

# Weekly ICBM EAR Report



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

**Prepared by Peter Huessy**

*President of GeoStrategic Analysis, Potomac, Maryland*

*Senior Fellow at the National Institute for Deterrence Studies (NIDS)*

*Senior Fellow at the Gold Institute for International Strategy*

**Edition: Week of March 29, 2026**

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**Executive Summary**

This week we bring you excellent assessments of China's strategic threat; an assessment seeking to bring greater clarity to Iran's nuclear weapons program and the JCPOA; SASC and HASC Testimony links are provided; Stimson issues a new report on workforce issues in the nuclear enterprise; LLNL details some of its ICBM and Bomber work; and should the US seek a greater nuclear capability as the Posture Commission recommends and which a new essay proposes.

**Upcoming and Previous Events of Interest**

**June 18<sup>th</sup>, LSUS, BFR and NIDS Host the 31<sup>st</sup> Nuclear Triad Symposium on the campus with LSUS in cooperation with the USAF Global Strike Command, Barksdale USAF Base.**

**USSTRATCOM "Guided by the warrior ethos, these top-performing units won** the Strategic Command Consultation Committee's 2025 #OmahaTrophy: ► ICBM: 341st Missile Wing ► SSBN: USS Maryland (SSBN 738) ► Strategic Bomber: 509th Bomb Wing ► Global Ops: SCW-1/TG-114.2."

**Quotes and Commentary of the Week**

**Secretary of State Marco Rubio: "President Trump** delivered a powerful speech tonight. He was clear about our objectives in Iran: • Destroy their weapons factories • Destroy their navy • Destroy their air force • Destroy their chances of ever having a nuclear weapon. The President's leadership sends a message to the world that the United States will defend its people and its interests and uphold peace through strength."

**Admiral Correll: "I am balancing** the risk of sustainment vs bringing on the new capability and working very closely with General White re bringing Sentinel online." [He is confident that the country can sustain Minuteman III until such time as the Sentinel is deployed.] HASC Testimony March 17, 2026

**Secretary of State Marco Rubio:** The U.S. may need to reassess its relationship with NATO after the Iran war is finished

**Distributed From Admiral Mies:** (Ret) The Golden Dome is the most serious opportunity in decades to build a layered national missile defense. As Reagan saw with his Strategic Defense Initiative, Trump recognizes that deterrence is strongest when adversaries question their abilities to strike and control escalation.

**Harvard/Harris poll indicate 64%** of Americans say Iran violated its nuclear deal; 62% view Iran as a direct US national security threat and 67% say Iran is a leading source of instability terrorism and war

## ICBM News and Updates

**The LLNL supports both sustainment and modernization** of the nuclear stockpile. On the sustainment side, the lab helps maintain the W80-1 warhead, currently deployed on the Air Force's air-launched cruise missile, and the W87-0 warhead, deployed on the Air Force's Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile. This work includes ongoing surveillance, assessment and refurbishment activities to ensure those systems continue to meet military requirements.

**The lab also leads modernization for the W80-4 Life Extension Program**, which will replace the W80-1 for use on the Air Force's new Long Range Standoff cruise missile, sustaining the bomber leg of the nuclear triad with enhanced safety, security and reliability features, according to a fact sheet from the National Nuclear Security Administration. Additional modernization efforts include the W87-1 Modification Program, which will replace the aging W78 warhead and will be fielded on the Air Force's Sentinel ICBM, the missile to replace the Minuteman III. And the W87-1 is based on previously tested nuclear components, incorporates enhanced safety and security features, and will maintain the effectiveness of the land-based leg of the triad without providing new military capabilities.

## Administration Nuclear Activities

### **Congrats to our ICBM, SLBM and Bombers Folks That Defend Our Country:**

**Guided by the warrior ethos**, these top-performing units won the Strategic Command Consultation Committee's 2025 #OmahaTrophy: ► ICBM: 341st Missile Wing ► SSBN: USS Maryland (SSBN 738) ► Strategic Bomber: 509th Bomb Wing ► Global Ops: SCW-1/TG-114.2."

