PROCEEDINGS

NUCLEAR AND MISSILE DEFENSE POLICY IN THE SECOND TRUMP ADMINISTRATION: WHAT TO EXPECT AND WHAT SHOULD BE DONE

The remarks below were delivered at a symposium on "Nuclear and Missile Defense Policy in the Second Trump Administration: What to Expect and What Should be Done" hosted by the National Institute for Public Policy on November 20, 2024. The symposium discussed how a second Trump Administration should adapt U.S. nuclear and homeland missile defense policies and programs in the face of growing nuclear threats by adversaries and how to overcome the likely impediments to such change.

David J. Trachtenberg (moderator)
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The election of Donald Trump to a second term as U.S. president presents an opportunity to recalibrate U.S. nuclear weapons and missile defense policy. The Trump 2018 *Nuclear Posture Review* (NPR) called for augmenting the existing nuclear program of record with two supplemental capabilities: a low-yield ballistic missile warhead and a nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missile (SLCM-N).[1] The low-yield ballistic missile warhead was deployed on submarines; however, the SLCM-N was opposed by the Biden Administration, which argued in its 2022 NPR that the system was too costly and unnecessary.[2] Despite the Biden Administration's opposition to SLCM-N, the Democratic Congress continued to fund it, supporting the Trump Administration's contention that it would provide "a needed non-strategic regional presence, an assured response capability," "a valuable hedge against future nuclear 'break out' scenarios," and enhance "the flexibility and diversity of U.S. nuclear capabilities to help address emerging deterrence requirements in the near term and beyond."[3]

Last year, the bipartisan Strategic Posture Commission concluded that "the current U.S. strategic posture will be insufficient to achieve the objectives of U.S. defense strategy in the future due to the rapid advancement of the threat, particularly the nuclear threat of two peer adversaries," and that U.S. nuclear capabilities should be "supplemented to ensure U.S. nuclear strategy remains effective in a two-nuclear-peer environment."[4] Among other things, it called for preparing to upload hedge warheads on ICBMs and SLBMs, deploying a MIRVed Sentinel ICBM, considering road-mobile ICBMs, and reassessing continued adherence to New

[1] Department of Defense, *Nuclear Posture Review*, 2018, pp. XII, 54-55, available at https://media.defense.gov/2018/feb/02/2001872886/-1/-1/1/2018-nuclear-posture-review-final-report.pdf.

[2] Department of Defense, *2022 Nuclear Posture Review*, p. 20, available at https://media.defense.gov/2022/Oct/27/2003103845/-1/-1/1/2022-NATIONAL-DEFENSE-STRATEGY-NPR-MDR.pdf.

[3] *Nuclear Posture Review*, 2018, op. cit., pp. XII, 55.

[4] Madelyn R. Creedon, Jon L. Kyl, et al., *America's Strategic Posture: The Final Report of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States*, October 2023, pp. viii, 35, 47, 99, available at https://www.ida.org/-/media/feature/publications/a/am/americas-strategic-posture/strategic-posture-commission-report.ashx.

START limitations. Whether the Trump Administration will act on these recommendations remains to be seen.

In addition, the Trump 2019 *Missile Defense Review* continued to emphasize homeland defense against rogue nation threats, noting that "the United States relies on deterrence to protect against large and technically sophisticated Russian and Chinese intercontinental ballistic missile threats to the U.S. homeland."[5] Yet, a policy that allows the U.S. homeland to remain vulnerable to coercive nuclear threats from Russia and China seems incongruous with repeated statements that defending the homeland is DoD's "top priority."[6] Apparently it's okay to actively defend the homeland against lesser threats but not more substantial ones.

