Weekly ICBM EAR Report

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

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ICBM EAR, Week of April 6th Prepared by Peter Huessy, President of Geostrategic Analysis, and Senior Fellow at the National Institute for Deterrence Studies and Senior Fellow at the Gold Institute for International Strategy

Executive Summary

Quotes of the Week; the WSJ comments on North Korea and Iran and Counter Proliferation; Ear's updated essay on Iran and the JCPOA; Defense Budget summitted to Congress by the administration; The Minot USAF base, its bombers and ICBMs are reviewed by Japanese news network; From the archives (1) How US intelligence mis-estimated Soviet defense spending; and (2) How did Reagan bring down oil prices from $159 to $34 a barrel.

Speaker Gingrich remembers Churchill and taking the Nazi threat seriously; Numerous administrative activities including tenuous cease fire with Iran; Armen Rosen of Free Press takes on those who think Iran is winning; International Developments are noted; Congressional reaction to the FY2027 budget proposal; & Some additional commentary of note especially Mark Schnider's new study of China's warhead testing and accelerated nuclear buildup. And final words from the Sec USAF on the heroic rescue of our pilots.

Quotes of the Week

Harvard's Professor John Lewis Gaddis, interviewed on Uncommon Knowledge by former Reagan speechwriter and Hoover Institute's Peter Robinson: "China has no global ambitions and thus the US has to learn to co-exist."

Mathew Kroenig, Atlantic Council: "For the first time in history, the United States will need to deter not just one, but two near-peer nuclear superpowers at the same time, and that is going to require a larger nuclear force. "

NNSA Administrator Brandon Williams: "Our commitment to peace through strength is unwavering—and our message to our adversaries is clear: we will maintain unmatched capabilities needed to keep our nation safe.

General Stephen L. Davis, Commander USAF Global Strike Command: "The Sentinel ICBM is foundational to our no-fail mission, and this work helps deliver a weapons system that is more safe, more secure, and more effective on day one."

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-AL)and Sen. Roger Wicker (R-MS): "This bold commitment provides the resources needed to rebuild American military capability and confront those challenges head-on,"

US Strategic Command: "This modernization effort will provide uninterrupted #Deterrence and ensure the #Readiness of the ICBM force for decades to come."

Rep. Ken Calvert, R-Calif, Chairman of the House Appropriations defense subcommittee: The defense budget request reflects the subcommittees priorities, including pay raises for junior enlisted service members, investment in munitions production and increased shipbuilding.

CJCS Gen. Dan Caine: The USAF conducted 62 bomber missions as part of Operation Epic Fury, including 18 sorties flown roundtrip from the continental United States.

Senator McConnell, (R-KY) Chair of SAC Defense Appropriations Subcommittee: : "Budget reconciliation, for its part, can only supplement — not replace — the consistent demand signals necessary to secure the private sector investments necessary to adequately expand and modernize our defense industrial base,"

Senator McConnell: "Regular order appropriations are the right way to meet the scale and scope of the requirements of our military."

ICBM News

ICBM News of the Week: A Look at Minot, ND USAF Base.

US nuclear base underscores deterrence as global risks rise

NHK (Japan), Apr. 9 | Nishikawa Atsutoshi and Benjamin Marks

The global nuclear order has entered a more precarious phase. The latest US-Russia nuclear treaty expired in February, and wars continue to rage in Ukraine and the Middle East. Nowhere is the constant state of nuclear readiness more visible than at the center of American strategic deterrence: Minot Air Force Base in the state of North Dakota. NHK's Washington Bureau Chief Nishikawa Atsutoshi was granted rare access last year to the frontline site, where both nuclear-capable bombers and intercontinental ballistic missiles are on constant standby. Here is his account of what he observed there.

Congressional Developments of Strategic Significance

Nuclear war shouldn't come down to just one person

The Hill Online, Apr. 6 | Rep. Scott Peters (D-CA)

President Trump's attack on Iran and his proposal to resume U.S. nuclear weapons testing has jolted Americans back to a darker era of Cold War brinkmanship, when impulsive decisions could push the world toward catastrophe. It's a stark reminder that one person can, at any moment, order the use of nuclear weapons with almost no oversight. My bill, the Nuclear First-Strike Security Act, would establish safeguards to prevent an impulsive or reckless first strike, without weakening our ability to defend our country.

The FY2027 Budget Proposal

(from Washington Times)

President Trump has proposed boosting defense spending to $1.5 trillion in his 2027 budget released Friday, The president's plan would also reduce spending on nondefense programs by 10% by shifting some responsibilities to state and local governments. "President Trump is committed to rebuilding our military to secure peace through strength," the budget said.

This year's White House document, prepared by Budget Director Russell Vought, is intended to provide a road map from the president to Congress as lawmakers build their own budgets and annual appropriations bills to keep the government funded. Mr. Vought spoke to House GOP lawmakers on a private call Thursday.

Among the budget priorities the White House called for:

- ***Supporting the Trump administration's immigration enforcement and deportation operations by eliminating refugee resettlement aid programs, maintaining Immigration and Customs Enforcement funds at current year levels and drawing on last year's increases for the Department of Homeland Security funds to continue opening detention facilities, including 100,000 beds for adults and 30,000 for families.***
- ***A 13% increase in funding for the Department of Justice, which the White House said would be focused on violent criminals.***
- ***A $10 billion fund within the National Park Service for beautification projects.***
- ***A $481 million increase in funding to enhance aviation safety and support an air traffic controller hiring surge.***

Congress has mixed reaction to $1.5 trillion defense budget request | Stars and Stripes

President Donald Trump's request Friday was to increase defense spending to $1.5 trillion in the 2027 fiscal year. The budget request also asks Congress to approve $1.15 trillion through its annual appropriations process and enact the remaining $350 billion through a legislative tactic known as reconciliation, Together, the amount would mark the highest level of funding for defense in modern history and give the Defense Department a 44% funding increase

The Republican Chairmen of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees described the $1.5 trillion top line as a "historic" investment in countering adversaries around the globe and said they were committed to passing the proposed budget into law. "This bold commitment provides the resources needed to rebuild American military capability and confront those challenges head-on," said Rep. Mike Rogers (R-AL) and Sen. Roger Wicker (R-MS)

They noted that the proposed funding will drive the U.S. toward a defense budget that makes up 5% of the nation's gross domestic product — a benchmark spending level that the U.S. has demanded of its NATO allies. Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., the chairman of the Senate Appropriations defense subcommittee, said he welcomed significant growth in annual appropriations for the military.

