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Feature Report

“Combating Nuclear Terrorism: NRC Needs to Take Additional Actions to Ensure the Security of High-Risk Radioactive Material”. Published by U.S. Government Accountability Office; April 4, 2019

<https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-19-468>

Fast Facts

In the hands of terrorists, radioactive material could be used for a dirty bomb. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission considers the health risks from short-term radiation exposure when determining how to safeguard radioactive material.

But experts told us factors such as deaths during an evacuation and the cost of environmental cleanup should also be considered.

We recommended, among other things, that the NRC consider these additional factors in determining security measures for radioactive material.

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The two nuclear superpowers thus will likely find themselves in 2021 in a situation that they have not faced for decades—a world with no constraints on nuclear force numbers.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The Hill (Washington, D.C.)

Nuclear Commander Nominated to Be No. 2 General in US

By Rebecca Kheel

April 9, 2019

The general in charge of the U.S. nuclear arsenal has been nominated to be the country's second-highest-ranking military officer, Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson announced Tuesday.

Wilson said at a space symposium in Colorado that Air Force Gen. John Hyten was nominated Tuesday morning to be the next vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

If confirmed, Hyten would take over for Air Force Gen. Paul Selva when his term ends this summer.

Hyten has served as commander of U.S. Strategic Command (Stratcom), a role that puts him in charge of the U.S. nuclear forces, since 2016.

Prior to taking the helm at Stratcom, Hyten was the commander of Air Force Space Command. Throughout his career, he has been a strong proponent of space-based missile defense sensors.

His next appearance before Congress will be Thursday, when he is among the witnesses scheduled to defend President Trump's Space Force proposal to the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Hyten also recently expressed concern that Moscow is developing weapons outside the scope of the New START Treaty, which caps the number of deployed nuclear warheads allowed by Russia and United States. He added, however, that he is still a "big supporter" of the treaty.

Trump announced last year he would nominate Army Gen. Mark Milley to be the next chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Milley, if confirmed, would take over for Marine Corps Gen. Joseph Dunford, whose term ends in September.

<https://thehill.com/policy/defense/438060-nuclear-commander-nominated-to-be-no-2-general-in-country>

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Breaking Defense (Washington, D.C.)

GAO: Navy 'Overly Optimistic' on Columbia Sub Costs

By Paul McLeary

April 8, 2019

WASHINGTON: The Navy's cost and labor estimates for its highest priority — and most expensive — shipbuilding program are "unrealistic," "not reliable," and "overly optimistic," according to a new Government Accountability Office report released Monday.

Current Navy plans call for construction on the first of 12 Columbia-class nuclear-armed submarines to begin in 2021, with an overall price tag of \$128 billion. But the GAO's latest audit of the program found that the Navy both failed to account for typical shipbuilding cost increases, and the complexity of actual "hands-on" labor hours it will take to build the boats.

The result is that the Navy will likely have to ask Congress for billions more over the next several budgets to keep work moving along on what is already a tight schedule to get the boats in the water to make up for the retirement of Ohio-class subs over the next decade-plus.

“Without an updated cost estimate with more realistic assumptions, Congress will be asked to commit billions of dollars for the lead submarine without knowing the full potential cost of construction and the possible effect on other shipbuilding programs,” the report said.

GAO didn’t venture its own estimate, but it cited a study by its sister agency, the Congressional Budget Office, that the Columbia program might cost almost \$145 billion — 13 percent above the Navy figure.

Typically, shipbuilding programs experience a whopping 27 percent cost growth during the lie of their new builds, the GAO points out, which would add billions to the Columbia’s overall cost. That historical increase was not factored into the Navy’s plans.

Already, a problem with the welding on its missile launch tubes that was discovered early on has cost contractor BWX some \$27 million to repair, but Navy officials insist that the problem won’t push back the delivery schedule for the first boat.

The first of the 12 Columbia subs is scheduled to enter service in 2031, and the class will eventually carry a staggering 70 percent of the country’s nuclear arsenal within their hulls.

That capability makes the Columbia the key to the nation’s nuclear triad, and absolutely critical to the Pentagon’s overall nuclear and national security strategy for decades to come. And the boats need to be in the water by time Ohio-class subs are retired, which will already lead to a dip in the number of nuclear-capable boats in the water.

In a sign of the urgency of the program, the Navy stood up a program office for the Columbia, a rare move for a program that hasn’t started construction yet.

The Navy’s acquisition and research chief, James Geurts, told reporters last month that he wanted to get ahead of any more hiccups. “I did not want to wait for crisis. I wanted to ensure we were proactively working the program,” he said.

With a build schedule with little room for error, the Columbia has “a lot of challenges ahead,” he added, but with a full PEO shop managing issues, he thinks any problems will be stamped out quickly.

The GAO, however, questioned the Navy’s figures, including estimates for how many hours of labor will be needed to build the boats.

The Navy anticipates that it will take about 12 million labor hours to build the lead submarine. But “this represents 17 percent fewer labor hours than what was needed for the lead Virginia class submarine, when adjusted for weight differences,” the government auditors point out. Therefore, “the touch labor hour estimate is overly optimistic—with assumptions on construction efficiencies that are either unsubstantiated or unprecedented compared to Virginia class and other shipbuilding historical data.”

In a letter dated Feb. 1, Kevin Fahey, the Pentagon’s assistant secretary of defense for acquisition, wrote in response to the GAO that the Navy’s cost estimate for the Columbia will be updated in 2019. He also said that the Navy disagrees that labor and cost estimates are faulty, but instead, the “supplier base remains the highest risk to construction readiness” and the Navy is investing in supporting the industrial base in order to shore up some of those risks before they impact the program.

<https://breakingdefense.com/2019/04/gao-navy-overly-optimistic-on-columbia-sub-costs/>

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Minot Daily News (Minot, N.D.)

Gen. Wilson: Entire Nuclear Enterprise Modernized in Next Decade

By Eloise Ogden

April 8, 2019

MINOT AIR FORCE BASE -The entire nuclear enterprise will be modernized in the next decade, according to the vice chief of staff of the U.S. Air Force.

“There won’t be one aspect that isn’t modernized,” said Gen. Stephen Wilson in a March 29 interview during his visit to Minot Air Force Base.

Minot AFB is the only base with dual nuclear-capable wings – the 5th Bomb Wing with its B-52 bombers and the 91st Missile Wing with Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missiles in underground facilities in the surrounding area.

“I wanted to come back and see a lot of the changes we’ve been making across the whole nuclear enterprise. It’s so important fundamentally to our nation and our Air Force. This place, Minot, is a place that both missiles and bombers come together to bring two of the three legs of the triad,” said Wilson.

“We’ve been putting lots of effort into modernization across the force. It’s been a few years since I’ve been back and I wanted to see how we’re doing,” he added.

“I think we’re doing great,” he continued. “I think we’ve got some really fantastic airmen. I met a bunch of really inspired and courageous commanders at all levels... We’ve got some terrific airmen with good ideas,” Wilson said.

He said continuous improvements can be seen in literally every aspect whether it is in the B-52s with CONECT (Combat Network Communication Technology), new hangars and maintenance facilities on base and upgraded missile alert facilities in the Minot missile field.

Wilson said continued progress is being made across the entire nuclear enterprise. “We’re not there but we’re making lots of good progress and I continue to be impressed,” he said.

Wilson said he has asked commanders about the community support they receive. He said they say they get “tremendous community support” from all the civic leaders and local leaders who “really support our airmen and their families and that’s really important.”

Wilson became vice chief of staff of the Air Force in July 2016. His military career includes as deputy commander of U.S. Strategic Command at Offutt AFB, Neb., and commander of Air Force Global Strike Command at Barksdale AFB, La., positions he held prior to becoming Air Force vice chief of staff.

In his present position, based at the Pentagon in Arlington, Va., Wilson presides over the Air Staff and serves as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff requirements Oversight Council and Deputy Advisory Working Group, according to his Air Force biography. He assists the chief of staff with organizing, training and equipping 685,000 active-duty Guard, Reserve and civilian forces serving in the United States and overseas. Wilson is a command pilot with more than 4,500 flying hours and 680 combat hours.

New helicopters

Money has been appropriated by Congress for new helicopters to replace the UH-1N “Hueys.” The UH-1Ns are flown at Minot AFB.