There have been increasing calls to reconsider this homeland vulnerability, especially in light of escalating nuclear threats and the growing military entente between Russia and China. Deploying additional ground-based missile defense interceptors, accelerating the Next Generation Interceptor program, developing the Glide Phase Interceptor, moving forward with space-based kinetic and non-kinetic defensive systems, expediting cruise missile defense, and building a third missile defense site in the United States are among some of the recommendations that have been suggested by experts. The Congress has also weighed in with multiple provisions in last year's National Defense Authorization Act, including reaffirming that it is U.S. policy to rely on nuclear deterrence to deter Russian and Chinese nuclear threats—a policy statement that I believe needs revision.

In addition, I suggest it is time to reconsider the so-called Nitze criteria that argues missile defense capabilities must be "cost-effective at the margin"—in other words, that the cost of adding to the defense must be less than the cost of adding offensive missiles to overcome it. The cost of missile defenses pales in significance to the cost of rebuilding an American city should deterrence fail. As my colleague Matt Costlow has written, "since 1985, the so-called 'Nitze criteria' have been central to the debate on U.S. homeland missile defense." Yet, "the supposed inviolability of the 'Nitze criteria' has placed unworthy constraints on the U.S. debate about missile defense to the detriment of both policies and capabilities."[7]

Again, as the Strategic Posture Commission concluded, "the currently planned U.S. homeland [missile defense] capability does not adequately defend against coercive attacks from China and Russia…. To defend against a coercive attack from China or Russia, while

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[5] Department of Defense, Missile Defense Review, 2019, p. III, available at https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Interactive/2018/11-2019-Missile-Defense-Review/The%202019%20MDR_Executive%20Summary.pdf.

[6] See, for example, Department of Defense, *2022 Missile Defense Review*, p. 6, available at https://media.defense.gov/2022/Oct/27/2003103845/-1/-1/1/2022-NATIONAL-DEFENSE-STRATEGY-NPR-MDR.pdf.

[7] Matthew R. Costlow, *A Curious Criterion: Cost Effective at the Margin for Missile Defense, Information Series No. 537* (Fairfax, VA: National Institute Press, October 21, 2022), available at https://nipp.org/information_series/matthew-r-costlow-a-curious-criterion-cost-effective-at-the-margin-for-missile-defense-no-537-october-21-2022/.

staying ahead of the North Korean threat, "the United States will require additional [missile defense] capabilities beyond the current POR [program of record]."[8]

This also provides a credible, bipartisan benchmark for the incoming Trump Administration to reevaluate and reassess the continued vulnerability of the U.S. homeland to peer nation nuclear threats and the implications such continued vulnerability is likely to have on the credibility of the U.S. deterrent posture.

This is the backdrop for today's discussion.

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Franklin C. Miller
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Thanks to David and NIPP for inviting me.

So, it's fallen to me to talk about nuclear deterrence in this new multi-peer world.

I want to divide the issue into three parts: policy, programs, and execution. For those of you who have seen the article Madelyn Creedon and I published today in *Foreign Affairs Online*, come back in a few minutes when I'm done speaking.

As far as deterrence policy is concerned, I believe we are in a good place. Some of us might recall what we call the "second Carter Administration," when Jimmy Carter moved from timidity in the face of Soviet bluster to signing out PD-59. In the same general vein, this summer we entered the "second Biden Administration" in terms of deterrence policy. With a little help from its friends on the Strategic Posture Commission (tip of the hat to my fellow panelist today and SPC Commissioner Matt Kroenig), the administration changed the U.S. deterrence and targeting policy focus on Russia to having to deter simultaneously Russia, China and North Korea. They got it right. And I believe that a new, time-consuming, NPR is therefore both unnecessary and indeed counterproductive. The Trump Administration will need to do a quick review of U.S. policy, but it should not fall into the proverbial trap of "new NPR, new Presidential Guidance, new Nuclear Weapons Employment Policy (NUWEP), new Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP) and finally three and a half years later, new planning."

As far as the programs are concerned, Sentinel, Columbia-class, D-5 Life Extension Program (LEP), B-21 (in sufficient numbers), Long-Range Stand-Off missile (LRSO), and the nuclear sea-launched cruise missile (SLCM-N) are the right answer. We need a rebuilt and modern Triad and a flexible effective regional nuclear deterrent.

