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## Feature Report

***“National Biodefense Strategy”***. Published by U.S. Government Accountability Office; March 11, 2020

<https://www.gao.gov/assets/710/705218.pdf>

Biological threats can be manmade biological weapons, naturally occurring diseases such as novel coronavirus COVID-19, and more.

The National Biodefense Strategy, issued in 2018 along with implementation guidance, spells out the nation’s plan to address these threats. It calls for a joint effort by multiple agencies and private sector partners.

We testified about how well the strategy has worked so far. We found there are no clear processes, roles, or responsibilities for joint decision making. In February, we made 4 recommendations, including that Health and Human Services (the lead agency for the strategy) clearly document these factors.

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Workshop participants shared a variety of views regarding the deterrence of bioweapon attacks. There was some divergence in views on what degree attribution and, in particular, rapid attribution is important for deterring biological attacks.

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China, however, appears adamant against joining discussions with the United States and [Russia](#) on an arms agreement because it has a much smaller nuclear arsenal.
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Bidgood’s research, coming on the heels of International Women’s Day, looks at the role gender plays in international security and conflicts across the globe and the importance of increasing the presence of a female voice in promoting peacebuilding and conflict resolution.
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The development follows Iran’s declaration on 5 January that its nuclear programme would no longer be “subject to any restrictions in the operational sphere”, in response to the decision of the United States in 2018 to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal and reimpose sanctions.

**COMMENTARY**

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“Countries like South Korea and Japan, despite their reliance on the U.S. nuclear deterrence umbrella, would benefit from global nuclear reductions and thus can play a special role in calling for the maintenance of deterrence and security with smaller arsenals.”
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“We continue to try to apply Cold War ideas to strategic challenges, including cybersecurity, and chief among these is the concept of deterrence.”
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“Given the growth of the European Deterrence Initiative and the subsequent failure of a Pacific version to materialize, it is valuable to consider how their origins differed.”

# NUCLEAR WEAPONS

USNI News (Annapolis, Maryland)

## Lawmakers Still Lack Details on Pentagon Shipbuilding Plan

By John Grady

March 10, 2020

Two senior lawmakers said they don't have enough information to evaluate the Trump administration's "hard rudder turn" on its shipbuilding budget that was presented last month to Congress.

"We're weeks away from having to put this thing away," and his panel doesn't have the documents it requires for oversight, Rep. Joe Courtney, (D-Conn.), said on Monday at the Hudson Institute. Secretary of Defense Mark Esper ordered to hold off on delivering the Navy's long-range shipbuilding plan pending a big Pentagon evaluation of the service's upcoming force structure assessment.

Without the supporting documents about the course ahead, "this budget is really a problem," he said. Even when the documents are provided, "we're going to move heaven and earth to get [the budget request] changed" to boost shipbuilding, starting with restoring a Virginia-class submarine

The fear in the industrial base Navy shipbuilding has returned to a cycle of peaks and valleys that makes it difficult to hire and retain retaining skilled workers and make long-lead purchases necessary to build submarines and surface warships efficiently.

Rep. Rob Wittman, (R-Va.) at the same event, "you really have to emphasize the rebuilding of the Navy." The shifting of \$4 billion from shipbuilding to operations and maintenance in the Fiscal Year 2021 request means losing a second Virginia-class submarine. The shift also puts on hold decisions about destroyer buys, new classes of amphibious ships and the advisability of retiring aging ships.

The FY 2021 request for six warships and two tugs makes it impossible to reach the 355-ship fleet size target in the foreseeable future or even within the existing shipbuilding plan or force structure assessment, he said.

Both pointed to the growth of the Chinese fleet, expected to surpass the size of the American Navy within this decade as well as the modernization of the Russian submarine as key reasons to restore \$4 billion to the shipbuilding account. It also means closely examine plans to retire some surface combatants.

Complicating matters now is that the legacy submarines and surface ships that are to be replaced like amphibious combatants were commissioned as part of the 1980s U.S. Navy fleet build-up.

The Los Angeles-class (SSN-688) boats, "are running out of hull life and reactor life," Courtney added.

"We climbed over glass" to start rebuilding the submarine fleet as the first priority in expanding the size of the Navy. At the present rate of just one Virginia-class submarine authorized and funded, "the trough in the submarine fleet will run into the 2030s."

The projected cost of restoring the second submarine this year would be \$2 billion.

As to where the other \$2 billion in restoring shipbuilding to last year's \$23 billion would be put, Courtney said the "results were pretty scary" from the turbo activation exercise on having the

Ready Reserve Fleet getting underway to sustain a large-scale military operation so “it’s going to be another big focus. We need to respond to this stress test.”

Wittman, noting that logistics often receives short shrift in military planning, added, “the Navy has purchased zero” used cargo ships under a special program Congress approved several years ago to improve readiness and reduce the age of the sustainment fleet.

As for the high cost of upcoming Columbia-class ballistic missile submarines consuming the shipbuilding account for the future, the administration needs to use the sea-based deterrence fund approved by Congress, Wittman said.

The question comes down to “how do we this [replace the Ohio-class] in the least disruptive way” to the shipbuilding accounts, Wittman said.

These submarines “will be on patrol right into the 2080s” and their cost has a one-time impact. “Do you let it suffocate the rest of the budget,” Courtney said. He added ballistic missile submarines are the most survivable leg of nuclear deterrence and the class “carries 70 percent of the nuclear payload.”

Both said there was precedent for using such a fund for strategic purposes, and the administration should make that move rather than having the Navy pay for Columbia out of its shipbuilding funds or the Air Force pay for the B-21 bomber out of its procurement budget.

Presence and deterrence does come down to numbers, both agreed.

“It’s not going to just be quality [of the American Navy], it’s going to quantity as well” that is needed to deter aggressive Chinese and Russian ambitions, Wittman said. He noted the Chinese construction of a second aircraft carrier and a cruiser as examples of Beijing expanding its maritime presence and influence well beyond its territorial waters.

Wittman said strategic and economic success “will focus on freedom of the seas.”

<https://news.usni.org/2020/03/10/lawmakers-still-lack-details-on-pentagon-shipbuilding-plan>

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Breaking Defense (Washington, D.C.)

## **Cyber Attack? Then We Fight Back: Sen. King**

By Sydney J. Freedberg Jr.

March 12, 2020

WASHINGTON: “Our adversaries feel no fear,” Sen. Angus King said today, and that needs to change. Russian and Chinese leaders have grown accustomed to attacking the US in cyberspace with impunity, he said, and the government needs to make it clear to them that America will strike back: “If you attack us,” he said, “you will pay a price.”

King was rolling out the final report of the Cyberspace Solarium Commission chartered by Congress, chaired by himself and Rep. Mike Gallagher – a report which deliberately and repeatedly invokes the analogy of Cold War deterrence. King even took pains to publicly praise President Trump’s hardline stance against Chinese 5G giant Huawei, which the report calls out as a threat.

Now, much of both the 182-page report, released this morning, and the panel discussions held on Capitol Hill this afternoon focused on the usual suspects rounded up by any blue-ribbon commission. The report calls for reform and reorganization in both the Executive Branch and

Congress, where oversight of cybersecurity is scattered among 50-plus committees. It calls for restoring and strengthening the White House cyber coordinator role abolished under Trump – a recommendation where the Republican Rep. Gallagher is publicly bucking his president — and for creating a new assistant secretary of State. It calls for government and business to work more closely together, sharing information on threats without imposing new regulation. It calls for closer cooperation with allies and the strengthening of international norms against bad actors. All these recommendations are as unsurprising as they are difficult to actually carry out.

