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A "One-War" Warfighting Construct No Longer Applies to U.S. Nuclear Strategy

Paul Amato

Paul Amato is the former director for nuclear deterrence policy in the Office of Secretary of Defense for Policy. He is a retired Marine infantry officer with twenty-eight years of active and reserve service. Before his government service, he was a practicing lawyer in the private sector. The views expressed in this article are his own.

Policymakers, military strategists, and scholars have routinely debated U.S. strategic defense posture, in particular the type of contingencies the United States should prepare its military to confront, whether global conflict to one centered on one, one-and-a-half, or two major regional contingencies.[1] These approaches from the Cold War to the recent Biden Administration were a function of many factors, including a changing geopolitical environment, reorientation to new or evolving threats, policy choices and fiscal constraints.

As the Trump Administration undertakes the drafting of its National Defense Strategy (NDS), which likely will include a review of the Nation's nuclear posture, it is likely that Department of Defense (DoD) officials will make China, as the most powerful and consequential threat to the United States today, the U.S. strategic priority and focus. While DoD officials in recent years have paid lip-service to the belief that the United States should, with significant assistance from its allies, be able to handle multiple simultaneous non-nuclear conflicts, current DoD leadership seems poised to settle on a defense strategy that singularly focuses on and prioritizes the challenge posed by China, while inducing greater allied participation to help address military shortfalls in other theaters and against other potential opponents, particularly Russia, Iran, and North Korea. But such an approach is still effectively a one-war framework.[2]

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Realistically, given the deficit in U.S. military capabilities that has grown over the last two decades, such a one-war framework for conventional conflict may make sense. There is much ground that needs to be made up and a limit to what the United States can do in the short-term given fiscal constraints and a defense industrial base that is just awakening from a long slumber. As a result, a "one-war" strategy focused on China is certainly defensible given the scope of Indo-Pacific threats, and the residual U.S. and allied capabilities available in Europe in the event of crisis or conflict with Russia. But that should not be the end of the story.

As DoD develops its NDS, the emerging two-nuclear peer environment requires a different approach. It is time to distinguish between the historical U.S. conventional and nuclear force-sizing constructs in U.S. strategy. While it may make sense in the coming years to focus our conventional force structure, acquisitions and planning to the China threat, such an approach should not apply to U.S. nuclear posture and forces.

There are three reasons why DoD should break from the traditional approach to formulating its strategy. First, as the Pentagon drafts the NDS it is critical to the strategy's success that conventional and nuclear force planning be integrated. Put simply, one-war force planning for non-nuclear forces should not constrain our approach to determining what is needed to deter nuclear attack in a two-peer environment. The drafters must recognize and account for the growing need to deter two nuclear peer powers and, if deterrence fails, to have a force available that is able to achieve objectives against both of them, sequentially or simultaneously, regardless of whether we focus non-nuclear planning and capabilities against China. The time is right to adopt in the next NDS a "two-war" nuclear force sizing framework even as we pursue what, for all intents and purposes, will likely be a one-war conventional strategy focused on China.

Second, adopting such an approach at the Departmental level will begin to alert the nation's most senior national security leaders, and the non-nuclear policy, strategy and academic communities who support them, of the urgent need to focus more of their attention on the nuclear domain. With the end of the Cold War and the ascension of the Global Zero movement encapsulated by President Obama and his Administration's "Prague Agenda," a generation of policymakers, military strategists, and scholars have taken a holiday from studying, understanding and accounting for the nuclear dimension of defense strategy. As the threat environment has evolved, large segments of the U.S. defense establishment have not evolved with it.

As former Biden Administration officials Vipin Narang and Pranay Vaddi recently stated, "nuclear concerns can no longer be treated as a niche issue managed by a small community of experts. Officials at the highest levels of government will need to incorporate them into core defense policy…."[3] Breaking down the nuclear and non-nuclear silos in our approach to the NDS will aid in expanding an understanding of the breadth and depth of the nuclear challenges the nation faces—challenges that will only grow over the next ten years.

Third, distinguishing between nuclear and non-nuclear strategy and force sizing will make evident to policy makers and military planners the dynamics of 21st century conflict, where U.S. strategic deterrence has evolved from a two-body problem to a three-body problem

placing the potential for nuclear escalation front and center in any great power face-off with Russia or China. This should include making the Nation's senior-most leaders aware of the need to consider nuclear force posture and size adjustments to confront this new environment. Such adjustments are needed. However, even if senior leaders choose not to make new or different investments in U.S. nuclear forces, enunciating a strategy that recognizes this dynamic allows DoD strategists and planners to better assess risk and to mitigate them accordingly. Articulating a two-war strategy for U.S. nuclear forces in the forthcoming NDS will facilitate examination of these tradeoffs in a transparent and forthright manner, allowing senior leadership, up to and including the President, to make fully informed decisions on how to address the threats and apportion risk.

