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Feature Report

“A Theory of Engagement with North Korea”. By Christopher Lawrence. Published by Belfer Center; May 2019

<https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/theory-engagement-north-korea>

At the Hanoi Summit in February 2019, the United States and North Korea reached a familiar impasse—diplomacy broke down over the appropriate order of near-term steps, and the world was left wondering whether any package of rewards would be enough to incentivize denuclearization.

In a new Managing the Atom Discussion Paper, Christopher Lawrence outlines an alternative conceptual framework for engaging North Korea. Rather than offering rewards for nuclear rollback, the approach focuses on building credibility around the notion of a shared political future. Lawrence suggests that physical actions—such as shared investments in integrated rail, electricity, or mining infrastructure—speak more credibly about the political future for all the parties involved than do written commitments or more transient “carrots” and “sticks.” The international relationships created by infrastructure projects may alter North Korea's security calculus over time, and incrementally reduce its dependence on nuclear weapons. Drawing lessons from the 1994 Agreed Framework, Lawrence reinterprets the history of nonproliferation engagement with North Korea, and illuminates possible opportunities to break the diplomatic impasse after the Hanoi summit.

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NUCLEAR WEAPONS

National Defense (Arlington, Va.)

Air Force Wants to Utilize Commercial Satellites for Nuclear Command, Control

By Mandy Mayfield

June 26, 2019

The U.S. military is eyeing commercial satellites for nuclear command and control, said a top officer June 26.

“The work that we're doing in connecting the force and building a networked force across the services in the conventional side has got equal application to the nuclear command-and-control side,” Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David Goldfein said during remarks at an event in Washington, D.C., hosted by the Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies.

“One of the areas that I think we're going to be able to leverage significantly is ... the rapid and exciting expansion of commercial space and bringing low-earth orbit capabilities that will allow us to have the resilient pathways to communicate,” he added.

The Air Force operates two of the three legs of the United States' nuclear triad, to include the bomber force and ground-based intercontinental ballistic missiles. Meanwhile, the Navy deploys ballistic missile submarines for the strategic deterrence mission.

The Air Force wants to reap cost savings by leveraging the commercial space industry, Goldfein said. Increased access to affordable launch services and smaller, more capable payloads has caused a rapid expansion in commercial offerings, he noted.

“Whether it's Silicon Valley or commercial space, there are unlimited opportunities ahead right now for us in terms of how we think differently on things like nuclear command-and-control,” Goldfein said.

As adversarial nations such as Russia and China develop anti-satellite capabilities, the Pentagon wants more resilient satcom architectures.

“We want to get to a point, both in conventional and unconventional or conventional and nuclear, where if some portion of the network is taken out ... I've got five other pathways” to communicate with military forces, Goldfein said.

The Air Force chief's remarks come as the Pentagon is taking a closer look at its nuclear command, control and communications needs and fleshes out what technologies it plans to buy.

Existing systems are aging. The last major upgrade of the NC3 architecture took place in the 1980s, according to a report released earlier this year by the Mitchell Institute titled, “Modernizing U.S. Nuclear Command, Control and Communications.”

“I honestly can't think of a more timely or important topic than our No. 1 mission, which is to work side by side with the Navy to provide a safe, secure and effective nuclear deterrent because generating global vigilance, global reach and global power has always been and always will be a simultaneous mission set,” Goldfein said.

When asked if the commercial space sector would shy away from working with the Defense Department, as some technology firms have for projects that involve artificial intelligence, Goldfein said he believes patriotic sentiment would convince members of industry to help.

“I really think we can come to that common ground because I see no shortage of patriotism in industry anywhere,” he said.

<https://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/articles/2019/6/26/air-force-wants-to-utilize-commercial-satellites-for-nuclear-command-control>

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Air Force Magazine (Arlington, Va.)

Missileer Improvements Hit Mark, but Still More to Do

By Rachel S. Cohen

June 26, 2019

Performance and professionalism in the Air Force’s nuclear ranks has improved in the last few years following a spate of personnel issues, but there’s always more work to be done to ensure the men and women who watch the arsenal are at their best, the service’s top uniformed officer said this week.

“I believe we’ve come a long way,” Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David Goldfein said at a June 26 AFA Mitchell Institute breakfast. “We’ve all had to make sure that we keep our foot on the gas on this. I’m optimistic, but I’m not comfortable.”

Nuclear operators have hit rough patches over the past several years: low morale and lost focus coupled with reports of drug use, weapons mismanagement, a proficiency test cheating scandal, and frequent staff turnover. In response, the service launched programs to revamp training and regulations and to keep missileers in their jobs longer, rather than send them to other specialties after a few years. The Air Force has also made a conscious effort to offer bonuses, tout missileers’ work, and visit the three nuclear missile bases spread across rural Wyoming, North Dakota, and Montana.

Now, the service wants to develop its missile-managing employees’ leadership skills at the same time as it develops new nuclear weapons and Northrop Grumman’s B-21 bomber. Some airmen at Air Command and Staff College are taking a yearlong course focused on the nuclear enterprise in one effort to bolster leadership in those career fields.

“One of the tasks I gave them was to ... give us some fresh thinking on, how do we do command and control if nuclear weapons were inserted into a conventional fight?” Goldfein said. “We built our nuclear command and control to be separate from our conventional command and control.”

If the Russians deployed a low-yield, “tactical” nuclear weapon in combat, regional commanders would need the ability to integrate nukes into their otherwise conventionally armed battle plan. However, Goldfein emphasized that a “nuclear weapon is a nuclear weapon,” saying many don’t believe there is such a thing as a tactical nuke.

“Our command-and-control systems right now are not as agile as they need to be,” he continued. “This group of scholars have been doing some extraordinary work, writing papers and thinking about what is the command-and-control mechanism and how does that need to feed into [nuclear command, control, and communications]?”

The Air Force’s NC3 Integration Directorate has been mulling the idea of dual-use command and control for at least two years, and points to the concept as one of the most complicated security hurdles it faces in bringing the NC3 enterprise into the digital age.

Goldfein argues efforts to modernize decades-old NC3 systems also needs to dovetail with the Air Force's Advanced Battle Management System, envisioned as a network of conventional C2 assets spread across air, land, and space sensors and platforms, as well as with the push into commercial space capabilities.

<http://www.airforcemag.com/Features/Pages/2019/June%202019/Missileer-Improvements-Hit-Mark-but-Still-More-to-Do.aspx>

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International Atomic Energy Agency (Vienna, Austria)

Amount of Nuclear Material under IAEA Safeguards Continues to Increase: Safeguards Statement 2018

By Adem Mutluer

June 25, 2019

Last year saw an increase in the amount of nuclear material subject to IAEA safeguards, continuing a trend from previous years, according to the Safeguards Statement for 2018, published last week.