“We’re under way to get MH-139 helicopters,” said Wilson. “The guys can’t wait to get them and I can’t either. We’ve been flying our UH-1s a long time. The new ones will be terrific.”

He said the first ones will be available in the near future. “We’re working hard to get them,” he added.

In September 2018, the Air Force selected the MH-139 to replace its fleet of UH-1Ns. The aircraft will take over the role of protecting the nation’s intercontinental ballistic missile bases – Minot AFB, F.E. Warren AFB, Wyo., and Malmstrom AFB, Mont. – and the transportation of U.S. government and security forces, according to MH-139 information.

There are many components to the entire modernization of the nuclear enterprise.

“We’ll bring the new Ground Based Strategic Deterrent (GBSD) that will replace the Minuteman III,” said Wilson. He said this next-generation ICBM system, still in the early stages, is not just the missile. GBSD, the next-generation ICBM system, is an all new command-and-control, communications as well as the new missile.

The Air Force selected Northrop Grumman and Boeing as the two contractors for GBSD in August 2017.

“It’s a real important program and we’ve got a lot of money on that program – on GBSD,” Wilson added.

The goal is to begin production on the new missile in the late 2020s, with deployment of the new system in the 2030s at all three current ICBM sites – Minot AFB, Warren AFB, Wyo., and Malmstrom AFB, Mont., according to Northrop Grumman officials.

A next generation bomber, the B-21 Raider, is on the horizon. Northrop Grumman was awarded the contract for the B-21 Bomber Program.

Wilson said he went to see the new bomber production and the work being done on it about a month ago. He visited the Northrop Grumman Design and Development facility in Melbourne, Fla. “They’re making great progress. Northrop is the prime contractor on that. I think everybody is happy with the performance of where we are with the B-21,” he said.

B-52 modernization

More modernization is being done on the B-52s including re-engining, Wilson said.

The Air Force plans to fly the B-52 through 2050, but the current B-52 engine was deemed unsustainable past 2030. In 2018, the Air Force began efforts to replace these engines with commercially available engines. Eight engines per aircraft will be procured for all 76 aircraft, with production beginning in 2025. In addition to the engine replacement, the B-52s radar is being modernized, with production starting in fiscal year 2024 and planned delivery of 76 radars from 2025-2029, according to Air Force information.

“In addition, we’re going to replace our air-launched cruise missiles with our long-range stand-off weapons. We’re working hard to bring new capability on those,” Wilson said, referring to the B-52s.

NC3

Wilson said during the March 29 interview that extensive work is also under way with the nation’s nuclear command, control and communications systems, or NC3. NC3 is the classified

communications system to keep the U.S. president connected to military forces during a nuclear event.

He said he tells people what that means is on America's worst day we have the capability to communicate to the forces wherever they are. "We have that today and we need to be able to modernize that for the future," Wilson said. He said Gen. John Hyten, commander of U.S. Strategic Command, is leading that effort.

"It's a really an important time in our modernization efforts across the whole nuclear enterprise," Wilson added.

Acting Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Marine Corps Gen. Joe Dunford testified before the House Armed Services Committee on March 26 on the fiscal year 2020 National Defense Authorization Budget request from the Department of Defense.

"Both reiterated the importance of the triad and the importance that that brings our nation. I tell people if you're Air Force, there's no more important place than here at Team Minot because it's where both sides – the missiles and bombers – come together and it really is critical for the defense of our country," Wilson said.

Quality of life for airmen, families

"We're always looking to make improvements whether it be in dorms and facilities that make it a good place to live and work because the quality of life is important for our airmen and their families," Wilson said.

During his visit to Minot AFB including the Minot missile complex he said he saw "really good improvements."

"I was out at a missile alert facility and it was brand new. They'd spent \$350,000 to upgrade it and it was a very nice, clean, modern facility," Wilson said. "As an Air Force we're putting a lot of money into the quality of life for our airmen and their families."

"I think it's an exciting time to be in the Air Force," Wilson said. Although the world is going through disruptions – politically, economically, socially and technologically – he said airmen are doing their jobs and doing them well.

"I leave here really confident about our Air Force and I'm really confident about the threats to our nation when I see the people here at Minot and what they do every day to defend our Air Force and our nation," Wilson said.

<http://www.minotdailynews.com/news/local-news/2019/04/good-progress/>

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Defense News (Washington, D.C.)

With the US Navy's Top Shipbuilding Priority on Deck, Red Flags Fly

By David B. Larter

April 8, 2019

WASHINGTON — On Capitol Hill for a breakfast talk in 2015, the chief of naval operations' director of undersea warfare could not have been clearer.

The Navy had waited until the last possible moment to start working on a new class of ballistic missile submarine to replace the early 1980s Ohio-class boats, and there just won't be time for lengthy delays.

"We have effectively skipped an entire SSBN generation," then-Rear Adm. Joseph Tofalo told the crowd, "but in doing so we have consumed the entire margin for error."

It was a familiar talking point. The Navy has been pounding the table for years now about the need to move out on Columbia, a crucial part of the country's nuclear deterrent triad of missiles, bombers and ballistic missile submarines. But the Navy has always acknowledged the tremendous challenge it faces in getting its first Columbia-class boomer procured, constructed, tested and fielded in time for its first patrol slated for 2031. The service is planning to buy the first ship in 2021.

Recent delays and a shakeup in the Virginia-class buying profile, along with a high-profile quality control issue right out of the gate on the missile tubes destined for Columbia have raised red flags and concerns about the submarine building enterprise and its ability to handle the mammoth \$115 billion program without delays and major overruns.

The consequence of significant delays to the program is a drop in total number of SSBN's below what the Navy says is imperative to maintain continuous strategic deterrent patrols as the Ohio-class boats run out of nuclear fuel.

The service has downplayed concerns, saying that the delays in Virginia deliveries, which will be between four to seven months for the foreseeable future, are measured against accelerated construction timeline goals. Furthermore, the quality control issues identified with the missile tubes fabricated by BWXT, Inc., were identified are being corrected, leaving the Navy still 11 months ahead of schedule for the tubes.

But the Navy has also injected new uncertainty into the schedule by shaking up the buying profile for the Block Five Virginia class, Defense News reported April 3. The service is shifting from its plan of adding the 84-foot section to nine of the 10 planned Virginias in Block Five to adding an 11th boat at the last minute and canceling one of so-called Virginia Payload Modules. (The VPM is designed to triple the Virginia's Tomahawk strike missile capacity.)

Nuclear submarines are constructed in a joint effort between Huntington Ingalls Newport News in Virginia and General Dynamics Electric Boat in Connecticut. Both have labored to increase their workforce and prime a diminished supplier base for increased Virginia-class production and the start of the Columbia-class program.

Concerns inside industry and among experts are growing because of fears that the combined effect of compounding delays, as well as the Navy's injecting new uncertainty, could increase the chances for further delays in the Virginia program and ripple into the strategically vital Columbia class.

Several sources familiar with industry concerns who spoke on background said adding the third boat as well as shaking up the buying profile for Virginia Payload Module could have unintended

consequences as the yards try to simultaneously support normal Virginia class construction, construction of the much larger Virginia Payload Module ships and the Columbia.

Those worries get to the core of what makes a successful shipbuilding program, said Dan Gouré, a former Bush Administration defense official and military analyst with the Arlington-based Lexington Institute.

“Like there is one rule in real estate (location, location, location), there is one rule in building ships: Predictability, predictability, predictability,” Gouré said. “And they are messing with that now, for the first time in quite a while. And that makes no sense.”

Gouré said the late-in-the-game nature of the shift in buying profile is particularly concerning, especially just a year before they plan to kick off construction of Columbia, because of the connected nature of the Virginia and Columbia programs.

“These yards are integrated,” he said. “When you start messing with the other program on a short-notice basis, you risk the yards being able to deliver on time and at cost for multiple programs.

“So, for the Navy, Columbia is their number one priority. But you are also messing with the other programs. That makes it at least of concern that if there is a problem with Columbia that industry won’t be able to transfer the resources – people, material, whatever it is – to fix what needs to be fixed because you have upset the timelines of those other programs.

“In a sense you risk the worst of both worlds: You risk further perturbations in the Virginia class, and at the same time risk not being able to get Columbia out on time.”

Late change

A defense source speaking on background said the third boat in 2020 was a late addition by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and in public testimony the Navy has acknowledged that the service was until recently planning for a 10-boat block buy for Block V.

