

Restricting the Missions of our Nuclear Arsenal¹

Resolved: The USFG should substantially restrict the missions of its nuclear arsenal.

Variation 1: The USFG should substantially restrict the size and/or missions of its nuclear arsenal.

Variation 2: The USFG should substantially restrict the size and/or missions of its nuclear arsenal through unilateral policies or arms control initiatives.

In short, this framework – “restrict missions” – is very faithful to the controversy paper’s wording proposed frame of “reduce reliance.” “Restrict” tightens up the word “reduce” by forcing the affirmative to more directly limit or circumscribe nuclear weapons. “Missions” is more tangible and specific than “reliance.”

Quantitative reductions arguably restrict missions on a one-to-one mapping, so it is probably not necessary to include “size” in the wording.

¹ Submitted to the CEDA Topic Committee on June 1, 2009 by Steve Mancuso. I received input from several people, including: Dr. Jeffrey Lewis, Director of the Nuclear Strategy and Nonproliferation Initiative at the New American Foundation; Alex Lennon, Editor-in-Chief of the Washington Quarterly; Paul Kerr, Congressional Research Service; and many debate coaches – Stefan Bauschard, Rich Edwards, Scott Elliot, David Glass, Mike Hall, Jim Hanson, Scott Harris, David Heidt, David Cram Helwich, Josh Hoe, Ed Lee, Tim Mahoney, Joe Patrice, Dallas Perkins, Greta Stahl, Ken Strange, and Kelly Young. I don’t mean to imply that any of these people endorse the final product – just that they provided valuable insights in varying degrees along the way.

It might be wise to add “unilateral policies and/or arms control initiatives” as a way to authorize the arms control style affirmatives that were so prominent in the controversy paper and on voters’ minds.

“Restrict”

The verb “to restrict” conveys a more direct and binding connotation than the verbs “reduce” or “decrease.” If true, use of “restrict” would represent an important guard against bi-directional type affirmatives such as increasing conventional weapon modernization. Those affirmatives might “reduce” by effect our nuclear missions, but they would not by themselves “restrict” a mission.

“Restrict” means “curtail,” “cut back,” “curb,” “abridge,” “confine,” “limit,” “bound,” “place limits on,” “to hold within limits,” “circumscribe”

Legal sources note that “to restrict” means:

1 : to subject to bounds or limits²

The noun “restriction” means direct, on-face limitation.

restriction

n. any limitation on activity, by statute, regulation or contract provision. In multi-unit real estate developments, condominium and cooperative housing projects managed by homeowners' associations or similar organizations, such organizations are usually required by state law to impose restrictions on use. Thus, the restrictions are part of the "covenants, conditions and restrictions" intended to enhance the use of

² Lawyers.Com <http://research.www.lawyers.com/glossary/restrict.html>

common facilities and property which are recorded and incorporated into the title of each owner.³

This is an improvement over the use of “decrease” or “reduce” because it conveys a sense of being legally binding instead of the result of an effect. See also the related comments in Dave Arnett’s paper.⁴

Here is an example of its use in the context of nuclear missions.

First, we review current U.S. nuclear doctrine, both what it is and how it is developed and implemented. Next, we describe how restricting the missions for nuclear weapons much more severely would enhance the security of the United States, and then show how these new limited missions would be implemented.⁵

³ Law.Com <http://dictionary.law.com/default2.asp?selected=1835&bold=restrict>

⁴ Why “restrict?” Restrict is good word because it is a legal term that specifically refers to restrictions on uses. (See:http://dictionary.law.com/default2.asp?selected=1835&bold=|_|_| •Limit’ is a vague term that did little to shrink the high school topic, and •reduce’ is awkward on a topic where the object of action includes non-quantifiable characteristics. Restriction, when combined with •substantial’ and a statement of goal •elimination of nuclear weapons’ also meaningfully constrains small and/or bidirectional Affirmatives.

⁵ Hans Kristensen, Federation of American Scientists and the Natural Resources Defense Council, From Counterforce to Minimal Deterrence, April 2009 Occasional Paper No. 7.

“Missions”

“Missions” is the lynchpin wording of this proposal. The term “missions” in relation to our nuclear weapons is frequently used by real world analysts.⁶

Advocates of a more robust nuclear posture argue that, with dramatically reduced nuclear arsenals, the United States military will not be able to fulfill this or that mission assigned to nuclear weapons. That is precisely the point; to move with any sincerity and effectiveness toward a nuclear weapons-free world, nuclear weapons must shed almost all of their current missions. Going forward, nuclear weapons should not be assigned any mission for which they are less than indispensable. That is why we believe that the focus ought to *begin* with a discussion of nuclear missions. As missions for nuclear weapons are, one-by-one, stripped away, the logic of reducing their numbers will be inescapable.⁷

Here are some examples of authors discussing “missions” for nuclear weapons in roughly the same context as the controversy paper.

