The Documentation Section includes Assistant Secretary of War (ND-CBD) Robert Kadlec's statement before the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Strategic Forces Hearing on Fiscal Year 2027 Strategic Forces Posture. Next, the section provides select excerpts from the recent testimony of U.S. Strategic Command Commander Admiral Richard Correll. The testimony outlines the Strategic Command's priorities and discusses adversaries' threat developments. The third feature is excerpts from the 2026 Annual Threat Assessment, the intelligence community's consensus agreement on threats to U.S. homeland and interests around the world. The 2026 assessment lists transnational organized crime as the top threat to U.S. homeland, warns of modernization of other states' nuclear weapons, and discusses region-specific threats. The fourth document is a statement by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Arms Control and Nonproliferation Christopher Yeaw, to the Conference on Disarmament from February 2026, in which he discusses the future of arms control and provides more information on China's nuclear testing.

Document No. 1. Statement by Dr. Robert Kadlec, Assistant Secretary of War (ND-CBD), Before the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Strategic Forces Hearing on Fiscal Year 2027 Strategic Forces Posture, March 17, 2026.

U.S. strategy is at a critical inflection point, driven by a confluence of stark realities. First and foremost, China's strategic nuclear breakout means we now face the unprecedented challenge of deterring two nuclear peers, China and Russia, simultaneously. This is not a distant problem; it is the central, organizing challenge for our defense strategy today. Compounding this external pressure are two other factors: the immense budgetary, industrial, and programmatic strains of modernizing all three legs of our nuclear triad and its command and control at once, and the expiration of the New START Treaty this past February.

The 2026 National Defense Strategy (NDS) correctly identifies this new, more dangerous environment. My purpose today is to outline how our nuclear posture must be adapted to support that strategy. The reality is that our nuclear forces, while foundational, are not a panacea. They are a necessary but insufficient component of a defense strategy focused on denial. Our primary goal must be to convince adversaries—first and foremost the People's Republic of China (China)—that they cannot succeed in using military force to achieve their objectives. Our nuclear posture must be a credible backstop to that denial strategy, not a substitute for it.

We must be rigorously clear-eyed about the threats we face. China represents the most significant and comprehensive challenge to U.S. national security. China is engaged in the most rapid and opaque nuclear expansion in history. In 2020, the Department assessed China's stockpile of operational nuclear warheads as being in the low 200s. Today it exceeds 600, and is on track to surpass 1,000 by 2030, with capabilities enabling the majority ng to reach the U.S. Homeland. This nuclear buildup is coupled with a massive investment in theater-range delivery systems, like the DF-26, designed to hold U.S. forces and allies and partners at risk in the Indo-Pacific region. The purpose of this expansion is clear: to create a

strategic shield behind which the People's Liberation Army can conduct regional aggression, particularly against Taiwan. A force of this size and sophistication provides China with a spectrum of nuclear options to try to deter U.S. intervention and coerce a resolution to a conflict on China's terms.

Russia remains a formidable nuclear power with the world's largest arsenal and a doctrine that explicitly integrates nuclear weapons for regional coercion. Its ongoing modernization and development of novel systems, like Poseidon and Burevestnik, underscore its continued reliance on nuclear forces to offset conventional weaknesses. While the primary responsibility for the conventional defense of Europe must rest with our wealthy and capable European allies, the U.S. nuclear extended deterrence provides a critical backstop. This cannot, however, be the primary solution for European security. A credible deterrent in Europe requires a robust, in-theater conventional denial force, fielded overwhelmingly by the Europeans themselves.

We must now plan for the concrete possibility of coordinated or opportunistic aggression across multiple theaters. An American focus on a crisis in the Indo-Pacific region could be seen by Russia as an opportunity in Europe, just as a crisis in Europe could be seen as an opportunity for China. Our force structure, posture, and nuclear strategy must be robust enough to deter both peers simultaneously, even if we were to be engaged in a major conventional conflict with one. This does not mean we must match their combined arsenals warhead for warhead. It means we require a nuclear force sufficient to inflict unacceptable costs on both adversaries under any contingency, ensuring neither believes they can exploit a crisis elsewhere for their own gain.

We must never be left vulnerable to nuclear blackmail. It is the Department's responsibility to provide the President with a credible nuclear strategy to defend our vital interests and the forces to support it. This means we require a strong and effective nuclear arsenal adapted to the nation's overall defense strategy. This arsenal must enable a strategy to deter nuclear and non-nuclear strategic attacks on the American homeland. This is important not only for deterring aggression but also to provide the President options to favorably manage escalation and achieve other objectives in the event of a conflict across the globe. For too long, America's nuclear strategy has been considered a separate, almost theological, enterprise. Now, our nuclear strategy must be coherently and rigorously integrated into our overall defense strategy.

Our nuclear strategy, therefore, must be subordinate to and supportive of our overall defense strategy. The NDS rightly prioritizes defending the Homeland and deterring China. The most effective way to do so is through a strategy of denial—convincing an adversary that their military aggression will fail to achieve its objectives. In the Indo-Pacific, this means fielding a conventional force, alongside our allies and partners, capable of deterring a conflict in the region, ideally by preserving military overmatch. The role of our nuclear arsenal in this context is not to fight and win a nuclear war, but to deter China from escalating to the nuclear level in the first place, or from believing it can use its nuclear arsenal to coerce us into accepting a *fait accompli*. Our nuclear forces must provide the President with credible options to manage escalation, demonstrating that any nuclear use will be met with a

response that leaves the adversary worse off. This requires a flexible and modern nuclear posture.

A solvent defense strategy also requires our allies and partners to carry their fair share of the conventional burden. U.S. nuclear extended deterrence is a powerful enabler of this, providing our allies in both Europe and the Indo-Pacific region the security backstop they need to invest in their own conventional denial capabilities. But it must be a backstop, not a crutch. In the Indo-Pacific region, allies like the Republic of Korea and Japan must take the lead in building the conventional forces needed to deny regional aggression. Our nuclear umbrella makes it possible for them to do so without pursuing their own nuclear arsenals, but it does not absolve them of the primary responsibility for their own defense.

President Trump's "Golden Dome for America" initiative is a vital complement to our deterrent posture. It is not a replacement for our offensive nuclear forces. By strengthening our defense against missile attack, we demonstrate that coercion will fail, strengthening the President's hand in a crisis. Deterrence by denial (through missile defense) and deterrence by punishment (through nuclear response) are two sides of the same coin.

To execute our strategy, modernization programs are not optional; they are an urgent necessity. The transition from our legacy systems to a modernized triad occurs during a period of maximum geopolitical risk. There is no room for error. We must accelerate the Sentinel ICBM, the COLUMBIA-class submarine, and the B-21 bomber with its LRSO cruise missile. Critically, we must also field flexible, theater-range nuclear options. The SLCM-N is essential. It provides a persistent, survivable, and non-strategic nuclear presence in key regions, reducing reliance on land-based assets and providing the President with a credible deterrent against limited nuclear use. It is a vital tool for managing escalation in a conflict with a peer competitor.

We are entering a new, more dangerous era. The luxury of assuming a single major adversary is gone. The NDS provides a sound framework for this new reality, but a strategy is only as good as the will and resources committed to its execution. The cost of modernizing our nuclear deterrent and fielding the conventional forces to support a denial strategy is significant. But the cost of failing to do so is incalculably greater. Congress's continued support is essential to ensuring we have the deterrent we need to protect our nation and its interests.

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Document No. 2. Statement of Richard A. Correll, Commander, United States Strategic Command, before the House Armed Services Committee on Strategic Forces, March 17, 2020 (select excerpts)

[…] The People's Republic of China (PRC), the Russian Federation, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), and the Islamic Republic of Iran are seeking to undermine global and regional balances of power while strengthening ties and collaboration. […] Technological advances in artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), autonomous systems,

quantum communications, and quantum sensors are reshaping the character of war. Evolving threat vectors—cyber, a contested electromagnetic spectrum (EMS), counter-U.S. space capabilities, novel missile systems, and supply chain challenges—continue to impact our decision calculus and planning practices. The development of nuclear weapons with smaller yields, improved precision, and increased range increases strategic ambiguity and the possibility for coercive use by potential adversaries.

People's Republic of China

[…] The People's Liberation Army (PLA) seeks a larger and more diverse nuclear force, comprised of systems ranging from low-yield precision strike missiles to intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) with multi-megaton yields. China has now surpassed 600 deliverable nuclear warheads and is forecasted to have more than 1,000 by 2030.

The PLA Rocket Force (PLARF) continues to expand its silo-based ICBM force, including construction of 320 silos for the solid-fueled CSS-10 (DF-31) and up to 50 silos for the liquid-fueled CSS-4 (DF-5). The PLARF is also fielding additional mobile CSS-10 (DF-31) and CSS-20 (DF-41) ICBMs capable of targeting the continental United States.

The PLA Navy's (PLAN) sea-based nuclear deterrent consists of six JIN-class ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs). The PLAN's JIN-class SSBNs are each equipped to carry up to 12 JL-2 (CSS-N-14s) submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) or the newer JL-3 (CSS-N-20) SLBMs—capable of targeting the continental United States.

The PLA Air Force (PLAAF) is operationally fielding refuellable H-6N bombers, capable of carrying a nuclear air-launched ballistic missile. The PLAAF is also developing a strategic stealth bomber, the H-20, which may debut sometime in the next decade. […]

PLA senior leaders also recognize the evolving EMS landscape, seeking rapid maturation of PLA electromagnetic spectrum operations (EMSO), in scale and sophistication, tailored to contest U.S. EMS superiority in the future operational environment. Over the last two decades, the PLAAF has almost doubled its dedicated intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR)/electromagnetic warfare (EW) aircraft inventory with newer and fully operational jamming platforms.

