Feature Report

"Energy and Water Development Appropriations: Nuclear Weapons Activities". By Amy F. Woolf. Published by Congressional Research Service; Nov. 9, 2018


The DOE budget includes funding for the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), a separately organized agency within DOE. NNSA operates three programs: Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation, which secures nuclear materials worldwide, conducts research and development (R&D) into nonproliferation and verification, and operates the Nuclear Counterterrorism and Incident Response Program; Naval Reactors, which “is responsible for all U.S. Navy nuclear propulsion work”; and Weapons Activities.

The last is the subject of this report. The Weapons Activities account supports programs that maintain U.S. nuclear missile warheads and gravity bombs and the infrastructure programs that support that mission. Specifically, according to DOE’s budget documentation, these programs “support the maintenance and refurbishment of nuclear weapons to continue sustained confidence in their safety, reliability, and performance; continued investment in scientific, engineering, and manufacturing capabilities to enable certification of the enduring nuclear weapons stockpile; and manufacture of nuclear weapons components.”

...

Weapons Activities has three main programs, each with a request of over $2 billion for FY2018, as follows:

- Directed Stockpile Work supports programs that work directly on nuclear weapons. It includes life extension programs, maintenance, and other activities. The FY2017 appropriation was $3,308.3 million, and the FY2018 appropriation was $4,009 million; the FY2019 appropriation is $4,658.3 million, an increase of 16% over the FY2018 appropriation.

- Research, Development, Test and Evaluation Programs, which advance the science, engineering, computation, and manufacturing, support Directed Stockpile Work. The FY2017 appropriation was $1,842.2 million, and the FY2018 appropriation was $2,034 million; the FY2019 request is $1,995 million.

- Infrastructure and Operations maintains, operates, and modernizes the National Nuclear Security Administration infrastructure. It supports construction of new facilities and funds deferred maintenance in older facilities. The FY2017 appropriation was $2,808.4 million, and the FY2018 appropriation was $3,118 million; the FY2019 request is $3,002 million.

Weapons Activities also includes several smaller programs, all of which are described in this report: Secure Transportation Asset, Defense Nuclear Security, Information Technology and Cybersecurity, and Legacy Contractor Pensions.

This report will be updated as necessary.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

NUCLEAR WEAPONS
• Air Force Announces Bases That Will Test, Maintain the New B-21 Stealth Bomber (Air Force Times)
The Air Force expects to buy at least 100 B-21s, and each aircraft is expected to cost about $638 million. The service expects to stand up the first B-21 operational units around 2025.
• With Nukes in Mind, French Officials Stake Out Must-Haves for Franco-German Warplane (Defense News)
The aerial leg of France's strategic deterrent consists of nuclear-tipped ASMP cruise missiles, made by MBDA. The delivery aircraft — special versions of the Rafale and Mirage — will be phased out in place of the future Franco-German aerial weapon.

US COUNTER-WMD
• National Security Council Official Frames Nation’s Biodefense Plan for Blue Ribbon Panel Members (Homeland Preparedness News)
  ... The Trump administration is trying to wrap its arms around what is and isn't working in biodefense against man-made, accidental, naturally occurring biological threats and emerging infectious diseases, said Tim Morrison, senior director for weapons of mass destruction and biodefense at the National Security Council (NSC).
• DoD Official: U.S. Needs to Develop New Counters to Future Hypersonic Missiles (USNI News)
  Protecting ships and bases from the hypersonic missile threat is key to the future of U.S. missile defense, Michael Griffin, the under secretary for research and engineering, said ...

US ARMS CONTROL
• North Korean Weapon Test Demonstrates Pyongyang’s Resolve (VOA)
The U.S. State Department suggested the test would not derail efforts to persuade North Korea to give up a nuclear weapons program.
• STRATCOM Head on Key Lawmaker’s Arms Control Agenda: ‘If You Want to Save Money, Change the Threat’ (Defense News)
  In 2017, the Congressional Budget Office estimated that the Pentagon will spend more than $1 trillion over the next 30 years to buy new nuclear weapons or sustain what it has.

COMMENTARY
• It’s Time to Fill Asia’s Arms Control Void (The Interpreter)
  How to curtail [the] expanding arsenals in a region where the most powerful actor, China, is openly sceptical of arms control is an extremely difficult challenge, but one that must be addressed.
• INF Treaty Withdrawal: The Congressional Role (War Room)
  President Ronald Reagan and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev ratified the INF Treaty in December 1987, and the Senate consented unanimously five months later.
NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Air Force Times (Vienna, Va.)

**Air Force Announces Bases That Will Test, Maintain the New B-21 Stealth Bomber**

By Stephen Losey

Nov. 17, 2018

The B-21 Raider, the Air Force’s next stealth bomber, has its first homes.

The Air Force on Friday announced it has chosen Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma to maintain and sustain the B-21, and Edwards Air Force Base in California to handle testing and evaluation of the advanced long-range strike bomber.

In a release, the Air Force said the Air Logistics Complex at Tinker, part of the Air Force Sustainment Center there, has the knowledge and expertise to handle the Northrop Grumman bomber’s depot maintenance.

