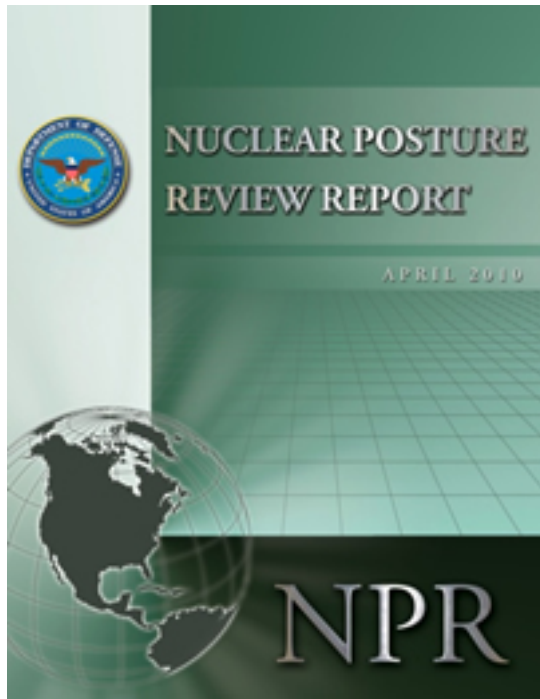


# FAS



## **The U.S. Nuclear Posture After the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review and 2013 Nuclear Employment Strategy**

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Federation of American Scientists

Presentation to  
Graduate Seminar on Nuclear Policy  
Georgetown University School of Foreign Service  
Washington, D.C.  
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## Intensions to Change

“To put an end to Cold War thinking, we will reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy, and urge others to do the same.”

*President Barack Obama, Prague, 2009 (emphasis added)*

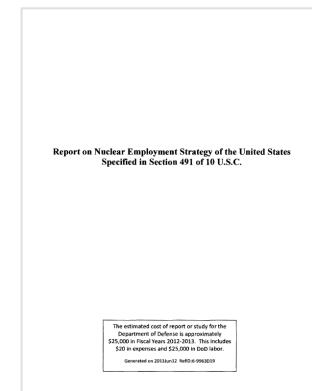


*“It is possible that our deterrence goals can be achieved with a smaller nuclear force, which would reduce the number of nuclear weapons in our inventory as well as their role in U.S. national security strategy.”*

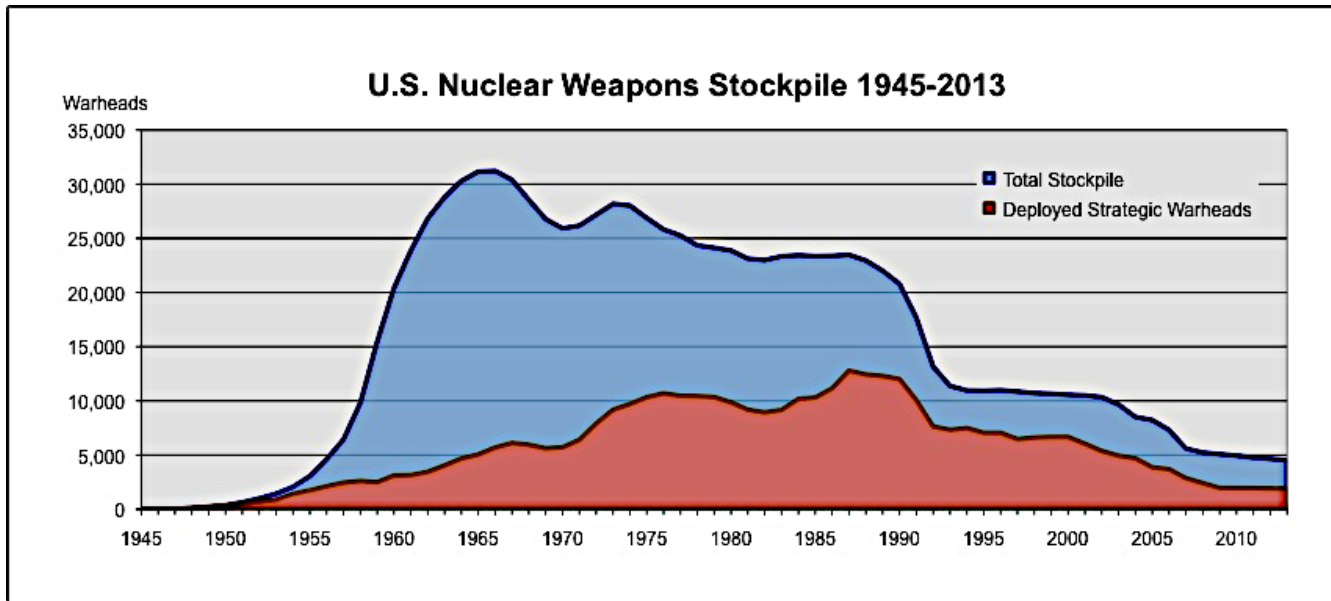
*Sustaining US Global Leadership: Priorities for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Defense, DOD, 2012 (emphasis in original)*