China's continued endeavors to challenge U.S. global posture and presence has also expanded into the space domain with increasing offensive space capabilities, including a concentrated effort to undermine U.S. NC3 capabilities. These efforts include direct-ascent anti-satellite weapons capable of destroying satellites in orbit and advanced jamming technologies aimed at disrupting encrypted satellite communication links.

Russian Federation

Moscow views its nuclear weapons program as the cornerstone of Russian sovereignty and its military doctrine allows for nuclear use and signaling to manage perceived existential nuclear and conventional threats, to forestall theater defeat, and to compel an end to conflict on terms acceptable to Russia—the most recent example is employing nuclear coercion in the war in Ukraine. […] Russia's nuclear warhead arsenal consists of approximately 4,600 nuclear warheads; 2,600 are intended for its strategic triad and up to 2,000 are warheads intended for theater nuclear weapons not accounted for under the now expired New START Treaty.

Russia's Strategic Rocket Force maintains a mix of road-mobile and silo-based ICBMs. […] Russia announced the successful test of a delivery system in October 2025, the SSC-X-9 Skyfall, a nuclear-powered vehicle capable of delivering a nuclear-armed ground-launched cruise missile. This system could enable strikes on North American targets via unconventional and challenging-to-defend attack vectors.

The naval component of Russia's nuclear triad consists of 10 SSBNs under the operational control of the Naval High Command. This fleet includes Delta IV-class submarines armed with SS-N-23 SLBMs and the more advanced, quieter Dolgorukiy I- and II-class submarines equipped with SS-N-32 SLBMs. While Russia's SSBN modernization program has faced delays, it remains on track to be completed by the early 2030s. In addition to its SSBN fleet, Moscow is developing—and recently tested—the Poseidon, a nuclear-powered, nuclear-armed underwater vehicle representing a unique and unconventional delivery system designed to devastate coastal areas.

Russia is also modernizing the Long-Range Aviation fleets of Tu-95 Bear-H and Tu-160 Blackjack primary strategic bombers. Upgrades aim to equip the bombers with more advanced cruise missiles, longer ranges, and extended operational lifespans. Additionally, Moscow has announced plans to resume production of Tu-160 bombers and complete development of a next-generation strategic bomber, designated PAK-DA, within the next decade.

Russia's war in Ukraine highlights the critical role EMS plays in modern warfare, particularly the need for resilient communications, ISR, and navigation in a protracted and spectrum-contested conflict. Moscow's forces have developed new EW capabilities to test and adapt its tactics, techniques, and procedures intended to achieve warfighting advantage. […]

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

The DPRK continues to view its nuclear weapons program as the guarantor of state security and regime survival. Pyongyang is focused on improving its capabilities to strike the U.S.

Homeland with nuclear warheads and is pursuing novel capabilities, such as underwater drones, while increasing its stockpile of weapons grade uranium and plutonium in support of its nuclear program. Since 2016, Pyongyang has displayed three separate nuclear warhead designs, including a purported 5-kiloton warhead suitable for use with numerous systems—likely optimized for theater employment.

[…] In October 2025, North Korea displayed the solid-propellant Hwasong-20, reportedly its most powerful ICBM system to date. Solid propellant systems are easier to maintain and can be launched on short notice with little to no indications and warning, reducing the time window for response. The DPRK also displayed possible hypersonic glide vehicles intended to avoid ballistic missile defenses. Recognizing shortfalls in its conventional military capability, Pyongyang's asymmetric military strategy also includes EW as a key component, primarily focused on disrupting enemy communications and navigation systems, with recurring global positioning system (GPS) signal jamming used against South Korean civilian and military targets.

Growing Relations Between Adversaries

In September 2025, China's President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin, and North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un appeared together publicly during a military parade in Beijing. This high-profile meeting suggests a shared ambition to reshape the global balance of power. Despite underlying tensions and divergent national interest amongst these nation-states, each sees advantage in challenging post-Cold War security arrangements and countering U.S. interests abroad. The United States and its allies must be prepared for the possibility that one or more potential opponents might act together in a coordinated or opportunistic fashion across multiple theaters.

China has sought to preserve its close ties with Russia while promoting its own image as a responsible great power, projecting public "neutrality" in the Russo-Ukrainian War while economically enabling Russia's war efforts. China also remains one of North Korea's principal supporters. In its December 2025 National Security White Paper, China omitted its long-standing policy request for denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. […]

The June 2024 Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between Moscow and Pyongyang highlights this growing relationship; Russia gains munitions and manpower for the war in Ukraine, while North Korea gains financial inflows and potentially technology in support of its nuclear and missile programs. Tehran is also contributing to the war in Ukraine by supplying Moscow with armed drones and short-range ballistic missiles, facilitating reconstitution of Russia's conventional forces. […]

DETERRENCE—STRATEGIC CAPABILITIES

[…] JEMSO [Joint Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations], a critical enabler, ensures spectrum superiority and supports the integration of strategic capabilities across all domains. Together with the ongoing modernization of the NC3 enterprise, these efforts reinforce the United States' ability to defend the Homeland, deter aggression, assure allies and partners, and hold adversaries at risk anytime and anyplace to achieve Presidential objectives if deterrence fails. […]

Land-Based Triad Component

[…] The Minuteman III (MMIII) missile was initially deployed over 50 years ago with a planned 10-year service life. It continues to achieve a 98% Mission Capable rate with missiles on alert 24/7/365. Increasing sustainment and maintenance costs continue as defense industry partners contend with obsolete parts, aging support equipment, and a reduction in specialized manufacturing capabilities.

Sentinel development and deployment remain top priorities for the Air Force and USSTRATCOM. Every opportunity is being explored to expedite Sentinel program deliverables. The forthcoming Milestone B recertification (scheduled for not later than 2026) will provide a more concrete deployment timeline. […] Any further delay to the Sentinel program will have cascading negative impacts across the triad, driving increased risk to strategic deterrence. […]

Sea-Based Triad Component

The sea-leg is the most survivable leg of the triad, representing 70% of our Nation's day-to-day nuclear capabilities and providing a credible assured second-strike capability. […] On-time delivery of the COLUMBIA-class and Trident II D5 Life Extension 2 (D5LE2) remains a top priority to sustain U.S. dominance in the sea-based strategic deterrence capability. […]

The COLUMBIA-class SSBN will incorporate numerous advancements, including a life-of-hull reactor, electric drive propulsion, significant acoustic improvements, and state-of-the-art combat control systems, delivering unparalleled operational capabilities to ensure our SSBN fleet maintains its strategic advantage in the undersea domain. The COLUMBIA-class remains one of USSTRATCOM's highest priorities and will achieve its first strategic deterrent patrol no later than 2031. The Navy is assessing potential opportunities to recover schedule in post-delivery activities to meet USSTRATCOM's required initial operational capability, and continued submarine industrial base investment remains vital to meeting the demand of the COLUMBIA-class as it enters full rate serial production.

Sustaining acoustic superiority in the undersea domain through the transition from OHIO- to COLUMBIA-class submarines and beyond necessitates investment in advanced large vertical arrays, cutting-edge materials science, coatings, continued regular modernization of the tactical SSBN combat system, and other initiatives within the Acoustic Superiority Program. The Integrated Undersea Surveillance System and its planned recapitalization efforts deliver real-time intelligence on submarine and surface ship operations, allowing Combatant Commanders to strategically position forces to support deterrence patrols and combat operations.

Air-Based Triad Component

[…] In 2025, our Bomber Task Force (BTF) demonstrated its global reach with over 243 days of overseas presence, conducting more than 100 missions in partnership with all CCMDs [Combatant Commands], integrating with 27 ally and partner nations. The demand for bomber support continues to strain the fleet, presenting maintenance and aircrew challenges that will not be cured solely by the future B-21. The continued funding of bomber modernization programs and improving critical parts availability will be critical to ensuring a capable long-range strike bomber fleet that will deter potential adversaries and assure our allies and partners. […]

The Air Force is modernizing the B-1B with new weapons and improving its networking capabilities for seamless integration in a joint, all-domain environment while simultaneously ensuring the B-2 remains operationally relevant with upgrades to radar absorbent materials, weapons integration capabilities, multi-function displays, GPS reception, and communication systems. Sustainment remains essential to maintaining a favorable conventional military balance until the B-21 achieves operational mass; depot throughput, parts funding, and aircrew retention directly affect near-term deterrent credibility.

The B-21 will serve as the premier long-range penetrating bomber and command and communications enabler. Fielding success depends on early investment in installation infrastructure, workforce development, and nuclear certification resourcing at operational Wings. The B-21's open architecture will allow for rapid integration of new technologies and capabilities, ensuring it remains at the forefront of long-range strike airpower for decades to come. The current program of record (POR) calls for 100 B-21 bombers; however, last year, USSTRATCOM, along with other Combatant Commanders, advocated to continue assessing the POR to meet global warfighting demands. We continue to work with the Air Force and the DoW [Department of War] on assessments to determine the final procurement quantity.

While upgrades extended its service life, the AGM-86 Air-Launched Cruise Missile is approaching obsolescence. To maintain our strategic advantage, we must deliver the AGM-181 Long Range Standoff (LRSO) weapon, a modern replacement of the nuclear air-launched cruise missile with greater targeting flexibility and enhanced capability to penetrate

defended areas. […] Compared to other nuclear modernization efforts, the LRSO program has consistently met its milestones and has been on track to meet planned delivery dates.

Our bombers rely on tankers; the tanker fleet serves as the foundation of our air-based global strike capabilities. Across the Joint Force, CCMD demand for these global reach assets is increasing. The declining availability of the aging KC-135 requires the acceleration of tanker modernization and recapitalization. Increasing connectivity and survivability are paramount, and USSTRATCOM fully supports Air Mobility Command's efforts with the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center to certify the KC-46 for nuclear operations.

