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Feature Report

“Countering Mobile Missiles: Holding the Entire Launch Cycle at Risk”. By Col. Herbert C. Kemp, USAF (Ret.). Published by Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies; September 2019

http://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/a2dd91_fa949ddd645048bda9e7b0f50f77216c.pdf

A major threat confronting modern U.S. and allied forces around the world is the evolution of potent antiaccess/area denial (A2/AD) environments, constructed and enhanced by potential adversaries. At the heart of many of these A2/AD environments is a key capability—the mobile theater ballistic missile (TBM), capable of striking targets across a battlefield or area of operations. Following the use of Scud mobile missiles in the 1991 Gulf War, mobile TBMs as a class have grown more capable and proliferated to numerous countries. This has expanded the threat to U.S. and coalition operations around the world. While a great amount of attention has, appropriately, been focused on active missile defense, modern air forces must complement missile defenses with a full-spectrum response that includes efforts to interdict TBMs before and after launch. This paper aims to explore the means to accomplish this mission within current capabilities.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

- Study Says North Korean Base Hosts Nuclear-Capable Missiles That Put Japan in Crosshairs (Japan Times)
  Scud-ER, or extended-range, missiles can travel roughly 1,000 km, and can deliver a 750-kg warhead — a nuclear-weapon-size payload — to all of South Korea and the southern half of Japan, including Shikoku and a large portion of Honshu, it said.
- USS Nebraska Launches Four Trident II Intercontinental Missiles Off San Diego (Times of San Diego)
  “Our nation’s sea-based deterrent has been a critical component of our national security since the 1960s, and this week’s launches continue to demonstrate the credibility and reliability of our life-extended missiles,” said Vice Adm. Johnny R. Wolfe ...
- B-52s Deploy to Europe, Joining B-2s Already in Theater (Air Force Magazine)
  B-52s and Reserve airmen from the 307th Bomb Wing at Barksdale AFB, La., deployed to Europe to participate in the multinational Ample Strike exercise, the United Kingdom Weapons School exercise Cobra Warrior, and the NATO Days military show ...
- 3-D Printers Could Help Spread Weapons of Mass Destruction (Scientific American)
  A report published Tuesday from a multi-institutional research group led by the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey sounds an alarm about this possibility.

US COUNTER-WMD

- US State Department Greenlights $3.3 Billion Missile Sale to Japan (Diplomat)
  The SM-3 Block IIA missile is the most advanced version of the SM-3 “hit-to-kill” interceptor series and has been under joint development by U.S. defense contractor Raytheon Missile Systems and Japan's Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI) since 2006.

US ARMS CONTROL

- Trump Says He Could Ease Sanctions If Iran Wants to Talk (VOA)
  He said Iran wants a deal because “they have tremendous financial difficulty and the sanctions are getting tougher and tougher.”
- North Korea 'Willing to Restart' Nuclear Talks with US (BBC)
  At their first meeting, last year, US President Donald Trump and North Korea’s Kim Jong-Un agreed to the "complete denuclearisation" of the Korean peninsula - but without determining what that meant or how to achieve it.
- Panetta: ‘A New Chapter of the Cold War’ with Russia (VOA)
  Panetta said it is of utmost importance that the United States reopen dialogue with Russia and China so all sides can address the current lack of trust among the key arms players of the world.
COMMENTARY

- **Future Iran Nuclear Deal Needs Stronger Verification** (The Hill)
  This week’s revelations that the International Atomic Energy Agency found traces of uranium at an undeclared nuclear site in Iran’s Tehran Province — revelations which the regime has refused to explain ...

- **Why Does Erdogan Want Nuclear Weapons?** (Al-Monitor)
  ...Erdogan claimed that “all developed countries in the world” have nuclear weapons and recounted an anecdote about how the former president of an unarmed nuclear country grumbled about restrictions on him.

- **We Need a Green New Deal for Nuclear Weapons** (Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists)
  In stark contrast to the seven-hour climate town hall, nuclear weapons received a measly three minutes during the July debates between 20 Democratic presidential hopefuls ...
NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Japan Times (Tokyo, Japan)

Study Says North Korean Base Hosts Nuclear-Capable Missiles That Put Japan in Crosshairs

By Jesse Johnson
Sept. 7, 2019

A new study spotlighting an “undeclared” North Korean missile base that hosts medium-range weapons capable of striking half of Japan was released Friday amid growing concerns in Tokyo over U.S. President Donald Trump’s acceptance of shorter-range missile tests by Pyongyang.

Located 1,100 km west of Tokyo and 75 km north of the Demilitarized Zone, the Kumchon-ni base “houses a battalion- or regiment-sized unit equipped with Hwasong-9 (Scud-ER) medium-range ballistic missiles (MRBM)” as well as shorter-range Hwasong-6 (Scud C) missiles, the study released Friday by the Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank’s Beyond Parallel project said.

The base is reportedly tasked with strikes against the southern half of Japan during wartime, and, to a lesser degree, South Korea, said the study, which claimed to be “the first comprehensive public report detailing the development, organization and threat posed by the Kumchon-ni missile operating base.”

Scud-ER, or extended-range, missiles can travel roughly 1,000 km, and can deliver a 750-kg warhead — a nuclear-weapon-size payload — to all of South Korea and the southern half of Japan, including Shikoku and a large portion of Honshu, it said.

Such a range would put “many bases used by the U.S. military” within striking distance, according to the report.

It also said that the base could eventually play host to “more recently emerging MRBMs” such as the solid-fueled Pukguksong-2 missile, which North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said in May 2017 could be “rapidly mass-produced.”

Should such a deployment become a reality, “the threat envelope could include all of Japan, including U.S. military bases on Okinawa, and beyond,” the study said.

The report said that as of August, the Kumchon-ni base “is active and being well-maintained by North Korean standards,” adding that continued infrastructure changes at the facilities in recent years “attest to the ongoing importance” of the site to the North Korean leadership.

A United Nations panel report on North Korea released Thursday quoted one member state as saying it had observed the deployment of the Pukguksong-2 to “missile bases close to the northern border,” where liquid-fueled Rodong missiles have also been deployed. The North is estimated to possess 200 to 300 of the medium-range Rodong missiles, which can fly about 1,300 km (800 miles).

The North has in recent months conducted a spate of weapons tests, the most recent on Aug. 24, making for a total of at least 11 apparent ballistic missile launches overseen by Kim this year. The pace comes close to matching the frantic speed of testing in 2017, when Trump and Kim traded insults and threats.
But Trump has brushed off the tests of the short-range weapons, saying “a lot of people are testing those missiles, not just (Kim)” — comments that have sent a worrying message to Washington's Asian allies.

“We are in the world of missiles, folks, whether you like it or not,” he said recently.

During the breakneck pace of its missile testing in 2017, the North also fired four Scud-ER missiles into the Sea of Japan in March, three of which flew over 1,000 km and landed within 350 km of mainland Japan.

In an unusually overt threat to Tokyo, Pyongyang said at the time that the barrage of missiles was a rehearsal for a strike on U.S. military bases in Japan — a simulation of a type of saturation attack that experts say could defeat missile defenses.

Experts later said that the testfirings were training for striking U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni in Yamaguchi Prefecture.

Friday's report acknowledged that, following Kim’s December 2011 ascension to power, “he instituted widespread changes throughout the KPA (Korean People's Army) emphasizing realistic training and increased operational readiness.


Return to top

Times of San Diego (Del Mar, Calif.)

