

# Dangers for the Entire World: Last-Minute Modifications Improved Trump's Nuclear Weapons Strategy

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In-depth Report: [Nuclear War](#)

The [U.S. Nuclear Posture Review \(NPR\)](#), a key nuclear-strategy document that was issued on February 2nd by U.S. **Secretary of Defense James Mattis**, seems to have benefited from last-minute changes that had been made to it. But it's still extremely dangerous for the entire world, as will be fully explained here.

One key issue on which a change was made was whether the U.S. would lower the threshold for introducing nuclear weapons into a conflict.

Princeton scholar **Bruce Blair** somehow saw an earlier draft of the NPR, and he headlined, in the normally neoconservative — but not this time; instead they published his warning against Trump's going too far into neoconservatism — *Washington Post*, on January 13th, headlined "[A new Trump administration plan makes nuclear war likelier](#)"; and Blair managed to report, in that neoconservative medium, that the then-draft NPR included the passage:

"The United States would only consider the use of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States, its allies, and partners. Extreme circumstances could include significant non-nuclear strategic attacks. Significant non-nuclear strategic attacks include, but are not limited to, attacks on the U.S., allied, or partner civilian population or infrastructure."

Blair criticized this:

Alarming, the wizards have uprooted the nuclear taboo and deluded themselves into believing that nuclear weapons are far more usable than previous presidents held. In a single ill-conceived stroke, they have expressed a readiness to go nuclear first in a conflict with Russia or others that had not yet crossed the nuclear Rubicon. This is needless because the United States possesses ample conventional strength to repulse Russian aggression, and reckless because all it accomplishes is increasing the risk of blundering into a nuclear war.

The tech-journalist [Jessica Conditt](#), on January 31st, two days prior to the NPR's public release, picked up on Professor Blair's article (without noting, however, where she had obtained her information on it) and wrote:

The draft takes its cue from the 2010 NPR when it says, copied verbatim, “The United States would only consider the use of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States, its allies, and partners.” However, the updated [she doesn’t indicate that this was ‘updated’ as of January 13th] version expands the definition of such events: “Extreme circumstances could include significant non-nuclear strategic attacks. Significant non-nuclear strategic attacks include, but are not limited to, attacks on the US, allied, or partner civilian population or infrastructure.”

Essentially, the draft opens the door for the US to respond to a devastating cyberattack with a nuclear strike. Perhaps a low-yield strike, even. Previously, the US has been averse to a first-use scenario, pledging to launch nuclear weapons only if the country were directly targeted by other nukes.

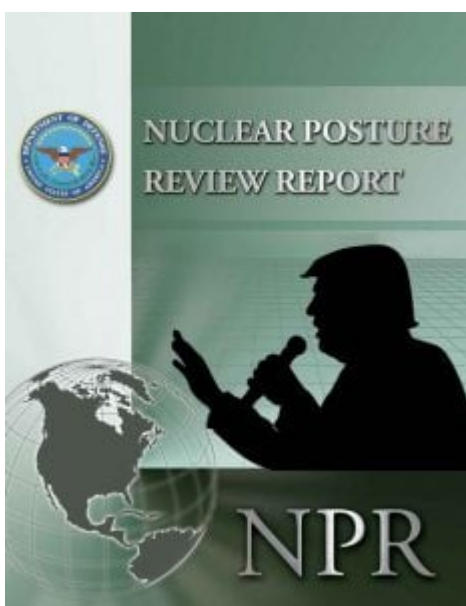
“It’s actually incredibly alarming that the Trump administration is putting forth the idea that we could use nuclear weapons in response to a cyberattack,” Alexandra Bell of the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation told National Public Radio on Monday [January 28th] [and [National Public Radio likewise had not indicated](#) that the January 13th WP article was their source]. “The Trump plan actually puts multiple options on the table — nuclear weapon in response to a chemical attack, to a biological weapons attack, to an attack on civilians without a real description of where that threshold is and really widens the options for President Trump to use nuclear weapons.”

None of these conditions appeared in the final document, which instead said nothing about any of them.

