

## F – Declared Nuclear Policies by NPT NWSs

### China: Excerpts from China's National Defense in the New Era

[July 2019]

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#### Implementing the Military Strategic Guideline for a New Era

[Eds . . .]

China is always committed to a nuclear policy of no first use of nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances, and not using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states or nuclear-weapon-free zones unconditionally. China advocates the ultimate complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. China does not engage in any nuclear arms race with any other country and keeps its nuclear capabilities at the minimum level required for national security. China pursues a nuclear strategy of self-defense, the goal of which is to maintain national strategic security by deterring other countries from using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against China.

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#### Safeguarding Interests in Major Security Fields

Nuclear capability is the strategic cornerstone to safeguarding national sovereignty and security. China's armed forces strengthen the safety management of nuclear weapons and facilities, maintain the appropriate level of readiness and enhance strategic deterrence capability to protect national strategic security and maintain international strategic stability.

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#### Reforming the Leadership and Command System

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The PLARF [People's Liberation Army Rocket Force] plays a critical role in maintaining China's national sovereignty and security. It comprises nuclear missile, conventional missile and support forces, and subordinate missile bases. In line with the strategic requirements of having both nuclear and conventional capabilities and deterring wars in all battlespaces, the PLARF is enhancing its credible and reliable capabilities of nuclear deterrence and counterattack, strengthening intermediate and long-range precision strike forces, and enhancing strategic counter-balance capability, so as to build a strong and modernized rocket force.

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### China: Excerpts from 'China's Arms Control, Disarmament, and Nonproliferation in the New Era'

[27 November 2025]

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#### (1) Nuclear policy

**Upholding a firm commitment to a policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons and a nuclear strategy of self-defense.** China was compelled to make the strategic choice to develop nuclear weapons at a particular point in history to deal with nuclear threats and blackmail, break the existing nuclear monopoly, and prevent nuclear wars. China's nuclear weapons are not intended to threaten other countries, but for defense and self-protection. China has never used nuclear weapons to threaten other countries nor deployed nuclear weapons outside its own territories, and has never provided a nuclear umbrella for other countries.

Whether confronted with nuclear threats or blackmail during the Cold War, or in a complex international security environment with growing strategic security threats at present, China has always committed to its policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons, firmly upheld a nuclear strategy of self-defense, and promoted the modernization of its nuclear forces to safeguard China's own strategic security and overall global strategic stability. China's

greatest contribution to international nuclear arms control lies in the fact that it has the most stable, consistent and predictable nuclear policy among all nuclear-weapon states.

**Keeping China's nuclear capabilities at the minimum level required for national security.** China has always exercised the utmost restraint regarding the scale and development of its nuclear weapons. It never has and never will engage in any nuclear arms race with any other country in terms of level of expenditure, quantity, or scale of nuclear weapons. In order to demonstrate its determination to avoid provoking a nuclear arms race, China has conducted the smallest number of nuclear tests among all nuclear-weapon states, and has closed down its nuclear weapon research and production facilities in areas including Chongqing and Qinghai.

In building a lean and effective nuclear force system, China is improving its capabilities in strategic early warning, command and control, missile penetration, and rapid response, as well as its survivability, in order to ensure the safety, security, reliability and effectiveness of its nuclear weapons and deter other countries from using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against China.

**Attaching great importance to the safe management and use and effective control of nuclear weapons.** China has strict laws and regulations and reliable technical means to implement safety management throughout the entire process of nuclear weapons storage, transportation and training. These effectively prevent any risk of an unauthorized or accidental launch of nuclear missiles, and ensure that the nuclear force is kept absolutely safe and reliable. The command of nuclear forces in China is highly centralized under a streamlined and efficient process, which ensures that unit operations are carried out in the strictest and most accurate compliance with the orders of the Central Military Commission.

**Adopting nuclear transparency, confidence-building, and risk reduction measures.** China maintains that nuclear transparency should be conducive to strategic mutual trust, take full account of the security environment and interests of each country, and be implemented by themselves voluntarily in accordance with their national conditions. Given the current international security situation, transparency in intentions and policies is of the most practical significance. China firmly follows a path of peaceful development, pursues a nuclear strategy of self-defense, and commits to a no-first-use policy on nuclear weapons. This is the most practical measure of transparency. Since 1995, China has published two white papers on arms control and 10 on national defense, and submitted six national reports on the implementation of the NPT, explaining China's nuclear policy and strategy as well as the development of its nuclear capabilities.

China has taken a number of confidence-building measures. It has voluntarily notified relevant countries of ballistic missile launches, and signed the Agreement on Notifications of Ballistic Missile and Carrier Rocket Launches with Russia. In September 2024, China notified relevant countries in advance of launching an intercontinental ballistic missile into the Pacific Ocean.

Due to the vast differences between nuclear-weapon states in their nuclear forces and policies, and in their security environment, there are no measures to reduce nuclear risks that can be universally applied. China advocates prioritizing crisis prevention and opposes the hypocritical approach of inciting confrontation and creating crises while calling for the reduction of nuclear risks. Nuclear-weapon states should effectively reduce the nuclear risks by abandoning the policy of aggressive nuclear deterrence based on the first use of nuclear weapons and reducing the role of nuclear weapons in their national and collective security policies.

**Promoting the effective operation of the P5 mechanism.** The P5 (the five nuclear-weapon states recognized by the NPT who are also the five permanent members of the UN Security Council) mechanism is an important platform enabling the five states to safeguard the architecture of the NPT, and a significant mechanism to strengthen strategic communication and mutual trust. In January 2019, China hosted the P5 Beijing Conference which restarted the cooperation process that had reached a deadlock. In January 2022,

China promoted the issuance of the Joint Statement of the Leaders of the Five Nuclear-Weapon States on Preventing Nuclear War and Avoiding Arms Races, reiterating the view that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. China has taken the lead in compiling two editions of the P5 Glossary of Key Nuclear Terms with other P5 members, which provide a valuable reference for the international community by promoting greater consensus and mutual trust, dispelling misunderstandings, and avoiding misjudgment between the five countries. From August 2024 to August 2025, China served as P5 coordinator again, working to promote greater communication about nuclear policies and strategic mutual trust among the five states.