**A recent swarm of drones that intruded on an Air Force nuclear bomber** base in Louisiana remains under investigation, the [Air Force Global Strike Command](#) said. On March 9, [Barksdale Air Force Base](#), Louisiana, was put on temporary lockdown after "several unauthorized drone incursions that varied in duration and number of drones" disrupted operations, the command said Tuesday in a statement. The action is believed to be criminal activity. But with the Iran conflict underway and threats of Tehran using low-cost Shahed strike drones, fears of an attack were heightened.

[https://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local\\_news/aggressive-los-alamos-labs-expansion-plan-wins-approval-from-national-nuclear-security-administration/article\\_df1556d8-7ddb-46b0-b380-1f727254d1d4.html](https://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local_news/aggressive-los-alamos-labs-expansion-plan-wins-approval-from-national-nuclear-security-administration/article_df1556d8-7ddb-46b0-b380-1f727254d1d4.html)

**NNSA Principal Deputy Administrator Scott Pappano: Conducted a** Nuclear Security Enterprise tour at the Savannah River Site, met with the dedicated men and women carrying out NNSA's national security mission every day in South Carolina. Visited the Tritium Extraction Facility, where NNSA recently achieved a record number of tritium extractions, crucial in maintaining our nuclear capabilities."

**General R. Caine: Emphasis on Integration and Innovation. Outlined** an "algorithm for winning" that integrates special operations forces, the broader joint force, interagency partners, allies, and the private sector for "exponential" effects in time and capability. Industry must focus on fighting the next war, not the last one, particularly through AI and emerging technologies. **Develop a global risk algorithm using advanced tech (including AI) to assess complex threats, sense risks proactively, and avoid unintended escalation.**

**Secretary Rubio: March 31, 2026** This [Iran] regime is led by radical people who believe that their purpose in life is to create the end of the world. If these people have nuclear weapons—and we know that because they are assembling all the things you need for nuclear weapons including long range rockets. Iran is the lead sponsor terrorism the region in the world and they can never be allowed to have a nuclear weapon which is President Trump very clear from the very first day of his presidency. When he came down that escalator in 2015, he talked about he's actually been talking about the threat before he was a political candidate and as president. He was not going to allow a threat to future generations of Americans. We are going to destroy their Air Force going to the Navy which we have achieve a significant percentage of their launch, we are well on our way to achieving that we were going to wipe out their defense industrial base, the factories that make the missile we are on our way to doing that because the things they were going to hide behind nuclear weapon and threaten the world to do anything about it that was going to happen under President Trump. We are on our way. We are ahead of schedule on each objective and finish line not today. It's not tomorrow, but it is coming. We are going to get to the point where our military will have achieved all of and subjective in this mission and they're doing so with extra extraordinary efficiency. Something that I think we go down in history as one of the best tactical military operations

in modern times. [NATO Isn't an Alliance: It's a European Welfare Program Funded by American Taxpayers: Marco Rubio \[WATCH\]](#)

## International Strategic Developments

**Japan's first long-range missile** was deployed at a southwestern army camp, as the country pushes to bolster its offensive capabilities.”

**China's "secret" development of nuclear** infrastructure in Sichuan province, described by intel sources as an ongoing construction projects as part of Beijing's "most significant nuclear weapon modernization campaign in decades.”

**A large fleet of U.S. B-1 and B-52 bombers** operating from RAF Fairford is carrying out a high-volume of strikes against Iranian targets, underscoring Britain's important support role in the conflict even as UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer aims to portray the mission as defensive and politically distinct from joining the war outright.

**North Korea's test of a high-thrust solid-fuel intercontinental** ballistic missile (ICBM) engine signals efforts to develop multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRV). The MIRV program aims to complicate US and allied defense systems and secure a credible second-strike capability as part of North Korea's deterrent strategy.

## Congressional News of Interest

**HIGHLIGHT: Secretary Kadlec tells Congress that the Administration will do a Nuclear Strategy Review especially examining (1) the two peer threat, (2) theater nuclear forces and extended deterrence, and (3) whether the US needs greater numbers as the Posture Commission recommended. This will be the first such review and Kadlec emphasized the excellent conclusions of the Posture Commission led by Secretary Elbridge Colby although it will not be a formal Nuclear Posture Review.**

Witnesses: Mark Berkowitz, Mark Kadlec, Gen Steve Whiting, General Guillot, Adm Richard Correll: HASC Strategic Forces Subcommittee, Hearing March 17, 2026 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AqHTepeetOQ;>