In particular, the specifically quoted passage, which so alarmed these people:

“Extreme circumstances could include significant non-nuclear strategic attacks. Significant non-nuclear strategic attacks include, but are not limited to, attacks on the US, allied, or partner civilian population or infrastructure.”

does not appear in the final document that was [published on February 2nd](#).



Furthermore, other seemingly moderating changes appear to have been made. Back on January 9th, Britain’s *Guardian* had headlined [“US to loosen nuclear weapons constraints](#)

[and develop more 'usable' warheads](#)" and reported that "The new nuclear policy is significantly more hawkish than [meaning "than"] the posture adopted by the Obama administration, which [sought to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in US defence](#)," and that, "Arms control advocates have [voiced alarm at the new proposal to make smaller, more 'usable' nuclear weapons](#), arguing it makes a nuclear war more likely."

Clearly, the initial recommendations from Trump's Defense Secretary Mattis, who shapes Trump's military views, have been somewhat softened — made less stupid — due to intensive criticisms in the press against them; and this fact indicates that Trump isn't totally ignoring the opposition (i.e., Democratic Party) press, and that sometimes the billionaires who control the opposition Party and its media, can get through to him, via their media.

However, the final Trump-Mattis document is still extremely incoherent, self-contradictory, and does leave open the possibility that the types of extreme danger to the world's security that worried these critics of the draft, will become instituted in actual practice by Mattis-Trump. He/they merely removed the *explicit statements* of the conditions in which the U.S. would initiate a nuclear war. Trump-Mattis just reverted to Obama.

The big problem in the document (and which no one has pointed out) is that it (like all its predecessors) ignores the basic issue regarding nuclear weapons, which is: **that there is no such thing as a nuclear weapon which *isn't* a strategic weapon; any 'nuke', no matter how 'small', is a strategic nuclear weapon.** The very concept of 'tactical nukes' is fraudulent.

Once the nuclear threshold has been breached in a confrontation between the two military super-powers (U.S. & Russia), the history of civilization will be terminated. Much, but hardly all, of that termination will be what occurs in the first 20 to 30 minutes — the actual nuclear exchanges themselves. World War III, if it happens at all, will be finished in less than 30 minutes, especially because the U.S. has its missiles right on, and near, Russia's borders.

Russia is already down to very nearly a launch-on-warning response-window. Waiting before unleashing the entire retaliatory arsenal would be suicidal, because, otherwise, the opponent's attack could obliterate much of that arsenal before it's even in the air. This is why the first side to "go nuclear" against the other will be at an enormous strategic advantage. 'Tactical' nuclear weapons ('small' nukes) should thus be outlawed altogether. Anything (such as the use of 'small nukes') that lowers the nuclear threshold, increases enormously the likelihood of a world-ending nuclear war, because the nuclear threshold has then already been crossed. The side that crossed it might say that "We didn't cross our strategic threshold," but the opposite side might feel that it crossed theirs. Mattis ignores this reality, which can't be modified (far less nullified) by any technological development (such as he assumes). Nuclear weapons are, by their very physics, vastly higher energy-intensity than any other type of weaponry; and any attempt to make them smaller, or the delivery-system more accurate, doesn't at all make them non-nuclear. If a weapon entails a nuclear-energy release, then it's a nuclear weapon. Period. And any nuclear weapon is a strategic weapon. That's just a strategic fact.

As **Michel Chossudovsky** wrote on February 5th (but based largely on those earlier news-reports that turned out not to reflect the final document), under the headline "[Secret Meeting on the Privatization of Nuclear War Held on Hiroshima Day 2003: Behind closed doors at Strategic Command Headquarters](#)", providing important historical context to this:

The Trump Administration's Nuclear Posture Review 2018 has called for "the development of new, more usable nuclear weapons".

The 2018 NPR is in many regards Déjà Vu.

What seems to have escaped the numerous media reports on the 2018 NPR is that the development of "more usable nuclear weapons" had already been put forth in George W. Bush's 2001 Nuclear Posture Review, which was adopted by the US Senate in late 2002. In this regard, Senator Edward Kennedy had accused the Bush Administration for having developed "a generation of more usable nuclear weapons," namely tactical nuclear weapons (B61-11 mini-nukes) with an explosive capacity between one third and 6 times times a Hiroshima bomb.

