

# As NATO Leaders Discuss “Russian Threat”, US Approves New Nuclear Project

By [Lucas Leiroz de Almeida](#)  
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***The US is taking advantage of the NATO summit to advance nuclear measures in domestic politics.*** In a recent statement, the Department of Defense announced that it will continue its project to develop a new Sentinel intercontinental ballistic missile, despite the exponential increase in costs. [The Congress approved the proposal](#) despite its highly irresponsible nature. The goal is to improve US nuclear capabilities in the current security crisis.

**The Sentinel program is expected to replace all of the country’s outdated Minuteman III nuclear missiles. The project’s costs are currently estimated at 140 billion dollars**, an 81% increase in cost expectations compared to the program’s first assessment. The Pentagon had previously promised to spend just 77 billion dollars on the production of the new missiles, but evaluators now say the project will cost nearly twice that.

According to American law, when a project is expected to grow in cost by more than 25%, the department responsible for the proposal must review the program and justify its need to the Congress. After studying the project, the Pentagon concluded that there are no alternatives to the Sentinel program, and that American lawmakers should consent as soon as possible for its implementation, thus ensuring the renewal of American nuclear capabilities. Fearing alleged “threats”, US politicians approved the requirement.

“[We are] fully aware of the costs (...) But we are also aware of the risks of not modernizing our nuclear forces and not addressing the very real threats we confront,” said **William LaPlante**, the under secretary of defense for acquisition, about the case.

Obviously, the “threats” seen by the US regarding nuclear issues are focused on the Russian Federation. **Since the beginning of the special military operation, the West has been responding to Moscow’s measures through nuclear blackmail.** [Some Western leaders](#) have even stated that they would be ready to face a nuclear war with Russia. In parallel, the US recently gave Ukraine permission to attack Russian military units outside the conflict zone, which could put some nuclear facilities at risk.

In retaliation to Western nuclear blackmail, **Moscow has suspended its participation in the New START treaty. The bilateral Russian-American agreement signed in 2010 limits the nuclear capabilities of both countries, and although Russia has suspended its participation, the country still observes the rules of the pact, severely limiting its number of weapons and delivery systems.** However, in 2026 the agreement will expire and it is unlikely that the parties will reach any kind of consensus to renew it.

In practice, it is possible to say that the irresponsible actions of the West since February 2022 are **leading the world into a new nuclear race.** The US-led West is taking several initiatives to escalate this race, with the approval of a new multi-billion-dollar nuclear program, even in the midst of a serious internal crisis in the US, being an example of this. Instead of using public money to solve the problem on the borders or create measures to ease social and ethnic tensions, Washington is prioritizing investing in nuclear weapons to allegedly face “risks” that are created by the US’ own foreign policy.

All Russian nuclear actions have been merely reactive. Moscow recently ended the ban on nuclear tests and began joint tactical weapons exercises with the Republic of Belarus - a country to which nuclear equipment was recently provided to strengthen Minsk amid threats posed by both the Kiev regime and neighboring NATO countries. These actions were retaliatory given the nuclear pressure and the constant threats posed by the US-led alliance in the Russian strategic environment. In practice, the US creates the threat, prompting Russia to react - and then Russian retaliation is described by Western propaganda as a “danger”, endorsing further US actions and creating a vicious cycle.



For the first time, a photo at the Washington summit captures all 32 NATO member states' delegation groups together (9th of July 2024) (From the Public Domain)

It is important to emphasize that the latest American move came in the first day of the [NATO summit in Washington](#). The alliance's officials are meeting precisely to discuss new strategies to confront Russia in the current proxy conflict. Given the context, the American political atmosphere is even more paranoid about the possibility of a direct war with Russia, which explains why the "nuclear threat" speech persuaded Congressmen to approve the new Sentinel program, despite its exorbitant costs.

Indeed, the US and NATO are taking a dangerous path. The nuclear escalation may not end if measures to expand military capabilities continue to be taken frequently. Given the strictly defensive nature of Russia's nuclear policy, the path to de-escalation is simple: the US and its partners need only stop posing threats to Russia and invite Moscow to renegotiate a new nuclear agreement.

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**Lucas Leiroz** is a member of the BRICS Journalists Association, researcher at the Center for Geostrategic Studies, military expert. He is a regular contributor to Global Research. You can follow Lucas on [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#) and [Telegram](#).

*Featured image: President Joe Biden awards NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg the Presidential*

*Medal of Freedom during an event marking the 75th anniversary of the NATO Alliance, Tuesday, July 9, 2024, at the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium in Washington, D.C. (Official White House Photo by Erin Scott / Public Domain)*

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