But running through the usual high-minded mush was a remarkably hard line of realpolitik about the importance of retaliation. The soft-spoken King, one of the Senate's most affable figures, actually raised the topic not quite nine minutes into the opening ceremonies.

"I've sat through probably 25 or 30 hearings before joining this commission," King said. "One of the things that comes through is our adversaries feel no fear of costs being imposed.

"If the Russians can meddle with an election and have no serious consequences, why wouldn't they do it again? If the Chinese can steal the OPM (Office of Personnel Management) records with more or less impunity, why wouldn't they do it again?" King asked. "So part of the important function of the report is to talk about deterrence, and to talk about a declaratory policy that, if you attack us, you will pay a price. Because I want the people making these decisions, whether it's in the Politburo or in the Great Hall of the People or whoever it is, to say, 'man, if we do this, it's going to cost us something.'"

Even King's Freudian slip is telling: The Politburo – aka the Presidium, aka the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union – went out of existence with the USSR in 1991. (China's Great Hall of the People, a building just by Tiananmen Square, remains in use). But the Politburo was the core decision-making body for America's great rival for over 40 years. The Cyberspace Solarium Commission itself was named after President Eisenhower's White House strategy sessions that roughed out the policy of containment. It's that Cold War thinking that King & co. are deliberately seeking to revive.

### Retaliation in Black & White

Like King's remarks today, the text of the report itself moves swiftly to deterrence and retaliation.

"Here are some big ideas to get the conversation started," King and Gallagher write in their introduction. "First, deterrence is possible in cyberspace. Today most cyber actors feel undeterred, if not emboldened, to target our personal data and public infrastructure. In other words, through our inability or unwillingness to identify and punish our cyber adversaries, we are signaling that interfering in American elections or stealing billions in U.S. intellectual property is acceptable. The federal government and the private sector must defend themselves and strike back...."

The body of the report calls for a strategy of "layered deterrence," with three mutually supporting layers. They are:

- Shape behavior. The United States must work with allies and partners to promote responsible behavior in cyberspace.
- Deny benefits. The United States must deny benefits to adversaries who have long exploited cyberspace to their advantage, to American disadvantage, and at little cost to themselves. This new approach requires securing critical networks in collaboration with the private sector to promote national resilience and increase the security of the cyber ecosystem.
- Impose costs. The United States must maintain the capability, capacity, and credibility needed to retaliate against actors who target America in and through cyberspace.



The Cold War language of deterrence run through the report. Yes, the report does distinguish – like Cold War theorists – between “deterrence by denial,” which means defending yourself so well that potential attackers doubt they’ll do the damage they desire, and “deterrence by punishment,” which means being able to stage a counter-offensive so devastating that would-be attackers lose more than they could hope to gain.

In the report, deterrence-by-denial becomes synonymous with the cybersecurity buzzword of “resilience” – the ability to keep functioning through an attack and restore normal operations rapidly afterward – but even this takes on a Cold War tinge. “I think one of the most unique and biggest parts of the report,” Rep. Gallagher said this afternoon, “is this concept of planning for continuity of the economy, in the way that, in the ’50s, we started planning for the unthinkable: how would we maintain continuity of government and continuity of operations in the event of a nuclear attack.”

What about deterrence by punishment? In the Cold War, that boiled down to a threat to massacre tens of millions of innocent civilians. Cyber weapons can’t physically do that, and if they could, it would hardly be a proportionate response to the theft of military secrets or even the sabotage of, say, a chemical plant that led to a deadly toxic spill. But that doesn’t mean the US cannot rely for cyber attacks with cyber counter-attacks of its own.

“America’s commitment to international law appropriately places constraints on its willingness to implement deterrence by punishment in cyberspace,” the report says delicately. “In addition, scholars of cyber strategy debate the extent to which cyber capabilities offer a feasible punishment mechanism, or whether punishment requires lethal capabilities. Therefore, in cyberspace the preferred punishment strategy for democratic nations is to impose costs on adversaries through targeting key—often government or illicit, as opposed to commercial and civilian—networks and infrastructure used to conduct cyber campaigns.”

In other words, deter cyber attack by threatening to ravage any assets used to conduct such an attack.

The report also embraces Cyber Command’s controversial new strategy of “defending forward.” CYBERCOM’s concept effectively requires US hackers to maintain a watchful presence, not just in US systems, but on allied, neutral, and adversary networks so they can detect impending attacks and cut them off at the source. The Solarium Commission makes that approach a principle of its proposed national strategy.

“The strategy incorporates the concept of ‘defend forward’ to reduce the frequency and severity of attacks in cyberspace that do not rise to a level that would warrant the full spectrum of retaliatory responses, including military responses,” the report says. “Though the concept originated in the Department of Defense, the Commission integrates defend forward into a national strategy for securing cyberspace using all the instruments of power.” (Traditionally, these instruments are known as the ‘DIME’: diplomatic, informational, military, & economic).

“Defend forward posits that to disrupt and defeat ongoing adversary campaigns, the United States must proactively observe, pursue, and counter adversaries’ operations and impose costs short of armed conflict,” the report continues. “This posture signals to adversaries that the U.S. government will respond to cyberattacks, even those below the level of armed conflict that do not cause physical destruction or death, with all the tools at its disposal and consistent with international law.

“This posture includes operating in ‘gray’ [neutral] and ‘red’ [adversary] space in a manner consistent with international law,” the report affirms.

In the commission’s layered defense strategy, the report goes on, “the cost imposition layer also demands that the U.S. government protect its ability to respond with military force at a time and



place of its choosing, [because] a key, but not the only, element of cost imposition is the military instrument,” the report says. A whole chapter of the report goes into detail on ways to strength the US military. Many of them focus on better defending units, contractors, and weapon systems against cyber attack. But they include boosting offensive capabilities as well, particularly by growing CYBERCOM’s Cyber Mission Force.

“The CMF is currently considered at full operational capability, with 133 teams comprising a total of approximately 6,200 individuals,” the report acknowledges. “However, these requirements were defined in 2013,” it notes, long before the magnitude of threat to US elections and the economy became so painfully clear.

The Cyber Mission Force needs not only to grow larger, the report argues, but to move faster, which requires giving it new standing authorities to take action without time-consuming consultation – another controversial move.

“The pace of cyberspace operations may require delegated authorities and seamless decision making to pursue and deliver effects against adversary targets,” the report says. “Relevant authorities within the scope of Title 10 for conducting counter-cyber operations include not only authorities to deliver offensive cyber effects but also those that support planning and executing these operations.”

The italics in that sentence are ours – but the emphasis on the capacity to conduct cyber counter-offensives is clearly the commission’s.

<https://breakingdefense.com/2020/03/cyber-attack-then-we-fight-back-sen-king/>

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C4ISRNET (Vienna, Va.)

## **How Minot Plans to Protect America’s ICBMs from Drones**

By Aaron Mehta

March 9, 2020

MINOT AIR FORCE BASE, N.D. — By 2016, top Pentagon officials, including then-Defense Secretary Ash Carter, had honed in on the threat posed by small, commercially available drones to the sites housing America’s nuclear arsenal.

“I have our bases with our weapons storage facilities [mission], and I will tell you there have been recent examples of extended UAS over some of the areas we don’t particularly like them being around,” Gen. Robin Rand, then the head of Air Force Global Strike Command, said at the time, using an acronym for unmanned aerial system. “I’m not comfortable with that.”

While the problem hasn’t gone away, security officials at Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota believe they at least have a plan in place for dealing with any unmanned intrusion.

The concerns of unmanned systems against nuclear facilities, both civil and military, are clear. The devices make excellent little spies, can be weaponized and are cheap to procure — all attributes that have become obvious to U.S. forces who have encountered them while deployed in Syria or Iraq.