**USS Nebraska Launches Four Trident II Intercontinental Missiles Off San Diego**

By Chris Jennewein

Sept. 6, 2019

The Navy reported Friday it launched four unarmed Trident II nuclear missiles this week from the USS Nebraska, a ballistic missile submarine traveling off the coast of San Diego.

The first two launches took place Wednesday; the last two were on Friday. All occurred before sunrise.

The tests are part of a program to extend the strategic weapons system's lifespan into the 2040s.

“Our nation's sea-based deterrent has been a critical component of our national security since the 1960s, and this week's launches continue to demonstrate the credibility and reliability of our life-extended missiles,” said Vice Adm. Johnny R. Wolfe, director of the the command responsible for the Navy's strategic weapons.

The 45-foot-long Trident II missiles have a range of 4,000 nautical miles and carry either eight or 14 independently targetable thermonuclear warheads.

They are deployed on 14 Ohio-class submarines, each of which had 24 of the weapons. The submarines are nicknamed “boomers” because of their missiles' destructive power.

The Navy said the launches this week marked 176 successful flights of the Trident II weapon system.

B-52s Deploy to Europe, Joining B-2s Already in Theater

By Brian Everstine
Sept. 5, 2019

The Air Force's two nuclear-capable bombers are deployed to England, as B-52s arrived at RAF Fairford, England, this week to join B-2s that moved to Fairford for training last month.

B-52s and Reserve airmen from the 307th Bomb Wing at Barksdale AFB, La., deployed to Europe to participate in the multinational Ample Strike exercise, the United Kingdom Weapons School exercise Cobra Warrior, and the NATO Days military show, according to a Sept. 5 US Air Forces in Europe release.

KC-135s from the Nebraska Air National Guard also flew to the Czech Republic for this year's Ample Strike. Since deploying to Fairford last month, the B-2 Bomber Task Force has flown multiple firsts for the stealth bomber.

On Aug. 30, two B-2s flew with RAF F-35s for the first time, participating in a training sortie with two of the jets near Dover. On Sept. 5, a B-2 with the task force flew a sortie into the Arctic Circle, which included a night refueling. The flight was the farthest north the aircraft had flown in the European theater, according to USAFE.

http://airforcemag.com/Features/Pages/2019/September%202019/B-52s-Deploy-to-Europe-Joining-B-2s-Already-in-Theater.aspx

3-D Printers Could Help Spread Weapons of Mass Destruction

By Matthew Gault
Sept. 10, 2019

In the mid-1990s boy scout David Hahn used household objects and his scientific knowledge to start building a nuclear reactor in his backyard. Police and the Environmental Protection Agency stopped him before he could finish. Twenty years later, revolutions in manufacturing and computing have made projects such as Hahn's a lot more feasible; if he had access to a 3-D printer, for example, he might have finished his reactor before authorities intervened. Modern technologies also mean one does not need to be as smart as Hahn to create at least some kinds of DIY weapons.

With the right machine and blueprints anyone can build a handgun in their living room—and firearms are just the beginning. Researchers fear that artificial intelligence and 3-D printing might one day create, on demand, weapons of mass destruction.

A report published Tuesday from a multi-institutional research group led by the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey sounds an alarm about this possibility. "This is the proverbial wicked problem," says paper co-author Robert Shaw, Director of the institute’s Export Control and Nonproliferation Program. Shaw says the proliferation of 3-D printers, combined with advances in artificial intelligence, could make it much easier for nations or individuals to covertly build nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

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When most of us think of 3-D printing, also known as additive manufacturing, we picture jets depositing layers of plastic to create models for hobbyists. But the potential for the technology goes much further—some researchers have claimed that the ability to print almost anything imaginable will usher in a new industrial revolution.

Industrial-scale 3-D printers are already advancing technology related to extremely dangerous weapons. The U.S. National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), for instance, is using these machines to manufacture models of nuclear weapons for testing. “While using 3-D printing to maintain the nation’s nuclear weapons stockpile, NNSA labs are advancing the broader science of the field,” the administration said in a 2016 blog post. Meanwhile defense contractor Raytheon has a 3-D printer that can manufacture 80 percent of a missile, and Los Alamos National Laboratory is using these machines to produce high explosives.

Not even an advanced machine can print weapon components without expert designs—but there are concerns that artificial intelligence could allow unskilled humans to come up with the necessary blueprints, thanks to a technique called generative design. With this process a user can give a computer a design problem and set requirements for the final result. The AI suggests many possible solutions, and humans pare down the results. For example, when General Motors wanted to replace its heavy eight-component seat belt bracket with a lighter version that used fewer pieces, engineers plugged these parameters into a generative design algorithm and 3-D printed the result as a solid piece of material. NASA recently used the technique to create a prototype lander for space missions.

“The skill that used to be a barrier for developing enrichment equipment for nuclear weapons might be taken out of the hands of a human,” says Ferenc Dalnoki-Veress, a Middlebury physicist who co-authored the report. “This is potentially dangerous.”

The combination of additive manufacturing and AI creates three major risk areas, according to the report’s authors. The first would involve a nation with an existing missile program, such as North Korea, improving its output by printing rocket parts or propulsion-system components. The use of 3-D printers could “advance its capabilities, accelerate its capabilities, or augment its production capabilities in a way where they can produce more missiles more quickly, or at least prototype missiles more quickly,” Shaw says.

The second potential danger is that 3-D printers could help establish a weapons program by producing the required infrastructure—without alerting international watchdogs. Observers can currently monitor the global supply chain for signs someone is building a factory meant to produce weapons of mass destruction; this is one reason the import and export of certain substances, such as ammonia-based fertilizer (a key component in homemade bombs), are tightly regulated and scrutinized. But industrial 3-D printing could potentially bypass some of the world’s existing arms control frameworks. Today if a country wants to manufacture a dangerous chemical such as sarin, it needs to go through public channels to purchase a particular kind of noncorrosive metal piping. Soon it may have the ability to print these supplies instead.

The third risk is a “black swan” event, a threat no one sees coming. “We see the possibility we could have something completely new, that no one here is really thinking of, that could have weapons of mass destruction capabilities,” Shaw says.

Not everyone is convinced 3-D printing and generative design will ramp up the possibility of apocalypse. “For state actors, 3-D printing can be useful ... but I don’t see that additive manufacturing magically solves a lot of problems,” says Martin Pfeiffer, a doctoral candidate at the University of New Mexico and an expert on the anthropology of nuclear war. For nonstate actors, he adds, “additive manufacturing could let you do some things with a smaller visibility footprint, but you can’t 3-D print a plutonium or [highly enriched uranium] core.”
Giakomo Persi Paoli, a researcher at nonprofit research institute RAND Europe who investigated 3-D-printed small arms for the United Nations, sees parallels between his work and that of the Middlebury researchers. “What they’re saying is plausible,” he says, but he notes that successfully 3-D printing a weapon is harder than it sounds. “It’s a combination of four things,” he explains. Making a weapon requires a digital blueprint, the 3-D printer itself, the material that will be shaped by the printer, and human labor to finish the weapon. “It’s very unlikely that whatever comes out of the printer will be plug-and-play, ready to go,” he says.

Take the Liberator, one of the earliest functional 3-D printed handguns. It was the result of hundreds of iterations and a lot of human effort. The completed design did not come out of the printer ready to shoot: it required a careful assembly, and even then the gun did not work all the time. The same would likely be true of more complex weapons. Generative design promises to make parts of the process easier, but consider the instances in which generative design produced good results: GM’s seat belt bracket and NASA’s lander. Both projects had engineers shaping the design, not amateurs.