That set up a strange circumstance because the Navy usually buys Virginias over three years with two years of advanced procurement ahead of each hull. But the third boat in 2020 is being bought all in one year, which the Navy’s acquisition boss said in recent testimony meant the Navy wouldn’t be able to start construction on the boat until 2023.

James Geurts, the Navy’s head of Research, Development and Acquisition, told the House Armed Service Committee’s seapower subcommittee that keeping the risk to Columbia low was part of the reason to put the boat in the budget now because it gives industry time to hire and work the supplier base.

“The other thing that’s important is ... keeping in mind Columbia coming along, and ... by loading it now [it] gives us the most time to figure out how to use that efficiently as a risk reduction element for Columbia — i.e. we can get some of the additional workforce trained up, get some more of the supplier base and get some of the supplier builds out of the way before Columbia gets here,” Geurts said. “So, we are working to put all of those together.”

Whether the workforce and supplier base can handle the increased demands and perturbations in the schedule is an open question. The private shipyards in charge of construction Virginia and Columbia are also being newly tasked with submarine maintenance, jobs that are falling months behind schedule in part because of a slow supply chain, according a recent report in USNI News.

“I think it’s a combination of getting a skilled workforce up and operating, getting the planning available across both private and public yards to the level of detail needed, and then it is contending for material – because as we bring these maintenance availabilities in, you’re contending for material that’s also going to Virginia and now Columbia (ballistic missile submarine program),”

Geurts told USNI News. “So, we’ve got to look at it as a whole ecosystem, and that’s what we’re doing right now.”

The bad years

The ecosystem for submarine parts is in trouble, something the Navy has known for more than two decades, said Bryan Clark, a retired submarine officer and analyst with the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, something that has become more evident with the delays in the Virginia class.

“It does not bode well if they are already seeing delays in the Virginia program with building two per year,” Clark said. “Within the supplier base there are a lot of sole-source and single-source suppliers who provide parts for Virginia, but also for Columbia. One of the unintended consequences of using a lot of common components between Virginia and Columbia is you have to rely on the same suppliers.”

The Navy likes common parts and components because it cuts down on specialized training, maintenance time and costs, but if the supplier is not sized to take on the level of work the Navy wants, it can cause delays to creep into the system, Clark explained.

Furthermore, the suppliers may be hesitant to invest in expanding their business because within recent memory the Navy has cut back on submarine building. Some suppliers remember the lean times and don’t want to be caught out on a limb when Columbia wraps up.

“In the 1990s we suffered a reduction in sub building with the Seawolf debacle,” Clark said, referring to a submarine program that was slashed from 29 to three hulls because of costs. “Then we moved to Virginia and that had a lot of problems starting out.

“There was a five- or six-year period when we weren’t building a lot of submarines, and a lot of suppliers went out of business. The suppliers that survived right-sized their business to meet the current demand, and these companies are saying: ‘Do I expand now when down the road there could be another issue like Seawolf?’ ”

It’s a question the Navy is going to have to tackle if it hopes to field Columbia on time, Clark said, but it was not an issue that was unexpected.

“This is something that was always going to happen as the Navy ramped up,” Clark said. “And the Navy is starting to see it with building two Virginias per year.”

<https://www.defensenews.com/naval/2019/04/08/with-the-us-navys-top-shipbuilding-priority-on-deck-red-flags-fly/>

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US COUNTER-WMD

Omaha World-Herald (Omaha, Neb.)

Defense-Related Research Builds on Pershing's Legacy

Special for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln

April 7, 2019

John J. Pershing, who commanded the American Expeditionary Forces to victory in Europe during World War I, had strong ties to the University of Nebraska.

In 1891, 2nd Lt. Pershing was assigned to Nebraska as a professor of military science and tactics. The next year Pershing organized a competition drill group, which became the Pershing Rifles after Pershing left Nebraska. While at Nebraska, Pershing pursued and earned a law degree.

Today, Pershing's legacy of military service lives on not only through the national Pershing Rifles drill unit but also through support efforts to combat weapons of mass destruction.

The University of Nebraska has a strong partnership with the Pentagon to conduct advanced security-related research through NU's National Strategic Research Institute, which was founded in 2012.

NSRI at the University of Nebraska is the only university-affiliated research center in the country dedicated to delivering solutions for combating weapons of mass destruction (WMD) to the U.S. Strategic Command.

NSRI provides research and development for the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and other governmental agencies in multiple mission-critical competency areas — including development of medical countermeasures to WMD; nuclear detection and forensics; consequence management; chemical and biological weapons detection; and space, cyber and telecom law.

In 2018 NSRI received a five-year, \$92 million contract with the U.S. Air Force to expand research opportunities across the NU system to help meet the needs of the U.S. Strategic Command and the Department of Defense. The contract will allow NSRI to maintain ongoing work, like improving a vaccine for the toxin ricin, advancing the performance of metals used on military vehicles, improving laser technology used to detect explosives and developing new research projects by faculty, researchers and students from across the university.

https://www.omaha.com/sponsored/unl-150/defense-related-research-builds-on-pershing-s-legacy/article_8e593302-e8b8-56c7-b979-baa8322a36d1.html

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Defense News (Washington, D.C.)

Here's Who Is Going to Be the Next Missile Defense Agency Chief

By Jen Judson

April 5, 2019

WASHINGTON — The next Missile Defense Agency director will be now-Vice Admiral Jon Hill, who currently serves as the agency's deputy director, the MDA has confirmed.

Hill will replace Air Force Lt. Gen. Samuel Greaves, who will retire July 1, according to MDA spokesman Mark Wright.

The newly minted vice admiral's nomination for the position was sent to Capitol Hill the last week of March.

Before Hill became deputy director in 2016, he served as the U.S. Navy's Program Executive Officer for Integrated Warfare Systems (PEO IWS) beginning in 2014 where he garnered experience in integrated air-and-missile defense.

Hill has maintained the United States is ready to defend against the biggest threats to the homeland such as the North Korean intercontinental ballistic missile threat. At the Defense News inaugural conference in 2017 he stressed the U.S. military was prepared to counter any such threat, but he warned that additional funding is needed to fortify defenses for more formidable threats to come, adding the real concern is that threats will become more complex.

The vice admiral will take the lead of an agency that is now tasked to carry out initiatives advocated for in President Trump's recently released Missile Defense Review (MDR). And he will likely have his hands full wrapping up a series of studies requested within the MDR to include designating acquisition authority to a service or defense agency on ways to defend the homeland from offensive cruise missiles; assess the number of Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) battery requirements, which has been up in the air for years; and whether Aegis destroyers can be converted to become fully capable against incoming missiles within 10 years.

He'll also be tasked to come up with ways to accelerate efforts to enhance missile defense tracking and discrimination sensors; how the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter can be used as a missile defense system; and how to go about developing and fielding a space-based sensor layer as well as a space-based intercept capability.

<https://www.defensenews.com/newsletters/daily-news-roundup/2019/04/05/heres-who-is-going-to-be-the-next-missile-defense-agency-chief/>

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Columbus Dispatch (Columbus, Ohio)

Will Trump Give Northeast Ohio a Missile Defense Site after Lordstown GM Plant's Demise?

By Jessica Wehrman

April 7, 2019

WASHINGTON — A military base roughly 30 miles from the now-shuttered GM plant at Lordstown may encapsulate the region's hope for something — anything — to help replace the thousands of jobs lost when GM left the region.

Regional leaders want that site — Camp James A. Garfield Joint Military Training Center near Ravenna — to be the home of America's third missile defense site, the only one in the eastern half of the continental U.S.

But the wait has been long and tedious. Ohio lawmakers had thought last year a decision was imminent and would be announced as part of the long-awaited Ballistic Missile Defense Review. But when the review came out in January, there was hardly a mention of the East Coast site.

Now officials hope that language in an earlier defense bill requiring the Defense Department to designate a preferred site within 60 days of publishing the Ballistic Missile Defense Review means an announcement is imminent.

No one, though, is sure. Last week, Ohio lawmakers sent a letter to acting Defense Secretary Patrick M. Shanahan urging the department to meet that 60-day deadline.

Rep. Anthony Gonzalez, a Rocky River Republican, said he's mentioned the issue to President Donald Trump multiple times. Trump, he said, "is definitely aware of it. And the thing with this president is if you make a strong economic argument, it's going to get his attention."