The term "more usable" emanates from debate surrounding the 2001 NPR, which justified the use of tactical nuclear weapons in the conventional war theater on the grounds that tactical nuclear weapons, namely bunker buster bombs with a nuclear warhead, are, according to scientific opinion on contract to the Pentagon [and thus hired in order to buttress the Pentagon's viewpoint] "harmless to the surrounding population because the explosion is underground."

Even if a 'small nuke' explodes underground, it can still be achieving a strategic objective — maybe even a decisive one, in a war that possesses major strategic significance.

Nuclear war starts when nuclear weapons are first used. Period.



The aftermath of the bombing of Hiroshima

The military opponent might be a non-nuclear power, in which case there won't be nuclear retaliation. This would be like Japan 1945 (and the bombs that were used on those cities were 'small' enough to qualify to be referred to today as having been 'small nukes', or 'tactical nuclear weapons'). But America's use of nuclear weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was "strategic" nonetheless. To deny this is simply to lie. It's what Mattis-Trump-Obama-Bush do/did, and what almost all neoconservatives are committed to doing in order to increase the bottom lines of 'Defense' contractors.

However, Mattis-Trump aren't aiming to increase America's 'small nukes' stockpiles only, or even mainly, in order to win 'conventional' wars (which WW II was). They have been openly pushing for it against both Russia and China. They have been publicly lowering the barrier to WW III.

How serious is this issue?

The only widely available scientific estimates of the impact that a nuclear war would have were done by [Steven Starr](#) — a scientist entirely non-dependent upon Lockheed Martin and other corporations that depend for their existence upon the most expensive of all strategic weapons systems, which are the nuclear-capable ones. [A good summary of Starr's analysis can be found here](#). However, his analysis is really based upon earlier ones, and those will now be discussed:

The latest scientific analysis of [“Environmental Consequences of Nuclear War”](#) was published in *Physics Today* December 2008, and said “A regional war involving 100 Hiroshima-sized weapons would pose a worldwide threat due to ozone destruction and climate change. A superpower confrontation with a few thousand weapons would be catastrophic.” That term “catastrophic” was a typical scholarly understatement, which actually meant ending civilization (if not ultimately life on Earth), but the article includes no direct verbiage about that, only such obtuse phrases as:

In the SORT conflict, we assume that Russia targets 1000 weapons on the US and 200 warheads each on France, Germany, India, Japan, Pakistan, and the UK. We assume the US targets 1100 weapons each on China and Russia. We do not consider the 1000 weapons held in the UK, China, France, Israel, India, Pakistan, and possibly North Korea. ...

With 1000 weapons detonated in the US, 48% of the total population and 59% of the urban population could fall within about 5 km of ground zero; 20% of the total population and 25% of the urban population could be killed outright, while an additional 16% of the total population and 20% of the urban population could become injured. ...

Because the soot associated with a nuclear exchange is injected into the upper atmosphere, the stratosphere is heated and stratospheric circulation is perturbed. For the 5-Tg injection associated with a regional conflict [much smaller than a Russia-America war would be], stratospheric temperatures would remain elevated by 30°C [54 degrees Fahrenheit] after four years.<sup>6-8</sup> **[No estimate is provided in the case of a Russia-v.-America conflict. Presumably, it would quickly end the world; so, it's not publicly analyzed.]** The resulting temperature and circulation anomalies would reduce ozone columns by 20% globally, by 25-45% at middle latitudes, and by 50-70% at northern high latitudes for perhaps as much as five years, with substantial losses persisting for an additional five years.<sup>7</sup>

The calculations of the 1980s generally did not consider such effects or the mechanisms that cause them. Rather, they focused on the direct injection of nitrogen oxides by the fireballs of large-yield weapons that are no longer deployed. Global-scale models have only recently become capable of performing the sophisticated atmospheric chemical calculations needed to delineate detailed ozone-depletion mechanisms. Indeed, simulations of ozone loss following a SORT conflict have not yet been conducted. ...