That does not mean these worries can be dismissed altogether. “The genie’s out of the bottle—it keeps me up at night,” says Gretchen Hund, former director of the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory’s Center for Global Security. Hund, who built a career on identifying emerging issues and technologies that might have national security implications, says the additive manufacturing market has exploded in the past five years—and remains largely unregulated.

“Given the speed at which technology is advancing ... this is something policymakers should be aware of,” Paoli says. “This is a plausible threat. It’s not immediate, but it shouldn’t be discounted.”

The new report suggests that 3-D printing could be part of the WMD supply chain within the next 10 years. “Right now people aren’t paying enough attention to it,” says co-author Miles Pomper, a senior fellow of the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies. "And this is trying to sound that alarm to get them to focus.”


Return to top

US COUNTER-WMD

Diplomat (Tokyo, Japan)

US State Department Greenlights $3.3 Billion Missile Sale to Japan

By Franz-Stefan Gady
Sept. 12, 2019

The U.S. Department of State (DoS) has approved a possible sale of 73 Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) Block IIA interceptors for an estimated cost of $3.295 billion the U.S. Department of Defense’s (DoD) Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) said in an August 27 statement.

The deal will include MK 29 Canisters with packing, handling, storage, and transportation kits.

“This proposed sale will support the foreign policy and national security of the United States by improving the security of a major ally that is a force for political stability and economic progress in
the Asia-Pacific region,” the statement reads. “It is vital to U.S. national interests to assist Japan in developing and maintaining a strong and effective self-defense capability.”

The SM-3 Block IIA missile is the most advanced version of the SM-3 "hit-to-kill" interceptor series and has been under joint development by U.S. defense contractor Raytheon Missile Systems and Japan’s Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI) since 2006.

Raytheon has been responsible for the SM-3 Block IIA’s hardware, system development, and all-up-round integration. MHI oversees the development of the interceptor’s second- and third-stage rocket motors, steering control, and the missile nosecone.

It can be employed on Aegis-equipped guided missile destroyers and on Aegis Ashore batteries. Japan is expected to acquire two such land-based missile defense systems by 2023.

DoS greenlighted the sale of two Aegis Ashore units to Japan in January 2019. The two batteries will be stationed in Japan’s Akita and Yamaguchi prefectures and next to the SM-3 Block IIA interceptor, are capable of firing the Block IB missile as well as the supersonic SM-6 missile interceptor.

The U.S. Department of State approved a previous sale of eight SM-3 Block IB missiles and 13 Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) Block IIA missiles for an estimated cost of $561 million in November 2018.

The U.S. Missile Defense Agency (MDA) and U.S. Navy last successfully conducted an intercept of an intermediate-range ballistic missile target with a SM-3 Block IIA missile in December 2018.

As I explained at the time:

The December 11 intercept marks the second successful test of a SM-3 Block IIA missile in 2018. On October 26, a SM-3 Block IIA missile launched from the Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS John Finn (DDG-113) successfully destroyed a medium-range ballistic missile target launched from the PMRF. A previous successful test of the Aegis Baseline 9/5.1 BMD combat system with a SM-3 Block IIA missile took place in February 2017. Two other tests of the missile in June 2017 and January 2018 ended in failure.

The SM-3 Block IIA is designed to destroy short- to intermediate-range ballistic missiles. “The proposed sale will provide Japan with increased ballistic missile defense capability to assist in defending the Japanese homeland and U.S. personnel stationed there,” the August 27 DSCA statement adds.


Return to top
US ARMS CONTROL

VOA (Washington, D.C.)

**Trump Says He Could Ease Sanctions If Iran Wants to Talk**

Author Not Attributed

Sept. 11, 2019

U.S. President Donald Trump again dangled the possibility of easing U.S. sanctions on Iran if it can bring President Hassan Rouhani to the bargaining table.

"We will see what happens," Trump told reporters at the White House Wednesday. He said Iran wants a deal because "they have tremendous financial difficulty and the sanctions are getting tougher and tougher."

Trump added that the U.S. is not looking for regime change in Iran and said the country has "tremendous potential."

Trump spoke two days after firing National Security Advisor John Bolton, who opposed any talks between the U.S. and Iran.

Iranian President Rouhani has already ruled out meeting with Trump as long as sanctions are in place. He said Wednesday such talks would be "meaningless."

"The Americans must understand that bellicosity and war-mongering don't work in their favor. Both...must be abandoned," he said.

Trump pulled the United States out of the 2015 international nuclear deal with Iran last year and reimposed sanctions that were lifted under the agreement.

Iran has started backing away from parts of the agreement and threatens to boost its uranium enrichment unless the remaining signatories help its battered economy.

Trump has said he wants to renegotiate the nuclear deal if Iran can "forget about "enrichment."

"We cannot let Iran have a nuclear weapon and, they never will have a nuclear weapon," he said. Iran insists its nuclear program is strictly for civilian energy purposes.

[https://www.voanews.com/middle-east/trump-says-he-could-ease-sanctions-if-iran-wants-talk](https://www.voanews.com/middle-east/trump-says-he-could-ease-sanctions-if-iran-wants-talk)

Return to top
BBC (London, U.K.)

**North Korea ‘Willing to Restart’ Nuclear Talks with US**

Author Not Attributed

Sept. 10, 2019

North Korea is willing to restart denuclearisation talks with the United States later this month, the country's vice foreign minister has said.

Choe Son-hui said they were willing to resume "comprehensive" discussions in a setting agreed by both sides.

Her statement came after US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo voiced hopes for talks to resume.

Hours after Ms Choe spoke, two short-range projectiles were reportedly launched from North Korea.

At their first meeting, last year, US President Donald Trump and North Korea’s Kim Jong-Un agreed to the "complete denuclearisation" of the Korean peninsula - but without determining what that meant or how to achieve it.

Discussions on the finer details broke down in February, during their second summit in Hanoi.

**What has North Korea said?**

Ms Choe said on Monday that North Korea was willing to sit "face-to-face" again at an agreed time and place around late September.

In the statement, she urged Washington to come with a fresh approach in order to keep hopes for a deal alive.

"I want to believe that the US side would come out with an alternative based on a calculation method that serves both sides' interests and is acceptable to us," she said, according to Reuters.

The last summit broke down after a rift emerged over the lifting of sanctions.

In June, Mr Trump and Mr Kim spoke again at a historic meeting at the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between the two Koreas.

During a brief discussion the two leaders agreed working-level talks should resume, but they still have not.

"I have a very good relationship with Chairman Kim," Mr Trump told reporters at the White House on Monday. "I always say having meetings is a good thing. We'll see what happens."

This is the latest of several North Korean short-range missile tests which have taken place since May. It is a programme that has drawn little criticism from Washington, which has tended to focus upon ensuring a moratorium on Pyongyang's longer-range testing.

But the short-range tests matter. They enable North Korea to improve on what appears to be a relatively new weapon, similar to the Russian Iskander system, a solid-fuelled missile capable of carrying either a conventional or a nuclear warhead with a range of some 300km (186 miles).

The missiles in this latest test travelled just a little in excess of this. Given their probable accuracy, they threaten US and South Korean bases, while their trajectory poses significant problems for existing anti-missile defence systems.