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## France: Excerpts from National Strategic Review

[16 July 2025]

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### A robust and credible nuclear deterrent

**165.** France possesses an independent, sovereign and legitimate nuclear deterrent, structured around two strategic components (ocean-based and air-based) whose renewal has been decided by the President of the Republic.

#### 1. Fundamentals of the French doctrine

**166.** France's deterrence strategy is nuclear. It has been consistently and transparently reaffirmed, regardless of political changes. It is adapted in line with developments in the strategic environment, as reflected in the speeches of successive Presidents of the Republic. These speeches have in turn been reflected into the various Defence White Papers and strategic reviews, which together form the foundation of French doctrine. President Emmanuel Macron presented France's defence and deterrence strategy at the École de Guerre in a speech delivered on 7 February 2020, which is the current reference. Successive military programming acts passed by Parliament have reflected this long-term political determination, particularly in budgetary terms, and have ensured its implementation.

**167.** As a contest of wills, nuclear deterrence is above all the expression of political resolve, aimed at protecting France against any state-origin aggression targeting its vital interests, regardless of its source or form, whether nuclear or otherwise. Deterrence aims to influence the calculations and decisions of a state adversary in advance by making the potential aggressor fear unacceptable damage.

**168.** Nuclear deterrence is the ultimate guarantee of the Nation's security, protection and independence. France underlines the role and political nature of this weapon, whose use is the sole responsibility of the President of the Republic, elected by direct universal suffrage.

**169.** Deterrence aims to sow doubt in the mind of the adversary. This requires a careful balance between political determination to defend France's vital interests, doctrinal transparency and deliberate ambiguity regarding the exact circumstances in which the use of nuclear weapons could be considered.

#### 1.1 A strictly defensive purpose

**170.** The use of nuclear weapons is conceivable and envisageable only in extreme circumstances of self-defence, and not for the purposes of conquest, aggression, coercion or consolidation of a military advantage: "Nuclear war cannot be won and must not be fought<sup>229</sup>". Given the consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, France affirms that as long as these weapons exist, they must be used strictly for defensive purposes, deterrence and the prevention of war.

#### 1.2 Vital interests

**171.** It is the sole responsibility of the President of the Republic to assess what these interests are. The choice to maintain deliberate ambiguity, reaffirmed by each President, complicates the

calculations of any aggressor considering attacking France's interests and thereby discourages any attempts to circumvent deterrence.

#### 1.3 The unique nature of nuclear weapons – unacceptable damage

**172.** The nature, extraordinary power, speed and effects of nuclear weapons make them unique and incomparable to any conventional weapon. It is these intrinsic characteristics that enable them to inflict instant and unacceptable damage. This capability imposes a level of risk that far outweighs any potential gains an aggressor might hope to achieve. In this contest of wills, it is that prospect which must deter any inclination towards aggression. Any use of nuclear weapons in a conflict would irreversibly and fundamentally alter its nature. This is why nuclear deterrence is unique and fundamentally different from any form of discouragement undertaken by conventional, political or economic means.

#### 1.4 The nuclear warning

**173.** If a state adversary were to take the risk of attacking France, having misjudged the nature of its vital interests, a so-called nuclear warning strike could be carried out against them. Such a strike would be intended to send a clear message to the aggressor that the nature of the conflict has fundamentally changed and to restore the logic of deterrence by compelling them to abandon their ongoing acts of aggression against our country.

**174.** This nuclear warning is optional, singular and non-repeatable. It is not intended to achieve military dominance over an adversary, as the French nuclear weapon is in no way a battlefield weapon.

#### 1.5 Strict sufficiency

**175.** France rejects any arms race. The level of French nuclear forces does not depend on the offensive capabilities, whether nuclear or conventional, of other states. France does not seek any form of parity. This level is determined solely by the ability of France's nuclear forces to inflict unacceptable damage on any state that threatens France's vital interests.

#### 1.6 Permanence

**176.** French deterrence is exercised permanently thanks to the ability of nuclear forces to inflict unacceptable damage at any time. Permanence is based on the complementarity of the two nuclear components. The crews do not train to be ready: they are ready. Permanence is essential to the credibility of French deterrence. It prevents any strategic surprises and contributes to the freedom of action of the President of the Republic in all situations.

#### 1.7 Mutual support between nuclear and conventional forces

**177.** France's defence strategy is a coherent whole in which nuclear and conventional forces support each other at all times. When vital interests are likely to be threatened, conventional military manoeuvres may be part of the exercise of deterrence. However, there is a fundamental difference between conventional operations and any possible use of nuclear weapons. Conventional forces expand France's ability to respond to threats and set the threshold for our deterrence at the appropriate level. The coherence of our military model strengthens France's ability to channel adversarial aggression towards the lowest possible level of intensity. In this regard, the President of the Republic stated in his keynote speech at the École de Guerre in 2020: "The presence of robust conventional forces makes it possible to avoid strategic surprise, prevent the creation of a fait accompli or test the adversary's determination at the earliest possible stage by forcing them to reveal their true intentions. In this strategy, our nuclear deterrent force remains, as a last resort, the cornerstone of our security and the guarantee of our vital interests. Today, as in the past, it guarantees our independence and our freedom of judgement, decision and action. It prevents our adversaries from counting on the success of escalation, intimidation or blackmail".

**178.** More specifically, air and missile defence capabilities, along with deep conventional strike capabilities, both of which have grown significantly in importance at the European level since the war in

Ukraine, are two of the pillars that will help expand this support.

### 1.8 Complementarity of components

**179.** France relies on a daily basis on the two complementary components of its nuclear forces: ocean-based and airborne. Both contribute to all deterrence missions. Their respective capabilities make them complementary by significantly complicating a potential adversary's calculations and the sizing of their defences. This complementarity also shields France's deterrent from unexpected technological breakthroughs in areas such as air defence, missile defence or submarine detection. Thanks to these two components, the Head of State has multiple and diverse options at his disposal to ensure the credibility of deterrence in all circumstances.

