



Written by [David Kelly](#) on October 13, 2023

Report: U.S. Ill-prepared for War With Two Nuclear-armed Adversaries

There is an increasing risk of military conflict and the potential for even nuclear war with China and Russia, according to a comprehensive year-long review and report on threats the United States faces and its strategy and planned capabilities to address those threats.

The report released on Thursday from the [Strategic Posture Commission](#) (SPC) was established by the 2022 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), with Congress seeking a review of the strategic posture of the United States due to the quickly changing geopolitical landscape along with current tensions with China over Taiwan and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.



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"We will face a world where two nations possess nuclear arsenals on par with our own," the SPC wrote in their executive summary. "The risk of conflict with these two nuclear peers is increasing. It is an existential challenge for which the United States is ill-prepared, unless its leaders make decisions now to adjust the U.S. strategic posture."

According to the report, those decisions are needed "for the nation to be prepared to address the threats from these two nuclear-armed adversaries arising during the 2027-2035 timeframe. Moreover, these threats are such that the United States and its Allies and partners must be ready to deter and defeat both adversaries simultaneously."

The SPC found during their comprehensive year-long review that "evidence demonstrates that the U.S.-led international order and the values it upholds are at risk from the Chinese and Russian authoritarian regimes," and, "the risk of military conflict with those major powers has grown and carries the potential for nuclear war."

The Commission concluded that "today's strategic outlook requires an urgent national focus and a series of concerted actions not currently planned. In sum, we find that the United States lacks a comprehensive strategy to address the looming two-nuclear-peer threat environment and lacks the force structure such a strategy will require."

Overall, the SPC report found that the "fundamentals of America's deterrence strategy remain sound, but the application of that strategy must change to address the 2027-2035 threat environment." The commission stated that changes need to include "necessary adjustments to the posture of U.S. nuclear capabilities — in size and/or composition," along with "a full spectrum of non-nuclear capabilities" that are "also essential to the nation's strategic posture." The report added that "Allies and partners are central to our findings regarding strategy and posture."

The 160-page in-depth report covers 131 findings and offers 81 recommendations on America's



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strategic posture. The SPC report recommended that the “objectives of U.S. strategy must include effective deterrence and defeat of simultaneous Russian and Chinese aggression in Europe and Asia using conventional forces.”

A few key recommendations listed in the report include:

- The Commission recommends the United States maintain a nuclear strategy consistent with the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC), based on six fundamental tenets — assured second strike, flexible response, tailored deterrence, extended deterrence and assurance, calculated ambiguity in declaratory policy, hedge against risk — and apply these tenets to address the 2027-2035 threat.
- Congress fund an overhaul and expansion of the capacity of the U.S. nuclear weapons defense industrial base and the DOE/NNSA nuclear security enterprise, including weapons science, design, and production infrastructure.
- The United States urgently deploy a more resilient space architecture and adopt a strategy that includes both offensive and defensive elements to ensure U.S. access to and operations in space.
- The United States and its Allies take steps to ensure they are at the cutting edge of emerging technologies — such as big data analytics, quantum computing, and artificial intelligence (AI) — to avoid strategic surprise and potentially enhance the U.S. strategic posture.

The SPC report also found that it is in America’s “national interest to maintain, strengthen, and when appropriate, expand its network of alliances and partnerships.” The commission wrote “that our defense and the defense of the current international order is strengthened when Allies can directly contribute to the broader strategic posture, and the United States should seek to incorporate those contributions as much as possible.”

In closing, the SPC report revealed that its recommendations “aim to prevent war with two nuclear peer adversaries — to deter aggression against the United States and its Allies and partners — and to ensure victory if deterrence fails,” adding that proper action needs to be taken by Congress and the President to protect the American people with a “whole-of-government” response to all potential risks.

While having adequate defensive capabilities is certainly prudent, much of the threat of a future large-scale war with either Russia or China, or both, could be avoided by simply adopting the non-interventionist foreign policy of America’s Founders. The likelihood of Russia or China simply attacking the United States out of pure aggression is next to zero, meaning any conflict would almost certainly arise as a result of foreign meddling on the part of the United States or European countries. Closing down the hundreds of American military bases, many of which are in Asia and practically surround Russia and China, would be a good first step toward a more peaceful world.



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