The administration will want to look at the outyear buys—it's well known I favor more than 12 Columbias and more than 100 B-21's and more LRSOs than the Air Force wants to buy to load in the B-21s. The administration will also want to review the Air Force's

[8] Madelyn R. Creedon, John L. Kyl, et al., *America's Strategic Posture: The Final Report of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States*, op. cit., p. 63.

scandalous lack of tankers—a shortfall which jeopardizes our ability to deter simultaneously at the conventional and the nuclear level.

But the real issue confronting the administration will be the combined failure of government and industry to execute: to produce these new systems at a pace which is relevant to the threat. All of the programs are running behind. Part of this is that the Service Secretaries and their staffs have no sense of urgency. They have shown time and again that they do not understand how the world has changed. It is inconceivable and totally unacceptable for the three Combatant Commands most affected to point to near-term threats towards the end of this decade while the Navy and Air Force plod along in a business-as-usual mode promising new capabilities in another ten years.

The new Secretary of Defense must take personal charge of the nuclear modernization program. He must hold the Services to account as Cap Weinberger did. Weinberger held quarterly reviews of the key Reagan Strategic Modernization Programs—MX, Ohio-class SSBN and D-5 missile, and B-1 bomber. He required the Service Secretary, Service Chief, and the flag officer in charge of the program (as well as his principal OSD subordinates) to be present. And deficiencies discussed in month 1 had better be fixed by month 4. And he must fire people—Service Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and program managers—if things don't improve. Relying on "the system" just doesn't work.

And the new SecDef should expand this to cover other critical programs: nuclear attack submarine (SSN) production, conventional prompt strike, and SLCM-N. He should demand an immediate program to increase our air tanking capability. He might also call for regular updates on ship and submarine overhauls and yard availabilities and Air Force depot maintenance. And he must demand major increases in our war reserve munitions stocks—one can't talk about periods of real danger towards the end of this decade without having enough missiles, torpedoes, and artillery rounds to deter if possible and fight if necessary. All of this will require money—and I would call on the Secretary and the president to provide what is needed. These are not normal times, and we cannot act as if we are not under threat. We are.

The Secretary must also work with industry as a trusted partner. It doesn't work to publish a Defense Industrial Base Strategy (however good) and then do relatively little for a year only to issue an update just before the election. DoD must become a good customer. You cannot ask industry to expand its workforce and facilities on the promise of expected orders which then never materialize. The story of the FY 25 second Virginia-class SSN is the poster child for this.

On the flip side, the way in which General Dynamics has been working with DoD to ramp up 155 mm shell production is a success story. The Secretary needs more and regular engagement with Defense Industry leaders. The Polaris submarine and missile went from concept to first deployment in five years. The same was true for Minuteman. The U-2 went from concept to first flight in one year. We need to return to those kinds of time cycles—but it can only happen with close cooperation and with steely oversight from the SecDef. Obviously, Congress needs to do its share…. But that's the SecDef's responsibility too.

One final word before I get off the stage. There is one policy issue which is unresolved, and that is arms control. New START will expire in February 2026 and must be allowed to die: no extensions, no "no undercut agreements." New Start—RIP. The administration must be ready to move the day the treaty is over to begin uploading Minuteman and beginning to return to nuclear service the B-52s and Ohio tubes neutered under New START. And while I believe any arms control deal is not in our interest with the untrustworthy and murderous thug now running Russia, any thinking about future agreements must cast off the dead hand of the Cold War and include all deployed nuclear weapons, not merely intercontinental ones: wars start regionally, not over the poles. And any agreement should provide the United States sufficient weapons to support with high confidence the simultaneous deterrence policy.

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Robert G. Joseph
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David, thank you for the invitation to be part of this distinguished panel on an important and timely topic. In fact, and I will come back to this, this may be a unique time for the prospects of homeland missile defense—a time of opportunity which—if not seized—maybe the last time for achieving the defenses we need for deterrence and defense.