But even as Gonzalez and other Ohio lawmakers push for the site, the military must answer two fundamental questions: Should it place the site in Michigan, New York or Ohio?

And, more important: Should it be built at all?

Camp Garfield is competing with two other sites to land the missile defense mission: Fort Custer Training Center near Battle Creek, Michigan, and Fort Drum, New York, which is north of Syracuse.

All three sites say landing such a mission would be a boon. The Ohio delegation, in the March 26 letter to Shanahan, said it would bring 2,300 construction jobs and up to 850 full-time employees once the system is operational.

"Our feeling here is that it changes the economy as we know it for the better," said Guy Coviello, vice president of government affairs for the Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber of Commerce. "And that it would likely more than make up for the impact of the loss of General Motors."

He said not only would the site support 850 full-time employees, it might support an additional number of engineers and scientists throughout northeast Ohio. It might help secure the need for the nearby Youngstown Air Reserve Station, which, like many reserve stations, is always at risk.

But the hold-up is worrisome.

"I think the government officials owe it to the public, especially those in the three states that have sites, a decision," Coviello said.

Even the prospect of developing a third site is controversial to some.

“This is entirely a congressional–driven idea, and the Pentagon has never wanted it or supported it,” said Stephen Young, a senior Washington representative for the Union of Concerned Scientists, which is critical of the idea of a third site.

He said the likelihood of such a site ever being developed “is quite low, in part because the body that was pushing it most heavily was the House Armed Services Committee under Republican leadership. And now the Democrats are in charge.”

James McKeon, a policy analyst with the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, said the federal government would be better off making existing missile defense sites work better. He said the current program only tests at 50 percent, and that’s under “highly scripted conditions.”

And Kingston Reif, director for disarmament and threat reduction policy for the Arms Control Association, said if the Missile Defense Agency truly wants the site, it would’ve mentioned it in its most recent Ballistic Missile Defense Review. Instead, he said, they punted.

“I don’t see a need for this particular site at this time,” Reif said.

Others argue a third site is long overdue.

Thomas Karako, director of the Missile Defense Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said a third site would serve as the equivalent of an insurance policy should the first attempts to shoot down an incoming missile fail. He calls it the “shoot–look–shoot” doctrine.

He argues a third site is necessary: While the U.S. has pursued some level of missile defense to combat North Korea for the past 20 years, the landscape has shifted and the country has tested two ICBMs recently. “A lot has changed,” he said.

But the challenge is cost: It would take an estimated \$3.6 billion to get a new site up and running, according to some estimates, and the military is still wrestling with how best to defend the nation from incoming missiles.

“It’s understandable why they haven’t pulled the trigger on it,” he said.

Riki Ellison, founder and chairman of the nonprofit Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance, argues that the breakdown of the most recent summit with North Korea should also spur the military to act, saying “at this point, there is a pretty good risk” both North Korea and Iran will continue to build up their ICBM capabilities.

“Once those missiles fly by Alaska, there’s nothing else to stop them if they overmatch it,” Ellison said.

But picking a site, he said, doesn’t necessarily mean things will happen immediately; Congress still has to spend the money to build up that site.

Until then, he worries, the nation will be at risk.

“The country needs it,” Ellison said.

<https://www.dispatch.com/news/20190407/will-trump-give-northeast-ohio-missile-defense-site-after-lordstown-gm-plants-demise>

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Defense News (Washington, D.C.)

Rep. Mike Turner on Why He's Softened on Space Force, and the Importance of an East Coast Missile Defense Site

By Valerie Insinna

April 8, 2019

WASHINGTON — With new nuclear and missile defense policy to oversee, as well as the sweeping overhaul of the military's space enterprise, the lawmakers of Congress' Strategic Forces subcommittees find themselves responsible for the oversight of several huge efforts this year.

Defense News caught up with Rep. Mike Turner, R-Ohio, the top Republican on the House Armed Service's Strategic Forces Subcommittee, to chat about how Republicans might tackle each of those challenges — and where they could find common ground with Democrats.

What would you like to see the committee take up this year?

I'm very supportive of the administration's Nuclear Posture Review and our need to respond to the increasing threats from Russia's modernization and China's expansion of its nuclear weapons capabilities.

Coming from having chaired the air and land [subcommittee], an item that we have dual jurisdiction over is the dual-capable version of the F-35, and that will be a priority for me as we look to the modernization of the B-61. NATO has very hard deadlines in the 2020s that we need to make certain we meet. And the groundwork for the dual-capable F-35 is now.

On missile defense, I'm the author of the East Coast missile defense site that was a response to the expected abandonment by the Obama administration of their phase 4 of their phased adaptive approach. They killed the ground-based missile system that [President George W.] Bush was going to place in Europe, claiming with their phased adaptive approach that phase 4 would include a component to protect the continental United States. I felt, at the time, it was a bait-and-switch and that phase 4 would never come into fruition. It did not. So, we moved forward with the establishment of an East Coast site option.

The Missile Defense Review indicates that they've proceeded in their assessment, but they're not proceeding with the site itself. I want to do some critical review, with the Missile Defense Agency, on their assessment both of the threat and the potential for a second site.

I think it's very concerning that we have virtually all our eggs in one basket. I think we also need to have the options of look-shoot-look. Basic geometry would have us needing us to have multiple sites.

Before we dig into those topics, I want to get your opinion about Space Force. I know that you were pretty opposed to the Space Corps proposal when it was first offered by Reps. Mike Rogers and Jim Cooper, but it seems like you are a little bit more supportive these days.

When it was first proposed, they wouldn't tell us what was going to be in it, how much it was going to cost or what it was going to do. We were told it was going to cost nothing. I knew that was not the case. Today we do have a fairly sizable price tag that the proposal for Space Force comes with. But I think we're still in the processes of trying to define what a Space Force would be and what it would do.

I'm not opposed to undertaking a separate space function under the Air Force; I just want to make certain we do it right. What we proposed before was haphazard, and what we have an opportunity

to do now is very thoughtful undertaking to try to advance our operations and our acquisitions of space assets.

How would you characterize your level of support for the proposal as it stands now?

I'm supportive of working on the process, to figure out how do we do this right. Which was the same position I had before. That's going to require work.

What did you think of the numbers that the Office of the Secretary of Defense has floated so far, the \$2 billion over five years?

It still sounds incredibly under counting what the expenses will be for doing this.

What sort of oversight can the House Armed Services Committee do, then, to make sure that that's an accurate accounting of what it's going to take?

As you said, their current assessment is over a five-year period, so we don't have to do it all at once. We have an opportunity to take some time, put together a construct that is operationally beneficial, and then work with the Air Force and DoD on its implementation to ensure that it's done both right and cost-efficiently.

It sounds like you are supportive of the idea of putting Space Force under the Air Force.

I think it's the only way that it should be done. Absolutely. The interrelationship between the Air Force and our space access should not be severed.

What are your thoughts on the legislative proposal for Space Force, specifically?

Obviously there's a number of things in it that don't work.

Can you extrapolate a bit on that?

I really don't want to at this time. I think obviously they'll become evident. But there are a number of waivers and authorities that I think are excessive and that Congress probably wants to have a greater role in.

This is a pretty complex piece of legislation. ... There's no portion of this that's just going to be copied and pasted.

There's been a lot of talk about nuclear weapons in the House the last couple months, and you've been a strong proponent of that enterprise.

A nuclear deterrent has kept us safe for decades. As our adversaries invest in their capabilities, modernization and expand their forces, our deterrent effect diminishes if we don't similarly invest.

How do you see this debate playing out within the HASC, and then more broadly?

We just had a hearing on nuclear policy, and it seemed as if the chairmen and Democratic caucus members on the committee might not share his [HASC Chairman Adam Smith's] views. I think we're probably going to find that the policies coming out of the committee are more consistent with the policies we've already held.

Looking at the scope of the work that the Defense Department wants to accomplish when it comes to nuclear modernization over the next decade — there is quite a lot there. There's the delivery systems, there is NC3 modernization, there is looking at warheads. And that's just on the modernization side, not even looking at different treaties and other policy options. What are your priorities that you think absolutely must get done, and what is your role in helping facilitate that?

Yeah, it's got to be all of them. The problem that we have right now is that this has been deferred repeatedly. I think the last administration dreamed of a world without nuclear weapons and

thought that maybe this bill was going to go away. It's not going away. There are more nuclear weapons today than there were when the Obama administration came in. And there are certainly more states that pose a threat.