But Col. Chad Gallagher, who as head of the 91st Security Forces Group at the base is responsible for protecting roughly 8,500 square miles of territory, said some of the challenges caused by drones can be transformed into benefits.

"If you look at anything going on down range, we're trying to capitalize on the lessons we've learned over the last 19 years and counting," he told sister publication Defense News during a recent visit to the base. "So we can do perimeter checks; we can use it to spot positions; we can use it to go and look in areas that may be obscured by the terrain and have that go over, versus sending a manned helicopter that can potentially be shot down."

The helicopter question is an important one for Minot. The base currently operates eight UH-1 Huey helicopters for security, but they are all housed at a central base location. To get out to the furthest missile field could take a security response team 30 minutes. But if the 91st could scatter unmanned systems around the fields, it would let the group get eyes on any potential issue in minutes.

"We'll send one of the inexpensive drones with live, full-motion video," he said. "You can't record what civilians are doing, we're not doing that. But we'll use it to help protect the force. Before we send in a human being, we'll send in these drones. So that's new stuff that we're trying to work on."

The base should receive its first wave of ground-based unmanned systems soon, which could expand the unit's security capabilities.

"A lot of them are really inexpensive. If you look in your [explosive ordnance disposal] forces, they're already using unmanned robots to do EOD stuff," Gallagher said. "We're just trying to go a lot smaller for stuff that we would do for nuclear security. What can we do to send in eyes, get full-motion video with a multitude of sensors before we send a human being in?"

So far, Gallagher said, there haven't been any breaches by unmanned systems into Minot's territory. But he is concerned about the potential for an increase in the use of commercial drone technology in the area for the local oil fields and proliferation of wind farms. As a result, the base is trying to establish norms with local industry to make sure everyone is on the same page.

"If you're below 400 feet, you do not have to file a flight plan through the [U.S. Federal Aviation Administration]. So because there is no flight plans, there's no way to necessarily know you're going to have an overflight [by a drone]," he said. "When I have a helicopter up, I definitely don't want a drone anywhere in the area, so we're working out deals where, hey, they're going to give us a plan for the month and what they are doing for oil, wind and utilities. And then we'll deconflict that. And if we have a mission, we'll talk to them and ask if they can move to the left or the right, or maybe we change our mission for the day."

That's going to get more important in the next decade as the replacement for the Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile — the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent — begins to fill the silos and the old ICBM is transferred.

Previously, forces at Minot were using small systems produced by Chinese firm DJI to patrol the region. However, the Pentagon has raised multiple concerns with DJI products, leading to a stop in their use by the department that forced the 91st to look elsewhere.

But that doesn't mean the DJI-made technology is collecting dust. Those systems have become fodder for the security forces' anti-drone training, including using them as targets for counter-drone technology. Gallagher declined to go into detail about what counter-drone capabilities the base has, but he did say he's "comfortable" with what's readily available.

<https://www.c4isrnet.com/unmanned/2020/03/09/how-minot-plans-to-protect-americas-icbms-from-drones/>

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Air Force Magazine (Arlington, Va.)

## **Dyess or Ellsworth to Get First B-21s**

By John A. Tirpak

March 6, 2020

The Air Force will soon start studies assessing the environmental impact of basing the B-21 Raider at Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, and Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D., the service announced on March 6. One of the two locations will be the first base to host the bomber.

Typical environmental assessments consider the impact of operations, noise, and pollution from a weapon system on the local area's population, agricultural enterprises, water quality, transportation, cultural resources, airspace, and wildlife.

The two bases were chosen because they already operate B-1B bombers, which means basing the B-21s in either location will "minimize mission impact, maximize facility re-use, minimize cost, and reduce overhead, as well as leverage the strengths of each base to optimize the B-21 beddown strategy," according to the Air Force announcement. Public hearings will be held in nearby locations through April.

The announcement, published in the Federal Register, said the environmental impact analysis will support the choice of "Main Operating Base 1" for the B-21, which will include B-21 operational squadrons, a B-21 formal training unit, and a weapons generation facility. The announcement noted the B-21 will be capable of "penetrating and surviving into advanced air defense environments," delivering both conventional and nuclear weapons. Future beddown locations will be chosen after MOB 1 is selected.

The B-21 is expected to enter into service in the 2020s, and USAF plans to build at least 100 of the aircraft, which will fall under Air Force Global Strike Command.

In addition to Dyess and Ellsworth, Air Force leaders have said the B-21 will likely also beddown at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., which has been home to the small B-2 stealth bomber fleet since the early 1990s.

Besides direct area impacts, the assessment will consider the areas where the B-21s will practice. In South Dakota—as well as neighboring states Wyoming, Montana, and North Dakota—it would be the Powder River Training Complex. In the Southwest, it would be the Brownwood Military Operating Area, the Lancer MOA, and the Pecos MOA, in Texas and New Mexico.

The Air Force needs to base the B-21 in an "appropriate geographic location" that can support operations, training, facilities, and airspace for the bomber mission, according to the announcement.

The hearings will be held to address "scoping comments" from affected local communities. Local newspapers will be alerted as to the hearing schedule 15 days ahead of each one.

<https://www.airforcemag.com/dyess-or-ellsworth-to-get-first-b-21s/>

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# US COUNTER-WMD

Stars and Stripes (Washington, D.C.)

## **CENTCOM General: US Is Moving Air and Missile Defense Weapons into Iraq**

By Corey Dickstein

March 10, 2020

WASHINGTON — The U.S. military is moving air and missile defense capabilities into Iraq, two months after Iran launched a missile attack at an Iraqi base hosting nearly 1,000 American troops, the top general for U.S. Central Command said Tuesday.

“We are in the process of bringing air defense systems, ballistic missile defense systems into Iraq – particularly to protect ourselves against another potential Iranian attack,” Marine Gen. Kenneth McKenzie told members of the House Armed Services Committee.

Since shortly after the Jan. 8 missile attack on al Assad Air Base in western Iraq, the United States has been negotiating with the Iraqi government to bring air and missile defense systems such as the Patriot missile system into the country. Pentagon officials have said turmoil within the Iraqi government and logistical challenges had delayed the movement of missile defense capabilities into Iraq.

McKenzie did not provide specific information Tuesday about the movement of air and missile defense capabilities into Iraq, and none of the lawmakers asked him to expand on his announcement. It was not clear precisely when such defensive systems would arrive in Iraq or where in the country they would be placed.

The Army’s Patriot missiles are designed to shoot down enemy missiles or aircraft that threaten U.S. or allied forces. While the United States has Patriot units deployed across much of the Middle East, the Pentagon had not deployed such a system into Iraq as commanders believed U.S. troops in other countries in the region were more likely to be targeted for attack by Iran, officials said in January.

The movement of Patriots or other missile defense capabilities such as the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, system that can also shoot down ballistic missiles would require the approval of the Iraqi government.

Even if such missile defense weapons had been present Jan. 8 in Iraq, Army Gen. Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has said it would not have guaranteed that they would have protected al Assad from the 16 missiles that hit the base. More than 100 U.S. troops at the base reported traumatic brain injuries in the days and weeks after the attack.

“That’s what they’re designed to do,” Milley said Jan. 30 at the Pentagon. “Can’t say for certain, obviously.”

The United States has slightly more than 5,000 troops deployed to Iraq, where they are focused primarily on aiding Iraqi troops fighting the remnants of the Islamic State. Two Marine Raiders, Gunnery Sgt. Diego D. Pongo and Capt. Moises A. Navas, were killed in northern Iraq on Sunday while working alongside Iraqi troops targeting an ISIS mountain hideout.