The IAEA seeks to verify that States around the world use nuclear material solely for peaceful purposes. It does this by applying technical measures, known as safeguards. Each year, the IAEA reports to its Board of Governors on its findings and conclusions through the Safeguards Implementation Report. This forms the basis of the Safeguards Statement. In 2018 the IAEA conducted 3,011 in-field verifications across the globe, up from 2,843 in 2017. These in-field verifications included 183 complementary accesses, up from 140 in 2017. Complementary access provides the IAEA with entry to a location within 24 hours and, in some cases, with as little as two hours' notice.

The year also saw an increase of the number of nuclear facilities and locations outside facilities at which safeguards inspectors conduct verification activities, reaching a total of 1,314 worldwide.

"Since 2010, the amount of nuclear material under safeguards has increased by 24%," said Massimo Aparo, Deputy Director General and Head of the Department of Safeguards at the IAEA. "It is only with the extensive verification activities, carried out by the IAEA and outlined in the Safeguards Implementation Report, that we continue to meet the challenge of providing the international community with credible safeguards conclusions."

The latest Safeguards Implementation Report showed that in 2018, safeguards were applied for 182 States, including 174 with comprehensive safeguards agreements, three with item-specific agreements and five with voluntary offer agreements. The type of conclusion that the IAEA draws with respect to each State varies according to the type of safeguards agreement the State has in place with the IAEA.

In 2018, of the 174 States with a comprehensive safeguards agreement in force, 129 also had an additional protocol in force. By providing access to additional information, sites and locations, the additional protocol enables the IAEA to provide assurances regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities, in addition to assurances on the non-diversion of declared nuclear material from peaceful nuclear activities.

Of those States with a comprehensive safeguards agreement in force, the IAEA was able to conclude that for 70 States, "all nuclear material remained in peaceful activities" and for the other 104 States that "declared nuclear material remained in peaceful activities".

For the three States with item-specific safeguards agreements in force (India, Israel and Pakistan), the IAEA concluded that “nuclear material, facilities or other items to which safeguards had been applied remained in peaceful activities”.

For the five States with voluntary offer agreements in force (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States), the IAEA concluded that “nuclear material in selected facilities to which safeguards had been applied remained in peaceful activities or had been withdrawn from safeguards as provided for in the agreements”.

“Drawing conclusions is at the core of safeguards,” said Aparo. “After the evaluation of all safeguards-relevant information, including that gathered during in-field inspection and analysis carried out at our headquarters, the Safeguards Implementation Report communicates our findings to our Member States.”

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/news/amount-of-nuclear-material-under-iaea-safeguards-continues-to-increase-safeguards-statement-2018>

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US COUNTER-WMD

Homeland Preparedness News (Washington, D.C.)

Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness, Response Law Emboldens U.S. Disaster Recovery Efforts

By Kim Riley

June 25, 2019

The Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness and Advancing (PAHPA) Innovation Act, S. 1379, became law on Monday with the president’s signature, prompting accolades from national stakeholders, company executives and federal lawmakers.

The far-reaching law ensures the United States will be better prepared to respond to a wide range of public health emergencies, whether man-made or occurring through a natural disaster or infectious disease.

Overall, the law aims to bolster the nation’s health security strategy, strengthen the country’s emergency response workforce, prioritize a threat-based approach, and increase communication across the advanced research and development of medical countermeasures (MCMs), among numerous provisions contained in the law.

Dr. Robert Kadlec, the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which will have oversight of many aspects of the law, said it enables ASPR to continue enhancing the nation’s health security.

“We look forward to using the new or renewed authorities in the law as we work with long-standing and new partners to build readiness and response capabilities against the very serious health security threats our nation faces,” he said earlier today.

A few of the ways the new law does this is via enhanced public-private partnerships, such as between military and civilian entities for trauma readiness; between state and regional hospital coalitions to improve surge capacity and to “address gaps and inefficiencies in emergency

preparedness and response efforts for children,” according to the law’s text; and partnerships for the development of vaccines, among others.

For instance, the newly signed law strengthens authorities for specific healthcare programs, including the Hospital Preparedness Program and the National Disaster Medical System, according to Kadlec.

“More than 31,000 healthcare entities across the country participate in Hospital Preparedness Program coalitions,” Kadlec said. “These partnerships in every state and U.S. territory bring together healthcare facilities — not just hospitals — and healthcare services in local communities to provide coordinated medical care during disasters.”

The co-chairmen of the Alliance for Biosecurity also praised the law’s support for public-private partnerships.

“PAHPA enables long-term public-private partnerships, which are essential in safeguarding public health and building resilience against chemical and biological threats and emerging infectious diseases,” said co-chairman Chris Frech, who is also senior vice president of global government affairs for Emergent BioSolutions Inc.

The global biopharmaceutical company develops, manufactures and delivers a variety of MCMs for biological and chemical threats, and for emerging infectious diseases, and has been involved in several long-term and ongoing contracts with the federal government across several areas.

The newly signed law will continue to support such long-term public-private partnerships, added Bob Kramer, president and CEO of Emergent BioSolutions, who also heralded PAHPA as “an essential step toward building resilience against” chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive (CBRNE) threats and emerging infectious diseases.

Brent MacGregor, also co-chairman of the Alliance for Biosecurity, agreed.

“This legislative achievement marks a critical milestone in our continued public-private partnership to ensure Americans are better protected against the next influenza pandemic threat,” said MacGregor, who is also senior vice president of commercial operations at Seqirus, a global influenza vaccine company. “We are proud to stand on the front line with our partners to provide rapid access to life-saving influenza pandemic vaccines.”

The co-chairmen of another influential organization, the Blue Ribbon Study Panel on Biodefense, also commended President Donald Trump’s signature on the bill.

In fact, many of the provisions contained in the legislation harken to the Blue Ribbon Study Panel’s 2015 report, A National Blueprint for Biodefense: Leadership and Major Reform Needed to Optimize Efforts, which recommended changes to U.S. policy and law to improve national biodefense and maximize resource investments.

Panel co-chairmen, former U.S. Sen. Joseph Lieberman and former Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge, on Monday thanked the Trump administration for supporting these critical public health security priorities at numerous federal agencies, including HHS.

“Many of these programs will enable HHS to better defend the nation against biological threats,” Lieberman said. “Along with the release of the National Biodefense Strategy last September, the administration is demonstrating its commitment to preparedness for, surveillance of, response to, and recovery from pandemic influenza, bioterrorism and other biological threats. We applaud these efforts.”

