The U.S. Election and Nuclear Order in the Post-Pandemic World

Leon V. Sigal
Northeast Asia Cooperative Security Project, New York, NY, USA

ABSTRACT
US power and prestige may have diminished in recent years, but the United States still plays a pivotal role in international institutions, alliances, and media, so who becomes president and which party controls Congress matter for the global nuclear order. Nuclear weapons are often considered the esoteric domain of experts. Yet three recent developments – the ban on above-ground nuclear tests, INF Treaty, and collapse of the Berlin Wall – would not have happened without mass protests. Popular preoccupation with COVID-19, economic distress, racial animus, and climate change makes mobilization of a mass anti-nuclear movement unlikely. The international milieu is thus critical for the nuclear future. President Trump’s reelection is likely to have a pernicious effect on that milieu, hindering international cooperation to limit nuclear weapons and accelerating a destabilizing qualitative arms race. Yet an intense crisis risking nuclear war is unlikely because he wants to avoid involvement in any wars, not start new ones. He will also try to sustain nuclear diplomacy with North Korea, though whether he would satisfy Pyongyang’s stiffer demands remains in doubt. His opponent, Joseph Biden, will face those same demands. Personnel is policy, and the Biden administration will likely be staffed with officials who served under President Obama. That means a return to shoring up alliances, international cooperation, and continuity with Obama’s nuclear policies. Whether or not he will curtail nuclear modernization, but he will try to restore the JCPOA, save New START, preserve the Open Skies accord, and seek technical talks with China.

The hopes and fears of many at home and abroad are riveted on the November 3 presidential election in the United States – and understandably so. However much its power and prestige may have diminished in recent years, the United States still plays a pivotal role in international institutions, alliances, and mass media, so who becomes its president matters a lot for the global nuclear order.

Almost as important as the outcome of the presidential race is whether the next president’s party can secure a commanding majority in both houses of Congress.

However unlikely it is that Trump’s expressed desire to contest the election’s outcome could succeed, whether the nation can avert a violent backlash among disappointed partisans is less clear.

CONTACT Leon V. Sigal sigalleonv@gmail.com Northeast Asia Cooperative Security Project, New York, NY, USA © 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group on behalf of the Nagasaki University. This is an Open Access article article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.
Yet focusing on the US election risks drawing too much attention away from the deeper questions that the world now faces – questions that a US president can address but cannot answer alone. Among those major post-COVID unknowns with an impact on nuclear arming and disarming are the following:

Will the experience of the global pandemic cause further disruption of the international order?

Will distrust of governments wane or continue to impede international cooperation to contain the global pandemic, mitigate climate change, facilitate international trade, and promote nuclear proliferation?

Will the contagion of nativism and ethno-nationalism exacerbate disintegrative global political and economic trends or will the need for cooperation and expertise to contain the coronavirus triumph over the attempts of leaders to blame foreigners or immigrants for the spread of the pandemic?

Will inward-looking “America first” sentiment in the US public and Congress recede or will it persist and further impair alliance relations and international cooperation on matters of global concern?

Will political and economic competition between the United States and China be held in check by modest efforts at cooperation or escalate into a new Cold War, and even military confrontation?

Will German deficit-financing stimulate EU economic recovery and ease disintegrative trends in Europe or will the ethno-nationalist tide continue to rise on the continent?

Will New START be renewed and US-China talks explore cooperative measures to reduce nuclear arms and nuclear risks or will intensified competition set off a new arms race?

In all these unknowns, the role of publics, and explicitly popular attitudes and activity, is potentially decisive. If that is not obvious in the case of nuclear weapons, which is often thought to be the esoteric domain of experts, one need only recall that while mass activism does not guarantee policy change, three of the most significant developments in recent decades – the ban on above-ground nuclear tests, the INF Treaty, and the collapse of the Berlin Wall – would not have happened without mass protests in many countries. And citizen involvement, organized by NGOs, can even facilitate monitoring of arms agreements and nuclear developments in some countries.

Yet the public’s understandable preoccupation with COVID-19, economic distress, racial animus, and climate change leave scant scope for paying heed to nuclear risks, which makes mobilization of a mass anti-nuclear movement unlikely. Absent popular action, however, positive change to the global nuclear order will continue to be marginal and fitful.

The outcome of the US presidential election will help shape answers to the post-COVID questions and especially the risk of nuclear war and the likelihood that negotiations to reduce and constrain the role of nuclear arms will resume.

