MR. PETER HUESSY: I want to welcome you for this in our next series of seminars. We’re honored to have for the first time, Mark Schneider, who in the Pentagon, as you know, was known as Mr. Strategic Deterrence. (And he ?) replaced Frank Miller, who had that – what I called him for so many years. Mark is now, as you know, with the National Institute for Public Policy as a senior military analyst. And I thought it was important for us to know what the Russians are doing in the strategic nuclear weapons business, not only their modernization programs but their strategy and how they look at nuclear weapons, because it’s vastly different than how this country is beginning to look at nuclear weapons.

I also want to let you know that next week we have two seminars. Linton Brooks and Frank Miller will discuss both NNSA and the strategic modernization program for our platforms and everything on the 28th. And then Frank Klotz, former head of the Global Strike Command, and now with the Council on Foreign Relations, will talk about the overall missile defense and strategic nuclear deterrent picture and where we’re going with things such as Global Zero as well as the implementation of 1251, which certainly are in diametrically opposite directions. And then we will take a break until July 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th, when we will have four seminars that week. And I’m sure you will all look forward to attending all those.

I also want to thank our sponsors who are here today, and our guests from a number of our allies and friends from various embassies and also some of our military friends. And I want to thank you all for being here. Please register, if you have not, with Sarah, who is here.

And we are honored, again, to have Congresswoman Michelle Bachmann. Michelle, can I have you come up here please? And she has attended a number of events. I want to thank you, congresswoman, for being here today.

And so Mark, without any further ado, I want to thank you on behalf of our sponsors, who are NDIA, ROA and AFA, for coming here today and speaking to us about an extraordinarily important subject; and something of critical importance, given one of the recent pieces in Foreign Policy was that Russia is no longer our enemy. Why do we worry about having strategic nuclear weapons?

If you noticed recently, the Russians have been delivering weapons to the country of Syria. The ship has been boarded. A number of -- I think a British insurance companies is no longer give insurance to the ship and the ship can’t -- but let’s say that those ships were being escorted with Russian warships.
And an American president and its allies and NATO said no, you’re not delivering these weapons to Syria and we got into a naval confrontation in the Mediterranean.

Then ask yourself whether the strategic balance of nuclear weapons makes a difference? And I think it makes not only a difference in terms of what each country might do in that situation, but if a crisis evolved towards a conflict, then you can see how nuclear weapons are relevant, are important, and the strategic balance makes an enormous amount of sense. That’s why I think the remarks this morning by Mark Schneider are so important. So would you all welcome our friend from NIPP, Mark Schneider?

(Applause).

MR. MARK SCHNEIDER: Thank you very much for inviting me today to speak on this very important topic. Before I get into the substance, I want to talk about the sources. Almost everything I am going to say is based on how the Russian government and its senior officials are describing its nuclear modernization programs.

The United States government rarely says anything about – for at least over a decade now – about the Russian nuclear threat. Where we have said things, I have incorporated them into the analysis. But this is mainly based upon Russian sources.

Some of the legacy START Treaty MOU data is still relevant. Almost nothing useful is being released under the new START Treaty. And because of the fact that the START data is already about two and a half years old, it’s less and less relevant with the passage of time. Some of the old editions of Soviet Military Power are still relevant with regard to the legacy Soviet systems that are still part of the Russian nuclear arsenal.

I would like to also caution you, when you evaluate the Russian sources the Russian government basically does just about a 100 percent of what it says it’s going to do in the nuclear area. But there is always some delay, usually several years, between what they say they’re going to do in terms of timelines and what is actually done by the Russian government. But despite that, by carefully looking at Russian governmental sources and Russian press accounts, you get a pretty good feel for what’s going on in Russia today.