In the new law, Congress addressed 15 of the panel’s 33 recommendations, including the development of a national strategy to address cyber threats to public health security; streamlining

the use of flexible contracting authorities by the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority, or BARDA; and coordination between the U.S. Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security to report on biological detection technology and information sharing, among others.

But Ridge pointed out that “there is still much work that remains to be done, but we are grateful that both Congress and the administration are embracing our recommendations and putting them to work on behalf of all Americans.”

The bill was spearheaded in the U.S. House of Representatives by Reps. Susan Brooks (R-IN) and Anna Eshoo (D-CA) and in the U.S. Senate by Sens. Richard Burr (R-NC) and Bob Casey (D-PA).

Burr on Monday thanked the Senate and the president for prioritizing the law’s policies and programs that he said will keep America’s families safe.

“Whether it’s a disease outbreak, natural disaster or biological attack, it’s essential our nation is prepared to address the ever-growing variety of public health threats and challenges of the 21st century,” said Burr, adding that the new law “ensures our nation is constantly vigilant against these threats” and stands ready to respond with innovative MCMs.

Brooks also commended Trump’s signing of the law, pointing out that the threats it protects against “are not just hypothetical.”

“Threats such as Ebola, smallpox or the pandemic influenza can devastate communities, whether occurring naturally or manufactured into weapons of mass destruction by nation states or terrorist organizations,” Brooks said. “Now that PAHPA has been signed into law, we are one step closer to a safer and more secure future.”

U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee Ranking Member Greg Walden (R-OR), who helped shepherd the bill through the legislative process, applauded President Trump for signing the law, as well.

“The Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness and Advancing Innovation Act represents a long-standing bipartisan commitment to strengthening our national security,” Walden said.

Walden said that although it’s “long overdue,” he’s nonetheless elated that the “nation’s public health preparedness and response programs are now reauthorized and extended to give our federal, state and local officials the tools they need to respond quickly and effectively to ongoing threats of all kinds.”

<https://homelandprepnews.com/countermeasures/34514-pandemic-and-all-hazards-preparedness-response-law-emboldens-u-s-disaster-recovery-efforts/>

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US ARMS CONTROL

The Hill (Washington, D.C.)

North Korea: US Trying to 'Bring Us to Our Knees' with Sanctions

By John Bowden

June 26, 2019

North Korea's foreign ministry vowed Wednesday that U.S. sanctions would not bring down Pyongyang's economy, and accused the Trump administration of trying to force concessions from the country through economic pressure.

In a statement released amid news of discussions about a possible third summit between President Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, the North's foreign agency promised that it "will not hesitate to pull a muscle-flexing trigger in order to defend ourselves" if its sovereignty was questioned, according to The Associated Press.

Recent actions by the U.S., it reportedly said, were part of a "wild dream of the U.S. to bring us to our knees by means of sanctions and pressure has not changed at all but grows even more undisguised."

North Korea, the agency's statement continued, is "not a country that will surrender to the U.S. sanctions."

The fiery statement from the North comes as South Korea's President Moon Jae-In told reporters that the U.S. and North Korean officials were involved in talks surrounding a third bilateral summit, while Moon himself offered to meet with Kim as well.

"It depends on Chairman Kim Jong Un," Moon wrote, according to the AP. "I am prepared to meet with Chairman Kim in person at any given moment without being restrained by time, place or formalities."

"History has shown that North Korean nuclear threats diminish when inter-Korean relations are good," he reportedly added.

Trump is scheduled to visit South Korea on Saturday for a two-day visit after meeting of the G-20 nations in Japan.

<https://thehill.com/policy/international/450372-north-korea-us-trying-to-bring-us-to-our-knees-with-sanctions>

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VOA (Washington, D.C.)

Iran Dismisses US Sanctions, Says Calls for Dialogue Not Serious

By VOA News

June 25, 2019

Iranian officials on Tuesday dismissed new U.S. sanctions as putting an end to any diplomatic path for resolving tensions between the two countries, and further described U.S. overtures for dialogue as disingenuous.

U.S. President Donald Trump issued the economic sanctions Monday against Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and eight senior commanders in the Iranian military and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps. He called on the Iranian government to "change its destructive behavior, respect the rights of its people, and return in good faith to the negotiating table."

U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton said Tuesday during a visit to Jerusalem that Trump "has held the door open to real negotiations," and that Iran has responded with what he called "deafening silence."

But coupled with the U.S. threat to also add sanctions targeting Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, the country's President Hassan Rouhani called the Trump administration's moves "outrageous and idiotic."

"You sanction the foreign minister simultaneously with a request for talks?" he said during a televised address.

Hours earlier, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi wrote on Twitter that Trump's approach is "destroying the established international mechanisms for maintaining world peace and security."

"Imposing fruitless sanctions on Iran's leadership and the chief of Iranian diplomacy mean the permanent closure of the road of diplomacy with the frustrated U.S. administration," Mousavi said.

Trump wants Iran to engage in new talks over its nuclear program after he withdrew the United States from the 2015 international pact restraining Iran's nuclear activity in exchange for relief from sanctions that badly hurt the country's economy. He further imposed fresh sanctions, including those seeking to choke off Iran's key oil exports.

Iran has repeatedly denied it was working to develop nuclear weapons, and the U.N. nuclear watchdog charged with monitoring the 2015 agreement has certified Iran was in compliance with the terms of the deal.

As the Trump administration has increased its pressure on Iran in recent months, and as Iran has complained that the other signatories to the nuclear deal have not done enough to help it maneuver around the U.S. sanctions, Iranian officials have pledged to stop abiding by some certain restrictions it had agreed to such as the amount of highly enriched uranium it can have.

Trump called his order a "strong and proportionate" American response to Tehran's shoot-down last week of an unmanned U.S. drone, which Washington says occurred in international airspace near the Strait of Hormuz and Iran claims occurred over its airspace.

The U.S. leader said he imposed the sanctions because of a series of "belligerent acts" carried out by Iran, which U.S. officials say include Iran's targeting of Norwegian and Japanese ships traversing the Strait of Hormuz with mine explosions days before the attack on the drone.

Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei gestures to a crowd at a June 4, 2019 ceremony in Tehran marking the 30th anniversary of the death of his predecessor, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, whose portrait appears behind him.

Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei gestures to a crowd at a June 4, 2019 ceremony in Tehran.

"We'd love to be able to negotiate a deal," Trump said.

But he declared, "Never can Iran have a nuclear weapon," adding, "They sponsor terrorism like no one's seen before."

He said, "I look forward to the day when sanctions can be lifted and Iran can be a peace-loving nation. The people of Iran are great people."