For any nuclear conflict, nuclear winter would seriously [the term “seriously” is nowhere defined] affect noncombatant countries.<sup>12</sup>

In a hypothetical SORT war, for example, we estimate that most of the world's population, including that of the Southern Hemisphere would be threatened by the indirect effects on global climate.

The norm for scientists — who are hired by large corporations that have huge stakes in the ‘findings’ and that hire those same scientists only to the extent the given scientist supports the same things that their employers support — is to avoid terminology that will attract non-specialists, and this article included no estimates as to how many survivors there would be after all the nuclear poisoning and ozone depletion and soaring high-altitude temperatures and ultimate plunging ground-temperatures, and the interactions of all those factors. The scientific establishment (largely dependent upon the military-industrial complex) and the political establishment (likewise) are obviously not trying to educate the public about any of those realities — and Mattis says nothing about them, if he even knows about them. Does he have the numbers that aren’t published? Why are they not published? Who benefits by hiding these matters from the public? Who will hire Mattis after he leaves Government? Does he really think that the U.S. military can force the rest of the world in the way that America’s Deep State ([billionaires and their hired agents inside and outside the U.S. Government](#)) want?

Subsequently, in January 2010, some of the same scientists who had done that December 2008 study, published [“Local Nuclear War”](#), and opened: “Worry has focused on the U.S. versus Russia, but a regional nuclear war between India and Pakistan could blot out the sun, starving much of the human race.” That sounds about the same as they had said earlier would happen if the U.S. and Russia haul off against each other. Obviously, however, a Russia-v.-U.S. war would actually be much worse than a Pakistan-v.-India war. Something’s wrong here. The scientists aren’t doing their job; or, if they are, it’s not the public’s job (i.e., not informing the public in a democracy as a real democracy would require), it’s the military-industrial complex’s job that they’re doing. And people such as Mattis are the very public front of it. And U.S. **President Donald Trump** has essentially contracted-out his international relations to Mattis.

Here are highlights, key excerpts, from the final published Nuclear Posture Review; and, after it will be discussed its key failings:

<https://media.defense.gov/2018/Feb/02/2001872877/-1/-1/1/EXECUTIVE-SUMMARY.PDF>

## **NUCLEAR POSTURE REVIEW FEBRUARY 2018**

### **OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**

Executive Summary Introduction On January 27, 2017, President Donald Trump directed Secretary of Defense James Mattis to initiate a new Nuclear Posture Review (NPR). The President made clear that his first priority is to protect the United States, allies, and partners. He also emphasized both the long-term goal of eliminating nuclear weapons and the requirement that the United States have modern, flexible, and resilient nuclear capabilities that are safe and secure until such a time as nuclear weapons can prudently be eliminated from the world. The United States remains committed to its efforts in support of the ultimate global elimination of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. It has reduced the nuclear stockpile by over 85 percent since the height of the Cold War and deployed no new nuclear capabilities for over two decades. Nevertheless, global threat conditions have worsened markedly since the most recent 2010 NPR, including increasingly explicit nuclear threats from potential adversaries. ...

The Value of U.S. Nuclear Capabilities

The fundamental reasons why U.S. nuclear capabilities and deterrence strategies are necessary for U.S., allied, and partner security are readily apparent. U.S. nuclear capabilities make essential contributions to the deterrence of nuclear and non-nuclear aggression. The deterrence effects they provide are unique and essential to preventing adversary nuclear attacks, which is the highest priority of the United States. U.S. nuclear capabilities cannot prevent all conflict, and should not be expected to do so. But, they contribute uniquely to the deterrence of both nuclear and non-nuclear aggression. They are essential for these purposes and will be so for the foreseeable future. Non-nuclear forces also play essential deterrence roles, but do not provide comparable deterrence effects — as is reflected by past, periodic, and catastrophic failures of conventional deterrence to prevent Great Power war before the advent of nuclear deterrence. ...