Russia still maintains legacy Soviet systems and will probably do so for at least another 10 years, though they’ll be a declining percentage of the overall Russian strategic nuclear force. These include the SS-18 heavy ICBM; the SS-19, a large Peacekeeper-size missile -- we no longer have Peacekeeper, of course -- and the SS-25 mobile ICBM; together with the SSN-18, the SSN-23 submarine launched ballistic missiles. Russia has not, generally speaking, modernized its legacy Soviet systems because the emphasis has been overwhelming on the development of new replacement systems. The only legacy modernization of any significance is the SSN-23, Sineva, which reported has improved accuracy and an improved warhead carrying potential.
I would divide the Russian modernization program into two phases. One is the Yeltsin-era programs. These were started in the 1990s and have reached either deployment, or in the case of the Bulova-30, deployment sometime later this year.

You have a second group of programs, which in many respects are much more significant, and that’s the programs that were announced after the United States Senate approved the New START Treaty in December of 2010. This includes three new ICBMs that have been formally announced by the Russian government, and a modernized SLBM.

Now the Soviet-era programs involved a single warhead ICBM, the SS-27, which under Putin was modernized in, I would say, contravention of the START Treaty that was in effect at that time, into a MIRV system. The Russians call this the RS-24 or Yar system. We call it the SS-27 Mod 2. It’s not a new system. It is just a MIRV’d SS-27.

They also are just about to deploy this year the first Bulova-30, a new SLBM, on a new class of submarines, the Borei (ph) class. As a matter of fact, they just signed within the last few weeks a contract for the production of five new submarines, to a total of eight.

They have also produced the Tu-16 Blackjack heavy bomber. This is in contravention of the political commitment made as part of what was known at the time as the Presidential Nuclear Initiatives in 1991-1992. Production has usually been one aircraft every three to five years. So it’s a very slow program, but it is ongoing.

Now the accuracy of the Yeltsin-era description of these programs was confirmed by the Defense Department and the Department of Energy in a joint report to the U.S. Congress in 2008. The new systems are much more impressive and much more dangerous than the Yeltsin-era programs. The most significant and most dangerous of these is the new heavy ICBM that was announced by the commander of the strategic missile forces and by the head of Russian procurement, a retired general by the name of Propokin (ph), who at the time was first deputy minister of defense.

The new heavy ICBM he described as being operational by 2018. It is described in the Russian press as smaller than the SS-18 but with more destructive potential or throw-weight. I have five sources which say that it has more throw-weight than the SS-18. Several of them announced specific numbers in the 9,000 to 10,000 kilogram class, which is about nine times that of a Minuteman III ICBM.

The missile is described by several Russian press sources as carrying 10 heavy or 15 medium warheads. A recent Russian press report said 15 heavy. All that is consistent with the reported throw-weight of the system.

In December 2011 the commander of the Russian strategic missile force, in an interview in which he discussed the new heavy ICBM, revealed that Russia was also developing what he called a new medium ICBM. He described this as a 100 ton ICBM and he indicated it would have a conventional warhead option. This is the first official confirmation of anything like that on the part of the Russians, although there have been occasional press reports along these lines.
Now even assuming it carries nothing more than the Soviet-era front section from the SS-24 mobile ICBM missile that can easily carry 10 warheads, heavy MIRVing is almost uniformly reported as part of this new modernization program: very large numbers of warheads, improved accuracy and improved military characteristics. This is an enormous contradiction to what we are doing, which is essentially no modernization for the next 20 years.

Now the third new ICBM announced was launched in May of 2012. The Russian defense ministry was rather tight-lipped about this new missile. It did characterize it as a new mobile ICBM, said it made maximum use of existing components, and talked about a warhead as distinct from warheads, which would be what you would expect, having impacted successfully at the Kamchatka test range.

Secrecy about this new missile is extreme. BBC characterized it as a secret missile. I found one Russian press report that characterized it as a classified missile.

There’s no apparent reason for this level of secrecy about a new missile in the context of normal Russian behavior, which for political reasons is literally bragging about everything they’re doing in the nuclear area because they believe they get political clout as a result of these developments. This brings up the issue of whether or not there is compliance issues associated with this new missile. And I don’t see anything in the New START Treaty, because of its general lack of limitations, that would create a compliance issue associated with a new ICBM.

But there still has to be some reason for this because this is such a departure from their normal behavior. I mean, they have not even announced the name of this missile, its designator. They have not released a video or photograph of the missile or its launcher. I mean, this is a rather unique form of behavior on the part of the Russians.