U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said earlier sanctions imposed when Trump pulled out of the international agreement have been "highly effective in locking up the Iranian economy."

He said some of the sanctions Trump imposed Monday had been "in the works" before the drone was shot down, and some were being imposed because of the attack on the drone.

The Treasury Department headed by Mnuchin said that any foreign financial institution that engages in a "significant financial transaction" with the Iranians targeted by the sanctions could be cut off from U.S. financial deals.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo described the new sanctions as "significant" as he left Washington on Sunday for a trip to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to continue the Trump administration's effort to build a coalition of allies to counter Iran. Pompeo met Monday with Saudi King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

"The world should know," Pompeo said, "that we will continue to make sure it's understood that this effort that we've engaged in to deny Iran the resources to foment terror, to build out their nuclear weapon system, to build out their missile program, we are going to deny them the resources they need to do that thereby keeping American interests and American people safe all around the world."

Iran has defended its missile work as legal and necessary for its defense. Tehran has sought support from the remaining signatories to the 2015 agreement to provide the economic relief it wants, especially with its key oil exports as the U.S. has tightened sanctions in an attempt to cut off Iranian oil shipments.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/iran-dismisses-us-sanctions-says-calls-dialogue-not-serious>

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Defense News (Washington, D.C.)

NATO Chief Gives Russia Deadline to Comply with Nuclear Treaty

By Martin Banks

June 24, 2019

BRUSSELS — NATO's secretary general has given Russia a deadline of Aug. 2 to comply with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, or face "credible and effective" retaliatory measures.

"In the event Russia does not comply, our response will be defensive, measured and coordinated," Jens Stoltenberg said Tuesday at a news conference, where he also discussed progress on defense spending goals and plans for space. "There is still a small window of opportunity for Russia to comply with the treaty, but it is getting smaller and smaller. If the treaty breaks down, the responsibility for this lies solely with Russia."

The 1987 INF Treaty was established as a safeguard against nuclear war. Russia is accused of violating the treaty — a charge it strongly denies, instead accusing the U.S. of flouting the pact by deploying missile-defense facilities in Eastern Europe.

Possible measures will be discussed at a meeting of NATO defense ministers in Brussels on Wednesday, he added.

When asked for specifics, Stoltenberg said: "Our response will be measured, as we do not want a new arms race. But we must ensure our defense remains credible and effective. This is NATO's job."

"I will not preempt the outcome of Wednesday's meeting and I cannot say what the ministers will decide on Wednesday, but we will need to respond if Russia does not comply," he added. "Some measures can be implemented quite quickly but others will take more time."

He did say that new and unspecified measures could be adopted against Russia as soon as this week.

"The U.S and other NATO allies have tried to engage with Russia for years, and I again call on Russia to take the responsible path and comply with the treaty. But I have to say I see no sign of this," he said.

"In fact, Russia is developing new missiles in violation of the treaty," he added, pointing to the deployment of Russia SSC-8 missiles, which "have been of concern for several years."

"There is no doubt Russia is violating the treaty, and now is the time to tell the Russians that if it does not comply with the treaty, there will be no treaty," he continued. "There are just five weeks left for Russia to save the treaty. They still have time to respect the INF, but time is running out."

Spending target

Stoltenberg also said NATO allies were "on track" to meet a target of spending 2 percent of gross domestic product on defense.

Eight allies are now spending 2 percent on defense, up from three members in 2014. By the end of next year, European members and Canada will have added a cumulative total of more than €100 billion (U.S. \$114 billion) since 2016, he said.

"This is a good trend, and we expect this to continue. The majority of allies have plans to reach 2 percent by 2024," he said.

According to the NATO chief, most alliance members have increased their defense spending by double digits since 2014 and are boosting investment in new capabilities.

This year, 16 NATO members are expected to meet the benchmark of at least 20 percent of defense spending devoted to major equipment, and almost all members have plans to do so by 2024.

"Allies are also stepping up with more forces for NATO missions and operations. This is impressive progress and a sign of commitment and that NATO is on the right track. But we must keep up the positive momentum," Stoltenberg said.

Plans for space

Ministers will approve NATO's first-ever space policy at Wednesday's ministerial meeting, Stoltenberg said at the news conference.

The meeting will be the first NATO event attended by acting U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper, who is heading to Europe to try to persuade reluctant and increasingly wary NATO allies to work with the Trump administration on Iran sanctions and security in the Middle East, amid concerns the U.S. and Iran are on a path to war.

Stoltenberg said the defense ministers will discuss creating a framework for how the alliance should deal with opportunities and challenges in space "for alliance security and operations."

"Space is part of our daily lives. And while it can be used for peaceful purposes, it can also be used for aggression. Satellites can be jammed, hacked or weaponized," he said. "Anti-satellite weapons could cripple communications. So it is important that we are vigilant and resilient — also in space."

<https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2019/06/25/nato-chief-gives-russia-deadline-to-comply-with-nuclear-treaty/>

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COMMENTARY

Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists (Chicago, Illinois)

A Nuclear War in the Persian Gulf?

By Kaveh L. Afrasiabi and Nader Entessar

June 24, 2019

Tensions between the United States and Iran are spiraling toward a military confrontation that carries a real possibility that the United States will use nuclear weapons. Iran's assortment of asymmetrical capabilities—all constructed to be effective against the United States—nearly assures such a confrontation. The current US nuclear posture leaves the Trump administration at least open to the use of tactical nuclear weapons in conventional theaters. Some in the current administration may well think it to be in the best interest of the United States to seek a quick and decisive victory in the oil hub of the Persian Gulf—and to do so by using its nuclear arsenal.

We believe there is a heightened possibility of a US-Iran war triggering a US nuclear strike for the following reasons:

The sanction regime set against the Iranian economy is so brutal that it is likely to force Iran to take an action that will require a US military response. Unless the United States backs down from its present self-declared "economic warfare" against Iran, this will likely escalate to an open warfare between the two countries.

In response to a White House request to draw up an Iran war plan, the Pentagon proposed sending 120,000 soldiers to the Persian Gulf. This force would augment the several thousands of troops already stationed in Iran's vicinity. President Trump has also hinted that if need be, he will be sending "a lot more" troops. Defeating Iran through conventional military means would likely require a half million US forces and US preparedness for many casualties. The US nuclear posture review is worded in such a way that the use of tactical nuclear weapons in conventional theaters is envisaged, foreshadowing the concern that in a showdown with a menacing foe like Iran, the nuclear option is on the table. The United States could once again justify using nuclear force for the sake of a decisive victory and casualty-prevention, the logic used in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Trump's cavalier attitude toward nuclear weapons, trigger-happy penchant, and utter disdain for Iran, show that he would likely have no moral qualm about issuing an order to launch a limited nuclear strike, especially in a US-Iran showdown, one in which the oil transit from the Gulf would be imperiled, impacting the global economy and necessitating a speedy end to such a war.