SASC Hearing: <https://rollcall.com/2026/03/26/senators-worry-about-historically-dangerous-strategic-threats/>

**JCS Chairman & Advocacy for FY2026 Defense Budget:** Chairman of the JCS General Caine strongly supported the proposed ~\$961.6 billion budget. He emphasized (1) **Re-energizing the defense industrial base;** (2) **focusing on lethality/readiness under the Secretary's pillars of restoring warrior ethos, rebuilding the military, and reestablishing deterrence.**

Key priorities he highlighted included:

- **Strengthening homeland defense (border security, countering illegal immigration and narcotics).**
- **Deterring China in the Indo-Pacific with "combat credible" forces.**
- **Modernizing the Nuclear Triad, shipbuilding,**
- **"Golden Dome" missile defense initiative,**
- **New fighter aircraft (e.g., F-47),**
- **Drone technology,**
- **Cyber capabilities.**

Houe Budget Committee Proposal: ["The Best Metric to Reverse the Curse: A 3% Deficit-to-GDP Path to Fiscal Sustainability."](#)

## The Iran Corner

### **Was Iran Was Building Nuclear Weapons or Nuclear Energy?**

**Iran and the NPT: Commentary by the ICBM EAR:** First we bring you an excerpt [below] from the BAS by George Perkovich who claims the US and Israeli elimination of the Iranian nuclear program will push other nations to seek nuclear weapons and will potentially rupture the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

BAS/Perkovich, April 2026: When President Trump withdrew the United States from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in 2018, he **cracked the brittle foundation of the global nonproliferation regime** based on the 1970 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). This was not seen clearly at the time, so its implications could not be fully addressed. Now the ramifications are becoming clearer: The war on Iran raises doubt that the NPT can be a central pillar of international security. If not, will more countries seek nuclear weapons, including US allies or friends? And will China and Russia be emboldened to follow the US-Israeli example to forcibly try to stop them?

### **Comment by the ICBM EAR:**

The USA repeatedly played diplomatic rope-a-dope with North Korea over its potential nuclear weapons program although we could have destroyed the very initial nuclear reactor in North Korea. Pyongyang now has a range of nuclear weapons estimated at upwards of 100 or more.

On the other hand, the Israelis and United States repeatedly either militarily took down the identifiable parts of the Iranian nuclear weapons programs, as well as having eliminated a nuclear reactor in Iraq and Syria, and a range of nuclear activities in Iraq post Desert Storm and through the Proliferation Security Initiative, took down what were initial parts of the Libyan nuclear program by intercepting shipped centrifuges from Malaysia going to Tripoli. The result: all four nations do not now have nuclear weapons.

Clare Lopez an expert on Iran's nuclear program explains Perkovich has everything backward. **First, Iran** did not comply with the JCPOA requirement that they reveal all their nuclear related military activity. That was the key provisions which if not complied with by Iran made the nuclear deal null and void---the deal could not go forward. **Second, the Iranians worked** on nuclear warhead triggers, exploding bridge wire nuclear detonators, (first discussed in a November 2011 Quarterly IAEA report) warhead shells as well as having a program that was projected by the Iranians themselves to build between 7-11 nuclear warheads. Material documenting the entire Iran nuclear program was spirited out of Iran by Israeli commandoes in 2018 that IAEA concluded revealed the entirety of Iran's nuclear activities which were a blueprint for building nuclear weapons. **Third, the assumed halt or pause** in 2003 of the Iran nuclear program was actually a further disbursement of the program among various Iranian institutions to better hide the nature and the extent of the nuclear activities which continued. **Fourth, Iran continues** to work on building long range rockets, (a violation of the JCPOA). With the recent targeting of Diego Garcia Iran revealed a capability of launching such missiles some 2500 miles or 4000 kilometers. This is double the distance claimed as the maximum range of its missiles by the Iranian government itself, as well as Russia, and by most of the US based nuclear abolition community, including the BAS and their parent organization the Union of Concerned Scientists. **Fifth, the widespread** but now obviously false claim that Iran's missiles could not and were not ever intended to range Europe was used as the key argument [also repeatedly trotted out by the BAS] to take down the European based missile defense that former President Bush (43) has proposed to build to defend Europe and NATO from projected Iranian ballistic missile threats. **Sixth, leaving the JCPOA was actually no** different than leaving the INF agreement with the Russians. In both cases, one party to the agreements was not in compliance—Russia deploying missiles of INF range and Iran failing to disclose and dismantle its military related nuclear activities.

