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CLINTON BUYS PENTAGON'S "COLD WAR LITE" NUCLEAR WEAPONS POLICY KEEPS LARGE "INACTIVE RESERVE" ON ICE FOR TREATY BREAKOUT

The Pentagon's long-awaited Nuclear Posture Review, a year in the making, has finally arrived, and the results may charitably be described as meager. Charged by then Defense Secretary Aspin with conducting a forward-looking comprehensive review of the role of nuclear weapons in post-Cold War U.S. security strategy, Clinton's nuclear strategy team has looked backward for its inspiration, and essentially ordains that the nuclear future will look much like the past.

The new acronym – "Mutual Assured Safety" or MAS – is a transparent attempt to create the illusion of significant change in U.S. nuclear arms policy, when in fact very little change has occurred. The policy might more aptly be labeled "Cold War Lite." Far from charting a path toward mutual assured safety from the nuclear threat, the outcome of the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) is more likely to frustrate the achievement of U.S. nuclear nonproliferation objectives, and stiffen the resistance of foreign nuclear establishments to further disarmament measures. Warming over the doctrinal leftovers of the Cold War in the context of the new political realities is bound to create some contradictions, as the NPR recommendations amply demonstrate:

- Secretary Perry has stated that a guiding principle of the "new" policy is to provide a "hedge" against the possible reversal of reform in Russia. This will be accomplished by maintaining the strategic nuclear industrial base, nuclear weapons expertise, and reserve warhead stockpile needed to "reconstitute" the very nuclear forces subject to "reduction" under START II.

At the same time, however, Secretary Perry stated that the NPR has highlighted the need to continue the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program with Russia "to help destroy a former enemy's nuclear weapons and industry. It's a small investment with an enormous payoff," Perry observed in a recent speech.

In other words, the U.S. should aim to continue the "destruction" of Russia's nuclear weapons and industry while retaining the capability to "reconstitute" its own. Obviously, this one-sided approach to "cooperative threat reduction" is not likely to engender much enthusiasm on the Russian side, and partly explains the dismal performance of the Nunn-Lugar program to date.

- But "Cold-War Lite" is not merely a contradictory policy – it's just plain wrong. If the major strategic concern is that an aggressively nationalist regime might come to power in Russia and assume control over the tens of thousands of warheads remaining in the former Soviet nuclear stockpile, *the appropriate response is not to slow down the pace of weapons destruction, but rather to speed it up*, thereby assuring that whatever regime comes to power inherits the smallest possible arsenal.
- "Cold-War Lite" will cost the U.S. taxpayer considerably more than the alternatives of either unilaterally and irreversibly implementing START II cuts now, or obtaining Russian agreement on a START II protocol that would make even deeper cuts in operational forces and *require* the verified dismantlement of all reserve and retired weapons (neither START I or II requires the dismantlement of nuclear bombs and warheads themselves, leaving a large potential "inactive reserve" of weapons on both sides that could be redeployed in the future).

Over the next decade, NRDC calculates that the reconstitution option could result in a substantial "shadow arsenal": up to 700 warheads for "uploading" Minuteman III land-based missiles to three warheads apiece; 1,000 warheads for uploading submarine launched missiles to 8; and 1,500 cruise missile warheads and bombs for loading on the B-1B and B-52H bombers. The potential total of 3200 "inactive reserve" weapons is only slightly less than the 3400 "active" operational strategic warheads that the U.S. will retain under START II!

- The misguided decision to retain a "last resort" – formerly called "first-use" – option for nuclear retaliation against a non-nuclear attack on U.S. forces overseas, and to maintain the tactical air posture needed to make good on this threat, directly undermines U.S. nonproliferation efforts to convince other countries that effective conventional forces and regional security arrangements do not require reinforcement with nuclear threats.



**PROJECTED U.S. NUCLEAR FORCES
AFTER START II (2003)**

Strategic Forces		Warhead	Number
ICBMs	500/450 Minuteman III	W87-0	500/450#
SLBMs	336 Trident II on 14 SSBNs x 5 }	W76	1,280
		W88	400
Bombers	20 B-2A x 16 32 B-52H x 20 32 B-52H x 12 }	B61-7	450
		B83	500
		W80-1 (ACM)	<u>400*</u>
Sub-total			3,500
Non-strategic Forces			
	Sea-launched cruise missiles (SSNs)	W80-0	350
	Air Force tactical bombs	B61-3,-4,-10	<u>600</u>
Sub-total			950
TOTAL			4,450**
Reserve Stockpile for possible reconstitution			
	ICBM warheads (W78) loading Minuteman IIIs to 3		1,000
	SLBM warheads (W76) for uploading SSBNs to 8		1,000
	Bomber weapons for bomber force (B-1, B-52H)		<u>1,500</u>
	Non-strategic warheads (plans unknown)		?
TOTAL			3,500
GRAND TOTAL			8,500

Depending upon a future decision to consolidate four Minuteman III bases to three the total number of ICBMs will be either 450 or 500. If it is 500 small adjustments in the bomber force will be necessary to bring the total to 3,500.

* The Advanced Cruise Missiles are currently planned to be carried only by the B-52H.

** With approximately ten percent spares for routine maintenance the total number for the active force would be around 5,000 warheads.

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