The Time to Break from the Past is Now

U.S. conventional and nuclear strategy are inextricably linked and must be developed in tandem to ensure consistency and effectiveness. As a general proposition, conventional war strategy and force sizing should be a downstream exercise from nuclear force sizing and strategy as all the conventional forces in the world will do no good if an adversary believes it has a path to victory through nuclear escalation. In conceiving and drafting the NDS, therefore, Trump Administration officials must from the outset properly harmonize the role of nuclear and non-nuclear domains.

The place of nuclear weapons in the world has evolved over the last 15 years and U.S. nuclear posture has not evolved with it. As described in the 2023 bipartisan Strategic Posture Commission report:

> The new global environment is fundamentally different than anything experienced in the past...Today the United States is on the cusp of having not one, but two nuclear peer adversaries, each with ambitions to change the international status quo, by force, if necessary: a situation which the United States did not anticipate and for which it is not prepared.[4]

The NDS will harmonize the nuclear and non-nuclear domains by acknowledging that, while the United States may choose to pursue a one-war non-nuclear construct that prioritizes China, we must explicitly adopt a two-war nuclear construct that recognizes the continued (and increasing) salience of nuclear weapons in both the Indo-Pacific and Europe, and that enables the United States to prosecute a conventional conflict with either Russia or China without undermining U.S. confidence in the ability of strategic deterrence to hold in the second theater.

In light of this development, the old model of structuring and sizing the entire U.S. military for one, one-and-a-half or two major regional contingencies is outdated. As seems evident from public statements by Administration officials, we can certainly choose to size our non-nuclear forces primarily for a China fight and rely on European allies to carry the bulk of a non-nuclear

conflict in Europe. But even with this approach, the U.S. must size and posture its nuclear forces for a "two-war" strategy, a decision that needs to be incorporated now.

The previous administration's experience demonstrates the importance of nuclear policy to the overall defense strategy. Shortly after the Biden Administration took office, Secretary Austin committed to an integrated deterrence strategy, which included a combined approach to the NDS, the Nuclear Posture Review and Missile Defense Review. But the reviews could not be completed without a decision on nuclear declaratory policy.

As Vice President, and during his Presidential campaign, Mr. Biden evinced a desire to adopt a "sole purpose" nuclear declaratory policy.[5] Consistent with this sentiment, the U.S. interagency during the strategy reviews considered a variety of declaratory policy options, including sole purpose, and prepared pros and cons for each of them for the President's consideration.[6]

Had President Biden selected a sole purpose declaratory policy, it would have meant that U.S. conventional forces in a confrontation with a nuclear-armed adversary would have been called upon to assume a greater military burden as the U.S. nuclear arsenal would not have been available to help at any point before adversary nuclear attack, even if the adversary had engaged in chemical, biological or other non-nuclear strategic attack. In other words, under a sole purpose policy, U.S. and allied non-nuclear forces would have to "fight it out" until the adversary employed nuclear weapons.[7] Not only would this be a different approach from that which the United States has followed for the last 70 years, but it would have required a more significant commitment to non-nuclear military capabilities and resources than at any time since the advent of nuclear weapons.

While the President ultimately decided to maintain a declaratory policy of calculated ambiguity, the key takeaway from this example was the importance of integrating a nuclear declaratory policy as a foundational component of the overall NDS.

The NDS gives DoD the opportunity to take a concrete step in acknowledging and accounting for the changed nuclear security environment—one where both Russia and China have increased the salience of nuclear weapons in their doctrines and strategies, and which presents a growing risk of opportunistic aggression by a second nuclear-armed adversary in the event of a crisis or conflict with the first of them.

And the risk of opportunistic aggression cannot be waved away. There is a worrisome trend of growing alignment, coordination and outright support between and among, China, Russia, North Korea and Iran.[8]. This is why it is time to dispense with the idea of a "one-war" military force sizing construct for both nuclear and non-nuclear forces and accept the fact that—even if the non-nuclear elements of the NDS focus on China—the United States must be aware of the need to deter both China and Russia and, if needed, to achieve objectives against either or both of them with nuclear capabilities. While the Administration can certainly pursue a "one-war" conventional strategy—especially given resourcing constraints—it should recognize that a "two-war" nuclear construct is needed for the Nation to better manage the evolving security environment.

