

Weekly ICBM EAR Report



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

Prepared by Peter Huessy

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ICBM Ear Week of March 3, 2026, Prepared by Peter Huessy, President of Geostrategic Analysis, Potomac, Maryland and Senior Fellow, NIDS and Gold Institute

Summary

Multiple commentaries on China and Iran; ICBM test by USAF GSC; Multiple Discussions of extended deterrent in Europe. Upcoming NIDS seminars; new Heritage Foundation Report; NIDS roundtable on nuclear testing; NIDS seminar Sean MacDonald on pit production; archived essay on China arms control; what the abolitionists get wrong about arms control; Ramirez and Iran. Congress does not adopt War Powers Act, concurs with administration views.

Save The Date: June 17-18 Triad Symposium

Dear Nuclear Triad Supporters:

Peter Huessy, Senior Fellow with the National Institute for Deterrence Studies (NIDS), has again partnered with Louisiana State University Shreveport and BRF Defense to conduct the fifth annual Nuclear Triad Symposium in Shreveport, LA on June 18, 2026. Please save 18 June on your calendar to attend the 2026 event. In-person attendees will benefit from opportunities to not only hear from and meet officials from Air Force Global Strike Command, 8th Air Force, and 307th BW -- located at nearby Barksdale Air Force Base -- but also speakers from 20th Air Force, Navy Strategic Systems Programs, and the Navy's Program Executive Office for Strategic Submarines. General S.L. Davis will serve as the symposium's keynote speaker. Other invited speakers include Gordon Chang, Dr. Stephen Blank, Dr. James Howe and Assistant Secretary of State Chris Yeaw.

Networking breaks are scheduled throughout the day to enable government, industry, academic participants, and speakers to discuss topical issues and pursue collaboration opportunities with one another. Past year event information, agendas, and recordings can be accessed [here](#). The Symposium's theme focuses on the Nuclear Triad's critical role as the Foundation for U.S. National Security with presentations and discussions on the current strategic environment, force readiness, nuclear force modernization, Triad roles in global and regional competition, evolving government and industry workforce needs, nuclear enterprise infrastructure renovation, and defense industry contributions to the deterrence effectiveness of nuclear forces.

Special emphasis will be placed on nuclear force modernization in the United States Air Force and United States Navy and their combined efforts to sustain and improve U.S. nuclear deterrence capabilities through the Columbia SSBN, Sentinel ICBM and D-5 missile, B-21 Raider bomber, B-52J aircraft, Long Range Standoff weapons, NNSA operations, integrated nuclear-conventional operations, NC3 modernization programs, theater nuclear issues such as the SLCM-N and J-35 as well as unconventional threats such as cyber & EMP to the US nuclear deterrent. Sessions are designed to encourage interactive discussions among government and industry participants. You can contact Lt General (Ret) Bob Elder at Bob.Elder@collaborationlink.org or Peter Huessy at phuessy@thinkdeterrence.com to recommend topics to be covered.

New addition:

In conjunction with the Triad Symposium, an unclassified government-industry collaboration event, hosted by BRF Defense at LSUS, is planned for the day prior to the Triad Symposium (17 June). It will be followed by a classified workshop session for cleared defense contractors at the nearby BRF InterTech facility. Please contact Brandon Jacobson, Brandon.Jacobson@collaborationlink.org, if you would like to participate in the 17 June government-industry collaboration event.

The symposium will take place in the University Center Ballroom at Louisiana State University Shreveport (LSUS). LSUS will block a group of rooms at local hotels for attendees. The area is conveniently served by Shreveport Regional Airport (SHV), approximately 20 minutes from the symposium site. Contact Peter Huessy at phuessy@thinkdeterrence.com to become a Nuclear TRIAD Symposium sponsor. To sponsor local event costs, including A/V costs, food and beverages, please contact Brandon Jacobson, Brandon.Jacobson@collaborationlink.org.

For general logistical questions, networking event questions, and all other inquiries, please contact Ashley Dean McVey at Ashley.Dean@lsus.edu

You will receive the full agenda soon -- I will send out a registration link next week. In the meantime, please save the date. The planning staff looks forward to hearing from you. See you in June!