"With a talented workforce and decades of experience in aircraft maintenance, Tinker AFB is the right place for this critical mission,” Secretary Heather Wilson said in the release.

Robins Air Force Base in Georgia and Hill Air Force Base in Utah will support Tinker on maintaining, overhauling and upgrading the B-21, the Air Force said. The bases will also be equipped to rebuild parts, assemblies or subassemblies of the bomber, and test and reclaim equipment when needed to activate depots.

Edwards was chosen for the B-21’s Combined Test Force because it is home to the Air Force Test Center. That center handles the Air Force’s testing and evaluation to make sure aircraft and equipment meet the service’s standards.

“From flight testing the X-15 to the F-117, Edwards AFB in the Mojave Desert has been at the forefront of keeping our Air Force on the cutting edge,” Chief of Staff Gen. Dave Goldfein said. "Now, testing the B-21 Raider will begin another historic chapter in the base’s history.

The Air Force expects to buy at least 100 B-21s, and each aircraft is expected to cost about $638 million. The service expects to stand up the first B-21 operational units around 2025.


[Return to top](#)

Defense News (Washington, D.C.)

**With Nukes in Mind, French Officials Stake Out Must-Haves for Franco-German Warplane**

By Sebastian Sprenger

Nov. 15, 2018

BERLIN — French defense officials said they will bring requirements to the future Franco-German combat aircraft that they believe are deeply connected to the country’s sovereignty: the ability to fire nuclear weapons and operate from aboard aircraft carriers.


[Return to top](#)
These two must-have capabilities take a special place in what will be a growing list of feature requests to be developed by analysts over the coming years. What makes them unique is that the importance Paris ascribes to them likely will place them outside of the give and take in requirements negotiations that happen in all cooperative projects.

“France has a specific policy about deterrence,” Maj. Gen. Jean-Pascal Breton, the French lead for the Future Combat Air System, told attendees at the International Fighter industry conference in Berlin. “That’s why we don’t want any countries to dictate to us what to do.”

The aerial leg of France’s strategic deterrent consists of nuclear-tipped ASMP cruise missiles, made by MBDA. The delivery aircraft — special versions of the Rafale and Mirage — will be phased out in place of the future Franco-German aerial weapon. Meanwhile, France’s desired carrier-operations capability comes with specific design requirements for how planes take off and land on short runways at sea.

French defense officials also hope to incorporate dedicated combat drones into the mix of Future Combat Air System platforms, which France has studied together with the United Kingdom for years. Those carrier-capable unmanned aircraft would be bigger than the drones envisioned to be swarming around the main, manned aircraft, and their task would be striking targets deep behind enemy lines.

Germany needs none of those features. Still, officials from both countries here at the conference insisted the diverging requirements would be sorted out amicably as the program progresses. The Germans hope that the system’s envisioned modular architecture will help limit country-specific variations, allowing nations to configure one common, base-aircraft design to fit their needs.

Brig. Gen. Gerald Funke, the German Air Force’s lead for the project, equates the planned setup to that of a smartphone: The hardware is largely the same, as interchangeable “apps” provide the desired military effects.

France’s atomic-weapons requirement dictates that the central fighter aircraft for the FCAS system will be manned, at least initially, Breton told reporters. Asked whether it’s conceivable to instead have a drone fire French nuclear-tipped cruise missiles, he replied: “It’s a political decision. For the moment, we don’t see it.”

According to the French two-star, the program plan foresees agreement on an architecture strategy in 2020, building a demonstrator platform in 2025 or 2026, and freezing the design specifications in 2030 to enable manufacturing in time for a 2040 fielding date.

Analysts are currently toying with four variants for the main, manned, combat aircraft, which is called the next-generation fighter, or NGF, in French FCAS lingo, Breton said.

Each boasts specific strengths, like maneuverability in one case. It is unclear, however, how many distinct versions there will be in the end, he stressed, as Germany and France each fine-tune their visions.

Spain is expected to formally join the project soon. The plan is to have Madrid sign similar cooperation documents as Berlin and Paris have already inked, including a finalized, high-level requirements document in the next few months.

The door is also open for the United Kingdom — which has its own next-generation air project cooking, the “Tempest” — to partake. “When it’s possible to include Tempest at a later time, we will do that,” Breton said.

Airbus and Dassault are the main contractors for the FCAS program. They are slated to receive initial study contracts early next year.
While Dassault will be in charge of the central combat aircraft, as agreed by all, Airbus has claimed the lead for the so-called “system of systems” for the entire project. The term refers to the sensor and command connections linking all FCAS components as part of what Airbus calls the “Combat Cloud Ecosystem.” That piece is considered the secret sauce meant to turn a bunch of flying objects into a highly autonomous, lethal and coordinated weapon.

Asked about the industrial leadership for the “system of systems” going to Airbus — as opposed to Thales, France’s go-to electronics vendor for the domestic military market — Breton thought for a moment and smiled. “There will be a European answer,” he said.