Nuclear Command, Control, And Communications (NC3) Enterprise

[…] Pursuant to the DoW's initiative to cultivate an "AI-first" workforce, AI and ML are now integral to USSTRATCOM's mission, enabling the analysis and interpretation of vast data streams. […]

We are also integrating Golden Dome for America (GDA) into USSTRATCOM's deterrence and Homeland defense posture by strengthening strategic capability, reinforcing nuclear command and control, and advancing a layered defense architecture. Other key focus areas for USSTRATCOM include the Survivable Airborne Operations Center (SAOC), E-130J Take Charge and Move Out (TACAMO) recapitalization, replacement of the E-6B Airborne Command Post (LOOKING GLASS), resilient satellite communications, survivable missile warning and tracking systems, ground-based NC3 components, securing cyberspace data processes, and harnessing AI, ML [machine learning], and other leading-edge technologies to enhance operational effectiveness.

Joint Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations (JEMSO)

[…] USSTRATCOM integrates JEMSO explicitly into long-range strike mission planning and low-observable employment to elevate bomber survivability in contested EM environments. In 2024, USSTRATCOM coordinated with the Under Secretary of War for Intelligence & Security and the intelligence community to focus on potential adversary use of the EMS to ensure we have a comprehensive understanding of the threat. Subsequently, the Defense Intelligence Enterprise established a new Complex Analytic Issue for EMSO to increase analysis of potential adversary EMS-dependent systems, emerging threats to the EMS, and development of countermeasures.

Integrated Planning and Operations

[…] The ELITE CONSTELLATION 25 (EC25) Campaign, the first iteration of a Joint Staff-led fiscal year (FY) 2024-2027 initiative, provided a critical platform to enhance Joint Force warfighting capabilities. Conducted in partnership with eight other CCMDs, interagency

partners, allies, and partner nations, EC25 focused on advancing joint integrated operations. Following this success, USSTRATCOM conducted GLOBAL THUNDER 26, a field training and command post exercise centered on nuclear mission execution addressing the employment of strategic assets, nuclear deterrence and assurance, and escalation dynamics, while refining layered defensive strategies for the NC3 enterprise. […]

In 2025, USSTRATCOM conducted combined operations with 31 allies and partners—from BTF [Bomber Task Force] missions to SSBN port visits. USSTRATCOM also participates in the U.S.-Japan Extended Deterrence Dialogue, the U.S.-Australia Strategic Policy Dialogue, and the U.S.-Republic of Korea Nuclear Consultative Group to strengthen extended deterrence with our allies and enhance strategic and operational planning in joint/combined environments.

CNI is the seamless planning and operation of joint and combined conventional and nuclear forces, in sequence and in parallel across the competition continuum. CNI extends beyond conventional kinetic support to nuclear operations, emphasizing the incorporation of non-kinetic and influence operations to complement, amplify, or enhance nuclear capabilities. USSTRATCOM continues to advocate for conventional, long-range, precision strike weapons systems capable of holding distant, defended, and time-sensitive targets at risk. As potential adversary military capabilities expand, this capability becomes increasingly critical. To accelerate the technological maturation process, USSTRATCOM continues to advocate for partnerships with commercial infrastructure and launch vehicle providers to enhance U.S. capacity for ground and flight testing of hypersonic technologies.

China, Russia, and North Korea are actively developing theater-range nuclear weapons to counterbalance the conventional military advantage of the United States and its allies and partners. Addressing these efforts requires theater nuclear capabilities that provide credible deterrence options and incentivize off-ramps. To this end, USSTRATCOM is collaborating with USINDOPACOM, USEUCOM, Nuclear Weapons Council partners in the DoW, and the Department of Energy to identify the most effective strategies for deploying future TNF [Theater Nuclear Forces].

The Joint Force Requirements Council (formerly the Joint Requirements Oversight Council) validated USSTRATCOM's requirements for TNF, which outlines the need for a diverse set of enduring, multi-domain theater nuclear capabilities. Key components of this portfolio include deployed gravity weapons in Europe and the planned fielding of the Nuclear-Armed Sea-Launched Cruise Missile (SLCM-N). SLCM-N will provide an additional at-sea nuclear deterrent capability with limited operational deployment in FY 2032 and initial operational capability in FY 2034. This program will deliver a low-yield, non-ballistic theater nuclear option to support Presidential objectives, providing additional range, flexibility, and survivability.

These capabilities enable flexible force posture to expand the President's decision-making space and enhance the ability to manage nuclear risks across the conflict continuum. […]

DELIVERING WARFIGHTING ADVANTAGE— INDUSTRY, INFRASTRUCTURE & SECURITY

The USSTRATCOM portfolio relies on a robust and modernized national and defense industrial base, nuclear stockpile, and security infrastructure to address evolving threats and maintain global stability. Stringent nuclear security measures are also necessary, requiring investments in early warning systems and rapid response capabilities.

National And Defense Industrial Base

A nation that builds is a nation that wins. […] For USSTRATCOM, the DIB [defense industrial base] acts as a force multiplier, with production serving as a signal of U.S. readiness and resolve to potential adversaries. This includes public and private organizations that supply the DoW with critical materials and services—extending beyond the United States to allies like Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Japan, and South Korea.

Stockpile And Weapons Infrastructure

[…] The current nuclear weapons modernization program of record is absolutely necessary to field the world's most robust, credible, and modern nuclear deterrent. However, our supporting infrastructure for nuclear modernization is challenged to meet the demands of the evolving global security environment. To address these challenges, the United States must shift from incremental extensions to the next generation of nuclear forces with new and modern capabilities, underpinned by a flexible, capable, and efficient nuclear security enterprise. Future weapon designs will prioritize adaptability, allowing for integration of new technologies throughout their lifecycles. […]

Major programs to address plutonium pit production, high explosives formulation and manufacturing, uranium and lithium processing, radiation case production, and strategic radiation hardened component manufacturing are all experiencing schedule pressure and will be challenged to meet expanding modernization requirements. […]

Nuclear Security

USSTRATCOM warfighting posture differs significantly from other CCMDs due to our continuous alert status and force generation requirements. DoW policy mandates stringent protection and security for U.S. nuclear weapons and platforms, recognizing their political

and military significance, destructive potential, and the catastrophic ramifications of unauthorized access. […]

Ukraine's June 2025 drone strike against Russian combat support airfields, Operation SPIDERWEB, demonstrated the disproportionate lethality Unmanned Systems (UxS) can achieve against strategic forces at a fraction of the cost of traditional weapon systems, underscoring the urgent need for robust countermeasures, especially within the Homeland. […]

In accordance with the GDA Executive Order, and in close collaboration with USNORTHCOM and other DoW stakeholders, USSTRATCOM is actively assessing strategic missile threats and prioritizing locations for defense against attacks by nuclear-armed adversaries. […] GDA strengthens deterrence by denial while reinforcing the credibility of U.S. strategic forces. By integrating space-based sensors, ground-based interceptors, and advanced command and control into a coherent Homeland defense architecture, GDA enhances the Joint Force's ability to defend North America and safeguard U.S. global interests, including the Arctic. […]

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Document No. 3. Office of the Director of National Intelligence, *Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community* (March 2026), select excerpts.[1]

FOREWORD

[…] The global security environment is becoming more complex. The risk of global economic fragmentation is rising, and emerging technologies such as AI and quantum computing are expected to have a significant impact on national security. Furthermore, armed conflict is becoming more common globally, major power competition continues, and military capabilities among state and nonstate actors are improving. Intensifying competition over supply chains and technological primacy, more diverse threats in key domains, and unresolved or potential regional conflicts create interconnected risks. However, we should be cautious about thinking that every problem in the world directly threatens us or is of equal importance to the U.S. In a more complex world, it is especially important that we think prudently and prioritize our efforts, that we find opportunities to advance peace and mutually beneficial solutions to problems, while also not underrating those threats that do impinge on our freedom and our interests. […]

[1] The full unclassified assessment can be found at https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/ATA-2026-Unclassified-Report.pdf.

HOMELAND

The IC assesses that the Homeland faces a variety of threats in the coming year, including our top concerns: transnational organized crime, illicit drug trafficking, migration, the threat of Islamist ideology and terrorism, major power competition, and WMD threats. Transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) are smuggling illegal drugs into the U.S., engaging in financial fraud, and laundering money through international financial institutions. […] Meanwhile, Russia, and China to a lesser extent, are expanding their interest and presence in the Arctic to counter perceived U.S. inroads and advance their strategic interests. China, Russia, and North Korea are also developing new, novel, or advanced delivery systems to increase or obtain a capability to strike the Homeland.