But troops in Iraq and throughout the Middle East also deter aggression by Iran and its proxy forces in other countries in the region, McKenzie said. He listed Iran as the primary U.S. concern in the CENTCOM area of operations, which includes the Middle East, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

“Our presence sends a clear signal about our capabilities and our will to defend partners and U.S. national interests,” the general said. “Going forward, it is CENTCOM’s objective to posture forces in the region with the operational depth to achieve a consistent state of deterrence against Iran and be adaptable to future Iranian threats.”

The attack on al Assad was Iran’s retaliation for an American drone strike Jan. 3 in Baghdad that killed their most powerful military official, Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani. Soleimani commanded Iran’s elite Quds Force, which trained, supplied and directed Tehran’s proxy forces across the Middle East. He was also a close adviser to Iran’s supreme leader Ali Khamenei.

Though McKenzie on Tuesday defended the decision to kill Soleimani, he said Iran and its proxies could be emboldened by its own ballistic missile attacks against Americans.

Those strikes, he said, “crossed a threshold compared to previous attacks and has probably set a lower bar for future actions by the regime.”

<https://www.stripes.com/news/middle-east/centcom-general-us-is-moving-air-and-missile-defense-weapons-into-iraq-1.621925>

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Homeland Preparedness News (Washington, D.C.)

## **Sandia Labs Partners with Nonprofit on Initiative to End Bioweapon Threat**

By Dave Kovaleski

March 11, 2020

Sandia National Laboratories has joined forces with the Council on Strategic Risks to launch an initiative to make bioweapons obsolete.

The two organizations have released a report called “Making Bioweapons Obsolete: A Summary of Workshop Discussions. It makes recommendations for significantly reducing and ultimately eliminating biothreats. The report came out of a one-day workshop Sandia recently that brought together government, national laboratories, academia, industry, policy, and entrepreneur communities to address the challenges. It was the first workshop in a planned series.

Addressing the rising threats bioweapons present across the U.S. and around the world will require using strategy, technology advances, policy, and other tools, Anup Singh, director of Biological and Engineering Sciences at Sandia, said.

“This is an extremely interesting time in biotechnology with the revolutionary advances in genome editing, synthetic biology, and convergent technologies such as artificial intelligence and robotics,” Singh said. “Academia and the private sector are driving a variety of biotechnology innovations, and it is imperative that we engage them in solving the problem together with the traditional national security partners.”

The report focuses on identifying solutions that can be employed by leaders around the world.

“We need a moonshot-level, inspirational goal regarding biological threats,” Andy Weber, senior fellow at the nonprofit Council on Strategic Risks, said. “When we convene top experts to explore the concept of making bioweapons obsolete, we are usually met with great enthusiasm and a feeling that the United States can really achieve this vision. Indeed, it is largely an expansion on the work the U.S. government has accomplished to date in addressing smallpox threats to America with an extensive vaccine stockpiling system and its development of vaccines for viruses such as Ebola.”

The report provides insights on critical technological trends, highlights the need for coordinated outreach and education to policymakers, and drives home the importance of U.S. leadership on this.

“With increased commitment, time, resources, and leadership, we can make further strides in meeting this bold target,” Andy McIlroy, associate laboratory director of Integrated Security Solutions at Sandia, said. “I hope that we can continue this discussion to create a united, national vision that meets the urgency of the moment.”

Future workshops will focus on man-made threats from weapons of mass destruction, as well as the risks posed by advances in technology.

<https://homelandprepnews.com/stories/45472-sandia-labs-partners-with-nonprofit-on-initiative-to-end-bioweapon-threat/>

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Global Biodefense (Seattle, Wash.)

## **An Ambitious Goal: Reducing Biothreats and Making Bioweapons Obsolete**

By Global Biodefense

March 9, 2020

In a report released this week, *Making Bioweapons Obsolete: A Summary of Workshop Discussions*, Sandia National Laboratories and the Council on Strategic Risks outline the discussion and recommendations that came out of the Making Bioweapons Obsolete workshop hosted last fall at Sandia.

The one-day meeting brought together government, national laboratories, academia, industry, policy and entrepreneur communities to address the challenges of mitigating and eliminating the risks bioweapons present. The workshop was the first in a planned series.

Drawing on the cross-discipline expertise of the working group, organizers aim to better understand the threat and how technology can both increase and mitigate the risk. The report focuses on identifying solutions that offer the biggest return and influencing national leadership to provide attention and resources to the issue and engage with academia and industry.

The report highlights a wide range of considerations that must be addressed. The report:

- Provides insights on key technological trends.
- Raises questions of the data and information access required for rapidly characterizing and responding to biological attacks and outbreaks.
- Explores market and supply chain dynamics in depth.
- Points to significant U.S. government capacities that can be used and expanded, including its vast testing and evaluation infrastructure.
- Highlights the need for coordinated outreach and education to policymakers, in particular by academic and private sector experts.
- Drives home the critical importance of U.S. leadership.

Workshop participants shared a variety of views regarding the deterrence of bioweapon attacks. There was some divergence in views on what degree attribution and, in particular, rapid attribution is important for deterring biological attacks. Some believed that even without strong attribution capabilities, rapid and effective response capabilities may be sufficient to deter biological attacks, as



such attacks would become a relatively ineffective method of meeting the perpetrator's intended political objectives. Considerations for treaty limitations and resource allocation for attribution are also considered in the discussion.

The group discussed several specific tools and technologies relevant to future bioweapons threats including: rapid enzyme discovery, synthetic biology, high throughput gene synthesis, genetic analysis of large populations, and implications of advances in artificial intelligence.

There is a window now to shape the emerging bioeconomy in terms of factors like control, market concentration versus distribution, and protection of individual rights. Furthermore, there are worrying signs of declining U.S. leadership in biotech and biosecurity, including rising influence by China, various European countries, and others.

A united, ambitious national vision of making bioweapons obsolete will help in meeting the urgency of the moment and in materially altering the landscape of biological threats. It must be clearly articulated that a national effort toward making bioweapons obsolete will protect America, reduce the nation's vulnerabilities, and increase its competitiveness. Meeting this ambition will take commitment, time, resources, and perhaps most important, leadership.

The workshop is the beginning of an important conversation in tackling the ambitious issue of eliminating or significantly reducing biothreats, explained Andy McIlroy, associate laboratory director of Integrated Security Solutions at Sandia.

"With increased commitment, time, resources and leadership, we can make further strides in meeting this bold target," McIlroy said. "I hope that we can continue this discussion to create a united, national vision that meets the urgency of the moment."

Future workshops will continue the wide-ranging discussion focused on engaging in a national dialogue and promoting better public-private collaboration in this grand mission. Sessions will focus on man-made threats from weapons of mass destruction, as well as the risks posed by advances in technology.

For more on council's program on making bioweapons obsolete visit the Janne E. Nolan Center on Strategic Weapons.

<https://globalbiodefense.com/2020/03/09/an-ambitious-goal-reducing-biothreats-and-making-bioweapons-obsolete/>

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# US ARMS CONTROL

Washington Times (Washington, D.C.)

## **Trump to Pressure China to Join New START Deal to Restrict Its Growing Nuke Arsenal**

By Bill Gertz

March 10, 2020

The Trump administration this week disclosed plans to seek an extension of the 2010 New START agreement to limit China's growing nuclear arsenal and restrict exotic new weapons not covered by the treaty.

China, however, appears adamant against joining discussions with the United States and Russia on an arms agreement because it has a much smaller nuclear arsenal.