Dr. Robert T. Smith Chancellor Louisiana State University in Shreveport

Peter Huessy Senior Fellow National Institute for Deterrence Studies

Lt Gen (Ret) Bob Elder Collaboration Link, a division of BRF (Defense)

Quotes of the Week

Secretary of War Pete Hegseth: The American bombardment of Iran was “about to surge dramatically.”

Secretary of War Pete Hegseth: “America is winning” the war against Iran, Tehran’s missile capabilities have been drastically diminished.

Secretary of War Pete Hegseth: The U.S. and Israel will soon achieve “complete control” over Iranian airspace.

China announced Thursday that it would boost defense spending by 7% in 2026, the lowest rate increase in five years for the Chinese military.

Elbridge Colby, undersecretary of war for policy at the U.S. Department of War, “I think it’s perfectly appropriate and, from our point of view at the Department of War, reasonable for there to be a greater European complexion to NATO nuclear deterrence.”

NATO Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy Boris Ruge: “NATO is fully committed to the NPT which remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime.”

USCENTCOM Commander Adm. Brad Cooper confirmed that B-1, B-2 and B-52 bombers have all conducted strikes as part of Operation Epic Fury.

Elbridge Colby: North Korean and Russian nuclear weapons constitute the ‘primary existential threat’ facing the U.S., Pentagon’s told lawmakers at a Senate hearing Tuesday.

Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Thomas G. DiNanno: U.S. and Germany reiterated unwavering commitment to extended nuclear deterrence in @NATO and to the trans-Atlantic cooperation essential to U.S. strategic security.

Thomas DiNanno: The US pursuit of new, improved, and modernized nuclear arms control strategies after New START will benefit U.S. and European security.

USCENTCOM Commander Adm. Brad Cooper: The B-2 bombers dropped dozens of 2,000 pound “penetrator” bombs on deeply buried Iranian ballistic missile launchers.

NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte welcomed French President Emmanuel Macron’s update to Paris’ nuclear doctrine, while underscoring that the “United States’ nuclear umbrella” would remain the “ultimate, supreme guarantor” of European security.

ICBM News of the Week

The redesign of the LGM-35A Sentinel ICBM system will require building an underground fiber-optic network spanning 32,000 square miles and constructing entirely new missile silos.

Air Force Global Strike Command successfully conducted a test launch of an unarmed Minuteman III ICBM equipped with two test re-entry vehicles from Vandenberg Space Force Base last night.

Strategic Developments in the Administration

President Trump said that U.S. combat operations against Iran “continue at this time in full force, and they will continue until all of our objectives are achieved.”

U.S. Central Command confirmed that B-2 bombers were deployed on Saturday to strike Iran’s “hardened” ballistic missile facilities using 2,000-pound precision bombs.

Undersecretary of War for Policy Elbridge Colby told the Senate Armed Services Committee that the Trump administration does not intend to publish a new Nuclear Posture Review, while adding that “nuclear forces are at the top of our priority list.” [The Secretary said the 2018 NPR should be used as the basis for US nuclear deterrent strategy.]

Events and Studies of Strategic Importance

NIDS Seminar: Paige Gasser of LLNL Review of Extended/Regional Nuclear Deterrence March 13, 2026

NIDS Seminar: Franklin Miller: Nuclear Strategy at a Crossroads March 20, 2025

Heritage Foundation issues its **2026 Index of U.S. Military Strength**. Commentary: <https://www.dailysignal.com/2026/03/04/threat-level-against-us-is-high-latest-military-index-finds/>

NIDS Seminar Round table on Nuclear Testing with senior nuclear experts, transcript and video links are here. https://youtu.be/PmXblEAYc9U?si=n9WQ8DjW2F_ZYOM-



4HS Roundtable
Nuclear Testing Explai

NID Seminar with Sean McDonald, Senior Adviser to the Integrated Plutonium Production Program....website. https://youtu.be/0_JHPRUVLxc?si=cZNQk8J--mLF5a5.....and
Transcript....



5HS Sean
McDonald.pdf

Nuclear Archive 2006, Arms Control and China



Arms control with
China.pdf

Nuclear Essay of the Week

Dr. Stephen Blank and Peter Huessy: https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2026/03/06/what_the_arms_control_community_gets_wrong_about_arms_control_1168771.html

International Security Developments

Iran's ambassador to the UN nuclear agency alleges that U.S.-Israeli airstrikes targeted the Natanz enrichment facility,”

NATO Spokesperson Allison Hart: “The NATO High Level Group – the senior advisory board to NATO’s Nuclear Planning Group – met [on Wednesday] to discuss the role of NATO’s nuclear capabilities in preserving peace, preventing coercion and deterring aggression.”

