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CSDS News and Analysis 1482 (Feature Report: “Operational Unpredictability and Deterrence,” RAND)

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Welcome to [USAF Center for Strategic Deterrence Studies](#) News and Analysis! As part of the CSDS mission to develop [U.S. Air Force](#), [Department of Defense](#), and other [government](#) leaders to advance the state of knowledge, policy, and practices within strategic defense issues involving nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, we offer the government and civilian community a source of contemporary discussions.

Feature Report

[“Operational Unpredictability and Deterrence: Evaluating Options for Complicating Adversary Decisionmaking”](#). RAND, Aug. 11, 2021.

RAND: "This report assesses whether and how the U.S. military might utilize unpredictability in force employment, posture, and operations to deter adversaries and identifies the possible risks and costs of such approaches." [Read Report](#).

Nukes and Deterrence, Counter-WMD, and Arms Control in News and Research

NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND DETERRENCE

- [Engaging with North Korea: Lessons from Game Theory](#) (RAND)
Deadlines to spur progress ... are vitally important because, with each passing year, North Korea's technological prowess and stockpile of nuclear weapons are likely increasing.
- [Are Dual-Capable Weapon Systems Destabilizing? Questioning Nuclear-Conventional Entanglement and Inadvertent Escalation](#) (Atlantic Council)
Evidence shows dual-capable systems have been ... used without causing inadvertent escalation to nuclear war. ... There are reasons to believe dual-use systems may in fact contribute to deterrence.
- [Why the U.S. and Chinese Militaries Aren't Talking Much Anymore](#) (Carnegie Endowment)
The prioritization of deterrence over dialogue has only become more pronounced as PLA generals and Chinese scholars grow more confident in the ability of China's advanced ballistic missiles.
- [Brand New B-21 Bomber will Only Fly with the Immortal B-52](#) (Military.com)
The Pentagon is getting ready to roll out its brand new stealth bomber, the B-21 Raider, which is earmarked to replace the aging B-1 supersonic swing-wing bomber and the B-2 stealth bomber.
- [Shiny New 'Looking Glass' on Display at SAC Museum after 6-year Restoration](#) (Omaha World-Herald)
The plane was the linchpin of U.S. nuclear strategy during the Cold War because it ensured that the U.S. could retaliate if Russia attacked first.

COUNTER-WMD

- [Key U.S. Initiatives for Addressing Biological Threats Part 3 – The Biological Threat Reduction Program](#) (Council on Strategic Risks)

The briefer provides several recommendations to help ensure the BTRP [Biological Threat Reduction Program] is sufficiently robust and effective in the coming years.

- [Pentagon Readies to Identify Integrated Air and Missile Defense Capability Gaps](#) (Defense News)

Hyten said this time the MDR and the Nuclear Posture Review will be an integrated part of the National Defense Strategy.

- [How Will the Pentagon Close the Homeland Missile Defense Gap?](#) (Defense News)

The plan would include establishing layers of defensive capability relying on the Aegis Weapon System, particularly the SM-3 Block IIA missiles ..., and a possible Aegis Ashore system in Hawaii.

US ARMS CONTROL

- [20th Air Force Commander: Nuclear Modernization is Path to a Treaty with China](#) (Air Force Magazine)

"What they were still confounded by was why the United States would have a treaty because at least in these officers' minds, treaties were an indication of weakness," Lutton said.

- [Converging Crises in North Korea: Security, Stability & Climate Change](#) (Council on Strategic Risks)

The stability of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, a nuclear-armed country, presents a serious concern to global security and in particular to the security of the Indo-Pacific region.

- [N Korea Repeats Threat as US Says Joint Military Drills are Defensive](#) (AP in Air Force Times)

A day earlier, Kim Yo Jong, the powerful sister of North Korea's leader, said the drills were the "most vivid expression of the U.S. hostile policy" toward North Korea

- [Iran President Picks Hawkish Diplomat to Lead Nuclear Talks](#) (Bloomberg)

His oversight could see Iran seek to drive a harder bargain over rolling back its rapidly expanding nuclear program in return for sanctions relief, and perhaps even topple the process.

COMMENTARY

- [Plutonium Pits Are a Critical Obstacle in U.S. Nuclear Plans](#) (Foreign Policy)

"The difficulty lies in where and how the pits are to be fabricated. This isn't something that existing facilities can be casually repurposed for"

- [Conventional-Nuclear Integration: Avoiding Misconceptions and Mistakes](#) (War on the Rocks)

"These questions lie at the heart of conventional-nuclear integration, a controversial subject that Biden administration officials should consider ... as they undertake a new *Nuclear Posture Review*."

- [Believe It or Not: U.S. Nuclear Declaratory Policy and Calculated Ambiguity](#) (War on the Rocks)

"America's current policy of 'calculated ambiguity' is worth keeping because it contributes to deterring a growing range of strategic non-nuclear threats (chemical, biological, conventional)"