#### Deterrence of Nuclear and Non-Nuclear Attack

Effective U.S. deterrence of nuclear attack and non-nuclear strategic attack requires ensuring that potential adversaries do not miscalculate regarding the consequences of nuclear first use, either regionally or against the United States itself. They must understand that there are no possible benefits from non-nuclear aggression or limited nuclear escalation. Correcting any such misperceptions is now critical to maintaining strategic stability in Europe and Asia. ...

#### Enhancing Deterrence with Non-strategic Nuclear Capabilities

Existing elements of the nuclear force replacement program predate the dramatic deterioration of the strategic environment. To meet the emerging requirements of U.S. strategy, the United States will now pursue select supplements to the replacement program to enhance the flexibility and responsiveness of U.S. nuclear forces. It is a reflection of the versatility and flexibility of the U.S. triad that only modest supplements are now required in this much more challenging threat environment. These supplements will enhance deterrence by denying potential adversaries any mistaken confidence that limited nuclear employment can provide a useful advantage over the United States and its allies. Russia's belief that limited nuclear first use, potentially including low-yield weapons, can provide such an advantage is based, in part, on Moscow's perception that its greater number and variety of non-strategic nuclear systems provide a coercive advantage in crises and at lower levels of conflict. Recent Russian statements on this evolving nuclear weapons doctrine appear to lower the threshold for Moscow's first-use of nuclear weapons. Russia demonstrates its perception of the advantage these systems provide through numerous exercises and statements. Correcting this mistaken Russian perception is a strategic imperative. ...

Expanding flexible U.S. nuclear options now, to include low-yield options, is important for the preservation of credible deterrence against regional aggression. It will raise the nuclear threshold and help ensure that potential adversaries perceive no possible advantage in limited nuclear escalation, making nuclear employment less likely. ... In the near-term, the United States will modify a small number of existing SLBM warheads to provide a low-yield option, and in the longer term, pursue a modern nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missile (SLCM). Unlike DCA, a low-yield SLBM warhead and SLCM will not require or rely on host nation support to provide deterrent effect. They will provide additional diversity in platforms, range, and survivability, and a valuable hedge against future nuclear "break out" scenarios. DoD and National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) will develop for deployment a low-yield SLBM warhead to ensure a prompt response option that is able to penetrate adversary defenses. This is a comparatively low-cost and near term modification to an existing capability that will help counter any mistaken perception of an exploitable "gap" in U.S. regional deterrence capabilities. In

addition to this near-term step, for the longer term the United States will pursue a nuclear-armed SLCM, leveraging existing technologies to help ensure its cost effectiveness. SLCM will provide a needed non-strategic regional presence, an assured response capability.

The dead give-away there is the subhead “Enhancing Deterrence with Non-strategic Nuclear Capabilities.” There are no “non-strategic nuclear capabilities.” Mattis-Trump still accept the lie that there are. If they don’t know that it’s a lie, they’re idiots.

In other words: the NPR (meaning Nuclear Posture Review, not National Public Radio) is based upon using nuclear weapons in order to *win* a nuclear war. [That has actually been America’s real nuclear strategy ever since at least 2006.](#) ‘Small’ nukes will now be used instead of conventional weapons, to “warn” “the enemy” against using “small nukes.” The problem with this line of thinking is that it ignores that, regardless of whether the conflict starts with regular weapons or with “small nukes,” the response to it will necessarily be a total blitz release of the other side’s entire strategic nuclear stockpile, **because the first side to release its entire nuclear stockpile against the other will be the one that suffers the less harm.** In military parlance, the side that suffers the less harm is the ‘winner’, regardless of any other factor. That’s the basic reality of military strategy: it’s inevitably win-lose, *not* win-win.

The advantage to “going first” is much greater in strategic military matters than it is in chess or other (i.e., non-fatal) “competitive games.” Mattis ignores, instead of states, this fact.

The first side to release everything will destroy some of the other side’s weaponry and thus enormously weaken the other side. And defense against nuclear weapons costs much more than does increasing the weapons that are strictly for aggression (the latter of which — overtly, instead of merely covertly, aggressive weapons — is Russia’s strategy).

In any war, even ‘defensive’ weapons are for aggressive purposes — to win — in this case, to *invalidate* some of the opposite side’s attacking weaponry.



