



**Discussion of *A House of Dynamite*:  
The Need for Nuclear Disarmament  
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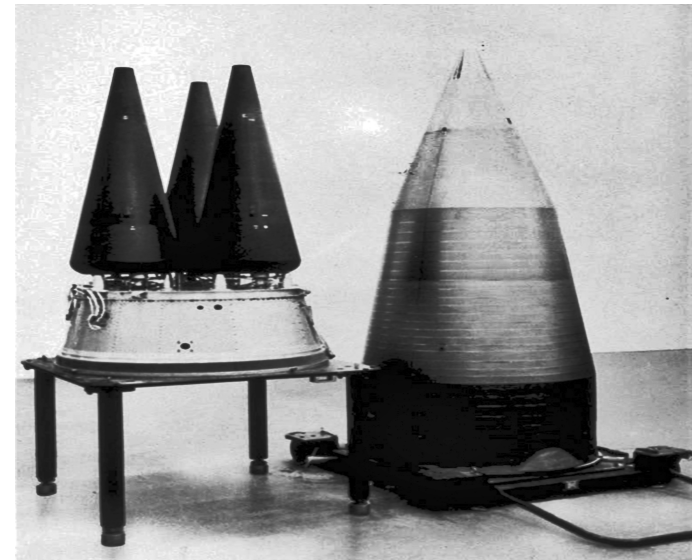
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# Star Wars: No Substitute for Nuclear Disarmament

- The crux of *A House of Dynamite* is the failure of ballistic missile defense.
- In fact, “Star Wars” has always stood in the way of preventing Armageddon.
- In 1986 Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev almost signed a nuclear weapons ban treaty. It was Edward Teller’s lies that prevented that.
- In 2002 George W. Bush withdrew the U.S. from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. Putin predicted the end of arms control. New START expires in February 2026. First time since 1972 without any strategic arms control whatsoever.
- Even after ~\$900 billion in failed ballistic missile defenses, Trump’s “Golden Dome” will be yet another bonanza for the usual military contractors.
- Failure is inevitable because of the sheer number of warheads and decoys, hypersonic and unconventional delivery systems, and astronomical expense.
- Above all, the false allure of ballistic missile defenses will block progress toward nuclear disarmament.

# **Today's \$2 Trillion Nuclear Weapons “Modernization.” What Does it Mean?**

- Rebuilt warheads extended for decades with new military capabilities.
- New-design nuclear weapons.
- New production facilities expected to be operational until 2080.
- New intercontinental ballistic missiles, new cruise missiles, heavy stealth bombers and submarines.



**“Modernization” Means Nuclear Weapons Forever!**

# “Deterrence” is the Threat

Central Mission of Los Alamos National Laboratory



- The one-word rationale is always “a safe, secure and effective nuclear deterrent...” [2022 Nuclear Posture Review](#).
- **But the Pentagon has always rejected minimal deterrence** while “reiterating the need to maintain counterforce capabilities... not rely[ing] on a counter-value or minimum-deterrence ...”

[2024 Nuclear Employment Strategy](#)

- This is why Russia and the U.S. have 1,000s of deployed nuclear weapons and a new arms race.
- Nuclear warfighting capabilities is driving the U.S.’ \$2 trillion “modernization” program, particularly plutonium “pit” bomb core production at Los Alamos Lab.
- “Deterrence” also has a dangerous history of accidents and miscalculations.

## **This second nuclear arms race is arguably more dangerous than the first**

- All weapons states are “modernizing” and keeping their nuclear weapons indefinitely, contrary to the 1970 NonProliferation Treaty.
- Multiple nuclear weapons powers with competing interests.
- Increased chance of regional nuclear wars (e.g., India-Pakistan).
- Hypersonic and cyber weapons may not be deterrable and could cripple defenses and/or hijack command of nuclear weapons.
- Artificial intelligence could sideline human judgement in the command and control of nuclear weapons.

# Why is Nuclear Disarmament Necessary?

- “The indefinite combination of human fallibility and nuclear weapons will destroy nations.”
- “Rationality will not save us. I want to say, and this is very important: at the end we lucked out. **It was luck that prevented nuclear war.**”
- “There is no way to reduce the risk to acceptable levels, other than to first eliminate the hair-trigger alert policy and later to eliminate or nearly eliminate nuclear weapons.”

Robert McNamara, Defense Secretary under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, *“Lessons Learned from the Cuban Missile Crisis”*

# **There is a Mandate to Disarm**

- The National Nuclear Security Administration is required by recent law to produce plutonium “pit” bomb cores.
- However, the U.S. Constitution declares that “all Treaties made... shall be the supreme Law of the Land.” (Article 6)
- The 1970 NonProliferation Treaty (NPT) requires signatories “to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament...”
- The failure to honor the NPT led to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, roughly similar to chemical and biological weapons bans.

## What you can do

- Everyday stuff is important: LTEs, op-eds, talk to friends/family.
- Texan activists focus on Pantex, New Mexicans on Sandia and Los Alamos. Be active! Support your local anti-nuke organizations.
- Pressure both congressional delegations for life-sustaining jobs.
- Question and puncture the myth of “Deterrence”!!! Argue for minimal deterrence as a starting point toward nuclear disarmament.

(Recommended reading: Daniel Ellsberg’s *The Doomsday Machine*.)

- Engage in the Pit Production Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement process. Public hearings expected in March/April.
- Support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.
- Get out the vote for November 2026 mid-term elections.