Directs DOD to “reduce the role of deterring nuclear weapons in deterring non-nuclear attack,” to “reduce the role of launch under attack,” and “reiterates the intension to work towards [the goal of making deterrence of nuclear attack the sole purpose of U.S. nuclear weapons] over time.”

*Report on Nuclear Employment Strategy of the United States, DOD, June 12, 2013*

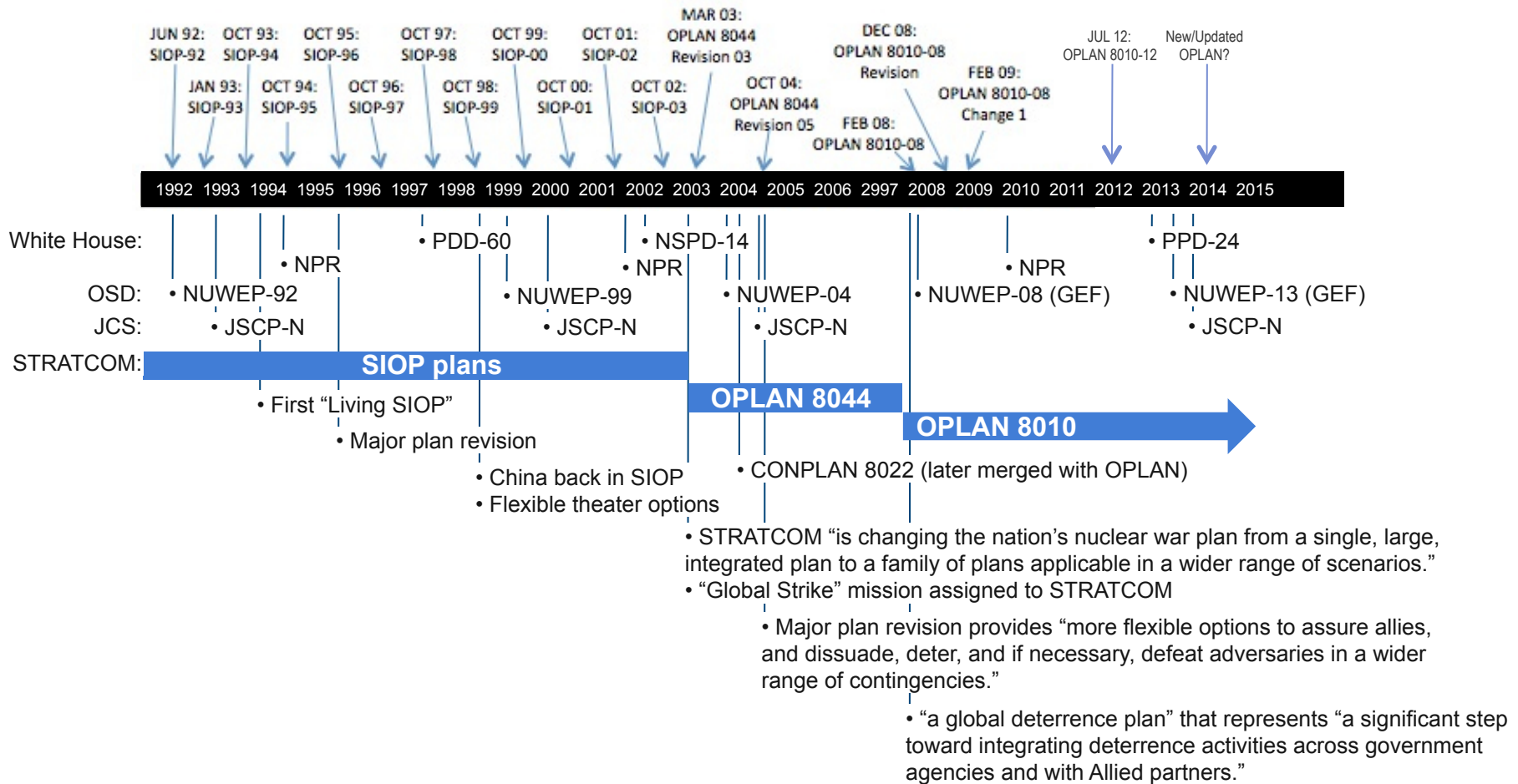


## Where Are We?



- Significant reductions in stockpile and deployed warheads compared with Cold War
- Stockpile reductions since peak in 1965 and 1974
- Deployed strategic warheads peaked in 1987
- Stockpile at about 4,650 with about 1,900 strategic and 200 tactical warheads deployed

## Recent Nuclear War Plan History



## Wider Strategic Threat Horizon

**PLANNING FOR REGIONAL STATES** TOP SECRET

- Series of options North Korean Taepo Dong 1
- Scenario driven approach Libyan Tarhuna Facility
- Planning Assumption: Scud Missile (Iran, Iraq, Libya)

TOP SECRET

- Proliferation concern and 9/11 attacks triggered broadening of not only conventional but also nuclear planning to “regional states” armed with WMD
- Terminology changed from deterring “nuclear” adversaries to deterring “WMD” adversaries
- OPLAN 8044 Revision 03 included executable strike options against regional proliferators
- Based on NSPD-14 (2002)
- Effect: mission proliferation (do more with less); plan more complex

