

President Biden's 2022 Nuclear Posture Review

On October 27, the Biden administration released its [2022 National Defense Strategy, Nuclear Posture Review, and Missile Defense Review](#). Since Bill Clinton, every presidential administration has released a Nuclear Posture Review, which lays out the nation's nuclear strategy. The Biden administration's NPR is different in that it is integrated with the National Defense Strategy (NDS) and the Missile Defense Review (MDR). What has not changed is that President Biden's strategy follows the trend of continuity and stability across recent NPRs, continuing most major programs from the Obama and Trump administrations and fully supporting modernization of the nuclear triad.

Why is the NPR Important?

The Nuclear Posture Review is one of the most important documents each presidential administration produces, laying out America's nuclear posture for Congress and the defense community as they work together to fund, authorize, plan and execute missions and capabilities. It reassures our allies of our commitment to them and our capability to credibly support that commitment. The NPR tells our adversaries the same thing; we are committed to defending ourselves and our allies and we are fully capable of doing so.

“**International allies and adversaries ... usually read [the NPR] the most closely. We really do send assurance and deterrence messages big time in a public NPR report.**”

– Elaine Bunn, Non-Resident Senior Advisor, CSIS PONI

What does the Biden administration say about our nuclear triad and nuclear modernization?

“The Department will continue to modernize our nuclear forces, the ultimate backstop to deter attacks on the homeland and our Allies and partners who rely on U.S. extended deterrence.” (2022 National Defense Strategy, page 9)

“In a dynamic security environment, a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent is foundational to broader U.S. defense strategy and the extended deterrence commitments we have made to allies and partners.” (2022 Nuclear Posture Review, page 1)

“Strategic deterrence remains a top priority mission for the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Nation. For the foreseeable future, nuclear weapons will continue to provide unique deterrence effects that no other element of U.S. military power can replace.” (2022 Nuclear Posture Review, page 1)

“Our nuclear deterrent thus undergirds all our national defense priorities, including defending the U.S. homeland, deterring strategic attacks against the United States, our Allies and partners, and deterring regional aggression with emphasis on the PRC and Russia.” (2022 Nuclear Posture Review, page 9)

2022 Nuclear Posture Review Programmatic Findings (Nuclear Posture Review, page 21):

- Fully fund the Sentinel ICBM replacement program of record in the 2023-2027 Future Years Defense Program.
- Fully fund the COLUMBIA-Class SSBN program to deliver a minimum of 12 boats to replace the OHIO-Class fleet beginning in 2030.
- Fully fund the B-21 Raider bomber to replace the B-2A Spirit fleet.

Expert Quotes Ahead of the 2022 NPR Release

“ I fully support modernizing our strategic nuclear deterrent capabilities across the Triad, the supporting stockpile and infrastructure, Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications, and our Integrated Tactical Warning/Attack Assessment capabilities. ”

– Gen. Anthony Cotton, Commander, United States Strategic Command ([Sept. 2022](#))

“ By the 2030s, the United States for the first time will need to deter two major nuclear powers, each of whom will field modern and diverse global and regional nuclear forces. To ensure our nuclear deterrent remains responsive to the threats we face, we are modernizing the nuclear Triad, nuclear command, control, and communications, and our nuclear weapons infrastructure, as well as strengthening our extended deterrence commitments to our Allies. ”

– Biden Administration National Security Strategy ([Sept. 2022](#))

▮▮ *Fortunately, nuclear modernization isn't a Democrat issue or a Republican issue, it's an American issue. The effort began under the Obama administration. It continued under President Trump. And now it's a top priority for the Biden administration, which has reaffirmed the long-standing national commitment to maintaining a capable nuclear deterrent by fully funding the modernization in the latest budget, and in the information publicly released about the administration's official nuclear policy, known as the Nuclear Posture Review. ▮▮*

– Rep. Rosemary Lesser, Utah State Rep. ([Sept. 2022](#))

▮▮ *What I will say about the triad and the ICBM leg in particular in this case is that it's a stabilizing and a risk-reducing function for our country, partners, and allies. The National Defense Strategy is clear about what we do with our nuclear strategy. The ICBM leg of that, currently Minuteman III but Sentinel going into the future, is that stabilizing force so that we can hedge against breakout with new adversaries. ▮▮*


– Maj. Gen. Jason Armagost, Director of Strategic Plans, Programs, and Requirements, Headquarters Air Force Global Strike Command ([Sept. 2022](#))

▮▮ *This strategic investment is long overdue, given that our existing Minuteman III fleet has been in operation since the 1970s – decades past its intended lifespan. It's been estimated that by the end of this decade, the US will no longer be able to operate a significant portion of the ICBM fleet, and by 2036, the fleet will no longer be able to be sustained. The Sentinel's ground-based strategic deterrence will ensure the US can maintain a credible deterrent capability for the next 50 years or more. ▮▮*

– Derek Miller, Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce ([August 2022](#))

▮▮ *As we look ahead to the next 75 years, investing in nuclear modernization is as relevant as ever and we are committed to transitioning to the Sentinel, which will ensure our Nation is ready to provide strategic deterrence for tomorrow. ▮▮*

– Gen. CQ Brown, Jr., Air Force Chief of Staff ([April 2022](#))



“ As a critical national security priority, continued, consistent, and predictable funding remains essential to ensure the on-time delivery of the Sentinel weapon system. Sentinel’s unique use of digital engineering, modularity, and modular open system architecture, along with government ownership of data rights, allow it to remain viable against emerging threats and more easily integrate future NC3 systems. Increases in safety, security, reliability, and cyber resiliency have been incorporated since the start. ”

– Lt. Gen. James C. Dawkins, Jr., Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Deterrence and Nuclear Integration ([May 2022](#))

“ Our Nation’s nuclear deterrent force, two legs of which is operated by Airmen, has quietly provided a strategic security shield for decades. All that time, the Department of the Air Force has kept the watch; always vigilant and ready. The name Sentinel recognizes the mindset that thousands of Airmen, past and present, have brought to the deterrence mission, and will serve as a reminder for those who operate, secure, and maintain this system in the future about the discipline and responsibility their duty entails. ”

– Frank Kendall, Secretary of the Air Force ([April 2022](#))

“ Plans to recapitalize the triad now span three presidential administrations and rightly reflect a deep understanding that nuclear deterrence is the foundation of security for our nation and our allies. The administration deserves praise from policy experts across the political spectrum for maintaining a steady hand on these plans. ”

– Sen. Ben Nelson ([April 2022](#))