Administrative Developments of Strategic Importance

HIGHLIGHT: the head of IAEA in Vienna had previously indicated the Iranian nuclear material enriched to 60% may have been buried under rubble as indicated by the Iran Foreign Minister some weeks ago. The administration has explained that the Iranians have agreed to eliminate all enrichment, and the two nations will work together to dig up and remove the enriched fuel that was buried during the June 2025 air strikes.

CENTCOM Commander Adm. Brad Cooper recently directed a B-2 bomber strike against an underground Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps headquarters near Tehran.

The U.S. and Israel are determined to target those in Iran with nuclear expertise in a bid to cripple Tehran's ability to weaponize its atomic program after the war ends.

FY2027 Defense Budget Proposed
https://breakingdefense.com/2026/04/golden-dome-out-years-and-lots-of-missiles-details-of-trumps-1-5t-defense-budget-request/?utm

WASHINGTON — While the Trump administration is requesting $1.5 trillion in defense spending for fiscal 2027, that number will likely to trend downwards in the coming years based on projections revealed today by the Office of Management and Budget. As part of the Trump administration's broader FY27 budget request roll out, OMB broadly laid out plans to hike defense spending by budgeting $1.15 trillion in the base budget request and an additional $350 billion from a forthcoming reconciliation bill. However, that $1.5 trillion figure could drop to $1.28 trillion in 2028, only rising to $1.35 trillion in 2031. In the coming weeks, the Pentagon is expected to release in-depth budget justification documents detailing how it wants to funnel $1.5 trillion to specific programs next year. However, OMB and initial department documents broadly lay out the plan.

The Department of the Navy, comprising the Navy and Marine Corps, gets the largest share of the planned spending in FY27, with $150 billion — $126 billion in the budget request and another $24 billion planned in reconciliation. The Department of the Air Force, which includes both the Air and Space Forces, gets $101.2 billion, with $83.4 billion in the budget request and $17.6 billion in reconciliation. The Golden Dome missile shield would get $17.5 billion in FY27. However, that would be reliant on passing reconciliation, with a relatively scant $400 million for the program included in the base budget request.

The Navy is requesting $65.8 billion for shipbuilding alone for FY27, with roughly $60.2 billion coming from the base budget and another $5.6 billion from reconciliation funding, according to budget documents. That's a steep hike from the FY26 enacted budget, which allocated $27.2 billion to shipbuilding.

Space Force Sees Big Increase; the budget documents released by OMB today show the Space Force with a top line, including both baseline and reconciliation funding of $71.2 billion, a 77% increase from the $40 billion for FY26. The increase is primarily due to a doubling of the Space Force R&D budget. The base budget RDT&E request for FY27 is $38.4 billion, plus another $2.3 billion in reconciliation funds. One of the biggest beneficiaries of the RDT&E increase is the Space-Based Moving Target Indicator program, slated at just over $1 billion in base and reconciliation funds combined.

The procurement budget also gets a boost as well, with $9.6 billion requested in the base budget and another $9.4 billion in the reconciliation. Two programs are the chief beneficiaries of the reconciliation funding request, the Space-Based Air Moving Target Indicator, with $7.1 billion, and Proliferated Low Earth Orbit SATCOM at $1.6 billion. Space Force operations and maintenance bumps up to $9.3 billion in the baseline request, plus a small reconciliation add of $414 million. That's an increase from FY26 level of $5.7 billion in baseline funds and about $5 million extra from reconciliation.

Air Force: R&D, Procurement Boosts; the Air Force's R&D account is slated for a big jump. According to budget documents, the Trump administration is requesting roughly $74.2 billion, with just over $1 billion coming from reconciliation. The Air Force's R&D enacted share in FY26 was approximately $57 billion, the documents say. (Some of those dollars could be pass-through spending, which is paid for through Air Force accounts but ultimately goes to agencies outside the Pentagon.)The money would go toward key Air Force development projects like the F-47 stealth fighter set for first flight in 2028, for which the documents show a roughly $5 billion request — an increase of about $1.5 billion over enacted FY26 levels. **Funding for the troubled Sentinel ICBM would dip approximately $300 million from finalized FY26 levels for a total of $4.5 billion,** while research for a next-gen tanker would appear to cease. The documents further show no research or procurement funds for the E-7 Wedgetail aircraft, likely extending a fight with lawmakers over the radar plane's future.

The Air Force's procurement account would similarly rise to roughly $62 billion, though that number may also include pass-through spending. A big driver appears to be missiles: In FY26, $6.3 billion total was enacted for procuring missiles, which would increase to a total of $11.4 billion in FY27.Notably, the documents show the Air Force kickstarting procurement of Collaborative Combat Aircraft drone wingmen to the tune of nearly $1 billion, using base discretionary funding. The service is expected to make a production decision this summer for a first batch of CCA drones. Similarly, the documents show a $403 million request for procurement of the Hypersonic Attack Cruise Missile, which may mean the fast-flying weapon is poised to enter production.

For Army missile procurement, the service saw a jump from over $7 billion to $37 billion, mostly for seekers for the Precision Strike Missile seekers, Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, HIMARS, PAC-3 Missile Segment Enhancer and the Typhoon Mid-Range Capability.

At a Pentagon press conference, Secretary of War Pete Hegseth claimed "a historic military victory" after the U.S. and Iran agreed to a two-week ceasefire

Military Tribute

A Tribute to the Extraordinary Rescue of US Airmen

A U.S. F-15E aviator was successfully rescued 200 miles deep inside Iran in an operation that involved some 100 commandos and dozens of U.S. helicopters and warplanes, including four B-1 bombers that dropped nearly 100 2,000-pound satellite-guided bombs to keep approaching Iranian forces away from the crew member's hiding site,

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Ken Wilsbach wrote: "We will never leave an Airman behind; it's our creed and our warrior ethos. The combat search and rescue mission to bring our pilot and weapon systems officer home was one of the most impressive operations I've seen in 40 years of service. The survival skills our Airmen displayed to evade enemy capture, the teamwork between our special operations forces and recovery crew to lay down key strikes and extract deep behind enemy lines speaks to the strength of our warfighters. We displayed air supremacy, showing the overwhelming capability of the U.S. military. The enemy doesn't stand a chance. I couldn't be more proud of our Air Force, Joint Force and all those involved."