One Russian press report has even suggested that this may be what was characterized as the revival of the Soviet-era “pseudo ICBM,” and that’s a direct quote out of the article. For years and years the Russians -- since about 2007, senior Russian government officials have been bad mouthing the INF Treaty; and in a number of cases, by Putin when he was president, threatened to pull out of the treaty. Again, I want to reiterate this is speculation, but this could be an IRBM, an intermediate range missile designed for targeting Europe masquerading as an ICBM. And basically all you need to do under the New START Treaty is test a MIRV’d IRBM with only a single warhead, fly it ICBM range, which they have done, and you’re outside of the INF Treaty. And you have a lot of options under New START for such a system.

Now the reason I think this may be the case is a substantial pattern of Russian activities relating to the INF Treaty which raise to varying degrees compliance issues with the treaty. The new Iskander short-range ballistic missile has been reported in the Russian and Finnish press as having a range in excess of 500 kilometers which is allowed under the INF Treaty. This missile is one of the favorite Russian threat systems.
They are constantly threatening to forward-deploy this to Kaliningrad. They have, according to press reports, forward-deployed it to the Leningrad area where it’s got maximum capability against NATO Europe. This is a significant concern to many of our allies.

Now there’s also another Russian missile that was formally announced in 2007, spring of 2007. When it was first tested it was described as a ground-launched cruise missile. And after the first launch we had almost a blackout in Russian official statements about it, but the program has continued. And there are a large number – I mean something on the order of 10 – separate reports by major Russian journalists and major Russian publications which say the range of this missile is between 1,000 and 3,000 kilometers.

Now if so, that’s a clear violation of the INF Treaty. That re-establishes a substantial targeting capability against Europe. It’s interesting to note that then-first deputy Prime Minister Sergei Ivanov, who until just a few months before that had been defense minister, when he announced this new missile characterized it as quote, “a long-range missile,” which is a rather odd thing to say about something that’s supposed to have a range of under 500 kilometers.

Another very interesting development about this is that the chief designer of the R-500 received a state award, but his name wasn’t announced. And it was stated that the name of the designer was classified information. So it’s clear that the Russian government does not want the Russian press to talk to the people who were developing this missile system.

There’s also reports in the Russian press that the Russian missile defense systems and a number of Russian surface to air missile systems have a secondary role of attack against ground targets with nuclear warheads. If so, that would raise a number of compliance issues with the INF Treaty. So we are seeing a pattern of reports in the Russian media that suggest that the Russians are going ahead with the openly voiced threats to pull out of the INF Treaty, only in a covert manner.

Now in addition to the ICBMs, in 2011 the Russian navy announced that a second modification of the SSN-23 Sineva, which is translated either as the Liner (ph) or Laner (ph) SLBM, is now operational. It is reported by its manufacturer as capable of delivering four heavy or nine to 12 small warheads or a combination of both. So we’re seeing a very extensive program here and one that involved heavy MIRVing of the new missile systems.

Now there are a number of Russian programs that we know about, but we don’t know exactly what they are. There was a passing reference by the defense minister to a new ICBM called the Avant-garde. Nothing has been said officially about what this thing is. There are press reports that it’s a more heavily MIRV’d version of the SS-27. There’s one press report that it’s a rail-mobile ICBM. And in December 2011 the commander of the strategic missile force talked in an interview about the possible revival of a rail-mobile ICBM, so you may have another system here.

In 2011 there were several announcements by the Russian government that there would be increased production of ICBMs starting in 2013. This is a significant change in that while the older
modernizations programs were pretty extensive, production rates had been low. Now we’re talking about fairly sizeable production rates.

As a matter of fact, then-presidential candidate Vladimir Putin, who was at the time prime minister, in 2012 declared that Russia plans to produce 400 new ICBMs over the next 10 years. That’s quite a significant production capability. And in May 2011 the commander of the strategic missile forces said that his force would be 98 percent modernized by 2021. So again, this is a significant increase in the numbers that were talked about only a few years ago by Russian governmental officials.

