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Feature Report

“Non-U.S. Deterrence Strategies: What Must the United States Be Prepared For? AY19 Strategic Deterrence Research Papers (Vol II)”. Published by U.S. Air Force Center for Strategic Deterrence Studies; April 8, 2020

<https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/CSDS/Display/Article/2142568/non-us-deterrence-strategies-what-mustthe-united-states-be-prepared-for-ay19-s/>

The Air University Deterrence Research Task Force, composed of Air War College and Air Command and Staff College students, developed a series of papers in response to research questions from the commander, Air Force Global Strike Command, and the Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Deterrence and Nuclear Integration in 2019. The papers deepen last year’s research on East Asia topics as well as reviewing Russian strategy and EMP issues. This collection of papers represents ongoing critical thinking on strategic policy issues conducted at Maxwell AFB.

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NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Air Force Magazine (Arlington, Va.)

Space Force Refining Doctrine, Deterrence Documents

By Rachel S. Cohen

April 7, 2020

The Space Force is working on its capstone space doctrine publication as well as a new deterrence strategy to shape its way forward, Chief of Space Operations Gen. Jay Raymond said in an April 7 discussion with AFA's Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies.

New doctrine will reflect that space is increasingly crowded and possibly dangerous, with more entities developing ways to damage and confuse U.S. satellites and ground stations. The Space Force is standing up a space doctrine center as well, to act as a hub for policy on how to act in space, likely more defensively and perhaps more aggressively when needed than in the past.

"We put together a draft that's being coordinated as we speak," Raymond said. "Hopefully we'll be able to publish this in the next two or three months going forward. It will be the capstone document, if you will, and then there will be other document volumes that will fall under that."

Doctrine touches on deterrence theory as well. Because deterrence requires communication between the U.S. and a threatening entity, the Space Force is figuring out how to declassify its operations to the point that it can credibly warn off potential attackers.

“We’re having a tabletop exercise to help inform that strategy this coming week,” Raymond said. “I met with the security folks from the department and have asked them to help us create a new security framework that allows us to implement that strategy.”

He said there is no firm timeline for completing the deterrence strategy.

Raymond and other defense officials continue to debate which pieces of the space enterprise that fall outside the Department of the Air Force should move into the Space Force. They are also working on multiple reports on acquisition, force structure, and more for lawmakers, and designing new organizations that will oversee aspects like procurement and various operational specialties like electronic warfare and missile warning.

As the Pentagon figures out how to scale back operations in the face of the coronavirus pandemic, the Space Force will delay its planned launch of the third modernized GPS III satellite until June 30 or later to protect its employees. The launch was originally scheduled for later this month, and the decision to move it will be revisited in May.

“We do not make this decision lightly. However, given our GPS constellation remains strong, we have the opportunity to make a deliberate decision to maintain our mission assurance posture, without introducing additional health risk to personnel or mission risk to the launch,” said Space and Missile Systems Center boss Lt. Gen. John Thompson.

SMC plans to launch three new GPS satellites this year. The GPS enterprise is shrinking its onsite workforce so that employees can stay far enough apart to avoid spreading the virus, as well as changing aspects of its work at the launch and checkout facilities.

“Once these efforts are completed, and the crews have rehearsed and are deemed proficient and ready to execute under these modified conditions, we fully intend to return to our launch cadence for deploying GPS III satellites,” said Col. Edward Byrne, chief of the medium Earth orbit space systems division. <https://www.airforcemag.com/space-force-refining-doctrine-deterrence-documents/> [Return to top](#)

UPI (Washington, D.C.)

Records Show Iran Lied about Making Nuclear Weapons, Scientists Say

By Clyde Hughes

April 9, 2020

April 9 (UPI) -- A non-profit global science and security group says in a new report that Iran has built a plant to produce nuclear weapons despite its insistence that all its atomic endeavors are wholly peaceful.

The Washington, D.C.-based Institute for Science and International Security said the 30-page report is based on documents from the Iran Nuclear Archive that were seized by Israel two years ago.

The analysis, posted Wednesday, said Tehran has "clearly" been dishonest with the International Atomic Energy Agency, which relies on government cooperation and onsite inspections. "Iran should declare this site to the International Atomic Energy Agency and allow its inspection, since the facility was designed and built to handle nuclear material subject to safeguards under Iran's comprehensive safeguards agreement," wrote scientists David Albright, Sarah Burkhard and Frank Pabian.

The report says Iran created the Shahid Mahallati Uranium Metals Workshop, near Tehran, to research and develop uranium metallurgy related to building nuclear weapons -- particularly components for weapons-grade uranium, the key explosive material in Iranian nuclear weapon cores.

The group said Iran told the IAEA more than four years ago it hadn't done any metallurgical work intended for nuclear weaponry and wasn't willing to discuss any similar activities "that did not have such an application."

"The activities at Shahid Mahallati and [another plant] Shahid Boroujerdi are a dramatic contrast to that statement," the report added. "Highlighting once again that Iran furthered its nuclear weapons capabilities far more than was known prior to Israel's seizure of the Nuclear Archive, permitting Iran today to build nuclear weapons faster than previously believed.