If the United States were to commit a limited nuclear strike against Iran, it would minimize risks to its forces in the region, defang the Iranian military, divest the latter of preeminence in the Strait of Hormuz, and thus reassert US power in the oil hub of the Persian Gulf. Oil flowing through the Strait of Hormuz is critical to a rising China. US control over this merchant waterway would grant the United States significant leverage in negotiations. A limited US nuclear strike could cause a 'regime change' among Iranian leadership, representing a strategic setback for Russia, in light of their recent foray in the Middle East with Iranian backing.

Undoubtedly, there are several significant negative consequences to a US use of nuclear weapons, opening the way for other nuclear-armed states to emulate US behavior, and for many other non-nuclear weapons states to seek their own nuclear deterrent shields. There would also be a huge outcry in the international community causing the US global image to suffer.

Will such anticipated consequences represent sufficient obstacles to prevent a limited U.S. nuclear strike on Iran? With President Trump, who counts on "bomb Iran" billionaire Sheldon Adelson as one of his main campaign contributors, the threshold for using nukes certainly seems to have been lowered.

How the United States and Iran came to the brink. President Donald Trump complicates the situation by stating that the United States is not seeking war with Iran, while repeatedly threatening to annihilate it. In July of 2018, in response to a statement by Iran's President Hassan Rouhani, Trump tweeted "NEVER, EVER THREATEN THE UNITED STATES AGAIN OR YOU WILL SUFFER CONSEQUENCES THE LIKES OF WHICH FEW THROUGHOUT HISTORY HAVE EVER SUFFERED BEFORE." On May 19, 2019, Trump fired another incendiary volley, threatening the "official end" of Iran in a U.S.-Iran war. Then Friday June 21, 2019 the day after Iran shot down a US military drone, the President said "I'm not looking for war and if there is, it'll be obliteration like you have never seen before. But I am not looking to do that. But, you (Iran) can't have nuclear weapons." In an interview with NBC's Chuck Todd.

Citing Iran's military threat, the Trump administration continues to enforce relentless economic sanctions under the guise of a "maximum pressure" strategy, designating Iran's revolutionary guard a terrorist organization. The administration also is ramping up the US military presence in the Persian Gulf, sending several warships, a Patriot missile battery, an expeditionary force of marines, and nuclear-capable B-52 strategic bombers to the region. The United States has also withdrawn all "non-emergency" personnel in Baghdad and Erbil. These actions add fuel to the growing fear of war—a war sure to involve Iraq, home to both US military bases and powerful battle-hardened pro-Iran Shiite militias.

War could break out in a variety of ways: As a result of Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz (a choke point for the daily transfer of some 19 million barrels of oil), a preemptive strike on Iran's military and nuclear facilities (in light of Iran's stated intention to resume aspects of its nuclear activities, banned under the 2015 nuclear agreement), an application of the 9/11 legislation on Authorization of Military Force against al-Qaeda (accusing Iran of being in league with al-Qaeda terrorists), or in response to perceived Iranian mischief (such as the recent sabotage on board several Saudi and UAE merchant ships).

The United States and Iran are not the only regional players, and care must be taken to understand the context and implications of events. As pointed out by a number of US experts in the wake of the most recent attacks on oil tankers, regional rivals such as Saudi Arabia have much to gain from a breakout of war between the U.S. and Iran. The U.S. has echoed the Saudi accusations against Iran and extended them to include blaming Iran for the Yemenis Houthi rebels' drone attack on a Saudi pipeline on May 14th.

Accusations are one thing, but the big question is, will the Trump administration heed Saudi Arabia's call for a "US surgical strike" on Iran? Both the Saudis and Iranians harbor hegemonic ambitions in the region. The Saudis are pushing for a limited US strike to eliminate some of Iran's formidable naval and missile capabilities, thus weakening their regional rival. But even a limited US strike would increase the likelihood of Iranian forces inflicting serious damage on US military assets in the region, both directly and indirectly through multiple proxy forces.

Iran's military commanders have warned that the US military fleet is within range of Iran's short-range missiles. Iran has reportedly affixed anti-ship missiles on hundreds of its fast boats, as part of an asymmetrical "swarming" tactic. Ayatollah Khamenei, Iran's Supreme Leader, has also instructed the country's military forces to commence preparations for war.

It is worth recalling that Iran is ranked 14th for countries with the most military firepower. Iran has also devoted considerable attention to upgrading its asymmetrical capabilities, including shifting its formal strategy to an "offensive-defensive" posture—meaning that if the United States moves offensively against Iran, Iran will counter by moving offensively against a regional target of value for the United States. An example of an offensive-defensive move would be if the United States were to use its airbases to launch nuclear-capable B-52 strikes on Iran, Iran could counterattack the US base in Qatar, irrespective of friendly ties with the country.

Iran is in many respects a "regional superpower" with over a half a million active soldiers and another 350,000 reservists; it possesses thousands of guided missiles, over 1,600 tanks, some 500 aircraft, hundreds of military drones, and several surface warships, submarines, and mine boats, in addition to some 3,000 fast boats. These assets indicate that the now seemingly imminent conflict with Iran will not be a cakewalk for the United States. This possibility of a costly conventional conflict in our minds increases the likelihood of US conflict escalation to nuclear war.

The risk of nuclear warfare in the Persian Gulf represents a present and clear danger to world peace, requiring the mobilization of the international community to intervene.

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Defense One (Washington, D.C.)

A Closer Look at the Arguments against the Low-Yield SLBM

By Vincent Manzo

June 21, 2019

Low-yield nuclear weapons are center stage in the debate over the nascent 2020 defense authorization act. The House of Representatives and the Senate have competing positions on the low-yield submarine-launched ballistic missile, or L-SLBM. While the United States is moving to lower the yield on a small number of W-76 warheads, debate on this force structure change has continued since the release of the Nuclear Posture Review in early 2018. MIT political scientist Vipin Narang recently observed there are two camps of opposition to L-SLBM: those who disagree with having low-yield nuclear weapons in general, and those who support having them but believe the risks of L-SLBM outweigh the benefits. Each camp raises a different set of issues that deserve a closer look.

General Opposition

Opposition to low-yield nuclear weapons is about whether the United States should retain limited nuclear response options or instead rely solely on high-yield weapons. A recent article by Representative Lieu and Senator Markey reflects this perspective. They argue that limited options are “irresponsible and dangerous.” Their premise is that nobody knows whether a nuclear war would stay limited, which of course is true.

