ArmsControlWonk.com

Strategic Posture Commission Announced

posted Thursday March 20, 2008 under **nuclear-weapons**, **administrivia** by **jeffrey**

And the nominees are …

> The following individuals have been nominated to the Commission by the House Armed Services Committee:
>
> • William Perry, Commission Chairman, former Secretary of Defense;
> • John Foster, Director Emeritus of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory;
> • Lee Hamilton, former Congressman and Vice Chair of the 9/11 Commission;
> • Keith Payne, CEO and President, National Institute for Public Policy;
> • Ellen Williams, University of Maryland Distinguished Professor; and
> • Harry Cartland, former physicist, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.
>
> The following individuals have been nominated to the Commission by the Senate Armed Services Committee:
>
> • James Schlesinger, Commission Vice Chairman, former Secretary of Energy and Secretary of Defense;
> • John Glenn, former Senator and NASA astronaut;
> • Fred Ikle, former Director, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency;
> • Morton Halperin, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs;
> • James Woolsey, former Director, Central Intelligence Agency; and
> • Bruce Tarter, former Director, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

For the terms of reference and some background, see Strategic Posture Commission ACW, May 11, 2006

■

Comment

1. Without information about targeting, all of this will be pointless. I wonder what makes this attempt at getting the information different from past attempts.

   — LB · Mar 20, 08:46 AM ·

2. It is a good point, though I believe it can be addressed.

   I am actually working on a post about this very subject.

   — Jeffrey Lewis · Mar 20, 09:47 AM ·

3. James Schlesinger knows all about targeting. At least he did back when he wrote the guidance in 1974.

   I'm surprised at the absence of a snarky comment from Jeffrey on this list. Are you too busy calculating the average age? Or trying to track down the last time (if ever) some of these people had anything to do or say about nuclear policy?

   — anon · Mar 20, 10:29 AM ·

4. Maybe Amy Woolf can apply for the staff director position?

   — Jozy Dore · Mar 20, 12:01 PM ·

5. I must say I'm disappointed in the overall composition of the panel.

   I'm happy to have Perry as the chair. As one of the four horsemen of the anti-apocalypse, that is the biggest bright spot.

   And your colleague Mort will be excellent.

   Ellen Williams will also be good – she knows a lot about plutonium as a surface physicist.

   But as much as I admire Hamiltion, he's an internationalist, not a nuclear guy. I like Glenn, but he's also not go to nuclear expert.

   Tartar did a good job on the AAAS RRW panel but is a lab guy at heart.

   Then we have Foster and Payne, who have integrity but are serious nuke-heads. Schelsinger and Woolsey are also nuclear hawks (though I appreciate Woolsey's strong push for energy independence, he was on Payne's NIPP panel that wrote their "NPR").

   Cartland, former HASC staffer under Duncan Hunter – he actually had a good rep but still . . . Hunter?

   The wild card is Ikle – he was also on the NIPP nuclear panel, but has not been shy about attacking the administration's terrorism policies.

   — Stephen Young · Mar 20, 06:35 PM ·

6. Presumably, William Perry also knows something about targeting policy; but that's beside the point. If the information is classified, those who have had direct access to the nuclear targeting policy won't be able to put that first-hand knowledge to use. If they decided to commit an indiscretion and disclose informally what they know, the commission would not be able to use that to draw its conclusions. There is no way around the question of whether that info will be made available to the Commission through official channels. I don't know if DoD is moving towards this; given their past opposition to any such move, things don't look good. However, I do not closely follow that debate; perhaps they have recently relaxed their attitude.

   — LB · Mar 20, 07:57 PM ·

7. I feel really confident about the prospects of this commission now that Keith "Nuclear War is winnable"

Payne has been nominated to it.

— Robot Economist · Mar 20, 08:57 PM ·

8. Stephen (and others), its worth remembering that the composition of the panel is actually the result of 4 indpendent picks, with each the majority and minority in both the House and the Senate getting their say. Hence, Duncan Hunter, as ranking minority on the Committee, got his picks (can you guess which are his?), as did Skelton, who deferred to Tauscher. On the Senate side, you can see the effects of Levin (who did not defer to the subcommittee). He's very plugged into the old nuclear establishment. I also heard that Hamilton asked to be on the Commission. From his old seat as chair of House Foreign Affairs and his current seat at the Wilson Center, he may bring some gravitas and perspective to the Committee. I'm not sure what Glenn brings, (actually, he has some nonproliferation bona fides, even though they are a bit dated) although he may have some rapport with General Chilton at STRATCOM since they are both astronauts.

— anon · Mar 22, 08:22 AM ·

9. 70

Here are my estimates.

Perry, 80
Foster, 85
Hamilton, 76
Payne, 52
Williams 52
Cartland, 50

Average Age: 66

Schlessinger, 79
Glenn, 86
Ikle, 83
Halperin, 71
Woolsey, 66
Tarter, 67

Average age: 73

— Jeffrey Lewis · Mar 22, 10:01 AM ·

10. Livermore three, Los Alamos zero.

— CKR · Mar 22, 04:45 PM ·

11. The Strategic Posture Commission might have some "hawks" on it. Shock, horror! Gather your skirts and leap up on a stool!

<sarcasm> Obviously our "strategic posture" should be one of total nuclear disarmament, and thus the only those who believe in total nuclear disarmament should be on such a commission. </sarcasm>

— Lugo · Mar 27, 10:16 AM ·

12. Lugo, lovely job of intentionally misconstruing my comments. Anon, I know that half the appointees were from the Republican side, and will well represent a pro-nuclear viewpoint. I was merely lamenting that the Dem choices were not as seeped in nuclear policy as their counterparts, and that the bipartisan initiative Perry helps lead is not well represented.

— Stephen Young · Apr 1, 10:41 AM ·

Commenting is closed for this article.