## Essays & Reports

New Essays & Reports of Interest to the Nuclear Community [There are three China essays that provide an interesting and diverse set of views on the challenges the US faces in the Western Pacific.]

### #1: VIDEO: CHINA IS A CO-BELLIGERENT—AND WASHINGTON SHOULD SAY SO, WITH GUERMANTES LAILARI

[Guermantes Lailari](#) • March 31, 2026

Watch now on YouTube:  <https://youtu.be/4SdP1d5kYxg>

China is not a passive bystander in the war against Iran—it is a “co-belligerent” whose intelligence sharing, satellite guidance, and radar technicians are directly contributing to the deaths of Americans, Israelis, and Gulf Arab nationals. That was the blunt assessment of Guermantes Lailari, a retired U.S. Air Force foreign area officer and senior non-resident fellow of the Jewish Policy Center in Taiwan, who told a JPC webinar on March 31 that Washington must confront Beijing over support that goes far beyond arms sales. Lailari, who was selected as a Taiwan fellow by Taiwan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2022 and has written for the JPC’s *inFOCUS Quarterly* on Chinese support for the Houthis and Hamas, argued that the scale of Chinese involvement amounts to participation in the conflict.

#### BEIJING’S FINGERPRINTS IN IRAN

Lailari traced China’s involvement to a 25-year, \$400 billion agreement signed with Tehran around 2021–2022 covering oil, gas, and military development—“not just weapon systems, but training, intelligence, the full spectrum.” He noted that China sold Iran radar systems supposedly capable of detecting stealth aircraft, though Israeli and American strikes destroyed them. At least three Chinese radar technicians were reportedly killed, and broader estimates suggest up to 300 Chinese nationals died across Iran while supporting defense and internal-security infrastructure. China’s surveillance technology, Lailari added, underpins the regime’s domestic repression, including a January crackdown in which “up to 30,000 civilians, unarmed protesters, were killed.”

The most consequential support, he argued, involves the Beidou satellite system. Its 500 satellites provide targeting intelligence and in-flight guidance corrections for Iranian missiles—capability Tehran does not possess on its own. “When those missiles hit targets, it’s because China has provided that information,” Lailari said. The same intelligence pipeline feeds the Houthis, enabling attacks on commercial shipping and on Israel. He stressed that in the Iran conflict, unlike Ukraine, Chinese assistance is “killing Americans,” making the situation “more severe.”

#### WHY CHINA AND RUSSIA ABSTAINED AT THE UN

Lailari addressed the surprise abstention by Beijing and Moscow on UN Security Council Resolution 2817, supported by roughly 135 nations. The Gulf states, he observed, were the driving force, and China could not afford to antagonize them: Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Kuwait alone supply nearly 25 percent of China’s crude oil imports, and Gulf-China trade reached \$257 billion in 2024. By abstaining rather than vetoing, Beijing could “continue supporting Iran without any kind of repercussions” while signaling disapproval of the war on its own propaganda terms.

#### TAIWAN’S RESOLVE AND THE PORCUPINE STRATEGY

Turning to the Indo-Pacific, Lailari dismissed fears of an imminent Chinese invasion of Taiwan. Xi Jinping has fired more than 100 generals in recent years, leaving the Central Military Commission with only two members—himself and one anti-corruption investigator. “Things aren’t looking good if you’re trying to get ready for an invasion,” he observed. Chinese military equipment has also performed poorly in recent engagements in Venezuela, the India-Pakistan fighting, and Iran.

Meanwhile, Taiwan has committed \$20 billion in new weapons purchases—equivalent to its entire defense budget—pushing defense spending above 3.2 percent of GDP, with another \$14 billion reportedly in the pipeline. The

U.S. military is training Taiwanese forces under the National Defense Authorization Act, helping them adopt a “porcupine strategy” that makes the island “so difficult to swallow that it will choke China.” Lailari compared the effort to lethal training Washington provided Ukraine beginning in 2017.

Beijing, he noted, wages a parallel information campaign pushing “American skepticism”—portraying Washington as an unreliable partner—and “Taiwan skepticism,” claiming the island lacks the will to fight. Polling data tells a different story: 60 to 70 percent of Taiwanese say they are willing to defend their country, and the overwhelming majority identify as Taiwanese rather than Chinese.