There is a report – or actually many, many reports -- in the Russian press that a 10 warhead package is being developed for the new strategic missiles: the Bulova-30 SLBM and the SS-27 ICBM. One of these reports says a new super-miniature warhead is being designed for these missiles. Yury Solomonov, who is the chief designer of the SS-27 and the former head of the design bureau, says that by 2016 new warheads will be put on both the MIRV’d and the single warhead version of the SS-27.

He said that these warheads would be MIRVs, but the system would not have the traditional MIRV dispensing bus. So you’re talking about something which is substantially new, some type of maneuvering warhead which has a large off-set capability and can function as the equivalent of a MIRV’d system. This is a very new development.

The Russians have announced that the KH-102 long-range nuclear armed air-launched cruise missile with an announced 5,000 kilometer range and a stealth capability has become operational. And they have announced that they’re going ahead with a new heavy bomber that will carry this and other weapons with a projected IOC date of 2025 or 2030.

In that same interview that I mentioned in December 2011, the commander of the strategic missile forces said that the Russian ICBM force was almost completely equipped with advanced penetration aids. So the basic arguments they’re making about how the U.S. missile defense system is going to deny their deterrent is literally absolute nonsense.

We can’t depend on the New START Treaty to in any way significantly impact the overall Russian modernization program. There are essentially no qualitative constraints in the treaty itself. Several dozen provisions which limited qualitative characteristics from the old START Treaty are completely absent from New START.

Russia was actually – and this is based on the Russian declared New START data published by the State Department – Russia was below the New START limits in terms of deployed warheads and deployed delivery vehicles on the day that New START entered into force. The 1,550 nuclear warhead limit under New START is very unlikely to constrain the Russians for the simple reason that bomber weapons are counted at an extreme discount. An entire aircraft load of bomber weapons, which could be anywhere from six to 24 nuclear weapons, are just counted as one under New START. So you’re talking about a likely force that’s over 2,000 warheads at its low point and might be as much as 2,500, depending on the number of assumptions you have to make.
Now the Russians are not practicing anything remotely like U.S. stockpile stewardship. They are introducing new and advanced types of nuclear weapons. This has been stated by their senior leadership, including Defense Minister at the time Sergei Ivanov, various commanders of the 12th Main Directorate of the Russian General Staff, which is their nuclear weapons organization, and a number of senior officials from their atomic energy ministry.

The scope of Russian nuclear weapons modernization efforts is everything from extremely high-yield thermonuclear warheads on the strategic forces, to very low-yield precision nuclear weapons. This includes a new warhead for the SS-27, a new MIRV warhead for the MIRV version of the SS-27, which according to Russian sources is both lighter and has a substantially higher yield than the best Soviet-era Cold War design. So we’re seeing the augment of new types of nuclear weapons.

There are reports, actually fairly numerous, that the Russians are engaging in low-yield nuclear testing called hydro-nuclear tests, despite the moratorium and despite their commitments related to the CTBT. The reports of Russia introducing advanced low collateral damage precision low-yield nuclear weapons are fairly numerous in the Russian press. And there are actually declassified CIA reports from the 1990s which were released under the Freedom of Information Act, which gives some credence to these reports.

The Russian Sineva SLBM, the new – or modernized, actually, SLBM – and the new Bulova-30 are both reported to, in addition to a high-yield thermonuclear weapons, to be carrying – or soon in the case of the Bulova-30 – soon will be carrying sub-kiloton low-yield nuclear weapons with precision accuracy. The numbers that have appeared in the Russia press are of yields of 50 to 200 tons. And there’s even one report that the Sineva carries a conventional warhead option as well. So this is completely unlike the U.S. approach to stockpile stewardship, and the likely reliability of these could very well be better than anything we can do under the constraints that we’ve imposed on ourselves.

Russia is very well know to have a massive stockpile of non-strategic or tactical nuclear weapons that is, by official U.S. government estimates, ten times as large as the U.S. stockpile. The Defense Department in November of 2011 indicated that they had between 2,000 and 4,000 tactical nuclear weapons. The U.S. Strategic Commission says 3,800. It’s not only the number of these nuclear weapons that is of concern, but the fact that they have retained essentially the entire Cold War-era inventory of tactical or non-strategic nuclear weapons. The numbers are much reduced in comparison to Cold War levels, but they still number in the thousands and there are many estimates that are much higher than the numbers that I’ve quoted of 2,000 to 4,000.