Pyongyang is again signalling it may resume talks on its nuclear weapons programme. But so far, the Trump administration's approach has yielded little and there is no indication that either
Washington or Pyongyang is ready to pursue the basic detailed, diplomatic spade-work essential for any agreement.

What about the new tests?

South Korean military officials say two projectiles were fired toward the sea at about 07:00 local time on Tuesday (22:00 GMT Monday).

They were launched towards the east from Kaechon in South Pyongan province and travelled about 330km (205 miles). A national security council meeting was held in response.

A senior US official told the AFP news agency they were aware of the latest reports.

"We are continuing to monitor the situation and consulting closely with our allies in the region," they said.

Speaking to US media on Sunday, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the administration was "disappointed" at the ongoing tests.

"We wish that he would stop that. But our mission set at the State Department is very clear: to get back to the table," he said.


Panetta: ‘A New Chapter of the Cold War’ with Russia

By VOA News

Sept. 6, 2019

VOA correspondent Greta van Susteren spoke with former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta about the global arms race and the military expansion into space.

Panetta said space represents a new frontier and the likely battlefield of the future. He also discussed China's developing lead in space and its impact on the world, as well as the risks arising from the decision by the United States and Russia to abandon the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.

Panetta said it is of utmost importance that the United States reopen dialogue with Russia and China so all sides can address the current lack of trust among the key arms players of the world.

Greta van Susteren: Mr. Secretary, nice to see you, sir.

Leon Panetta: Nice to be with you, Greta.

GVS: Mr. Secretary, what's the difference, in concept, between Space Command and a space force?

Panetta: Well, I'm assuming that what they're hoping is that they can provide greater emphasis to our effort in space. I'm not convinced that that's the answer. I mean, I sometimes worry that an additional bureaucracy, anyplace, only inhibits progress rather than advancing it. But ... now in the Air Force, there are a number of officers who are committed to working in space, and I'm sure that that effort will continue and the United States will protect our position in space.

GVS: What kind of mischief, for lack of a better word, can be imposed upon a nation by what goes on in space? I mean, how much self-defense do we have to worry about in space?
Panetta: I think space is that frontier that a lot of nations are beginning to explore now, and India has just launched a vehicle into space. There are other countries that are developing initiatives to go into space. China, obviously, has a huge initiative with regards to space, as we do. And so I think space is indeed a battlefield of the future if we don't sit down as nations and develop rules for how we're going to behave. Right now, it's kind of wide open.

GVS: Well, that's what we're doing. My next question: It seems like everyone, well, not everyone, but many nations are sort of freelancing in terms of what they're doing in space and almost putting ... like an arms race, or a technology race, in space. I can deal with a technology space race but not an arms race in space.

Panetta: Well, I think that's a real concern, particularly with artificial intelligence. What China is doing with artificial intelligence and deploying their capabilities in space — they are really developing space weapons that are capable of interfering with other satellites that are in space. The United States frankly has not done as well in developing the kind of defenses that we absolutely have to have, if we're going to have satellites in space that are not impacted by weapons from China.

GVS: How did we let China get ahead of us?

Panetta: Well, it's a good question. I think they put a lot more emphasis on research and efforts to develop artificial intelligence and new technologies in space. They've really focused on that effort. The United States, while we've had the private sector developing capabilities in space, very frankly, we have not invested, as we should, with regards to space, and particularly with regards to national security in space as well.

GVS: Turning now to the INF. President Trump has pulled out, as of early August, from the INF Treaty, but before that point, had Russia violated that agreement?

Panetta: Well, I don't think there's any question that Russia had developed a missile which violated the terms of the INF agreement, and we had raised objections to that. I'm not sure it's a good reason to withdraw from the INF, because the end result of that will be a nuclear arms race between the United States and Russia. I wish that diplomacy had been given a little more of a chance to try to resolve those issues.

GVS: Well, if the INF is violated by Russia, it becomes almost a unilateral agreement with just the U.S. complying. Plus, in terms of an arms race, we just mentioned China and outer space — China is not a signatory to the treaty in the first place, so China was off doing its own thing.

Panetta: Well, and that frankly is a concern about not only our national security but peace in the world. I mean, the reality is that we have some very, very dangerous flashpoints in the world that we live in. And one without question is dealing with China, particularly with this trade war, but dealing with them and other capabilities in space. And the other is Russia, which we're now involved in what I call a new chapter of the Cold War. ... And, you know, the prospect of having the United States and Russia engage in a nuclear arms race where they're both trying to increase and improve their nuclear weapons, I think it's a dangerous prospect for the world. And so, the most important thing right now, it strikes me, is that diplomacy has to play a role here. We've got to make a serious effort to try to reopen dialogue, not only with China but with Russia as well.

GVS: Is there any doubt that we're in an arms race right now with Russia, and is there any doubt that we're in an arms race with China?

Panetta: I don't think there's any question that that's happening. Russia is continuing to invest in developing new missiles and new arms, and the United States is obviously investing as well, with regards to those kinds of capabilities. So I don't know what else you would call that but, you know, an arms race in terms of trying to figure out who can achieve superiority. We've been through this
in the past. Obviously, both countries are trying to checkmate each other as to who is the strongest. But as that continues, I think we have the same kind of danger we have in Iran, which is that somebody then can make a terrible mistake. And as a result of that mistake we could be involved in a nuclear war.

GVS: What got to the point that China stopped destroying its missiles and stopped complying with the INF .. ? I mean, what was the flashpoint? What provoked them to do it?

Panetta: I think as always — look, this is an area where we’ve been competing with the Russians and with the Chinese for a very long time. And, you know, beneath the surface, even though there are agreements, there are those that feel that those agreements are inhibiting their ability to develop the weapons they need. And I think, with regards to Russia, they were working on this missile, and they wanted to develop that capability to be able to launch an intercontinental ballistic missile that could fly a lot faster at going after its target. And in doing that and in testing it, that’s what created the violation of the INF Treaty. But again, the problem is, you know, both sides now have decided to withdraw from that treaty, which means that the treaty doesn’t restrain anybody. And the consequence of that is that both sides are going to be spending a lot more money and investing in what is essentially a new arms race.

GVS: All right, obviously ... that’s a terrible thing; it’s horribly expensive and horribly dangerous. Not what anyone should want, but how do you reverse this? How do you get people to the table? How do you get to the point where, you know, the United States can trust Russia? Russia violated earlier the INF; how do you get China, which wasn’t part of the agreement in the first place, to come to the table and discuss this?

Panetta: You’re asking the toughest question of all, which is: How do we get back to opening up a dialogue that will allow us to try to prevent this kind of uninhibited arms race that we’re in right now? There’s a lack of trust. There’s no question about it. Lack of trust with Russia, a lack of trust with China.

You know, China — a great example of that is the trade war that we’re in, and the fact that we cannot arrive at some kind of agreement here, that we should try to eliminate these tariffs and create a better trade relationship with China, and for that matter the rest of the world. Look. It’s tough. ... I’ve been there. I know what it means to sit down and try to negotiate with people you don’t agree with. But what it takes is persistence, it takes determination, and it takes the fundamental will to try to continue to work at trying to arrive at an agreement and develop that kind of trust that you need in order to do that. I think Russia understands where this is all headed. I think China understands where this is all headed. I don’t think anybody wants the end result, which would be a nuclear war that would destroy the world. So, if that’s the case, then I think what the president and what our key diplomats have to do is to be willing to find an approach of sitting down, trusting each other, but being persistent. You’re not going to get a quick deal here. What each country is going to do is test each other. The most important thing is that when the United States sits down, that it ... represents the strongest military power on the face of the Earth, and that they know that. If they know that, then they have everything to gain by trying to negotiate with the United States. We need to be strong, but at the same time, we also need to be flexible to listen to their concerns, to listen to what bothers them and to try to deal with their concerns as well. That’s the way you negotiate. That’s the way you get deals done.

