategy.”<sup>1</sup> This hubris reflected what was, and remains, a gross misreading of history.

“In addition, Washington continued to enjoy the post-Cold War peace dividend and, in 2001, gave up maintaining a two-war standard for non-nuclear U.S. preparedness. Only one year prior to Russia’s initial attack on Ukraine in 2014, the United States was still withdrawing tanks from Europe. **American leaders at the time expressed shock at this aggressive Russian behavior; it contradicted their celebrated narrative dominating Washington that great power conflict was a thing of the past.**

“History was supposed to have transcended the old-school hostilities and aggression of the past. Secretary of State John Kerry said Russia’s 2014 aggression against Ukraine sprang not from an expansionist, aggressive agenda, but from its feelings of “weakness.” You see, Russia was more pathetic and unsophisticated than aggressive and expansionist. Kerry added that, “you just don’t, in the 21st century, behave in 19th-century fashion by invading another country....”<sup>2</sup> That was the supposed New World Order reality. **As an astute academic commentator noted recently, such expectations reflected “ideological certitude bordering on geostrategic arrogance, one that still infuses the nation’s policy debates.”<sup>3</sup>**



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## **ICBM and Minuteman Update**

### **Minuteman: America’s 60-Year Nuclear Workhorse by Simon Whistler**

This video (link below) and text explores the LGM-30 Minuteman, the intercontinental ballistic missile that has formed the backbone of America’s nuclear deterrent for six decades. It traces the missile’s development during the Cold War, its evolution through technological upgrades, and its enduring role in maintaining strategic balance and readiness in the modern era. *By Simon Whistler - MSN*

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/other/minuteman-america-s-60-year-nuclear-workhorse/vi-AA1OSIgT>

Minuteman III, the 10,000 km intercontinental nuclear missile — why did the US test it from California into the Pacific now; a direct signal to China? The United States has tested the Minuteman III missile in a bold demonstration of nuclear readiness. The missile launched from California and flew over 6,700 kilometers to a remote Pacific test site. The launch carried no explosives, but the move signals a clear message: the US is serious about its strategic strength.

The test underscores the concept of “peace through strength.” By showing that its nuclear capabilities remain strong, the US aims to deter potential aggression while keeping allies confident. Observers say the launch also sends a signal that America is ready to defend its interests globally.

Analysts warn this may fuel a new nuclear arms race. While the test itself posed no immediate threat, it could prompt other nations to expand or modernize their arsenals. The US believes that visible readiness is a crucial part of international diplomacy and security strategy.

The test of the Minuteman III missile, which can carry [up to three nuclear warheads](#), validated the [reliability, readiness and accuracy](#) of the nation's ICBM fleet, the U.S. military said, adding that the launch was [routine and scheduled years in advance](#).

The test comes as the U.S. modernizes its ICBM force by replacing the Minuteman III missile, which has been [in service since 1970](#), with the Sentinel missile. Maintaining the readiness of existing missiles is a top priority until the new missiles are deployed.

The U.S. Air Force [deploys 400 Minuteman III missiles](#), each currently armed with one warhead, in silos across Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota and Wyoming.

While the Minuteman III force, with a stated range of [more than 6,000 miles](#), is controlled by ground launch centers, it can alternatively be fired through the Airborne Launch Control System aboard the E-6B aircraft [if ground launch is unavailable](#).

As of January 2025, the U.S. nuclear arsenal is estimated to include approximately 3,700 warheads in deployment and reserve, including up to 800 assigned to the ICBM force, of which about half are deployed, the Nuclear Information Project said.

***[Essay by Frank Xie, Epoch Times, China's Ambitious Strategy to Displace the United States](https://www.theepochtimes.com/opinion/the-collapse-of-chinas-grand-strategy-and-trumps-china-moment-5931107)***

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For more than a decade, China pursued an ambitious grand strategy aimed at displacing U.S. leadership and reshaping the global order in its authoritarian image.

Under Chinese leader Xi Jinping, Beijing expanded its economic, technological, military, and political footprint—from the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to military outposts in the South China Sea—while allying with rogue regimes, such as those in Russia and Iran, to stretch U.S. power thin.

Yet that strategy is now faltering. The BRI is mired in debt and dysfunction, China's tech ambitions are stymied by export controls, and its authoritarian allies are unraveling under geopolitical and military pressure. Internally, Xi faces growing dissent and instability within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) itself.

Facing stagnation, isolation, and a fraying coalition, Beijing may seek a grand bargain with Washington—not as triumph, but as retreat. This would mark an opening for the United States to press for systemic concessions: ending support for adversarial regimes, halting maritime militarization, and rebalancing trade.

A transactional realignment could restore American leverage, reshape the international order, and—if handled deftly—undermine CCP rule itself. For a U.S. leader, particularly one like Donald Trump, such a deal could be framed as a Reaganesque victory for liberty over tyranny—and, perhaps, a Nobel-worthy achievement.

