



## **Questions for Defense Secretary Nominee Ashton Carter**

**1. At the Presidential Conference on William Jefferson Clinton in 2005, you said that “[the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat reduction] is a major historic achievement for humankind, and historians not only decades but centuries from now will note the disaster that might have been – but which was averted through Nunn-Lugar.” Mr. Carter, as someone who helped draft that legislation, how will you work to preserve the non-proliferation infrastructure? How will you prioritize preventing terrorists from obtaining nuclear material?**

**Background:**

To date, Department of Energy/National Nuclear Security Administration initiatives have removed all highly enriched uranium (HEU) materials from 27 locations. But [there are still 25 countries](#) in possession of enough nuclear material to build a nuclear weapon. Nevertheless, for fiscal year 2015, Congress appropriated \$338 million less than in FY14 to non-proliferation programs and increased nuclear weapons program spending by \$387 million compared to FY14. This was the third straight year of reductions in the U.S. non-proliferation budget.

*Obama’s Mixed Bag on Nuclear Weapons* by Angela Canterbury and Sarah Tully:

<http://nukesofhazardblog.com/story/2014/10/28/155215/69>

*Analysis: Funding Reductions for Nuclear Non-proliferation* by Angela Canterbury and Greg Terryn:

[http://armscontrolcenter.org/issues/securityspending/analysis\\_funding\\_reductions\\_nuclear\\_nonproliferation/](http://armscontrolcenter.org/issues/securityspending/analysis_funding_reductions_nuclear_nonproliferation/)

*Origins of the Nunn-Lugar Program* speech as delivered by Ashton Carter at the Presidential Conference on William Jefferson Clinton, 2005: <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB447/2005-11-10%20through%2012%20Report%20on%20Nunn-Lugar%20by%20Ashton%20B.%20Carter.PDF>

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**2. For the *New York Times* in 2003, you, Arnold Kanter, and Brent Scowcroft wrote, “The world should renew its determination to curb the spread of nuclear weapons by supplementing the current treaty with additional inducements and penalties.” In 2006, you and Stephen Lamontagne authored a paper entitled “Containing the Nuclear Red Zone Threat” that suggested a multination supply regime was the best way to curb the threat of states advancing toward nuclear weapons capacity. As Defense Secretary today, how would you go about incentivizing states to not pursue nuclear weapons capabilities?**



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## **Background:**

The so-called nuclear red zone includes countries that are close to having nuclear weapons capabilities. Carter and Lamontagne put forward a multinational supply regime solution that incentivizes not having nuclear facilities and implements punitive measures against states that don't comply.

*Good Nukes, Bad Nukes* by Ashton B. Carter, Arnold Kanter, William J. Perry and Brent Scowcroft:  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/12/22/opinion/good-nukes-bad-nukes.html>

*Containing the Nuclear Red Zone Threat* by Ashton Carter and Stephan Lamontagne: <http://www.the-american-interest.com/2006/03/01/containing-the-nuclear-red-zone-threat/>

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**3. a) During President Clinton's first Nuclear Posture Review, when you were Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy, you "suggested a monad including as few as 10 Trident submarines, each carrying 24 missiles armed with six warheads each," could replace the nuclear triad without diminishing the US' strategic deterrence. More than twenty years later, we still maintain the nuclear triad, and plan to spend upwards of one trillion dollars to maintain all three legs over the next three decades. Has your opinion on the viability of a nuclear monad changed? If so, why is a nuclear triad more important to sustain today than twenty years ago? What are your thoughts on re-evaluating what is needed for a strategic deterrence and the role of the nuclear triad given today's global security environment?**

**b) A 2014 review of the US nuclear enterprise revealed that widespread safety issues such as outdated equipment, low morale and weak leadership plague the US nuclear weapons program. Former Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel's solution was to order a massive overhaul of the enterprise, including a commitment to increase spending for the U.S. nuclear enterprise by \$7.5 billion over the next five years. Don't you think reducing the number of nuclear weapons, and in particular, the number of land-based missiles, would lead to fewer safety problems? How do you plan to address these safety concerns?**

## **Background:**

Since 1959, the United States has maintained a "triad" of nuclear weapons delivery systems, which consists of nuclear-armed bombers, land-based missiles, and submarine-launched missiles. It's been fourteen years since the end of the Cold War; nevertheless, the Pentagon plans to spend at least \$355 billion modernizing the U.S. nuclear arsenal over the next decade and up to \$1 trillion over the next 30 years. The necessity of all three legs of the nuclear triad to maintain our nuclear deterrent is a hotly contested debate within the

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defense world. For instance, a [2013 Cato policy report](#) suggested that reducing the nuclear triad to submarines only would save roughly 20 billion dollars annually without degrading our strategic deterrent.