The Y12 National Security Complex announced: “The Uranium Processing Facility Project recently achieved a historic milestone that connects UPF directly to its future mission: the Highly Enriched Uranium Materials Facility Connector tunnel is ‘in the dry.’ With NNSA Y-12 Project Management Office oversight, UPF Construction and Y-12 Safeguards and Security were able to complete the milestone ahead of schedule.”

International Developments of Strategic Importance

ROK’s top intelligence official told lawmakers in Seoul on Monday that the DPRK’s recent test of a new missile engine made with carbon fiber material could be aimed at achieving a lighter missile body and developing multiple-warhead capabilities,

Russian satellites have made dozens of detailed imagery surveys of military facilities and critical sites across the Middle East to help Iran strike U.S. forces and other targets.

Essays, Reports and Commentary of Interest

Essay #1 From Armin Rosen, The Free Press, 5th of April, commenting on why many pundits and academics insist Iran is winning the conflict in the Middle East. https://www.thefp.com/p/behold-the-experts-in-media-and-academia

Excerpt: “Since April 2024, the Islamic Republic has fired just over 1,200 ballistic missiles at Israel. They have killed 47 Israelis, only one of whom was an enlisted soldier. The estimated 5,400-plus drones and missiles Iran has fired at the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Oman since this war began on February 28 have killed about 30 people and convinced the UAE to start revoking the residency visas of Iranian citizens living in the Emirates—a huge potential setback for sanctions-strapped Tehran, which depended on Dubai as a key access point to the global economy. Meanwhile, the U.S. has lost a reported 13 service members as of this writing, with no confirmed deaths from Iranian attacks since the opening days of the war. These losses are tragic but have had no effect on the U.S.’s ability to wage war on Iran. The current number of American dead is 10 fewer than were killed during the 1989 U.S. invasion of Panama, and six fewer than were killed in the 1983 invasion of Grenada.”

Essay #2: From the Editor: Defense Budgets

When Dr. Johnny Foster was Assistant Secretary of Defense for Research, Development, Test and Evaluation, he was convinced the US intelligence community was vastly under-estimating USSR military spending, often expressed as a percentage of GDP. At the direction of the President, he approached George Bush, then Director of the CIA, and asked why the intelligence community refused to acknowledge Moscow was spending far more as a % of its GDP on defense than the 4.5% estimated for the United States.

In 1972, the Agency had estimated USSR spending at $26 billion rubles or around 5% of a GDP. While eventually it turned out that Soviet defense spending was in excess of 20% of Soviet GDP, Foster could only secure from Director Bush a modest increase in official estimates to 7% of GDP, only marginally higher in 1972 than the 6.5% for the United States. Director Bush explained to Foster than a very high Soviet number would force the US to match such spending, the budget deficit would increase significantly, but as Agency analysts told the Director, such US growth in its defense spending “would explode détente” which would be “against US policy.” The agency eventually retroactively hiked their estimate of 1972 Soviet defense spending to 14% ($52 billion rubles in 1972 out of a total GDP of $350 billion rubles). https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP07G00258R000100120001-0.pdf

From the Archives:

In 1980, crude oil cost $149 a barrel, while by 1989, the price has fallen to $34 a barrel, adjusted for current prices. On July 4th, 2008, oil hit $148 a barrel, thanks in part to the interdiction of oil ankers in the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea and Gulf of Oman by Somalian pirates who has received training from Russian naval special forces as well as GPS coordinates, explained by the then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This essay from Stephen Moore's website has the details: https://committeetounleashprosperity.com/hotlines/how-reagan-ended-the-oil-crisis-of-the-1970s/

Commentary from the former Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich. This has been edited for brevity.

Churchill was faced with willful ignorance in the 1930s. He had read Hitler's "Mein Kampf" when it came out in English. He instinctively understood that Britain was in mortal danger. As early as 1936, Churchill warned that "Germany is arming fast… No one can say that they are not doing exactly what they have said they would do."

The British governing elite of course did not read "Mein Kampf," did not want to take Hitler as a serious threat, and did not want to take the steps necessary to stop him. They kept shrugging off Hitler's clear speeches as though they had no meaning. By 1937, Churchill warned "when I listen to what Herr Hitler says… I cannot feel that we are safe in treating these declarations as idle." Churchill went on to warn that "the era of procrastination, of half-measures, of soothing and baffling expedients, of delays, is coming to its close. In its place we are entering a period of consequences." Even before the Allies gathered to try to appease Hitler, Churchill warned: "The dictators are not looking for concessions… they are looking for weakness."

When Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain went to Munich to offer Hitler part of Czechoslovakia in the hope that it would satisfy his demands, Churchill understood that the agreement was a disaster. He said "You were given the choice between war and dishonour. You chose dishonour, and you will have war." Giving in to aggressive tyrants inevitably increases their appetite and boldness. They constantly take the measure of the people who refuse to stand up to them. Churchill understood this and warned, "so far from having its hand forced, Germany has been encouraged… We have sustained a total and unmitigated defeat. "Churchill also understood that delaying the war would make it much worse. Finally, in 1939 as war loomed and seemed unavoidable Churchill set the right standard for fighting a war: "There is no use saying, 'We are doing our best.' You have got to succeed in doing what is necessary." President Trump's clarity on the Iranian dictatorship has a long pedigree. Forty five years ago in an October 1980 TV interview he said, "That this country sits back and allows a country such as Iran to hold our hostages …is a horror." For 46 years, President Trump has understood that the Iranian government is our mortal enemy. He is now at the crossroads. We are not in a risk-free exercise. In the Churchillian tradition, we must win or face an even greater danger in the near future. There is no middle ground except in the fevered fantasies of elites who are desperate to avoid risk and willing to hide from reality.