**A New Arms Race?**

The United States, Russia, and China are all making new nuclear weapons. US efforts began under the Obama administration, but when President Trump was shown a graph tracing START reductions in US and Russian arms, he demanded that even more be
built – only to be told that existing production lines were already full. After throwing a tantrum, he had to content himself with authorizing a new lower-yield warhead instead. Despite fears of a new arms race, the US buildup thus remains constrained by existing production capacity, Russia may lack the financial wherewithal to replace its aged weapons at a much more rapid pace, and China is mainly expanding its SLBM and road mobile arsenal, which arguably enhances strategic stability though not necessarily crisis stability.

Although the number of arms being produced is not necessarily destabilizing, several qualitative developments are more worrisome. Increased accuracies will continue to jeopardize land-based missiles and intelligence down-links. More recently, purported Russian plans to “escalate in order to deescalate” (Oliker and Baklitsky 2020) and to produce lower-yield warheads prompted the Trump administration to build theater-based intermediate-range missiles that ostensibly will be conventionally-armed and to deploy lower-yields warheads of its own on Trident submarines.

These moves are based on two fundamentally flawed assumptions: that deterrence will never fail and that a nuclear war, if fought, can be limited. The ability of political leaders to control the use of nuclear weapons in an intense crisis or during a war, always suspect, has become all the more precarious with the increasing potential for cyberattacks and anti-satellite weapons (Hanson and Shepherd 2020, 4) to disrupt command, control, communication, and intelligence.¹ New hypersonic weapons under development in Russia, China, and the United States could aggravate crisis instability by drastically reducing how long it takes to reach their targets – the flash-to-bang time (Watts, Trotti, and Massa 2020). Distinguishing conventionally-armed from nuclear-armed hypersonic missiles or lower- from higher-yield warheads in the heat of the moment could also prove difficult.

More worrisome are growing US-China, US-Russia, and Sino-Indian tensions, which, if they were to intensify, may spark fears of impending war that raise the risk of crisis instability. A nuclear arms race and potential nuclear proliferation in Northeast Asia and the Persian Gulf could accentuate this danger. So too could displays of force by one rival or another – “dynamic force employment” is the Pentagon’s buzzword for its displays – in the South China Sea, near Taiwan and the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, in the Baltic Sea and the Sea of Okhotsk, and on the Himalayas, which could spark deadly clashes. A case in point is Korea where large-scale joint US-South Korean exercises compel North Korean counter-mobilization that could trigger a deadly clash that gets out of hand.

If Trump Wins

Observers of foreign policy have many reasons to prefer Donald Trump’s defeat – to cite just a few, his abandonment of critically important international agreements like the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the INF Treaty, and the Open Skies Treaty; his open promotion of nuclear arming by other nations; his undermining of international institutions like the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Trade Organization (WTO); his open support for ethno-nationalists who undermine the democratic governments of European allies; his attempt to turn what is essentially

¹Nautilus Institute series, for instance, Press (2019).
a political and economic competition with China into a military and ideological confrontation; and his misguided mercantilist challenge to trade ties with allies like the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP) and global supply chains without obvious benefit to American workers. Such efforts are likely to persist in a second Trump administration.

Of even greater concern is the character of President Trump – mercurial and impulsive, uninformed yet impatient with the details of policy briefings, insecure enough to feed on flattery. As disrupter-in-chief, he prefers to govern by free-for-all instead of a coherent policy process and to promulgate policy tweets, often without follow-up.

Hopes for nuclear diplomacy with Iran, Russia, or China under Trump are much dimmer, darkening prospects of nuclear proliferation in the Persian Gulf and East Asia.

Yet two of Trump’s more positive impulses are likely to continue. Despite his spasms of rhetorical excess, he is unlikely to increase the risk of an intense crisis leading to nuclear war because he wants to avoid US involvement in any wars, not start new ones, and he will try to continue negotiations with North Korea to curb nuclear developments there.

Beyond drawing attention to himself by meeting with Kim Jong Un, he may not have fully understood what he was doing or paid much attention to the details of policy or implementation, but his administration had officials like the secretaries of State and Defense and a Joint Chiefs of Staff who did and he sometimes heeded their counsel.