"Despite this chilling assessment, the new details in the Nuclear Archive now confront Iran, demanding that it admit to its deceptions and falsehoods, as if the Nuclear Archive is reality denied coming back to haunt Iran."

The group said the main building at one of the plant sites was gutted and abandoned between late 2010 and early 2011, and that Iran has yet to declare the site to the IAEA or allow inspections.

The United States led multiple Western governments, Russia and China in an agreement with Iran four years ago to limit Tehran's nuclear capability in exchange for sanctions relief. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action was abandoned by the Trump administration in 2018 and President Donald Trump reintroduced sanctions to force them back to the bargaining table.

Iran and remaining parties to the deal -- Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the European Union -- have expressed an interest in saving the deal, but Iran wants U.S. sanctions to end. https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2020/04/09/Records-show-Iran-lied-aboutmaking-nuclear-weapons-scientists-say/7361586436298/

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Los Alamos Daily Post (Los Alamos, N.M.)

Due To COVID-19, NNSA Adds 15 Days To Public Comment Period On Plutonium Pit Production At Los Alamos

By Carol A. Clark

April 8, 2020 LANL

News:

In response to requests for additional time based on disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (DOE/NNSA) has extended by 15 days the public comment period for the draft Supplement Analysis to the 2008 Site-wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) for Continued Operations of Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL).

The document examines whether the environmental impacts associated with expanded plutonium pit production at LANL require preparation of a new or supplemental EIS for LANL.

The draft Supplement Analysis was initially released for a 45-day comment period, which started March 10. The extended comment period ends May 9.

During the comment period, NNSA will accept comments from all interested agencies (Federal, State, and local), public interest groups, Native American Tribes, businesses, and members of the public.

Pit production at LANL is required in light of national policy and Federal law that directs NNSA to begin producing a minimum of 30 pits a year at LANL no later than during 2026. Resources needed for expanded pit production at LANL include construction of additional infrastructure, expansion of the work force, waste management operations, and transportation.

To meet military requirements, NNSA is also proposing to begin producing a minimum of 50 pits per year no later than during 2030 at the proposed Savannah River Plutonium Processing Facility at the Savannah River Site (SRS) in South Carolina.

A separate EIS is being conducted for pit production at SRS, as NNSA has not previously analyzed the environmental impacts of pit production at the site level for SRS.

NNSA has made this SA available for public review and comment on the NNSA NEPA reading room at: <https://www.energy.gov/nnsa/nnsa-nepa-reading-room>.

Comments on the Supplement Analysis may be provided to NNSA by US mail or email at the following addresses:

Mail:

NNSA Los Alamos Field Office

Comments: LANL SWEIS SA

3747 West Jemez Road

Los Alamos, NM 87544

Or email: lanlsweissa@nnsa.doe.gov, Subject line LANL SWEIS SA comment

<https://ladailypost.com/due-to-covid-19-nnsa-adds-15-days-to-public-comment-period-onplutonium-pit-production-at-los-alamos-national-laboratory/>

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Airman Magazine (Fort George G. Meade, Md.)

Great Power Competition

By Robbie Arp

March 25, 2020

The Air Force is changing.

Air Force senior leaders are aware of the need to not only adapt, but retain the service's competitive edge over our enemies.

"All of us have to come together to understand the threat and be clear-eyed on the competition that we face," said Air Force Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Stephen Wilson. "A changing world environment, strategic competition and peer competitors are the catalysts that make this change so immediately important."

Part of this change is the emphasis on Joint All Domain Command and Control, or JADC2, the internet of the joint warfighter that connects all platforms and people and accelerates the speed of data-sharing and decision-making in all five domains: land, air, sea, cyber and space.

Secretary of the Air Force Barbara Barrett says JADC2, “more seamlessly integrates the joint team in a battle network that links all sensors to all shooters.”

With the creation of the U.S. Space Force, the Air Force is showing intent to dominate space, allocating \$15.4 billion from the \$169 billion budget proposal to ensure superiority in space, provide deterrence and, if deterrence fails, provide combat power.

“Space is essential in today’s American way of life,” Barrett said. “Navigation, communication, information all depend on these aging, vulnerable, though brilliant, GPS satellites.”

The Air Force has already begun replacing these older satellites with new, defendable GPS satellites.

With the budget proposal comes a continued effort to increase the number of squadrons in the Air Force to 386, ensuring the ability to generate combat power and improve readiness.

“This budget moves us forward to recapitalize our two legs of the [nuclear] triad and the critical nuclear command and control that ties it all together,” said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David Goldfein.

During her speech at the Air Force Association’s Air Warfare Symposium in February, Barrett stated, “Our priorities can be summed up simply. We need a modern, smart, connected, strong Air and Space Force to deter and defend against aggression and preserve precious freedom and peace.”

The Air Force is changing, but as Wilson puts it, “The threat has changed; now we’re looking through a lens that is an existential change, and an existential threat out there.”