BORDER SECURITY

Foreign Illicit Drug Actors

Mexico-based TCOs involved in illicit drug production and trafficking bound for the U.S. endanger the health and safety of millions of Americans and contribute to regional instability. […]

- Mexico-based TCOs—including the Sinaloa Cartel and the New Generation Jalisco Cartel (CJNG)—are the dominant producers and suppliers of illicit drugs, including fentanyl, heroin, methamphetamine, and South America-sourced cocaine, for the U.S. market. […]
- Colombia-based TCOs and illegal armed groups, including the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN), are responsible for producing and trafficking large volumes of cocaine to the U.S. and European markets. […]

While there has been noticeable improvement, ***China and India remain the primary source countries for illicit fentanyl precursor chemicals and pill pressing equipment.*** […]

Other Transnational Criminals

Transnational gangs in the Western Hemisphere, some of which are involved in the U.S.-bound drug trade, threaten public health and safety in the Homeland and the well-being of civilians and partners abroad through their violent criminal activities and expansion efforts. […]

Migration

Foreign public perceptions of stricter U.S. migration policies and U.S. and regional border security enforcement have contributed to a sharp decrease in migrant encounters at the U.S.–Mexico border since early 2025. […]

TERORISM

The U.S. continues to face a complex and evolving threat landscape with a geographically diverse set of Islamist terrorist actors seeking to propagate their ideology globally and harm Americans, even as al-Qa'ida and ISIS are significantly weaker than at their respective peaks during the early 2000s and mid-2010s. […]

The spread of Islamist ideology—in some cases led by individuals and organizations associated with the Muslim Brotherhood who have provided financial and other forms of material support to terrorist groups such as HAMAS and Hizballah—poses a fundamental threat to freedom and foundational principles that underpin Western Civilization. […] At the extreme end are groups that endorse the violent imposition of Sharia in governance, directly undermining fundamental Western freedoms of speech and religion, with the ultimate aim of establishing an Islamist caliphate. There are growing examples of this in various European countries such as Austria, Germany, and the UK. The designation of Muslim Brotherhood chapters that fund and promote violence as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) is a mechanism to secure Americans against this threat. […]

- […] We face, however, an enduring challenge of detecting individuals who might seek to commit acts of terror after entering the Homeland, including from the population of tens of thousands of asylees and Afghan evacuees who entered the U.S. during the past few years. Since January, U.S. officials have only had a handful of encounters at our southern or northern borders with individuals associated with terrorist groups with a strategic intent to attack the Homeland, such as al-Qa'ida and ISIS. […]

In recent years, al-Qa'ida and ISIS plotters intent on targeting the Homeland have focused more on virtually recruiting U.S.-based aspirants to encourage and enable potential attacks. […]

While al-Qa'ida and ISIS maintain the intent to launch operations targeting the U.S., the most likely terrorist attack scenario in the Homeland involves U.S.-based lone offenders […]. These individuals take inspiration from foreign terrorist ideologies and propaganda that often exploit world events such as the Gaza conflict to fuel radicalization and mobilization. Al-Qa'ida and ISIS release media encouraging U.S.-based supporters to conduct attacks and often offer tactical guidance. […]

Jihadist ideology and influencers play a key role in mobilizing individuals to violence by advancing anti-Western and pro-militant narratives. Such narratives have influenced most U.S.-based Sunni violent extremist attacks in recent years. Those promoting Islamist ideology have been able to appeal to broader and younger audiences through their use of technology, and in recent years have increasingly focused on emotionally evocative and grievance-based narratives rather than on traditional jihadist scholarship and ideological writings. Moreover, migrants who were already influenced by Islamism before they arrived, particularly in Europe, create risks that could increase given the deteriorating security environment in some countries. […]

Al-Qa'ida and ISIS pose the biggest threat to U.S. interests overseas in parts of Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, where these groups operate. […]

We are continuing to assess how the U.S.–Israel–Iran conflict will affect the worldwide terrorism landscape during the coming year. Iran and Iranian-aligned terrorist actors—including HAMAS and Lebanese Hizballah—have been severely degraded by Israeli-led operations, U.S. intelligence and weapons support to Israel, and U.S. operations in the region following HAMAS's attack against Israel in October 2023 through the current U.S. and Israeli-led military campaign. […]

- Iran has proven capable of developing lethal operations against Americans at home and abroad and probably will attempt to pursue such efforts again if the current government remains in power and is able to rebuild. Hizballah and HAMAS probably are still able to conduct attacks outside the Middle East, but Israel intends to continue to degrade their capabilities. The Huthis and Iraqi Shia militias probably remain resilient and are likely to continue to threaten U.S. and allied interests in the Middle East. During Operation Epic Fury, some Iraqi Shia militias responded to Iran's call to attack U.S. bases, causing some damage and demonstrating their continued threat to U.S. interests and to Iraq's security and stability. […]

HOMELAND DEFENSE

The U.S.'s secure nuclear deterrent capability continues to ensure our safety here at home. However, China, Russia, North Korea, Iran, and Pakistan have been researching and developing an array of novel, advanced, or traditional missile delivery systems with nuclear and conventional payloads, that can strike the Homeland. The IC projects threats to the Homeland will expand to more than 16,000 missiles by 2035, from the current figure of more than 3,000 missiles.

- North Korea has successfully tested ICBMs capable of reaching the entire Homeland, and prior to Operation Epic Fury, Iran had developed space-launch vehicles that it could use to develop a military-viable ICBM by 2035 should Tehran decide to do so.

- In spite of the growing proliferation of one-way attack UAVs that perform missile-like functions, China, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, and Russia will continue to prioritize advanced missiles that can threaten the U.S. However, their militaries almost certainly will plan to pair their high-end missiles with cheaper, expendable systems to stress U.S. missile defenses.

Adversaries will seek to understand U.S. plans for advanced missile defense for the Homeland, almost certainly for the purposes of shaping their own missile development programs and assessing U.S. intentions regarding deterrence. China, Russia, and North Korea almost certainly will continue enhancing their own missile and counterspace capabilities during the next five years.

- Chinese officials probably fear that the Golden Dome for America will reduce Washington's threshold for initiating military action against Beijing in a crisis, which is likely driving China to focus on using international arms control discussions, particularly on its space-based elements.

ARCTIC

Russia has the largest Arctic coastline and views itself as part of the neighborhood. Russia is our primary challenge in the Arctic as it aims to further its interests in the region as part of broader global balance-of-power competition. Moscow is seeking to expand and deepen its presence in the Arctic through increased maritime trade, natural resource extraction, and military activity. In addition to its own domestic economic and security concerns, this activity is aimed at countering a perceived growing U.S. emphasis on expanding its influence and presence in the Arctic as a key national security strategic objective. […]

While Russia has enhanced its ability to operate in the Arctic by focusing on combat readiness and using dual-use technologies and facilities for defense, its war with Ukraine has limited its ability to fully achieve its Arctic ambitions.

- The bulk of Russia's Arctic forces are concentrated in the Kola Peninsula, which hosts about two-thirds of Russia's second-strike nuclear capabilities. The area is home to Russia's Northern Fleet, including seven of the country's nuclear-armed ballistic missile strategic submarines. Russia has made major investments in the fleet, including adding long-range missiles, UAVs, and underwater drones. Russia has at least three air bases on the Kola Peninsula that host fighter jets, surveillance, and transport aircraft.
- In January 2025, Russian President Putin emphasized that Moscow was intensifying its efforts to develop its icebreaker fleet, which is already the world's largest. The Russian Arctic Fleet has 42 icebreakers, including eight nuclear and 34 diesel-

electric. Russia is building what could become the most powerful nuclear icebreaker in the world, which is reported to be operational by 2030.

China describes itself as a polar power and is seeking to expand its presence in the Arctic including plans to incorporate the "Polar Silk Road" into its Belt and Road Initiative as shipping lanes become more accessible and economically viable. Beijing seeks to expand its Arctic presence using scientific research, investments, and commercial ventures along the Northern Sea Route. Russia has invited China to cooperate at times in the Arctic, including conducting joint patrols.

TECHNOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

Leadership in emerging technologies is increasingly defining global power and influence. For technology powers such as the U.S. and China, AI and quantum information science— especially quantum computing—are at the center of this leadership competition. These technologies will foster broad new capabilities during the coming years that will impact economies and countries' national security advantages. At the same time, these technologies open up new risks across the spectrum of domestic and national security interests that require serious analysis and mitigation from the outset.

AI

AI is a defining technology for the 21st century, enabling computers and machines to simulate human learning, comprehension, problem solving, creativity, and autonomy. Recent developments in generative AI—or models capable of creating original content such as long form text, high-quality images, and realistic video and audio—have sparked global interest in AI that shows no signs of slowing. […]

Maintaining a global leadership role in AI provides the U.S. with first-mover advantage. Other global powers' robust progress in AI is challenging U.S. economic competitiveness and national security advantages.

- AI's growing impact on all industries and domains will increase during the coming years. In the defense industry, AI has already been employed in recent conflicts to influence targeting and streamline decisionmaking, marking a significant shift in the nature of modern warfare. AI also has the potential to aid in weapons and systems design, influence offensive and defensive cyber operations, and increase the autonomy of uncrewed vehicles. In the intelligence domain, AI allows analysts to rapidly make sense of immense datasets and generate novel ideas and insights on complex national security issues. These applications, however, also carry risks that require careful human engineering to appropriately mitigate risk of AI autonomy before they are broadly deployed.

Advanced semiconductors, also known as advanced chips, underpin the most advanced AI R&D, allowing the largest and most expensive models to train on massive datasets at speeds and scales that might otherwise be impossible. Because advanced chip R&D and manufacturing is concentrated in few regions, and demands deep expertise and precision, the ability to design and produce these chips domestically is both an economic and geopolitical priority for the U.S., China, and other countries. […]

China is the most capable competitor in the AI space, and aims to displace the U.S. as the global AI leader by 2030. China is driving AI adoption at scale—both domestically and internationally—by using its sizeable talent pool, extensive datasets, government funding, and burgeoning global partnerships.

QUANTUM COMPUTING

Early developers in quantum computers will give their countries an extraordinary technological advantage over others in terms of the ability to both quickly process national security information and break current encryption methodology. […] Indeed, quantum computing may revolutionize human abilities to solve problems that are hard to address with even the largest supercomputers. […]

The timeframe for transitioning to quantum computing is unclear due to a multitude of challenges. These include the need for more effective private-public coordination, scaling qubits and the overall quantum computer architecture, and R&D in foundational areas such as advanced software and algorithms, materials, hardware, and standards and benchmarks, at a minimum. The U.S., China, EU, Japan, and the UK are all investing billions of dollars to overcome these challenges and secure a first-mover advantage in this emerging field.