### 1.9 Renewal of strategic nuclear forces

**180.** Since 2017, France has been engaged in renewing its two nuclear components. The strategic oceanic forces are benefiting from a new increment of the M51 intercontinental ballistic missile, and construction of the third generation of nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines has begun. The air-based nuclear component is equipped with an upgraded version of the ASMPA<sup>23</sup> missile and will, in the coming years, be equipped with a hypersonic, high-speed nuclear missile (ASN4G<sup>24</sup>).

## 2. French deterrence and Europe

**181.** France's deterrence policy must take into account changes in our strategic environment, our alliances and European integration. France has always considered that its deterrence has a European role<sup>25</sup>, given the unique nature of European integration and the unwavering solidarity it has created between France and its European partners. The President of the Republic stated in February 2020 that "our nuclear forces play a unique deterrence role, particularly in Europe. They strengthen Europe's security by their very existence and, in this respect, have a genuinely European dimension. On this point, our independence of decision-making is fully compatible with unwavering solidarity towards our European partners. Our commitment to their security and defence is the natural expression of our ever-closer solidarity. Let me be clear: France's vital interests now have a European dimension." In March 2025, he reaffirmed that "in deciding what constitutes vital interests, the interests of our main partners will be taken into account".

**182.** Within the Atlantic Alliance, France, as a nuclear-weapon state, has a specific role to play and contributes to the definition of the Alliance's nuclear policy, without however participating in NATO's nuclear planning mechanisms. Like the United Kingdom, it embodies the existence within the Alliance of multiple independent decision-making centres, complicating the calculations of any potential aggressor and contributing to NATO's overall deterrence.

**183.** Given the Russian threat and other potential or foreseeable risks, European states must be able to defend themselves better. In 2020, and again in 2024, France proposed to its European partners who so wish a strategic dialogue on the contribution of French nuclear deterrence to Europe's collective security. On 5 March 2025, the President of the Republic announced the opening of a strategic dialogue on the protection of our European allies through French deterrence. This dialogue is intended to be fully complementary to NATO's nuclear policy, without seeking to replace it. It will be based on three fundamental principles: (i) the decision to employ French nuclear deterrence will not be shared (the President of the Republic is its sole authority), (ii) French doctrine emphasises the strategic nature of the nuclear weapon, rejecting any notion of tactical use, and (iii) the offer made to Europeans will not come at the expense of the capabilities required for our national deterrence.

### 3. Preventing the arms race, dissemination and proliferation

**184.** France will work to preserve the centrality of the NPT in the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture and to promote a realistic and progressive approach to nuclear disarmament.

**185.** At the same time, the fight against nuclear proliferation remains a priority. France will therefore continue to mobilise to respond to proliferation crises and their potential consequences.

**186.** Political, technical and financial support for the International

Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will be maintained. The implementation of safeguard agreements and the universalisation of the Additional Protocol will be supported.

**187.** In parallel, France will strengthen existing frameworks for combating the proliferation and spread of weapons, including export control arrangements, conventions and international treaties. It will also contribute to efforts to promote the highest non-proliferation standards among its partners.

## 4. Promoting arms control

**188.** In the context of the disintegration of the security and arms control architecture, France will continue to support ambitious and verifiable strategic arms control agreements between the world's largest nuclear arsenals, in order to ensure strategic stability. It will reaffirm its commitment to strategic arms control instruments, including US-Russian agreements (such as New START), and to preserving existing political frameworks that ensure European strategic stability.

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### France: Excerpts from Speech by the President on France's nuclear deterrence policy

[2 March 2026]

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France has always defined the size of its arsenal in strict accordance with the operational effectiveness of our nuclear deterrent. My responsibility is to ensure that our deterrent maintains, and in the future continues to maintain, its power of assured destruction in the dangerous moving environment, beset by proliferation, that I just pointed out. As a consequence, I have decided to increase the number of warheads of our arsenal. To put an end to any speculation, we will no longer release figures on our nuclear arsenal, as we have done in the past. To be free, we must be feared, and to be feared, we must be powerful. This increase in our arsenal is a testament to this.

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And I will now speak of Europe. Our security was never conceived within the sole limits of our territory, in both conventional and nuclear terms. It is a clear geographical fact that exists and that we cannot negotiate. I will also add, today more than ever: independence cannot be solitude. When it comes to nuclear issues, this has been recognized by all of my predecessors without exception. But today, the conditions are now truly in place to draw its tangible consequences.

To explain this point, allow me to take the time to dwell upon a central element of our nuclear doctrine, the vital interests of the nation. French nuclear deterrence is intended to deter any State from encroaching on our vital interests. And what are they? We have never laid them out specifically. We have never laid them out, deliberately. Our red lines are not clear. They cannot be. Without a doubt, our interests, although they cover mainland and overseas France, should not merely be considered as what is within our national borders.

Could we consider that the survival of our closest partners might be put at risk without it affecting our vital interests? Or conversely, that an extreme threat in Europe only concerns us? For these fundamental reasons, successive Presidents have referred to the European dimension of France's vital interests. In February 2020, I reiterated the offer of all my predecessors, since President François Mitterrand, of a dialogue with European countries that would wish to develop this dimension with us more deeply. I had even offered to involve these countries in exercises of our deterrent.

Six years later, we are in a different strategic universe. We must move into an entirely new stage and articulate for our times the intuition already formulated by General de Gaulle. I believe I am in a position to affirm that our partners now stand ready for this.

First of all, last July, we forged closer ties with the United Kingdom, a major partner and independent nuclear power with which, since 1995, we have acknowledged that no situation affects the vital interests of one without those of the other also being affected. We have strengthened our bilateral nuclear cooperation, asserted our

joint solidarity with the Europeans, and opened up the possibility of coordinating our respective deterrents. This winter, for the first time since our deterrent has existed, senior British officials attended one of our strategic air forces' exercises.

But our ambition must be greater, because it is Europe's security, our security, which is at stake in the future. Contact has been made with a first group of allies, of course starting with our crucial partners, Germany. They responded positively to France's offer.