DoD has the opportunity to adopt a two-war nuclear construct in the current NDS and should do so. The security environment has changed, the existential threat to the United States from nuclear conflict has grown, and the explicit acknowledgement in a DoD strategy document of the increasing risk of conflict with multiple nuclear-armed peer adversaries is something that must be acknowledged. Only then can policy makers, strategists and senior-leaders properly analyze and plan for the full array of risks that will manifest in the event of a crisis with China, Russia, or both.

A Two-War Nuclear Strategy Will Highlight (Again) the Risks of Great Power Conflict

In the 1970's and 1980's the National Security Advisor, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense and their senior-most advisors, were intimately familiar with U.S. nuclear strategy and doctrine, and were conversant in terms such as countervalue, counterforce and throw-weight. This did not distract from their knowledge of and focus on non-nuclear capabilities and strategy. To the contrary, while recognizing the immense risk of nuclear war, they did not shy away from understanding the import of nuclear weapons to our overall strategy and were clear-eyed about the role of nuclear weapons in our strategy.

Despite this history, renowned nuclear scholar, Therese Delpech, noted in 2012 that such nuclear literacy had waned, writing "Deterrence is a very difficult undertaking [that] suffers from intellectual and policy neglect."[9] She went on to note a finding from a 2008 DoD report that there is "a distressing degree of inattention to the role of nuclear weapons in deterrence among many senior DoD military and civilian leaders"…."[10]

A 2014 DoD independent review struck a similar tone, finding "a significant disconnect between the ownership, passion, and dedication to the nuclear deterrent mission [of the service men and women performing it] and what the forces perceive to be the commitment to mission ownership by higher level leaders throughout [DoD] and the nation."[11] As Narang and Vaddi note, given the gravity of today's nuclear threats, it is no longer viable for nuclear deterrence to remain "a 'niche issue' managed by a small community of experts."[12]

While there is a general consensus[13] in the nuclear deterrence expert community of the nuclear threats the Nation faces and the need for action, "perhaps the biggest hurdle to making good on this consensus is the fact that most Department of Defense (DoD) officials with responsibility for Pentagon strategy, force development, and budget decisions are generally not steeped in nuclear deterrence issues, and that they are less likely than many nuclear experts to see the risk of two simultaneous or near-simultaneous nuclear wars as realistic."[14]

But these are the very individuals who are leading NDS drafting. Because of this, there is a risk of bias toward implementing a so-called "one-war" force sizing construct that gives short-shrift to the evolving two nuclear peer environment. This would be a disservice to senior Administration officials and to the defense establishment, *writ large*, and to the President who will be the singular individual forced to confront, and manage, the risk of nuclear escalation in the event of the most stressing warfighting scenarios. This NDS provides an opportunity to

make a fundamental change that will begin to alert leaders at all levels of government to the growing risks of nuclear conflict.

Announcing a strategy that focuses U.S. non-nuclear planning and resourcing on a one-war construct focused on China, while also acknowledging the reality that the United States must be cognizant of and able to manage a two-peer nuclear power deterrence challenge, will begin to push back on the lingering "intellectual and policy neglect" referenced by Delpeche, and position the Nation to make informed tradeoffs on how to manage this growing risk.

This does not necessarily mean that new or different nuclear capabilities will displace the very urgently needed modernization and expansion of U.S. non-nuclear military capabilities for a looming China fight. Rather, it will help to break down the persistent nuclear and non-nuclear silos that impede a broader understanding of the breadth and depth of the nuclear challenges the nation faces—challenges that will only grow over the next ten years—and enable senior leadership to make informed tradeoffs.

What Should Come Next?

Distinguishing in the NDS between nuclear and non-nuclear strategy and force sizing will be a significant step toward addressing the dynamics of 21st century conflict. Acknowledging the problem, even if choosing not to respond, or responding only minimally, allows planners and strategists to better understand the risks and mitigate against them. Importantly, however, it is critical that the *President* understand the risks with this approach, as it is his flexibility and optionality that will be constrained in the event the most stressing scenarios eventually emerge. And it will not do any good to let him know of the risks as the crisis is upon us, as by that stage it will be too late to do anything meaningful about it.