**The CCP's Grand Strategy**

Under the tight grip of power and control of the CCP, China's rise was not only a byproduct of globalization—it was a deliberate grand plan aimed at reshaping the global order. Under Xi, Beijing abandoned the "peaceful rise" narrative and instead embraced the idea of national rejuvenation through great-power competition. Economically, China sought to build alternatives to Western-dominated systems through initiatives such as the BRI and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

**US, China Reach 'Basic Consensus;' Taiwan Won't Be Traded**

Beijing made clear its goal: to displace the West as the central node of global trade, finance, and development influence. Beijing also leveraged access to its vast market as a powerful economic tool, using it to pressure developed countries into political concessions or strategic alignment. Simultaneously, it extended massive loans to developing countries, often under opaque terms, creating debt traps that increased Beijing's leverage over vulnerable, third-world governments.

Technologically, through a plethora of mechanisms—intellectual property rights infringement, outright theft, industrial espionage, forced tech transfer, and students and scholars in Western universities—China launched an unprecedented effort to achieve self-sufficiency and dominance in critical sectors such as artificial intelligence (AI), semiconductors, biomedicine, gene modification, space, and quantum computing.

**This ambition was never solely about modernization—it was a bid for strategic autonomy and global leverage. By setting standards in emerging technologies and manipulating supply chains, Beijing attempted to carve out a sphere of technological influence independent of the West.**

Militarily, China became more assertive than at any time since the Mao era. The modernization of the People's Liberation Army—with a particular focus on naval expansion, missile systems, cyber capabilities, and space assets—was aimed at displacing U.S. military primacy in the Indo-Pacific and securing Beijing's regional objectives by force if necessary.

**Beijing quietly encouraged Russia's invasion of Ukraine, seeing the war as an opportunity to strain Western military and economic resources while undermining the security architecture led by the United States and its allies.** At the same time, China deepened its strategic partnership with Iran, providing economic and diplomatic support that emboldened Tehran's proxies and further destabilized the Middle East. In the South China Sea, China built and militarized artificial islands in defiance of international rulings while escalating its pressure campaign against Taiwan through both gray-zone coercion and explicit threats. This multifront posture directly challenged the long-standing U.S. doctrine of being able to fight and win in two major war theaters simultaneously—a Cold War-era strategy.

Politically, China promoted an alternative model of governance centered on authoritarian control, state-directed development, and sovereignty over individual rights. Through institutions like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and its influence at the United Nations, **China worked to reframe global norms—pushing back against Western liberal ideals and casting its own system as a legitimate and effective path to modernization.**

**Beijing lent diplomatic cover to autocratic regimes and deepened strategic partnerships with Russia and North Korea, supporting their challenges to the Western-led international order. It also strengthened ties with Iran, backing Tehran's regional ambitions and its network of proxies, further complicating Western efforts to maintain stability in the Middle East.** By exporting surveillance technologies and advancing proposals for “cyber sovereignty,” China sought to legitimize digital authoritarianism and curtail the open internet.

In doing so, Beijing did not simply reject the existing global order since World War II; it aimed to redefine it in its own beliefs and ideology. The CCP's ambition was not just to protect its rule at home but to make the world safer for autocracy abroad.

## **Failure Everywhere**

**However, since the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, Beijing's grand vision of a China-centered global infrastructure network is beginning to fray. Launched with great fanfare in 2013, the BRI promised to forge a new era of connectivity, development, and soft power.** But more than a decade later, many of the flagship projects lie unfinished, mired in debt distress, corruption scandals, or local backlash.

From Sri Lanka's Hambantota Port to Kenya's railway to nowhere, the BRI has become emblematic not of Chinese strategic foresight but of an overreach that China can no longer afford. As economic growth slows and the shadow of depression looms at home and over recipient countries demanding debt relief or simply walking away from unsustainable projects, China finds itself grappling with the costs—economic, diplomatic, and reputational—of its once-vaunted initiative.

The cracks in the BRI reveal a deeper miscalculation: Beijing treated infrastructure as strategy but underestimated the politics of the ground it sought to pave. Many BRI recipient countries, initially lured by cheap loans and promises of modernization, are now confronting the downsides of opaque contracts, poor environmental safeguards, and sovereignty concerns. The recent retreat of Chinese lending and Xi's shift to a “smaller and smarter” BRI signal a tacit acknowledgment that the original model is no longer tenable.

On top of this is the CCP elites' looting and grafting of funds under the banner of the BRI. Far from cementing China's global leadership, the BRI now serves as a cautionary tale—one in which ambition outpaced capacity and influence was squandered by indifference to the very governance standards Beijing sought to sideline.