*The Case Against the Nuclear Triad*, CATO Institute: <http://www.cato.org/policy-report/novemberdecember-2013/case-against-nuclear-triad>

*The End of Overkill? Reassessing U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy* by Benjamin Friedman, Christopher Preble, and Matt Fay: <http://www.cato.org/publications/white-paper/end-overkill-reassessing-us-nuclear-weapons-policy> (see page 9)

*Pruning the Nuclear Triad? Pros and Cons of Submarines, Bombers and Missiles*, Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation:

[http://armscontrolcenter.org/issues/securityspending/051613\\_nuclear\\_triad\\_pros\\_cons/index.html](http://armscontrolcenter.org/issues/securityspending/051613_nuclear_triad_pros_cons/index.html)

*Death Wears Bunny Slippers* by Josh Harkinson:

<http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/11/air-force-missile-wing-minuteman-iii-nuclear-weapons-burnout>

*Hagel is Out; Big Spending is In* by Sarah Tully:

<http://nukesofhazardblog.com/story/2014/11/26/163137/39>

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**4. The Administration plans to spend at least \$355 billion modernizing the U.S. nuclear arsenal over the next decade and up to \$1 trillion over the next 30 years. The planned modernization will not only upgrade existing weapons but also create additional military capability compared to the current weapons. Considering the Budget Control Act's budget caps and the possibility of sequestration, as well as non-nuclear international security challenges such as Daesh in Iraq and Syria, and the recent attacks in Paris—how is spending a trillion or more to modernize our nuclear weapons arsenal the best investment in the least likely scenario of nuclear war? What does spending that money to modernize our nuclear arsenal do to help us meet more immediate and realistic challenges such as terrorism and cybersecurity?**

*The Unaffordable Arsenal* by Greg Terryn: <http://nukesofhazardblog.com/story/2014/10/30/103356/10>

Congressional Budget Office Projected Costs of U.S. Nuclear Forces, 2014-2023:

<http://www.cbo.gov/publication/44968>

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**5. In a 2013 speech at the National Defense Industrial Association you spoke of “the need to absorb some reductions in defense spending in the interest of the nation’s overall fiscal situation.” As Defense Secretary, how do you plan to address the continued use of the Overseas Contingency Operations to fund non-war Pentagon projects such as the F-35 and missile defense? When will you terminate the account and what will you do to end the Pentagon’s use of off-budget accounts such as the newly proposed National Sea-Based Deterrence Fund?**

**Background:**

The 2010 National Defense Authorization Act appropriated \$585 billion to the defense department: \$521.3 billion to the base budget and \$63.7 billion to the Overseas Contingency Operations fund (OCO). OCO was established under President Obama in 2009 to replace the emergency supplemental appropriations that had previously been used to fund the wars. OCO was intended to institutionalize this funding and force the Pentagon to be more transparent about what was actually being funded by the war request. In recent years, however, OCO has been treated more as a slush fund for projects sometimes only tangentially related to overseas operations. OCO is not subject to the budget caps. In September 2014 the Pentagon submitted to Congress a reprogramming request to use OCO money to buy eight new F-35 fighter aircrafts. The House Appropriations Committee promptly denied the request.

A National Sea-Based Deterrence Fund was established in the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act as a way to secure funding for the new Ohio-class replacement submarines. Critics see it as a budget gimmick because funds for the project come out of a generic, off-budget account rather than the Navy’s budget.

Mr. Carter’s speech as prepared for delivery at the 2013 National Defense Industrial Association:

<http://www.ndia.org/meetings/Documents/3May2013DSDCarterNDIAEisenhowerRemarksPreparedForDelivery.pdf>

*The Pentagon’s Slush Fund Continues to Raise Eyebrows* by Angela Canterbury and Sarah Tully:

<http://nukesofhazardblog.com/story/2014/11/21/202728/03>

*Funding New Submarines Outside the Navy?* By Hugh Lessig: <http://www.taxpayer.net/media-center/article/funding-new-submarines-outside-the-navy>

*Time to Rein in the Pentagon’s Mysterious Slush Fund* by William Hartung:

<http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-hartung-pentagon-slush-fund-20140815-story.html>

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**6. You spearheaded the Better Buying Power initiative in 2010. How successful was that initiative? As Secretary of Defense, how do you plan to build on it, or do you**

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## have a different approach in mind?

### Background:

Better Buying Power was the defense acquisition system's addition to Secretary Gates' 2010 efficiency initiative. [The goal of BBP](#) was "to do more without more – that is, to get more capability for the warfighter and more value for the taxpayer by obtaining greater efficiency and productivity in defense spending." The program reported success in cutting projected costs for programs like the Ohio-class submarine; however, critics are quick to advise that these savings do not take into account frequent cost overruns.

*Manage Defense Spending Through 'Better Buying Power,' Not Sequestration* by Ashton Carter:

<http://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2013/11/carter-manage-defense-spending-through-better-buying-power-not-sequestration/73739/?oref=d-river>

*How Ash Carter Oversold DOD's Saving Record and His Role* by Lawrence Korb:

<http://www.defenseone.com/management/2013/11/how-ash-carter-oversold-dods-savings-record-and-his-role/74546/>

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**7. In a 2006 report entitled "Plan B for Iran: What if Nuclear Diplomacy Fails?" you lay out a course of action if the U.S. and partners are unable to come to a diplomatic solution. A key take-away from the study is that "While it is important to explore and analyze various versions of Plan B, it would be premature to abandon the diplomatic path, Plan A." If the United States or Israel were to use military force to prevent Iran from building nuclear weapons, what do you think the consequences would be? How do you assess the progress of the current negotiations and what do you recommend to ensure we don't have to resort to plan B?**

### Background:

The five permanent members of the UN Security Council, plus Germany, and Iran continue to make progress towards a comprehensive agreement over Iran's nuclear program. The latest deadline for a political framework has been set for March 1, 2014 with a final agreement deadline of July 1, 2014. However, expected legislation from Senators Robert Menendez (D-NJ) and Mark Kirk (R-IL) could scuttle diplomacy by imposing sanctions or tying the President's hands. Derailing the negotiations could lead to military action against Iran.