Return to top

US COUNTER-WMD

Homeland Preparedness News (Washington, D.C.)

National Security Council Official Frames Nation’s Biodefense Plan for Blue Ribbon Panel Members

By Kim Riley

Nov. 16, 2018

Against the backdrop of a spreading Ebola outbreak in Congo, where a worsening war has stymied U.S. aid amid increasing security concerns, the Trump administration is trying to wrap its arms around what is and isn’t working in biodefense against man-made, accidental, naturally occurring biological threats and emerging infectious diseases, said Tim Morrison, senior director for weapons of mass destruction and biodefense at the National Security Council (NSC).

“In addition to our aggressive efforts to contain Ebola, what we’re dealing with in Congo … is an active terrorist presence and a very destabilized security situation that’s constraining our work there,” Morrison told members of the Blue Ribbon Study Panel on Biodefense on Wednesday.

The current Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is the largest in the west African nation in over 40 years, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The CDC recently reported that zero U.S. citizens are working in the northeastern Congo outbreak zone, although staff from the CDC and the U.S. Agency for International Development are stationed in Congo’s capital located roughly 1,000 miles away while the Trump administration mulls whether more personnel should be deployed to the center of the crisis, where numerous armed militias have made ongoing response efforts dangerous.

“I wish I could say we had more progress to report,” Morrison said during the Nov. 14 meeting held in Washington, D.C., by the Blue Ribbon Study Panel on Biodefense, which continues to assess the state of U.S. biodefense efforts. “But I think we would be in a far worse place today without the work done by the prior administration, the work of the private sector to develop a vaccine, and the kinds of intense leadership focus that we have put on biodefense.”

Morrison, the former policy director for the Republican staff on the U.S. House Armed Services Committee — who helped develop the U.S. government’s nuclear modernization program during
the Obama administration — now is tasked with, among other duties, implementing the National Biodefense Strategy released earlier this year by the White House, as well as National Security Presidential Memoranda (NSPM) No. 14, which lays out the directives for supporting the biodefense strategy.

“Our definition of success is predicated on the idea that if the American people never have to think about biodefense, we’ve succeeded,” said Morrison referring to implementation of the National Biodefense Strategy.

“We do not want a scenario where the American people have to think about another global influenza pandemic along the lines of what their grandparents and great grandparents had to think about in 1918,” when the Spanish Flu pandemic infected some 500 million people across the globe and killed an estimated 50 million people worldwide, according to the CDC.

Morrison said that U.S. President Donald Trump wants biothreats countered at their source. “From a humanitarian standpoint, we want to deal with an outbreak that causes great human suffering and generally destabilizes a security situation in a country ... we want to deal with that there,” in the country where the disease outbreak originated, he said. “We don’t want to have to deal with Ebola here.”

When discussing biological incidents, Morrison said the administration is thinking about whether they are man-made, accidental or naturally occurring. “What they all have in common is that, even in the most remote areas of the world, they can spread rapidly and directly impact our citizens’ health, security and their prosperity,” he noted.

Ebola is something the federal government has been dealing with since 2014, said Morrison.

“The position we find ourselves in, based on the good work the Obama administration did at the time in dealing with a very aggressive outbreak, has helped to set us ... with tools that the prior administration didn’t have,” he said.

One such tool is an Ebola vaccine, Morrison said, but dispersing it currently has proven difficult given the active terrorist presence in Congo that has created “a very destabilized security situation” and constrained response and recovery efforts.

Outlining the strategy

A U.S. Naval Reserve intelligence officer, Morrison outlined particulars about how the biodefense strategy will unfold.

“The administration is attempting to change the government’s approach to complex biological threats,” said Morrison, the lead presenter during the panel’s meeting on Wednesday, in reference to the National Biodefense Strategy. “For the first time we will be evaluating national biodefense needs and monitoring them ... on an ongoing basis.”

Having arrived at his current job in July, Morrison said that “one of the first things that got stuck in my hand” was the panel’s 2015 A National Blueprint for Biodefense status report, from which two-thirds of the 33 panel recommendations made it into the recent national strategy, according to former Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge, co-chair of the Blue Ribbon Study Panel with former U.S. Sen. Joseph Lieberman.

“I had the same question that you all have asked,” Morrison told panel members. “What took so long?”

“There’s an old saying, ‘When we stand on the shoulders of giants, we can see further.’ I think that’s the case here because the work that the administration did on the biodefense strategy and the
national security memorandum was very much informed by your work,” he said citing the panel’s report.

Morrison said he hopes their dialogue continues so that together, “we can figure out where are we succeeding in implementing the president’s strategy and where we need to do a little bit more work. And frankly, how can we work better with our partners, whether those partners are at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue [in Congress], or if those partners are state and local actors or the private sector.”

When the president signed NSPM 14, Morrison said, “I think he took a look at the 15 departments and agencies, the intelligence community and ... the examples presented by the Bush administration and the Obama administration and said, ‘Ok, how do we go further? What do we really need to do to build on the examples of the prior administration’s efforts, but also what we’ve learned since then from Ebola in 2014? What we learned from Ebola in 2016, and what we learned from Zika, and MERS and SARS and anthrax? How do we take a step to really build on the kind of challenges that the Blue Ribbon Panel highlights?’”