Trump Administration officials claim credit for compelling the North to the negotiating table by threatening war. The evidence strongly suggests otherwise. North Korean diplomats were well-aware of Trump’s oft-expressed interest in negotiating during his 2016 presidential campaign. Although the February 2017 visit of a senior DPRK delegation was postponed, talks opened in the New York channel that spring. Washington gradually deployed more airpower and other forces to the region, but Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Joseph Dunford, and the commander of US Forces in Korea Vincent Brookes repeatedly voiced caution about using them and were reluctant to come up with military options for Korea sought by National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster. The drumbeat of war in the news media, amplifying hyperbolic threats by Trump of “fire and fury” and loose talk by others of “bloody nose” strikes, aroused consternation in Seoul, though not in Pyongyang. Careful parsing of Trump’s over-the-top rhetoric suggests he was making deterrent threats in the event that North Korean actions put US or allied security in jeopardy. On 29 April 2017, at the peak of the war fever, KCNA dismissed these threats as bluffs:

The U.S. is bluffing after firing dozens of missiles at Syria and dropping a GBU-43 bomb on Afghanistan. During his recent junket to Asia, U.S. Vice-President Pence, saying the world witnessed the “bold decision of the president” through the military actions in Syria and Afghanistan, behaved so arrogant as to urge the DPRK not to misjudge the will of the U.S. and test the decision of Trump and muscle of the U.S. forces. Dignitaries including the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations also noisily talk about “strong warning” to someone every day, asserting that the era of “strategic patience” has come to an end and all options

---

2For a detailed history of US-DPRK negotiations under Trump, Sigal (2020).

3For example, “The United States has great strength and patience, but if it is forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea.” White House Office of the Press Secretary, Remarks by President Trump to the 72nd Session of the U.N. General Assembly, 19 September 2017.
including military action are on the table. This is just a bluff of the U.S. keen on flexing its muscle by striking non-nuclear countries and weak nations only. Such an act can never irritate the DPRK. ... The U.S. is getting evermore desperate in its bluffing, but it only reveals the vulnerability of those exasperated by the DPRK’s nukes of justice and invincible military muscle⁴.

Even as Trump has repeatedly expressed his desire for another summit meeting with Kim Jong Un, Pyongyang has erected a high hurdle for resuming talks. It is demanding unilateral steps up front to demonstrate a US commitment to end enmity, demands that Washington has yet to satisfy. Three such steps might bring the North back to the negotiating table. One is a public commitment in principle to work toward what Secretary of State Pompeo once called “a fundamentally different strategic relationship”⁵ from enmity to friendship, starting with an end-of-war declaration. A second is a commitment to scale back all joint field exercises with South Korea on land, in the air, or offshore for one year or longer if negotiations continue to make progress. A third is sanctions easing such as granting an exemption from UN Security Council sanctions to permit the reopening of the Kaesong Industrial Zone or to allow North Korean sales of coal and textiles. Whether Trump is prepared to satisfy the DPRK’s stepped-up demands remains unclear.

**Biden Wins**

In government, personnel is policy, and the Biden administration will likely be staffed with officials who served under President Obama. That means a return to shoring up alliances and international cooperation. It also means continuity with Obama’s nuclear policies.

Biden’s most considered responses on nuclear matters came in the campaign’s answer to a survey of Democratic candidates conducted by The New York Times in early 2020. Asked about the use of force “to preempt an Iranian or North Korean missile or nuclear test,” the Biden response was non-committal:

> Force must be used judiciously to protect a vital interest of the United States, only when the objective is clear and achievable, with the informed consent of the American people and, where required, the approval of Congress. The nuclear program of North Korea and the nuclear ambitions of Iran pose such a vital interest. I would do whatever necessary to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, taking no option off the table. I would also be prepared to use force in the event of an imminent long-range missile attack by either country (Astor and Sanger 2020).

