

### **US-RUSSIA DETERRENCE AND STRATEGIC STABILITY: A REASSESSMENT**

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#### **ABSTRACT:**

US-Russia strategic deterrence rests ultimately on both countries' capacity to respond to a nuclear attack with a massive nuclear second strike. The US and Russian military and security policy establishments' operating assumption is that the threat of massive nuclear retaliation is a necessary guarantee against an attempted or threatened disarming first strike by the opposite side. This deterrence paradigm has been successful in preventing a strategic exchange and the catastrophic consequences that would result. Today, however, its foundation is eroding organically due to technological advancements, divergences in relative capabilities, and the emergence of new domains, such as cyber. There is thus a need to explore alternative strategic deterrence paradigms that are both more robust and more suitable to the post-Cold War environment.

This project aims to produce a monograph that analyzes the development of the deterrence paradigm governing the US-Soviet/Russian strategic dyad during the Cold War and traces its history since then; assesses the benefits and costs of maintaining that paradigm today; outlines the trends that threaten to undermine the paradigm; and considers potential alternatives. Any viable alternative must provide the same deterrent effect (including extended deterrence) that the current paradigm does, while also addressing its shortcomings.

*Research in Progress* describes ongoing PASCC research. For more information please contact [INSS@usafa.edu](mailto:INSS@usafa.edu).