GVS: Meanwhile, though, Russia is selling surface-to-air missiles to our NATO ally Turkey. And that, of course is causing, you know, much consternation in the United States. Was that to sort of divide NATO, or what’s the purpose of Russia doing that with Turkey?
Panetta: Look, we have to understand with Russia, you know, there's one fundamental goal, which is to destabilize the United States and to destabilize our relationship with our allies. They've been doing that for a long time; this is nothing new.

And I think the problem is when they sense that there's a vacuum there, they will take advantage of it. That's what they did when they went into the Crimea. That's what they did when they went into the Ukraine. It's what they did when they went into Syria. They sensed a vacuum there in terms of the United States, and they took advantage of it. And they're doing the same thing with regards to Turkey; they sense that the relationship between Turkey and the United States is not well. And so, they're taking advantage of it by providing them with weapons and missiles, and by trying to gradually have Turkey pull back from NATO. I think that's the ultimate goal. ... (Turkish President Recep Tayyip) Erdogan is not dumb. He understands what Russia is trying to do. He's going to take advantage of it. But, Erdogan is going to march to his own drummer. And I think in the end if the United States is smart, we'll keep our channels of communication open to Erdogan, because I think at some point he's going to need to have the United States when it comes to dealing not only with Syria, but with dealing with other problems in the Middle East.

GVS: All right, the United States pulled out of the 2015 deal with Iran, the nuclear deal. And President Trump has said that he would be willing to talk to Iran again, but Iran says, no, until you lift the sanctions, we're not going to talk at all. So there's a stalemate ... where does this lead us ... ?

Panetta: Well, that's another one of these flashpoints in the world that I think is producing the potential for what could be another war in the Middle East. Right now it's very tense. The United States did pull back from the arms control agreement. I think that was a mistake. At the same time, Iran is continuing to probe. They're attacking ships. They're using drones to come after us. ... They're making efforts to undermine stability in Syria and elsewhere in the Middle East. So, this probing back and forth creates a very tense situation. ... President Trump and the leader of Iran ... they're both dug in, and neither is going to move in terms of trying to establish some negotiating path. I think the key here is the effort by (French) President (Emmanuel) Macron, who has made the effort to try to open up some opportunity for negotiation. He does have the ability as a result of remaining in the agreement, the nuclear agreement with Iran, along with these other countries that were part of it — Great Britain, Germany, Russia, China. I think the key is to have those countries try to pursue an opening for negotiations with Iran that includes these areas that the president expressed concerns about, but gets us back to the negotiating table. Neither side wants a war here, neither side is going to benefit from a war. The only answer is to have some dialogue that is provided through this negotiating with our allies.

GVS: All right, let me give you one more flashpoint. North Korea has been firing off missiles the last several months. President Trump seems at least publicly, to be sort of unnerved by it, that it's happening. Meanwhile, you've got Japan and South Korea, they've got a very frosty relationship. We always hoped China would help us with North Korea, and now we're in a trade war with them. So, what about North Korea?

Panetta: Well, you've raised again another, you know, one of those dangerous flashpoints in a very dangerous world. I don’t think that the president’s effort at summitry with Kim Jong Un has worked at all. I think he, you know, he tried to make an effort at it. I give him some credit for trying to make that effort. But the end result has been that that they are taking advantage of that relationship, and we’re paying a price for that. North Korea continues to develop nuclear weapons. They continue to develop their missile capability. They're developing a new submarine that will have the capability of firing a missile. They're going ahead and rearming themselves as, you know, in the face of this relationship, and the president, frankly, has been excusing that kind of behavior. I don’t think that’s been a smart move on his part. And so, North Korea is going to continue to take
advantage of that relationship. And the problem is it's now beginning to impact on the most important relationship we had in that region, which is with South Korea, and with Japan. Now we're seeing the relationship between South Korea and Japan break down as well. And so that alliance that's been critical in dealing with North Korea is now suffering the consequences of that. This is not a good situation. And again, the only opportunity here is, if, if the United States and South Korea and Japan are willing to reopen discussions with North Korea. Summitry between the president and Kim Jong Un has not worked, and very frankly will not work.

GVS: Mr. Secretary, thank you very much for talking to me. ... Maybe next time the world will be a lot calmer ... because the world certainly looks rather dangerous these days.

Panetta: It does, but you know I always have great confidence that ultimately we will find the leadership in the world to find a way to resolve the crises that we're facing. But it's going to take that in order to hopefully preserve peace in the future.

GVS: Mr. Secretary, thank you very much. I hope to talk to you again soon.

Panetta: Thank you.

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Return to top

COMMENTARY

The Hill (Washington, D.C.)

Future Iran Nuclear Deal Needs Stronger Verification

By Lawrence J. Haas

Sept. 11, 2019

This week’s revelations that the International Atomic Energy Agency found traces of uranium at an undeclared nuclear site in Iran's Tehran Province — revelations which the regime has refused to explain — shows that the Iranian nuclear issue is far more complicated than U.S. and Iranian jockeying of recent days suggests.

The issue is not just whether to salvage the 2015 global nuclear deal with the Islamic Republic, as key Western European nations want, or to pressure Tehran to agree to re-write it, as President Donald Trump wants.

The tougher question is whether, in light of this week's revelations and prior suspicions by nuclear watchdogs that Iran was skirting the nuclear deal, the world can ever trust Tehran to fully comply with limits on its nuclear program.

As the atomic agency’s findings make clear, any future nuclear deal must not only encompass a broader set of nuclear-related issues (e.g., Iran’s ballistic missile program) but also include much stronger verification procedures, and guaranteed sanctions for violations, than those of the 2015 deal.

Even before this week’s revelations, tensions were rising in Washington, Tehran and in European capitals over the future of the deal, which imposed temporary limits on Iranian nuclear activity in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions against the Iranian regime.
Reflecting his harsh assessment of the deal, which had been concluded on President Obama’s watch, President Trump formally pulled the U.S. out of the agreement in May of 2018. Since then, Great Britain, France, and Germany have sought to salvage the pact by convincing Tehran to continue complying. Tehran, however, is openly violating more and more provisions because Washington has imposed growing economic sanctions under President Trump’s “maximum pressure” campaign, while Europe has not fulfilled Tehran’s request for ways to evade them.

Even before this week, rising tensions between Washington and Tehran, and their tit-for-tat actions against one another, had left the deal in a more precarious state.

Earlier this month, President Trump imposed new sanctions on Iran’s shipping network and on individuals and entities affiliated with the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps’ Quds Force, which helps to ship Iranian oil.

Tehran, in turn, has announced over the last two months that it will exceed the deal’s limit on nuclear fuel stockpiles, enrich uranium at higher levels of purity (thus, closer to nuclear weapons-grade) than allowed, and ignore limits on nuclear-related research and development.

This week’s revelations about covert Iranian nuclear activity are bound to exacerbate Washington’s concerns.