Does the country need low-yield weapons?

In deterrence, you want your adversary to believe that if they take action with a nuclear weapon, that they will have an unacceptable nuclear response from their opponent. Currently, Russia has a doctrine of utilizing nuclear weapons to escalate a conflict for the purpose of deescalating. It's nuts. It basically says that they're more willing than any other state in the world to use nuclear weapons.

If we only have high-yield nukes and their view is to escalate to deescalate and they utilize a low-yield nuke, their expectation is that they're not going to engage us in a response because the response would be disproportionate. So having the low-yield nuke option isn't just an option for military need, it's a deterrence need.

What would you say to those who would say that thinking leads to a new arms race?

To tell [Russian President Vladimir] Putin. You don't sit at the start line and look at your opponent, your adversary, and have them running down the field and then start running yourself, and then someone say: "Well, you're in a race now." No, we were in a race from the moment your opponent started running.

So it sounds like you're in favor of both the low-yield Trident warhead and a nuclear-capable cruise missile for nuclear submarines.

Absolutely.

Do you think that's something that HASC members will be supportive of, and how does that problem get solved within the budget?

I always say that people are classified briefings away from being a defense hawk. I think the way we satisfy this on the Armed Services Committee is that people need to know what our adversaries are doing. When you know what our adversaries are doing, you realize that this is not a choice, this is just the prudent path to ensure our national security.

More broadly speaking, though, this is a year where Congress is going to have solve sequestration again and come up with a budget deal. Are you hopeful that that's going to be able to happen?

It has to, and in the end it's happened every year. We had only once, a short period, where sequestration went into effect. Now, sequestration resulted in lowered top-line numbers, which caused a readiness crisis, that people now see, and universally acknowledge, that means that, not only do we need to avoid sequestration, we need to ensure our top-line numbers remain high.

What were your thoughts on the Missile Defense Review?

I was, as I said before, disappointed that they were not more strongly supporting the East Coast missile defense site. It is not just an issue of the emerging threat of Iran and looking to our East Coast as a possible vulnerability. It is ensuring that we have redundancy, ensuring that we have the ability to take multiple shots and we have no margin of error here.

What did you think about the proposal to create some sort of an interceptor for F-35s? Is that a good idea?

Some of these things are just trying to advance knowledge so that we can either achieve a specific capability, or it might lead us to another capability. I think it certainly makes logical sense, and let's see where it takes us.

I'm guessing that maybe the study on space-based interceptors kind of falls into that box for you as well.

Absolutely. And, again, it's looking to what our adversaries are doing and where we need to be.

I asked about Space Force but not generally about space. What would you like to see happen in space policy more broadly?

We are so space-dependent, on all of our ground and air operations, that not only do we need to look to defense mechanisms, but ways to ensure continuity of operation and really just expand what assets that we have because of their vulnerabilities.

<https://www.defensenews.com/space/2019/04/08/rep-mike-turner-on-why-hes-softened-on-space-force-and-the-importance-of-an-east-coast-missile-defense-site/>

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Defense News (Washington, D.C.)

Lockheed and Israeli Company Team Up for US Army Missile Defense Radar 'Sense-Off'

By Jen Judson

April 5, 2019

WASHINGTON — Lockheed Martin and Israeli radar company Elta Systems, a subsidiary of Israel Aerospace Industries, are teaming up for the U.S. Army's upcoming "sense-off" demonstration of possible radars for its Lower Tier Air and Missile Defense System.

Lockheed confirmed via a spokesperson that it is in discussions with Elta as the companies finalize an optimal solution for the demonstration.

Elta was one of the companies on the Army's bidder list for the sense-off, the spokesperson said, and therefore Lockheed and Elta decided to participate together "to bring the best technology from both companies."

For Lockheed, the partnership made sense because "we saw mature technology with Elta that complemented the very mature technology that Lockheed Martin has developed," the spokesperson said. "When the Army chose to move faster and accelerate the program, it made perfect sense for us to work with Elta."

The Army has for years sought a radar capable of detecting threats from 360 degrees to replace its aging Patriot radar (although the service appears to be moving away from requiring that capability in a new radar).

Originally, an entire system was meant to replace Patriot, but the Army walked back on those plans roughly a decade ago to separately develop components of a new Integrated Air and Missile Defense system to include an advanced, next-generation radar.

Critics over the years have said the service was moving far too slowly on procuring a new radar, as several next-generation radar offerings are reaching high levels of technology readiness. Congress has also urged the Army to speed up the process, mandating that it procure something in the next five years.

The Army has made air and missile defense one of its top modernization priorities, so the service decided the best way to move quickly on a new radar was to hold a sense-off demonstration to reassess what is available, technologically speaking, ahead of a competitive acquisition program.

The sense-off is expected to take place between May and June this year at White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico. Each vendor with a radar will have roughly two weeks on the range to demonstrate capabilities.

The sense-off is a separate effort to the technology-development program already in the works, in which Lockheed Martin and Raytheon have been chosen to participate.

As the result of the sense-off, the Army plans to choose one vendor to build six prototypes by the end of fiscal 2022 to prove whether the radar can be manufactured. A follow-on contract for additional radars is expected.

Elta is known for its multimission radars, and recently supplied Finland with its ELM-2311 compact MMR, but it has sold more than 100 systems globally.

In addition to its Compact MMR, Elta supplies the MMR for Iron Dome — of which the U.S. Army is buying two batteries — and David's Sling, both air defense systems in Israel.

The company's radars have been battle-tested, having seen thousands of rockets and missiles in the last five to 10 years on the borders of Israel, Gaza, Lebanon and Syria.

<https://www.defensenews.com/land/2019/04/05/lockheed-and-israeli-company-teaming-up-for-us-army-missile-defense-radar-sense-off/>

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US ARMS CONTROL

The Hill (Washington, D.C.)

Pompeo 'Confident' There Will Be Third North Korean Summit

By Tal Axelrod

April 5, 2019

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said he is "confident" there will be another summit with North Korea to negotiate denuclearization after talks collapsed in Vietnam two months ago.

"I'm confident there will be," Pompeo told CBS News in an interview Friday when asked if there would be a third summit between President Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. He added that he did not know when such a meeting could occur, though he hopes it will happen "soon."

"Look, we came out of Hanoi with a deeper understanding of each other, the positions that the two sides had. The two leaders were able to make progress in that respect. We didn't get as far as the world is demanding," he added.

Trump and Kim appeared to be edging closer to an agreement regarding North Korea's nuclear disarmament in Hanoi in February, but disagreements over sanctions relief for the Asian nation scuttled any deal. The two leaders had also met in Singapore in 2017 to assert their commitment to reaching a deal, though the meeting resulted in few specifics.

Pompeo said he was not discouraged by the Hanoi summit's outcome, adding there was still hunger on both sides to make progress on the issue.

“It’s a negotiation, and we’ve always known this was going to take a while, so I don’t know that I was disappointed. You always hope you’ll make progress faster, better. You know that in every interaction you have,” Pompeo said.

“We’re determined. I’m convinced the North Koreans are determined as well. Chairman Kim has promised me, he’s promised President Trump he will denuclearize. Now it’s the mission of my team to make sure that that happens.”

The secretary of State maintained that the administration still had no intention of lifting any sanctions on North Korea until complete denuclearization could be verified.

Trump and South Korean President Moon Jae-in will meet at the White House next week to discuss North Korea’s nuclear program, coinciding with a national address Kim will deliver to the North Korean people.

<https://thehill.com/policy/international/asia-pacific/437612-pompeo-confident-there-will-be-third-north-korea-summit>

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The Hill (Washington, D.C.)

Secrecy Behind Saudi Nuclear Talks Infuriates Congress

By Rebecca Kheel

April 7, 2019

Congressional anger is growing over President Trump’s efforts to secure a nuclear energy deal with Saudi Arabia.

Lawmakers first became wary of the plans when the Saudis refused to accept limits preventing them from developing a nuclear weapon.

But that skepticism quickly turned to fury when it was revealed that the Trump administration gave approval for companies to share certain nuclear energy technology with the kingdom without a broader nuclear deal in place.

Lawmakers are now demanding answers. They particularly want to know whether any of the approvals came after the October murder of U.S.-based journalist Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul.