The resulting strategy, he said, for the first time presents a leader on biodefense strategy for the federal government: the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), “who essentially will be the first among equals — among the heads of the departments and agencies — chairing the Biodefense Steering Committee to harness all the activities of the federal government in the biodefense space. But he will also be the official charged with coordinating the range of activities that include the state and local sector, and that include the private sector,” Morrison explained.

One of the things in the new biodefense strategy “that we’re particularly proud of,” he added, “and which sets this strategy apart from some of the prior work, is the reliance on innovation; engaging the private sector in harnessing what technology can do to help the United States deal with biodefense challenges.”

Joining the HHS Secretary in oversight is Morrison’s boss, the assistant to the president for national security affairs, a.k.a. the National Security Advisor, who will take the product developed by the biodefense steering committee and lead a process to assess the nation’s capabilities and prioritize biodefense actions across the U.S. government.

The process to be led by the HHS Secretary and National Security Advisor has five key roles, Morrison explained, which are to: assess biological risks; ensure capabilities to prevent biological incidents; prepare to reduce the impacts of biological incidents; respond rapidly to biological incidents; and to recover after biological incidents.

Also, for first time, the biodefense strategy will be linked to the annual federal budget process. “That is, frankly, where we feel we will need help,” Morrison told the Blue Ribbon Study Panel members. “We will need to help our partners in the private sector and our partners in Congress understand that they play a role in biodefense that perhaps they’ve never previously understood.”

As a special assistant to the president, Morrison said the nation’s biodefense strategy is very much informed by accountability.

For instance, for the implementation of the biodefense strategy, he explained, the NSPM assigns roles and responsibilities, defines end states (what success looks like for each subpart of the biodefense strategy and NSPM), milestones (which are time-bound, resource-informed actions that will be taken to achieve each end state, but which aren’t necessarily resource-bound), and metrics (the indicators that will tell the group when the milestones have been met).
“The first opportunity for the Blue Ribbon Study Panel to evaluate our success will come in January or February [2019] when we meet the 120-day implementation deadline provided by the NSPM,” said Morrison. “That will be the president’s first opportunity to grade us and that’ll be your first opportunity to grade us as to how we are implementing the implementation plan in response to the NSPM.”

Panel co-chairmen Ridge and Lieberman asked Morrison if BioWatch, the current U.S. government program to detect the release of pathogens into the air as part of a terrorist attack on American cities, would or could be replaced. The panel members advocate for doing so as they've determined that BioWatch is a failing enterprise.

“I feel it’s never really lived up to its expectations,” Lieberman said. “Its ineffectiveness could and will leave us much more exposed.”

“BioWatch hasn’t worked, isn’t working, and cannot be remedied,” added Ridge, pointing to the program’s reliance on old technology and its labor-intensiveness. “I think it’s outlived its usefulness.”

Specifically, Lieberman said public information released by the U.S. Department of Defense says it's developing new federal biodetection systems that would be more effective. “Can you report on whether this is a priority for you?” he asked Morrison.

Morrison said he would rather not comment on a specific program at this time, however, he said “this is why we settled on” the strategy’s prioritization and accountability processes, as well as the role that will be played by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) related to future funding. He said the administration intends to look at everything being done annually in biodefense across all agencies to ensure taxpayer money is being used as effectively as possible.

“Once we get the budget,” he added, “we’ll have more we can say about how we’ve chosen to prioritize biodefense actions.”

Morrison told the panel members that the NSPM and National Biodefense Strategy are the president’s precise directions on how he wants to move forward.

“President Trump lets us know very clearly and directly what his expectations are,” he said, “and he’s not shy about holding us accountable.”


Return to top

USNI News (Annapolis, Md.)

DoD Official: U.S. Needs to Develop New Counters to Future Hypersonic Missiles

By John Grady

Nov. 16, 2018

Existing radars don’t provide the almost-split-second warning needed to keep Guam, carrier strike groups in the Pacific and Kadena Air Base in Okinawa from being held hostage to a future hypersonic attack, the Pentagon’s chief technology officer said this week.

Protecting ships and bases from the hypersonic missile threat is key to the future of U.S. missile defense, Michael Griffin, the under secretary for research and engineering, said while speaking at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C.
“We can see it and find it,” but “we really need to be closer to the action” to defend against a weapons technology that China, particularly, and Russia are investing in heavily. Hypersonic weapons’ low signature in flight and high degree of maneuverability upon final approach to targets make the weapons difficult to defend against, Griffin said. He added that missile defense’s goal is to be “persistent, timely, global” in addressing existing and emerging threats.

To meet that wide-ranging challenge, “I see value [in having] one agency” with its own acquisition authorities to concentrate focus on missile defense, rather than have the services develop their own systems.