If DoD's senior-most leaders do decide to go beyond simply acknowledging the need to address this emerging two-peer nuclear risk landscape, what should be done?

U.S. nuclear forces have historically provided "a range of response options in scope and scale…enabling an effective U.S. response to nuclear attack, at any level and in any context, in ways that will impose greater costs than any expected or hoped-for gain."[15] This range of response has historically included a mix of capabilities that are suited for both "central" and "regional" deterrence.

Certain U.S. forces, generally Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles and Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles, primarily support "central deterrence"—i.e., capabilities that in the main deter strategic attacks against the Homeland. In the event deterrence fails, and an adversary launches a large-scale nuclear attack against the Homeland, these are the forces the President would have available to impose intolerable costs against what adversaries value most. This could include their nuclear forces and enabling capabilities, as well as other national assets that they highly value.[16]

Regional deterrence on the other hand implicates capabilities available to the President to manage what is generally perceived to be the most likely scenarios for adversary nuclear employment—namely, adversary nuclear attack arising from failed or failing regional

aggression. To deter such attacks in the first instance, or to restore deterrence if such attacks do occur, the United States maintains lower-yield nuclear capabilities that are regionally-based, or regionally-deployable. These capabilities are key to ensuring adversaries do not miscalculate the potential consequences of using limited nuclear strikes to coerce or to defeat U.S. and allied regional forces.[17]

The United States has long maintained a mix of capabilities that enables it to tailor its deterrence to the diverse nuclear threat actors it faces, and a balance between central and regional nuclear capabilities has been key to a stable deterrence posture. But as the nuclear threat environment has evolved the mix of U.S. capabilities has not evolved with it, and U.S. flexibility has eroded. In this respect, the SPC found 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, particular the nuclear threat of two peer adversaries," and that "[u]rgent, significant change" in the overall U.S. strategic posture "is required."[18]

There is a growing body of writing in the expert and academic community about proposed modifications to address this challenge,[19] and steps that are necessary to address it.[20] Putting aside the more fulsome discussions of specific nuclear force adjustments addressed in these and other sources, the non-nuclear community must more closely examine why the nuclear community believes they are necessary.

First, the continued credibility of U.S. nuclear capabilities in the two-peer environment should matter to conventional strategists and planners because we do not know which conflict will start first. While the NDS may enunciate a China-focused strategy, it is not at all certain that a war in the Indo-Pacific will be the first to occur. For example, if the Ukrainian conflict evolves into a NATO-Russia conflict, and NATO Allies capably bear the brunt of the non-nuclear fight, U.S. nuclear capabilities will still be needed to undergird Allied efforts in the theater. What then of a potential U.S.-China conflict in the Indo-Pacific over Taiwan? Will the United States "have enough," or the right mix, of nuclear capabilities to maintain nuclear deterrence both in Europe and the Indo-Pacific while allies continue to lead the fight with Russia and the United States takes the lead in the Indo-Pacific? U.S. conventional advantage in the Indo-Pacific, and Allied conventional advantage in Europe, will be of cold comfort if either Russia or China believes nuclear escalation will help them out of their conventional war dilemma.

Second, deterrence in the first instance is about influencing adversary decision calculus. This depends upon the United States being seen as having a credible capability to impose greater costs on an adversary than any expected or hoped-for gain by their employment of nuclear weapons. But to enable such cost imposition, the United States must have a mix of capabilities that are flexible enough to restore deterrence, whether deterrence has failed due to adversary regional attacks or due to attacks on the U.S. Homeland. In the two-peer context:

> The second peer may see its interests best served by remaining neutral; but this is neither foreseeable nor guaranteed. The second-peer's calculus will likely be influenced by a range of factors that are difficult to discern, but their perception of

> U.S. and allied preparedness to counter their aggression and possible escalation will likely be the most important of those factors. We should seek to affect their perception of that factor, as we cannot yet rule out either possibility.[21]

Thus, should the second adversary—regardless of which one—assess that the United States is not prepared to counter their aggression and possible escalation, aggression and escalation may be exactly what ensues. To this end, the best laid non-nuclear strategy, in the absence of an accounting of the risk of opportunistic, nuclear-backed aggression, could be the very thing that brings on the second country's attack, and the potential for nuclear escalation—escalation that will no doubt impede our ability to achieve conventional war plan objectives.