They’re modernizing these capabilities. The most significant modernization programs right now are the Iskander ballistic missile, which the third ranking defense ministry official in charge of procurement says has a nuclear option – again, in contravention of the political commitments about the elimination of these weapons that were made under the Presidential Nuclear Initiatives of 1991-1992. The SU-34 bomber or fighter-bomber is nuclear capable. As a matter of fact, the then-commander of the Russian air force, Colonel-General Alexander Zelin, said that its mission would be strategic nuclear and that it would carry a long-range cruise missile.
Well that creates a slight problem with START in that you can’t do this. You turn the aircraft into a heavy bomber, which the Russians are very unlikely to do. So my guess is they will go ahead with this program and simply deny that it carries a long-range nuclear cruise missile.

There is also a program underway called the Yasen class submarine or the 885 class submarine. It’s a new advanced, fourth-generation submarine. And it is reported widely in the Russian press as carrying a new long-range nuclear submarine-launched cruise missile. So we have fairly extensive programs underway in the theater and non-strategic nuclear capability.

Now we can’t, as I mentioned earlier, we can’t expect New START to have much effect on any of this. There essentially is very little in the way of qualitative limitations in the treaty. I expect the Russians to exploit the number of loopholes that are built into the treaty.

The START Treaty banned air-launched ICBMs or even anti-missile with an air-launched ballistic missile with a range of over 600 kilometers. It also prohibited long-range missiles on surface ships. Neither of these two provisions is in the New START Treaty, and New START doesn’t even mention rail mobile ICBMs. So I think you’re going to see some activity there over the next decade. But at this point we have no specific press reports on this, although we have advocacy pieces appearing in the Russian press to go ahead with these sorts of systems.

What makes all this dangerous is that Russia has adopted formally a nuclear weapons use doctrine which allows for the use of nuclear weapons in both regional and local wars on a pre-emptive strike basis. The doctrine was initially developed by then-national security council secretary Vladimir Putin, who at the time was soon to become prime minister and then acting president and then president. He actually signed the first version of the revised nuclear doctrine into law as acting president in the year 2000.

The most disturbing from my standpoint – the most disturbing aspect of this whole business – is that the Russians characterize the first use of nuclear weapons as de-escalation of a conflict. That’s a pretty optimistic view of what my happen if you use nuclear weapons, particularly against NATO or the United States. And they have, since 2007, and I believe Putin was directly responsible for this, they began to make high-level nuclear threats against the United States, our allies, and in some cases the entire world.

These involved overt threats of targeting nuclear missiles against these states, threats of pre-emptive or preventive nuclear attacks under various circumstances. We have seen a variety of other types of nuclear threats, including forward deployment of nuclear weapons or nuclear armed missiles, flying nuclear capable bombers into – and this happens routinely – air defense identification zones, and in some cases even a few over-flights of NATO or Japanese territory. And these are not conducted for any other reason other than political intimidation.

This is not the way the Russians would use their bomber force in the event of a war. These aircraft are armed with very long-range, right now probably 5,000 kilometer range cruise missiles. A few years ago when this happened, 3,000 kilometer, 3,500 kilometer range cruise missiles, according to old
editions of Soviet Military Power. So there’s no reason to fly non-stealth bombers into air defense identification zones other than political intimidation. But they do this on a routine basis and it’s continuing to this very day.

One of my concerns is that a whole generation of Russian military officers now has been promoted into the senior levels. They have literally fired most of the older generals and basically their deputies are now serving in their place. But these individuals have heard their senior political leadership talk about the use of nuclear weapons under circumstances that no Western leader would even consider using nuclear weapons. I think this is dangerous.

That about concludes my formal presentation. I’ll open the floor to comments or questions.

(Appause).