David has asked me to address what I expect on homeland missile defense in the 2nd Trump Administration. I know David appreciates the classics so let me begin with a quote from *The Tempest*. What is past is prologue. In other words, to understand the prospects of the Trump Administration's missile defense policies and programs, it is useful to look at previous administrations.

I will briefly touch on the checkered history of missile defense going back to the Reagan Administration as Reagan was the first President to challenge the prevailing dogma concerning defenses—and he did so on both moral and strategic grounds. He rejected the central concept that mutual assured destruction provided the best means of deterrence. He saw the possibility that defending the American homeland could, in fact, be a stabilizing factor in the balance of terror we shared with the Soviet Union.

It was on this basis that he proposed the Strategic Defense Initiative and challenged the American science and technology sectors to explore the potential for developing an effective defense of the US territory and population. The intended contribution of such capabilities to deterrence was reflected in the JCS Phase One Requirements. And here I quote: "The military objective of Phase I would be to enhance the US deterrence posture by being able to deny the Soviets their objectives in an initial ballistic missile attack." The goal would be to "decrease the Soviets' confidence that the objectives of its initial attack would be met."

Bush 41—operating in a vastly different strategic environment with the fall of the Soviet Union—continued the pursuit of strategic defenses through the GPALS program—the global protection against limited strikes. This was a program of record that envisioned both ground-based interceptors and 1000 small satellites with sensors and kinetic kill capabilities for intercepting enemy missiles in space.

With Bill Clinton you find the emergence of a distinct Republican-Democrat pattern. On day one, Secretary of Defense Les Aspen announced the end of GPALS, or as he put it, taking the stars out of Star Wars. The ABM treaty—which both Reagan and Bush 41 questioned—was upheld time after time for the next 8 years as the "cornerstone of strategic stability."

Bush 43 entered office committed to withdrawing from the ABM treaty and deploying missile defenses to protect against small scale attacks from rogue states like North Korea. IOC was reached in October 2004 and further built out in the next four years. NSPD 4 and Bush's first address on national security issues provided the strategic rationale for basing deterrence on both offense and defense—punishment and denial.

The Obama Administration did what the Clinton Administration did before it. While it was inconvenient to openly seek a revived ABM Treaty, defenses were seen as a bargaining chip to achieve offensive reductions. The number of ground-based interceptors was reduced (such as through the cancellation of the 3rd site in Europe) and all of the programs intended to keep pace with the Korean threat were killed: KEI, ABL, and MKV.

The first Trump Administration—and here I may risk the wrath of our distinguished moderator—was mostly all hat and no cattle. The President said all the right things but the results—in terms of capabilities—were pathetic. When the President went to the Pentagon to introduce the 2019 *Missile Defense Review,* he said "We are committed to establishing a missile defense program that can shield every city in the U.S." He emphasized that "space is a new warfighting domain" and that "my upcoming budget will invest in a space-based missile defense layer" and that, "regardless of the missile type or the geographic origins of the attack, we will ensure that enemy missiles find no sanctuary on earth or in the skies above."

The disconnect was with what was actually in the MDR and the DoD budget—focused almost solely on North Korea with spending on a space-based interceptor capability amounting to what was likely less than DoD spending on potatoes. The wrong answer—in the form of the next generation land-based interceptor—became the program of record despite not strengthening deterrence against coercive threats or even keeping pace with the North Korean threat.

The fact that the Biden Administration continued the next generation interceptor tells you everything you need to know. The Biden MDR explicitly ruled out defenses as a means of strengthening deterrence against Russia and China. Perhaps Frank and Matt can elaborate on the recommendations of the Strategic Posture Commission on this point.