Yet their argument presumes that the purpose of U.S. low-yield weapons is to enable the United States to use nuclear weapons first, when in fact the principal role of these systems in U.S. strategy is to deter an adversary from using nuclear weapons first against allies and U.S. forces fighting abroad. Thus, Representative Lieu and Senator Markey sidestep the central nuclear deterrence challenge facing the United States: what happens if the country the United States is fighting uses a small number of low-yield weapons? Should the United States adopt a policy of responding with high-yield nuclear weapons to any nuclear attack, even “one atomic weapon of any size”? Representative Lieu and Senator Markey do not explicitly take this position, but that is the logical culmination of their argument that “preparing for limited nuclear war is folly.”

Representative Adam Smith, on the other hand, does follow this thought through: “We want our adversary to be clear on the point that we’re going to kick their ass if they take us on.” He said this in the context of arguing against proportionate responses, so presumably he believes that only high-yield nuclear weapons suffice for deterrence.

This is a logical strategy, but is it wise?

If Russia used a handful of low-yield nuclear weapons in Europe, which it possesses in large numbers, do we really want the United States to respond with a massive strike against Russia? After an adversary crossed the nuclear threshold, preventing further nuclear attacks would be a top priority. But a high-yield rather than a calibrated U.S. response, especially against Russia, would increase the likelihood of catastrophic nuclear escalation.

This raises the question of whether it would be credible for the United States to rely solely on high-yield weapons to deter limited nuclear war. Would such a strategy convince potential adversaries and U.S. allies? To be clear, current U.S. policy does not guarantee that the United States would respond to a limited attack with low-yield weapons. Instead, the United States is ambiguous about precisely how it would respond while retaining some degree of flexibility in U.S. nuclear forces, which President after President has wanted. Eminent scholar Scott Sagan argues that this approach

to deterrence makes nuclear war less likely and that the United States should develop “more lower-yield nuclear warheads” to make U.S. strategy more effective and ethical.

Thus, the question for those who oppose limited response options is whether they would be comfortable with having only high-yield weapons if they were responsible for deciding how to respond after Russia used a few one-kiloton nuclear weapons in Europe during a conventional war. Phrased differently, if their only options are to continue fighting the conventional war or employ a high-yield nuclear weapon, how would they protect U.S. allies and deter further Russian nuclear use without triggering nuclear escalation? If they do not have a convincing answer, it would be unwise to base a deterrence strategy on their preferred nuclear posture.

Opposition to L-SLBM

Opposition to the L-SLBM hinges on two arguments: that the system is uniquely destabilizing due to operational dangers and that it would not contribute to deterrence. The Congressional Research Service has published a good summary of this robust debate. Defense strategist Austin Long has published two strong analytical assessments of the operational dangers argument, but a few of the arguments against the deterrence value of L-SLBM deserve more scrutiny.

First, many opponents argue that L-SLBM is redundant because the United States has a large arsenal of low-yield nuclear weapons. But a quantitative expansion in the number of U.S. low-yield weapons is not the rationale for L-SLBM. Rather, L-SLBM adds lower-yield options for U.S. strategic ballistic missiles, the most effective delivery vehicle in the U.S. nuclear arsenal. In doing so, it creates limited nuclear response options that are faster and more difficult to defend against than existing delivery vehicles for lower-yield weapons, bombers and dual-capable aircraft.

The guaranteed ability to penetrate defenses is particularly important because there are challenges to the effectiveness of U.S. bombers and dual-capable aircraft. The U.S. ability to deliver low-yield weapons in the face of modern air and missile defenses will be far greater when the nuclear-capable B-21 and Long-Range Standoff weapon —the next generation air-launched cruise missile—begin service in the late 2020s and early 2030s. But the cruise missiles carried by the B-52H may become obsolete before then. L-SLBM is a great hedge against this risk because it does not require new platforms (e.g., submarines and missiles), is relatively inexpensive, and the United States can deploy it soon. Paradoxically, the sustained opposition to the Long-Range Standoff weapon from the disarmament community, which typically describes it as simultaneously redundant to other U.S. capabilities and profoundly destabilizing, increases the value of a near-term hedge.

Second, opponents of L-SLBM argue that there is no evidence that Russian leadership is undeterred by existing U.S. capabilities. Certainly, there is not publicly available smoking-gun evidence in which President Putin and his senior advisors reveal that only L-SLBM would deter them from nuclear-backed aggression, but complete and unambiguous evidence of this nature is hardly ever available to inform U.S. national security decisions.

So what is the evidence to support the case for this force structure change?

There are compelling indications that Russian strategy envisions the use of both non-nuclear and nuclear weapons for the purpose of splitting the United States from its allies and convincing U.S. leadership to abandon its strategic objectives in a war. Under this framework, Russia would calibrate the initial use of force and hold in reserve the threat of larger nuclear attacks if the war continues. For some exemplary analyses, see [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

While nobody knows whether a Russian leader would act on this approach in an actual war, there is sufficient evidence that the United States must have a strategy for convincing Russian leaders that nuclear escalation would be the most dangerous choice and that restraint is a better alternative. Not having operationally effective limited response options would reinforce the case that Russian

coercion would succeed. It makes it much easier for Russian leaders to convince themselves that they could set the conflict at a level where the United States cannot fight and that U.S. officials would be unwilling to fight at a higher level, where they have ample capability that is too dangerous to use in a limited war.

On this basis, the United States makes judgements about whether existing and planned U.S. nuclear forces provide sufficient capacity at an acceptable level of risk. Current U.S. limited nuclear response options are consolidated on platforms that face near-term challenges from Russian defenses and whose replacement programs are set to arrive on tight timelines. During this transition phase, there are risks that Russian leadership might conclude that they can effectively defeat any limited response with a U.S. bomber or dual-capable aircraft. U.S. policymakers judged that L-SLBM is an effective means for mitigating this risk. These types of decisions are judgement calls made amid uncertainty and imperfect information.

It is reasonable for critics of L-SLBM to reach a different judgement, yet there is a question they have not satisfactorily answered: Given the profound danger of any nuclear use, why should the United States forgo a modest technical adjustment that dramatically improves the overall resiliency of the nuclear forces supporting U.S. strategy for deterring limited nuclear war?

Vince Manzo is a nuclear policy analyst. The views expressed here are his own. He is the author of "Nuclear Arms Control without a Treaty? Risks and Options After New START."

<https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2019/06/closer-look-arguments-against-low-yield-slbm/157925/>

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War on the Rocks (Washington, D.C.)