DIVERSE THREAT VECTORS

The global security landscape is volatile and complex, with armed conflict growing more common and posing potential threats to U.S. interests. Strategic competition and regional and smaller powers becoming more willing to use force to pursue their interests heighten the risk of conflict. The space domain is becoming increasingly contested, with China and Russia developing counterspace capabilities to challenge our own space efforts and U.S. dominance more generally. The threats of nuclear proliferation and chemical and biological warfare capabilities continue to grow.

MILITARY

Armed conflict across the globe may pose a threat to U.S. interests and forces through the end of the decade. […] This dynamic stems from a combination of major power competition, state and nonstate actors choosing to use force to achieve their goals, instability

within states and regions, and increasing military and unconventional capabilities of both state and nonstate actors.

- In 2024, there were 61 active state-based conflicts across the world, the highest number since the end of World War II, according to the Peace Research Institute of Oslo. These conflicts resulted in about 129,000 battle-related deaths, the fourth highest of any year since the end of the Cold War, and were superseded only by 2021, 2022, and 2023.
- The risk of conflict is heightened by major power competition. Beijing and Moscow view Washington and its allies and partners as aggressors, and hostile toward their interests in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. They could respond with force should they determine there are critical threats to their core interests.
- Even if the great powers refrain from conflict, many regional and smaller powers are growing much more willing to use force to pursue their interests. Countries such as Egypt, Israel, Pakistan, Turkey, and the UAE are using a mix of lethal aid, proxy forces, or their own military assets to provoke or undermine their rivals or to tilt nearby conflicts in their favor.
- Many countries are now more willing to use deniable, coercive, or violent approaches below the threshold of war. These include acts of sabotage, assassinations, detentions, non-lethal attacks, and the use of migration as a weapon.

The fundamental principles of warfare are unchanged, and combatants are likely to blend many "tried and true" approaches with innovative technologies and techniques.

- Future warfare will require rapid adaptation, both on the offense and defense. In particular, the proliferation of remotely operated or autonomous weapons systems on the battlefield in Ukraine has shortened timelines for tactical adaptation, with both sides of the conflict devising new measures and countermeasures in the span of weeks.
- Future warfare will require a balance between quality and quantity. Exquisite, high-end capabilities—expensive and slow to manufacture—cannot be continually replenished at scale in a lengthy, high-intensity conflict. Alternatively, some combatants have mass produced cheap and low-tech weapons whose sheer numbers make up for their lack of sophistication.
- […] Uncrewed systems are already ubiquitous on the battlefield, and these will make real-time surveillance and targeting achievable for many militaries, particularly when teamed with commercial imagery and AI or machine learning systems. Proliferation of commercial networks, personal devices, and extensive video recording capabilities will provide additional vectors to gain intelligence insights.
- Future battlefields are more likely to be urban given the steady growth of cities worldwide as well as their political and economic significance.

SPACE

Rapid advances in space technology, lower barriers to entry, the deployment of counterspace systems, and the expansion of civilian and military applications have solidified the space domain as a key arena for strategic competition and future conflicts. Decreasing costs for space launches and satellite manufacturing have enabled a greater number of actors—both state and nonstate entities—to develop or to exploit others' space capabilities. A broader range of actors can now use space capabilities to threaten U.S. and allied military operations, expose sensitive U.S. intelligence activities, and facilitate illicit activities such as drug trafficking and terrorism.

- China has eclipsed Russia as the key U.S. competitor in space. Beijing's rapid deployment of space capabilities positions it to use space to advance its foreign policy goals, challenge U.S. military and technological superiority in space, and project power on a global scale. Russia remains a capable space power, even while its space industry suffers from systemic underfunding, quality control issues, international sanctions, and export controls.
- The evolution of the Russia–Ukraine war has heightened global awareness of the impact that space services have on military operations. Ukraine demonstrated for the first time that a nation without its own space infrastructure can integrate commercial and partner space services to defend against an adversary with established space systems and decades of military space operations experience.

Competitor threats to U.S. space architectures are growing in scale and complexity as nations prioritize the development of extensive counterspace capabilities to contest U.S. space dominance. Architecture improvements aimed at making satellites and constellations safer and more capable will pose a security dilemma to U.S. competitors, and probably will incentivize them to pursue new weapons and more aggressive strategies that introduce new escalatory risks. […]

Nuclear weapons are a growing threat to satellites. Russia is developing a new satellite meant to carry a nuclear weapon as an antisatellite capability. […]

CYBER

Cyber actors from China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, and ransomware groups will continue to pose critical threats to U.S. networks and critical infrastructure. These global cyber actors almost certainly will continue malicious cyber activities because they gain unmatched intelligence collection value and financial incentives from these operations. These cyber adversaries also have the ability to pre-position or execute disruptive and destructive attacks against U.S. critical infrastructure and other targets. […]

China is the most active and persistent cyber threat to U.S. Government, private-sector, and critical infrastructure networks, while Russia poses a persistent, advanced cyber attack and foreign intelligence threat. […]

Iran poses a threat to U.S. networks and critical infrastructure in the form of cyber espionage and cyber attacks. Iran's cyber operators previously have used cyber attacks to effect against poorly defended targets and weaker opponents, such as Albania. […] We note that Iranian proxies and hacktivists outside of Iran will also seek cyber-enabled operations against U.S. targets but these probably will be less technically advanced. […]

North Korea's cyber program—combined with Pyongyang's use of IT workers with falsified credentials to gain employment with unwitting companies—is sophisticated and agile, and North Korea is capable of conducting espionage, cybercrime, and cyber attacks. It is focused on evading financial sanctions, stealing funds to support its military, and conducting cyber espionage to fill gaps in the regime's weapons programs. Pyongyang's cyber forces are capable of achieving a variety of strategic objectives against diverse targets, including in the U.S. and South Korea, while its growing use of human insider access to circumvent cyber security measures threatens targets with stronger defensive measures. Cryptocurrency heists and other financial crimes also continue to net at least $1 billion each year to fund the regime's weapons programs. […]

Financially or ideologically motivated nonstate actors such as ransomware groups, other cyber criminals, and hacktivists are taking more aggressive cyber attack postures. […]

WMD

Governments' respective threat perceptions and competition with other states will continue to drive WMD modernization, expansion, and testing efforts. […]

- Beijing views nuclear modernization as critical for strategic competition with the U.S. For its part, Moscow views U.S. long-range precision-strike systems and future developments in U.S. missile defenses as threats to its nuclear deterrent. In addition, North Korea is investing in nuclear-capable systems to deter the U.S., challenge regional missile defenses, and hold targets in South Korea at risk. […]

Countries with WMD capabilities are modernizing, expanding, and testing those capabilities and delivery systems. […] The ongoing development and inclusion of these dual-use technologies also challenge the IC's ability to collect on and detect their emergence or developmental progress, including for WMD efforts, as well as identify ways to counter the development and production of these capabilities.

- With varying degrees of success, China, North Korea, Pakistan, and Russia probably will continue to research, develop, and field delivery systems that will increase their ranges and accuracy, challenge U.S. missile defenses, and provide new WMD-use options. India also is developing new and longer-range nuclear delivery systems.
- Russia has the largest and most diverse nuclear weapons stockpile and is modernizing its nuclear weapons capabilities in the face of multiple failed tests of new systems. China remains intent on modernizing, diversifying, and expanding its nuclear posture for strategic rivalry with the U.S. Both countries are continuing to develop nuclear-capable systems meant to penetrate or bypass U.S. missile defenses. North Korea is strongly committed to expanding its nuclear weapons arsenal, as shown by its pace of flight tests and publicized uranium enrichment capabilities.
- Prior to Operation Epic Fury, Iran was pursuing increasingly capable missile systems, was non-compliant with its Chemical Weapons Convention obligations, had not abandoned its intention to conduct R&D of biological agents and toxins for offensive purposes, was intending to try to recover from the devastation of its nuclear infrastructure sustained during the 12-Day War, and refused to live up to its nuclear obligations with the IAEA, including refusing to allow IAEA access to key nuclear facilities. […]

Most states with CBW programs have developed these weapons for tactical use such as targeted killings, special military operations, and CT or counterintelligence operations, and probably will continue these investments during the next several years. […] China, North Korea, and Russia probably maintain the knowledge and capability to produce and employ traditional biological pathogens and toxins, and historically have pursued—or, in the case of North Korea, continues to pursue—pathogens that cause highly infectious or contagious diseases.

- Russia's scientists continue developing new CBW capabilities. Its intelligence services have used Novichok nerve agents twice since 2018 in assassination attempts, and its military has used chemicals in thousands of attacks against Ukrainian forces since 2022. China probably possesses CBW capabilities that threaten U.S., allied, and partner forces as well as civilian populations. North Korea maintains its CW capabilities, and Pyongyang may use such weapons during a conflict or in an unconventional or clandestine attack.
- State programs are pursuing advanced technologies to develop military capabilities, such as novel industrial processes and bioenergy sources, which may also support the creation of antiagriculture, antimaterial, and antipersonnel agents. […]

Arms Control

Some countries will continue to challenge arms control regimes and normative behavior regarding WMD development by avoiding, abandoning, or subverting existing or future agreements; using perceived tolerance of small-scale use and testing; and developing asymmetric capabilities. Russia, in particular, has undermined arms control agreements during the last five years and used chemical weapons in Ukraine, although Moscow probably will continue to abide by the longstanding norm against the large-scale use of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons absent a significant shift in its conflict with Kyiv.

