



Congressional Perspectives on Nuclear Deterrence and the American Presence and Role in the World

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Strategic Nuclear Myths and Truths

6 Strategic Nuclear Myths

- ▶ Nuke Deterrence doesn't really work-you can't fight with nukes
- ▶ Hair trigger fears
- ▶ Nukes Not useful in age of terrorism
- ▶ Adopt No First Use Good Idea
- ▶ Too Expensive, Cannot Afford
- ▶ No need to rush; we can delay scheduled modernization.

6 Strategic Nuclear Truths

- ▶ Together Arms Control & Nuke Modernization works
- ▶ Nuke stability both greater and worse
- ▶ Large scale proliferation can be stopped-what remains still deadly
- ▶ Modernization is cost effective
- ▶ Missile Defense of critical help
- ▶ Numbers and modernization matters

Six Myths: (1) Cannot Fight with Nukes

- ▶ Nuclear weapons are designed primarily to deter the outbreak of conflict between nuclear armed superpowers
- ▶ That conflict might take the form of biological, chemical, major conventional or nuclear attack
- ▶ Idea is not to use nuclear weapons to fight every possible conflict
- ▶ Nuclear weapons are designed to retaliate in such a way as to markedly reduce the ability of a nuclear armed adversary to cause US and allies harm
- ▶ Holding at risk an adversary's key military assets we threaten to eliminate those elements of state power without which their aggression cannot stand.....

Six Myths: (2) Nukes are on Hair Trigger

- ▶ US nuclear forces are not on hair trigger
- ▶ President will not be forced to use early in a crisis
- ▶ Survivable nature of the force allows President time to make key decisions
- ▶ Triad of forces plus missile defense presents adversary with insurmountable attack dilemma
- ▶ Pre-emptive or surprise disarming attack not possible given current US force posture
- ▶ Crisis will not force early use

Six Myths: (3) Not Useful vs Terrorism

- ▶ Nuclear deterrence is not designed to deter all threats
- ▶ Conventional and guerilla war, terror attacks evidence that deterrence across the board sometimes fails
- ▶ FBI, Customs/Immigration, Coast Guard, FAA, Intelligence Community: None stopped 9-11
- ▶ Should they be determined “Not Useful”?
- ▶ Nuclear deterrence has for 70 years stopped directed armed conflict between major nuclear armed powers.

Six Myths: (4) No First Use

- ▶ No first use of nuclear weapons seen as moral stand to persuade others to adopt similar “high ground” and be more willing to reduce or eliminate their weapons
- ▶ China, NK, Iran, Pakistan are not going to follow US moral stand as they haven't to date re previous nuclear reductions/eliminations
- ▶ NFU allows the other guy to get in the first nuclear punch. And with a biological, chemical or major conventional attack, they can attack first even without fear of US retaliation with our nuclear forces.
- ▶ Allies in Europe and Asia fear such a NFU policy gives regional adversaries an advantage.

Six Myths: (5) Too Expensive

- ▶ The 25 year cost of nuclear modernization is \$700 billion—in then-year dollars
- ▶ This is roughly \$28 billion a year on average—growing to \$35 billion a year at the height of the modernization effort.
- ▶ Over that same 25 year period, the US government will spend an estimated \$155 trillion, largely dependent on interest rates and cost of entitlements.
- ▶ 2026 Defense Budget at \$610-\$640 billion would still mean 4-5% of the defense budget would be spent on nuclear modernization-- that remains the bedrock requirement for US national security.
- ▶ By 2021 nuclear modernization would be ½ of 1% of the Federal Budget

Six Myths: (6) No Need to Rush to Mod

- ▶ In 2002, CSIS reported that previous decade nuclear systems had become bill payers for other defense requirements
- ▶ Concluded that this procurement holiday seriously undermined the readiness and sustainability of the nuclear force at that time
- ▶ Since then, serial delays in submarine, ICBM and other nuclear modernization have resulted in continued increases in the cost of sustainment of some legacy systems---in fact equal in cost to all platform modernization over the next ten years (roughly \$67 billion each)
- ▶ Cruise missile mods, enhanced aircraft numbers/capability to penetrate air defenses, better ICBM accuracy and adequate ICBM test assets, and limits to submarine hull life and required submarine stealth all key factors supporting need for major nuclear modernization effort over next few decades...

Six Truths: (1) Arms Control and Mods Work Better Together

- ▶ Reagan era prescription of modernizing system while simultaneously reducing warheads works
- ▶ Emphasize 5 companion factors: bomber counting rules; demirv land based missiles; go to sea; build missile defenses; increase stability.
- ▶ Modernization gave you the bargaining leverage to seek reductions while also preserving, enhancing and making more credible your deterrent.
- ▶ START I, START II, Moscow Treaty and New Start all fall into that strategy over the past five administrations—remarkably consistent

Six Truths: (2) Nuclear Stability Enhanced and Worsening

- ▶ Ironically nuclear threats are both worsening and getting better;
- ▶ US force structure and platforms makes any pre-emptive strike not credible
- ▶ Yet regional nuclear/missile threats from theater nuclear and missile systems getting worse including NW Pacific, Middle East and Eastern Europe.
- ▶ Brad Roberts warns that the worsening stability from a tattered extended deterrent capability/doctrine/strategy is most worrisome of all nuclear threats