The United States is trying to create ABM (BMD) systems that will eliminate Russia’s retaliatory weapons in the event that the U.S. attacks Russia first. With existing nuclear-warhead treaty-limits against both sides, there is no way for Russia to countervail America’s ABM-buildup other than to exceed the existing nuclear-warhead-limiting treaties. Putin and his successors won’t tolerate America’s spending-war against the Soviet Union being repeated against Russia. If driven by the U.S. to do so, Russia’s response will thus be to exceed existing warhead-limitations, as being the more cost-effective way to respond to America’s ABM buildup — a buildup that threatens Russia’s ability to retaliate against a possible NATO nuclear blitz-attack, first-strike surprise invasion, against Russia.



America is trying to outspend Russia into historical oblivion before a nuclear war even happens. But Russia, like America, would rather strike first than be struck first, and won't allow the U.S. to gain the ability to win a nuclear war. America's policy is "[M.A.D. is dead.](#)" Nuclear *victory* is now the goal. As was previously said, this [has been the strategic nuclear policy of the United States Government since at least 2006](#). In fact, this U.S. nuclear policy was [subsequently confirmed in a shocking article published on 1 March 2017 in the prestigious \*Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists\*](#). So, it can no longer be reasonably denied. Winning a nuclear war against Russia is now irrefutably the U.S. Government's real objective. This fact, also significantly, exposes the fraudulence (or else ignorance) of the Princetonian, Professor Blair, in the January 13th *Washington Post* article, saying "Alarmingly, the wizards have uprooted the nuclear taboo." That 'taboo' was actually ended by the U.S. Establishment by no later than 2006, but has been consistently continued on the Russian side (which has no incentive *whatsoever* to promote the blatant lie that a nuclear war between the U.S. and Russia can be '[won](#)').

The very concept of "victory" in a nuclear war between the two military super-powers is insane. It is *pre-nuclear* thinking. Mattis and Trump are now basically committed to it, just as was President Obama, and George W. Bush before him. Mattis's NPR was going to fill in some of the blanks that prior U.S. Presidents didn't yet want filled in, but the torrent of criticisms from Democratic Party newsmedia seem to have stopped that.

Thus: on nuclear strategy, Trump is continuing Obama. No one is publicly discussing what's central. Even the published criticisms don't.

In the nuclear age, the mere possession of nuclear weapons places the given nation into a strategically different category than any that even so much as existed in pre-nuclear-weapon history. That's the reason why there has been so much concern about North Korea's nuclear-weapons program, and about the possible such program in Iran. In warfare, nuclear is strategic — never merely 'tactical'. Any nation that operationalizes nuclear weaponry enters thereby into a military category that didn't even exist until 1945. Any press statements that pertain to nuclear weaponry but ignore this basic strategic fact about them, disqualify both the publisher and the writer. Any nuclear weapon is a strategic weapon, by definition of "nuclear weapon." This is especially the case if it's being used against another nuclear-weapon nation. However, even when Japan surrendered to the U.S. in 1945, because it had no deliverable nuclear weapon with which to retaliate, that was very definitely a strategically significant matter.

Incidentally, Mattis's (and this statement *did* make it into the final draft) "*Russia's belief that limited nuclear first use, potentially including low-yield weapons, can provide such an advantage*" is probably entirely fictitious — a lie about "Russia's belief." Russia has not — at least not publicly — endorsed any such "belief"; and, the last time when Russia even so much as mentioned the subject (which was as of 2003), "[Russian officials say that the lack of information about Russia's tactical nuclear weapons is necessary.](#)" As of today, a Google-search for the phrase "Russia's new tactical nuclear weapon" produces a finding: "No results found for 'Russia's new tactical nuclear weapon'." None — ever, including now. In other words: no Russian tactical nuclear weapon has ever been reported to the public, even by Russia's enemies (i.e., by the U.S. and its allies). Mattis is almost certainly lying to employ the phrase "*Russia's belief that limited nuclear first use, potentially including low-yield weapons, can provide such an advantage*"; but, if he's not, then the Government that currently hires him is obligated to its public (if there's anything at all democratic about that Government) to provide evidence backing up that allegation. And, as to whether the U.S.