<https://airman.dodlive.mil/2020/03/25/great-power-competition/> [Return to top](#)

US COUNTER-WMD

DVIDS (Atlanta, Ga.)

DTRA and USEUCOM Partner with Country of Georgia to Strengthen CBRN Capability

By Jessica Lewis/DTRA

April 7, 2020

The mission of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) Preparedness Program, in support of U.S. European Command (USEUCOM), is to train and equip partners to prepare for and respond to incidents involving chemical, biological, and radiological materials, and to contribute to the countering weapons of mass destruction (WMD) mission. In the Country of Georgia, this program works to build capacity and strengthen Georgia’s CBRN defense and response capability.

During the current COVID-19 pandemic, the close cooperation between Georgia and the United States is paying dividends. DTRA-trained and equipped Georgian partners are fighting successfully against the spread of COVID-19. This demonstrates DTRA’s unique role in delivering flexible response capabilities to our partners in Europe and around the globe, enabling our Allies and Partners to reduce the spread of COVID-19. “We stand side by side with the Country of Georgia and all of our Allies and Partners in the European theater during this global pandemic,” said Brigadier General Jessica Meyeraan, Deputy Director of Partnering, Security Cooperation, and Missile Defense, United States European Command. “United States European Command remains committed to the enduring partnership between Georgia and the United States, and we are grateful to the Defense

Threat Reduction Agency and the U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi for their partnership on this program." The ongoing train and equip program in Georgia supports the State Security Service, the Ministry of Internal Affairs CBRN Response Unit, and the Ministry of Defense's CBRN Defense Company to build the capability to domestically respond to WMD and improvised WMD incidents. In concert with this train and equip mission, other DTRA programs have helped our Georgian partners to build their WMD response capacity, increase border security, secure WMD materials, and increase national and regional cooperation in order to thwart WMD trafficking attempts.

Given increased globally instability, whether due to bad actors or naturally occurring pandemics, it is critical that DTRA and USEUCOM continue to build and nurture strong relationships to assist Allies and Partners develop their CBRN response capabilities. Not only will this prepare our Allies and Partners to mitigate the effects of a CBRN or WMD incident, but also enable them to respond to pandemics such as COVID-19 more effectively.

DTRA and USEUCOM remain committed to supporting our Ally and Partner Nations during this pandemic response.

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/366776/dtra-and-useucom-partner-with-country-georgiastrengthen-cbrn-capability>

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Defense News (Washington, D.C.)

Missile Defense Agency to Inject Competition into Homeland Missile Defense Contract

By Jen Judson

April 3, 2020

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Missile Defense Agency plans to hold a competition that could split up the work among contractors to modernize and sustain America's missile defense system, which is designed to destroy intercontinental ballistic missile threats.

Boeing has held the development and sustainment contract for the Ground-based Midcourse Defense systems in place at Fort Greely, Alaska, and Vandenberg Air Force Base, California. Boeing's contract is set to expire in 2023.

The GMD system is made up of more than 44 Ground-Based Interceptors buried in silos in the ground along with ground control stations, detection and fire control systems, and other support infrastructure.

Boeing received a sole-source \$6.6 billion award in 2018 to build a new silo and 20 more GBIs, as well as to sustain the system.

But Vice Adm. Jon Hill, the MDA's director, told an audience in March at an Association of the U.S. Army event that "we know that contract is not giving us everything that we need for the future, so we are going to compete that contract downstream."

The agency is working to develop a Next-Generation Interceptor that would replace the current GBIs with more capable interceptors. Its plan to upgrade the GBI's exoatmospheric kill vehicle with a redesigned version was canceled in 2019 due to technical problems. Rather than rework that program, the agency decided to design an entirely new interceptor and stop building new GBIs.

A request for proposals for the NGI is due imminently.

But along with a new NGI, “we are going to make sure that ground systems, sensors and fire control, all the rest of the system, we have the opportunity to inject that competition because I think that is very important,” Hill said.

The MDA previously considered splitting up the contract several times, believing that would reduce cost and create efficiency in the program, but nothing materialized toward that goal.

This time, the MDA has released two requests for information with the possibility of splitting up the contract. The most recent RFI was posted on Beta.Sam.Gov in March.

“I will tell you that our lead system integrator does a great job today and the partnerships with industry within that construct do a great job, but we think that it’s so large and complex we should be doing everybody a favor by being able to split that up without losing the integration among all those pieces,” Hill said, “so our intent is to move in that direction.”

The agency “is exploring different approaches for fulfilling the GMD Program Element requirements. Acquisition approaches under consideration range from an award of multiple contracts to execute segments/missions of the program scope to a single contract to execute the entirety of the program scope,” the RFI states. “Essential to all of the acquisition approaches under consideration is the establishment of an enduring arrangement strategy for the execution of the [Weapon Systems Integration (WSI)] functions across the program lifecycle, either under a single prime contract, or as one of the multiple contracts.”