Finland plans to lift decades-old ban on hosting nuclear weapons,”

Russia says it will respond if Finland hosts nuclear weapons, accuses Helsinki of stoking tension,”

Seoul should take the lead on conventional defense against the North, says Elbridge Colby.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk signaled his country will eventually try to obtain its own nuclear weapons as Europe strengthens deterrence.” A

Russia says France’s plan to expand its nuclear arsenal is destabilizing.”

Iran

Iran Commentary by Peter Berkowitz, formerly of the US State Department, now with the Hoover Institution.

US-ISRAEL JOINT ACTION AGAINST IRAN IS JUST AND NECESSARY

In just over a week, the joint US and Israeli military campaign in Iran “has already severely weakened and may topple the brutal Islamist theocracy,” writes Senior Fellow Peter Berkowitz at *RealClearPolitics*. “Berkowitz emphasizes that “the United States did not initiate a war but rather undertook an operation to end the war that Iran’s Islamist revolutionaries have waged for 47 years against the United States and Middle East friends and partners.” He also cautions that “difficult days lie ahead.” Berkowitz concludes that “American planning for the day after the termination of major military operations should proceed expeditiously . . . preparing both for a greatly weakened regime and for regime collapse.”

Commentary on Iran by Peter Huessy, Editor, ICBM EAR.

According to a number of House Representatives, there was no justification for the Israeli and American strikes on Iran because there was no “imminent” threat from Iran. Michael Oren, the former Israel, ambassador to the United States noted this last week that in 1936 when Churchill said that Great Britain and allies had to stand up to Nazi Germany and Adolf Hitler, one could also argue there was not an imminent threat to Great Britain that would justify Great Britain taking military action against Germany? Amb Oren asked whether the United States and Israel should wait until a threat is imminent? Such a condition assumes we will know when Iran plans to attack the United States--- just as we knew when Japan was going to attack Pearl Harbor and when Al Qaeda was going to attack the World Trade Center in September 2001.

There is also the charge that Israel dragged us into war. But did Israel direct Iran to attack us multiple hundreds of times since 1979 to which the US had every right to respond? There were 4 choices facing the US: Israel goes it alone; the US goes it alone; both Israel and the US do nothing; or both coordinate along with our allies and take down Iran together.

Well, given Iran will continue to attack both nations irrespective of what Israel and the US does, the choice looks pretty obvious. Some points:

- Given the Iranians bragged to our negotiators they had 4400 kilos of near weapons grade material capable of making 11 nuclear weapons--which they of course serially claimed they have no interest to produce!
- This is NOT a "war of choice." The previous administration chose to pay off the mullahs but the Mullahs simply produced near weapons grade nuclear material and a large arsenal of missiles and drones. Those choices by Iran made this war essential now.
- Critics, however, claim no attack was imminent. But when did the critics acknowledge an attack by Iran was imminent, especially in that the US and its interests in the Middle East have been repeatedly attacked by Iran since 1979.
- The danger is that if or when Iran secures a nuclear weapon, they will probably NOT tell when the missile with a nuke warhead will be launched at New York or Tel Aviv. And thus, we will know they have a nuke when it explodes over Central Park.
- Churchill pleaded with Parliament in the 1930's to take action to stop Hitler. But many in Parliament said no German attack was imminent. Well, only when England figured out Hitler was going to invade Poland did, they take the threat seriously---but then it was too late as Hitler didn't believe the allies of Poland were serious about defending Poland. So, he invaded.
- 65 million dead people later Churchill was proven right and Chamberlain wrong.
- Looking back through history, when was the President warned that an attack was imminent? Pearl Harbor? 9-11? WTC-93? Khobar Towers? The USS Cole? The DPRK invasion of ROK?

Patrick Denis, The Patriotic News. John Fetterman broke ranks and said Iran posed "a serious and immediate threat" and Trump was on firm legal ground. The House minority leader basically admitted he would've approved the strikes — he just wanted to be asked first. (Bless his heart.) Iran's biggest export has never been just oil, it is chaos. Funding terrorism, sowing fanaticism, spreading death, destruction, and mayhem around the world, killing thousands at home and abroad, this regime has been a plague on the earth. The world will be a much better place without Khamenei.