ESSAY #3: OPINION | THE NORTH KOREA LESSON FOR IRAN

Diplomacy failed to stop Pyongyang from getting the bomb. Trump didn't make the same mistake.
The Editorial Board, Wall Street Journal
April 3, 2026 5:44 pm ET

https://www.wsj.com/opinion/north-korea-nuclear-weapon-iran-diplomacy-donald-trump-f6582f02?st=m6RmgN

President Trump decided to use military force to stop Iran from getting a nuclear weapon after diplomacy failed. This was a choice, as critics are quick to note, and a risky one. But the strangely forgotten U.S. experience with North Korea suggests the alternatives were even riskier. That history is worth recounting today to show the limits of nuclear diplomacy with a determined foe, as well as what happens when the U.S. puts conflict-avoidance above all else.

In 1984 the CIA warned that North Korea could pursue weapons-grade plutonium. Under global pressure, dictator Kim Il Sung joined the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) the next year. This was seen as a sign of Pyongyang's peaceful intent, even as it delayed adopting nuclear safeguards. North Korea continued to advance its nuclear program. In 1993 it denied inspectors access to camouflaged nuclear sites, leaving the world to guess

whether it had separated plutonium for bombs. Facing tough questions, Pyongyang announced it would withdraw from the NPT. The Clinton Administration was able to talk Kim down for a time, but Pyongyang quarreled with the International Atomic Energy Agency and in 1994 unloaded spent fuel rods from its Yongbyon reactor without IAEA monitoring. Would the fuel next be reprocessed to produce bomb-grade plutonium? No one knew.

Bill Clinton threatened sanctions. The U.S. military drew up plans for strikes on nuclear installations, and Defense Secretary Bill Perry presented a plan for a large military buildup in the region. Mr. Clinton canceled talks and deployed Patriot missile-defense systems to South Korea. John McCain backed the use of force from the Senate, and the White House was trending toward military options.

Enter Jimmy Carter. The former President informed the Clinton Administration that he intended to take up a prior offer from the North Koreans to visit and try to defuse the situation. Mr. Clinton decided to let Carter proceed as a private citizen, thinking it might give Kim a chance to back down. Instead, Mr. Clinton found himself cornered politically. Carter feared conflict above all and even opposed sanctions. He went beyond what he had been authorized by Mr. Clinton to discuss and announced a tentative agreement with Kim—on CNN. The press and foreign-policy establishment hailed nuclear peace in our time.

Military options came off the table and Mr. Clinton embraced the deal, which became the 1994 Agreed Framework. North Korea consented to freeze its illicit nuclear work and eventually allow full inspections in exchange for a multibillion-dollar package of civilian nuclear power and oil. The U.S. set aside the question of whether North Korea had a bomb's worth of plutonium and ignored its NPT violations. The regime would mellow overtime with economic engagement, some said. Besides, who wanted another Korean war? For a time, the deal seemed to work. Yet in 1996 rogue Pakistani nuclear scientist A.Q. Khan visited Pyongyang to help with uranium enrichment, an alternative path to a bomb that North Korea pursued covertly. Weaponization research continued on the sly. The regime's intent to build a bomb never changed.

In 2002 the George W. Bush Administration confronted North Korea over its enrichment program, and Pyongyang reneged on the Agreed Framework. Kim Jong Il, the son of Kim Il Sung, expelled inspectors, withdrew from the NPT and resumed plutonium work. Mr. Bush employed threats, sanctions and diplomacy but ultimately ruled out the use of force. North Korea quadrupled its plutonium stockpile and in 2006 conducted its first nuclear test. After that, U.S. military options became riskier. North Korea pressed on. It is now believed to possess some 50 warheads, and it tests ICBMs that will one day be able to reach the continental U.S. The latest missile test came on Sunday.

The lesson is that U.S. Presidents waited too long to stop North Korea. The risks of war were always said to be too high, it was never a good time, and there was always another diplomatic option to exhaust. North Korea is now a nuclear power, which means it could escalate to devastating effect in any conflict. This is more or less the path at least four Presidents took with Iran. Talks, deals, and economic relief were in ample evidence, with sanctions used as a negotiating tactic but without a credible threat of force. Like Pyongyang, Tehran agreed to a deal that didn't require it to come clean about past nuclear activities and left nuclear infrastructure intact for the future. Iran's regime never stopped pursuing the bomb.

Donald Trump is the only President who had the courage to attack Iran's nuclear program and allow Israel to do so, in June's 12-day war. The Iranian missile arsenal he now acts to degrade has its parallel in North Korea's artillery, which deterred U.S. action against Pyongyang's nuclear program by aiming at Seoul. Also on the U.S. target list are Iran's buried stockpiles of fissile material and its construction site beneath Pickaxe Mountain, where it later hopes to enrich the material. The former perhaps can be watched, but it would be a mistake to end the war with the latter intact.

We don't know how the current Iran conflict will end, but we do know Iran's radical regime will not have a nuclear program when it's over. This has made the world a safer place.

Budget Brief: Essay #3 Based on Stephen Moore's recent analysis.

The Federal government now spends $7 trillion a year. When John F. Kennedy was elected President in 1961, the entire cost of the Federal government was $98 billion, adjusted for inflation. Defense was $49 billion, half of the entire budget. At the end of the Korean War, the Federal budget was $43 billion. In 1964, President Johnson declared "unconditional war on poverty." The poverty rate stood at about 14%. Sixty-one years and $20-plus trillion later — Heritage Foundation has tracked every dollar — the rate sits at roughly 11%. That's a two-to-three-point improvement. Roughly $8 trillion per percentage point. Per. Percentage. Point. For context: the entire U.S. GDP in 1965 was about $750 billion. We've spent roughly 27 times the entire 1965 economy trying to eliminate poverty, and we've barely dented it. If this were a business, the board would have fired the CEO in 1975.