The RFI lays out a possible plan to split up the contract into five pieces. One contractor would provide the NGI, which is being addressed through a separate request for proposals. Another would be responsible for legacy and future ground systems, and another for sustaining the existing GBIs.

And a company would operate the weapon system along with military operators and would run fleet maintenance scheduling and deconfliction, site operations, test support, and depot and parts management, the RFI lays out.

Lastly, a contractor would serve as the weapon systems integrator, making it responsible for overall GMD integration “including physical and logical integration of the GMD components, GMD system and MDA enterprise level integration, planning and execution of all necessary testing to verify and validate overall requirements compliance,” the RFI states.

Responses to the RFI are due April 10.

<https://www.defensenews.com/pentagon/2020/04/02/missile-defense-agency-to-injectcompetition-into-homeland-missile-defense-contract/>

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Breaking Defense (Washington, D.C.)

COVID-19: Army Delays Missile Defense Network Test By

Sydney J. Freedberg Jr.

April 7, 2020

WASHINGTON: The Army has indefinitely postponed a major test of its IBCS air and missile defense network to protect the soldiers and civilians involved from the COVID-19 coronavirus, Breaking Defense has learned.

A battalion of air defense troops who'd been training for weeks at White Sands Missile Range have been sent back to home base. Even more important for public health, technical experts from multiple Army agencies and contractors will no longer have to travel to the test.

Known formally as a Limited User Test, the event requires participation from across the country, the head of the Army's air & missile defense modernization task force, Brig Gen. Brian Gibson, told me in late March.

The LUT would involve both soldiers and civilians from Fort Sill, the Army's artillery & air defense center; Huntsville, headquarters for the service's missile procurement; and extensive support from the host facility, White Sands Missile Range, as well as neighboring El Paso, Tex., Gibson said. Other participants would come from even further afield, such as Army Test & Evaluation Command (ATEC) at Aberdeen Proving Grounds.

"There are testers from afar that come in to oversee that test," Gibson told me. "Those are all variables that are part of this daily assessment on should we, can we, do we continue?"

Ironically, the soldiers training for the test were probably safer than the general public – as long as they were isolated in the desert at the vast White Sands Missile Range. But if one of them were somehow exposed to the coronavirus, Gibson warned, the patient would be in close quarters with lots of other soldiers and a long way away from a hospital.

"Certainly, being away from large population centers is a different dynamic, [and] most of the time that is positive," Gibson told me in March, "but, also, we're very cognizant that's still a pretty large number of individuals we have together in tight quarters that are further away from population centers where most of the health care infrastructure and support is." There have been no reports that any soldiers involved have fallen ill.

The test had been scheduled to begin May 15, after weeks of intensive training and preparation. No new date has been set, but if the Army can start the LUT up in July – far from a foregone conclusion – it can keep the high-priority program on schedule.

What is IBCS? The name is an awkward nested acronym for Integrated Air & Missile Defense (IAMD) Battle Command System. The network is intended to share data and commands seamlessly among a wide range of historically incompatible systems across the Army and, potentially, the other services. As such, it's the No. 1 priority in the Army's air & missile defense portfolio, which is in turn one of the service's Big Six priority areas for modernize.

The program's been in the works for over a decade with many ups, downs and delays, but the Army and lead contractor Northrop Grumman are confident they have turned IBCS around.

Four years ago, an earlier — disastrous — Limited User Test revealed software problems that led the Army to delay the program four years and overhaul the entire program. Since that 2016 LUT, the Army and Northrup have been bringing soldiers and engineers together frequently to try out the latest software upgrades and make fixes, rather than waiting for feedback from a major test event. The Army even brought in the Air Force for an experiment in which an F-35A Joint Strike Fighter successfully transmitted targeting data on a missile to IBCS.

Compatibility with IBCS is now mandatory for all future Army air & missile defense systems, which has been a stumbling block for the Israeli-made Iron Dome. Top brass have even begun touting IBCS as a key building block of the future Joint All-Domain Command & Control (JADC2) mega-network meant to coordinate all the armed services in a future war with Russia or China.

So the Army and Northrop were understandably eager to show off how well the latest version of IBCS performs. When they'll have a chance to do so depends less on what they do themselves than on the progress the entire nation makes against an insidious and invisible enemy.

<https://breakingdefense.com/2020/04/covid-19-army-delays-missile-defense-network-testexclusive/>

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US ARMS CONTROL

Newsweek (New York, N.Y.)

Russia Says U.S. 'Unwillingness' Is Threatening Major Nuclear Weapons Deal

By David Brennan

April 8, 2020

Russia has again pointed the finger at the U.S. for delaying the extension of the New START nuclear weapons treaty, which expires next year.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told reporters Wednesday that any questions about why the deal has not been extended should be directed to Washington rather than Moscow. Peskov said the Kremlin remains keen to make a deal, but has met with delay from the White House.

"Actions on destruction of this document—on its non-extension—are taken not by Moscow," Peskov told reporters, according to the Tass state news agency. "Rather, this is our U.S. colleagues' unwillingness, and we have repeatedly expressed our regret in that regard."