Moscow also has balked at the U.S. push to cover its newly developed arms — including a megaton-class nuclear-tipped drone submarine, a nuclear-powered cruise missile and an ultra-high-speed missile — under the treaty, which is due to expire next year.

Chris Ford, assistant secretary of state for international security and nonproliferation and the administration's senior arms control official, formally requested in December that China join a security dialogue aimed at limiting strategic and tactical nuclear weapons.

"They have yet formally to respond to us at all," a senior State Department official told reporters Monday. "I hope that they will do so soon, and we look forward to having this kind of engagement with them."

The official said Beijing should be pressured into talks because the People's Liberation Army is engaged in a major nuclear expansion at the same time that China is refusing to join talks aimed at reining in nuclear threats through arms control.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian on Friday repeated rejections of the U.S. arms control offer. "China has repeatedly reiterated that it has no intention of participating in the so-called trilateral arms control negotiations with the U.S. and Russia," he said.

<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2020/mar/10/china-pressured-join-new-start-nuclear-weapons-agr/>

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Monterey Herald (Monterey, Calif.)

## **Monterey Scholar Advocates for Women in Arms Control**

By Dennis L. Taylor

March 11, 2020

MONTEREY — Providing women a seat at the table on critical issues of nonproliferation and arms control can affect better policy outcomes, according to a Middlebury Institute of International Studies scholar.

Sarah Bidgood directs the Eurasia Nonproliferation Program at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies at MIIS, with her research focus on U.S.-Soviet and U.S.-Russia nonproliferation cooperation and more broadly the international nonproliferation effort.

She was scheduled to speak Wednesday as part of the Middlebury Institute Speaker Series that features an array of faculty experts discussing topics reflecting the Institute's mission. The graduate school cancelled the event at the same time it instituted restrictions that included cancelling in-person classes and restricting visitors to the Monterey campuses.

Bidgood's research, coming on the heels of International Women's Day, looks at the role gender plays in international security and conflicts across the globe and the importance of increasing the presence of a female voice in promoting peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

"I am looking in particular at the effect gender has on outcomes in the nonproliferation and arms control space," Bidgood said. "As you are making policy relating to weapons of mass destruction, it's important to think about the equity of who is included in those discussions."

She cites research which finds that companies that provide for more diversity in decision-making groups instead of homogeneous structures have greater success, and the same is true of outcomes from policy decisions.

"Part of the challenge is that we don't know precisely why this is," Bidgood said. "Women have no biological propensity toward peace."

Rather it could be because gender is a construct and women are acculturated to behave in certain ways, she said. This could result in women being especially adept at creative and collaborative thinking, which in turn produces better outcomes.

Homogeneous groups may also be less successful because, if their members are all coming from the same or similar perspectives, they won't be questioned or challenged in their beliefs.

"It leads to lazy thinking because you don't have to articulate why you hold a certain viewpoint, you just assume everyone else knows," Bidgood said.

She calls recent data quantifying the lack of women in the weapons of mass destruction policy making realm "sobering." It was well understood as far back as the 1980s that there was a dearth of women working in disarmament and nonproliferation diplomacy, arms reductions and national security. According to several new studies, however, it is now clear that women make up on average only 20% to 30% of any given group that addresses these issues.

"It's striking when women make up 50% of the global workforce," she said.

Fortunately, there is growing push back against what she calls "masculine" stereotypes about the arms control field. For example, allied men are refusing to sit on all male panels, she said.

Still, there are systemic and institutional barriers preventing women from entering the arms control policy space. The result is that nonproliferation discussions are often devoid of important perspectives that challenge the status quo, Bidgood said.

What's more, because women would be disproportionately affected by any use of nuclear weapons, it is all the more essential that they have a voice in weapons of mass destruction policy making, she said.

<https://www.montereyherald.com/2020/03/11/monterey-scholar-advocates-for-women-in-arms-control/>

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UN News (Manhattan, N.Y.)

## **Atomic Agency Cites Concerns over Iran Testing Sites, Offers COVID-19 Assistance**

By UN News

March 9, 2020

Iran's nuclear capabilities moved back into the international spotlight on Monday as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said that it had concerns about possible "undeclared nuclear material and nuclear-related activities" in unregistered locations there.

The development follows Iran's declaration on 5 January that its nuclear programme would no longer be "subject to any restrictions in the operational sphere", in response to the decision of the United States in 2018 to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal and reimpose sanctions.

In an appeal to Iran to cooperate with the UN nuclear watchdog, IAEA Director General, Rafael Mariano Grossi, said that Iran had not provided access to the sites in question and had failed to clarify inspectors' questions.

"This is adversely affecting the Agency's ability to clarify and resolve these questions and to provide credible assurance of the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran", Mr. Grossi said. "I call on Iran to cooperate immediately and fully with the Agency, including by providing prompt access to the locations specified by the Agency."

The rules governing how Iran's nuclear programme is monitored are set out in the 2015 "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action" (JCPOA).

It was agreed by Iran and the five members of the Security Council: China, France, Russia, UK and the U.S., plus Germany and the European Union.

The deal guarantees the IAEA's regular access to Iran's nuclear programme, in line with a 2015 UN Security Council resolution to ensure the enforcement of the JCPOA.

Following the US Administration's decision to pull out of the deal, in July 2019, Iran reportedly breached its uranium stockpile limit, announcing its intention to continue enriching uranium.

In a speech to the IAEA Board of Governors, Mr. Grossi noted that despite concerns, the agency "has not observed any changes to Iran's implementation of its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA in connection with this announcement, or in the level of cooperation by Iran in relation to Agency verification and monitoring activities" under that deal.

14 countries request IAEA help against COVID-19

Meanwhile, as the COVID-19 epidemic continues its global spread, the agency has offered to use science to tackle disease transmission.

Speaking in Vienna, Mr. Grossi said that scientists from countries requiring assistance would be given training in a technique using nuclear-derived machines which can identify the virus accurately "within hours".

While the agency is not involved in controlling the disease in the same way as the World Health Organization (WHO), "we do have expertise and experience that help in detecting outbreaks of certain viral diseases and in diagnosing them", he said.

The first training course will take place at IAEA's Seibersdorf nuclear applications laboratories in a few weeks.

To date, the agency has received official requests for support from six countries in Africa, five in the Asia and Pacific region and three in Latin America.

In the past, the IAEA has helped to respond to viruses including Ebola, Zika and African Swine Flu.

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/03/1059001>

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## COMMENTARY

Korea Times (Seoul, South Korea)

### **Nuclear Powers Must Lead on Arms Control**

By Tong Zhao

March 11, 2020

The once-every-five-years review conference of the 191-member Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) will start in April in New York.

One of the most divisive issues at the conference will be the lack of sufficient progress by nuclear weapons states (NWS) toward fulfilling their legal obligation on nuclear disarmament.

Against the background of an increasingly intensive nuclear arms competition among the major powers, the collapsing of existing arms control treaties, and the simmering crises around North Korea and Iran, the five NWS, who are also the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, must exercise leadership to safeguard a stable nuclear order.

The NWS created the P5 Process in 2009 to discuss steps to implement their NPT obligations, and especially to promote disarmament through transparency and confidence-building measures. This mechanism is being underused, but has potential to make greater contribution to arms control.

NWS have generally argued that it is the responsibility of all countries to improve the international security environment so as to create the necessary conditions for nuclear disarmament.

But non-nuclear weapons states (NNWS) also have a point in noting that the existence of nuclear weapons has continued to poison the international security environment.

The 2017 deployment of a THAAD missile defense system in South Korea caused serious Chinese concern about this system's potential capability to undermine China's nuclear deterrent against the United States, and subsequently led to the most serious crisis in Beijing-Seoul bilateral relationship in decades.