Today, a new step of France's deterrence can now be taken. We are entering the path of what I will call "forward deterrence". I prefer to be clear from the start, there will be no sharing of the ultimate decision, nor of its planification, nor of its conduct. Under our Constitution, the decision to employ nuclear weapons rests solely with the President of the Republic, who is accountable to the French people.

Therefore, there will also be no sharing of the definition of our vital interests, which will remain of sovereign assessment for our country. And for this reason, as with other nuclear alliances, including when they have plans and procedures, there will be no guarantee in the strict sense of the term. A rigid guarantee would not be wise. It would lower the nuclear threshold and reduce the uncertainty of our adversaries in equal proportion.

With forward deterrence, our doctrine will retain its original foundations: its strictly defensive character, the refusal of any nuclear battle, and the total and deliberate distinction between conventional and nuclear realms. The same holds true for the opportunity of a nuclear warning shot, unique and non-renewable: it will always be decided at France's sole discretion, to demonstrate very clearly that the nature of a conflict has changed and that France intends, through this means, to preserve an ultimate chance to restore deterrence.

So France will always assume on her own the responsibility for the deliberate crossing of the nuclear threshold, fully factoring in the interests of our allies. This is a progressive approach. It offers, first of all, the possibility for partners to participate in deterrence exercises. It may also involve signalling, including beyond our strict borders, or conventional participation of allies' forces in our nuclear activities. It will finally involve the temporary deployment of elements of our strategic air forces to allied countries.

In the same way that our strategic submarines dilute naturally in the oceans, guaranteeing a permanent-strike capability, our strategic air forces will also be able to be spread deep into the European continent. This dispersal across European territory, a sort of archipelago of forces, will complicate the calculations of our adversaries and will make this forward deterrence very valuable to us. It will strengthen our defence, while giving it room to operate: it will offer it a new strategic depth, in line with the challenges of European security. It will be, I believe, very valuable to partners who will follow this approach with us, and whose territory will gain a strong link with our deterrence.

It has been clear since the beginning, to us and to our partners, that this effort will come as an addition to NATO's nuclear mission. In which, I would like to point out, we do not take part. The forward deterrence we are proposing is a distinct effort which has its own value and is perfectly complementary to NATO's at both strategic and technical level. The work we have started on this project with the Europeans has been done in full transparency with the United States of America and in close coordination with the UK.

I would like to thank those allies who have demonstrated their trust by working intensely towards these future partnerships, in compliance with our international obligations, and particularly the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Germany will be a key partner in this most ambitious effort, of course, in the spirit of the Treaty of Aachen. The first steps of cooperation will begin this year and could include visits of strategic sites and joint exercises.

Other countries have already agreed to this dialogue, in addition to our British and German partners and friends, whom I have already mentioned: Poland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Greece, Sweden and Denmark will join it. This is a genuine strategic convergence between our countries, that will give real depth to the defence of our continent. Discussions are also open with several other countries and will be developed the next weeks and months.

Mirroring what we have put in place with the UK, exchange bodies at political level will be created with each of these countries in the next few days. This requires joint work on the threat and intelligence, specific means of communication, organization, but also a common understanding of the drivers of escalation and how to respond to them, particularly in the conventional phase.

That is also why the approach of forward deterrence, by its very nature, strengthens our protection and that of our partners. In the same way that France creates for Europe's adversaries new strategic dilemmas through forward deterrence, our partners are contributing in exchange to collective security and therefore France's security. That is the very nature of mutual support between nuclear and conventional capabilities.

The experience of recent years shows that there are at least three areas where our Europe, if it had to confront an escalation and handle it under the nuclear threshold, would benefit from new collective resources: early warning, meaning the capability to detect and track missiles that could target us, using a combination of satellites and radar systems; control of our airspace with expanded air defence and anti-missile and anti-drone defences; and deep strike capabilities. By joining us in such reciprocal mutual support, partner countries can help strengthen the capabilities of Europe in these three fields. It would be a fair distribution of efforts, and France would clearly benefit from it.

Already, projects are moving forward, and we will continue to quicken the pace. First, regarding early warning systems, the JEWEL programme will provide Europeans with the sovereign capabilities to detect missiles targeting them from space. As for air defence, the new generation SAMP/T NG surface-to-air missile system will provide world class performances. Denmark and Ukraine have already announced they are acquiring them. In terms of deep strike capabilities, Germany, the United Kingdom and France, in the framework of our ELSA initiative, will work together on long-range missile projects. This will give new options to conventionally manage escalation, at a time when adversaries are deploying new technologies and weapons. As the partnership grows stronger, other projects and contributions will appear, in a spirit of European sovereignty and complementarity.

This is the new layer that I want to add to France's defence, and the new cohesion that it will create for our continent. You can see it for yourselves, it is therefore a major shift that I have chosen to bring about for our deterrence. The context allows me at last to make the words "European dimension", pronounced by nearly all my predecessors, a reality that benefits both our country and our allies.

In the troubled times we are living through, it will also be necessary to rethink the rules that govern the security of our continent and of the world. It is a whole framework that must be rebuilt, and Europeans should be able to fully defend their interests. And they will be able to because they will have born their share of the burden, strengthened their strategic independence and taken the major decisions that I have just mentioned. Today, international agreements on arms control are at a loss. Let's look at the situation with clear eyes. Everyone has taken their liberties. The United States put an end to the anti-ballistic missiles treaties. The United States and Russia put an end to the intermediate-range nuclear force treaties, the provisions of which Russia had long violated. The New START Treaty, which governed US and Russian nuclear arsenals, ceased to exist a few weeks ago. Russia deratified the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, which the United States, meanwhile, had never ratified. A resumption of tests would end an almost 30-year-long moratorium. China, meanwhile, is catching up, and is not taking part in anything. So let's be honest: The field of rules has turned into a field of ruins. And the prevailing animosity does not inspire the confidence required to rebuild the norms of collective security. That is why we are right to harden our position and we made the decisions I have just announced.

Unfortunately, such anomy applies not only to those who already have nuclear weapons, but also to those who are seeking to acquire them. The Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will be held in May, to a backdrop heavy with threats, with the concerning advances of the North Korean programme, the Iranian crisis, and the growing attempts of all those who, in Asia, Europe and elsewhere, are

seeking alternatives to the security guarantees that they thought they could rely on. That is the spirit of our times. But France does not plan to resign itself.