The controversy dates back to last year when, in a speech to the United Nations, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu urged the International Atomic Energy Agency to investigate the site in question, saying it held “massive amounts” of equipment and material tied to Iran’s nuclear program. When the agency did so, it gathered environmental samples that revealed traces of uranium.

Raising further eyebrows at the atomic agency as well as in Washington and Jerusalem, Iran has refused to fully comply with the agency’s investigation of the site, the Wall Street Journal noted earlier this month.

Meanwhile, after Reuters reported the agency’s findings of traces of uranium at the site in Tehran Province, Netanyahu held a news conference on Monday at Israel’s Foreign Ministry to reveal what he called another secret nuclear-related warehouse — this one in Abadeh, in Iran’s Fars Province. As Netanyahu explained with a slide show, Tehran destroyed the site in Abadeh — where he said the regime “conducted experiments to develop nuclear weapons” — when it learned that Israel knew about it.

None of this should surprise us. After promising “anywhere, anytime” inspections to police the nuclear deal, President Obama and his team ended up settling for considerably less. As part of the final nuclear accord, the U.S. and other P5+1 powers accepted a protocol under which Iran has 24 days to comply with an International Atomic Energy Agency request to visit a suspected undeclared site, giving Tehran lots of time to move, hide, or destroy evidence of its nuclear progress. Nor did the deal provide any measures that would compel Tehran’s compliance with the inspection request to begin with.

The holes in the nuclear deal, and Tehran’s willingness to exploit them, suggest that any future global agreement must contain an inspection regime, and sanctions for non-compliance, that truly reassures the region and wider world that Iran will neither develop nor acquire nuclear weaponry.

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Why Does Erdogan Want Nuclear Weapons?

By Kadri Gursel
Sept. 10, 2019

In an unprecedented move, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan declared his desire to obtain nuclear weapons, flouting Turkey's obligations as a signatory of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Speaking at an economic forum in the central Anatolian city of Sivas Sept. 4, Erdogan praised the advancement of Turkey's defense industry and then said, “It's all fine and well, yet some countries have missiles with nuclear warheads, not one or two. But I don't have missiles with nuclear heads. This I cannot accept.”

Erdogan’s use of the singular first-person pronoun was, of course, meant to denote Turkey and not himself. His statement reflects his mistrust in the nuclear umbrella of NATO, to which his country belongs. Indirectly, it also indicates that he attributes no deterrent significance to the American B61 tactical nuclear weapons deployed at the Incirlik Air Base, in southern Turkey, as part of NATO's nuclear program.

In further remarks, Erdogan claimed that “all developed countries in the world” have nuclear weapons and recounted an anecdote about how the former president of an unnamed nuclear country grumbled about restrictions on him. Erdogan said, “When I was on a visit there, he told me, ‘They tell us this and that, yet I have about 7,500 nuclear warheads at present, but Russia and America have 12,500 or 15,000. I, too, will make [more].’”

Signaling that he does not object to nuclear arms races, Erdogan commented, “Look at them. Look at what they are competing over. But when it comes to us, they say, ‘Don’t do it!’” In arguing why Turkey’s acquisition of nuclear arms would be legitimate, he pointed to Israel, which is believed to be a nuclear state but maintains a policy of “nuclear ambiguity,” neither confirming nor denying whether it has nuclear weapons. “There is Israel just beside us. Do they have [nuclear weapons]? They do,” he said, describing Israel's possession of nuclear arms as a tool for “bullying” the region.

As he wrapped up the topic, Erdogan made a crucial remark. “We are currently working on it,” he assured the audience, suggesting that Turkey is engaged in activities to acquire a nuclear capability. If that is indeed the case, open sources are, of course, unavailable on what those activities entail and how much they have progressed.

The Turkish Foreign Ministry, meanwhile, maintains the page “Arms Control and Disarmament” on its website, which emphasizes Turkey's “active participation in international efforts in these areas, adherence to relevant international instruments and their full implementation.” It lists the multilateral agreements that Turkey has joined to become part of international control regimes against the proliferation of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. That this ministry is bound to a president who “cannot accept” not having nuclear weapons is an inexplicable paradox.

Turkey became party to the NPT in 1979 and to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in 2000. It is a founding member of the 1996 Wassenaar Arrangement on export controls of dual-use equipment and technologies, which can be used both for civilian purposes and the development of nuclear arms. In 1997, Turkey joined the Missile Technology Control Regime, which aims to prevent the
proliferation of chemical, biological and nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles. Finally, Turkey has been party to The Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation since its inauguration in 2002.

Given this background, the question is inevitable: Has Turkey under Erdogan decided to backtrack and acquire nuclear weapons? The question is not baseless. It is hard to believe that Turkey’s leaders have never discussed the option of nuclear armament. What is unprecedented, however, is that an inclination toward nuclear armament has been proclaimed so openly, directly and at the highest level.

In the years since the end of the Cold War, there had been only one previous occasion on which a Turkish official had spoken publicly on the issue. It occurred in August 2006 when military chief of staff Gen. Hilmi Ozkok referred implicitly to the nuclear option at the end of his tenure. Speaking at a ceremony marking his retirement, Ozkok began by expressing Turkey’s concern over the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. “The presence of countries possessing or suspected of possessing weapons of mass destruction on the axis from North Korea all the way to the Middle East is a serious and determining threat for our country today,” Ozkok said.

He went on to allude to Turkey’s nuclear option, using very careful language: “If the problem [of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction] cannot be resolved despite the intense diplomatic efforts of the international community, I see a strong likelihood that we will face some important decision stages in the near future. Otherwise, we will face the prospect of losing our strategic superiority in the region.”

The threat perception Ozkok outlined could have stemmed from Iran’s reactivation of its nuclear program under President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a radical adversary of the West and Israel elected in 2005, replacing the Reformist administration, which had suspended the country’s nuclear program. Israel is unlikely to have fueled Turkey’s concerns, as its nuclear arsenal was already well known, and bilateral ties had not yet plunged into crisis.

The difference is glaring between Ozkok’s remarks 13 years ago and Erdogan’s Sept. 4 statement. While the chief of staff made do with insinuations, Erdogan’s assertion of ongoing work in the context of nuclear-tipped missiles is clear and explicit, leaving no room for interpretation. It is also a gesture of defiance.

Remarkably, a decade ago in remarks to Qatar’s Al Jazeera, Erdogan had called for “no nuclear weapons in the region.” At the time of the interview, Nov. 25, 2009, the Mavi Marmara flotilla crisis between Turkey and Israel had not yet unfolded, but bilateral ties were already in turmoil, and Erdogan was aware of Israel’s nuclear arsenal. He even told Al Jazeera, “Pressuring Iran is unfair and unjust while others have [nuclear weapons],” a reference to Israel, but he did not use Israel’s case to advocate Turkey’s right to nuclear weapons.

So, what has changed in a decade to lead Erdogan to defiantly ask why he cannot have nuclear missiles? Why is he pointing to Israel now, given that Israel was not an argument for justifying a nuclear option for Turkey a decade ago? Moreover, there are the well-known examples of how India and Pakistan became nuclear powers. Unlike Erdogan, their leaders never declared to the world their intentions to acquire nuclear weapons and related ballistic missiles, keeping their programs state secrets until their first back-to-back nuclear tests in 1998. Why is Erdogan doing the opposite? What is his purpose in declaring his inclination so prematurely, given that Turkey is not even a nuclear-threshold country at this point?

The answers might lie in the geopolitical bottleneck in which Turkey currently finds itself.