Blessed Be Thy Nuclear Weapons: The Rise of Russian Nuclear Orthodoxy

By Michael Kofman

June 21, 2019

Dmitry Adamsky, *Russian Nuclear Orthodoxy: Religion, Politics, and Strategy* (Stanford University Press, 2019).

Russia's Federal Nuclear Center, the All-Russian Institute of Experimental Physics (RFNC-VNIIEF), recently placed a somewhat unusual government tender: It is seeking a supplier of religious icons with the images of Saint Seraphim of Sarov and Saint Fedor Ushakov. Meanwhile, a private foundation, backed by President Vladimir Putin and Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu, has been gathering funds to build a massive temple to the Russian Armed Forces at Patriot Park. Artisans are crafting a new icon for the temple, while the steps are to be made from melted-down Nazi equipment captured by the Red Army in World War II.

Viewed in isolation, these may seem to be the occasional eccentric habits of a latter-day authoritarian state. However, Dima Adamsky's new book, *Russian Nuclear Orthodoxy: Religion, Politics, and Strategy*, demonstrates convincingly that there are indeed important signs being missed all around us, pointing to a longstanding nexus between the Russian Orthodox Church and the country's nuclear-military-industrial complex.

Adamsky's groundbreaking book lays out the largely unstudied history of how a nuclear priesthood emerged in Russia, permeated the units and commands in charge of Russia's nuclear forces, and became an integral part of the nuclear weapons industry. Starting with the Soviet Union's

dissolution in 1991, through a process Adamsky frames as “genesis, conversion, and operationalization,” the Russian Orthodox Church positioned itself “as one of the main guardians of the state’s nuclear potential and, as such, claims the role of one of the main guarantors of Russian nuclear security.” At first the church partnered with the military, enabling servicemen to fulfill their religious obligations while on duty. In time, religion penetrated more deeply into the military, as Russia’s political elite and religious elite intertwined. Today, the church has entrenched itself at the tactical and operational levels of the Russian nuclear forces. Depending on how one views the role of religion in the context of nuclear forces, that’s either a discomfoting or a comforting thought.

Adamsky’s book covers two distinct but equally fascinating processes that have taken place in post-Soviet Russia: the church’s integration into the nuclear-military complex and the political system’s parallel quest to engineer a national idea, lend itself legitimacy, and rebuild the power of the state that crumbled when the Soviet Union collapsed. Russian Orthodoxy is thus a decidedly secular concept, a mechanical replacement part for the many bits of machinery – or in Russian parlance “political technology” – that broke during the nation’s failed attempt at democracy in the 1990s. The church, an institution with ambitions of its own, volunteered to participate in Russia’s time-honored tradition of restoring state power after collapse, and expanding it to dominate society. At its heart, Russian nuclear orthodoxy constitutes the collective belief that to preserve its Orthodox character, Russia must be a nuclear power, and to guarantee its nuclear status, Russia must be genuinely Orthodox.

Adamsky’s findings have relevance for other longstanding debates, such as the question of whether the system crafted under Vladimir Putin will outlast its creator. Russian Nuclear Orthodoxy suggests that the country’s political system is more than just an assemblage of patronage networks, court intrigue, national security clans, and elite corruption. It is engaged in a political project whose mission is to create state power, legitimate it, and wield it for as long as possible. The military has similarly looked to the church to restore a culture of conservative values, nationalism, and a political commissariat that once existed under the Soviet Union. This, however, may be the reviewer’s cynical interpretation based on his own experience with the subject matter. Adamsky walks gingerly through this minefield of Russia studies, seeking to substantiate his thesis of integration, conversion, and operationalization of the Russian Orthodox Church into Russian nuclear forces.

The emergence of Russia’s religious-nuclear nexus is a classic tale of elite instrumentalism, political alliances of convenience, and earnestly held belief. The contradictions do not negate each other, a familiar state of affairs for those who study Russia. In Adamsky’s “genesis” phase, the Russian Orthodox Church resurrects itself from the ashes of Soviet collapse by allying with a defunct and demoralized Russian military. The head of the church portrays his institution and the military as “brothers in arms.” According to Patriarch Metropolitan Kirill, both institutions had been excluded from political life and had a commitment to self-sacrifice. Thus the church would prove to be “the strongest ally of the military when it came to justifying its mission in the eyes of Russian society.” Adamsky traces the origins of the religious-nuclear nexus to Arzamas-16 (the city also known as Sarov), the birthplace of both the Soviet nuclear weapons program and Russia’s revered saint, Seraphim of Sarov. Facing a doubtful future, neglected by officialdom, the nuclear weapons industry seized the opportunity to make an ally in an Orthodox church seeking to restore its own position.

Though seemingly a marriage of convenience, the Russian Orthodox Church appears strategic in its efforts to ally with the nuclear complex. Strategic mythmaking lies at the heart of this union. At the tide of communism receded, the church sought to reclaim its place in Russian life. One can imagine the Russian Orthodox Church, like many faiths before it, seeking to appropriate the monuments and temples left behind by the communist system, which worshiped at the altar of technological progress. There was perhaps no stronger symbol of the achievement of the Soviet system than the

country's awesome nuclear arsenal, which underpinned its status as a great power in the international system.

In the 1990s, Russia's strategic nuclear forces were still the best-funded segment of the military, but the service was demoralized, having lost the sense of mission offered by the Cold War. Russia may have cut defense spending to the bone, but it would always find money for the nuclear deterrent, seen as the sole guarantor of its status and sovereignty. It may have been not serendipity, but in fact strategy, that led Patriarch Alexy II to bid for the soul of Russia's nuclear-military complex in 1991. Thus, a myth was born advocating the "divine predestination of the Soviet nuclear project" at the religious site of Sarov, as the Russian Orthodox Church and the RFNC-VNIIEF seemingly adopted each other. Though the author rightly titles this tale as genesis, it would be no less appropriate to characterize the process as one of mutual adoption and, subsequently, twin resurrection. In a sense, the church reconsecrated the Soviet-built nuclear military complex as its own progeny.

Adamsky shows how the church ascended Russia's power structures to become a pillar of the political regime. Yet there is an inherent tension between the Kremlin's needs and those of the church. The church wanted to be an ally of the regime without becoming a mere puppet of the political leadership. However, whereas Putin defines the Russian state as multi-confessional, Kirill sees the Orthodox church as having privileged status, calling it an "Orthodox country with national and religious minorities." This divide proves problematic for a ruling system seeking to appropriate the church instrumentally while also managing a country that is far more religiously heterogeneous than the church cares to admit.