Six Truths: (3) Proliferation Avoided but Also Worse

- ▶ The widespread proliferation feared by the Kennedy administration actually avoided;
- ▶ Brazil, Argentina, South Africa, ROK, Japan, Libya, Iraq, Taiwan all eliminated their nuclear weapons programs or gave up their nuclear weapons including as a result of military conflict/sanctions/diplomacy.
- ▶ But the Chinese remain a key proliferator through the Khan network
- ▶ Major Non Proliferation Force is US Extended Deterrent—stopped multiple nuclear programs
- ▶ Especially worrisome is the North Korean nuclear program with >10-12 warheads especially given its cooperative scientific and technology work with Iran and its companion missile programs
- ▶ Iran remains singularly dangerous wild war as we delayed yet strengthened Iran's nuclear weapons capability

Six Truths: (4) Mods are Cost Effective

- ▶ Cost of conventional war including Iraq, Afghanistan and GWOT now runs into the trillions of dollars;
- ▶ Large scale conventional conflict between nuclear armed super powers would be catastrophic
- ▶ Even limited conventional engagement in Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan runs \$50 billion annually--double the current all nuke modernization and sustainment annual costs
- ▶ For 70 years as General Welch explains nuke deterrence has worked perfectly
- ▶ 4-5% of the defense budget and ½ o 1% of Federal budget in 2026 [\$35B/\$6.6 trillion]

Six Truths: (5) Missile Defense Enhances Stability

- ▶ The deployment of regional and CONUS based missile defenses enhances strategic stability
- ▶ Subsequent to the end of the ABM Treaty deployed strategic nuclear arsenals were cut by 75%...between the US and Russia
- ▶ Moscow Treaty and New Start followed the end of the ABM Treaty
- ▶ ABM Treaty of 1972 accompanied by increase of 22,000 strategic nuclear deployed warheads in USSR and USA over the next two decades...
- ▶ Missile defense key to defense of Eastern Europe, Middle East and NW Asia—
- ▶ Precision long range prompt global conventional strike should be added to the mix

Six Truths: (6) Numbers and Mods Matter

- ▶ Nuclear Coercion in region based in part on correlation of theater nuclear forces
- ▶ Relative strength of strategic nuclear deterrent supports sharp rhetorical threats and threatening deployments
- ▶ Numbers matter to the Russians and Chinese—both modernizing to an extent not seen even during the height of the Cold War---
- ▶ US reductions from 12,000 to 1550 strategic nuclear weapons parallel with Chinese, North Korean, Pakistani, Indian build-up.....
- ▶ Adversary nuclear systems are not designed to overcome US nuclear capability but US superior conventional capability—cutting our nukes does not engender parallel reductions by non-US-Russian START treaty members

Implications for US Presence: Congressional Views

- ▶ **Congressional Consensus:**
NATO and Asian Allies Can Do More to Support Defense—quid pro quo re
More USA Defense Spending—Emerging Development but nuke balance
very worrisome
- ▶ **NK, China, Iran, Russia: Four Bad Guys Make US Presence Critical but
Nature of US and Allied Presence Remains Under Review**
- ▶ **Regional Nuclear Extended Deterrence in Europe Not Well Thought Out—
US nuclear theater deployments are primarily political in nature but that
remains a very big deal—B-61 focus (\$8.5 billion endeavor)**
- ▶ **Nuclear Deployment Pressures Growing in Asia especially in ROK and less
so in Japan—How Can Congress Dampen Down....**

Implications for US Presence (2)

- ▶ Missile Defense Big Priority of Combat Commanders
- ▶ Strengthen Regional Alliances Through Various Measures Including Extended Nuclear Deterrence...
- ▶ Avoid Further Nuclear Proliferation (Iran) or Cap/Roll Back Existing Proliferation (NK)
- ▶ Unclear the Navy, USAF or Army Force Implications but Long range
- ▶ No new commitments but no rash withdrawals for next year
- ▶ Arms sales to allies high on list—easy to do—will be linked to future “involvement”—not costless.....

Two Big Concerns: Chinese Proliferation and Russian Modernization

- ▶ China Playing With Nuclear Matches: Tom Reed: "In 1982, China decided to actively support nuclear proliferation into the Third World....China trained scientists, transferred technology, sold delivery systems, and built infrastructure...to pursue balance of power goals or to encourage nuclear events in the Western World. Some factions within the Chinese government writes Reed, "Thought a nuclear detonation in the West would be helpful in restoring China's global pre-eminence....[but] there must be no Chinese fingerprint" ("The Nuclear Express", by Tom Reed and Danny Stillman, Chapter 19, p318).

Two Big Concerns: Chinese Proliferation and Russian Modernization

- ▶ There are two very dangerous elements of Russian policy relating to nuclear weapons. One is a Russian nuclear doctrine which entails the first use of nuclear weapons in local and regional conventional wars; and two, Russian modernization programs which are providing the full range of nuclear capabilities, from precision low-yield and low-collateral damage nuclear weapons to some of the most destructive weapons in human history. Both of these, I think, are very important in light of what's going on in Europe today -- the Russian aggression in the Ukraine, and the constant pressure we see on not only NATO member states bordering Russia, but on neutrals like Sweden and Finland. Recently Igor Ivanov, who was the Secretary of the Russian National Security Council under Putin, and prior to that the Russian Foreign Minister under both Yeltsin and Putin, recently stated that, quote, "The risk of confrontation with the use of nuclear weapons in Europe is now higher than in the 1980s". Mark Schneider, April 20th, Remarks at AFA/Mitchell Institute Congressional Breakfast Seminar on Nuclear Deterrence, Missile Defense, Arms Control, Proliferation and Defense Policy.