Turkey’s security issues have only grown more complicated with Erdogan’s acquisition of the S-400 air defense systems from Russia, a move he made against the existential threat he perceives from
the United States, which, he believes, backed (either passively or actively) the failed coup attempt against him in July 2016. Because of the S-400 purchase, Turkey is now deprived of the F-35 warplanes it had paid for in addition to having been expelled from the F-35 co-production program and facing the threat of further US sanctions.

Meanwhile, the United States is backing Israel and Greece in their drive to build energy corridors in the eastern Mediterranean, shutting Turkey out, and the risk of confrontation in the region growing. Moreover, Turkey’s loss of the F-35s means that its air force, the country’s main source of deterrence, will weaken with time, and closing the gap by purchasing warplanes from Russia does not seem possible at present. On top of all this, Turkey is literally squeezed between Russia and the United States in Syria.

Faced with these predicaments, Erdogan is brandishing his nonexistent “nuclear card” to warn the forces he views as threatening him that he will move to create more instability and disorder unless they ease the pressure on him. By advocating Turkey’s right to nuclear weapons, he is sending the message that he will not step back against these forces, but will forge ahead, upping the ante.

If Erdogan’s message is taken seriously, the reactions it will spawn can hardly help Turkey extricate itself from its geopolitical bottleneck. On the contrary, all the countries and alliances that might see a nuclear Turkey as a threat would, no doubt, begin to scrutinize it closer and with more suspicion. With this framework of mistrust, increasing direct or tacit pressure, isolation and threats of sanctions against Turkey will obviously lead to more instability and disorder both in Turkey and the broader region.

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Return to top

We Need a Green New Deal for Nuclear Weapons
By Matt Korda
Sept. 11, 2019

Last week, the top 10 Democratic presidential candidates participated in a seven-hour climate town hall, during which they shared their plans to ban fracking, halt fossil fuel exports, and nationalize energy production—ideas that were considered fringe until recently. Just seeing the words “Climate Crisis” emblazoned on the CNN town-hall stage was a clear demonstration of how far the public discourse has shifted.

The conversation revolved around the Green New Deal and the Sunrise Movement, a self-described “army of young people” that has organized viral actions like the November 2018 protest with Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez at Nancy Pelosi’s office, and the June 2019 sit-in on the steps of the Democratic National Committee headquarters. The movement received some hefty praise at the
town hall from the presidential candidates, many of whom specifically noted that the event would never have happened without constant activist pressure.

I am a member of the Sunrise Movement, because I am scared of the existential threat that climate change poses to humanity. But I don’t work in the climate change space, because I believe there is an even scarier—and more immediate—existential threat that receives far less attention: nuclear weapons.

In stark contrast to the seven-hour climate town hall, nuclear weapons received a measly three minutes during the July debates between 20 Democratic presidential hopefuls, despite the fact that more than 80 percent of recent poll respondents in both Iowa and New Hampshire—the first two Democratic primaries—said they wanted to hear candidates’ views on nuclear weapons. It appears unlikely that nukes will get much airtime at tomorrow’s debate either, given their lack of consideration thus far. The attention gap between climate change and nuclear weapons doesn’t make much sense, given the common stakes, challenges, and—most importantly—solutions.

A progressive response. The Green New Deal is a progressive response to climate change, because it’s a solution commensurate with the scale of the problem. It also has a coherent vision for its implementation that is equal parts optimistic and realistic. Meanwhile, the arms control community is largely trapped in damage-control mode, valiantly resisting President Donald Trump’s efforts to build dangerous new nuclear weapons and withdraw from critical nuclear agreements. Environmentalists are playing offense, while the nuclear community is playing defense.

This raises the question: What is the progressive response to nuclear weapons?

Most progressives would argue that the answer is global zero—a nuclear-free world. However, that is a long-term solution. Just as the Green New Deal does not immediately seek a fossil-fuel-free world, a progressive nuclear policy cannot immediately seek a nuclear-free one.

This does not mean, however, that progressives should be satisfied with occasional and incremental nuclear policy tweaks. The Green New Deal resolution, introduced by Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Ed Markey in February 2019, eschews this approach in favor of a sweeping, justice-oriented platform. In that same vein, a progressive nuclear policy should challenge the nuclear complex in its entirety. By applying four core principles of the Green New Deal—international cooperation, reductions, transparency, and justice—to nuclear weapons, progressives can begin to craft a plan that seeks to ambitiously and coherently restructure US nuclear policy.

International cooperation. The Green New Deal aims to make the United States “the international leader on climate action.” In similar fashion, a progressive nuclear policy should seek to place the United States at the forefront of global disarmament effort—acting as an international leader in nuclear transparency, diplomacy, and reductions.

Trump has foolishly undone earlier diplomatic successes by killing off successful arms control treaties—including the Iran nuclear deal and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, which banned an entire missile class—and threatening to terminate President Barack Obama’s New START, the treaty that caps US and Russian deployed strategic nuclear arsenals. Nevertheless, a progressive nuclear policy should begin by emulating and expanding upon specific policies from not only the Obama era but also from the Trump administration.

Trump’s diplomatic overtures to North Korea are a welcome improvement over Obama’s “strategic patience.” Although Trump’s methods leave much to be desired, Democrats should not let their distaste for him taint their views of diplomacy. Under a progressive nuclear policy, the United States should engage with North Korea to concurrently work toward a peace regime and a reduction of nuclear tensions.
In a similar vein, the United States should immediately end its bellicose rhetoric toward Iran and attempt to pick up the shattered pieces of the Iran nuclear deal. Both of these efforts might require targeted sanctions relief and economic inducements to convince these countries to return to the table in good faith.

With regard to other nuclear powers—particularly Russia and China—the Trump administration has embraced great-power competition and gung-ho militaristic policies that will drag the world deeper into a renewed arms race. Instead, the United States should engage with Russia in an attempt to reconstruct the INF Treaty, with both countries eventually returning to compliance; immediately extend—and try to expand—New START; pursue arrangements to reduce military tension; draw up a long-term plan to include China and other nuclear-armed states in the arms-control process; and finally ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, which prohibits nuclear testing. These are necessary and realistic first steps toward the collective reduction of global nuclear arsenals and their roles in military strategy.

Finally, the Green New Deal suggests that US technological expertise can be leveraged to help other countries achieve Green New Deals of their own. This can be mirrored in the nuclear policy space. Just as the United States could become the leading exporter of renewable-energy technology, it could also become the leading exporter of disarmament expertise. A progressive nuclear policy could also emulate the “just transition” envisioned in the Green New Deal, which seeks to smoothly reorient workers toward low-carbon jobs; in the nuclear context, such a transition could result in weapons manufacturers using their expertise for disarmament—placing an emphasis on warhead dismantlement and verification, rather than on production.

Reductions. Committing to ambitious climate change goals (net-zero carbon emissions by 2050) is a critical component of the Green New Deal, and one that should also be translated to the nuclear space. For both threats, progressives must take steps to physically reduce the causes and enablers of the crisis at hand—for climate change, it’s carbon emissions; for nuclear weapons, it’s the weapons themselves. Over the next decade, the United States will spend nearly $100,000 per minute on its nuclear forces—that’s a tremendous amount of money that could otherwise be spent on priorities like infrastructure, health care, education, and fighting climate change.