Source: STRATCOM OPLAN 8044 Revision 03 briefing slide obtained by FAS under FOIA

## Smaller But Wider War Plan

SECRET

**OPLAN 8010 Background**

- OPLAN 8010 base plan approved Dec 07, including:
  - [REDACTED] (b)(1)
  - Nuclear force employment plans

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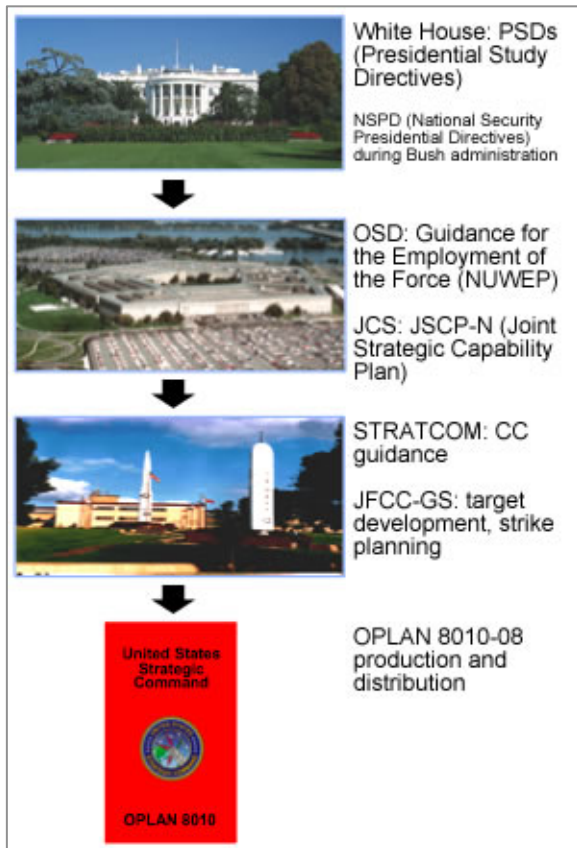
- Status of Adversary Appendices:
  - [REDACTED] Next review forecasted [REDACTED] (b)(5)
  - [REDACTED] Assumptions and concept approved [REDACTED] (b)(5)
  - [REDACTED] Final review/approval scheduled [REDACTED] (b)(5)
  - [REDACTED] Approval of assumptions and concept scheduled [REDACTED] (b)(5)
  - [REDACTED] Approval of assumptions and concept forecasted [REDACTED] (b)(5)
  - [REDACTED] Mission analysis in progress
  - [REDACTED] Mission analysis in progress

Source: STRATCOM OPLAN 8010 briefing slide obtained by FAS under FOIA

- OPLAN 8010-12 (July 2012): Strategic Deterrence and Force Employment
- Directed against six adversaries. Probably Russia, China, North Korea, Iran, Syria and 9/11-type WMD scenario
- Half do not have nuclear weapons and four of them are NPT members
- Includes four types of nuclear attack options:
  - Basic Attack Options (BAOs)
  - Selective Attack Options (SAOs)
  - Emergency Response Options (EROs)
  - Directed/Adaptive Planning Capability Options
- There are no longer Major Attack Options (MAOs) in the strategic war plan