Since the start of its war in Ukraine, Russia has levied nuclear threats against the U.S. and NATO, declared that it deployed nuclear weapons in Belarus, and unilaterally suspended its data exchanges required by the New START Treaty, while holding to its central numeric limitations. Moscow has also deratified its participation in the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. In addition, Moscow is developing space-based antisatellite nuclear weapons, which, if deployed, would be inconsistent with its obligations under the Outer Space Treaty.

REGIONAL CHALLENGES

China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea view the U.S. as a strategic competitor and potential adversary, perceiving it as a threat to their respective interests and ambitions, and seek to counter and undermine U.S. influence and power through a range of diplomatic, economic, and military means. China aims to dominate its region and challenge Washington's leadership, promote its own multilateral and economic influence, and strengthen its military while viewing the U.S. as its main strategic competitor. Russia continues to challenge U.S. interests and power, seeking to restore its influence in the former Soviet space, particularly Ukraine. Iran's strategic position faces extreme challenges as it attempts to address potentially regime-threatening conflict and the ongoing risk of domestic unrest. For now, it retains the ability to project power in the region and to suppress internal threats to the regime's hold on power. North Korea is committed to expanding its strategic weapons programs, including missiles and nuclear warheads, to solidify its deterrent capability. However, even in an era of major power competition, these powers will sometimes have common or overlapping interests where they can cooperate for mutual benefit, as we saw recently between the U.S. and China with the Busan Agreement.

Selective cooperation among China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea, driven by the common goal of balancing U.S. efforts and actions and supporting their own strategies, is bolstering the threat that each of them poses to the U.S. However, the relationships are limited and primarily bilateral, and the concept of "adversary alignment" overstates the depth of cooperation that is currently occurring. China's economic support for Russia and Iran and their increasing trade has helped Moscow and Tehran to each withstand U.S.-led international sanctions. North Korea's and Iran's military support to Russia have helped

Moscow in its war against Ukraine, which is in turn bolstered by Western support. These four countries are likely to continue to look for opportunities to increase their cooperation, although enduring divergent interests as well as concerns over directly confronting the U.S. will constrain the actual scale and scope of their relationships.

Western Hemisphere

Flagging economies, high crime rates, pervasive organized crime, migration flows, corruption, and narcotics trafficking present continuing risks to U.S. interests, while strategic competitors seek greater influence in the region that challenges Washington. […]

- China, Russia, and Iran are seeking to sustain economic, political, and military engagement with Latin America that may conflict with U.S. interests in the region. China's demand for raw materials is likely to drive continued economic outreach to Latin America, while Russia probably wants to expand its current security and diplomatic ties with Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela.

Asia

China Strategic Overview

President Xi and his government aim to achieve "the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" by 2049. China will seek to increase its power and influence to shape its region and world events; create an environment favorable to Chinese interests; overcome perceived containment efforts by the U.S.; secure its freedom of movement at sea; reduce U.S. military presence and operations on its periphery; and fend off challenges to its reputation, legitimacy, and capabilities at home and abroad. China also sees benefits to and is prioritizing a productive, stable economic relationship with the U.S., as evinced by its approach to the Busan Agreement with the Trump administration.

- Beijing has been deeply suspicious of Washington's intentions and has long viewed the U.S. as pursuing a coordinated effort to contain China's development and rise, undermine Chinese Communist Party (CCP) rule, and prevent the country from achieving its aims.
- At the same time, Chinese leaders will seek to reduce tension with Washington when they believe that such efforts benefit Beijing, protect China's core interests, and buy time to strengthen its position.
- Beijing will continue to strengthen its conventional military capabilities and strategic forces, intensify competition in space, and sustain its industrial- and technology-intensive economic strategy to compete with U.S. economic power, making advances in the "Global South" in advanced manufacturing and the

exportation of goods. China will likely continue working to maintain U.S. dependence on sectors such as critical minerals, energy storage systems, pharmaceutical ingredients, and UAVs, while accelerating efforts to reduce China's dependence on the U.S. in sensitive or strategic areas, such as semiconductors and AI. In addition, China has shown its ability to compromise U.S. infrastructure through formidable cyber capabilities for both espionage and strategic advantage in the event of a conflict.

- China's engagement with Russia substantially strengthens Moscow's ability to sustain the war in Ukraine and resist external pressure. China's imports of Russian oil and natural gas provide key sources of revenue for Moscow, helping it weather international sanctions. China's exports of dual-use goods and technology to Russia help sustain Moscow's defense production while reducing its incentives to reach a cease-fire in Ukraine.

China–Taiwan

In 2026, Beijing probably will continue seeking to set the conditions for eventual unification with Taiwan short of conflict. China, despite its threat to use force to compel unification if necessary and to counter what it sees as a U.S. attempt to use Taiwan to undermine China's rise, prefers to achieve unification without the use of force, if possible. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) also continues to develop military plans and capabilities for attempting to achieve unification using military force if directed to do so. […]

- The IC assesses that Chinese leaders do not currently plan to execute an invasion of Taiwan in 2027, nor do they have a fixed timeline for achieving unification. However, China publicly insists that unification with Taiwan is required to achieve its goal of "national rejuvenation" by 2049—the 100th year anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC). […]
- Chinese officials recognize that an amphibious invasion of Taiwan would be extremely challenging and carry a high risk of failure, especially in the event of U.S. intervention.

A conflict between China and Taiwan may disrupt U.S. access to trade and semiconductor technology critical to the global economy. If the U.S. were to intervene, it probably would face significant but recoverable disruptions to its transportation sector from Chinese cyber attacks. Even without Washington's involvement, U.S. and global economic and security interests would face significant and costly consequences, with tech supply chains disrupted and investor fear across markets. In addition, a protracted war with the U.S. risks unprecedented economic costs to the U.S., Chinese, and global economies.

China–East Asia

China seeks to advance political and military control of its claimed territory in the South China Sea. During the past year, China has advanced its control over disputed maritime territory in the South China Sea, particularly at the Philippine-claimed Scarborough Reef and Second Thomas Shoal, through persistent military and coast guard patrols and diplomatic and legal actions. […]

China–Japan tensions increased significantly in November 2025 following comments made by Japanese Prime Minister Takaichi describing a potential Chinese invasion of Taiwan as a "survival threatening situation" for Japan. In response, China is employing multidomain coercive pressure that probably will intensify through 2026, aimed both at punishing Japan and deterring other countries from making similar statements about their potential involvement in a Taiwan crisis. […]

- China's initial actions have included aggressive official rhetoric, the cancellation of flights and cultural exchanges, and the reimposition of its ban on Japanese seafood imports. Beijing probably will escalate to additional coercive economic measures if tensions increase.
- China probably will also increase military and coast guard activity around the Senkaku Islands—disputed territory administered by Japan but claimed by China—to signal displeasure and test Japanese responses. These activities could increase the risk of accidents or miscalculation leading to inadvertent escalation.

North Korea Strategic Overview

North Korea remains committed to expanding its strategic weapons programs, including missiles and nuclear warheads, and to solidifying its deterrent capability. North Korea's WMD, conventional military capabilities, illicit cyber activities, and demonstrated willingness to use asymmetric capabilities to attack South Korea and the U.S. pose significant threats to the U.S. and its allies, particularly South Korea and Japan. Increased trade after the pandemic, income from selling munitions to Russia, and illicit cyber activities including cryptocurrency thefts have boosted North Korea's foreign currency revenue generation to its highest levels since before extensive sanctions were imposed in 2018. North Korea's partnership with Russia is growing, and in 2025, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un took steps to improve ties to China—still North Korea's most important trading partner and economic benefactor—after the relationship had cooled because of Beijing's earlier opposition to Pyongyang's nuclear and missile tests.

- A more confident North Korea continues to reject direct engagement with South Korea and refers to Seoul as its "main enemy."

- The benefits that North Korea receives for its support for Russia in the war against Ukraine have increased North Korean capabilities. North Korean military forces have gained valuable combat experience in 21st Century warfare along with equipment. North Korea's ability to institutionalize lessons learned and consolidate gains from Russia will determine how valuable it will be. However, North Korea is likely to remain deterred by U.S. and allied forces.
- In 2024, North Korea deployed more than 11,000 troops to Russia to support combat operations in Kursk. North Korea has also provided artillery munitions, military equipment, and ballistic missiles to Russia during the course of the conflict.

South Asia

During the past year, South Asia remained a source of enduring security challenges for the U.S. India–Pakistan relations remain a risk for nuclear conflict given past conflicts where these two nuclear states squared off, creating the danger of escalation. […]

- ISIS-K maintains a foothold in the region and aspires to conduct external attacks, but the Taliban is improving its security services and has taken aggressive action against it. The Taliban has conducted extensive raids against ISIS-K targets, probably thwarted some attacks, and driven some ISIS-K leaders to relocate to neighboring countries.
- Pakistan continues to develop increasingly sophisticated missile technology that provides its military the means to develop missile systems with the capability to strike targets beyond South Asia, and if these trends continue, ICBMs that would threaten the U.S.
- Relations between Pakistan and the Taliban have been tense, with intermittent cross-border clashes, as Islamabad has become increasingly frustrated with anti-Pakistan terrorist groups' presence in Afghanistan while Islamabad faces growing terrorist violence. […]

Europe-Eurasia

Europe

As the primary economic and military partners of the U.S., the strength and resiliency of European countries have clear implications for U.S. interests and national security. European leaders have taken action to reverse decades of underinvestment in defense and national security and are increasing defense spending. At the same time, much of Europe faces challenges or capacity limitations that inhibit robust security cooperation in the near term. Several EU members face mounting levels of national debt, coupled with anemic growth. In

addition, many countries across the continent are contending with the effects of large-scale migration, to include Islamist radicalization within some immigrant communities.