It's unclear how the state squares the circle of a multi-confessional state identity, composed of Orthodox Christians, Muslims, Jews and Buddhists, with the Russian Orthodox Church's desire for privileged status. This in a country where Islam is a rapidly growing religion and millions of workers from Central Asia labor in the cities. Adamsky shows that while most Russians today consider themselves to be Orthodox, much more so than during the 1990s, the majority are non-practicing, or "believing without belonging." The book reveals a paradox: Even while Russia has become much more Orthodox, as Ekaterina Schulmann poignantly observed in a recent lecture, it is a largely urbanized, secular, and highly educated society. Russian Orthodoxy therefore appears less a religion and more a secular construct of conservative values and traditional ideals, installed by the state as a replacement part for the function once performed by communism. As Adamsky explores the "operationalization" period of state-church relations, it increasingly appears that while the Russian Orthodox Church is a religious institution, as operationalized, Russian Orthodoxy is not a religion but an element of state ideology and a markedly secular one at that.

The book offers several perspectives on how to conceptualize the nature of the church-Kremlin arrangement, from a symphony of equals, to jointly managed democracy, to a clear-cut asymmetry in which Putin has primacy over Kirill. The author demurs from explicitly advocating any of these perspectives, leaving the reader to draw their own conclusions. Is it a vertical power structure run by Putin, or perhaps more a court-like system, shaped by competing informal patronage networks, clans, and organizational rivalries, where the leader arbitrates and decides on those issues where he takes actual interest?

Perhaps no leader better illustrates the importance of Adamsky's thesis than Putin himself, who in October 2018 used noticeably religious framing to discuss what would happen if Russia were to be attacked by a nuclear first strike. He proclaimed, "An aggressor should know that vengeance is inevitable, that he will be annihilated. Whereas we would become the victims of their aggression, and as martyrs, will go to heaven – they will just end up dead," adding to clarify for the audience, "because they won't even have time to repent." Given this language, it is perhaps not surprising that

according to Adamsky, today “each leg of the nuclear triad has its patron saint,” and “icons appear on the nuclear platforms, while ” aerial, naval, and ground processions of the cross are routine.”

Putin’s personal beliefs are worth scrutinizing, though what passes for Kremlinology can at times devolve into amateur Freudian psychoanalysis. The book plays with the subject of whether Putin is truly religious, or whether his interaction with the church is pragmatic, intended to establish it as a pillar of Russian nationalism as part of his construct for the national idea. Adamsky is cautious here, suggesting that Putin’s religious beliefs are to a certain extent genuine, but he still leaves readers wondering whether the influence of religion on Russian domestic and foreign policy is a result of some authentic belief or a managerial solution for the Kremlin’s “political technologists.” The likelier, but more vexing, answer is that it is both.

For the Russian military, the institutional – as opposed to theological – role of religion seems straightforward. Orthodoxy for the armed forces is not an ecclesiastical discourse; rather, it’s an instrument to inoculate the military against Western influence, psychological warfare, and perceived efforts at political subversion. Today, the church is seen as a vehicle to build resilience within the force, increasing morale, unit cohesion, and sense of mission, while advocating for conservative values. The clearest example of this thinking is the General Staff’s decision in 2018 to establish the Main Directorate for Political-Military Affairs (GVPU), appointing the former head of the Western Military District, Andrey Kartapalov, as its first chief. This newly created organization harkens back to the Soviet Union’s Main Military-Political Directorate (GlavPUR), which had similar functions during communist times. Again, the system appears to be using the church to craft replacement parts for institutions it once had based on a political ideology that has been lost.

Col. Gen. Kartapalov was a logical choice for the post given his published thoughts on the subject of Western indirect approaches, described as “hybrid warfare.” In a 2015 speech, he presented views on how the West uses indirect actions to engage in what the Russian military terms “New-Type Warfare,” including “disorienting the political and military leadership of the state-victim” and “pressuring the enemy politically, economically, informationally, and psychologically.” The GVPU will provide psychological support, improve the moral state of servicemen, organize state-patriotic education, and the like. Russia’s General Staff sees the Orthodox church as one element of a strategy to bolster resilience in the information-psychological domain, cordoning off the Russian armed forces from U.S. indirect approaches or perceived efforts to distance the military from its own population.

At first glance, Adamsky’s argument that Orthodox priests also function within the Russian nuclear forces at the tactical level – in addition to the ideological – seems to be a bit of overreach. Yet he convincingly depicts the lengths to which the military has gone to accommodate this nuclear priesthood, from field churches for the strategic missile force to underwater temples in ballistic nuclear submarines. More than 40 such temples exist across the Russian Navy alone. Still, the church’s influence on and relevance to unit operations debatable, as this military analyst had difficulty envisioning the role religion plays in command relationships beyond providing spiritual support for the force.

Questions abound. Could the integration of the Russian Orthodox Church with the nuclear force bolster the country’s coercive credibility by improving an adversary’s perception of its resolve? If so, then to paraphrase Dr. Strangelove, the whole point will be lost if they keep it a secret. How should we perceive the church’s influence on unit cohesion and decision-making at lower echelons? Can the church inspire units to ensure execution of their mission? Are priests able to deploy with nuclear forces during war?

Physically, such accommodations are unlikely to be made in a strategic bomber or road-mobile intercontinental ballistic missile unit, though does show that temples exist aboard ships and

submarines. There is reason to be skeptical of the Russian Orthodox Church's role during a threatened or initial period of war, once units depart their initial bases to deployment zones and staging areas. Given the secrecy involved and the logistical constraints, it somewhat stretches the imagination to picture priests forward deploying with disparate missile units. Then again, anything is possible in Russia, a country that built an automated nuclear response system. One wonders, does the Dead Hand have a dedicated priest of its own, or given the construct was originally Soviet, can we assume the automated second-strike machine is an atheist?

It may be reassuring to picture this nuclear-religious nexus as a passing phase, and indeed, several of the Russian analysts Adamsky interviews suggest as much, perhaps seeking to dismiss an uncomfortable reality. However, the church's conversion into a pillar of state ideology and the military's doctrinal acceptance of the organization's utility offer good evidence that both the nuclear priesthood and the broader doctrine of nuclear orthodoxy will outlast the current regime. Hence Adamsky ends up exploring two enduring processes: the integration of the church as a religious organization into the Russian nuclear-military complex, and the state's adaptation of Orthodoxy as a secular concept that serves its own vision for the national idea, working to fill the ideological void left by communist ideology.

Reading Adamsky's book, I recalled Nietzsche's observation about the impact of science and technology on faith: "God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him." Looking at Russia, this may seem true at first, but as Adamsky shows, the Russian Orthodox Church – and Russian nuclear orthodoxy – are very much alive, and here to stay.

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<https://warontherocks.com/2019/06/blessed-be-thy-nuclear-weapons-the-rise-of-russian-nuclear-orthodoxy/>

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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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