Essay #4: North Korea, Iran and 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 took down the identifiable parts of the Iranian nuclear weapons programs, as well as having eliminated nuclear reactors in Iraq and Syria. We also countered a range of nuclear activities in Iraq post-Desert Storm period 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 why George Perkovich has everything backwards in his essay in the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists which the EAR reviewed last week. Here is a slight update of the evidence she helped provide.

First, Iran did not comply with the JCPOA requirement that they reveal all their nuclear related military activity. Those were 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 (the AMAD Plan) 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 commandos in 2018 that the IAEA concluded revealed the entirety of Iran's nuclear activities and 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 dispersal of the program among various Iranian institutions to better hide the nature and the extent of the nuclear activities which continued.

Fourth, Iran continued to work on building both medium and long range missiles, and with the targeting of Diego Garcia revealed a capability of launching such missiles some 2500 miles or 4000 kilometers, double the distance claimed as the Iranian maximum capability by the Iranian government itself, as well as by 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 with a range to reach Europe was used as the key argument [repeatedly trotted out by the BAS] to take down the European-based missile defense that former President Bush (43) had proposed to build to defend Europe and NATO from Iranian ballistic missile threats.

Sixth, leaving the JCPOA was 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.

Minot USAF Base Review by Japan's NHK, April 9th

I visited Minot in August with an NHK crew. A hulking black B-52 strategic bomber rolled across the tarmac in front of us with a deafening roar. Minot hosts more than two dozen of the behemoths, which have been the preeminent symbol of America's nuclear deterrent since the Cold War. Lieutenant Colonel Vince Noel, Commander of the 23rd Bomb Squadron, told us that the B-52 "is a piece of American air power manifest. "Noel called the aircraft a "symbol of American resolve," and the country's "ironclad commitment with our allies and partners in the regions." The three pillars of American nuclear deterrence are strategic bombers, intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs). Minot has the first two, giving it the distinction of being the only base in the country with more than one.

On standby underground '24/7'

We noticed streets across the base were named after weapons, such as "Missile Avenue" and "Minuteman Drive." The latter refers to the Minuteman III, the ICBMs at Minot. Their name comes from the term coined for young militiamen who could be mobilized within a minute during the American Revolutionary War. The Minuteman III is capable of carrying a nuclear warhead and is said to have a range of nearly 10,000 kilometers.

We were first permitted to visit a site used to train maintenance workers – one of about 150 ICBM launch-related facilities said to be located around the base. Because the ICBMs are targets for hostile nations, the missiles are securely stored in underground vertical launch facilities known as silos. Each one is protected by thick, blast-proof doors. The site we visited is designed to allow personnel to practice the procedures for silo maintenance, inspections, and safety checks in an environment identical to the ones housing live missiles. We descended a narrow staircase to an area from which we could see part of a full-scale, 18-meter replica.

'Extended deterrence'

Colonel Matthew J. Crosman, Deputy Commander 91st Missile Wing, explained the concept of "extended deterrence," which involves shielding allies. Crosman said such deterrence means "we operate ICBMs, or nuclear deterrents so that you don't have to. So that includes your allies in the Pacific as well, including Japan. "He underscored that the US military is "not launching our nuclear missiles every day," and instead is "just maintaining them," to "have them as a deterrent there, just in case."

'Capsule' controls launches

We also visited a facility for training personnel responsible for managing ICBM launches. We were required to store our smartphones in a locker before entering, because the site contains classified information. The control room for launch operations is called the "capsule." It was accessible only after passing through multiple locked checkpoints. Surrounded by thick walls, the capsule felt sealed and completely cut off from the outside world.

The ICBM launch procedure cannot be carried out by a single person but must be performed by a team of two. To prevent accidental missile launches, the team must follow a complex series of steps before an actual event. Personnel who perform this specialized role are called "missileers." They are responsible for carrying out a president's order to launch a nuclear attack, so they work in shifts to cover the 24-hour operations. We spoke with one of the missileers, who said he was 28 years old. When he first started this job, he admitted he was "really, really scared. "He said he has never launched a missile, nor does he spend time thinking about what it would be like to do so if he ever receives the order. "The reason we're here is to ensure that day never comes," he said, adding, "But if, by any chance, that day does come, we'll be ready and will carry out our mission by putting the thousands of hours of training we've accumulated to good use."

'Doomsday' ticks closer

The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists' "Doomsday Clock" is a symbolic representation of the time remaining until humanity's self-destruction. On January 27, the clock was set at 85 seconds to midnight – the closest it has ever come to the brink since it was created in 1947.

According to estimates compiled by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute in January 2025, the number of nuclear warheads worldwide was 12,241.Russia possessed 5,459 and the United States 5,177. Those

two countries alone accounted for more than 10,600 warheads, or 86 percent of the world's total. China was a distant third, with 600.On February 5, the New START Treaty — the only nuclear disarmament agreement between the United States and Russia — expired.

US President Donald Trump said in a social media post in February that efforts should be made to negotiate a revised treaty with improved terms. He said that China should also be included. But Beijing pushed back, stating, "Our nuclear arsenal is nowhere near the same scale as that of the United States, and it is unfair to ask us to participate in nuclear disarmament negotiations at this stage."

'A larger nuclear force'

Matthew Kroenig is vice president and senior director of the Atlantic Council's Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security and served as a government advisor during Trump's first term. He believes that the United States will be forced to strengthen its nuclear capabilities to deter not only Russia but also China.

"I think what should happen is that the United States should build up its nuclear forces for the first time since the end of the Cold War," he said. "For the first time in history, the United States will need to deter not just one, but two near-peer nuclear superpowers at the same time, and that is going to require a larger nuclear force. "Kroenig noted the US nuclear umbrella protects more than 30 formal treaty allies, including Japan. "You should want the United States to build a strong nuclear force," he told NHK, "because that's what's going to allow the United States to continue to deter China, North Korea, or others from conducting nuclear strikes on Japan."

Other experts are concerned that escalation in the wake of New START's expiration will lead to increased nuclear development in various countries. Daryl Kimball, Executive Director of the Arms Control Association, said that without the treaty, the United States and Russia could begin increasing the number of long range nuclear warheads on their missiles and bombers for the first time in about 35 years. "This would be a very significant and negative shift," Kimball said. "It could open the door to unrestrained competition, not just between the United States and Russia, as we saw during the Cold War, but also with China, which, as we all know, is increasing its smaller but still deadly strategic arsenal."