Biden will try his best to restore the JCPOA, which could head off nuclear weapons development not only in Iran but also in Saudi Arabia. Although some may counsel him to demand broader agreement with Iran up front, he is more likely to embrace Obama’s underlying strategic premise, that the JCPOA signals US desire to avoid siding with either Sunnis or Shiites and, if implemented, may facilitate further cooperation with Teheran. As Biden was quoted by The New York Times:

---

⁴KCNA, “U.S. Muscle-Flexing Can Never Work on DPRK: KCNA Commentary,” 29 April 2017. (Emphasis added.)
⁵U.S., Department of State, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Interview with Yui Hideki of NHK, 7 June 2018.
What Iran is doing is dangerous, but still reversible. If Iran moves back into compliance with its nuclear obligations, a Biden administration would re-enter the JCPOA as a starting point to work alongside our allies in Europe and other world powers to extend the deal’s nuclear constraints. Doing so would provide a critical down payment to re-establish U.S. credibility, signaling to the world that America’s word and international commitments once again mean something. My administration would also leverage renewed international consensus around America’s Iran policy – and a redoubled commitment to diplomacy – to more effectively push back against Tehran’s other malign behavior in the region. This would include: targeted sanctions against Iranian support for terrorism and Iran’s ballistic missile program; ironclad support for Israel; robust intelligence and security cooperation with regional partners; support for strengthening the capacity of countries like Iraq to resist Iranian influence; and a renewed commitment to diplomacy aimed at ending wars in Yemen and Syria that provide Iran with opportunities to expand (Astor and Sanger 2020).

Biden’s alliance management skills may be sorely tested in Asia, where South Korean preferences to avoid entanglement in a new Cold War with China and to deepen political and economic engagement with North Korea face resistance in Japan, tensions that Suga Yoshihide might ease as prime minister.

Curbing a renewed nuclear arms race to ease tensions in Asia through technical talks with China is likely to be a Biden objective. Mutual unease about China’s missile buildup on the one hand and US missile defenses and nuclear modernization plans on the other is likely to be the prime issue. That seemed evident in China’s overbearing reaction to the US deployment of the THAAD anti-missile system in South Korea. Beijing purportedly feared the capability of the AN/TPY-2 radar to cue US-based tracking radars and distinguish decoys, although it was likely as moved by concern about the increased integration of US alliances with South Korea and Japan that anti-missile defense requires. When deployment at a second site did not materialize, Beijing relented and resumed attempts to woo Seoul.

The Biden approach to North Korea reflects the views of his advisers who worked in the Obama administration:

The Trump administration’s approach to North Korea has relied on pursuing photo ops with Kim Jong-un, reducing economic pressure, suspending military exercises and ignoring human rights. But America got very little in return. In fact, Pyongyang has continued to produce fuel for nuclear weapons, and improved its nuclear weapons and missile capabilities. After three years of Trump’s approach, North Korea’s weapons are now more powerful, more mobile, more accurate and more dangerous – and Kim is more defiant and emboldened. As Kim advances his ability to hit the United States – and anywhere else in the world, for that matter – we can’t rely on Trump’s tweets or threats to keep us safe.

I would work with our allies and partners to prevent North Korea’s proliferation of nuclear weapons to bad actors; set the right formula of sanctions enforcement and sanctions relief; and make it harder for Kim to continue on his belligerent path, while making credible efforts to offer an alternative vision for a nonnuclear future to Kim and the people of North Korea. I would strengthen our core alliances with Japan and South Korea. And I would insist that China join us in pressuring Pyongyang – and that if it does not, the United States will continue to take measures to strengthen our ability to defend ourselves and our allies. I would be willing to meet with Kim – not to pursue a vanity project like Trump, but as part of an actual strategy that moves the ball forward on denuclearization (Astor and Sanger 2020).
If Biden makes no more serious effort to address the North’s negotiating demands, instead of a resumption of nuclear diplomacy, Pyongyang is likely to end its self-imposed moratorium on long-range missile test-launches and nuclear tests and resume testing to develop a reentry vehicle for its intercontinental-range rocket, a solid-fueled ICBM, and proven thermonuclear devices.

Saving START will be a challenge. Biden told Foreign Affairs he would not hold START hostage to nuclear talks with China but “pursue an extension of the New START Treaty, an anchor of strategic stability between the United States and Russia, and use that as a foundation for new arms control arrangements” (Biden 2020).

He will not abandon the Open Skies Treaty:

The Trump Administration says it is withdrawing from the Treaty because Russia is cheating. There are real concerns that Russia is not complying fully with the Treaty. It has improperly imposed restrictions on overflights over certain regions (Kaliningrad and the Russian-occupied regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia), to which the United States and other parties have objected. These Russian violations should be addressed not by withdrawing from the Treaty, but by seeking to resolve them through the Treaty’s implementation and dispute mechanism. That is exactly how other disputes over Russian implementation have been resolved, including altitude restrictions over Chechnya.