“First we want the information from [the Department of Energy], and we’re demanding it. We should get it,” said Sen. Bob Menendez (D-N.J.), the ranking member on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. “And I think it’s critical to know exactly how this happened, when it happened and particularly were you doing this after Khashoggi?”

Congress has been re-evaluating the U.S.-Saudi relationship since Khashoggi’s death, with lawmakers blaming Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for the killing.

Propelled in part by anger over Khashoggi’s death, Congress last week sent Trump a resolution that would end U.S. military support for the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen’s civil war.

Trump is expected to veto the resolution, making it the second veto of his presidency, and lawmakers are plotting their next steps to confront him for supporting the Saudis.

One potential avenue for expressing that anger is the administration’s nuclear talks with Riyadh.

House Democrats began investigating the administration's nuclear talks with Saudi Arabia after the Oversight and Reform Committee announced in February it was launching a probe to "determine whether the actions being pursued by the Trump administration are in the national security interests of the United States or, rather, serve those who stand to gain financially as a result of this potential change in U.S. foreign policy."

The investigation was launched in conjunction with the release of an interim report that included detailed allegations by unnamed whistleblowers that senior White House officials ignored warnings from legal and ethics advisers to stop pursuing the plan to sell nuclear reactors to Saudi Arabia.

The administration has been negotiating what's known as a 123 agreement with Saudi Arabia that would allow U.S. companies to sell nuclear reactors to the kingdom.

Riyadh has resisted an agreement that includes prohibitions on enriching uranium and reprocessing spent fuel to produce plutonium — essential steps in producing nuclear weapons.

Crown Prince Mohammed has also vowed his country would obtain a nuclear weapon if rival Iran does.

Satellite images first reported by Bloomberg News this past week show Saudi Arabia is nearing completion of its first nuclear facility.

The administration argues a nuclear energy deal with Saudi Arabia is necessary because the kingdom will otherwise take its business to other countries, leaving U.S. companies in the lurch while doing nothing to prevent nuclear proliferation.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Friday was asked about the state of negotiations with Saudi Arabia but responded by criticizing the Obama administration's nuclear deal with Iran in 2015.

"I can't tell you where the negotiations sit because they're still ongoing. But make no mistake about it: We only wish that the previous administration had taken that threat seriously with respect to the Islamic Republic of Iran," he said in an interview with Norah O'Donnell on "CBS This Morning."

Pressed on whether that makes it acceptable for Saudi Arabia to be a nuclear power, Pompeo said, "We will not permit that to happen."

Congress has statutory review powers over 123 agreements and can block them once they are submitted to Capitol Hill.

But even as the agreement remains in the negotiation stage, Energy Secretary Rick Perry approved six authorizations that let U.S. companies share certain nuclear energy technology with Saudi Arabia. Such authorizations typically allow for sharing unclassified nuclear technology and services such as nuclear fuel fabrication, reactor designs and training for operating a nuclear facility, according to the Congressional Research Service.

The Daily Beast first reported the approvals, which Perry later confirmed to the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Perry told senators the Saudi-related approvals were among 37 authorizations granted since 2017, including two for Jordan, and that it's "something that goes on every day."

He said details of the approvals were not shared publicly because the companies involved determined that doing so would divulge proprietary business information.

But lawmakers were outraged when they found out they were not told about the approvals, saying the secrecy violates the Atomic Energy Act, which requires that Congress be kept "fully and currently informed" of negotiations.

In a recent hearing with Pompeo, Rep. Brad Sherman (D-Calif.) said, "It appears that this is an end run around the law in an effort to achieve a policy."

"If you cannot trust a regime with a bone saw, you should not trust them with nuclear weapons," Sherman said, referring to a weapon used in Khashoggi's killing.

Sherman and Rep. Ted Yoho (R-Fla.) introduced a bill in late February that would require congressional approval of a 123 agreement with Saudi Arabia before it can take effect, as opposed to current law that says agreements go into effect unless Congress blocks them.

A companion bill was introduced in the Senate by Sens. Ed Markey (D-Mass.) and Marco Rubio (R-Fla.).

Menendez and Rubio sent Perry a letter this past week demanding information by April 10 on his approval for the six authorizations by his agency.

The two senators previously asked the Government Accountability Office to investigate the administration's negotiations on a 123 agreement.

"The kingdom has engaged in many deeply troubling actions and statements that have provoked alarm in Congress and led lawmakers to begin the process of reevaluating the U.S.-Saudi relationship and our long-term stability and interests in the region," the senators wrote to Perry. "We therefore believe the United States should not be providing nuclear technology or information to them at this time."

<https://thehill.com/policy/international/437649-secrecy-behind-saudi-nuclear-talks-infuriates-congress>

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VOA (Washington, D.C.)

UN Nuclear Watchdog Inspects Iran 'Warehouse,' Diplomats Say

By Reuters

April 4, 2019

VIENNA — The U.N. atomic watchdog policing Iran's nuclear deal has inspected what Israel's prime minister called a "secret atomic warehouse" in Tehran, three diplomats familiar with the agency's work said.

In a speech at the United Nations in September, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu — who vehemently opposes the deal — called on the International Atomic Energy Agency to visit the site immediately, saying it had housed 15 kg (33 lb) of unspecified radioactive material that had since been removed.

Netanyahu argued the warehouse showed Tehran still sought to obtain nuclear weapons, despite its 2015 pact with world powers to curb its nuclear program in return for a loosening of sanctions.

At the time, the IAEA bristled at being told what to do, saying it does not take information presented to it at face value and sends inspectors "only when needed."

"They've visited the site," one of the three diplomats said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the issue publicly and details of inspections are confidential.

One of the diplomats said the IAEA had been to the site more than once last month. The others said the agency had been there, without specifying when. The IAEA declined to comment.

"We have nothing to hide and any access given to the IAEA so far has been in the framework of laws and regulations and nothing beyond that," an Iranian official said.

The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran declined to comment.

Iran has said the site is a carpet-cleaning facility.

Israel's Foreign Ministry declined to comment.

Determining what nuclear materials if any were present at the site will depend on an analysis of environmental samples taken there, and the results will not be in until June, two of the diplomats said.

Such environmental samples can detect telltale particles — including highly enriched uranium — even long after material has been removed.

The IAEA has the power under the landmark 2015 deal to carry out so-called complementary access inspections in Iran, which are often conducted at short notice, wherever necessary.

The IAEA carried out 35 complementary access inspections in Iran in 2017, the latest year for which data is available, according to an annual report to member states that is itself confidential and which Reuters obtained.

Diplomats familiar with the IAEA's work say such inspections are often carried out to clear up questions Iran has not fully answered or discrepancies in its declarations.

'Nothing to hide'

The IAEA has repeatedly said Iran is holding up its end of the deal, which lifted international sanctions against Tehran in exchange for restrictions on its atomic activities that increased the time it would need to make a nuclear bomb. Iran says its nuclear program is entirely peaceful.

Quarterly IAEA reports say its inspectors have had access to all the places in Iran they have needed to visit, which IAEA chief Yukiya Amano repeated in a speech Tuesday.

At the same time, some diplomats who follow Iran closely say it has dragged its feet in dealing with the agency and some inspections have gone down to the wire.

"Full cooperation with the IAEA must be the norm, and Iran should not need a quarterly reminder of its importance," the United States, which has pulled out of the deal and now opposes it, said in a statement at last month's IAEA Board of Governors meeting, referring to another regular comment in IAEA reports.

Pending the results of the sample analysis, several diplomats said the fact inspectors were granted access to the site showed the deal is holding for now, despite Washington reimposing punishing sanctions that have targeted Iran's economy.

"The Iranians have realized that complying with the deal is in their interests," one diplomat said.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/un-nuclear-watchdog-inspects-iran-warehouse-diplomats-say/4862392.html>

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COMMENTARY

Defense One (Washington, D.C.)

America, You're Not Listening to Us

By Anatoly Antonov

April 7, 2019

You can't have a conversation if one party won't listen to the other.

Looking back on the discussions at the annual International Nuclear Policy Conference, hosted last month in Washington, D.C. by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, we have a strong feeling that all reasonable U.S. experts recognize an urgent lack of dialogue between Russia and the United States on key international security issues. As a result of this vacuum created in recent years, the number of unresolved problems continues to multiply — and therefore, so does the potential for conflict and the risks for global stability.