## Nuclear War Plan Guidance



Presidential guidance is but first step in long process:

- April 2004: NUWEP-04 stated in part: “U.S. nuclear forces must be capable of, and be seen to be capable of, destroying those critical war-making and war-supporting assets and capabilities that a potential enemy leadership values most and that it would rely on to achieve its own objectives in a post-war world.”
- May 2008: NUWEP-08 Annex to Guidance for the Employment of the Force (GEF), which combines half a dozen previously separate guidance documents into one document
- June 2013: Obama administration’s nuclear weapons employment strategy (PPD-24) reaffirms counterforce, directs no reductions of force structure below New START, and retains current alert posture
- Informs new NUWEP (Annex to GEF) and JSCP-N
- Potential adjustments to OPLAN 8010-12

*“[The] president’s direction to me was less than two pages; the Joint Staff’s explanation of what the president really meant to say was twenty-six pages.”*

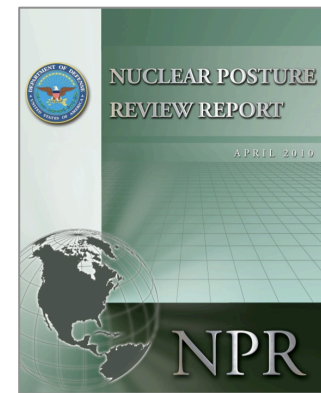
*STRATCOM Commander Admiral James Ellis, June 18, 2004*

## Reducing Role

Administration says NPR reduced role of nuclear weapons:

- The review “reduces the role of nuclear weapons in our overall defense posture by declaring that the fundamental role of U.S. nuclear forces is to deter nuclear attack....Our new doctrine also extends U.S. assurances by declaring that we will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons states that are members of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and in compliance with their non-proliferation obligations.”

*Thomas Donilon, March 2011 (emphasis added)*



...but also says that it can't reduce role yet because:

- “there remains a narrow range of contingencies in which U.S. nuclear weapons may still play a role in deterring a conventional or CBW attack against the United States or its allies and partners. The United States is therefore not prepared at the present time to adopt a universal policy that the ‘sole purpose’ of U.S. nuclear weapons is to deter nuclear attack on the United States and our allies and partners....”

*Nuclear Posture Review Report, April 2010*



# Obama's Nuclear Guidance

Announced in June 2013, nuclear weapons employment strategy (PPD-24):

## Changes

- Directs pursuit of one-third reduction in deployed strategic warheads
- States that US will only consider nuclear use in extreme circumstances
- Narrows nuclear strategy to focus on only 21<sup>st</sup> century objectives and missions
- Directs strengthening of non-nuclear capabilities and reduction of nuclear role in deterring non-nuclear attacks
- Directs reduction of role of Launch Under Attack in contingency planning
- Modifies hedging strategy for reserve warheads

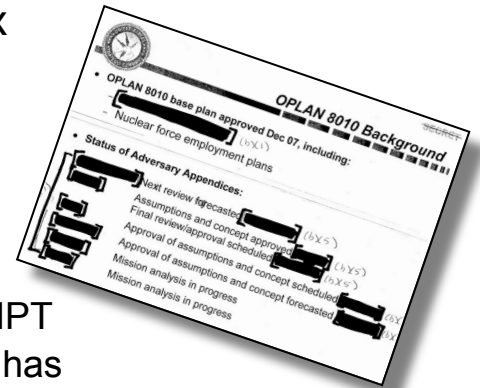
## Status Quo

- Reaffirms counterforce strategy, rejecting countervalue or minimum deterrence
- Reaffirms need for Triad
- Reaffirms need for upload capability
- Directs no force structure reductions beyond New START
- Retains role of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear adversaries
- Retains Launch Under Attack capability
- Retains current alert posture

## Reducing Role

Not evident “new doctrine” reduces nuclear planning against six adversaries in the current war plan beyond normal adjustment:

Adversary	Not affected by “reduced role” because:
Russia	it has nuclear weapons
China	it has nuclear weapons
North Korea	it has nuclear weapons and has withdrawn from the NPT
Iran	it is not considered in compliance with the NPT and it has WMD capabilities
Syria	it is not considered in compliance with the NPT and it has WMD capabilities
9/11 scenario	involves non-state actor (not member of NPT) acting alone or in collusion with “rogue” state not in compliance with/ member of NPT