The Biden White House also ruled out any space-based interceptors based on the stated view that such capabilities would "weaponize space." Given the militarization of space by Russia, China and other adversaries, and given the creation of our own Space Force, I find the White House statement to be both ridiculous and dangerous because it denies us the

capabilities we need to deter and defend against both rogue state threats and coercive threats from Moscow and Beijing. It cannot be done from the ground alone—unless of course we change the laws of physics.

So, what should we expect from the second Trump Administration? Certainly, there will be—in my view—the right policy statements emphasizing the priority of defending the U.S. homeland from attack. In the campaign, President Trump spoke of building an Iron Dome to protect against all missile threats.

The real question is whether he will succeed this time around—or will the antibodies, especially those in uniform, in the services, in the budgeting offices of the Pentagon, and at the State Department prevail once again. My bet would normally be on the antibodies as they have a long record of success. The U.S. government has simply proven itself unable to build an effective defense of the homeland against the threats we face.

But there is another possible path. First, President Trump should be told that the vision he laid out in his first term was not just ignored (as it was by his own Pentagon leadership) but actually repudiated by the Biden Administration. He should be informed of what I believe is a national scandal—in 2004 we deployed a rudimentary capability against North Korean missiles; 20 years later we still have a rudimentary capability against North Korean missiles—despite spending tens of billions of dollars on the program.

Second, the President needs to restate during this transition period the priority of homeland defense. If he is to succeed, he must move quickly—and achieve the key milestones within the first 18 months. Any major initiative by a new administration that challenges the way the government has operated must be undertaken before the bureaucracies reassert themselves. This is what Bush 43 did in exiting the ABM treaty.

Third, and most important, the President needs to assign the task to someone capable, with the needed authorities and budget authorizations. This is not a cost issue or a technology issue—as a robust space-based defense would likely cost a fraction of what is being spent on NGI and the advances in the needed technologies have been achieved. This is a straightforward leadership issue.

Three years ago, I was at dinner with several colleagues—all advocates of homeland missile defense, and all agreed that space capabilities—sensors and killers—are essential. I said then that, if I were king, I would put Elon Musk in charge. Think about it. Here is a brilliant guy who has changed the world by delivering real capabilities in different sectors. Through Space X, he is putting up thousands of satellites at a cost that was thought to be unimaginable in the world of government. But in any case, my suggestion was not adopted by the others—until now.

If Musk is willing to take on the task, I am confident he could succeed. No one has a better track record. And what's in it for President Trump? Most important, he delivers on the promise to protect America from missile attacks. And he fulfills the promise of Ronald Reagan made 40 years earlier.

When I saw the images of President Trump and Elon Musk at yesterday's Space X launch, I couldn't help but thinking if Trump would only ask Musk to take on the task of homeland missile defense, we would have the best—perhaps only—chance to succeed.

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Robert Soofer
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Challenges and Opportunities

The incoming Trump Administration faces unique challenges and opportunities with respect to nuclear and missile defense policy. The central challenge is posed by the expansion of China's nuclear arsenal, along with the continuing growth of Russian and North Korean nuclear forces. These nuclear forces pose a regional threat to U.S. forces and allies as well as new threats to the U.S. homeland. Most important, these new challenges must be deterred together—China and North Korea are no longer a lesser-included case to the Russia problem set. A nuclear and missile defense posture that was deemed sufficient to deter only Russia and defend only against North Korean ICBMs may not be adequate to prevent opportunistic aggression from China and North Korea.

The incoming administration also enjoys a unique opportunity to hit the ground running, avoiding the post-Cold War tradition of lengthy nuclear and missile defense posture reviews. This is because the reviews conducted in the first Trump Administration are still relevant. If anything, the threat has grown more acute, perhaps demanding additional capabilities to execute the policies and strategies well established by the earlier assessments.