The 10-year New START treaty came into force in 2011. It extended the existing START agreement, which was signed in the early 1990s.

New START capped the number of deployed Russian and U.S. strategic nuclear warheads and bombs at 1,550, and the number of deployed intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles and heavy bombers used for nuclear missions at 700. The total allowed number of deployed and non-deployed assets is currently 800.

New START is the last of what former Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev called the "three principal pillars of global strategic stability," following the collapse of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2002 and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty last year.

Russia has repeatedly said that it wants to extend New START, but the U.S. has still not revealed its plans. President Donald Trump has hinted that they wish to include China in any new deal, but experts—among them one of the original negotiators of START—have warned this is not feasible in such a short time frame. Chinese officials have dismissed any suggestion of involvement in a new treaty.

Newsweek has contacted the State Department for comment on its plans regarding New START.

Peskov acknowledged that the New START deal has fallen down the pecking order with the appearance of the coronavirus pandemic. Both the U.S. and Russia—like many other nations—are struggling to contain the virus. "The coronavirus has halted many vital processes," Peskov said, "This is the reality we have to face."

Russian Deputy Chairman of the Security Council of Russia Dmitry Medvedev—who was serving as president when New START was signed—complained Wednesday that in the nine years since the deal was agreed, the U.S. has flipped from "cooperation to political pressure and unleashed an unprecedented war of sanctions against us, trying to oust Russia from the global agenda."

In an op-ed for Tass, Medvedev suggested that removing sanctions on Moscow would be a good first step to re-open New START talks. "If the New START deal ceases to exist, its demise will have extremely serious consequences for international security," the former president and prime minister said.

Russian officials including President Vladimir Putin have urged the White House to lift sanctions—imposed because of Russia's annexation of Crimea, support of separatists in eastern Ukraine and meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential election—to help the global response to coronavirus.

<https://www.newsweek.com/russia-us-unwillingness-threatening-major-nuclear-weapons-deal1496824>

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Al-Monitor (Washington, D.C.)

COVID-19 Pandemic Intensifies Iran Sanctions Debate

By Bryant Harris

April 8, 2020

The global COVID-19 pandemic has added a new sense of urgency to the political debate over whether — and to what extent — the United States should lift sanctions on Iran as it struggles to adequately contain the coronavirus.

Iranian leaders have largely asserted that the US sanctions regime has hindered its COVID-19 response, noting that it has resulted in significant shortages of medical supplies. The Donald Trump administration released a State Department fact sheet this week dismissing the claims as "Iran's sanctions relief scam."

And while Democrats have universally called on the Trump administration to provide more leeway for humanitarian trade with Iran, the more hawkish and progressive wings of the party are divided on whether to lift the broader sectoral sanctions.

The Trump administration counters that the Treasury Department issued a general license exemption for humanitarian trade through Iran's Central Bank in February — after a counterterrorism designation last year effectively cut off exemptions for medical and agricultural trade. Notably, the United States did not object last week when Europe used its new humanitarian trade mechanism INSTEX to facilitate the delivery of medical goods to Iran for the first time.

And while the Trump administration has lambasted Iran for rejecting the US offer to provide direct coronavirus aid, the United States is also using its clout at the International Monetary Fund to block Tehran's \$5 billion emergency loan request. Under US law, Washington is required to oppose financial assistance from international financial institutions to countries listed as state sponsors of terror, a designation Iran has.

Furthermore, critics say the general license for humanitarian trade is discouraging Western companies and banks from having transactions with Iran. "Who is going to take on the risk for the trade?" asked Amir Handjani, a fellow at the Truman National Security Project. "In theory it's

allowed, but in practice the barriers that have been put up in front of it make it almost impractical — both from the banking perspective and from a trade perspective.”

Only five Iranian banks are currently able to facilitate humanitarian trade without putting foreign companies at risk of US sanctions.

Additionally, Human Rights Watch noted this week that “some of the equipment crucial to fighting the virus, such as decontamination equipment and full-mask respirators, require a special license” despite the humanitarian exemption.

Human Rights Watch referred to an October report, which found “that in practice these exemptions have failed to offset the strong reluctance of US and European companies and banks to risk incurring sanctions and legal action by exporting or financing exempted humanitarian goods.”

According to the Treasury Department, the number of license applications for additional medical trade with Iran has plummeted since the Barack Obama administration, with 220 applications in the fourth quarter of 2016 versus only 36 applications in the first quarter of 2019 — the latest available figure.

The top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Middle East panel, Chris Murphy, D-Conn., led 10 Democratic colleagues in a letter to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin last month calling for a “clear general licenses authorizing specific medical goods and equipment to facilitate international relief efforts.”

Former Vice President Joe Biden — who became the Democratic party’s presumptive presidential nominee today — also came out in favor of limited action to ease humanitarian trade with Iran last week. A group of 24 European and American diplomats, including officials from the Obama, George W. Bush and Bill Clinton administrations, also called on the Trump administration to do more to facilitate Iranian humanitarian trade earlier this week.