## FOOD, NOT JUST OIL

Lailari identified food as China’s most critical vulnerability. “They can’t feed themselves no matter how much land they farm,” he said, adding that while China holds roughly 120 days of oil reserves, “if you really want to hurt China, you start talking about food embargoes.” He also called for reciprocal bans on Chinese purchases of American farmland, noting that Beijing permits no foreign land ownership.

Looking ahead to a Trump-Xi summit expected in mid-May, Lailari predicted the agenda would extend well beyond trade to include Chinese presence in the Western Hemisphere, the Panama Canal, and the war in Iran. He cautioned that China is tripling its nuclear arsenal and that Taiwan could become “the flashpoint” for a nuclear confrontation—but expressed cautious optimism that Xi recognizes President Trump’s assertiveness. “Pushing him might get a response you don’t appreciate,” Lailari said, “because it might be very painful.”

## #2 From the Archives: China's 'Unrestricted Warfare': Is It Here Already?

by [Pete Hoekstra](#)

March 26, 2024 at 5:00 am

- China-linked hackers appear to be looking to attack U.S. infrastructure, especially key components such as the electrical grid, water reservoirs and treatment plants, pipelines, and transportation and communications systems, among other targets.
- The goal is seemingly to disrupt the U.S. everything critical to life – if you have no electricity, your cellphone will not work; no water will come out of the tap; gas pumps will not pump gas; flights and trains will stop, and disease from disabled sewage treatment plants will spread. There will be havoc and panic. The government and military will be unable to protect the nation. That is what is meant by "unrestricted warfare." Not a bullet was fired. It did not have to be. According to Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*, it is perfect.
- What are some of the steps that should be taken?
- The West has correctly identified the CCP as the malign threat that it is; now we have a responsibility to put into place the measures and deterrents to prevent it from attacking us through cyberspace or any other way. Let us not wait until we experience a 9/11-scale cyberattack that could be far more damaging to the U.S. than what took place on that dark day more than 20 years ago.

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If there is one thing FBI Director Christopher Wray has been consistent on, it is the threat of Communist China across a wide range of fronts. At an unprecedented event on July 6, 2022, Wray and his British counterpart, MI5 Director General Ken McCallum, held a [joint public appearance](#) – the first ever -- to discuss the growing security challenge posed by China. Evidently, they saw the matter as urgent.

In this joint appearance, the two men highlighted the threats posed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the CCP's [civil-military fusion state](#) -- specifically, that the CCP is intent on [acquiring and stealing](#) technology and business secrets from the West. [Targeted areas](#) include advanced materials, data and artificial intelligence (AI). China's President Xi Jinping has [made it clear](#) that he intends China to not only catch-up to, but surpass, the West.

More recently, Wray highlighted how the CCP and those affiliated with it apparently plan to use its technological capabilities to target the West.

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Jen Easterly, Director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), testified before the House Select Committee on Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party that the threats posed by China are not imaginary: they are real. Her agency already has [discovered CCP penetrations](#) into the telecommunications industry, aviation, energy and water infrastructure. As the threat from China continues to grow, the global security environment requires the U.S. and our allies to act now to harden our infrastructure and systems to mitigate the threat.

The problem is one of supreme urgency. No one knows who will win the U.S. presidential election on November 5. If I were head of the Chinese Communist Party, I would probably be saying to myself, "I am stuck with a weak economy, more than a billion people who will not be happy with that, and just more seven months with an American president who calls me a 'competitor,' as if the US-Chinese relationship were about EV car dealerships -- although that, too. [What are my choices? a\) Use this opportunity, which will soon be closing, to choke off Taiwan and take over the world's supply of semiconductor chips. If the U.S. tries to stop us, we could threaten them with mayhem or simply go ahead and make some. b\) Instead of Taiwan, why not just go straight for the U.S. while it is bogged down in Ukraine, the Middle East and its election? Or c\) We can wait and see who wins \(with our help\) and if it is the wrong person, we still have two-and-a-half months until the new president is inaugurated.](#)"

What are some of the steps that should be taken?