This example demonstrates how international struggles over nuclear issues can spill over into non-nuclear security domains and derail relations not only between NWS but also between NWS and NNWS.

Therefore, in addition to an effort by all to improve the international security environment, NWS need to work simultaneously on reducing the importance of nuclear weapons in national security.

As a first step to do so and to address the potential humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapon use, NWS should discuss how they can align their nuclear policies with the law of armed conflict at P5 meetings.

They should seek to apply the basic principles of discrimination, proportionality, and military necessity, in order to prevent excessive targeting policies, legitimizing oversized arsenals and

escalatory employment strategies. NNWS, especially those under the nuclear umbrella of NWS, also have homework to do.

They need to re-examine and readjust their defense strategies to ensure their national security is not dependent on the first use of nuclear weapons by their nuclear allies in conventional conflicts. By creating the conditions for the universal adoption of a no-first-use policy, NNWS can help create a world with less nuclear risk.

NWS deserve some credit for trying to reach out to the rest of the international community, including to host a P5 side event at the upcoming NPT review conference. NNWS should use these opportunities to drive home the point that, although short of complete disarmament, continuing to scale down existing nuclear arsenals is important.

Countries like South Korea and Japan, despite their reliance on the U.S. nuclear deterrence umbrella, would benefit from global nuclear reductions and thus can play a special role in calling for the maintenance of deterrence and security with smaller arsenals.

Due to the largely dysfunctional bilateral strategic security talks between NWS and the lack of multilateral arms control dialogues, the P5 Process has a unique responsibility to address the growing risk of a nuclear arms race.

The recently concluded P5 meeting in London committed the NWS to advancing the goal of ending the global production of fissile materials which are required for building nuclear bombs.

If the five NWS can take the lead by declaring a joint moratorium on fissile material production, that would impose a cap on their future potential to build up nuclear forces and thus serve as a concrete first step toward containing an arms race.

Northeast Asia is an area of particular concern regarding nuclear stability. North Korea is leveraging the growing great power competition to advance its nuclear agenda. The five permanent members of the Security Council have a special responsibility to prevent their divergent geopolitical interests from obstructing an international united front against North Korea's nuclear ambition.

The P5 meetings can serve as a less formal and less political platform than the Security Council for the leading powers to coordinate policy.

They should start substantive discussions on maintaining pressure on Pyongyang, building consensus on key elements of a denuclearization roadmap, and establishing conditions and mechanisms to reciprocate North Korean cooperation. As U.S.-North Korea bilateral talks stall, it is time for the major nuclear powers to collectively assert their leadership.

Tong Zhao is a senior fellow in the Nuclear Policy Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, based at the Carnegie-Tsinghua Center for Global Policy in Beijing. He works on nuclear weapons policy, deterrence, arms control, nonproliferation, missile defense, hypersonic weapons, and regional nuclear issues. He is a member of the Asia-Pacific Leadership Network for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (APLN). This article is published in cooperation with the APLN ([www.apln.network](http://www.apln.network)).

[http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/opinion/2020/03/197\\_285964.html](http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/opinion/2020/03/197_285964.html)

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CSIS (Washington, D.C.)

## Strategy after Deterrence

By James Andrew Lewis

March 11, 2020

“A military is built to fight . . . and focus on fighting and fighting to win.”

— Xi Jinping at the 19th Party Congress

One dilemma (among several) for U.S. strategic thinking is the still-powerful influence of the dead hand of Cold War thought. If there are historical precedents for the current situation, it is not the somewhat static bipolar competition of the last century but instead some combination of nineteenth century great power competition and the rise of aggressive authoritarianism in the 1930s. Yet we continue to try to apply Cold War ideas to strategic challenges, including cybersecurity, and chief among these is the concept of deterrence. What does deterrence mean in an international environment where:

Opponents have spent years developing strategies to circumvent United States’ deterrent capabilities;

They perceive the United States as strategically inept and believe it can be outmaneuvered in ways that reduce the risk of retaliation; and

Cyberspace has become the central domain for conflict, and, unlike nuclear weapons, whose use was to be avoided, cyber “weapons” are used daily in ways that do not pose existential threats.

We need to discard Bernard Brodie’s assertion that “the chief purpose of our military establishment has been to win wars. From now on its chief purpose must be to avert them.” Nuclear weapons create a ceiling that countries stay below in their use of force and coercion. While nuclear weapons reduce the likelihood of major war between nuclear-armed powers, they do not prevent conflict. If anything, conflict among major powers is increasing, albeit in new forms.

Authoritarian regimes challenge the United States and the West. They use coercive actions (force, the threat to use force, and cognitive manipulation) to advance their interests while staying below an informal threshold that, if crossed, would risk triggering a damaging response. There were similar thresholds in the Cold War, but technological and political changes make low-level conflict more effective and enticing.

Cyberspace is the principle arena for the new conflict. The persistent weakness of cyber defense makes cyberspace a relatively low-cost, low-risk domain for coercion and “almost-force.” It also means that a cyber strategy centered on defense or deterrence will be inadequate.

Cyberspace is not the only arena for conflict. U.S. strategic competitors—Russia, China, and Iran—have created tactics that allow them to pursue their strategic goals while managing the risk of direct military engagement. They use cyber and influence operations, proxies, and the positioning of military forces to obtain an advantage while managing the risk of conflict with the United States. The expansion into the South China sea or the occupation of Crimea are examples of this approach. If the intent was initially to push back against the United States, they now see an opportunity to gain regional dominance and reshape global rules and institutions in ways that favor their interests (especially China).

It appears, other than recent actions against Iran, that U.S. opponents believe it is possible to take action against U.S. interests without retaliation. A Russian interlocutor with ties to the Federal



Security Service, the successor to the KGB, said, "After the [2016] election interference, we waited for the U.S. response and were surprised when nothing happened." A Chinese general, when asked about the risk of engaging with the United States in cyberspace replied that it had "great capabilities, no will." If opponents believe that the risk of warfare with the United States is low and manageable and that it will not use nuclear weapons except in response to an existential crisis, they will test the limits of what can be done to harm U.S. strategic interests (or determine if there are any limits at all).

This testing takes place in an increasingly conflictual environment. This conflict is over political and economic influence (things that technological leadership can provide). The Cold War is not a useful precedent. Then, two powerful opponents confronted each other and, while avoiding general conflict, engaged in proxy war, testing, and occasionally bellicose verbal confrontations. However, they were deterred from direct conflict by the threat of nuclear war. Nuclear deterrence works as well now as it did in 1990, but the game of strategy has shifted.

Brodie and other nuclear strategists assumed that nuclear weapons would never be used. In contrast, cyber "weapons" are used daily. This sets the context for signaling and deterrence. Possessing a powerful cyber force but having it glower at opponents from the sidelines does not deter, and the signal this sends, no matter what words accompany it, is unpersuasive.

Engagement is the best way to change this. Defining what is unacceptable requires pushing back. Engagement cannot be one-off actions but should be part of a larger campaign to constrain opponents and advance national interests accompanied by planning on how to manage the risk of retaliation. For cyberspace, the assumption that underlies persistent engagement is that sharp rebukes, "painful but temporary and reversible," will reset opponent's analysis of the benefits of continued cyber actions against the United States.

Credible threats are at the center of any strategy to modify opponent action. Opponent's actions show that they are not deterred in key areas and believe they can take damaging actions without risk if they stay below the implicit "force" threshold that their actions and our responses have defined. Possessing powerful military forces is insufficient, given opponent efforts to develop and use strategies to circumvent them, and there has been a steady erosion of the U.S. position in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa.