Access to China's vast consumer and industrial markets was a strategic lever, which Beijing used to compel political concessions and shape the foreign policies of the developed world. For years, the promise of trade, investment, and market entry silenced criticism of China's domestic repression and muted resistance to its geopolitical ambitions.

But that leverage has begun to erode. China's slowing economy, aging and declining population, and shrinking labor force have diminished the allure of its market, particularly for companies and countries now wary of supply chain dependence and political risk. Even smaller nations, once seen as easy to coerce, have begun to push back. Latvia, for example, withdrew from China's "17+1" cooperation framework in 2022, citing economic underperformance and political divergence. What once looked like a gravitational pull now appears more like a fading magnet—still influential but no longer irresistible.

China once appeared poised to dominate the heights of the 21st-century tech economy. State-led initiatives such as "Made in China 2025" and massive investments in AI, semiconductors, and quantum computing signaled Beijing's ambition to reduce its reliance on foreign technology and set global standards. But that vision is increasingly at odds with geopolitical reality. U.S.-led export controls, especially in advanced chipmaking equipment, have exposed China's deep dependence on foreign know-how. Despite pouring billions into domestic alternatives, China still lags behind in critical sectors such as cutting-edge semiconductors, where breakthroughs cannot be bought or forced by fiat. The gap is narrowing more slowly than Beijing had hoped, and a technological iron curtain is beginning to rise.

For years, the West underestimated the scope of China's technological ambitions, viewing Beijing more as a market participant than a strategic competitor. That complacency shattered as evidence mounted that China's rise in key sectors—from 5G and artificial intelligence to advanced manufacturing—was not merely commercial but deeply geopolitical.

The shock came in waves: the global expansion of Huawei, revelations of intellectual property theft, and the state-orchestrated drive for self-sufficiency under "Made in China 2025." What had once seemed like industrial policy suddenly looked like techno-nationalism. In response, the United States and its allies began reorienting their policies—tightening export controls, reshoring supply chains, and investing in their own innovation ecosystems. The West has belatedly come to see that technological leadership is not just about economic competitiveness; it is about the balance of power in the 21st century.

Compounding the challenge are China's own structural constraints. A political environment that punishes dissent and privileges loyalty over innovation stifles the kind of open scientific culture on which true technological leadership depends. Private tech giants such as Alibaba and Tencent, once global success stories, have been reined in by regulatory crackdowns that prioritize control over competitiveness. Meanwhile, global trust in Chinese tech has eroded, as countries from Europe to Southeast Asia grow wary of surveillance risks and strategic dependencies. China may still become a formidable tech power—but the dream of global dominance is slipping away, undone by external resistance and internal contradictions.

China's strategy of stretching U.S. power by encouraging simultaneous conflicts across multiple regions has begun to falter as well. The war in Ukraine, which Beijing quietly backed as a strategic distraction for the West, has proven costly and increasingly unpopular within Russia itself. Widespread resistance to military mobilization—manifested in draft dodging, mass emigration, and localized protests—exposed the limits of the Kremlin's control and the fragility of its war effort.

Russia's failure to achieve a quick victory, its staggering battlefield losses, and mounting economic strain have weakened Moscow's global stature rather than reinforcing it. What Beijing viewed as a low-cost opportunity to divide and exhaust the West instead became a long, grinding conflict that drained one of its key partners and hardened European resolve against authoritarian adventurism.

In a recent interview, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi admitted that China was very much afraid of Russia losing the war in Ukraine, as that would result in the United States redirecting its attention and focus on communist China. It was reported that China even devised contingency plans to support the Russian Communist Party to control eastern Russia in the event that Russia completely collapses on the Western front and becomes too weak.

A similar erosion has unfolded in the Middle East. Former Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, long sustained by Russian and Iranian backing, fled to Moscow as his regime collapsed. Iran's regional posture suffered severe blows as well. Hamas's military infrastructure in Gaza is being systematically dismantled, while Hezbollah endured sustained Israeli retaliation that virtually destroyed its offensive capabilities. In a historic escalation, Israel—backed by U.S. intelligence and airpower—struck deep into Iranian territory, targeting key military and nuclear assets. Tehran, faced with the prospect of broader war and unable to count on an effective deterrent response, basically capitulated to avoid further escalation.

Far from encircling or overwhelming the West, Beijing's web of authoritarian allies and militant proxies is fraying—leaving China more isolated, its leverage reduced, and its strategy of distraction increasingly untenable.

### **Last Card to Play**

With its authoritarian partners faltering and its strategy of multipolar disruption backfiring, Beijing now faces a narrowing set of options. The last card it may be willing to play is a strategic recalibration: distancing itself from its embattled allies and seeking a thaw with Washington.