First, stop *all* investments in China and reroute essentials, such as the manufacture of medicines, to other nations. *Any* investment, even in paper cocktail umbrellas, goes toward strengthening the People's Liberation Army against us. We can hear the screeching of Wall Street and their Augustinian [cry](#): "But not yet!" The threat, however, should be viewed in terms of national security. No one will ring a bell when the lights go out.

The U.S. will also need to impose secondary sanctions, so that any country preferring to do business with China is prohibited from doing business with the U.S.

In addition, China -- for [poisoning to death](#) roughly 100,000 Americans each year with fentanyl and other opiates, a mass-murder equivalent to one large plane crash every day -- should be designated as a state sponsor of terrorism. China should also be barred from using the international banking system, or [SWIFT](#), "a secure network that allows more than 10,000 financial institutions in 212 different countries to send and receive information about financial transactions to each other."

Second, companies and universities also need to get serious about their security systems to make the theft of intellectual property more difficult to perpetrate but easier to detect. We cannot allow our enemies to short-circuit the difficult and expensive process of technological innovation by simply [walking out the door](#) with the plans.

This precaution, sadly, would do well to include a moratorium, at least for the time being, on students from Communist China attending U.S. universities. Again, there will be more screeching from academic institutions that are fond of holding out their tin cups, but are we really interested in educating our "competitors" to take us over or kill us?

Third, the U.S. needs to cooperate with its allies to protect the intellectual property and technological advances of our countries' respective corporations as a national security priority. One excellent example where this [cooperation has been successful](#) is between the U.S. and the Netherlands. The governments of the two countries have worked together closely to protect against technology transfer to the CCP. While each country has the decision as to its own trade policies, sharing intelligence and threat assessments enables both countries to make better decisions regarding joint security concerns.

Fourth, companies must be willing to notify the government if their systems have been attacked or compromised by outside entities. Under current law, publicly-traded companies have [four days to report](#) a cyber incident to regulators. Businesses sometimes have been understandably reluctant to acknowledge that their systems have been compromised: there is the risk of reputational damage and unpleasant repercussions. Organizations, however, need to be confident that sharing this information with the government will only be used to help address

the specific incident. Tragically, our government has not quite been doing all it can to inspire trust. There might be some extremely unpleasant repercussions from that.

Finally, there must be a coordinated strategy between our national, state and local governments on the CCP threat, including prime examples of where this system has failed, as in the production of EV batteries in the U.S. by CCP firms; the CCP buying up American farmland, especially near military bases, and the government's failure to hold the CCP to account for its lies about COVID's human-to-human transmissibility, which caused the unnecessary deaths of [more than a million](#) Americans, and the CCP's [mass-poisoning](#) of Americans with fentanyl, which in itself is an act of war.

While the federal government has [warned](#) "that Chinese EVs could collect your data and send it back to China," states and local governments are welcoming Chinese EV battery manufacturing plants into their communities, frequently with [massive government subsidies](#). This lack of coordination is a serious vulnerability in our national security posture.

Wray and McCallum were correct in highlighting the threat from the CCP in 2022. Wray has reemphasized the growing threat. The evidence is clear, and the time has come for our elected leaders and public servants — at all levels of government — to respond in a coordinated fashion to this threat. The West has correctly identified the CCP as the malign threat that it is; now we have a responsibility to put into place the measures and deterrents to prevent it from attacking us through cyberspace or any other way. Let us not wait until we experience a 9/11-scale cyberattack that could be far more damaging to the U.S. than what took place on that dark day more than 20 years ago.

*Peter Hoekstra is a Distinguished Senior Fellow at Gatestone Institute. He was US Ambassador to the Netherlands during the Trump administration. He also served 18 years in the U.S. House of Representatives representing the Second District of Michigan and served as Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Intelligence Committee.*

### **How US Military Dominance Unravels China's War Machine**

#### **#3 Essay of the Week:**

Every major leap in Chinese weapons development has been triggered by US military superiority. When China's military shortcomings are exposed, however, Beijing responds by purging its leaders and undermining its own capacity for learning and improvement. Each new demonstration of US military dominance not only challenges China externally, but destabilizes it internally, [Miles Yu](#) writes in the [Washington Times](#).