This issue, in particular, goes to the question of numbers. While it is not critical that the United States deploy nuclear forces that equal or exceed the combined forces of China and Russia, numbers do matter. The United States needs a sufficient number of ICBMs and SLBMs to credibly threaten both Russia and China with intolerable costs—that is, a credible capability to hold at risk what each one of them values most, including their strategic forces.[22] Given the increasing number of such targets due to China's nuclear expansion, more capacity is needed to maintain central deterrence and enable the U.S. ability to impose intolerable costs on either Russia, China or both.

Third, success in the conventional domain depends on nuclear deterrence holding. As mentioned above, conventional war strategy and force sizing should be a downstream exercise from nuclear force sizing and strategy as the most exquisite conventional strategy will be of little value if an adversary believes it has a path to victory through nuclear escalation. As such, the United States needs a flexible nuclear toolkit so that it can credibly and effectively deter Russia or China from attempting to escalate their way out of failed or failing conventional conflict. And, if deterrence does fail, the President needs flexible tools to restore deterrence without making a general nuclear exchange inevitable.

The United States does not have that flexibility today—nor is it likely to have it once the nuclear modernization program is complete, even with the eventual deployment of a nuclear sea-launched cruise missile (which congress has directed DoD to pursue). This should matter to nonnuclear strategists, as the goal is to deter adversary nuclear employment in the first instance and, if deterrence fails, to expeditiously restore deterrence in a way that preserves for regional commanders the freedom of action necessary to prosecute their conventional plans to a successful conclusion. Said another way, nuclear weapons underpin the United States' ability to successfully conduct conventional operations.

Conclusion

The ongoing NDS drafting exercise provides an opportunity for the Pentagon to begin to address, in a meaningful way, the intellectual pivot necessary to align conventional and nuclear strategy. Formally adopting a two-war nuclear strategy, even as DoD focuses its non-nuclear strategy on China, will help policymakers, military strategists, planners, and national

leadership understand and begin to account for the emerging two-peer nuclear environment. Not only will this ensure proper integration of nuclear and non-nuclear thinking but will help reestablish a nuclear literacy that has atrophied among non-nuclear experts. While this would be a significant step forward, more can be done. Nuclear posture adjustments are needed to effectuate the chosen strategy enunciated in the NDS, and those officials that have responsibility for articulating that strategy must understand that such adjustments will help make the chosen strategy approach more credible and effective.

[1] See David J. Trachtenberg, *The Demise of the "Two-War Strategy" and Its Impact on Extended Deterrence and Assurance*, *Occasional Paper*, Vol. 4, No. 6 (Fairfax, VA: National Institute Press, June 2024), available at https://nipp.org/papers/the-demise-of-the-two-war-strategy-and-its-impact-on-extended-deterrence-and-assurance-david-j-trachtenberg/; and, Michael O'Hanlon, "America's Military Strategy: Can We Handle Two Wars at Once?," *The National Interest*, June 6, 2024, available at https://nationalinterest.org/feature/americas-military-strategy-can-we-handle-two-wars-once-211324.

[2] O'Hanlon, "America's Military Strategy: Can We Handle Two Wars at Once?" op. cit.

[3] Vipin Narang and Pranay Vaddi, "How to Survive the New Nuclear Age: National Security in a World of Proliferating Risks and Eroding Constraints," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2025, p. 125.

[4] Madelyn Creedon, et al., *America's Strategic Posture: The Final Report of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States* (Alexandria, VA: Institute for Defense Analysis, October 2023), p. v, available at https://www.ida.org/-/media/feature/publications/a/am/americas-strategic-posture/strategic-posture-commission-report.ashx.

[5] Ankit Panda and Vipin Narang, "Sole Purpose Is Not No First Use: Nuclear Weapons and Declaratory Policy," *War on the Rocks*, February 22, 2021, available at https://warontherocks.com/2021/02/sole-purpose-is-not-no-first-use-nuclear-weapons-and-declaratory-policy.

[6] U.S. Department of Defense, *Nuclear Posture Review*, 2022, p. 9, available at https://media.defense.gov/2022/Oct/27/2003103845/-1/-1/1/2022-NATIONAL-DEFENSE-STRATEGY-NPR-MDR.pdf.

[7] *America's Strategic Posture*, op. cit., p. 28. As the Commission wrote: "The objectives of U.S. strategy must include effective deterrence and defeat of simultaneous Russian and Chinse aggression in Europe and Asia using conventional forces. If the United States and its Allies and partners do not field sufficient conventional forces to achieve this objective, U.S. strategy would need to be altered to increase reliance on nuclear weapons to deter or counter opportunistic or collaborative aggression in the other theater."