There are good reasons to prevent Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons. I have covered that topic in the past, the short of it is, preventing the danger of a nuclear arms race in a region with lots of money, very little respect for human life, and a fanatical desire for martyrdom.

The proliferation of nuclear material after the fact, would pose an even larger threat to a larger number of people, because the surrogates of many of these states will not heed the MAD doctrine that has kept nuclear nations in a fragile stalemate. You cannot deter people with the threat of destruction when they worship death.

Iran Commentary from Victor Davis Hanson:

Sami Winc: So, Victor, but what's in the realm of possibilities of what Trump might do and what is the grand strategy of Trump right now?

Victor Davis Hanson: Well, he's looking at—he always looks at these situations of intervention or bombing on a cost-to-benefit analysis, whether it was killing al-Baghdadi, or Soleimani, or the Wagner Group, or bombing ISIS in his first term, or hitting the nuclear facilities in his second in Iran, or the Maduro kidnapping capture, etc. And so that's a good way to look at it. What are the downsides? The downside is: If he starts bombing, who does he bomb and can he hit them? He has to have the Revolutionary Guards. He has to get the theocracy. They all know he's going to be after 'em. They're in bunkers. Will he be able to do it?

He's going to have to get to the missile depots. He's going to have to get all of the means that that regime exercises to create deterrence: missiles, nuclear facilities ... tanks. Get rid of 'em all. And he should expect, as we saw with Hamas in the tunnel, that they'll all be parked, stored—like they are in Beirut—in apartment buildings, in hospitals, in mosques. And so, they want a lot of collateral damage. And then he has to understand that he needs a popular uprising at the same time. We've already had one and that prompted him to send the assets to the region.

But he said, and you said, 32,000 people were killed and they're probably executing thousands about which we don't even know. So, if you're afraid to go out on the street and you see American planes, maybe even Israeli planes, and they're hitting targets, is your reaction, "Good, good. I'm glad they're killing my government," or "I don't really care anymore. They've killed us. Why are they hurting Iran? I'm an Iranian"? And will that create a counter-patriotic fervor?

Then he has to think: Look what happened in Libya when we bombed. We got rid of Gaddafi, the Obama—that triad of Susan Rice, Hillary Clinton, and Samantha Power. And what did they give us? They gave us ultimate chaos. And we went in and took out Saddam, we had chaos. We went in and got rid of the Taliban, we got chaos, and we had to stay there. So do we want ground troops in there to overthrow—no, we don't. So, who is going to take the place—the shah? And if we could get the shah's son, we could have him say, "I will not be in power for more than three years. I'm a transitional... to get a new constitution and bring in outside observers for fair elections. And we're going to outlaw that theocratic Khamenei party, sort of like the Germans outlaw the Nazi party." So that's a lot of—and then he has the weather and then he has other considerations.

Israel has a whole list of targets and they may not be the same number of targets as we are. They have killers that have killed Jews, they have terrorists. They know where they are. Once people see Israeli planes, does that confirm the propaganda of the regime that it's Israelis, et cetera. Then he's got the MAGA base to worry about. Tucker Carlson said just the 30-minute incursion into Iran was going to start World War III. Steve Bannon, that group. So, he has the assets. You can't take a 100,000-ton displacement, huge carrier, \$14 billion, 5,000 people, and just stick it out there forever. You know what I mean? It has a shelf life, maybe three, four months at most.

So, he's assembling these assets and they're almost in place. They're in the Mediterranean, they're in the Strait of Hormuz, they're in the Persian Gulf, they're in the Red Sea. They can come at a 360-degree angle. But they're reaching their climactic point of their extreme readiness. That means if you're a young sailor, you're not sleeping well, you're going to be called at any moment. You're having drills. You're at a state of readiness. It's not sustainable for more than three or four weeks.

So, at some point the commanders are going to come to Trump and say, "You've got to pull the trigger, or we got to go back." And that is going to be a decision, I think, that has political ramifications. So, then his other advisors are going to say, "We're nine months from the midterm. If you're going to do it, you got to do it now. And this is what can happen if we have a bloodbath and we hit a hospital and the Europeans—don't expect the Europeans to be there. Don't expect the British to let us use Diego Garcia. Don't expect anybody—and expect the Chinese and the Russians to be very angry because they're going to lose their asset and they will cause us problems somewhere else.