Biden has also pledged to reenter the nuclear deal that Trump withdrew from in 2018, which would require the United States to lift the broad sectoral sanctions hammering Iran’s economy.

“Those outside Iran who oppose non-kinetic economic pressure as a policy tool have found a new vector for the same argument,” said Behnam Ben Taleblu, a senior fellow at the hawkish Foundation for Defense of Democracies. “A public health crisis is being cited as a way to claw back to a fatally flawed and increasingly futile nuclear deal.”

Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., who dropped out of the Democratic presidential primary today, wants to go further than Biden. Sanders led 33 progressive lawmakers last month in a letter beseeching the Trump administration to lift the broad financial sanctions on Iran for the duration of the pandemic. The left-leaning lobby group J Street was among the 13 organizations that backed the letter.

J Street’s main rival, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), supports Trump’s stringent Iran sanctions regime, which forms the crux of his maximum pressure campaign.

Democrats closely aligned with AIPAC, including House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Eliot Engel, D-N.Y., and the top Democrat on the Senate foreign relations panel, Bob Menendez, D-N.J., have explicitly called for the current US sanctions to remain in place.

“The mainstream Democrats — Engel, Menendez — they have a more reasonable approach,” said Harley Lippman, an AIPAC executive committee member and the president of the Institute for the Study of Global Anti-Semitism and Policy. “I’m glad the sanctions made an exemption for humanitarian trade, but I don’t want to undermine the president’s [maximum pressure] strategy, because I think it’s an effective strategy.”

Lippman, a centrist Democrat, also criticized the party's efforts to rein in the president's war powers after the strike on Iranian Maj. Gen. Qasem Soleimani earlier this year, arguing that "it's important for Democrats to be more aligned with Trump [on this] because I think the more disagreement with Trump on Iran just sends the wrong signal to Iran."

The Trump administration has seized upon Iran's multibillion dollar expenditures on its regional proxies, its Health Ministry budget cuts, the rampant corruption throughout the country and Tehran's botched coronavirus response to argue that the Iranians have the economic means to fight the fallout from COVID-19 despite US sanctions.

"The phrase 'too little, too late' best describes [Iran Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's] tapping of a national wealth fund to finance Iran's [coronavirus] fight," said Ben Taleblu. "Tehran's new plan to gradually lift some travel restrictions in a bid to jump-start the economy sadly tells you what matters most. This is not a sanctions issue. This is a governance issue, plain and simple."

But Tyler Cullis, a sanctions lawyer at Ferrari & Associates, argued that the sanctions have prevented Iran from doing what the United States did in response to the crisis: provide a massive liquidity infusion into financial markets and stimulus checks meant to encourage its citizens to stay home.

"Iran's Central Bank can't make massive infusions of liquidity into its financial market because Iran's Central Bank doesn't have much liquidity of its own," said Cullis. "Iran can't dramatically expand unemployment insurance because Iran doesn't have much export revenue, and the reason it doesn't have much revenue is because of Trump's maximum pressure campaign."

Read more: <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/04/covid19-iran-sanctionsdebate-congress-democrats.html#ixzz6J8K7n2Wl> <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/04/covid19-iran-sanctions-debate-congressdemocrats.html>

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UPI (Washington, D.C.)

Japan, South Korea Discuss North Korea Missile Tests

By Elizabeth Shim

April 8, 2020

April 8 (UPI) -- Senior diplomats representing Japan and South Korea exchanged a phone call to discuss North Korea's recent missile tests, according to multiple press reports.

Japanese television network NHK reported Wednesday Shigeki Takizaki, the Japanese diplomat for Asia and Oceanian affairs, spoke to Lee Do-hoon, South Korea's special representative for Korean Peninsula peace and security affairs. The two sides agreed to engage in trilateral cooperation with the United States.

North Korea has been active with weapons tests in March amid the global coronavirus pandemic. The short-range missiles were described as tactical weapons, and the provocations have been condemned in Tokyo and Seoul.

On Wednesday Takizaki and Lee addressed North Korea's test on March 29, when the regime used "super-large" rocket launchers near Wonsan to fire two missiles.

Takizaki also raised the issue of COVID-19 in North Korea. Pyongyang has said there are zero cases of the deadly disease in the country, but infections could be spreading, Takizaki said during his call with Lee.

Tokyo has suggested North Korea is struggling to contain the virus.

Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi said on March 24 the disease is likely spreading from areas of North Korea bordering China, to its southern provinces.

"If there are absolutely no confirmed patients in North Korea, then that would be a miracle," Motegi had said.

Lee's call with Takizaki comes after consultations with U.S. Deputy Secretary of State and U.S. Special Representative on North Korea Stephen Biegun, South Korean news service Newsis reported.

The U.S. and South Korean representatives spoke last week using an online platform and agreed to the "full denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula" and the pursuit of a permanent peace settlement.

North Korea's weapons tests are raising the stakes after Pyongyang pulled back from nuclear negotiations in 2019.