Nuclear weapons once dominated security thinking but, as instruments of national power, their time has come and gone. The United States and the Soviet Union once had nuclear-armed surface-to-air missiles and air-to-air rockets, nuclear depth charges and torpedoes, nuclear land mines and demolition charges, and nuclear-armed rockets that could be launched

⁶ Federation of American Scientists, Missions for Nuclear Weapons after the Cold War, 2005 <http://www.fas.org/programs/ssp/nukes/armscontrol/missionsaftercoldwarrpt.html>. See also: US Nuclear Forces and Conventional Force Alternatives, October 10-12, 2008 The Stanley Foundation Working Paper www.stanleyfdn.org/publications/working_papers/Coyle-Fine_working_paper.pdf.

⁷ Hans Kristensen, Federation of American Scientists and the Natural Resources Defense Council, From Counterforce to Minimal Deterrence, April 2009 Occasional Paper No. 7.

from the back of a jeep. All of these missions have fallen away, not because of arms control agreements or political pressure but because nuclear weapons have been displaced in each case by technologically and militarily superior solutions made available by advances in miniaturized sensors and computers. Nuclear advocates are forced to ever more contrived and convoluted missions to justify nuclear weapons, for example, the nuclear bunker buster, which required very cooperative enemies who buried vital targets just out of reach of conventional attack but not so deep that they were out of reach of even nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons have simply become almost entirely obsolete.⁸

Opponents of reducing nuclear weapons primacy also use the framework of “mission.”

A recent report from the Center for Strategic and International Studies (where the authors of our controversy paper are employed) defended the importance of strengthening the “nuclear mission.”

But the imperative for a credible U.S. nuclear deterrent is indisputable—nuclear weapons exist; numerous nation-states possess them; more nation-states are likely to acquire them and the risk that nuclear weapons will be used is growing. No other justification or rationale is needed for **making the nuclear mission a top priority** for the Department of Defense.⁹

⁸ Ivan Oelrich, American Physical Society, What are Nuclear Weapons For? 2008
<http://www.americanphysicalsociety.org/units/fps/newsletters/200804/oelrich.cfm>

⁹ Clark A. Murdock, The Department of Defense and the Nuclear Mission in the 21st Century, CSIS , March 2008 p.24

The Federation of American Scientists published a report that outlined possible “missions for nuclear weapons.”¹⁰

This study does not set out to promote new nuclear missions but to evaluate the set of missions currently under some level of consideration. The set is shown in Table 2 and is a composite from several sources, including a report from the National Institute for Public Policy (NIPP), the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), studies from the National Laboratories, and Congressional reports.¹¹

¹⁰ Federation of American Scientists, Missions for Nuclear Weapons after the Cold War, 2005 <http://www.fas.org/programs/ssp/nukes/armscontrol/missionsaftercoldwarrpt.html>.

¹¹ Federation of American Scientists, Missions for Nuclear Weapons after the Cold War, 2005 <http://www.fas.org/programs/ssp/nukes/armscontrol/missionsaftercoldwarrpt.html>.

Nuclear Missions¹²

1. Survive and fire back after nuclear attack against homeland (for retaliation/deterrence)
2. Survive and fire back after nuclear attack against allies (for retaliation/deterrence/assurance)
3. Survive and fire back after chem/bio attack against homeland (for retaliation/deterrence)
4. Survive and fire back after chem/bio attack against allies (for assurance/retaliation/deterrence)
5. Survive and fire back after CBW use in military theater
6. Deploying nuclear weapons to attack enemy nuclear weapons to increase their vulnerability, decreasing their value (to discourage their development in the first place)
7. Deploying nuclear weapons to attack enemy chem/bio weapons to increase their vulnerability, decreasing their value (to discourage their development in the first place)
8. Damage limitation attacks against nuclear weapons in military theater
9. Damage limitation attacks against CB weapons in military theater
10. Damage limitation attacks against Russian/Chinese central systems
11. Ready to inflict damage after regional conventional attacks (or to deter such attacks)
12. Overawe potential rivals
13. Provide virtual power

¹² Federation of American Scientists, Missions for Nuclear Weapons after the Cold War, 2005
<http://www.fas.org/programs/ssp/nukes/armscontrol/missionsaftercoldwarrpt.html>.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">14. Fight regional wars15. Apply shock to terminate a regional conventional war |
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Plans that reduce quantitative numbers of nuclear weapons would reduce missions. In short, every nuclear weapon has a mission. If we cut the number of weapons we cut the number of missions.