“I would like the Missile Defense Agency to set that pace” of speeding development to fielding systems to counter what Beijing and Moscow are now demonstrating in the hypersonic realm. Griffin said he expected future budgets to provide funds for lasers that the agency can more rapidly develop and field. For example, to field space-control weapons, “we need to be in the megawatt class” of lasers. He added, “we also need to be able to get after the threat we see today” against the United States’ space-based sensors integral to warfighting.

One way to disaggregate the threat would be to have a constellation of satellites in space to reduce vulnerability. “I want us already to be working on it.” But he didn’t want to put a timetable on that aspect of defense. “We’ll get it as soon as we can get it,” implying the need for budgetary support as well as quicker technological development.

Similarly, Griffin acknowledged the vulnerability of land-based and sea-based radars to attack. From separating the illuminators from the site to other possibilities, “we are re-looking all of that” to improve survivability.

When asked what the next missile defense age encompasses, Griffin cited unmanned aerial, ground and undersea vehicles and swarming attack as immediate threats. Further out, “we need to learn how to defend and perpetrate directed energy and high-powered microwave [for] an electronic kill.”

Griffin said earlier in his talk that “we have a lot of ground to make up … in modernizing our offensive and defensive force structure” in missile defense. Griffin added the “last time we really invested in transformative capabilities that overwhelmed adversaries [in Desert Storm] was the Reagan era. … It’s time for us to get back to work.”

Missile defense readiness will “cause our adversaries to think twice, we hope” before attacking and create confusion as to how the United States might respond.


US ARMS CONTROL

VOA (Washington, D.C.)

North Korean Weapon Test Demonstrates Pyongyang’s Resolve

By Steve Miller

Nov. 19, 2018

SEOUL — What does a new "tactical" weapon mean for the North Korean denuclearization process? Both the United States and the South Korean government downplayed the weapons test, but Adam Mount, a member of the Federation of American Scientists, disagreed.

Speaking to Reuters news agency, he said the test may serve as a warning to Washington.

"They're trying to signal that they are willing to walk away from talks and restart weapons testing," he said. "It is the most explicit in a series of escalating statements designed to send this message."

The U.S. State Department suggested the test would not derail efforts to persuade North Korea to give up a nuclear weapons program.

"We remain confident that the promises made by President Trump and Chairman Kim will be fulfilled," a spokesman for the U.S. State Department said.

Troy University lecturer in international relations Daniel Pinkston, also does not believe the test will have any direct impact on current talks and says it’s another example that "North Korea’s orientation policy objectives haven't fundamentally changed."

He adds that this "particular system is just another indication of the importance of military to military strength in North Korea."

South Korea's Ministry of Defense said Friday the test shouldn't be classified as a "provocation."

In addition, an anonymous South Korean government official speaking to South Korea’s Yonhap News, said while the test should be watched carefully, it didn’t necessarily mean North Korea was willing to walk away from denuclearization talks.

A North Korean threat?

Seong Whun Cheon, Visiting Research Fellow at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies in Seoul, says he has concerns about Seoul’s assessment of the recent test, because a tactical weapon refers to a short-range device, "which means even if it’s not a threat to the United States, [it's] a direct threat to our (South Korean) national security."

Pyongyang has positioned a large assortment of conventional weapons within striking distance of the South Korea capital. The proximity of those weapons and their potential to inflict massive casualties should a country attempt to attack North Korea, has been a powerful deterrent to such actions.

Cheon adds that if Pyongyang and the United States were able to reach a deal that would allow North Korea to "continue to purchase either technical or medium-range missiles, including some nuclear capability, that is the worst nightmare that we can imagine at the moment."

Pinkston says the latest test sends "a signal to South Korea on how North Korea is prepared to stand fast and be resolute in their relations with the South... and to the United States and others on the UN Security Council."

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Ultimately Cheon says, "We don’t see any significant changes, or revisions, in their conventional strategy."

What weapon was tested?

North Korea's state media said Friday, leader Kim Jong-un inspected a test of a newly developed high-tech weapon. The visit and announcement came as talks with the United States over Pyongyang's denuclearization have stalled, even though Washington says a second summit with Kim and U.S. President Donald Trump is still being planned for early 2019.

In the English version of the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) report, it said Kim visited "the Academy of Defense Science and supervised a newly developed ultramodern tactical weapon test."

"The state-of-the-art weapon that has been long developed under the leadership of our party's dynamic leadership has a meaning of completely safeguarding our territory and significantly improving the combat power of our people's army," it said.

As of Monday, the South Korean government had not concluded what kind of weapon was tested, though South Korea's Yonhap news suggested it may be some sort of long-range artillery; however, that has not been verified.

"Regarding the North Korean high tech weapon test, South Korea and the United States are investigating it. We cannot confirm what it is," a defense ministry spokesman said.

"The testing of the high-tech tactical weapon has been carried out successfully, meeting all superior and powerful designing indicators," the Korean Central Broadcasting Station added.

The KCNA report said, "After seeing the power of the tactical weapon, Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un was so excited to say that another great work was done by the defense scientists and munitions industrial workers to increase the defense capability of the country."

North Korea's KCNA news agency did not identify the weapon and only posted a picture of Kim standing on a beach surrounded by officials in military uniforms. No weapons were visible in those images.