*Plan B for Iran: What if Nuclear Diplomacy Fails?* By Ashton Carter and William Perry:

[http://live.belfercenter.org/publication/2127/plan\\_b\\_for\\_iran.html?breadcrumb=%2Fexperts%2F868%2Fric\\_lewis](http://live.belfercenter.org/publication/2127/plan_b_for_iran.html?breadcrumb=%2Fexperts%2F868%2Fric_lewis)



*Sanctions and Extensions: How Much Money Will Iran Receive?* By Laicie Heeley:

[http://armscontrolcenter.org/publications/op-eds/laicie\\_iran\\_sanctions\\_011315/](http://armscontrolcenter.org/publications/op-eds/laicie_iran_sanctions_011315/)

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**8. The Department of Defense is the only federal agency that has not been audited as required by law. What do you plan to do to ensure the Pentagon is completely auditable by 2017 or before?**

**Background:**

A law enacted in 1990 requires every federal agency to pass a yearly audit. Twenty-five years later, the Pentagon continues to be the only federal agency that has not passed an audit required by law, according to the Government Accountability Office. The Pentagon continues to postpone efforts to be audit-ready. The latest deadline has been set for 2017.

*Audit the Pentagon Now, Congressmen Say* by Steven Nelson:

<http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2014/07/15/audit-the-pentagon-now-congressmen-say>

*Senators Warn Pentagon To Be Ready for Full Audit in 2017* by Charles Clark:

<http://www.defenseone.com/management/2014/05/senators-warn-pentagon-be-ready-full-audit-2017/84376/>

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**9. What Congressional restrictions on the authorization of the use of military force against ISIL do you think are appropriate? To what extent do you think there should be a specifically defined enemy? Geographical limitation? Expiration date?**

**Background:**

The legality of Obama's current campaign in Iraq and Syria is contested. The president has been using the 2001 AUMF against Al-Qaeda, passed in the wake of the September 11th attacks, to justify military actions against Daesh. In December 2014, the Senate Committee on Foreign relations passed a resolution authorizing the use of military force against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, also known as Daesh. The proposed AUMF against Daesh would repeal the 2002 AUMF against Iraq but says nothing about the 2001 AUMF. During the Senate hearing Senator Rand Paul (R-KY) put forward an amendment to constrain the U.S. campaign geographically. An amendment to limit the authority of the AUMF to one year was proposed by Senator Tom Udall (D-NM) and co-sponsored by Senator Paul. Neither amendment passed.

*Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Passes Authorization of Use of Force Against ISIL* by Sarah Tully:

<http://nukesofhazardblog.com/story/2014/12/11/17448/566>



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Testimony of John Kerry on the Authorization for the Use of Military Force Against ISIL:

<http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2014/12/234876.htm>

*Obama To Ask Congress for New War Powers to Fight ISIS* by Molly O'Toole:

<http://www.defenseone.com/politics/2014/11/obama-ask-congress-new-war-powers-fight-isis/98270/>

**10. During your previous tenure at the Department of Defense, the Pentagon introduced the "8 D's" (dissuasion, disarmament, diplomacy, denial (of necessary means), defusing, deterrence, defenses, and destruction) as a full range of tool with which to counter nuclear weapons proliferation. Within the context of our present day situation with Iran, as Defense Secretary, what will be your role in balancing the implementation of those tools? How do you plan to coordinate with other cabinet members? How do you plan to demonstrate your leadership in non-military defense?**

**Background:**

Mr. Carter has a history of supporting diplomacy with nuclear-armed adversaries but not unconditionally. For instance, in a 2006 op-ed for the *Washington Post*, Carter and former Defense Secretary William Perry [wrote](#), "Diplomacy has failed, and we cannot sit by and let this deadly threat mature." As Secretary Kerry and his diplomatic team approach the July 1, 2015 deadline to make a comprehensive deal with Iran, the new Defense Secretary will be a key advisor to Obama on the potential use of military action should the P5+1 and Iran not meet the deadline. Carter has expressed his support for diplomacy as a plan A; however, in 2008 he authored a report on possible U.S. air strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities.

*How to Counter WMD: Worst People vs. Worst Weapons* by Ashton Carter:

<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/60098/ashton-b-carter/how-to-counter-wmd>

*Can a Wonk Run a War?* By Michael Crowley: <http://www.politico.com/story/2014/12/ashton-carter-secretary-of-defense-113283.html>

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