Military forces must adapt to evolving political circumstances. Changes made by the Air Force after the Cold War were in response to the defense downsizing of the 1990s as well as national leadership priorities. Just as Strategic Air Command (SAC) was being dissolved, the Air Force and other services were experiencing severe resource constraints. With less national emphasis on nuclear weapons during this period, the Air Force failed to grasp the continued need to maintain a viable airpower-based nuclear deterrent capability. Moreover, **as the size of the nuclear arsenal was reduced and emphasis shifted to conventional missions**, the Air Force failed to articulate the continuing value of the nuclear deterrent.¹³

Plans like de-alert and NFU restrict one or more of the above missions. One mission is to respond to a launch of nuclear weapons by an enemy. De-alert and NFU restrict the implementation of that mission.

The nuclear “posture” we have today, the combination of weapons, their number and characteristics, that we keep them on hair-trigger alert, constantly deployed, many on submarines forward deployed off the

¹³ The Air Force’s Nuclear Mission, Department of Defense, September 2008 p.21

coasts of Russia and China just minutes from their targets, demonstrates that the United States maintains nuclear war fighting options including disarming first strikes. Reserving nuclear weapons solely for the mission of responding to nuclear attack, thereby deterring such an attack in the first place, implies a decisive no-first-use posture, weapons off alert, perhaps even stored separately from their delivery systems. And since the pain that must be inflicted today should be proportionate to the stakes in play, not a potential enemy's arsenal, the number of weapons needed is almost certainly only in the double digits.¹⁴

Plans that replaced counterforce targeting with minimal deterrence would be topical.

Pretty much any case that eliminates targeting strategies like counterforce would restrict missions.

We believe that **nuclear targeting decisions should place a very high value on avoiding collateral threat to populations, and explicitly prohibit city attacks**, keeping in mind that important military targets in cities can always be attacked, simply not with nuclear weapons. Of course, huge fatalities will occur in any nuclear attack but many fewer in a minimal deterrence posture than would occur with today's targeting choices. Note that **this approach actually restricts the mission of nuclear weapons** to just deterrence, which is what most discussions of nuclear weapons claim the mission to be. This is not war fighting, it is not preemption to limit damage, it is not vengeance. It is only deterrence in its

¹⁴ Ivan Oelrich, American Physical Society, What are Nuclear Weapons For? 2008
<http://www.americanphysicalsociety.org/units/fps/newsletters/200804/oelrich.cfm>

simplest form: guaranteed pain if an adversary unwisely attacks the United States or its allies with nuclear weapons.¹⁵

“Mission” is meaningfully distinguished from “goal,” the latter of which conveys a broader policy theme – such as deterrence. A “mission” is a specific task – one that can be objectively measured and quantified. Our “goal” or “role” for nuclear weapons might be deterrence. Changing from counterforce to minimal deterrence or from LOW to LOI might not reduce our general goal, although those changes would certainly restrict our missions. This evidence draws that distinction very clearly.

Before proceeding, we need two definitions: *mission* is used here to mean a specific type of task such as destroying a particular type of target. *Why* one might want to destroy the target, the effect, is the objective or, using the Administration's terminology, the *goal*.

The distinction between missions and goals is important but is often muddled in discussions of nuclear weapons. In the following discussion, deterrence, for example, is *not* a mission of nuclear weapons. A *mission* for a nuclear system might be to be able to survive a first strike and then launch against the striker, destroying its cities. The *goal* of this mission would be deterrence. **Damage limitation** seems to be an uncontroversial goal in general; but the specific mission of a surprise first strike, necessary to effect that goal, is much less appealing.¹⁶

¹⁵ Hans Kristensen, Federation of American Scientists and the Natural Resources Defense Council, From Counterforce to Minimal Deterrence, April 2009 Occasional Paper No. 7. p.32

¹⁶ Federation of American Scientists, Missions for Nuclear Weapons after the Cold War, 2005 <http://www.fas.org/programs/ssp/nukes/armscontrol/missionsaftercoldwarrpt.html>.

Mission is also distinguished from “role” by the military frequently.¹⁷ Roles are the broad policy themes and missions are the specific tasks that carry out the roles.

Roles are the broad and enduring purposes for which the Services and U.S. Special Operations Command were established by law.¹⁸

¹⁷ Quadrennial Roles and Missions Report, Department of Defense, January 2009 QRMFinalReport_v26Jan.pdf.

¹⁸ Quadrennial Roles and Missions Report, Department of Defense, January 2009 QRMFinalReport_v26Jan.pdf.

“Arsenal”

According to some definitions, the word “arsenal” includes the weapons stockpile as well as other aspects of the nuclear establishment such as development, manufacturing, testing and repairing the weapons.

ar se nal (ärs-nl) n.

1. A governmental establishment for the storing, development, manufacturing, testing, or repairing of arms, ammunition, and other war materiel.
2. A stock of weapons.

ar-se-nal

- 1 a: an establishment for the manufacture or storage of arms and military equipment b: a collection of weapons¹⁹

The benefit to this interpretation is that it arguably authorizes affirmatives that shut down nuclear testing or nuclear weapons development.

¹⁹ Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/arsenal>.