Lee Ju-hyun contributed to this report

https://www.voanews.com/a/north-korea-testing-weapons/4664472.html

Return to top

Defense News (Washington, D.C.)

STRATCOM Head on Key Lawmaker's Arms Control Agenda: 'If You Want to Save Money, Change the Threat'

By Valerie Insinna

Nov. 15, 2018

WASHINGTON — If Rep. Adam Smith gains control of the House Armed Services Committee, as projected, the head of U.S. Strategic Command has some advice for him: There are ways to trim down the cost of the nuclear arsenal, but don’t cut a leg off of the nuclear triad.

"When Congressman Smith asks me — and he has — I will tell him next year the same thing I told him last year and the year before," Gen. John Hyten said during a Nov. 14 discussion at Harvard University’s Institute of Politics.

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“As the STRATCOM commander, my advice is that we need to have a force that can respond to any threat that is in the world today. And in order to do that, I have to have a triad. The Russians have a very significant triad that is poised against us each and every day, and if I don’t have that, I can’t guarantee that the United States will have the ability to respond, which means I can’t guarantee the security of the country.”

Earlier on Wednesday, Smith said that the Pentagon’s plan to recapitalize the three legs of the triad — by buying the Columbia-class submarine, new intercontinental ballistic missiles, and the B-21 bomber — was “way beyond what we can afford.”

In 2017, the Congressional Budget Office estimated that the Pentagon will spend more than $1 trillion over the next 30 years to buy new nuclear weapons or sustain what it has.

Instead of pursuing that plan, members of Congress should push for a redo of the Trump administration’s recent Nuclear Posture Review and force the White House to choose between modernization of its nukes or its conventional weapons, Smith argued.

“Fundamentally what I’m hoping what we can do moving forward is reset our policy on nuclear weapons,” said Smith, D-Wash., during an event sponsored by the Ploughshares Fund.

Hyten agreed that there are things the Defense Department could do to roll back its spending on nukes, but it involves renegotiating arms control treaties to further reduce the nuclear arsenals of the United States and Russia.

“Want to know how to get those savings? Sit down with the Russians and say, ‘You know, 1,550 is not the right number,’” he said, referencing the maximum number of nuclear permitted by the New START Treaty signed by the United States and Russia.

“Maybe its 1,400. There’s a certain minimum number that we need to handle all of the threats in the world, and I won’t go into what that is, but we have analysis that we can give to diplomats to help them negotiate,” he said. “But if you want to save money, change the threat. Don’t change our level of security in this country.”

While Hyten was careful not to veer too closely into political matters, the STRATCOM chief at multiple points expressed exasperation with Russian violations of existing arms control agreements.

“I like arms control treaties that limit nuclear weapons. I think those are good things for our country and good things for the world,” he said.

But when negotiating with a nuclear power, “everything should be on the table” for each party — and for Russia, that includes its low-yield nuclear weapons.

Asked about President Donald Trump’s intention to withdraw the United States from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, Hyten again voiced dissatisfaction with Russian noncompliance.

The INF treaty prohibits the countries from fielding ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers, but the United States asserts that Russia’s new 9M729 cruise missile fits into that category.

“When I see the INF treaty, I see a treaty that I definitely want the Russians to be inside of, and they’re not. And they haven’t been for a number of years,” Hyten said.

Meanwhile, the United States abided by the treaty language, working through diplomatic channels to try to pull Russia back into compliance.
“The bottom line is: We have a treaty, and we’re the only person abiding by that. And at some point in time, the United States has to say, ‘That’s enough,’” he said. “And the president, a few weeks ago, said, ‘That’s enough.’”


COMMENTARY

The Interpreter (New South Wales, Australia)

It’s Time to Fill Asia’s Arms Control Void

By Tanya Ogilvie-White

Nov. 16, 2018

Asia urgently needs new diplomatic initiatives aimed at reducing nuclear dangers and preventing arms racing in the region. There’s a glaring gap between the ambitious disarmament goals set out in the relevant global treaties – the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) – and the immediate need to constrain regional arms racing pressures, which are undeniably growing.

The pending abrogation of the INF Treaty for nuclear and conventional ground-launched intermediate-range missiles, which is a symptom of major strategic change, including developments in and proliferation of military technologies, should be a wake-up call for us all: the post-Cold War arms control architecture is crumbling, and if it can’t be salvaged and adapted, something new needs to take its place.

If we don’t heed this call, we’re likely to see a major arms race in Asia, with all the negative consequences that that entails, including setting non-proliferation and disarmament projects back indefinitely.

Despite these dangers, arms control leadership has been distinctly lacking in Asia, as demonstrated by the noticeably quiet response to the INF treaty’s demise (in stark contrast to loud European reactions). This is partly explained by the fact that strategic communities in Asia have been preoccupied with nuclear and missile developments in states that haven’t been constrained by the INF treaty: China, India, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia – all of which have been free to test and deploy dual-capable missiles that are banned under the Treaty.