Our allies have made clear they want us to remain in the Treaty, and to work together to address compliance issues with Russia. Without us, the Treaty could crumble. Withdrawal will exacerbate growing tensions between the West and Russia, and increase the risks of miscalculation and conflict.

On nuclear arms, Biden has hinted at adopting a policy of no first use without quite committing to it: “As I said in 2017, I believe that the sole purpose of the U.S. nuclear arsenal should be deterring – and, if necessary, retaliating against – a nuclear attack” (Biden 2020). Nor will he resume nuclear testing.

At the same time, Biden is likely to continue replacing the current nuclear force with new weapons, a modernization program initiated by the Obama administration, although Democrats in Congress may successfully press him to cut back excessive arms spending.

To change the dynamics of nuclear policy and rally public support, Biden may need to address the international political milieu more broadly. That requires going beyond a restoration of the pre-Trump ancient regime and confronting the inertia in the national security bureaucracy and the orthodoxy of a US foreign policy establishment – what Obama aide Ben Rhodes has called “the Blob” – that seems determined to revive a muscle-bound version of American exceptionalism. As vice-president, Biden rose to the challenge in opposing the troop surge in Afghanistan and Iraq while supporting Obama’s desire to avoid taking sides in the Saudi-Iran and Sunni-Shiite conflict. Yet, faced with overwhelming economic, racial, and viral crises at home, it remains to be seen whether Biden will be prepared to pursue principled and purposeful multilateral engagement abroad without reverting to throwing America’s weight around.

---

6Statement by Vice President Joe Biden on President Trump’s Decision to Withdraw from the Open Skies Treaty, 22 May 2020.
7The original article was completed on 28 September 2020 and the postscript on 10 January 2021.
Postscript: The Biden Challenge

Donald Trump’s subversive attacks on Joseph Biden’s seven-million-vote victory culminated in his incitement of a mob to storm the Capitol. Along COVID-19 and its dire economic consequences, they pose a challenge to Biden in seeking to restore America’s place in the world, never mind keep his campaign pledge to “build back better.”

They needn’t inhibit the president-elect from dealing with Beijing, Pyongyang, Tehran or Moscow, however. True, slender Democratic majorities in both houses of Congress – the narrowest margins in decades – assure that nuclear policy in Asia as well as relations with China, North Korea, Iran, and Russia will remain a partisan political football, making it difficult to muster support for engagement in the tribal politics of today’s Washington. Still, as the EU trade deal with China and South Korea reluctance to support confrontation with Beijing suggest, a mixed policy of cooperation and competition favored by Biden is likely to be sustainable abroad.

For their part, North Korea, Iran, and Russia may be amenable to nuclear diplomacy. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un indicated he is open to re-engagement in his January 5–7, 2021 report to the Korean Workers’ Party Congress, which “analyzed that north-south relations may return to a new starting point of peace and prosperity in the near future … depending on the south Korean authorities’ attitude” and “declared the general orientation and the policy stand of our Party for comprehensively expanding and developing the external relations.” In the usual mixed message, Kim authorized continued development and production of nuclear forces, including tactical nuclear weapons, MIRVs and a reconnaissance satellite while “stressing that the strong defense capability of the state never precludes diplomacy but serves as a powerful means to propel it along the right course and guarantee its success” and hinting at a willingness to adjust his policy to that of the incoming Biden administration, “responding to power with power, and to goodwill with goodwill.”

In his parting remarks in Seoul, Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun, who led US negotiations with Pyongyang, set the tone on US policy on North Korea, “As we look to the future, I remain convinced that diplomacy remains the best course – indeed the only course – to solving our challenges with North Korea.” He added pointedly, “Among the points I will convey to the new team is this: The war is over; the time for conflict has ended, and the time for peace has arrived” (Song and Wonju 2020), The president-elect is likely to follow that sound advice.

Public discourse by so-called experts have done little to clarify Biden’s options. Many have warned of an end to North Korea’s self-imposed moratorium on nuclear and long-range missile testing without addressing its demands for reciprocity. Some have emphasized tighter sanctions despite mounting evidence of their ineffectiveness. Others have called for a new focus on arms control as if complete denuclearization were assured out of the question and as if the 1994 Agreed Framework and September 2005 Six-Party Joint Statement did not take a step-by-step approach toward that ultimate goal. Many cautioned against another summit meeting as if the problem in Singapore and Hanoi was having leaders get together rather than the excessive demands and inadequate offers of

---

8KCNA, “Great Program for Struggle Leading Korean-Style Socialist Construction to Great Victory: On Report Made by Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un at Eighth Congress of WPK,” 9 January 2021.
both sides. Few addressed the essential question of what inducements might begin to satisfy Pyongyang's desire for a fundamental change in relations with Washington.