U.S. analyst Ankit Panda of The Diplomat said the tests might have been ordered in part to improve morale in the North Korean military following a month-long lockdown.

https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2020/04/08/Japan-South-Korea-discuss-NorthKorea-missile-tests/7101586363862/

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COMMENTARY

Atlantic Council (Washington, D.C.)

Why a New Nuclear Deal with Iran is Needed Now

By Pierre GoldSchmidt

April 6, 2020

Throughout his election campaign, US President Donald J. Trump declared that the nuclear pact with Iran was "a disaster," "the worst deal ever negotiated," and that if elected president his "Number-One priority" would be to dismantle it. After becoming president, Trump kept his word and on May 8, 2018 the United States unilaterally withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Were Trump's criticisms justified? When he stated that the JCPOA—because of its "sunset" clause—does not prevent Iran from eventually acquiring the material to make nuclear weapons, he was correct. His accusation that the JCPOA gave Iran access to a mountain of cash, some of which has been used to produce nuclear-capable missiles, finance militant proxies, and spread violence and chaos throughout the region was likely also accurate.

Was it therefore right to withdraw from the JCPOA and to impose unprecedented economic sanctions from November 2018 onwards, notably by limiting Iranian oil exports to the maximum?

As a strong supporter of keeping one's word and complying with international agreements, I must admit that I surprise myself by posing the question in a serious way.

Clearly the answer depends on the outcome. If it leads Iran to withdraw from the nuclear NonProliferation Treaty (NPT)—as Iranian officials have been threatening for some time—or to a major military confrontation, it would be a disaster. On the other hand, if it leads to a better and lasting win-win agreement between the United States and Iran, Trump will be praised for his decision. Developments over the past year are not grounds for much optimism and the coronavirus pandemic has understandably overshadowed other priorities. Yet there is still a chance that this manufactured crisis can be a catalyst for progress on the nuclear front and provide Iran with urgently needed sanctions relief.

The basic outlines of any new agreement are clear: stronger assurances that Iran will not produce nuclear weapons in the long term and a credible guarantee that US sanctions will effectively be lifted as long as Iran complies with its obligations. This new agreement should also provide for a number of measures that are not included in the JCPOA, in particular:

- That Iran ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which should not be a problem since in the JCPOA “Iran reaffirms that under no circumstances will Iran ever seek, develop, or acquire any nuclear weapons.”
- That Iran place all its nuclear materials and facilities under “irreversible [International Atomic Energy Association] IAEA safeguards.”
- That Iran’s parliament ratifies the Additional Protocol to its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency without further delay.

Furthermore, as US Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Nonproliferation Christopher Ford stated in September 2019, any comprehensive deal must include “the requirement for robust IAEA verification and monitoring, including authorities that go beyond Iran’s Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and the Additional Protocol to include additional access rights.”

This is a position I have long advocated for any state found in non-compliance with its Safeguards Agreement. These extended IAEA access rights would be terminated as soon as the Agency has drawn the “broader conclusion” that there are no undeclared nuclear materials and activities in the state and that its declarations to the Agency are correct and complete. As Ford also said, “after full disclosure of its past weapons program and ceasing its enrichment work, Iran would be entitled and encouraged to enjoy more comprehensively the benefits of peaceful applications of nuclear technology.”

Snapback and the arms embargo

While the Trump administration has pursued a policy of “maximum pressure,” adding more and more sanctions on Iran, the European Union has been trying by a variety of means to save the JCPOA. In January 2018, it created a barter mechanism called INSTEX (Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges) to allow EU companies to trade with Iran—a mechanism that has just concluded its first transaction. In addition, in early September 2019, France proposed that Europe grant Iran a \$15 billion credit line repayable through future oil sales. Nevertheless, the US threat to sanction companies doing business with Iran prompted many major European companies (including Airbus, Total, German and French car companies, Siemens, and Danish ship operator Maersk) to stop trading and investing in Iran.

At the end of September 2019, at the UN General Assembly in New York, French President

Emmanuel Macron made a concerted effort to arrange a meeting between Trump and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani. The “Macron plan,” to the best of my understanding, can be summed up in four points:

1. We must ensure that Iran will never have the nuclear weapon;
2. Iran must take concrete steps to help bring an end to the civil war in Yemen;
3. Iran must guarantee freedom of movement in the Strait of Hormuz;
4. The sanctions imposed on Iran must be lifted.

Rouhani and Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif responded to Macron that the United States must first publicly promise to lift sanctions. Rouhani said that he was not interested in the type of flashy summit that Trump had with the North Korean leader, Kim Jong-Un.

As is well known, the JCPOA contains a unique dispute resolution mechanism called “snap-back sanctions.” If any of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (UNSC) plus Germany (the P5+1) considers that Iran is not meeting its commitments under the JCPOA, and that the issue constitutes a significant non-performance, it could, after several attempts at conciliation at different levels of power, refer the matter to the Security Council. The UNSC would then have to decide if it confirms the renewal of the lifting of sanctions adopted under former legally binding UNSC resolutions. If in such a case the United States uses its veto right, all such resolutions would instantly become applicable again.