To make these decisions, the administration has lots of help: bipartisan studies conducted over the past few years by the Center for Global Strategic Research, The National Institute for Public Policy, the Atlantic Council, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and the congressionally mandated Strategic Posture Commission have all reached the same conclusion: the current and planned nuclear weapons and missile defense posture is necessary but not sufficient to address the emerging strategic environment. These studies provide recommendations for bolstering U.S. strategic and regional nuclear forces, enhancing extended deterrence and assurance for our allies, and modernizing the ailing nuclear enterprise, including weapons, production facilities, and the human capital necessary to prepare for an uncertain future. The administration merely needs to decide on which options to pursue based on existing analysis.

Likewise, the Biden Administration has been studying the problem. Open congressional testimony from current and former STRATCOM commanders refers to the challenge of deterring two-plus nuclear powers at the same time and, in some instances, these commanders already have indicated a change in nuclear posture. The November 2024 *Report on the Nuclear Employment Strategy of the United States* suggests the Department of Defense has been thinking through the requirement to "be able to deter Russia, the PRC, and the DPRK simultaneously in peacetime, crisis, and conflict." It's not a far stretch to assume STRATCOM has examined what it would take—in terms of delivery systems and warheads—

to execute this guidance. The analysis is there such that early decisions can be taken with sufficient leadership attention.

The *2022 Nuclear Posture Review* suggested that changes in the nuclear posture may be necessary in the future. That future is now nearly upon us and outgoing Biden Administration officials allude to the need to increase the number of U.S. nuclear weapons. Vipin Narang, former Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, has noted that the Trump Administration "will be inheriting some rigorous homework and options, so they can pick up the ball and run with it."

The upshot of all this is that the administration does not have to begin from scratch: it can build on its previous reviews, supplemented by the extensive analyses conducted by government and non-governmental experts. In fact, it would be policy malpractice to waste another year studying the problem, when options are likely readily available. The president can issue direction and guidance through the National Security Council to prepare a set of recommendations and options that can be included in the president's first budget request to Congress in the late spring or summer.

Also providing a sense of urgency is the expiration of the New START Treaty in February 2026. While it is not clear whether negotiations with Russia will be desirable or possible, the administration will want to consider what form a follow-on agreement might take and what new nuclear force levels would be consistent with U.S. national security. In other words, the administration must decide early on how many additional nuclear warheads will be needed (and available) to address the new security landscape (China and North Korea in particular) and build these requirements into any proposals presented to Russia. Most of the analysis has been done—what's left is to make decisions.

To be sure, this is a daunting task, but key decisions can and must be taken early to impact the FY 2026 budget cycle, while other less pressing choices can await further analyses. What follows are a few key issues that need to be at the top of the administration's early agenda.

Nuclear Deterrence and Arms Control

Needless to say, an important priority is continuing the modernization of the nuclear Triad begun by the Obama Administration, affirmed by the first Trump Administration, and reaffirmed by the Biden Administration. Costs will likely continue to rise and competition for resources within the Department of Defense will remain as fierce as ever. Senior leadership attention from the Secretary of Defense, through the Service Secretaries, and to the program managers will be essential to maintain schedules.

An important piece of unfinished business from the 2018 *Nuclear Posture Review* is the recommendation to "pursue a nuclear-armed Sea Launched Cruise Missile, leveraging existing technologies to help ensure its cost effectiveness." Congress has established a fielding date of 2034, but the Navy program office assigned to execute the program does not think it can meet this date due to constraints in "the industrial base." It really is difficult to imagine why it should take ten years to reconstitute a nuclear weapon capability employed by the Navy and the Air Force during the Cold War. The nuclear-armed Ground Launched

Cruise Missile (GLCM) deployed to Europe in response to the Soviet SS-20 missile threat began development in 1977, with the first unit operational in 1981. It may have taken only five years because the GLCM was a modified version of the Navy's Tomahawk sea-launched cruise missile—not a new missile. Why can't that be achieved today with a variant of the Block V Tomahawk missile now in operational use by the Navy?