I would note that my employer, National Institute for Public Policy, in the fairly near future will be publishing a monograph that I’ve written which deals with the subjects I’ve just discussed, plus Russian activities in missile defense and air defense capabilities.

MS.: Thank you very much, Dr. Schneider. I wonder if you could talk about Russia’s strategic objective? You mentioned political intimidation, but is there anything more in all these massive investments (that accounts ?) for their modernization program?

MR. SCHNEIDER: Well, what ultimately is behind them is what many commentators, Russian commentators, have characterized as a 19th century worldview which sees the world as spheres of influence. I think it’s unquestionable that Putin sees restoration of the Soviet Union in the form of Russian dominance of post-Soviet space as one of their key objectives. And they have no other claim of being a super-power.

I mean, they’ve got an economy which is literally about the size of Spain’s in terms of gross national product. The only thing they’ve got is nuclear weapons. And therefore nuclear weapons play a very large role in their overall strategy.

There is a tendency of paranoia in Russia about the rest of the world. They don’t understand the West very well. Cold War related attitudes – I’m not talking about the communist ideology per se, but the attitudes that were engendered about the West by 50-60 years of Cold War are still very much alive and well in Moscow. I mean, it’s stripped away from the Marxist ideology, but it’s there as a major element of their world view. And that’s one of the reasons that they give such high priority to their nuclear capability.

They’re not capable of maintaining, at least yet, a modern military with conventional capabilities. They’re trying to do that, certainly. They’ve announced a large increase in precision strike capabilities.

But when you talk about precision strike capabilities you’ve got to keep in the back of your mind that they don’t mean this in the same sense that we do. We would talk about precision conventional
strike capability. They talk about precision nuclear and precision conventional strike capability. So they’re trying, I think, to increase their capabilities in non-nuclear strike, but they’ve got a long way to go and it’s a second level priority.

And when you’re pinched as much as they are – I mean, they’re trying to re-create a super-power military with an overall military budget which is only even today only slightly higher than Britain or France -- certainly Britain or France before the defense cuts that were made as a result of the economic situation. So basically, if you’re not number one on the priority list you don’t get a lot. I can’t give you an exact percentage, but the feel I get from following the Russian press is there has been a significant change in overall defense procurement, that they’ve moved from a situation of investing almost everything in nuclear capability -- including one year a senior official said they put 95 percent of their procurement budget in nuclear -- to a situation where they’re doing a broader-based procurement.

They’re probably, my guess is, doing 30 to 40 percent of what they say they’re doing in the conventional area. That’s quite a change. And, you know, in the context of the nuclear buildup, it’s not good news.

MR. HUESSY: Mark, would you explain how you see the way the U.S. currently sees nuclear weapons use and strategy, comparing that to the Russian and how that is dangerous or not dangerous in terms of if we come eyeball to eyeball in various parts of the world?

MR. SCHNEIDER: With regard to nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons use, we sort of live on a different planet. Certainly the Russian formal doctrine, statements by senior officials, doctrinal literature that we have access to, has a very low nuclear weapons use threshold. Several years ago then-Secretary of Defense Robert Gates compared it to the 1950s U.S. doctrine of flexible response. I think there’s some truth in that, but I think it goes beyond that in that flexible response ultimately was designed to raise the nuclear use threshold, make the use of nuclear weapons less likely.

What they’re doing is almost exactly the opposite, which is trying to certainly threaten the use of nuclear weapons under conditions that, as I mentioned, no Western leader would even consider the use of nuclear weapons. That’s dangerous. If they ever re-build their conventional capabilities to the point where they think they could win some sort of local contingency, they might try to do that.

And in light of structural problems they have in their military, a lot of negative Soviet legacy aspects of it, they just might lose. And if they have no other alternative I think they would escalate to nuclear weapons. They wouldn’t want to, but they wouldn’t accept military defeat.