First on the chopping block should be Trump’s new nukes: a planned nuclear sea-launched cruise missile akin to the one retired by the Obama administration for its lack of military utility, and a “low-yield” warhead (the name obscures the fact that it’s still one-third the size of the Hiroshima bomb that killed more than 100,000 people). These “flexible” weapons could make a nuclear strike even more tempting for military planners, making future crises all the more dangerous. However, a progressive nuclear policy shouldn’t stop there. The current plan to replace nearly every weapon in the US nuclear arsenal was actually enshrined under the Obama administration. As experts from Global Zero have argued, the majority of these replacements are unnecessary and could be phased out under a new nuclear posture favoring minimum deterrence over warfighting. Under this new posture—and ideally alongside reductions by other nuclear-armed states—the United States should dramatically reduce its bomber and submarine forces, and completely scrap its intercontinental ballistic missiles, which are irrelevant in a post-Cold-War era and are largely maintained to appease missile manufacturers and members of Congress where the missiles are based. Additionally, the United States should vow never to use nuclear weapons first—a position supported by the majority of Democrats.

The United States should also be prepared to make concessions regarding its ballistic missile defenses, which—despite being rudimentary at best and useless at worst—are key drivers of the arms race. This is because other countries, particularly Russia and China, fear that expanded US defenses might one day render their nuclear arsenals useless. Remember the scary new weapons
that Russian President Vladimir Putin unveiled last year? They were specifically designed to circumvent US missile defenses.

In my written evidence for the UK House of Lords’ parliamentary inquiry into nuclear disarmament in February, I provided a list of unilateral and multilateral recommendations for the United States to engage Russia on missile defense, including canceling US plans to test an SM-3 Block IIA interceptor against an ICBM target next year, pausing construction of the NATO Aegis Ashore site in Poland, and creating a joint US-Russia early-warning system to assess third-party missile launches. Unless the United States takes action to address Russia’s missile defense concerns, any remaining prospects for future arms control agreements will all but disappear.

Transparency. Just as with climate change, it will be impossible to achieve progress on nuclear reductions without simultaneously addressing the key drivers of US nuclear policy decisions: money and influence. By cross-referencing the annual Don’t Bank on the Bomb report—showing which companies are involved in building missiles and nuclear weapons—and those companies’ lobbying records, it’s disturbingly easy to see how they are purchasing congressional influence by exploiting loopholes in the US political system.

Additionally, the “revolving door” between the Pentagon, Congress, think tanks, contractors, and lobbyists has been well-documented. One particularly egregious case involving "senator-turned-lobbyist-turned-senator-turned-lobbyist" Jon Kyl is emblematic of how the revolving door allows politicians to profit from their influence. Military policy should be the product of a transparent democratic process, not a shady business deal; this kind of legalized corruption should be called out and eliminated.

Senator and presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren has presented a well-crafted plan to do exactly that, prohibiting lobbyists from taking government jobs (and vice versa) and subjecting all government contractors to the Freedom of Information Act. Other candidates should include similar accountability policies in their own platforms.

Very simply, a progressive nuclear policy should aim to make nuclear policy more transparent, not less. Recently, the United States has been trending in the wrong direction: Over the past year, the Pentagon has classified its nuclear stockpile numbers and its missile defense test schedule—both of which were previously available to the public. Needless over-classification allows those in power to remain unaccountable to those they claim to serve, thus entrenching unjust and undemocratic nuclear decision-making processes that can result in wastefulness, corruption, and harm.

Similarly, just as the Green New Deal seeks to strengthen democracy by ensuring that everyone’s voice is heard, a progressive nuclear weapons policy should seek to chip away at the undemocratic nature of nuclear policy. Under current policy, President Trump has unchecked authority to launch US nuclear weapons at any time—a truly frightening thought. This outdated and undemocratic posture needs to change, no matter who the president is.

Justice. Perhaps the most important line in the Green New Deal is the imperative “to promote justice and equity by stopping current, preventing future, and repairing historic oppression of... frontline and vulnerable communities.” This emphasis on restorative justice is what makes the Green New Deal so uniquely popular; it seeks to repair the damage done by longstanding oppressive policies. Given that patriarchal, racist, and colonial policies have all contributed to the development of the US nuclear complex, a progressive nuclear policy should echo the Green New Deal’s moral emphasis on repairing and discontinuing those harms.

Nuclear weapons have inflicted irreparable trauma upon vulnerable communities and environments—and not only Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Much lesser-known is that part of the US nuclear complex is built upon the displacement and contamination of indigenous communities. At
home, the uranium mining industry has disproportionately affected the Navajo Nation in the southwestern United States, and today, mining companies are lobbying a receptive Trump administration to revive uranium mining near the Grand Canyon. Abroad, US nuclear testing targeted the Marshall Islands, where the United States conducted 67 tests between 1946 and 1958. In both instances, the environments have been indefinitely poisoned, and cancer rates have dramatically increased—but the communities themselves have been largely neglected by the United States.

Today, the US government provides each displaced Marshallese victim a small amount of compensation, but does not allow them to use their resettlement funds to relocate to the United States—despite the fact that, as one Marshallese nuclear survivor puts it, they are “nuclear refugees on an island affected by climate change.” The United States also has domestic “downwinder” populations living in states like Nevada, Utah, Washington, Idaho, Arizona, and New Mexico, who were exposed to radiation from atmospheric nuclear tests between 1951 and 1957.

Although decades of nuclear oppression can’t be reversed, the effects can certainly be mitigated. The United States should begin the process of restorative nuclear justice, offering environmental and economic reparations to frontline communities that have been most affected by nuclear weapons detonations. Although the United States has stated that it will not support or sign the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons—the first legally binding international agreement to ban nuclear weapons—it should certainly engage with the specific articles that mandate humanitarian assistance and environmental remediation for communities harmed by nuclear testing.

Pursuing a platform of Green New Deal-style restorative justice—as outlined in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons—is not only a moral imperative but would also go a long way toward bridging the ever-widening gap between the nuclear haves and have-nots, many of whom have been so frustrated by the lack of progress on disarmament that they banned nuclear weapons entirely.

Wanted: a progressive nuclear champion. Applying the Green New Deal’s four core principles to nuclear policy yields what amounts to an ambitious, progressive nuclear revolution. Not only is it moral, just, and effective policy, it is also politically viable.

The fact that these principles directly overlap with those of the climate movement—on track to become the largest mass movement in history—is no coincidence. Young people are marching, campaigning, and—most importantly—voting for policies that are rooted in justice, above all else. And remember: The combination of Millennials and Generation Z is now the largest voting bloc in the United States, with 4 million Americans turning 18 every year.

In all likelihood, many of these young voters don’t remember Obama’s Prague speech in 2009, but the nuclear policy field does. In his remarks, Obama boldly announced that, “as the only nuclear power to have used a nuclear weapon, the United States has a moral responsibility to act.” He then stated that the United States would “take concrete steps towards a world without nuclear weapons.”

Things didn’t work out as planned. Obama’s nuclear abolitionism was worn down by defense hawks, industry interests, policy wonks, a hostile Congress, and even some of his own political appointees, and the United States ended up with a $1.7 trillion commitment to rebuild and enhance its entire nuclear arsenal.

There’s a lesson here for progressive candidates: resist.

A progressive nuclear policy certainly won’t be easy to pull off, and anyone who champions it will become an instant enemy of the nuclear priesthood. But in a presidential race in which a list of
enemies may say more about a candidate than a list of his or her friends, progressives should embrace the fear and loathing of the nuclear-industrial complex. Let the bridges they burn light their way to the Oval Office.


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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