Quiet signals suggest that China is already weighing the costs of continued alignment with pariahs like Russia and Iran, whose wars and repression have become liabilities rather than assets. A transactional pivot—selling out these partners in exchange for reduced tensions with the United States and restored access to cutting-edge know-how and tariff reductions—could offer Beijing short-term relief from economic stagnation.

But such a move would come at a steep price: undermining the very alternative order China spent the past decade trying to build. If Beijing chooses rapprochement, it will do so not from a position of strength but out of recognition that its grand strategy has failed—and that survival now depends on pragmatism rather than power. Yet the real obstacle in this direction is the CCP itself. It may have to give up its decades-long rhetoric of communist and socialist ideals and its propaganda of hostility toward freedom and democracy, and that could even mean the CCP giving up its grip on power.

Recent developments within China's political and military leadership have raised serious questions about Xi's hold on power. A wave of unexplained purges targeting senior officials—many of them handpicked loyalists in both the CCP and the People's Liberation Army—has signaled deepening instability at the core of the regime. In the People's Liberation Army Aerospace Force (PLAAF), viewed as vitally important, the entire top leadership was cleansed and replaced.

These moves, unusually opaque even by Beijing's standards, suggest growing discontent within the elite over China's economic slowdown, diplomatic isolation, and the mounting costs of Xi's hardline foreign policy. As internal fractures widen, the likelihood of a strategic reset—a “grand bargain” with the United States involving concessions in exchange for economic relief—has increased. Such a pivot would represent a sharp departure from the combative posture that defined Xi's tenure. But with trusted cadres removed and his authority quietly eroding, Xi may soon face a stark choice: retreat from confrontation or risk being pushed aside by a party no longer confident in his leadership.

### **Opportunity for a Grand Bargain**

Trump would likely frame this grand bargain as a Nixonian “peace through strength”—offering China economic survival in exchange for geopolitical retreat and an end to communist rule. Trump (or any U.S. leader) should not seek vague promises but demand verifiable, strategic realignments that reshape the balance of power in favor of the United States.

Trump should demand that China formally and practically withdraw support—economic, military, and diplomatic—for regimes destabilizing U.S. interests. This includes halting dual-use tech transfers and cutting military cooperation with Russia, Iran, and North Korea. Quiet Chinese support has helped sustain these regimes; removing that lifeline would isolate them further.

China's military outposts in the South China Sea and Indian Ocean are a direct challenge to U.S. naval supremacy. Trump should make any deal contingent on the drawdown or demilitarization of these artificial islands and a formal reaffirmation of freedom of navigation under international law. These steps would blunt China's maritime expansion and reassert U.S. control over key sea lanes.

Trump should also demand a halt to Chinese aggression near Taiwan and block Beijing's export of surveillance tech. The United States must defend both territory and digital freedom.

On trade, Trump should demand three core concessions. First, a rollback of China's subsidies in sectors such as electric vehicles, semiconductors, and steel. Second, binding commitments to end forced tech transfers and protect U.S. intellectual property. Third, a rebalanced trade deal with enforceable targets to boost U.S. exports—especially in agriculture, energy, and manufacturing.

Such a grand bargain and concessions are unlikely to take place if China remains a hardcore communist state. Even the most loyal CCP members nowadays do not really believe in communism anymore, let alone the general public in China, who have suffered so much in the past 75 years of communist rule. Overwhelming economic and technological pressure from the United States may lead to a regime change or regime transformation. This may lead to the abandonment of the rigid CCP party-state structure, similar to what happened in Eastern European countries in the 1990s.

Trump has expressed his disdain for communism and socialism numerous times in his speeches in Poland, the U.N., and his many rallies during his electoral campaign. If he could use the economic and geopolitical leverage to undermine the most powerful communist state in the world, it would parallel Ronald Reagan's contribution to the collapse of Soviet Union dominance in Eastern Europe.

A grand bargain between the United States and China could change the course of the 21st century. It would pull the world back from the brink—cooling conflicts, stabilizing economies, restoring a sense of order in a time of chaos, and bringing liberty and freedom to the entire world.

For America, it would mean strength without endless wars, and for China, a chance to rejoin the global system without humiliation and the burden of communism. And for millions caught in the crossfire of proxy battles and trade wars, it would offer something rarer than power: peace. If Donald Trump were to broker such a deal—defusing great-power rivalry and resetting global equilibrium—he wouldn't just earn a place in history. He would deserve a Nobel Peace Prize.

### **Debt Updated**

A New report outlines the increase in our national debt from 1993. For the Clinton 1993-2001, the increase was \$1.4 trillion or 32%; the Bush 43 increase was \$6.1 trillion of 105%; the Obama debt climbed \$8.3 trillion or 70%. The first Trump administration increased the debt by \$8 trillion of which \$4 trillion was CV-19 related. And the Biden administration increased the debt by \$9 trillion from 2021-25.

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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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