#### **Essay #4: America Must Seek Nuclear Supremacy**

An unarmed Trident II D5 missile is test-launched from the Ohio-class U.S. Navy ballistic missile submarine USS *Nebraska* off the coast of California, March 26, 2018. (U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist First Class Ronald Gutridge/Handout via Reuters)

March 30, 2026 1:43 PM

While the wars in Iran and Ukraine and other global crises command attention, many have overlooked the daunting challenge facing President Trump in the nuclear realm: for the first time ever, America faces not one but two peer adversaries that each represent an



existential threat to our way of life.

The Trump administration inherited the most complex nuclear challenge in history — but this moment is as much opportunity as it is crisis. Over the next three years, Trump has a golden chance to launch the nuclear renaissance America needs, rebuild a deterrent second to none, and deliver homeland defense for the 21st century.

Success begins by understanding how progressive arms-control orthodoxy failed. For decades, the global elites have clung to false assumptions: that treaties guarantee stability, restraint is reciprocated, and America's nuclear arsenal will soon be unnecessary with the arrival of a peaceful and benign global order. Those illusions have collapsed; Russia's treaty violations and China's nuclear breakout have upended every legacy framework the left relies on.

Biden's 2021 unconditional New START Treaty extension exemplified this delusion, locking America into a bipolar arms-control regime in a tripolar nuclear world. The treaty imposed numerical limits on the United States while leaving Russia's vast stockpile of tactical nuclear weapons untouched and China's nuclear expansion unconstrained.

The results were predictable. China accelerated and expanded its buildup. Russia exploited the treaty's shortcomings to rebuild its entire arsenal and develop new city-killing weapons. Nevertheless, under Biden, U.S. policy remained unchanged — ignoring these developments.

By refusing to extend New START last month, President Trump rejected this folly and affirmed reality: arms control divorced from the threat environment creates danger, not stability.

The Trump administration's nuclear playbook should build on that conviction by focusing on three key pillars: modernize the triad, expand the arsenal, and defend the homeland.

A nonnegotiable for MAGA nuclear policy should be modernizing the triad. Our triad is the foundation of deterrence and can give us a decisive edge over rivals, but only if it works as designed. As Senator Deb Fischer (R., Neb.) has [stated](#), modernization is “not a matter of choice but of survival.” That means funding the Sentinel ICBM; fielding a robust fleet of B-21 Raider strategic bombers; expanding survivable sea-based capabilities, including a nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missile; and rebuilding our aging Cold War-era nuclear-weapons production infrastructure. Deterrence cannot rely on legacy systems or rosy assumptions about Chinese and Russian restraint. It requires hard power with sufficient numbers, survivable forces, and flexible options to keep Moscow and Beijing guessing.

Second, the Trump administration should expand our nuclear arsenal — strategic and tactical. Modern delivery systems are insufficient if the underlying stockpile is too small for the mission. Washington must come to terms with the reality that arms-control advocates resist: deterring two nuclear peers requires more and different nuclear weapons than deterring one.

Also urgent is expanding America's nonstrategic nuclear forces. The United States fields around 200 tactical nuclear weapons; Russia fields around 2,000. This imbalance is all but an invitation for Russian coercion.

Once expanded, these weapons should be deployed in theater to Europe and the Indo-Pacific. Tactical nukes provide limited deterrent value sitting in U.S. storage vaults, but forward-deployed in places like Poland, Estonia, South Korea, and Japan, they can strengthen deterrence and lower the risk of nuclear blackmail.

Third, we need to advance Trump's initiatives to defend the homeland, including and in particular the massive Golden Dome project. Deterrence is necessary but not sufficient. Missile defense raises the cost of attacks and complicates our adversaries' planning.

The Golden Dome is the most serious opportunity in decades to build a layered national missile defense. As Reagan saw with his Strategic Defense Initiative, Trump recognizes that deterrence is strongest when adversaries question their abilities to strike and control escalation.

The United States does not seek an arms race. But in a world where its adversaries sprint ahead, unilateral restraint becomes synonymous with surrender. As Trump stated in 2016, if others insist on an arms race, America must “outmatch them at every pass and outlast them all.”

The goal of America's nuclear policy should always be peace — but as Biden proved, that will never be secured through concession. Deterrence works when U.S. strength is unmistakable and its resolve unquestionable.

**READ! Essay #5: Stimson Center: Work Force Development in the Nuclear Enterprise**



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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**

Prepared by Peter Huessy

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*Contact: [NIDS@ThinkDeterrence.com](mailto:NIDS@ThinkDeterrence.com)*

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