In arms control, our own record is indeed exemplary. And I want to recall that today. We dismantled the land component of our deterrence and our enrichment facilities for military purposes. We ceased our nuclear tests, developed a high-performance simulation system and have always rejected any arms race. The forward deterrence approach that we are proposing is not escalatory, and as it enhances the feeling of security in Europe, it provides significant benefits to prevent potential future risks of proliferation on our continent.

But we must change our rationale, first and foremost. Yes, Europeans have become used to their security depending on rules made by others, in other times, and rescinded also, sometimes, unbeknownst to them, often at their expense. Let us be clear, the European security architecture was just that: agreements dating to the Cold War negotiated by others, including when they concerned us, and they were terminated by the very same States that had signed them, with no consultation, even when they were our allies. This era calls for another method. We must rebuild a body of rules – as far as we are concerned, one rooted in our security interests and those of our continent.

This will require, first and foremost, an effort that Europeans must undertake on how Europe's stability should be organized. I am inviting our partners to take part in the initial work we have started with the Germans and the British on this matter. The strategic convergence allowed by forward deterrence will help to that effect. When our European interests are established, we will be able to go further and open a negotiation framework in order to control certain conventional capabilities and their positioning. This approach must be prepared right away by enhancing our European independence, and tomorrow it must aim for a new security framework in all these areas, particularly between Europeans and Russians, at the very least, and at international level, by aiming to involve the USA and China, including regarding nuclear capabilities, on an equitable basis.

Above all, as you will have understood, I want the Europeans to reclaim control of their own destiny. Let's not forget, that being said, that beyond the numbers in the arsenals and security architectures, there is an ethical dimension to what we are talking about. Nuclear weapons inherently inspire terror. The moral questions are not limited to the iron laws of strategy with its disembodied rationale. It is only right that such weapons continue to provoke rational discussions to limit and govern their use, and maintain the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons. This must remain our horizon.

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## Russia: Fundamentals of State Policy of the Russian Federation on Nuclear Deterrence

[December 2024]

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### I. General Provisions

1. These Fundamentals are a strategic planning document in the area of ensuring defence that reflects official views on the essence of nuclear deterrence, identifies military risks and threats intended to be neutralized by the implementation of nuclear deterrence, as well as defines the principles of nuclear deterrence and the conditions for the transition of the Russian Federation to the employment of nuclear weapons.

2. Assured deterrence of a potential adversary from aggression against the Russian Federation and (or) its allies is one of the highest state priorities. Deterrence of aggression is ensured by the totality of the military might of the Russian Federation, including nuclear weapons.

3. The state policy of the Russian Federation on nuclear deterrence (hereafter referred to as "state policy on nuclear deterrence") is a set of coordinated political, military, military-technical, diplomatic, economic, information, and other measures, unified by a common concept and implemented with reliance on nuclear deterrence

forces and means to prevent aggression against the Russian Federation and (or) its allies.

4. The state policy on nuclear deterrence is defensive in nature, aimed at maintaining the capabilities of nuclear forces at a level sufficient to ensure nuclear deterrence, and guarantees the protection of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state, deterrence of a potential adversary from aggression against the Russian Federation and (or) its allies, and – in the event of an outbreak of a military conflict – the prevention of the escalation in hostilities and their cessation on terms acceptable to the Russian Federation and (or) its allies.

5. The Russian Federation considers nuclear weapons as a means of deterrence, the employment of which is an extreme and compelled measure, and makes all the necessary efforts to reduce the nuclear threat and prevent aggravation of interstate relations that could trigger military conflicts, including nuclear ones.

6. The statutory legal basis of these Fundamentals consists of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, generally recognized principles and norms of international law, international treaties of the Russian Federation, federal constitutional laws, federal laws, and other statutory legal acts and documents regulating defence and security matters.

7. The provisions of these Fundamentals are binding on all federal government authorities and other government bodies and organizations involved in ensuring nuclear deterrence.

8. These Fundamentals may be adjusted to account for external and internal factors that shape defence requirements.

### II. The Essence of Nuclear Deterrence

9. The Russian Federation exercises nuclear deterrence toward a potential adversary, defined as individual states and military coalitions (blocs, alliances), that consider the Russian Federation as a potential adversary and possess nuclear and (or) other types of weapons of mass destruction or significant combat capabilities of general purpose forces. Nuclear deterrence is also exercised toward states that provide territory, air and (or) sea space under their control, as well as resources for preparing and committing aggression against the Russian Federation.

10. Aggression by any state from a military coalition (bloc, alliance) against the Russian Federation and (or) its allies is considered as the aggression by this coalition (bloc, alliance) as a whole.

11. Aggression against the Russian Federation and (or) its allies by any non-nuclear state with the participation or support of a nuclear state is considered as their joint attack.

12. Nuclear deterrence is aimed to ensure that a potential adversary realizes the inevitability of retaliation in the event of aggression against the Russian Federation and (or) its allies.

13. Nuclear deterrence is ensured by the presence in the structure of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation of combat-ready forces and means capable of inflicting assured unacceptable damage on a potential adversary under any circumstances through the employment of nuclear weapons, as well as by the readiness and resolve of the Russian Federation to employ such weapons.

14. Nuclear deterrence is implemented continuously in peacetime, during the period of immediate threat of aggression, and in wartime, up to the beginning of nuclear weapons employment.