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How to curtail these expanding arsenals in a region where the most powerful actor, China, is openly sceptical of arms control is an extremely difficult challenge, but one that must be addressed. The failure of Asia’s leaders to face this problem head on, and to witness the trampling of the INF treaty with barely even a whimper, is an abdication of responsibility and a worrying indictment of their leadership.

There are some immediate and practical steps that Asia’s leaders, including Australia, can take to start dealing with this problem. For example, it would show strong leadership if US allies in Asia signalled, collectively, that a return to hosting land-based US nuclear weapons in Asia, which ended in the early 1990s, is not an option. It needs to be made clear that not only would new hosting
arrangements undermine the NPT, which is the most strategically important treaty the world has ever known, but it would dramatically increase incentives for China to abandon its no first use posture and accelerate its military expansion – developments no-one would want to see.

One way to communicate strong anti-hosting sentiment would be for US allies in Asia to issue a joint statement following formal confirmation of Washington’s INF withdrawal (which has yet to occur), calling for dialogue on an updated, multilateral version of the INF treaty that would ensure that in Asia at least, Cold War nuclear hosting arrangements remain a thing of the past.

Asian leaders can also pursue a common strategy of diplomatic persuasion to encourage the extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), designed to verifiably reduce US and Russian strategic nuclear arsenals. The momentum this generates should be used to promote serious discussion of a multilateral strategic arms control treaty. Failure to extend New START in 2021 (which is possible if Trump wins a second term and National Security Adviser John Bolton stays on the scene) would have massive knock-on effects in Asia, creating a newly permissive environment for vertical and horizontal nuclear proliferation.

New START extension is therefore an essential building block for Asian arms control and strategic stability in general, and it should be possible to build support across the region – not only among US allies – for a diplomatic initiative that uses New START as its engine.

Getting Asia’s nuclear-armed states on board with new arms control initiatives won’t be easy, but one way to facilitate this is by stepping up defence diplomacy in Asia, via formal and informal discussions that focus on building trust and improving transparency and predictability.

Australia and Japan are already attempting to improve nuclear transparency in the NPT context through the Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative. But it makes sense to also increase efforts to engage the NPT outliers and China in frank discussions in regional forums, and with dedicated bilateral and informal initiatives that include advanced conventional weapons and new technologies on the agenda.

These efforts would be timely, appropriate, and achievable, and would reduce dangerous arms racing dynamics in Asia by demonstrating a serious commitment to peace and stability. But the political will to pursue them in earnest needs to flow from a series of common understandings. This includes understanding the dangers of allowing military build-up to continue, unconstrained. It goes further, to acknowledging the capacity for human agency to control arms racing dynamics by non-violent means that can be adapted in response to change. And this must also be founded on the shared benefits of building an arms control architecture that is relevant for today, which retains important elements of existing arms control arrangements, but which also embeds Asian countries, advanced conventional weapons and new technologies into the structure.

All of this is possible, and it's time for Asia’s leaders to step up and make it happen.

INF Treaty Withdrawal: The Congressional Role

By Frank Jones

Nov. 15, 2018

President Trump’s October announcement that the U.S. will “pull out” of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty set off a flurry of opinion pieces and assessments by numerous experts. Predictably, two camps emerged. One group applauded the decision, calling the treaty a Cold War relic that should be scrapped as it handcuffed the U.S. security in a changed threat environment. The other group saw it as a signal for a new and costly arms race that would lead to a more dangerous world. Both took the view that the decision was entirely one of the executive branch’s making. Whatever the merits or failings of the President’s decision, the U.S. withdrawal from the INF Treaty indicates something significant in the conduct of foreign policy towards Russia and China under President Trump: an emerging alignment between the President and the Republican majority in the Senate. This alignment leaves behind the internal party disagreements that characterized U.S.-Russia policy when the President took office almost two years ago. Combined with the U.S. hardening stance toward China, withdrawing from the INF may mark the beginning of a new period in international security.

President Ronald Reagan and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev ratified the INF Treaty in December 1987, and the Senate consented unanimously five months later. The accord required that the United States and Soviet Union eliminate all ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers within three years after the Treaty entered into force, and that neither party possess such weapons in the future. The rationale for the Trump administration’s decision to upend the agreement was that the Russians have been violating it since 2014, which the Russians deny.

Can the President simply withdraw from the INF Treaty? One critic, asserting that the Congress has the right counter the Trump administration’s plan, questioned whether it has the backbone to do so. Yet the legal grounds for such a move are murky, depending on a reference from Alexander Hamilton’s Federalist No. 75, as the critic asserted that the legislative branch “commands the clear constitutional authority to prohibit Donald Trump from terminating” the treaty. However, Article XV of the INF Treaty states, “each party shall, in exercising its national sovereignty, have the right to withdraw from the Treaty if it decides that extraordinary events related to the subject matter of this Treaty have jeopardized its supreme interests.” In that case, the party would “give notice of its decision to withdraw to the other party six months prior to the withdrawal.” The legal precedent for members of Congress filing suit on the claim of constitutional authority over treaty withdrawal is a single case (Goldwater v. Carter) brought before the Supreme Court in 1979. The Court saw the issue as a political question and dismissed the complaint. Thus, the legal basis for congressional opposition is weak.