This issue grows more relevant as the United States reconsiders its attitude towards the international system of strategic stability agreements. As Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov noted on March 20 in his statement to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, "The U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, and now from the INF Treaty, paves a way to a large-scale arms race with unpredictable consequences." The realities of today's rapid technological progress suggest that such a race will occur, because many countries aspire to have their own nuclear and missile capabilities as the sole true guarantors of their national security.

So it is quite surprising that the Western national-security community sometimes acts as if they do not wish to hear our arguments. Let's take the INF Treaty, for instance. A quick reminder: U.S. allies in NATO abandoned their own security interests and blindly supported Washington's unfounded accusations that Russia has "violated" the Treaty. The alleged proof presented so far by the United States—coordinates and dates of the "banned" missile tests—is absolutely insufficient for such grave accusations. If there is more evidence, it should be presented. Without it, all U.S. accusations made against us once again prove that Washington lacks arguments to back its biased stance. Meanwhile, our attempts to save the Treaty, including by proposing unprecedented transparency measures, are rejected by the Trump administration.

Not to mention that according to the information at our disposal, the United States has been violating the Treaty for 20 years now. In 1999, they first tested combat unmanned aerial vehicles that have the same characteristics as land-based cruise missiles banned by the Treaty. The United States went on to use ballistic target missiles for testing their missile defense system and, in 2014, they began to deploy in Europe the Mk 41 vertical launching systems. These launchers are fully suitable, without any substantial modifications, for Tomahawk intermediate-range attack missiles. And this is a clear violation of the Treaty. Launchers of this kind have already been deployed in Romania and it looks like next year they will be deployed in Poland.

Everyone seems to be OK with Washington's unilateral efforts to scrap one of the most successful disarmament treaties in history — two entire classes of missiles were eliminated — which fully met the interests of European security. As if nobody wants to treat seriously a very much real threat of new intermediate- and shorter-range missiles fielded in Europe. It is to be regretted that the lessons of the 1980s seem to have been erased from the memory of the Europeans, who chose not to support our efforts to preserve the INF Treaty at the United Nations General Assembly. We do not wish to escalate tensions. As President Vladimir Putin said during his Feb. 2 meeting with

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, Russia will not deploy intermediate- and short-range missiles, unless such U.S.-made weapons appear in Europe or in other regions of the world. We will act reciprocally and only to counter U.S. actions. Our response is outlined in a way that will not draw the Russian Federation into a costly arms race.

Another flagrant example of unwillingness to hear us is the notion that our nuclear doctrine includes an “escalate to de-escalate” concept that includes the possibility of a first “limited low-yield nuclear strike.” This belief is held widely enough to be mentioned in the U.S. Nuclear Posture Review released in February 2018. Clearly, this allegation does not withstand criticism. All those who doubt it could have a look at Article 27 of the Russian Military Doctrine. It plainly states that our country “reserves the right to use nuclear weapons in response to a use of nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction against it and (or) its allies, and in case of an aggression against it with conventional weapons that would put in danger the very existence of the state.” Therefore, as Vladimir Putin said, “our strategy does not include a preemptive use of nuclear weapons...Our concept is a retaliatory counter-strike.”

Recalling questions voiced during the Conference, I have an impression that our stance on the New START needs to be clarified.

We hope that the New START will not suffer the same fate as the INF Treaty. It expires in 2021. On many occasions we have declared our readiness to discuss the possibility of its extension for another five years. Washington, however, still cannot give a definite answer.

It is useful to recall that the extension of the New START is not a simple technicality that could be done in a couple of weeks. Serious issues must first be resolved. The American side must fully settle Russian concerns that the United States has met the accord’s limits not only by actually reducing the number of affected weapons, but also by converting a certain number of them in a way the Russian Federation still cannot confirm their incapability of employing nuclear weapons, as specified by the Treaty.

One can certainly hope that there’s still time. Although the less time we have, the higher the risks of ending up in a situation when there will be no legal limitations of nuclear arsenals for the first time in 50 years. Such a turn of events would be extremely dangerous in a time of overall bilateral crisis and dismantlement of the whole arms control regime.

We strongly adhere to our arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation obligations. Our proposals to resolve the INF issues and preserve the New START still stand. I am most confident that the efforts, required to return to an equal, professional discussion are not exhausted. But we won’t act “needy.” We’ll wait for our partners to come around and engage in a substantial dialogue on this issue of global importance. All our proposals are on the table.

Anatoly Antonov is Russia's ambassador to the United States.

<https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2019/04/america-youre-not-listening-us/156110/?oref=d-topstory>

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Atlantic Council (Washington, D.C.)

Reinvigorating NATO's Nuclear Deterrence Posture through Transparency

By Aaron Richards

April 2, 2019

After World War II, Europe sought to rebuild its decimated infrastructure and restore faith in European security. Despite having defeated Nazi Germany, the United States and its European allies were concerned about multiple events that were affecting regional stability across Western Europe (for example, civil war in Greece and a Soviet-sponsored coup in Czechoslovakia). The United States, led by President Harry S. Truman, responded by enhancing its partnerships with Western Europe with the goal of bolstering regional security. As a result, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was created in 1949 with the purpose of “detering Soviet expansionism, forbidding the revival of nationalist militarism in Europe through a strong [US] presence on the continent, and encouraging European political integration.”

The 70th anniversary of the founding of NATO on April 4 provides the members of the Alliance with the opportunity to reflect on its past and how it should evolve in the future. While NATO implements a multipronged approach to guarantee the freedom and security of its members, one of the most essential components of the Alliance is its nuclear deterrence posture, supported by the United States, the United Kingdom, and France. However, France maintains its nuclear independence by having its nuclear forces outside of NATO's defense coordination mechanisms, such as the Nuclear Planning Group. These member states pledged to provide a “nuclear umbrella” over the Alliance as a means of deterring threats, in alignment with the North Atlantic Treaty's Article V call for collective security.

Despite NATO's insistence that its nuclear deterrence strategy is not directed toward Russia, Russia's extensive history of provocative actions and circumvention of international security norms has broken the trust of NATO, making Moscow a primary object of the Alliance's deterrence strategy.

The Kremlin unequivocally interprets the US and NATO's defense postures in Europe as a direct threat. In response, Russia continues to expend resources on modernizing its nuclear forces, while provoking regional instability and directing bellicose language toward NATO.

The threat Russia poses to NATO's security cannot be overlooked as Moscow shows no signs of abandoning its strategy to weaken security in Western Europe and drive a wedge in the Alliance.

NATO's leadership has explicitly iterated the role of nuclear weapons in sustaining the Alliance's security. In the 2010 Strategic Concept, NATO states a “mix of nuclear and conventional capabilities” is a core element of its deterrence strategy. While member states support nuclear disarmament, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance as long as these weapons exist.

Given today's emerging threat environment, including the dangers emanating from Russia, it is important for NATO to revive the role of its nuclear deterrence posture through clear messaging and effective confidence-building measures that will strengthen its security in future threat environments.

The Alliance's Nuclear Planning Group serves as the senior body on nuclear matters and discusses policy issues associated with nuclear forces. Through this body, and NATO leadership in general, member states can take action to increase nuclear integration across the Alliance to involve more members in the nuclear deterrence mission. From the US perspective, nuclear capabilities will continue to form an integral part of NATO's deterrence and defense posture, including its forward-deployed weapons in Europe.

The United States is identifying ways to increase integration by continuing to partner with European countries to enhance the readiness and survivability of the NATO dual-capable aircraft (DCA) mission. DCA's forward presence, including the F-35 fighter jet, contributes to deterrence against potential adversaries and assurance of NATO allies.

As stated in the US Department of Defense's 2018 Nuclear Posture Review, collaborating with NATO partners on improving the DCA mission can increase "their operational effectiveness, and account for adversary nuclear and nonnuclear capabilities."

Additionally, the United States can leverage knowledge and expertise from its NATO allies in supporting the bloc's nuclear command, control, and communications (NC3) systems. Expanded NATO NC3 coordination may enable appropriate consultations and effective nuclear operations, improving its survivability, resilience, and flexibility in the most stressful threat environments.

Increasing NATO members' contribution in multilateral exercises involving both conventional and nuclear operations will also prepare the Alliance for combat readiness to address a variety of potential threats and environments. Further burden-sharing across these fronts, and others, will improve coordination throughout the Alliance to strengthen combined response capabilities.