Ask yourself what would have happened in Georgia where they fought a gigantic country with four million people and a tiny little army that never fought a war in recorded history? I’m exaggerating here, but there was an enormous paper disparity between the two capabilities, and they had to struggle to win. What would have happened in Georgia if they had actually lost? I wouldn’t rule out the possibility they would have used a demonstration nuclear strike under those circumstances.
So that scares me more than anything else: miscalculation. And I think the prospects of possible miscalculation go up as their overall military power situation improves in relation to potential targets, which include just about every state that exists in the post-Soviet space, includes the three Baltic Republics which are now part of NATO, which creates a serious potential problem here.

MR. : You raised a lot of alarm about the new systems Russia is developing. I’m just curious, even if all those systems were developed successfully, if they stay within the New START quantitative limits, do you think that strategic stability is undermined?

MR. SCHNEIDER: Well yeah, first I think you have to start out recognizing there is no New START limit. The New START limit is anything the nuclear weapons can afford to do. You’ve got a notional limit of 1,550 deployed warheads, but you’ve got gross discounting of bomber weapons.

You could build an unlimited number of bomber weapons. You’ve got types of missile systems, nuclear-armed missiles systems, that are not constrained by the treaty at all. So it’s basically whatever number of weapons that they can afford. If I had to guess, and this is just off the top of my head, they probably will be actually between something like 2,000 and 2,500 for the foreseeable future.

Now where we’re going, if you read the press, some very deep reductions and potentially unilateral reductions are being considered. When you put all the stuff together: the tactical nuclear; the long-range; the theater strike capability that’s not in any way constrained by New START; and the New START force structure, the modernization programs; you could easily have a several to one Russian advantage in overall nuclear capability, you know, ten years from now. And it could get a lot worse if we went to the deepest reductions that the press reports are saying are under consideration – 80 percent, according to a well publicized report, which by the way wasn’t denied by the administration.

As a matter of fact, just this week I saw a report in the Japanese press that the administration intends to go down to 1,100. You know, I think that that’s quite plausible in light of what the attitudes are. And if you assume that Russia goes ahead with its programs, successfully completes it – I acknowledge fully that it won’t be on the time schedule that they announced – but you will see this happening by at the latest 2025. By 2025 we won’t have a single new U.S. strategic system that does not exist today. That is an enormous disparity. And it has the potential for encouraging miscalculation about what they think they can get away with.

MR. : The concern is more on the quantitative side, not on the qualitative side?

MR. SCHNEIDER: Both. I mean, from the standpoint – and I’ve written an article that appeared in the Weekly Standard on the decline in the U.S. defense industry relating to strategic systems. And that’s quite a great concern. I mean, we haven’t had a functional ICBM design team in the United States in over 20 years. It’s the same thing on SLBMs.

The infrastructure’s ability to produce large solid rocket motors is in decline. And the cancellation of the Aires booster program has made that situation worse. We have -- certainly within
the next few years you won’t have a single U.S. nuclear weapons designer that’s ever designed and tested a nuclear weapon. That’s a major change.

And if the Russian reports concerning hydro-nuclear testing is true, which I think it probably is, then that’s not the situation that exists in Russia today. You have — you have experienced nuclear weapons designers and you don’t have experienced nuclear weapons designers in the United States. You’ve got experienced analysts.

We’ve turned our designers into analysts at the national laboratories. They do more analysis work than they do design work. They don’t do hardly any design work, except to fix specific problems that have come up in the stockpile. That’s an enormous asymmetry with long-term implications.

And, you know, right now we have no commitment to a follow-on ICBM — to the Minuteman III. We have — the earliest possible availability of a follow-on SLBM is 2042. That’s not what the Russians are doing, to put it mildly.

So you have experienced design groups in Russia that have developed and are in the process of developing new ICBMs. In the United States you have a declining — and there have been a number of reports on this problem — the declining level of expertise almost across the board. And this is quite disturbing in terms of its long-term implication, irrespective of what the current state of the deterrent is. Again, nobody can predict the future.

The Defense Science Board has pointed this out in a series of very good reports. I mean, we don’t know what will happen with problems with our delivery vehicles or our nuclear warheads over the next 20, 30, 40 years. We can predict with high probability there’s going to be problems, there always are. Our ability to resolve those problems, unless we start funding modernization, is going to decline. It has to.

MR. HUESSY: Thank you, Mark.

(Applause).