- Demographic trends indicate that EU members, including Italy, Germany, and many countries in Eastern Europe, will face serious fiscal challenges as waves of retirees strain public pension systems, with fewer young workers available to replace them. Much of Europe has relied on low-skilled immigration to ease labor shortages, particularly as the continent's median age surpasses 47. However, various factors, including a lack of effective assimilation, have limited the capacity to absorb new arrivals, and different values systems have fueled social tensions. […]

The lack of social integration and limited employment opportunities in some EU member countries, coupled with contrasting cultural and religious values, have made some immigrant youth more susceptible to political and religious radicalization—or they arrive having already been radicalized. […] One of the effects of these trends is unsurprisingly greater anti-immigration sentiment among many European voting constituencies.

- Many European political parties seek to curtail the tide of non-European immigration that has endured during the past 20 years. Polls suggest that most Europeans see non-European immigration as creating problems for their countries, and in the spring of 2025, European respondents ranked immigration as the top noneconomic problem facing their countries. […]

Most European countries regard Russia as their greatest and most enduring adversary. Russia's invasion of Ukraine, employment of gray zone tactics against industry and civil society in Europe, and efforts to fuel frozen conflicts have galvanized European attitudes and strengthened Europe's focus on defense. NATO and EU member states are eager to see the war in Ukraine resolved in a way that not only preserves Ukrainian sovereignty, but also deters future Russian aggression in Europe.

- Russia's war in Ukraine revived fears of ethnic conflict and reinforced political fault lines in the Western Balkans between Russia and the West. Russia fuels instability between Serbia—which it favors—and Kosovo over Kosovo's statehood, and backs the separation of Serb entity Republika Srpska from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Russia also uses state-sponsored nongovernmental entities to direct campaigns with the goal of obstructing NATO and the EU, highlighting Serb victimhood and promoting ties to Russia, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia, which have large ethnic Serb populations.
- Disruptions to Europe's critical infrastructure by state-affiliated actors have the potential to cause loss of life, harm U.S. and European commercial interests, and affect Ukrainian military supplies. For example, European countries are increasing spending on capabilities to detect, track, identify, and counter small UAVs and other threats.

Eurasia

Russia retains the capability to selectively challenge U.S. interests globally by military and nonmilitary means. Its robust, advanced conventional and nuclear forces are an enduring threat to the Homeland, U.S. allies and partners, and U.S. forces abroad. The most dangerous threat posed by Russia to the U.S. is an escalatory spiral in an ongoing conflict such as Ukraine or a new conflict that led to direct hostilities, including nuclear exchanges. Russia has also cultivated partnerships with China, Iran, and North Korea to further its own interests, and makes use of an array of tools that fall into the gray zone of geopolitical competition below the level of direct armed conflict. At the same time, Russia's aspirations for multipolarity could allow for selective collaboration with the U.S. if Moscow's threat perceptions regarding Washington were to diminish.

- Even with wartime attrition, Russia's ground forces have grown, and its air and naval forces are intact and arguably more capable than before the full-scale invasion. Russia has advanced systems, including counterspace weapons, hypersonic missiles, and undersea capabilities designed to negate U.S. military advantages. Russia is also building novel nuclear weapons platforms to supplement its already formidable nuclear air, land, and sea-based triad, complicating U.S. nuclear deterrence calculus.
- Russia is likely to remain resilient against Western sanctions and export controls, although at the cost of expanding budget deficits and underinvestment in the civilian economy that increase the risk of long-term economic stagnation and deepening dependence on China. Moscow relies on its partnerships with other U.S. adversaries to evade sanctions. It also is attempting to evade sanctions by setting up alternate payment systems.
- Russia's gray zone tools include cyber attacks, disinformation and influence operations, energy market manipulation, military intimidation, and sabotage. Russia often hides and denies its role, complicating U.S. efforts to counter it. […]

Russia–Ukraine

During the past year, Russia has maintained the upper hand in its war against Ukraine and sees little reason to stop fighting so long as its forces continue to gain ground. Moscow almost certainly remains confident that it will prevail on the battlefield in Ukraine and force a settlement on its terms. However, U.S. efforts to forge peace hold the potential to change this dynamic and ameliorate some of the conflict's regional effects. A durable settlement to the war in Ukraine could open the door for a thaw in U.S.–Russia relations and an improved bilateral geostrategic and commercial relationship.

- The continuation of the war increases the risk of both inadvertent and deliberate escalation to direct conflict between Russia and NATO forces. Russia's continued

willingness to use sabotage against U.S. and European allies to disrupt their support for Ukraine—for example, the railway explosion in Poland in November 2025—exemplifies this threat.

- Similarly, Russia's use of nuclear threats and combat use of dual-capable intermediate range ballistic missile systems in Ukraine raises the specter of a regional conflict expanding to an existential threat to the Homeland.
- The war also will continue to have spillover effects in other parts of the globe, as shown with North Korean troops gaining valuable warfighting experience and military technology from Russia for participating in combat operations against Ukraine.

Russia Strategic Overview

Russia views itself as a key geostrategic competitor of the U.S. and seeks a multipolar world order in which Russia reaches and maintains a privileged position, equal to that of the U.S. and other great powers, including China. […] Russia probably will continue selectively confronting the U.S. and its partners globally with its full range of capabilities where it sees opportunities to gain an advantage, driven in part by its longstanding perception that the U.S. poses a significant threat to its interests. Russia is also likely to continue collaborating with other powers, including U.S. adversaries, to jointly oppose the U.S. where their respective interests overlap.

Regional developments in the post-Soviet space, particularly the South Caucasus and Central Asia, pose both challenges and opportunities for the U.S. The region contains substantial reserves of key resources, including critical minerals, oil, and gas. Opportunities also exist for U.S. investment in diversified transit corridors connecting the Eurasian landmass with global markets and commercial opportunities. However, Russian political and economic influence in many of these countries presents an obstacle for U.S. private-sector engagement, as does pervasive corruption. Growing Chinese economic and political influence—often at Russia's expense—poses similar difficulties while also threatening to divert critical resources to the Chinese market. The region also remains a hub for drug trafficking and jihadist terrorist activity, which continues to pose a threat to the U.S. and our allies and partners. Ongoing U.S. engagement to resolve regional conflicts, such as between Armenia and Azerbaijan, can improve U.S. access to the region and facilitate strategic investments and commercial opportunities.

Middle East

In the Middle East during the next year, conflict and instability will shape security, political, and economic dynamics in a variety of ways. […]

Simultaneously, Israel's tolerance for persistent threats on its border has eroded and its policy of projecting military force beyond its borders to address emerging or potential threats has created domestic pressure on Arab leaders, challenged Gulf economic plans, and made overt Arab partnerships with Israel more challenging.

- Israeli leaders this year are likely to continue using proactive and sometimes provocative military action in a bid to undermine and deter regional adversaries. If the regime in Tehran survives, Israel is likely to use all available means to prevent Iran from rebuilding its capabilities devastated during the 12-Day War and Operation Epic Fury. It will also seek additional ways to undermine the regime. Iran, meanwhile, will try to recover and rebuild its influence, including maintaining its ability to project power and pose a viable retaliatory threat to Israeli and U.S. interests.
- Meanwhile, leaders across the region, and particularly in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and the West Bank, are facing substantial political and socioeconomic strains that are exacerbated by regional conflict. […]
- The conflict with Iran has at least temporarily smoothed the tensions between Saudi Arabia and the UAE, which emerged in part over divergent visions for Yemen, as they seek to present a united front against Iran's aggression, avoid extensive damage, and preserve their economic transformation agendas. In the aftermath of the conflict, these tensions could reemerge, with implications for a broad range of regional issues.
- Syria's Government is focused on asserting control over the vast territory formerly controlled by the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces and advancing President Ahmad al-Shara's goal of unifying Syria. Shara' is likely to try to integrate Druze-controlled southern Syria next. His success will be shaped by his ability to establish security, govern, rebuild economic opportunities, and develop trust with skeptical domestic and foreign audiences. Syrians, for their part, hold entrenched and often conflicting visions for their country's future, and are concerned about hardline Islamist terrorist elements within the Syrian Government, a major hurdle to establishing a stable and inclusive government.

When the conflict with Iran concludes, the region's key players are likely to reexamine longstanding assumptions and alliances as they determine how best to advance their interests in the changing region. Among the key decisions will be how the emerging balance of power between Jerusalem and Tehran affects the desirability of partnership with Israel and their levels of commitment to the U.S.-backed peace plan for Gaza, which represents additional opportunities for regional security and economic cooperation.

With Iran weakened and focused on survival, Axis of Resistance members are on the back foot. Israel has seriously weakened the conventional military capabilities of these groups, which are likely to lean into asymmetric methods to threaten Israeli and U.S.

interests in the region and beyond. In the meantime, non-Iran affiliated terror groups will seek opportunities to drive and take advantage of instability in the Middle East. […]

We expect that HAMAS will accept some degree of disarmament but will seek the minimum level that it considers necessary to preserve the cease-fire while allowing it to remain the dominant force in Gaza. Israel may increase attacks against HAMAS during the coming months, depending on its progress against other adversaries, if it believes that the group is slow-rolling disarming.

Lebanese Hizballah's decision to attack Israel on behalf of Iran has exposed the group to new military pressure from Israel at the same time that support from Iran appears uncertain going forward. The group had been trying to rebuild its military capabilities and revive its political influence in Lebanon, but renewed conflict with Israel almost certainly will further weaken the group and lead to internal debate about its future. Hizballah's actions have also prompted Lebanon's leaders to declare its military activities to be illegal, but Hizballah is prepared to resist domestic attempts to disarm. Meanwhile, Israel is likely to continue striking Hizballah targets and maintain its bases in southern Lebanon until it perceives that the group no longer poses a threat.