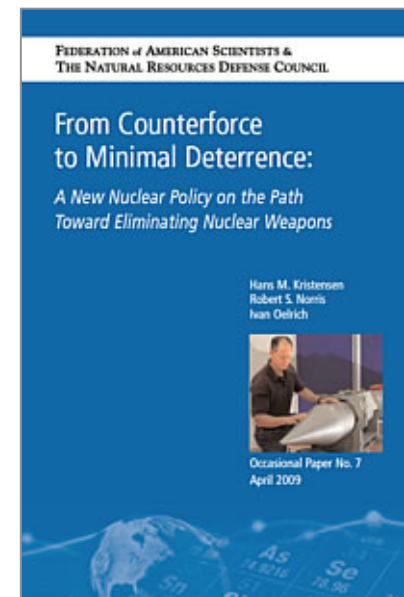
Yet President Obama said in Hankuk University speech in March 2012: “We’ve narrowed the range of contingencies under which we would ever use or threaten to use nuclear weapons.”

2013 nuclear weapons employed strategy (PPD-24) makes similar claim

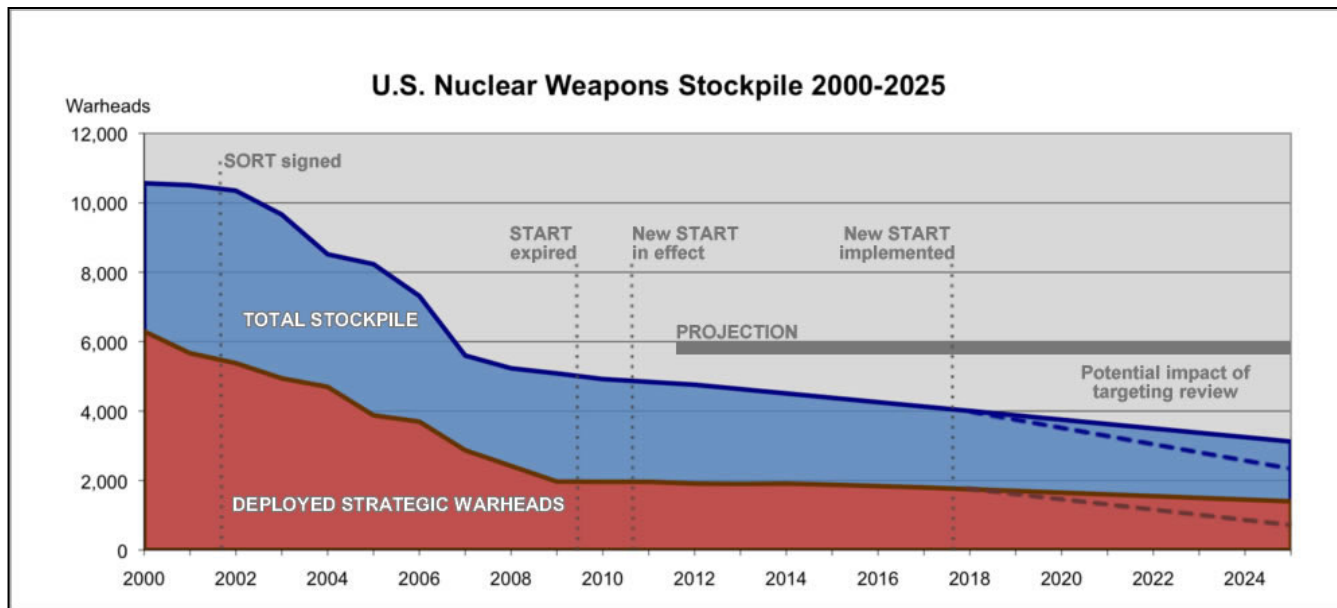
## Options for Changing War Plan

“Putting an end to Cold War thinking” will require more than trimming edges of posture but changing core planning assumptions and principles against Russia and China:

- Reduce the number or scope of target categories
- Reduce requirement for warhead damage expectancy in strike options
- Reduce number of strike options
- Reduce or remove prompt launch requirement for ICBMs
- Remove SSBNs from alert, modify deployments
- Reduce or remove requirement to plan for damage-limitation strikes
- Limit role to deter nuclear attack; “we have committed to take concrete steps to make nuclear use the sole purpose of our nuclear forces.”  
*Thomas Donilon, March 2011*
- Limit or end counterforce and force-on-force warfighting planning; “Counterforce is preemptive, or offensively reactive.”  
*DOD, Counterproliferation Operational Architecture, April 2002*
- Limit posture to secure retaliatory capability: core deterrence