The United States should partner with its NATO allies to improve the Alliance's nuclear deterrence capabilities to counter future threats and respond to the rhetoric stemming from Moscow. Russian President Vladimir Putin continues to speak out against the United States' nuclear policies (for example, 2018 Nuclear Posture Review and the US decision to withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty), attempting to limit global support for US nuclear modernization and weaken NATO.

The Alliance must clearly stipulate the role of its nuclear deterrence posture in its security strategy. More direct language from NATO leadership can foster internal discussions on how the Alliance would prefer to address nuclear deterrence and the role of its nuclear capabilities in achieving regional security. Such debate within NATO is critical to prevent imbalances that contrast sharply with potential adversaries and prepare NATO for future crisis management.

NATO's nuclear deterrence strategy aims to preserve peace, prevent coercion, and deter aggression. It has successfully played this role for the past seventy years. However, NATO lives in a new threat environment requiring the Alliance to bolster the nuclear deterrence element of its defense posture.

While the Alliance would prefer to prevent nuclear war with an adversary, it is important to ensure NATO is capable of supporting a ready, flexible, and survivable nuclear posture.

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This article is part of a series on the future of NATO.

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/reinvigorating-nato-s-nuclear-deterrence-posture-through-transparency>

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Brookings (Washington, D.C.)

10 Years after Obama's Nuclear-Free Vision, the US and Russia Head in the Opposite Direction

By Steven Pifer

April 4, 2019

April 5 marks the 10th anniversary of the speech in which Barack Obama laid out his vision for a world without nuclear weapons. It did not gain traction. Instead, the United States and Russia are developing new nuclear capabilities, while the nuclear arms control regime is on course to expire in 2021. The result will be a world that is less stable, less secure, and less predictable.

A WORTHWHILE VISION

Just 10 weeks after his inauguration, President Obama's first trip to Europe took him to Prague. Speaking in Hradcany Square, Obama voiced his deep interest in reducing nuclear arms, including a "commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons." He added that reaching that goal would require time, and that, as long as nuclear arms existed, the United States would maintain a "safe, secure and effective" nuclear arsenal.

Obama's critics mocked him as naïve and idealistic. Achieving a world without nuclear arms would require, at a minimum, that nations conclude that they could protect their vital interests without nuclear arms; that new and very intrusive verification mechanisms were developed and agreed; and that an enforcement mechanism against any cheating state have real teeth—daunting challenges, to be sure. That said, a world in which nuclear arms were reliably and verifiably eliminated would be very much in the U.S. interest.

Nuclear war today poses the one existential threat to the United States. In a non-nuclear world, America would enjoy the advantages of geography (the protection afforded by two wide oceans and friendly neighbors in Canada and Mexico), the world's most powerful conventional forces, and an unrivaled network of allies. Deterrence would not end; U.S. conventional forces could threaten enormous costs to any would-be adversary menacing America or its allies.

A big problem arises, however, in trying to persuade other states to accept a non-nuclear world. The balance of advantages and disadvantages that would make such a world so attractive for the United States would seem very different to other countries, such as Russia.

EVENTS TOOK A DIFFERENT COURSE

In any event, matters took a different course than Obama had hoped. Following signature of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) in April 2010, he called for negotiations with Russia to further reduce strategic nuclear weapons and bring in non-strategic nuclear weapons. That raised the possibility that, for the first time ever, the two countries might negotiate limits on their entire nuclear arsenals.

Moscow chose not to engage in further bilateral negotiations—in part because Washington proved unready to discuss limits on missile defense or conventional strike systems. The Russians also sought a multilateral negotiation, though they have never offered a proposal or explained how one treaty could limit forces as disparate as those of the United States and Russia (4000 to 4500 nuclear weapons each) and China and France (less than 300 each). A Washington Naval Treaty-type agreement assigning unequal limits to its adherents presumably would be unwelcome in Beijing, Paris, and other capitals.

Today, Russia and the United States have launched major nuclear force modernization programs. These programs focus largely on replacing old systems. Weapons systems age out and need

replacement. Both sides, however, also plan to add new capabilities, including exotic strategic weapons and low-yield nuclear arms. One likely and unfortunate result: The threshold for employment of nuclear weapons will be lower.

While U.S. and Russian nuclear modernization proceeds, the regime that limits U.S. and Russian nuclear arms has begun to break down. Russia violated the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty by deploying a prohibited cruise missile. Neither the Obama nor the Trump administration came up with an effective strategy to bring Moscow back into compliance, and it appears that President Trump barely tried, perhaps reflecting the influence of National Security Advisor John Bolton, who has long expressed skepticism about any agreements that constrain U.S. military forces. The INF Treaty will expire this August when the United States withdraws.

The end of the INF Treaty will leave New START, which caps the sides' strategic missiles and bombers as well as their deployed strategic warheads, as the sole remaining nuclear arms control agreement. Unlike the INF Treaty, both sides have complied with New START's limits, but it has less than two years to run before it expires.

New START's terms allow for an extension of up to five years. Moscow historically has wanted some bounds on U.S. strategic forces. The Russians broached the idea of extension in early 2017 and have raised it several times since then. Extension should be a no-brainer for Washington: It would cap Russian strategic forces until 2026 while forcing no change in U.S. modernization plans, since the Pentagon designed those plans to fit within New START. Extension would also continue the flow of information that the United States receives about Russian strategic forces from New START's verification measures. Unfortunately, Trump's grasp of these questions appears weak, and Bolton does not appear a fan of New START.

AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

The two nuclear superpowers thus will likely find themselves in 2021 in a situation that they have not faced for decades—a world with no constraints on nuclear force numbers. For the United States, that world will prove less stable and less secure as new nuclear capabilities undermine the strategic balance and threaten America. It will prove less predictable, as the data exchanges, notifications, and on-site inspections provided by New START cease. And it will almost certainly prove more costly, as the Pentagon has to make worst-case assumptions.

True, achieving Obama's vision of a world without nuclear weapons now seems unrealistic. But we could use some presidential commitment to controlling those weapons.

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/04/04/10-years-after-obamas-nuclear-free-vision-the-us-and-russia-head-in-the-opposite-direction/>

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ABOUT THE USAF CSDS

The USAF Counterproliferation Center (CPC) was established in 1998 at the direction of the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. Located at Maxwell AFB, this Center capitalizes on the resident expertise of Air University — while extending its reach far beyond — and influences a wide audience of leaders and policy makers. A memorandum of agreement between the Air Staff's Director for Nuclear and Counterproliferation (then AF/XON) and Air War College commandant established the initial personnel and responsibilities of the Center. This included integrating counterproliferation awareness into the curriculum and ongoing research at the Air University; establishing an information repository to promote research on counterproliferation and nonproliferation issues; and directing research on the various topics associated with counterproliferation and nonproliferation.

In 2008, the Secretary of Defense's Task Force on Nuclear Weapons Management recommended "Air Force personnel connected to the nuclear mission be required to take a professional military education (PME) course on national, defense, and Air Force concepts for deterrence and defense." This led to the addition of three teaching positions to the CPC in 2011 to enhance nuclear PME efforts. At the same time, the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center, in coordination with the AF/A10 and Air Force Global Strike Command, established a series of courses at Kirtland AFB to provide professional continuing education (PCE) through the careers of those Air Force personnel working in or supporting the nuclear enterprise. This mission was transferred to the CPC in 2012, broadening its mandate to providing education and research on not just countering WMD but also nuclear operations issues. In April 2016, the nuclear PCE courses were transferred from the Air War College to the U.S. Air Force Institute for Technology.

In February 2014, the Center's name was changed to the Center for Unconventional Weapons Studies (CUWS) to reflect its broad coverage of unconventional weapons issues, both offensive and defensive, across the six joint operating concepts (deterrence operations, cooperative security, major combat operations, irregular warfare, stability operations, and homeland security). The term "unconventional weapons," currently defined as nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, also includes the improvised use of chemical, biological, and radiological hazards. In May 2018, the name changed again to the Center for Strategic Deterrence Studies (CSDS) in recognition of senior Air Force interest in focusing on this vital national security topic.

The Center's military insignia displays the symbols of nuclear, biological, and chemical hazards. The arrows above the hazards represent the four aspects of counterproliferation — counterforce, active defense, passive defense, and consequence management. The Latin inscription "Armis Bella Venenis Geri" stands for "weapons of war involving poisons."

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