The Huthis in Yemen remain a resilient challenger to U.S. and partner interests in the region, and their military capabilities and strategic location on the Red Sea allow them to try to extort concessions from the international community. […]

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Document No. 4. Statement by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Arms Control and Nonproliferation, The Honorable Dr. Christopher Yeaw, to the Conference on Disarmament, February 23, 2026.

(as delivered)

Ministers, Excellencies, Mr. President, thank you for hosting me today. And thank you to Ambassador Zniber for Morocco's leadership of the CD presidency and stewardship of this year's High-Level Segment.

A few weeks ago, U.S. Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security Thomas DiNanno visited the CD to deliver a very important message on a topic that has been at the top of mind for many: what is next for nuclear arms control?

As U/S DiNanno stated, we have now shifted into a new era of nuclear arms control—one that actually addresses the realities of our current security environment.

New START expired on February 5, 2026.

Signed nearly 16 years ago, its numerical limits on warheads and launchers were no longer relevant by the time of its expiration.

For one, Russia violated the treaty from 2022 through to the treaty's end and stopped implementing the treaty in 2023.

And Russia likely exceeded New START's central limits at various times over the past few years.

The treaty also did not address Russia's large arsenal of nonstrategic, or theater, nuclear weapons. This arsenal numbers up to 2,000 warheads and has been a longtime concern for the United States and our allies.

Neither did New START address Russia's dangerous novel nuclear weapons systems. These include the nuclear-powered, nuclear-armed Skyfall cruise missile and the nuclear-powered, nuclear-armed Poseidon torpedo.

But perhaps its greatest flaw was that New START did not account for the unprecedented, deliberate, rapid, and opaque nuclear weapons buildup by China.

Despite its claims to the contrary, China has deliberately, and without constraint, massively expanded its nuclear arsenal. Without transparency or any indication of China's intent or endpoint—including in its most recent white paper—we believe China may achieve parity within the next four or five years.

How can we take China's claim of a no-first-use doctrine seriously, which can in no way be verified, in the midst of such a massive, non-transparent buildup? Similarly, how are we to understand Beijing's calculation of a "minimum deterrent necessary" if its numbers keep increasing?

China has claimed in the past that it cannot engage the United States in risk reduction because of a lack of trust, yet it expects us and the world to trust that it would not use nuclear weapons first.

At the time of New START's signing, China had only around 200 nuclear weapons. Now, Beijing is on track to have the fissile material necessary for more than 1,000 nuclear warheads by 2030.

This threat is made worse by Russian assistance to China's CFR-600 reactors, whereby Russia is transferring highly enriched uranium fuel assemblies to the program that can produce fissile material China needs to help expand its nuclear arsenal.

With China being the only P5 country without a moratorium on fissile material production for weapons purposes, we can see how this could be a problem.

All this to say, New START's expiration arrived at a fortuitous time – not just for the United States; not even just for the nuclear weapon states – but for all countries, as it allows us to take a renewed push toward President Trump's ultimate goal of a better agreement.

We could not accept an offer to maintain some of New START's central limits; asking the United States to confine itself to bilateral limits with Russia—especially while Moscow helps boost Beijing's capacity to increase its arsenal size and thereby putting upward pressure on U.S. requirements—is the definition of a bad deal.

A few weeks have now gone by since the Treaty's end. And I think it important to emphasize to you all here today that the Treaty's expiration—and the absence of any nuclear arms control treaty right now—does not mean the United States is walking away from or ignoring arms control. In fact, quite the opposite is true. It has been President Trump calling

for a better agreement. We should all ask ourselves: why have we not seen the rest of the nuclear weapons states joining that call?

The United States is proposing modernized, multilateral strategic stability and arms control discussions. But how we get there can take a variety of forms – there are many different approaches we can take that lead us to our ultimate objective, and we will not foreclose any of those options.

After decades of agreements between the United States and Russia, this transition to a multilateral format is a natural, necessary next step for arms control.

The multilateral approach can prevent an unmitigated nuclear arms race, limit the build-up of nuclear arms, and, as appropriate, address issues surrounding non-NPT states with nuclear weapons.

President Trump has made it clear that other countries have a responsibility to ensure strategic stability, none more so than China, and has kept open the possibility for the involvement of other nuclear-armed states in this effort. He has also made clear that our endpoint—our goal—is a better agreement toward a world with fewer nuclear weapons.

The term "multilateral" can refer to several different venues in which strategic stability and arms control dialogue could take place, and to be frank, as I said, no options are off the table.

The United States is entering this new era with no preconditions, no preconceptions.

We already have one forum, the P5, where NPT-recognized nuclear-weapon States already meet to discuss matters of strategic importance. So we can—and do—talk to each other.

After all, every NPT State Party has an obligation to negotiate in good faith on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament. Article VI does not say that only those states with the largest arsenals have that responsibility—all five nuclear-weapon States to the NPT share the same obligation.

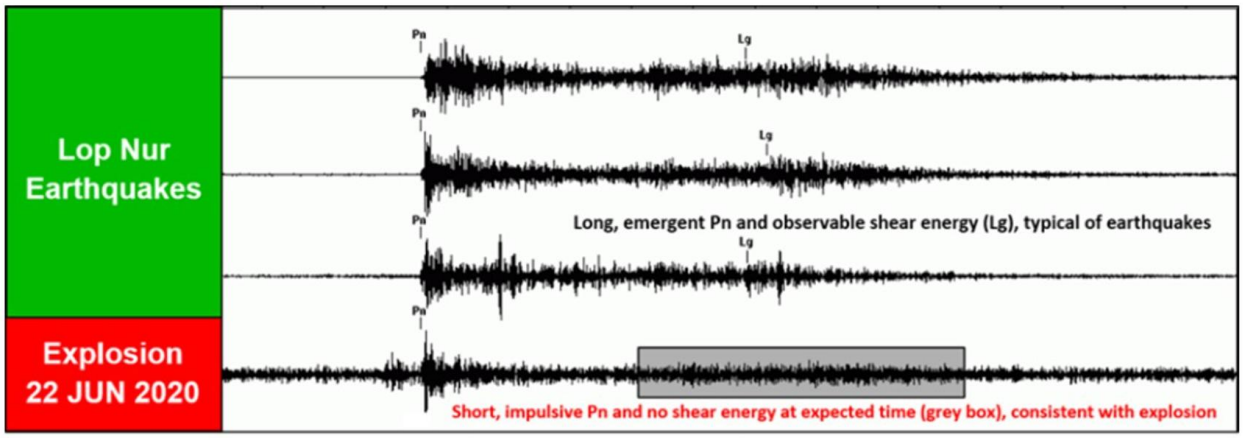
Since Under Secretary DiNanno's address, we have received widespread support for this new effort, for which I express my deep appreciation.

We are looking to all of you to help encourage nuclear-weapon States like China and Russia to engage meaningfully in a multilateral process.

Our next steps will be partly informed by how the world responds to our call.

In addition to this new proposal, Under Secretary DiNanno also shared for the first time information about China's history of nuclear testing. I would like to take this opportunity to further elaborate on his remarks.

As I indicated last week at the Hudson Institute, a probable explosion was detected near the Lop Nur underground nuclear test area as a magnitude 2.75 seismic event at 09:18 Greenwich Mean Time, identified using seismic data from Primary Seismic Station 23—or PS-23 for short—of the International Monitoring System (IMS) network at Makanchi, Kazakhstan.



Waveform comparison of historic Lop Nur earthquakes and the probable explosion event that occurred near the Lop Nur underground nuclear test area on 22 June 2020 as observed at Primary Seismic Station 23 (PS-23) at Makanchi, Kazakhstan.

It was a probable explosion based upon comparisons between historic explosions and earthquakes.

The seismic signals were indicative of a single fire explosion, not typical of mining explosions.

The estimated yield of the event was a 10 tons nuclear explosion—or 5 tons conventional equivalent—which assumes the explosion was fully coupled in hard rock, below the water table, and at the standard scaled depth of burial.

Any deviations from the assumed emplacement conditions (i.e., if the explosion were decoupled or otherwise concealed) would only increase this yield estimate.

Under Secretary DiNanno also shared that we know China has conducted nuclear explosive tests and that we know this test on June 22, 2020, was one such yield-producing nuclear test.

I appreciate that some in this room will not trust U.S. assessments, others will call for more information—and I believe more will be coming—and others know that what I have presented here today is true.

At the end of the day, what matters is that the U.S. government provided information which will help shine light on China's behavior and spur a discussion on how we all approach responsible nuclear testing behavior going forward.

In addition, China, from the outset, has sought to make it difficult for the international community to monitor China's testing activities.

During CTBT negotiations on the configuration of the International Monitoring System, Beijing rejected allowing seismic stations to be placed at a comparable distance to its Lop Nur testing site as those the United States permitted near its test site in Nevada. In fact, China required all IMS seismic stations to be located in its east, far from the nuclear test site.

China also delayed certification of two Primary Seismic stations for nearly 20 years and, to date, has not allowed its four Auxiliary Seismic stations to be certified even though they

were installed and have been in operation since the 1980s with assistance and collaboration from the United States.

These concerning activities are not the actions of a country that wishes to be transparent about its activities.

In my closing, I want to recognize the role the Conference on Disarmament has historically played in debating and negotiating the concepts and then the elements of arms control arrangements.

Perhaps the CD can once again play a role, if it can only get past what has plagued it for decades: deadlock and an inability to make meaningful progress.

While a treaty limiting nuclear weapons can only come from a negotiation among sovereign states with nuclear weapons, such an agreement affects all of our security.

We are optimistic that CD Member States will rise to the challenge and use the 2026 CD session to recognize the opportunity of today and today's security environment and how we may all benefit from President Trump's renewed push for strategic stability.

Ministers and Excellencies, thank you for your attention.