## Reducing Numbers



- W Bush administration cut stockpile nearly in half by 2007
- Modest but consistent reductions since
- New START limit nearly achieved for warheads; not yet for delivery vehicles
- Additional unilateral reductions to 3,000-3,500 warheads by mid-2020s expected

## Modernizations

More than \$200 billion committed for next decade:

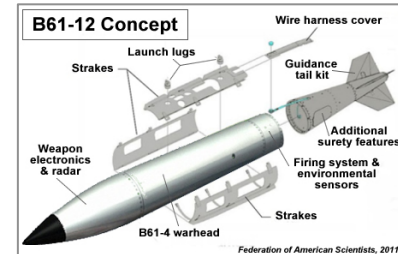
Delivery Platforms

- SSBNs:** New class of 12 boats/16 tubes each; deployed from 2031
- ICBMs:** Replacement study underway; deployed from 2030
- Bombers:** 80-100 new bombers planned; deployed from 2025
- Fighters:** F-35 JSF Block IV nuclear capability; deployed from 2020



Warheads

- B61-12:** Modified B61-4 with new guided tail kit to increase accuracy
- W76-1:** Full-scale production underway; new fuze with enhanced options
- W78:** Possibly replacement by interoperable warhead
- W80:** Possibly LEP use on new ALCM on new bomber
- W88:** New AF&F; potential replacement by interoperable warhead



Complex

- Uranium Production Facility (UPF):** Completion in mid-2020s; secondaries
- Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Replacement-Nuclear Facility (CMRR-NF):** Planned for mid-2020s but deferred for at least five years, modular upgrade instead; primaries
- Kansas City Plant:** New plant operating; non-nuclear components

## Conclusions

- Significant reductions since Cold War; but comparison increasingly useless for explaining role of nuclear weapons in 21<sup>st</sup> century
- Obama administration entered with pledge to “put an end to Cold War thinking” by reducing numbers of and reliance on nuclear weapons: 2013 nuclear weapons employment strategy (PPD-24) moves in that direction but also reaffirms Cold War thinking
- Administration also pledged modernization of remaining nuclear forces and complex that retain unnecessarily large and costly force structure that competes with broader defense needs
- “Reset” and “strategic stability” with Russia, while initially useful, has since reinforced an “us-and-them” mindset with an 1980s-like arms control approach where progress is now held hostage to Russian non-cooperation
- Russia reinstated as official justification for NATO to retain US nonstrategic nuclear weapons in Europe; weapons “disparity” focus drive old arms control thinking and surrenders initiative to NATO and Russian hardliners
- Excessive nuclear force posture and war planning fuel unnecessarily dynamic nuclear competition with Russia and China and muddles arms control agenda
- Dual-track message of reductions and modernizations has created schizophrenic policy where supporters of either track insist on priority; clearer priority is needed



# QUESTIONS?

Further reading:

Hans M. Kristensen, "Falling Short of Prague: Obama's Nuclear Weapons Employment Policy," *Arms Control Today*, September 2013, [http://armscontrol.org/act/2013\\_09/Falling-Short-of-Prague-Obamas-Nuclear-Weapons-Employment-Policy](http://armscontrol.org/act/2013_09/Falling-Short-of-Prague-Obamas-Nuclear-Weapons-Employment-Policy)

Hans M. Kristensen, "US Nuclear War Plan Updated Amidst Nuclear Policy Review," *FAS Strategic Security Blog*, April 4, 2013, <http://blogs.fas.org/security/2013/04/oplan8010-12/>

Hans M. Kristensen and Robert S. Norris, "Reviewing Nuclear Guidance: Putting Obama's Words Into Action," *Arms Control Today*, November 2011, <http://tinyurl.com/7x3oamq>

Hans M. Kristensen, *Obama and the Nuclear War Plan*, FAS, February 2010, <http://www.fas.org/blog/ssp/2010/02/warplan.php>

Hans M. Kristensen (with Robert S. Norris and Ivan Oelrich), *From Counterforce to Minimal Deterrence*, FAS/NRDC, April 2009, <http://www.fas.org/blog/ssp/2009/04/targeting.php>