15. The main military risks that, depending on changes in the military-political and strategic situation, can evolve into military threats to the Russian Federation (threats of aggression) and that are intended to be neutralized by the implementation of nuclear deterrence are as follows:

a) possession by a potential adversary of nuclear and (or) other types of weapons of mass destruction that can be employed against the Russian Federation and (or) its allies, as well as of delivery means for these types of weapons;

b) possession and deployment by a potential adversary of missile defence systems and assets, intermediate- and shorter-range cruise and ballistic missiles, high-precision non-nuclear and hypersonic weapons, unmanned combat vehicles of various basing modes, directed energy weapons that can be used against the Russian Federation;

c) buildup by a potential adversary on the territories contiguous to the Russian Federation and its allies and in adjacent waters of general purpose forces groupings, which include nuclear weapons delivery means, and (or) military infrastructure ensuring the employment of such means;

d) development and deployment by a potential adversary of missile defence and anti-satellite warfare assets, as well as of strike systems in space;

e) deployment of nuclear weapons and their delivery means on the territories of non-nuclear states;

f) establishment of new or expansion of existing military coalitions (blocs, alliances), leading to the advancement of their military infrastructure to the borders of the Russian Federation;

g) actions by a potential adversary aimed at isolating a part of the territory of the Russian Federation, including blocking access to vital transport communications;

h) actions by a potential adversary aimed at defeating (destroying, eliminating) environmentally hazardous facilities of the Russian Federation that may lead to technogenic, ecological or social disasters;

i) planning and conduct of large-scale military exercises by a potential adversary near the borders of the Russian Federation;

j) uncontrolled proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery, technologies and equipment for their manufacture.

16. The principles of nuclear deterrence are as follows:

a) continuity of activities ensuring nuclear deterrence;

b) adaptability of nuclear deterrence to military risks and threats;

c) uncertainty for a potential adversary in terms of scale, time, and place of the possible employment of nuclear deterrence forces and means;

d) centralization of state governance over the activities of federal executive authorities and organizations involved in ensuring nuclear deterrence;

e) rationality of the structure and composition of nuclear deterrence forces and means, as well as their maintenance at a level sufficient to fulfil the assigned tasks;

f) maintaining constant readiness of a designated part of nuclear deterrence forces and means for combat employment;

g) centralization of the command over the employment of nuclear weapons, including those located outside the territory of the Russian Federation.

17. The nuclear deterrence forces of the Russian Federation include land-, sea- and air-based nuclear forces.

### III. Conditions for the Transition of the Russian Federation to the Employment of Nuclear Weapons

18. The Russian Federation reserves the right to employ nuclear weapons in response to the employment of nuclear and (or) other types of weapons of mass destruction against itself and (or) its allies, as well as in the event of aggression against the Russian Federation and (or) the Republic of Belarus as participants in the Union State with the employment of conventional weapons, which creates a critical threat to their sovereignty and (or) territorial integrity.

19. The conditions that enable the possibility of nuclear weapons employment by the Russian Federation are as follows:

a) receipt of reliable data on the launch of ballistic missiles attacking the territories of the Russian Federation and (or) its allies;

b) employment of nuclear or other types of weapons of mass destruction by an adversary against the territories of the Russian Federation and (or) its allies, against facilities and (or) military formations of the Russian Federation located outside its territory;

c) actions by an adversary affecting elements of critically important state or military infrastructure of the Russian Federation, the disablement of which would disrupt response actions by nuclear

forces;

d) aggression against the Russian Federation and (or) the Republic of Belarus as participants in the Union State with the employment of conventional weapons, which creates a critical threat to their sovereignty and (or) territorial integrity;

e) receipt of reliable data on the massive launch (take-off) of air and space attack means (strategic and tactical aircraft, cruise missiles, unmanned, hypersonic and other aerial vehicles) and their crossing of the state border of the Russian Federation.

20. The decision to employ nuclear weapons is made by the President of the Russian Federation.

21. The President of the Russian Federation may, if necessary, inform the military-political leadership of other states and (or) international organizations about the readiness of the Russian Federation to employ nuclear weapons or of the decision taken to employ nuclear weapons, as well as of the fact of their employment.

### IV. Tasks and Functions of Federal Government Authorities, Other Government Bodies and Organizations on the Implementation of State Policy on Nuclear Deterrence

22. The state policy on nuclear deterrence is directed by the President of the Russian Federation.

23. The Government of the Russian Federation takes measures to implement economic policy aimed at maintenance and development of nuclear deterrence means, as well as shapes and implements foreign and information policy in the nuclear deterrence area.

24. The Security Council of the Russian Federation sets the main directions of military policy in the nuclear deterrence area, as well as coordinates the activities of federal executive authorities and organizations involved in the implementation of the decisions by the President of the Russian Federation related to ensuring nuclear deterrence.

25. The Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, acting through the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, directly plans and implements organizational and military activities in the nuclear deterrence area.

26. Other federal executive authorities and organizations participate in the implementation of the decisions by the President of the Russian Federation related to ensuring nuclear deterrence in accordance with their authority.

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## UK: Excerpts from The Strategic Defence Review 2025

[July 2025]

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[Eds . . .]

### 7.1 The UK's Nuclear Deterrent

**A modernised nuclear deterrent is the bedrock of the UK's defence and the cornerstone of its commitment to NATO and global security.** The UK's nuclear weapons deter the most extreme threats to national security and provide critical insurance against the gravest risks and uncertainties of the future. For more than 55 years under Operation RELENTLESS, the Royal Navy has operated a nuclear-armed submarine every hour of every day—the Continuous At Sea Deterrent—to deliver this important mission.

**Nuclear deterrence can no longer be considered separately from the wider strategic environment,** as described in Chapter 2. Any future crisis or conflict in which the UK is engaged may include nuclear-armed or nuclear-aspiring states willing to use nuclear threats to compel or constrain UK and allied decision-making. Ensuring the UK can continue to deter such threats and remain free from coercion requires sustained investment across the Defence Nuclear Enterprise and in the UK's alliances, skills, and industrial base. UK nuclear policy remains unchanged (Box 10).

#### Box 10: UK nuclear policy

The foundation of the UK's approach to deterrence remains a minimum, credible, independent UK nuclear deterrent, assigned to the defence of NATO. The purpose of the UK's nuclear weapons is

to preserve peace, prevent coercion, and deter aggression. The UK's nuclear weapons are operationally independent. Only the Prime Minister can authorise their use, ensuring that political control is maintained at all times. The UK would consider using nuclear weapons only in extreme circumstances of self-defence, including the defence of its NATO Allies.

