

**Top Level:** The Strategic Posture Commission argues that the United States is entering a fundamentally harder deterrence era: for the first time, it must be prepared to deter and, if necessary, respond to near-simultaneous and/or coordinated challenges from two nuclear adversaries (Russia and China). In the 2027–2035 window, both adversaries’ capabilities, doctrine, and willingness to use nuclear coercion will stress U.S. plans that were designed for a one-major-war paradigm. Thus, the United States should transition to a posture that can deter and defeat a Russian or Chinese attack while simultaneously deterring the other, rather than assuming crises will remain sequential or neatly separated by theater.

**Key Findings/Recommendations:** First and foremost, the United States must modernize and reimagine nuclear strategy, force structure, and the nuclear enterprise for a two-threat environment. The report stresses that today’s existing “Program of Record” was conceived in a more optimistic post–Cold War setting when China was a “lesser-included case” (from a nuclear perspective) and Russia was widely seen as less likely to pose a direct confrontation (something that has now changed in light of overt nuclear threats during the Russia-Ukraine war)—so it may be inadequate for the world now emerging. The Commission therefore recommends not only executing ongoing recapitalization, but also planning and resourcing additional nuclear capability and/or capacity beyond current plans to ensure credible deterrence across two theaters and against potential adversary coordination. This includes attention to resilience, flexibility, and a strengthened nuclear weapons enterprise that can hedge against operational risks and geopolitical shifts.

Second, the Commission emphasizes that U.S. strategic posture will require preserving and, if necessary, proliferating strong alliances in Europe and the Indo-Pacific. In Europe in particular, allies report that Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has raised the perceived risk of aggression and nuclear employment. The report underscores that many allies view U.S. nuclear and conventional capabilities as increasingly important for credible extended deterrence, and that major posture or policy changes should be predicated on meaningful consultations with allies because they directly affect allied perceptions of U.S. credibility and their own deterrence requirements. It supports efforts to reinforce NATO’s nuclear deterrence institutions and readiness (including revitalizing the Nuclear Planning Group, improving the operational effectiveness of NATO dual-capable aircraft, and expanding exercises), while also backing continued European investment in conventional defense to strengthen deterrence of Russian aggression.

Third, on arms control, the Commission’s message is blunt: it does not recommend relying on new, direct arms-control treaties or similar agreements as the near-term solution to the threat environment. The report argues that Russia has refused to comply with certain arms-control commitments, while China has been opaque and unwilling to negotiate comparable constraints; as a result, the Commission does not believe arms control is likely to materially reduce nuclear dangers in the near term. Instead, it prioritizes risk reduction: practical steps to reduce the chances of miscalculation, crisis instability, or inadvertent escalation while building the forces and resilience needed for deterrence in the absence of treaty-based limits.