Maybe they'll start threatening, at a higher degree, Taiwan, or maybe Putin will escalate in Ukraine while we're doing this." So, there's all these things that he has to filter out as important, somewhat important, irrelevant. And then he has to say, "What is the timing on the world stage?" Well, the Olympics is over. Well, you can't bomb somebody during the Olympics. I mean, there's this pretense—

Sami Winc: All these things come in. That's true.

Victor Davis Hanson: And you can't bomb somebody before the State of the Union. So, my anticipation is that the Olympics are over, the State of the Union is over. The weather and the seasons are getting better. And if he is going to do it, he would probably do it in the next 10 days. And then he will not have ground troops because, you know, he said George W. Bush should have been impeached for going into Iraq. So, it's a very difficult thing. Very quickly, then, there's a grand strategy.

I just want to say, you know, H.R. McMaster and Nadia Schadlow created the first national security strategic assessment in the first term. That was updated. I think Michael Anton and others updated it. It was a little bit

different, but it had the same theme. The theme was that Trump is not an interventionist. He doesn't want to go into ground—but he is not an isolationist. He is a Jacksonian. He is a preemptive deterrent. That's what he wants. And his main fear in the world is China.

And if you think about that—and it's been pretty brilliant what he is done the last 13 months, because if you take, say all these isolated incidents that everybody said, "Oh, he is herky-jerky. We don't know what he is going to do on any given day. Oh, there's no point to it." There is. If you just go down the list of, say, nine or 10 things. Take the Panama. He goes in and he starts, "We might take the canal back. We might do this, we might..." but what was the whole point of that? The whole point was to get the Chinese out of the entry and exit and tell the Panamanians you violated the spirit and the letter of the Panama Canal Treaty and we have a right to revoke it. So, you've got one choice, you get 'em out of there now, and you restore the Panama Canal to a partnership between us and you, or else.

That worked. Take another one. He got rid of Maduro. Maduro had a communist enclave that was a drugs-exporting conduit to Mexico, or the United States via Mexico. And partnership with the left-wing government, Colombia, anti-American, and embargoed and stealthily sending oil to China. And he said, "Nope." And we're going to do what? We're going to starve Venezuela out of its oil. We're going to block it, and we're going to take him out and we're going to restore the Monroe Doctrine. And China, we should have warned you in Panama. Now get out. And they did.

Acquisition and Innovation

- America can no longer afford to move at the speed of bureaucracy while our adversaries move at the speed of war. To lead in the modern arms race, America must draw on our heritage of innovation before our adversaries outpace us. Warfare is transforming in real time: drones can now enter a building before a service member ever has to, keeping Americans further from the fight and saving lives. Yet for too long, bureaucracy and red tape have delayed the tools our servicemen and women need.
- This week, Dr. Kevin Roberts President of the Heritage Foundation heads to the desert outside Salt Lake City to witness **firsthand the cutting edge of American drone technology and the innovators driving it forward. Joined by Vector CEO Andy Yakulis, he explores why restoring American manufacturing and unleashing warfighter ingenuity are essential to winning the modern arms race.**

Epoch Times: Commentary on China

[American Thought Leaders - The Epoch Times](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-3cRrquknc>

Congressional Developments

The US Senate by a vote of 53-47 turned back an effort to pass the War Powers act and rescind the funding for the strikes on Iran. See: <https://www.theepochtimes.com/us/senate-rejects-measure-aimed-at-blocking-trumps-iran-war-operation-5994025>

Pat Harrigan (R-NC): [Heritage Foundation Panel]. The new ICBM or Sentinel; will be the largest public works program in history; but must be done to secure our deterrence. Wish we did not have to do this. But the deterrent is critical to protect the USA. And we spend a lot of funding to keep the legacy systems. But we cannot reuse the current silos.

Sen. Kevin Cramer (R-ND): "During my meeting with Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force General John Lamontagne, we focused on modernizing America's nuclear deterrent. North Dakota is a cornerstone of our nation's nuclear deterrence, making it all the more important to replace Minot Air Force Base's aging Minuteman III ICBMs and modernize the B-52."

Iran - Michael Ramirez



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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.

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