Political opposition is a different matter. Indeed, a few Republican senators voiced their concern about the decision. Senator Rand Paul stated, “It’s a big, big mistake to flippantly getting out of this historic agreement.” He urged the president to open negotiations with the Russians to update and expand the treaty. Senator Bob Corker, Foreign Relations Committee chairman, hoped the administration was using the declaration to gain leverage, and thereby, prompt the Russians to return to compliance. He opined, “I hope we are not moving down the path to undo much of the nuclear arms treaties we have put in place.” Yet this opposition does not seem to reflect the sentiment of the majority of Republicans.
The administration’s declaration should not have come as a surprise to Republican Senators on the Foreign Relations Committee. The administration had willing accomplices on Capitol Hill. Moreover, as early as 2013, the Defense Department has been planning for an end of U.S. participation in the INF Treaty, a year before the Obama administration publicly announced its protest that the Russians were in violation. Further, the Defense Department has been examining potential missiles it could develop and deploy that would have range between 300 and 3,400 miles and therefore, not be treaty compliant. Civilian and military Defense Department officials had been openly and clearly expressing their concerns in congressional testimony for the past five years.

What about the role of Russia in prompting President Trump’s choice? The discourse about Russia’s role in the global security environment has been changing for some time, though the shift accelerated in 2014, with Russia’s occupation of the Crimea and its war in Ukraine. In August 2016, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Joseph Dunford, laid out the “4+1” framework, identifying Russia and China along with Iran and North Korea, as the principal threats to the United States, its allies and partners. (The plus one was “violent extremism.”) Thus, after a decade of strategic distraction with the so-called War on Terror, the United States would now focus on the most serious threats to the nation’s survival and its vital interests. Dunford’s framework, now termed the “return of great power competition,” found a place in the December 2017 National Security Strategy (NSS). Yet Arms control received little attention in the NSS. Where does the INF Treaty come in?

The Defense Department’s February 2018 Nuclear Posture Review was unequivocal in its questioning of Russian adherence to the INF Treaty, underscoring that the U.S. pursuit of a nuclear-armed Surface Launched Cruise Missile (SLCM) would “provide an arms control compliant response to Russia’s non-compliance with the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty, its non-strategic nuclear arsenal, and its other destabilizing behaviors.” Thus, Russia was not meeting its international legal and political commitments and was in violation of the INF Treaty. State and Defense Department officials testified before Senate Foreign Relations Committee in September 2018 on the state of Russian arms control. The Defense Department official indicated that the U.S. response to Russian noncompliance included “preparing the United States for a world without the INF Treaty.”

Action on Capitol Hill provided other clear signals that the INF Treaty was in jeopardy. Republican Senator Tom Cotton, an Armed Services Committee member, introduced a bill in February 2017, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty Preservation Act, to enforce Russian compliance. A companion piece of legislation was introduced by two Republicans in the House. The Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018 provided the sense of Congress: the Russians were in a material breach of the INF Treaty, which “affords the United States the right to invoke legal countermeasures which include suspension [a term not in the treaty language] of the treaty in whole or in part.”

This year, Republicans in the House Armed Services Committee added language to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 requiring the President submit a determination, by January 15, 2019, whether Russia is in material breach of its obligations under the INF Treaty. The Senate version of the bill contained no such language, and in conference, the Senate conferees receded to the House.

Given all this activity, the notion that the Trump administration’s decision was unexpected is unconvincing. Instead, it suggests something different: the formation of a new foreign policy consensus between a Republican Congress and the executive branch regarding U.S.-Russian relations on arms control. It is not unique for the defense committees to actively promote U.S. foreign policy in arms control, overshadowing the foreign affairs committees. The legislation also
points to the House of Representative’s willingness to play a more prominent foreign policy role using its legislative powers to do so.

Arms control issues were debated strenuously during the Cold War because, as Pat Towell has pointed out, they are “fraught with some significant implications for U.S. defense policy and budgets.” The arms control tug-of-war between the Senate and the president consisted of “elaborate and closely coupled assumptions about the nature of the military balance in question... and highly technical calculations.” Congress definitely has an institutional interest in this issue and should ensure it is consulted. The challenge for both branches today is to rebuild that framework based on an evolving strategic environment.

In 1988, as the Senate debated the INF Treaty in its advice and consent role, Democratic Senator Sam Nunn, chairman of the Armed Services Committee offered a salient point about the congressional role in arms control. He held that Congress must be assured that the administration was entirely transparent about how the treaty fit into U.S. foreign policy objectives and its military strategy. Nunn’s concern is worthy of consideration today. It will take an active and assertive Congress, perhaps even challenging the president, to hold the administration accountable regarding how withdrawing from the treaty is part of a comprehensive national security policy framework, and not a haphazard action. Still another question remains to be answered: with a divided Congress come January 2019, will it be able to act effectively in that oversight capacity?

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Return to top
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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