The UK is deliberately ambiguous about precisely when, how, and at what scale it would contemplate the use of nuclear weapons. The UK does not publicise figures for its operational stockpile, deployed warhead, or deployed missile numbers. This posture enhances its deterrent effect by complicating the calculations of potential aggressors and reduces the risk of deliberate nuclear use by those seeking a first-strike advantage.

The UK will not use, or threaten to use, nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear weapon state party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This assurance does not apply to any state in material breach of those non-proliferation obligations. The UK reserves the right to review this assurance if the future threat of weapons of mass destruction, such as chemical and biological capabilities, or emerging technologies that could have a comparable impact, makes it necessary. To ensure that the deterrent is not vulnerable to pre-emptive action by potential adversaries, the UK maintains four Ballistic Missile Submarines (SSBN, Ship Submersible Ballistic Nuclear) so that at least one will always be on a Continuous At Sea Deterrent patrol. It is committed to maintaining the destructive power needed to guarantee that the UK's nuclear deterrent remains credible and effective against the full range of state nuclear threats from any direction. The UK continues to keep its nuclear posture under constant review in light of the international security environment and the actions of potential adversaries.

#### Deterrence and assurance: working with NATO Allies

Russia's increasing reliance on nuclear coercion will be the central challenge for the UK and its NATO Allies in the coming decades. Russia is modernising and expanding its extensive set of nuclear capabilities, which are designed for employment at multiple levels of warfare. Its strategies for warfighting rely on the threat of limited nuclear use to terminate a conflict on advantageous terms. China's unprecedented nuclear expansion will place demands on US nuclear forces and the deterrence it extends to the Euro-Atlantic. Potential collaboration and opportunism among these and other nuclear challengers—of the type seen in Ukraine—add further complexity to deterrence, escalation dynamics, and allied assurance.

Partnership with the United States—underpinned by the 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement (recently renewed by this Government) and the 1963 Polaris Sales Agreement—continues to be fundamental to UK and US nuclear security goals and to UK nuclear deterrence. As the US confronts the unprecedented challenge of facing two near-peer nuclear powers, Russia and China, **the UK must explore how to support the US and its NATO Allies in strengthening extended deterrence across the Euro-Atlantic.**

As the only European country to assign its nuclear capability to the defence of NATO, the UK is **well-placed to lead Europe in enhancing its contribution to deterrence and assurance in the Euro-Atlantic.** The UK must work with Allies to ensure NATO's deterrence posture is fit for purpose across the spectrum of conflict, underpinned by collective investment in the range of capabilities necessary to deter nuclear use at any scale. This must include intellectual investment to ensure that the Alliance's civilian and military leaders understand the nuclear dimensions of any future crisis or conflict in which their countries are engaged.

Although France is not a formal part of NATO's nuclear planning structures, the UK and France have long recognised that a threat to the vital interests of one would constitute a threat to the vital interests of the other. The UK should seek a closer relationship with its European nuclear ally, building on the Lancaster House Treaties in areas of political, technical, and policy collaboration.

We need to have everything in place in case something happens—we need that insurance policy

Citizens' Panel member, Rolleston Camp

**A sustained commitment to arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation**

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is the cornerstone of the non-proliferation and disarmament regime and the only credible route to universal nuclear disarmament. The regime is now under strain. Historical structures for maintaining strategic stability and reducing nuclear risks have not kept pace with the evolving security picture. Others did not follow the disarmament progress led by the UK and the US during the 2000s. With the New START Treaty set to expire in February 2026, the future of strategic arms control—at least in the medium term—does not look promising.<sup>[footnote 83]</sup>

To maintain international confidence in the nuclear non-proliferation regime, **continued UK leadership within the NPT is imperative.** A strong NATO nuclear mission is also essential as it is one of the most significant non-proliferation tools available to assure Allies that they do not need nuclear weapons of their own.

#### Delivering the nuclear deterrent as a 'National Endeavour'

**The decisions made within this Parliament will be crucial for maintaining the UK's independent nuclear deterrent,** a complex, scientifically advanced portfolio spanning decades. The Defence Nuclear Enterprise (DNE, Box 11) is expending enormous effort to sustain the Continuous At Sea Deterrent and to adapt its estate and capabilities, with delays in decision-making and programme delivery since the end of the Cold War leading to cost growth across the portfolio in recent years. The launch of a 'National Endeavour' approach to the Enterprise is beginning to drive resilience across critical enablers of the nuclear deterrent. Success will require persistent leadership and focus at the highest levels of Government and a significant shift in mindset across all departments crucial to delivery.

#### Box 11: The Defence Nuclear Enterprise (DNE)

The DNE is the partnership of organisations that operate, maintain, renew, and sustain the UK's nuclear deterrent. The DNE's core organisations in Government are the Defence Nuclear Organisation, Royal Navy, Submarine Delivery Agency, Atomic Weapons Establishment, and Strategic Command. The DNE is currently investing across the following areas to sustain the deterrent for as long as required:

- Four Dreadnought class nuclear-powered ballistic submarines to replace the current Vanguard class. The first boat is due on patrol in the early 2030s.
- Seven Astute class conventionally armed, nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSNs) and the design of the next-generation SSN-A (AUKUS).
- A replacement UK sovereign warhead (ASTRAEA), while maintaining the existing stockpile.
- Critical elements of the DNE's infrastructure to adapt naval bases and manufacturing processes, supporting growth to sustain future fleet needs and weapons requirements.
- The establishment of a Nuclear Fuels Programme, which will re-establish a nuclear fuel cycle for reactor fuel for defence purposes.

**A transformed partnership with industry, building on existing efforts within the DNE, is also essential.** The scale of what industry must deliver to sustain and renew the nuclear deterrent is vast. The MOD must incentivise companies to prioritise nuclear activities and invest resources across the Enterprise to deliver to cost and schedule. Other factors influencing industrial productivity—including better infrastructure and a skilled workforce—must also be addressed.