Washington resounded with tough talk about China as if a new Cold War were imminent, ignoring hints from the Biden camp that he favored competing when necessary and cooperating where possible, including climate change, Korean denuclearization, and nuclear confidence-building, in order to head off confrontation.

Israel's hopes of stifling revival of the JCPOA by assassinating a prominent nuclear scientist in Iran were dashed when Tehran did not overreact. Its united front with Sunni Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the emirates will impede US attempts to bridge the divide with Shi'ite Iran. So, too, will intense bipartisan Congressional suspicion of Iran and enthusiasm for sanctions. The Biden administration's desire to roll back Iran's enrichment efforts before waiving snap-back sanctions will be seen in Tehran as putting the cart before the horse. What to do with advanced centrifuges that it installed over the past year may prove a challenge. Yet Tehran may prove amenable to blending down or shipping out the excess low-enriched uranium it recently produced without waiting for Washington's formal reentry into the JCPOA.

The Biden administration is inclined to agree to unconditional extension of New START with Russia for five years, although political prospects in Washington for accepting that result were darkened by Moscow's hacking of US security agencies. Restoring the INF Treaty will prove more onerous, given the new weapons systems both sides are developing.

In sum, there are some grounds for optimism about avoiding unbridled nuclear arming.

**Notes on contributor**

Leon V. Sigal is director of the Northeast Asia Cooperative Security Project in New York and has participated in Track II talks with North Korea for two decades. He was a member of the editorial board of *The New York Times* from 1989 to 1995. He served in the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, in 1979 as International Affairs Fellow and in 1980 as Special Assistant to the Director. He was a Rockefeller Younger Scholar in Foreign Policy Studies at the Brookings Institution in 1972-1974 and a guest scholar there in 1981-1984. From 1974 to 1989 he was a professor of government at Wesleyan University. He was an adjunct professor at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs from 1985 to 1989 and from 1996 to 2000 and a visiting lecturer at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School in 1988, 2000, and 2018. Sigal is the author of Reporters and Officials: The Organization and Politics of Newsmaking, Alliance Security: NATO and the No-First-Use Question (with John Steinbruner), Nuclear Forces in Europe: Enduring Dilemmas, Present Prospects, Fighting to a Finish: The Politics of War Termination in the United States and Japan, 1945, Disarming Strangers: Nuclear Diplomacy with North Korea, Hang Separately: Cooperative Security Between the United States and Russia, 1985-1994, and Negotiating Minefields: The Landmines Ban in American Politics. He edited The Changing Dynamics of U.S. Defense Spending.

**Disclosure Statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.
References

Astor, M., and D. E. Sanger. 2020. “The 2020 Democrats on Foreign Policy,” New York Times, 6 February 2020.
Biden, J. R., Jr. 2020. “Why America Must Lead Again,” Foreign Affairs, March/April 2020.
Hanson, K., and C. Shepherd. 2020. “U.S. Military Puts Space Weapons in Its Sights to Counter China,” Financial Times, 3 September 2020, p. 4.
Oliker, O., and A. Baklitsky. 2020. “The Nuclear Posture Review and Russian ‘De-escalation’: A Dangerous Solution to A Nonexistent Problem,” War on the Rocks, 20 February 2020.
Press, D. K. 2019. “NC3 and Crisis Stability – Growing Dangers in the 21st Century,” NAPSnet, 17 October 2019. https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-special-reports/nc3-and-crisis-instability-growing-dangers-in-the-21st-century/.
Sigal, L. V. 2020. “Paved with Good Intentions: Trump’s Nuclear Diplomacy with North Korea.” Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament 3 (1): 163–182. doi:10.1080/25751654.2020.1751549.
Song, S.-H., and Y. Wonju. 2020. “Biegun Says Diplomacy ‘Best’ and ‘Only’ Course to Resolving N. K. Challenges,” Yonhap, 10 December 2020.
Watts, J. T., C. Trott, and M. J. Massa. 2020. Hypersonic Weapons in the Indo-Pacific Region. Washington: Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security.