Opaque nature of US nuclear strategy

Experts have warned that US weapons are becoming increasingly obsolete. Some of the B-52 bombers still in use were manufactured in the 1960s. Among those advocating for extended deterrence, calls for modernization are growing louder. Some point out that the lack of clear US policy guidelines could ultimately lead other countries to accelerate expanding their own nuclear weapons programs. On March 2, French President Macron announced plans to increase the number of nuclear warheads in his country's arsenal. Estimated as of last January, France was reported to have the world's fourth-largest stockpile of the warheads. Although France had been reducing its nuclear arsenal since the end of the Cold War, it now appears to be shifting course to strengthen its nuclear capabilities.

The recent US-Israeli attack on Iran has also put nuclear development in the spotlight. Washington says the action was aimed at pre-emptively curbing threats from Iran posed by its nuclear program. However, it has also thrust upon the world the reality of a major power exercising its potent military force. During our visit to the training facility, we received a detailed explanation of the steps leading up to a launch. Although it is often referred to as the "nuclear button," the actual process involves extremely complex procedures. If a missile armed with a nuclear warhead were ever launched, its destructive power would be far greater than those of the atomic bombs the U.S. dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.The base personnel allowed us to handle some of the training equipment, including the ICBM. Even knowing it was only a replica, my hands trembled as I touched it.

Additional Commentary of Interest

The Future of Nuclear Non-Proliferation in East Asia Depends on Iran
National Review Online, Apr. 7 | Kyle Balzer

The world is currently mired in nuclear-induced instability in the Middle East. Yet an even greater nuclear shock looms in the Pacific if the U.S. is not careful. South Korea and Japan have both expressed concern that the Iran war has pulled U.S. military forces away from their defense. Questions abound in both countries about the credibility of Washington's security commitment. Unless the U.S. adjusts its diplomatic and military posture in the war's aftermath, the spread of nuclear weapons in East Asia is a real possibility.

NTI Advances Dialogue on U.S.-China Nuclear Risk Reduction
Nuclear Threat Initiative, Apr. 7 | Editorial

As strategic and technological competition between the United States and China intensifies—and amid growing concern over China's expanding nuclear capabilities—the need for sustained U.S.-China engagement on nuclear risks is increasingly urgent. These issues should be high on the agenda when President Trump travels to China next month to meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Note: The author of last weeks essay on seeking nuclear supremacy was **JOHN NOONAN**, an adviser to **POLARIS NATIONAL SECURITY**. He is a former congressional staffer and veteran of the United States Air Force.

Essay #5:

Covert Nuclear Testing and the Enormous Increase in Chinese Nuclear Weapons Capability
Mark B. Schneider, No. 656, April 8, 2026

Dr. Mark B. Schneider
Dr. Mark Schneider is a Senior Analyst with the National Institute for Public Policy. Dr. Schneider previously served in DoD as Principal Director for Forces Policy, Principal Director for Strategic Defense, Space and Verification Policy, Director for Strategic Arms Control Policy and Representative of the Secretary of Defense to the Nuclear Arms Control Implementation Commission. He also served in the senior Foreign Service as a Member of the State Department Policy Planning Staff.

The end of U.S. nuclear testing in 1992 resulted in freezing the performance of U.S. nuclear weapons. Since then, there have been no increases in U.S. nuclear weapons performance—i.e., no improved yield-to-weight ratios and no development of advanced weapons with tailored effects. Instead, the United States maintained a small part of its 1992 nuclear arsenal through life extension programs under a program called "Science Based Stockpile Stewardship."[1] In contrast, China, which continued high yield nuclear testing through 1996 and covert low-yield testing after that, has made dramatic improvements in its nuclear stockpile since 1992. In 1992, China's nuclear weapons technology was inferior to both that of the United States and Russia. Today, they have achieved at least near parity and possibly significantly more. Due at least in part to U.S. policy, China has dramatically improved its comparative position. It is easy to win a race when only one party is racing for ideological reasons.

China had made great progress in nuclear weapons technology by 1992. By the 1980s, it had developed an enhanced radiation or neutron bomb.[2] Chinese nuclear warheads developed by about 1990, according to Jeffrey Lewis, weighed about 500-kg and yielded hundreds of kilotons.[3] This apparently is a substantial underestimation of Chinese technical progress. A 2026 book by Chinese expatriate, Dr. Hui Zhang, now with the Harvard Belfer Center, who says he had unique access to Chinese nuclear weapons information and testing data, concluded that China had done much better.[4] The implication of Hui Zhang's book is that almost all the analyses by left of center American analysts, including the Federation of American Scientists, and in some cases apparently even in U.S. Intelligence Community positions made public, are wrong. They have considerably understated what China had accomplished by 1996 and what capabilities it would have in a future conflict.[5]

The People's Liberation Army Rocket Forces Disclosures On China's Nuclear Weapons

In 2017, the People's Liberation Army Rocket Forces (PLARF) made unprecedented disclosures with regard to the DF-41 ICBM. According to the PLARF, the missile had a range of 14,000 km and three warhead options: 1)

one 1,600-kg warhead of 5.5 megatons; 2) six 250-kg warheads of 650 kilotons; or 3) 10 165-kg warheads of 150-kt.[6] It also described the JL-2A SLBM as having a range of 12,000 km and either one warhead of 250 kilotons or three warheads of 60 kilotons and the older JL-1 SLBM apparently as having a 200-kiloton warhead.[7]

Hui Zhang's New Information Concerning China's Nuclear Weapons Development

Hui Zhang described two advanced Chinese nuclear warheads developed and tested by 1996. One of them called the "535," tested in 1992, used a "gas boosted primary with a round shape which weighed 210-kg and yielded 425 kilotons."[8] (Gas bosting involves injection of deuterium and tritium into the primary or fission trigger of a thermonuclear weapon, dramatically increasing its yield and reducing its size and weight.[9]) He indicated that the yield of this weapon can be lowered by reducing the amount of highly enriched uranium (HEU) in the secondary (the thermonuclear stage that produces a high percentage of its yield) or eliminating HEU from the secondary.[10] Hui Zhang indicated that one version of the "535" had a 300-kiloton yield.[11] He also relates that another warhead developed between 1992 and 1996,was the "5×5," a gas boosted warhead "with a new oval-shaped primary," which weighed 95 kg and yielded 95 kilotons.[12]

Hui Zhang stated the "535" warhead was developed for the DF-31 ICBM[13] while the "5×5" was developed for the DF-41 ICBM.[14] The "5×5" could explain the numerous reports that the DF-41 can carry 10 or more warheads.[15] He also said that the Chinese were developing "…a larger yield warhead using the new oval primary, further reducing the weight of a "535"-type warhead."[16] This obviously could also allow the development of a higher yield version within the original weight.