The pivotal moment for cyber conflict was the Syria redline debacle in 2010. After that incident, we saw for the first time coercive political actions against targets in the American homeland. Administration efforts to rebuild credibility after 2010 were probably undercut by the indecision over the 2016 interference, and things have not improved greatly since then.

Contrast the current situation with the Cold War. U.S. threats or signals to deter the Soviets were credible. The United States had fought and won a global war to defend Europe, firebombed cities, and ultimately used nuclear weapons. This history shaped Soviet thinking about conflict with the United States. Credible threats were linked to a clear retaliatory threshold. Eisenhower's declaration that nuclear weapons would be used if there were "trustworthy evidence of a general attack against the West" set a clear threshold linked to U.S. interests. That threshold still holds (more or less), but it is not sufficient to stop opponents as they have carefully thought about how to circumvent the nuclear threat.

The United States has had the luxury for 30 years of not facing serious competition. This hampered the development of strategy. It has not had to define national interests in a serious way, since they appeared unchallenged, and it lacks strategies to reverse opponent strategic gains. The United States cannot expect to conquer or defeat opponents. Regime change has not worked well, and there has been no serious thought about what regime change in Russia or China would mean for



U.S. interests and global stability. It is hard to see any outcome that would be positive. The United States has opponents who are not going away and who are not going to stop using coercion to seek change that serves their interests. This is where the similarities to the nineteenth century are of greatest use in reassessing strategy.

Drawing from the example of nineteenth-century competition, protecting U.S. interests will require abandoning the passivity of deterrence and using sustained low-level engagement that mirrors the tactics of our opponents, minimizing the risks of escalation without forsaking coercive effect. Sustained engagement does not come without risk, but the days in which the United States faced no strategic risk are over. The task is to engage and manage the risk of escalation without denying the need for more assertive strategic actions.

There are a number of corollary requirements for this task, including redefining national interests, reconsidering the utility of our current force posture and weapons acquisitions (which often date to the last century), building the mechanisms for direct diplomatic engagement on security issues with strategic opponents, and developing and funding non-military strategies for confrontation and competition. These are things that the United States has not had to do for decades and, as it is currently organized, may not be able to do at all absent major reform.

Opponents must be persuaded that the risk of harming the United States and its interests through coercive action is too great. There is still a credibility "deficit," and they will only be persuaded of this if they see concrete actions, not signals, words, or threats. Ultimately, the United States will need to define how to use engagement to actively advance its national interests, based on the lessons of engagement (and assuming the United States can redefine its interests in some meaningful way).

The British historian Paul Kennedy, whose work on the fall of the British Empire is often applied (inappropriately) to the United States, made an interesting point on why empires fail—it is not that they do not recognize problems, it is that they continue to apply old solutions that worked well in the past to new problems where they are no longer effective. The sooner we replace deterrence, signaling, and all the other accoutrements of nuclear strategy as a guide for strategy the better it will be for defending U.S. interests.

A version of this paper entitled "Deterrence is Dead" was presented to Department of Defense Strategic Multilayer Assessment (SMA) program.

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<https://www.csis.org/analysis/strategy-after-deterrence>

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War on the Rocks (Washington, D.C.)

## **The Case for a Pacific Deterrence Initiative**

By Randy Shriver and Eric Sayers

March 10, 2020

When war broke out in Ukraine in 2014 the Department of Defense moved swiftly to invest billions in near-term enhancements in Europe to address growing military-operational shortfalls. The European Reassurance Initiative, later renamed the European Deterrence Initiative, invested \$22 billion since then in increased presence, exercises, prepositioning, infrastructure, and partner capacity efforts all focused on ensuring the U.S. military and its NATO partners have the right capabilities in position to deter Russia. The Defense Department requested an additional \$4.5 billion for the initiative in its new budget request for 2021.

No similar initiative, or urgency, exists for the Indo-Pacific.

The Department of Defense deserves credit for increased investments in new platforms as well as research and development that will pay dividends in the 2030s and beyond in the Indo-Pacific. But the operational dilemmas faced by Indo-Pacific Command demand urgent attention. In order to make American investments in advanced fighters, attack submarines, or breakthroughs in military technology meaningful (in other words, to deter or win a conflict), there must be urgent investment in runways, fuel and munitions storage, theater missile defenses, and command and control architecture to enable U.S. forces in a fight across the Pacific's vast exterior lines.

Given this, Congress and the administration would be wise to create a new funding mechanism for Indo-Pacific Command priorities, similar to what was launched in Europe for directing funding to these critical yet often overlooked areas. Secretary of Defense Mark Esper should move to launch a Pacific Deterrence Initiative or "PDI" alongside the European Deterrence Initiative during the 2022 budget build to send a powerful strategic message of U.S. commitment to the region. In the interim, the Congress should use the detailed information Indo-Pacific Command will send to Capitol Hill as a part of section 1253 of the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act to begin a concerted effort to address these funding shortfalls beginning in the 2021 budget. America and its allies cannot afford to put off these investments for another year.

### **A Necessity for Europe, But Not Asia?**

Beginning in 2014, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel and Deputy Secretary Bob Work began raising specific concerns about the shifting operational environment in the Pacific. Specifically, Hagel outlined how "China and Russia have been trying to close the technology gap by pursuing and funding long-term, comprehensive military modernization programs." He concluded that "While the United States currently has a decisive military and technological edge over any potential adversary, our future superiority is not a given." This concern led to the Pentagon's "third offset strategy" that served as a military compliment to the Obama administration's broader rebalance agenda. Despite this new focus on China at the Pentagon, coupled with other initiatives like shifting a portion of the Navy to the Pacific Ocean, a significant shift in resources never followed. Sequestration hit the defense budget hard and left few resources for new initiatives. European Command and Central Command were able to avoid this period of budget tightening through the continued use of overseas contingency operation funds, but these funds were never offered to Indo-Pacific Command.

The growing challenge in the Pacific became all the more clear following the National Defense Strategy release in early 2018. But the resources to address the emerging operational challenges

with China, often called a “long-term challenge,” “pacing threat,” or “peacetime competition,” remained stagnant.

As concern and frustration grew, Sen. John McCain, then chairing the Senate Armed Services Committee, proposed the idea of something like the European Defense Initiative, but for Asia, in early 2017. He called it the Indo-Pacific Stability Initiative and sought to add it to the 2018 defense budget to address operational issues faced by Pacific Command, at the cost of \$1.5 billion a year over five years. The armed services were doing a decent job of buying new ships, fighters, and other platforms with the capabilities needed to address the military balance in the region, but the operationally relevant infrastructure needed allow the military to fight across the region’s vast geography and complex political access challenges fell short.

And it still does. Despite some momentum for the idea, it received only lukewarm support in the Pentagon. Like many ideas in Washington, it faded into the background.

A new optimism for a Pacific Deterrence Initiative emerged again following Esper’s speech at the Naval War College in August 2019. He made the case to “expand our basing locations” in the Pacific by “investing more time and resources.” Sen. Josh Hawley sent a letter to Esper supporting the concept. Sen. James Inhofe, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and Rep. Mac Thornberry, ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee, weighed in with their support. Rep. Adam Smith, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, also expressed an interest in the approach. After multiple years of discussing the concept, Congress included Section 1253 in the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act that requires the Indo-Pacific Commander to submit an independent assessment by March 15, 2020 of the resources required through 2026 to meet the command’s operational responsibilities.

