

Failure After Failure of the US Military Industrial Complex

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Global Research, July 03, 2024

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Militarization and WMD](#)

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It's no secret that the US Military Industrial Complex (MIC) is the [largest and most profitable in the world](#). After all, it's the [drive behind the vast majority of wars since WW2](#), bringing immense profit to the United States (obviously, [at the expense of the entire world](#)).

Thus, one would expect that the US MIC is one of the few institutions in Washington DC that's based on at least some meritocracy. Instead, it turns out it's just as ineffective, cumbersome and overly bureaucratic as [any other corrupt federal institution](#). It seems that decades of resting on its laurels and relying on the perpetuity of Pax Americana have made the US MIC far less efficient and capable of providing America with [the tools it needs to continue dominating the world](#).

Apart from the fact that profit is the main drive behind the US MIC, [making American weapons far less cost-effective](#) than is the case with countries where the military industry is not profit-based (such as Russia, [where it's largely or almost entirely state-owned](#)), it has also been struggling with the development of new strategic technologies. This is particularly true for hypersonic missiles, a relatively new class of weapons that have effectively revolutionized modern warfare. [Apart from being decades behind Russia](#) and at least a decade behind China, both of which are its main near-peer adversaries, [the US has also been eclipsed by regional powers such as North Korea](#), which already fields a number of such advanced missile types.

Some in the political establishment in Washington DC have ludicrously tried explaining [Russia's technological edge](#) in hypersonic weapons by [claiming it supposedly "stole" American technologies](#), although that still doesn't explain why the US has exactly zero operational hypersonic missiles, despite having nearly a dozen programs running simultaneously. The sheer magnitude of America's failures in developing this class of

weapons is best seen in the fact that some of its [projects that went furthest have been canceled after repeated failures](#). However, not being able to develop fundamentally new classes of missiles seems to be the least of the Pentagon's concerns. Namely, the US is now struggling even with basic strategic weapons.

Just last week, the head of the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent (GBSD) program, [USAF Colonel Charles Clegg, was fired after years of failures, delays and cost overruns](#). The GBSD program is expected to finalize the LGM-35 "Sentinel", a new American ICBM that's supposed to replace the horribly outdated LGM-30 "Minuteman 3" missiles. It's by no means a groundbreaking technology and is essentially a more up-to-date version of the older ICBM. It's highly unlikely to have any maneuverability as is the case with advanced Russian equivalents such as the RS-24 "Yars" ([or its derivatives like the RS-26 "Rubezh"](#)). Still, the development of even basic missiles with a regular ballistic trajectory seems to be a major issue for the US MIC.

On June 24, the USAF cited a "loss of confidence in [Clegg's] ability", stating that he failed to "follow organizational procedures". The GBSD program has faced severe issues (particularly cost overruns), [with the House Appropriations Committee concluding](#) that it was "stunned to learn of the massive increases in costs". The USAF insists that Colonel Clegg's dismissal is "not directly related to issues recently raised in the congressional review of the program". However, costs have increased by nearly 40% and now stand at over \$130 billion. Deeming the cost overruns unjustified, US Congress is refusing to provide the requested funding, instead offering no more than 91% of the requested sum, which could lead to further delays.

Namely, in FY 2024, the GBSD program will be getting \$3.4 billion, rather than the \$3.74 billion that Northrop Grumman says it needs. In its 2024 budget report, the Senate Armed Services Committee stated that "the program would be lengthy and complicated, involving real estate purchases, construction, deconstruction, removal and installation of equipment and nuclear certification". The LGM-35 "Sentinel", first scheduled to enter service no later than 2029, is expected to remain in development for the next ten years, meaning that it won't be ready before 2035. Worse yet, this is the best-case scenario, [which means further delays are highly likely](#) and could push the deployment to late 2030s or possibly beyond, further jeopardizing US security.

By then, the LGM-30 "Minuteman 3" will be well over 70 years in service, meaning that Washington DC could be left without its land-based strategic arsenal. [Recent failures of the existing one](#) suggest that it's [highly unlikely for the old ICBMs to be in working order](#) by the time their replacement is ready. However, even if, by some miracle, the issue of delays is resolved, the aforementioned cost overruns will persist. Namely, the projected price tag for a single LGM-35 "Sentinel" is \$162 million (in 2020 USD), which is an increase of over 37% compared to the initial projected cost of \$118 million. To put that into perspective, the much more advanced Russian [RS-24 "Yars" costs approximately \\$20 million apiece](#) and has been in service since 2011.

In addition, over 200 missiles have been deployed so far, forming the bulk of [Moscow's land-based strategic arsenal](#). This is without even considering the fact that Washington DC has nothing to match Russian monstrosities such as the now legendary R-36M2 "Voevoda" ([to say nothing of the latest RS-28 "Sarmat"](#)). And yet, issues with ICBMs aren't the only thing plaguing the US MIC. Namely, problems with tactical aircraft have now surfaced, with some sources suggesting that [the next-generation NGAD fighter jet program could be canceled](#).

These rumors have been denied by the USAF, but Secretary Frank Kendall admitted that the program is also plagued by similar failures, delays and cost overruns as the more strategically important GBSD.

Kendall says that [it's in need of a redesign to keep the costs down](#), as well as prevent them from spiraling out of control. It seems the NGAD program will need to cut back on certain key capabilities or be faced with unjustifiable and unsustainable delays. Kendall also said that a "revamped Next Generation Air Dominance fighter platform could end up with a less complex, smaller engine than originally intended to try to hold down its price". Although this is not uncommon with new programs (particularly for fighter jets), it's certainly a bad omen for the increasingly strained US MIC which is now [struggling to keep even the Kiev regime in the fight](#). Worse yet, due to these issues, [NATO is now considering](#) the possibility of [direct involvement in Ukraine](#).

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This article was originally published on [InfoBrics](#).

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