[8] See for example, Adm. Samuel J. Paparo, Commander U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, "Statement Before the House Armed Services Committee on U.S. Indo-Pacific Command Posture" (written statement, House Armed Services Committee, 119th Cong. 1st sess., April 9, 2025), pp. 4-5, available at https://armedservices.house.gov/uploadedfiles/indopacom_posture_statement_2025.pdf.

[9] Therese Delpech, *Nuclear Deterrence In the 21st Century: Lessons from the Cold War for a New Era of Strategic Policy* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corp., 2012), p. 14, available at https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2012/RAND_MG1103.pdf.

[10] James R. Schlesinger, Chairman, *Report of the Secretary of Defense Task Force on DoD Nuclear Weapons Management (Phase II): Review of the DoD Nuclear Mission*, U.S. Department of Defense, March 2008, p. iv, available at https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA492647.pdf.

[11] Larry D. Welch, General USAF (Ret.) and John C. Harvey Jr., Admiral (USN) Ret., *Independent Review of the Department of Defense Nuclear Enterprise*, *U.S. Department of Defense,* p. 1, June 2, 2014, available at

https://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/report/2014/independent-nuclear-enterprise-review-report-20140630.pdf. This disconnect is not unique to the United States. In its recent Strategic Deterrence Review, the United Kingdom called for additional "intellectual investment" to ensure NATO civilian and military leaders "understand the nuclear dimension of any future crisis or conflict…." United Kingdom Ministry of Defense, *Strategic Defense Review 2025*, p. 99, June 2, 2025, available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/683d89f181deb72cce2680a5/The_Strategic_Defence_Review_2025_-_Making_Britain_Safer_-_secure_at_home__strong_abroad.pdf.

[12] Narang and Vaddi, "How to Survive the New Nuclear Age," op. cit., p. 125.

[13] See generally Robert Peters, *The New American Nuclear Consensus – and Those Outside It*, The Heritage Foundation, March 19, 2024, available at https://www.heritage.org/defense/report/the-new-american-nuclear-consensus-and-those-outside-it.

[14] Paul Amato, "Many nuclear experts agree that the US needs new capabilities. Now they need to convince the Pentagon," *New Atlanticist*, June 11, 2025, available at https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/many-nuclear-experts-agree-that-the-us-needs-new-capabilities-now-they-need-to-convince-the-pentagon/.

[15] Center for Global Security Research Study Group, *China's Emergence as a Second Nuclear Peer: Implications for U.S. Nuclear Deterrence Strategy*, Center for Global Security Research, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Spring 2023, p. 29, available at https://cgsr.llnl.gov/sites/cgsr/files/2024-08/CGSR_Two_Peer_230314.pdf.

[16] U.S. Department of Defense, *Report on the Nuclear Employment Strategy of the United State*, November 15, 2024, p. 3, available at https://media.defense.gov/2024/Nov/15/2003584623/-1/-1/1/REPORT-ON-THE-NUCLEAR-EMPLOYMENT-STRATEGY-OF-THE-UNITED-STATES.PDF. For a general discussion of counterforce targeting strategy, see Brad Roberts, ed., *Counterforce in Contemporary U.S. Nuclear Strategy,* Center for Global Security Research, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, May 2025, available at https://cgsr.llnl.gov/sites/cgsr/files/2025-05/2025-0529-CGSR-Occasional-Paper-Counterforce-In-Contemporary-US-Nuclear-Strategy.pdf.

[17] U.S. Department of Defense, *2022 Nuclear Posture Review Fact Sheet: U.S. Extended Deterrence*, (2022), available at https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Spotlight/2022/NDS/NUCLEAR%20STRATEGY%20AND%20POLICY%20-%20NPR%20Factsheet.pdf.

[18] *America's Strategic Posture*, op. cit., p. 35.

[19] See CGSR Study Group, *China's Emergence as a Second Nuclear Peer*, op. cit.; Peters, *The New American Nuclear Consensus*, op. cit.; and, Narang and Vaddi, "How to Survive the New Nuclear Age," op. cit.

[20] See *America's Strategic Posture*, op. cit.; and, Narang and Vaddi, "How to Survive the New Nuclear Age," op. cit., pp 132-35.

[21] CGSR Study Group, *China's Emergence as a Second Nuclear Peer*, op. cit. p. 40.

[22] Department of Defense, *Report on the Nuclear Employment Strategy of the United States*, op. cit., p. 3.

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