Even under the best of conditions, fielding of the SLCM-N could come too late if adversary regional nuclear capabilities continue to expand. In this case, the administration will want to look to the National Security Laboratories for near-term options to fulfill emerging defense requirements. As suggested by the 2018 NPR, "US nuclear capabilities and the ability to quickly modify those capabilities can be essential to mitigate or overcome risk, including the unexpected." Accordingly, the president should direct the NNSA, through the Department of Energy, to prepare the labs to respond quickly to emerging military requirements. For example, designing a reserve nuclear device to fit an existing conventional missile system or aircraft to provide additional theater nuclear options. This requires appropriate design skills, a nimble production capability, and freedom from potentially restrictive regulations and laws.

The most fundamental requirement for nuclear deterrence is survivable nuclear retaliatory forces. The president should direct the Department of Defense to examine and bring forth near-term measures to enhance the survivability and endurance of U.S. nuclear forces against any combination of aggressors. Recommendations may include changes in basing modes, alert levels, early dispersal, mobility, and defenses to enhance the protection of U.S. nuclear forces and nuclear command and control.

Also, in the near-term, the president should direct the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to determine the number of additional strategic and non-strategic nuclear warheads necessary to address the expansion of Chinese nuclear capabilities, including possible forward deployment with key allies. With this requirement in mind, the administration can formulate a negotiating position with Russia for a follow-on agreement to New START, should that become feasible. At the same time, the president should direct the Department of Defense and the Department of Energy to take all necessary steps to prepare reserve warheads for upload onto existing bombers, ICBMs, and SLBMs, as soon as the New START Treaty expires in February 2026.

Homeland Missile Defense

The president will want to take immediate steps to fulfil his campaign pledge to build an "Iron Dome for America," which in essence means the protection of the United States against missile threats from any potential adversary. Here, again, the policies and recommendations of the 2019 *Missile Defense Review* remain operative but require senior leadership attention and additional funding to execute.

To defend against the ICBM threat from North Korea, the administration should dust off plans crafted during the first administration to provide additional layers of protection for the homeland with the Standard Missile 3 (SM-3) and THAAD. Additional SM-3 and THAAD

missiles can be procured and integrated with the Ground-based Midcourse Defense System to increase the number of interceptors protecting the United States from 44 Ground-Based Interceptors to perhaps over 100 GBIs, SM-3s and THAAD missiles within a few years. Though the SM-3 and THAAD do not provide the same protective coverage as the GBI, they can be deployed at 3-5 sites in the United States to provide complete underlayer protection.

To address the Russian and Chinese ballistic and cruise missile threat to the homeland, significant new funding will be necessary to continue development and deployment of space-based sensors, while exploring new ways of intercepting the more sophisticated Russian and Chinese missile threat. The Department of Defense should be directed to bring forth options to develop space-based interceptors as well as boost-phase intercept capabilities using aircraft armed with conventional missiles or directed energy weapons. U.S. Northern Command has an established plan for defending critical infrastructure in the United States against the Russian and Chinese cruise missile threat that deserves immediate attention and funding.

Maintaining Senior Leadership Focus

A lesson learned from the first Trump Administration is that strategic programs such as nuclear weapons and missile defense lose their urgency without senior leadership focus and support. For example, in the first year, President Trump personally directed Secretary of Defense Mattis to do something about North Korea's emerging ICBM threat. In response, Secretary Mattis directed the DoD Comptroller to pull together what became a $4 billion supplemental funding request for missile defense and missile defeat activities, including 20 additional ground-based interceptors to supplement the existing 44. Yet, despite the president's personal involvement in the rollout of the 2019 *Missile Defense Review*, the budget request for the Missile Defense Agency declined during the last two years of the Trump Administration.

Likewise, despite the decision taken during the *Nuclear Posture Review* to field a nuclear sea-launched cruise missile, the Department of Defense was unable to establish an acquisition program for this key nuclear program before the end of the term, some three years later. As the forgoing suggests, translating nuclear and missile defense priorities into programs will, without a doubt, require the direct support and involvement of the president and the Secretary of Defense from start to finish.