Government itself (such as in that statement from Mattis) should ever be trusted, the answer is [very clearly no](#). So, that evidence needs to be provided by the U.S. Government, to the public; and, otherwise, the NPR should be viewed as being both scurrilous and extremely dangerous to the entire world, for unsupportedly alleging this. But, in any case, [NATO already publicly acknowledges having tactical nuclear weapons](#). And, [as of 2011](#), the U.S. had already deployed over 150 of them in Europe. The U.S. has those weapons, which should be illegal, but the big debate on the U.S. side is how they 'should' be used. They should be the first weapons to be destroyed. [The aggressor is clearly the U.S.](#)

America's military-industrial complex (sometimes called "neoconservatives") now headlines 'news'-reports, by such unintended bad jokes as ["Tactical Nuclear Weapons: How America Could Have Won the Vietnam War?"](#) which are just PR pieces for costly new government-contracts for military-supply corporations such as Raytheon to produce yet more of these weapons that ought to be outright destroyed; so, now, we're supposed to believe (from the military-industrial complex's 'news'-media) that there could have been a 'technological fix' for the Vietnam War (which war was actually just a U.S.-and-allied invasion of Vietnam). Napalm wasn't already bad enough? Really?



A November 2011 U.S. Army War College study ["Russian Nuclear Weapons: Past, Present and Future"](#), which reflected 100% neoconservative assumptions, said (p. 296) "an analysis of Russia's current thinking about nuclear issues reveals ongoing and vigorous high-level debates about nuclear weapons. This debate is evidently linked to the domestic struggle for primacy between the factions around **Prime Minister Vladimir Putin** and **President Dmitry Medvedev**." Then:

The public debate began in earnest in October 2009 when Nikolai Patrushev, Secretary of Russia's Security Council, told an interviewer that the forthcoming defense doctrine will be amended to allow for the possibility of preventive and preemptive first strikes, including nuclear strikes, even in the context of a purely conventional local war and even at the lower level of operational-tactical, as opposed to strategic, strikes.<sup>10</sup> This triggered a major public debate over those questions that paralleled the private debate among Russia's leaders. Although ultimately the published doctrine omitted to say these things, the citation above about armored vehicles suggests that for many Patrushev's views are nevertheless reflected there.<sup>11</sup> In addition, the doctrine was accompanied by a classified publication on nuclear issues that left foreign observers in the dark about when Russia might or might not go nuclear and for what purposes and missions.

The same book (p. 321) even presents an amazing passage which acknowledges "the

danger [to Russia] (as listed in the new defense doctrine) of NATO enlargement, and the threat of [U.S.] missile defenses coming closer to Russia” and then it just ignores this outrageously unacceptable danger to Russia, and proceeds to try to portray as if today’s non-communist Russia is the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact partners, and as if they are positioning weaponry on and near *America’s* borders — to portray that the aggressor is Russia, and not NATO:

Fourth, given these conditions, the danger (as listed in the new defense doctrine) of NATO enlargement, and the threat of missile defenses coming closer to Russia, Moscow believes that it is being placed under mounting military-political pressure, or at least professes to be so, even though it undoubtedly knows that NATO is hardly an offensive threat and that the U.S. missile defenses cannot threaten its systems.<sup>92</sup> Therefore, it has been ready for at least a decade with its threat of striking first with nuclear weapons, even against conventional strikes, if the threat to its interests is dire enough. Thus in 1999 Colonel General Vladimir Yakovlev, commander in chief of Russia’s nuclear forces, stated that: “Russia, for objective reasons, is forced to lower the threshold for using nuclear weapons, extend the nuclear deterrent to smaller-scale conflicts and openly warn potential opponents about this.”<sup>93</sup> Since then, there has been no mention of any further alteration of this threshold. Consequently Russia sees nuclear weapons as warfighting weapons.