### Gauging Pacific Commitments

Current methods for judging the Pentagon’s commitment to the national defense strategy and Indo-Pacific theater have been reduced to cheering new investments in futuristic weapon systems or following the headlines about the need for forces in the Middle East. We believe a more holistic approach to assessing the Pentagon’s decision-making should consider three separate lines of action: global force distribution, theater investments, and capability investments. The first concerns decisions on how to deploy finite forces globally between combatant commands. The second, resources for joint capabilities that enable the warfighter, to include operationally relevant infrastructure, rotational forces, and exercises. And the third, major investments in new technology and the construction of new military platforms.

This typology is useful because it offers a comprehensive way to judge the Pentagon and congressional commitments across three timelines. First, in the near-term timeline (one to six months) that occurs when the secretary of defense balances the deployment of forces among combatant command requests. Second, the medium-term timeline (two to five years) where investments by the services and combatant commanders in theater infrastructure and posture occur. Finally, the long-term budget decisions (10 to 15 years) to invest in new technologies and major platforms that will not come to the battlefield until the 2030s.

Commitments and investment in the Pacific theater have been largely focused on the first and third categories, and the record is mixed. On global force distribution, the first category, the Department faces enduring pressure in the near term to resource commitments in the Middle East and Europe, despite continuing to call the Pacific the “priority theater.” The competition for the deployment of aircraft carriers, amphibious ships, multi-mission maritime aircraft like the P-8, missile defense assets like THAAD, and other capabilities that plays out at the Pentagon each month continues to lean in favor of Central Command and European Command.

On capability investments, our third category, the 2020 budget and new 2021 request to Congress devote considerable resources to major conventional platforms such as bombers, fighters, attack submarines, and destroyers and significant research and development investment in areas like artificial intelligence, intermediate range missiles, and hypersonic weapons. This is the area that is most often cited when the Pentagon seeks to make the case that it is shifting to implement the National Defense Strategy. Continuing to invest in the right force structure and future technologies while divesting in areas less relevant to great-power competition is critical. However, these investments aren't focused on addressing the operational issues of 2025, but rather building a military for the 2030s and beyond. The Pentagon can do better.

#### Towards a Pacific Deterrence Initiative

Any military conflict in the Pacific will be a "come as you are fight." There will be little time to swing assets like bombers and tankers and even less time for naval platforms to deploy or move to the theater in support. This places an even greater emphasis on our second category of theater investments that are central to enabling the "blunt layer" of the National Defense Strategy. To this point, the Pentagon may not even receive a passing grade for its emphasis on theater investments.

The services have moved to invest in the platforms that will be needed in the theater in the future, but have shown a fleeting interest in investing dollars in the enabling capabilities that are critical to execute the various warfighting concepts they are now developing. Flashy new platforms will be needed, but so will the high-end munitions, runways and port infrastructure, deployable air bases, fuel and munition storage, command and control tools, and other joint capabilities needed to effectively employ these platforms in the face of the Pacific's geographic and operational challenges. While the European Deterrence Initiative has allowed European Command to divert billions towards these issues alongside rotational forces, joint exercises, and enhanced security assistance, the same type of investments in the Pacific remain the greatest shortfall to implementation of the National Defense Strategy. It should also be emphasized that theater investments are the area where relatively small amounts of money can have the greatest impact on the military balance in the near term.

Given the growth of the European Deterrence Initiative and the subsequent failure of a Pacific version to materialize, it is valuable to consider how their origins differed. First, the European initiative was created in response to a major crisis. A similar crisis of China's making is much less likely to emerge in Asia and thus the political challenge will be to make this considerable change in order to prevent a future crisis. Second, because of the crisis in Europe and need to respond, the European effort was quickly in the overseas contingency operation budget. There is little possibility of this being extended to Indo-Pacific Command so a new initiative will need to be funded out of the base budget, a much more difficult task. Finally, the European Deterrence Initiative was launched by the Obama administration and Congress was eager to support it as a major response to Russian aggression. A Pacific companion will need to be pulled along by Congress until this administration or the next chooses to adopt the approach, making its organization and execution much less effective.

#### A Strategic Opportunity and Budgetary Necessity

The months ahead can have a major impact on the approach we take to addressing the military balance in the Pacific. A few key items should guide the thinking of the Pentagon and the congressional defense committees. First, both the Pentagon and Congress should view a Pacific Deterrence Initiative not as a basic budget exercise but a broader strategic opportunity to message the U.S. commitment to the region. An alignment of the Pentagon and Republicans and Democrats on Capitol Hill around this effort would be a real opportunity to begin to do in Asia what has already occurred in Europe in the last seven years. The message the European Deterrence Initiative

has sent NATO and Russia should be the same signal we want to send our Asian allies and partners as well as those in Beijing who have grown confident of their military capabilities.

Second, Congress should use the Section 1253 report from Indo-Pacific Command that is expected to be delivered this month to conduct oversight briefings and identify the pressing items in the 2021 budget that appropriators can begin to put resources towards. The European Deterrence Initiative began modestly in 2015 with \$985 million and 2016 with \$789 million. Congress should look to appropriate similar spending levels in the Pacific this year. While the services will own the actual budgets, Congress should also utilize a specific spending account for the initiative so that all funding can be visualized in one table. This would ensure funding commitments are clear to allies and the press, similar to the budget book for Europe each year.

Finally, defense leaders should view the consensus around this concept as an opportunity to work with the Congress to formalize a Pacific Deterrence Initiative in the 2022 budget request after consultation with Congress about its structure and the type of activities it should include. This would bring more rigor to the budget formation process going forward and signal an enduring commitment in future budget years.

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## ABOUT THE USAF CSDS

The USAF Counterproliferation Center (CPC) was established in 1998 at the direction of the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. Located at Maxwell AFB, this Center capitalizes on the resident expertise of Air University — while extending its reach far beyond — and influences a wide audience of leaders and policy makers. A memorandum of agreement between the Air Staff's Director for Nuclear and Counterproliferation (then AF/XON) and Air War College commandant established the initial personnel and responsibilities of the Center. This included integrating counterproliferation awareness into the curriculum and ongoing research at the Air University; establishing an information repository to promote research on counterproliferation and nonproliferation issues; and directing research on the various topics associated with counterproliferation and nonproliferation.

In 2008, the Secretary of Defense's Task Force on Nuclear Weapons Management recommended "Air Force personnel connected to the nuclear mission be required to take a professional military education (PME) course on national, defense, and Air Force concepts for deterrence and defense." This led to the addition of three teaching positions to the CPC in 2011 to enhance nuclear PME efforts. At the same time, the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center, in coordination with the AF/A10 and Air Force Global Strike Command, established a series of courses at Kirtland AFB to provide professional continuing education (PCE) through the careers of those Air Force personnel working in or supporting the nuclear enterprise. This mission was transferred to the CPC in 2012, broadening its mandate to providing education and research on not just countering WMD but also nuclear operations issues. In April 2016, the nuclear PCE courses were transferred from the Air War College to the U.S. Air Force Institute for Technology.

In February 2014, the Center's name was changed to the Center for Unconventional Weapons Studies (CUWS) to reflect its broad coverage of unconventional weapons issues, both offensive and defensive, across the six joint operating concepts (deterrence operations, cooperative security, major combat operations, irregular warfare, stability operations, and homeland security). The term "unconventional weapons," currently defined as nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, also includes the improvised use of chemical, biological, and radiological hazards. In May 2018, the name changed again to the Center for Strategic Deterrence Studies (CSDS) in recognition of senior Air Force interest in focusing on this vital national security topic.

The Center's military insignia displays the symbols of nuclear, biological, and chemical hazards. The arrows above the hazards represent the four aspects of counterproliferation — counterforce, active defense, passive defense, and consequence management. The Latin inscription "Armis Bella Venenis Geri" stands for "weapons of war involving poisons."

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