#### Long-term stability in the Defence Nuclear Enterprise

As a multi-generational effort, **the renewal of the nuclear deterrent requires long-term direction** so that the MOD and industry can manage risk and improve performance and value for money over time. Clarity is needed on how this programme interacts with a wider set of demands for nuclear-powered, conventionally armed submarines, including the next-generation attack submarines under the AUKUS partnership. The programme to replace the sovereign warhead is critical and will require significant investment this Parliament. The Government must maintain the current financial arrangements that ringfence nuclear from wider departmental

pressures to ensure stability in the nuclear portfolio. This includes funding for industrial infrastructure to mitigate risk in submarine build. **Public and parliamentary support is also vital** at a time when the importance, scale, and cost of the Enterprise are increasing.

#### Recommendations:

30. The UK must facilitate greater coherence between conventional and nuclear components of NATO's deterrence and defence posture. This should incorporate all domains and the entire spectrum of conflict, including high-intensity war against nuclear-armed states. Action should include:

- Further investment in conventional deep (long-range) precision strike and Integrated Air and Missile Defence (Chapter 7.4) to provide the broadest range of options for deterring and responding to high-impact threats.
- Strengthening NATO- and UK-led training and exercises, addressing potential escalation and conflict scenarios with nuclear-armed states.
- Commencing discussions with the United States and NATO on the potential benefits and feasibility of enhanced UK participation in NATO's nuclear mission.

31. The UK must continue to champion its nuclear responsibilities while seeking to renew the arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation regime, centred on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. However, the UK's priorities and objectives in seeking this renewal must be realistic about the absence of willing partners in Moscow and Beijing.

32. The National Security Council (Nuclear) committee of senior Ministers should review progress on the 'National Endeavour' for delivering the UK's nuclear deterrent at least twice a year. These meetings should bring together Ministers from all departments essential to its delivery.

33. The Government must take a comprehensive approach to improving industrial productivity as a key factor in delivering and maintaining the UK's nuclear deterrent. This includes:

- Ensuring it has the flexibility to incentivise industry investment in infrastructure and asset management. This should include serious consideration of amendments to the Single Source Contract Regulations.
- Removing barriers to productivity that sit outside industry's direct control. Projects such as the National Nuclear Strategic Plan for Skills and the Barrow Transformation Fund should be prioritised, <sup>[footnote 84]</sup> with other Government departments committing to providing funding at the necessary pace and scale.
- Exploring opportunities for legislative reform that could, in extreme circumstances, direct industry to prioritise defence nuclear requirements in the sovereign supply chain or enable compulsory acquisition of assets where necessary to protect national security.

34. To avoid the costs of the past, the Government must commit to not extending the life of the Dreadnought class submarines beyond their intended end-of-service dates from the mid-2050s. It should start to define the requirement for the post-Dreadnought nuclear deterrent within this Parliament.

35. To sustain long-term support for the UK's nuclear deterrent and to ensure stability in delivering the portfolio, the Government should:

- Develop mechanisms for enhanced parliamentary scrutiny—under appropriate conditions—to provide confidence that taxpayer money is being spent wisely in pursuit of the nation's highest defence priority.
- Deliver a 'National Endeavour' public communications campaign that conveys the fundamental importance and necessity of the deterrent.
- Confirm the intended numbers of SSN attack

submarines, including the next-generation attack submarines under the AUKUS partnership to provide the necessary assumptions for the required build capacity and tempo.

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## US: Excerpts from National Security Strategy of the United States of America

[November 2025]

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[Eds . . .]

### II. What Should the United States Want?

[Eds . . .]

We want the world's most robust, credible, and modern nuclear deterrent, plus next-generation missile defenses—including a Golden Dome for the American homeland—to protect the American people, American assets overseas, and American allies.

[Eds . . .]

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## US: Summary Points of 2018 US Nuclear Posture Review from President Trump's First Administration

[February 2018]

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### Strategic Environment

- Return to Great Power, long-term competition
- Nuclear-armed states did not follow U.S. lead in reducing role and numbers of nuclear weapons.
- U.S. reduced 85% since 1991.
- Russia modernizing and expanding strategic and non-strategic nuclear weapons; strategy for nuclear escalation.
- China modernizing military; fielding new nuclear capabilities and expanding their arsenal.
- North Korea expanding its missile and nuclear capability.
- Iranian nuclear ambitions remain a concern.
- Threat of nuclear terrorism.
- U.S. nuclear weapons approaching end of life.
- Changes in uncertain strategic environment may come suddenly and unpredictably.

### Role of Nuclear Weapons

- Deter nuclear attack on the U.S. and its allies and partners.
- Contribute to deterrence of non-nuclear attack.
- Assure allies and partners regarding U.S. extended deterrence guarantees.
- Achieve U.S. objectives if deterrence fails.
- Hedge against uncertain future.

### Posture

- Force modernization.
  - Strategic nuclear triad.
  - Non-strategic nuclear forces.
  - Robust nuclear command and control.
  - Responsive nuclear infrastructure.
  - Hedge capabilities
- Force structure
  - 400 ICBM
  - 240 SLBM
  - 60 bombers with cruise missile and bombs
  - Dual-capable fighter aircraft

### Tailored Deterrence and Flexible Capabilities

- Tailored for specific adversaries and circumstances to deny benefits, threaten what they most value.
  - **Russia**: preserve rough strategic parity; hold at risk valued assets.
  - China: counter A2AD and de-coupling strategies, hold at risk most valued assets.
  - North Korea: maintain escalation dominance, counter missile threats, end Kim regime if they launch nuclear attack on U.S., or our allies and partners.
  - **Iran**: dissuade from developing a nuclear weapon.
- Flexibility derived from diverse set of nuclear capabilities adaptable to changing conditions in a highly uncertain security environment.

#### **Declaratory Policy**

- Policy integrates deterrence and non-proliferation objectives.
- Nuclear weapons may be used in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States, its allies and partners.
- Not limited to deterring nuclear threats; may deter or respond to significant non-nuclear strategic attacks (e.g. attacks on population or infrastructure, warning capabilities).
- Will not use or threaten to use against non-nuclear states in compliance with non-proliferation commitments.

#### **Non-proliferation and arms control**

- Commitment to NPT Regime.
- Maintain New START, INF; set conditions for future arms control.
- Improve capabilities to prevent proliferation and terrorism.
- Transparency and risk reduction measures.