That “or at least professes to be so” indicates the author’s distrust of Russia’s many pleas to the U.S. military alliance not to do this. His “NATO is hardly an offensive threat” is a lie so blatant that only an idiot could actually believe it. Regardless of whether its author was stupid or instead a liar, those interjections from him reflect the mind-set of the people who write such things — such writers blatantly disqualify themselves from being trusted by any intelligent human being.

Subsequently (p. 331) the book made clear precisely which of the two — Putin or Medvedev — the author thought to be supporting tactical nuclear weaponry:

Medvedev made it clear that Russia does not need to increase its offensive nuclear capability any further than was originally planned.<sup>124</sup> Clearly this directly contradicted Putin’s public remarks in December 2009, underscoring the continuing divisions between Putin and Medvedev and within the Russian military-political elite.

This conveniently ignores that Putin has always been talking only about the need for Russia to improve its strategic nuclear weaponry. No indication at all has been given anywhere, that Putin supports the development of tactical nuclear weapons. Perhaps he does; and perhaps Russia has some of those weapons (which would be idiotic for Russia to have), but the neoconservative U.S. military-industrial complex isn’t yet publicly able to cite *any* evidence that Russia does (or is).

Even that book, which stretched as far as it could in order to assume that Russia has every type of weapon, and that the U.S. therefore needs to catch up and spend yet more money on yet newer types of weapons from General Dynamics and Boeing etc. than it already does, could offer *no evidence that Russia has any tactical nuclear weapons at all.*

The United States seems to be now clearly trying to repeat its victory (a victory of capitalism over communism) in the Cold War against the Soviet Union — outspending it until

exhausting ‘the enemy’ — but this time against Russia (which, *unlike* the Soviet Union, presents no ideological threat to America, nor any ideological or other military alliance against it such as the Warsaw Pact that the Soviet Union countered against America’s NATO alliance). All that Mattis-Trump will be able to achieve with this is to force Russia to quit all nuclear-warhead-limiting treaties.

Nuclear weapons, of any type, have only one constructive use: to deter being attacked. Without them, the Cold War might very likely have become a hot war. But with them, the world has gone since 1945 with no super-power war. “Ban the Bomb!” means: Let’s have yet another superpower war. M.A.D. is real. The U.S. Establishment is lying to deny it, or even to question it. The “usefulness” of nuclear weapons thus is strictly of a psychological nature — but the most important usefulness of all for avoiding a WW III.

Any actual physical war-use of a nuclear weapon would be evil. Perhaps even the armaments-firms that make billions from governments in many countries would rather it not happen, but they have stockholders whose wealth and power depends upon increasing governments’ expenditures on their militaries — and nuclear weapons-systems are the costliest of all. Buying (or advertising in) news-media to promote invasions is effective marketing for them. But with ever-increasing expenditure on weapons at the expense of authentically productive products and services, which help instead of maim and kill, the world gets closer and closer to having to choose between those investors, versus the world’s future. At some point, the world’s future must become governments’ top priority; no investors or any group of investors has the right to stand against that, regardless of how hard those investors might stand against the world.

The restored unlimited arms-race will be an enormous boon to the billionaires who own or control corporations such as Lockheed Martin, but the entire world will be impoverished as a result. Obviously, America’s billionaires don’t care at all about that (except in their pious ‘humanitarian’ rhetoric preaching to the rest of the world while funding politicians who push coups and invasions worldwide).

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*Investigative historian **Eric Zuesse** is the author, most recently, of [They’re Not Even Close: The Democratic vs. Republican Economic Records, 1910-2010](#), and of [CHRIST’S VENTRILOQUISTS: The Event that Created Christianity](#).*

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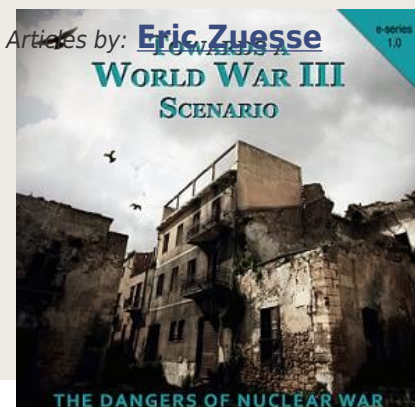
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