China's Nuclear Espionage

Even taking into account the apparently quite successful Chinese nuclear weapons espionage against the United States detailed in the 1999 Report of the Select Committee on U.S. National Security and Military/Commercial Concerns with the People's Republic of China (the "Cox Committee"), such progress is impressive. The Cox Committee report revealed that:

The PRC stole classified information on every currently deployed U.S. intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM). The warheads for which the PRC stole classified information include: the W-56 Minuteman II ICBM; the W-62 Minuteman III ICBM; the W-70 Lance short-range ballistic missile (SRBM); the W-76 Trident C-4 SLBM; the W-78 Minuteman III Mark 12A ICBM; the W-87 Peacekeeper ICBM; and the W-88 Trident D-5 SLBM. The W-88 warhead is the most sophisticated strategic nuclear warhead in the U.S. arsenal. It is deployed on the Trident D-5 submarine-launched missile. (Emphasis in the original).[17]

The Cox Committee also reported that, *"The PRC may have also acquired classified U.S. nuclear weapons computer codes from U.S. national weapons laboratories."* [18] (Emphasis in the original). This is particularly significant because it could have allowed the development of improved types of nuclear weapons with covert nuclear testing after the supposed end of Chinese nuclear testing in 1996. Keep in mind that Hui Zhang's book does not deal with Chinese nuclear warhead development after 1996, which is 30 years ago.

The Scope of China's Technical Progress on Nuclear Weapons

Based upon open source information concerning U.S. nuclear weapons and the unclassified START Treaty Memorandum of Understanding technical data, it appears likely that the "5×5" could be a Chinese version of the U.S. W76 and the "535" could be a Chinese version of the W88, at least with regard to the secondary, adapted to Chinese needs. As described by the Cox Committee report, "The W-88 warhead is the most sophisticated strategic nuclear warhead in the U.S. arsenal."[19] *The New York Times* reported that China had stolen the W88 design and that the Chinese DF-31 warhead technology was based on stolen U.S. information.[20] This seems consistent with Hui Zhang's conclusions, although he largely denies that China obtained significant benefits through espionage. He indicates that the "535" warhead is similar to the U.S. W88 and 80% as efficient[21] while the "5×5" is 90% as efficient as the U.S. W76.[22]

Chinese warheads based upon U.S. designs may not necessarily be exact copies. It is very likely that they would be adapted to Chinese requirements taking into account its capabilities and limitations.

An important Chinese nuclear weapons designer, Xue Bencheng, characterized a 1996 Chinese nuclear test as "a great spanning leap" that allowed warhead miniaturization.[23] Hui Zhang stated that this test, and several previous ones, were used to develop the "5×5" warhead. Certainly the development of a warhead comparable to the U.S. W76 could be characterized as a "a great spanning leap."

Is Hui Zhang's information consistent with the 2017 PLARF revelation? With certain assumptions, the answer appears to be generally "yes." The six 250-kg warhead version of the DF-41 yielding 650 kilotons could be an improved version of the Chinese "515" warhead using the new primary developed for the "5×5" warhead with an significantly improved "515"-style secondary. According to Hui Zhang, the "515" had a yield of 700 kilotons.[24] It could also be an improved higher yield version of the "535." The DF-41 ten warhead version of 165 kilograms and 150 kilotons yield could be a modified version of the "5×5." Again, keep in mind that the Chinese warhead

development that Hui Zhang described happened 30-40 or more years ago. Significant progress could have been made since then with the aid of vastly better computers that became available and the aid of covert nuclear testing. From the standpoint of robustness, China has the advantage of not living under the U.S. one point safety criteria (one chance in a million of a yield of four pounds of TNT for an accidental detonation) which limits the use of more fissile material if necessary.[25]

Declassified but highly redacted Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) reports on Chinese nuclear testing in the 1990s appear to give some credence to Hui Zhang's description of the focus of Chinese development on the "535" and "5×5."[26] These reports indicated that a number of the Chinese nuclear tests conducted in the 1990s were aimed at the development of new warheads for ICBMs and SLBMs.[27]

In 2023, STRATCOM Commander General Anthony Cotton said that "…the Chinese.…CSS-10 Mod 2 ICBM [DF-31A]…is capable of ranging the continental United States (CONUS) with multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs)."[28] This gives credibility to what Hui Zhang has reported because a MIRVed DF-31A would require warheads in the "535" or "5×5" class.

The Impact of Covert Chinese Nuclear Testing

Chinese improvement of its nuclear weapons after 1996 has apparently been the product of covert nuclear testing. Three decades of U.S. stagnation combined with aggressive Chinese development have created a serious situation. Indeed, in February 2026, *CNN* reported that:

US intelligence agencies believe that China is developing a new generation of nuclear weapons and has conducted at least one covert explosive test in recent years as part of a broader push to completely transform its nuclear arsenal into the world's most technologically advanced, according to multiple sources familiar with the US intelligence assessments.[29]

In October 2025, President Donald Trump stated that, "Because of other countries testing programs, I have instructed the Department of War to start testing our Nuclear Weapons on an equal basis. That process will begin immediately."[30]

In February 2026, Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Thomas DiNanno announced at the United Nations Conference on Disarmament in Geneva that:

Today, I can reveal that the U.S. Government is aware that China has conducted nuclear explosive tests, including preparing for tests with designated yields in the hundreds of tons. The PLA sought to conceal testing by obfuscating the nuclear explosions because it recognized these tests violate test ban commitments. China has used decoupling—a method to decrease the effectiveness of seismic monitoring—to hide their activities from the world. China conducted one such yield producing nuclear test on June 22 of 2020.[31]

Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control and Proliferation Dr. Christopher Yeaw, a noted expert on nuclear weapons, stated that the June 22, 2020 Chinese nuclear test conducted at China's Lop Nur test grounds had a seismic magnitude of 2.75.[32] This is well beyond very low-yield hydronuclear testing, and, hence, has much greater significance. He indicated that the June 22, 2020 seismic event was a nuclear test, and that the United States did not know its yield from seismic data because the decoupling factor could reduce the seismic signal 20 to 40 times or even more than the yield that would be calculated assuming no decoupling.[33] (Decoupling involves creating a large cavity, pumping out the air and then detonating the device. There are also other ways to reduce the seismic signal). In addition to decoupling, nuclear tests at still higher yields can be concealed by testing outside of known nuclear test ranges, testing in salts mines and the use of earthquake masking.[34]

In a February 2026 speech in Geneva, Dr. Yeaw said that:

The estimated yield of the [June 22, 2020] event was a 10 tons nuclear explosion—or 5 tons conventional equivalent—which assumes the explosion was fully coupled in hard rock, below the water table, and at the standard scaled depth of burial. Any deviations from the assumed emplacement conditions (i.e., if the explosion were decoupled or otherwise concealed) would only increase this yield estimate.[35]

With decoupling, the yield could have been over 400-tons of TNT. Indeed, Brandon Williams, Under Secretary of Energy for Nuclear Security who heads the National Nuclear Security Administration, stated that China is "clearly" conducting explosive nuclear testing and is "trying to hide it."[36] He indicated that the yields of these tests "are not small" but rather "hundreds of tons of yield."[37]

Testing at such yields can have great benefits for the development of new and improved nuclear weapons. A report on nuclear testing by the well-known JASONS study group concluded that "…testing under a 500 ton yield limit would allow studies of boost gas ignition and initial burn, which is a critical step in achieving full primary design yield."[38] With full primary design yield the chances of a dud are very low. Apparently, this is the reason that, in 1993, during the Clinton Administration's Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty policy development, the Defense Department position "…favored a low-yield treaty with a 500 ton testing limit."[39] It also is the likely reason that in 1995 the three nuclear weapons laboratories "…requested that the permitted test level should be

set to a level which is, in fact, lower than a one-kiloton limit, which would have allowed us to carry out some very important experiments, in our view, to determine whether the first stage of multiple-stage devices [thermonuclear weapons] as indeed operating, successfully."[40]

The utility of testing at 500 tons is not just theoretical. Hui Zhang writes that the first Chinese nuclear test that demonstrated gas boosting had a 420 ton yield.[41] This was in the 1980s when there were no restrictions on the yield China could test at other than perhaps cost. Testing at hundreds of tons could allow the development of both new high-yield thermonuclear weapons (combining the information China obtained through espionage with low-yield nuclear tests) and advanced low-yield/low-collateral damage weapons which Hui Zhang calls third generation weapons. In the West, they are sometimes called 4th generation weapons.

Hui Zhang reports that in the 1980s China developed and tested 1-2 kiloton neutron bombs but the seismic signals generated by the explosions were 300-500 tons of TNT.[42] This is because much of the energy from a neutron bomb is released in the form of high energy neutrons not blast which is mainly the result of x-ray heating. With decoupling, testing at these yields allows the development of a variety of new types of advanced low-collateral damage nuclear weapons.

The late Dr. Paul Robinson, then-Director of the Sandia National Laboratory, in his testimony on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty stated that "…if adversaries conduct experiments up to the threshold of international detectability, we will be at an intolerable disadvantage."[43] This is apparently exactly what has happened. According to Under Secretary of State DiNanno, Russia and China are testing, "At yield that creates an intolerable disadvantage for the United States by not testing."[44]

Conclusion

Rick Fisher, a senior fellow at the International Assessment and Strategy Center, in a pioneering analysis of the implications of Hui Zhang's disclosures, stated that by 2035 China could have between 6,328 and 8,260 nuclear warheads. [45] This would of course require China to have enough fissile material to build these weapons. China is increasing its inventory of fissile material and the United States almost certainly does not know everything that China is doing. It clearly is possible that by 2035, China may have a much larger nuclear force than what is being assessed by the Pentagon, surpassing that of the United States.

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[13] Ibid., p. 178.

[14] Ibid. p. 184.

[15] Mark B. Schneider, “China’s Nuclear Delivery Vehicles,” *Journal of Policy & Strategy*, Vol. 4, No. 3, 2024, p. 5, https://nipp.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Analysis-Schneider-4.3.pdf.

[16] Zhang, *The Untold Story of China’s Nuclear Weapons Development and Testing*, op. cit., p. 195.

[17] Select Committee, House of Representatives, *Report of the Select Committee on U.S. National Security and Military/Commercial Concerns with the People’s Republic of China*, Volume I (unclassified), May 1999, pp. 68–69, https://www.congress.gov/105/crpt/hrpt851/CRPT-105hrpt851.pdf.

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[19] Ibid., p. 68.

[20] James Rissen and Jeff Gerth, “China Is Installing a Warhead Said to Be Based on U.S. Secrets,” *The New York Times International*, May 14, 1999, https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/library/world/asia/051499china-nuke.html.

[21] Zhang, *The Untold Story of China’s Nuclear Weapons Development and Testing*, op. cit., p. 183.

[22] Ibid., p. 200.

[23] Schneider, “The Nuclear Doctrine and Forces of the People’s Republic of China,” op. cit., p. 253.

[24] Zhang, *The Untold Story of China’s Nuclear Weapons Development and Testing*, op. cit., p. 182.

[25] Schneider, *The Case for Resumed Nuclear Testing, op. cit., p. 46.*

[26] Dr. Hui Zhang stated that the 5×5 is the not the actual Chinese designator for this weapon but rather a designator he made up because he does not know the actual Chinese designator.

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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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Prepared by Peter Huessy
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