Until recently the EU, in order to save the JCPOA, has resisted engaging the “snap-back” procedure considering that Iran’s breaches were not “significant” and could still be reversed. However, that became impossible after Iran operated a cascade of sixty IR-6 centrifuges at Natanz, started the development of more efficient IR-9 centrifuges, and began enriching uranium in the underground Fordow facility.

Therefore, on January 14, 2020 the EU triggered the JCPOA dispute resolution mechanism while making clear that they would not rush to bring the matter to the Security Council. However, adding to the difficulties facing the EU are some time-sensitive provisions in the agreement itself, including the scheduled lifting of sanctions in October 2020 on Iran’s acquisition or sale of heavy conventional weapons and missiles. If the EU wants to avoid this, it will have in the coming months to refer the matter to the Security Council for a vote against the further suspension of sanctions under previous UNSC resolutions.

Such a course of action would not be without risks. Russia and China may well consider that Iran’s violations of the JCPOA were the consequence of the US unilateral withdrawal from the agreement and decide not to implement previous legally binding UNSC sanctions against Iran. This would create a damaging precedent, which could irreversibly undermine the credibility and effectiveness of the UNSC in preventing an aggravation of “any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression” as provided under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

In my view, there is thus no alternative to behind the scenes good faith negotiations with all the parties to hammer out a new agreement.

The best guarantee that Iran’s nuclear program is and will remain exclusively peaceful would be for Iran to adopt the so-called “nuclear gold standard”—a legally binding obligation to forswear enrichment and reprocessing technology. Iran, however, has repeatedly stated that it will never give up what it considers its right under the NPT to enrich uranium.

It might be possible to find an acceptable formula to achieve a similar goal without Iran having to formally renounce this right. Iran could, for example, commit to suspend all nuclear fuel-cycle activities and mothball its conversion and enrichment facilities as long as it is able to supply its nuclear power plants with fresh fuel elements without undue delay and at a fair market price. In exchange, the United States would commit to not restrain Iran's export of gas and oil under any pretext while retaining the right to impose other sanctions for reasons unrelated to Iran's nuclear program. In order to avoid a repetition of the unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA by the United States, the new agreement might have to take the form of a treaty approved by the US Senate.

During negotiations, Iran could implement confidence-building measures such as reducing its stockpile of enriched uranium to the level and grade required by the JCPOA and closing the Fordow enrichment facility. In return, the United States could partially suspend sanctions limiting Iranian oil exports. These measures are all the more achievable because they are easily reversible.

The "New JCPOA" would have to be strictly limited to Iran's nuclear program. Other points related to Iran's foreign policy and military involvement in the region and ballistic missiles could be the subject of a separate political agreement possibly involving other partners such as Saudi Arabia.

If the Trump administration refuses to negotiate a new nuclear agreement as long as Iran doesn't commit to stop supporting Hezbollah, get out of Syria, retract from Iraq, and end human rights abuses, there will be no "New JCPOA" and the situation will only get worse. On the contrary, if a "New JCPOA" can be concluded, Trump would be able to say that he did better than former President Barack Obama and that he was therefore right to withdraw from the original agreement.

Such an outcome could be seen as a major political victory for Trump—which may be an inducement for him to show some flexibility in the negotiations. A "New JCPOA" would certainly require support by other permanent members of the UN Security Council at a time when there is a great deal of tension among some of these nations. There is, however, one thing on which they can all agree: they do not want to see another country follow North Korea's example of withdrawing from the NPT and getting the bomb.

For any negotiation to succeed, the outcome must be perceived as a win-win for both parties, and both sides must be willing to negotiate simultaneously and in good faith. Unfortunately, these conditions are not being met today. To reach that stage will require a concerted effort from the EU, Russia, and China to convince the United States and Iran that it is in everyone's best interest not to miss any opportunity to make progress in resolving the Iranian nuclear crisis now.

Pierre Goldschmidt is a former Deputy Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Head of the Department of Safeguards.

<https://atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/iransource/why-a-new-nuclear-deal-with-iran-is-needed-now/>

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Real Clear Defense (Washington, D.C.)

Smarter Ways to Improve Missile Defense Capability

By Patty-Jane Geller

April 8, 2020

The January 7 Iranian missile attack against al-Asad air base in Iraq immediately led many to question why the base had no missile defenses in place.

The United States is now moving a Patriot battery to Al-Asad. Similarly, the U.S. sent Patriot and THAAD batteries to Saudi Arabia after the September 2019 cruise missile and UAV attacks on its oil facilities.

In these actions, the U.S. appears to be chasing the Iranian threat, one step behind. These linear and reactionary deployments are understandable for the short term, but, like a game of whack-a-mole, this approach will become unsustainable. Outpacing the threat requires smarter and more imaginative methods. As President Trump said last year, we need revolutionary rather than incremental improvements.

It is true that Iranian attacks reveal a vulnerability in U.S. forward deployments, and for now, deploying more Patriot, and THAAD batteries will help fill gaps. But the number of Patriot and THAAD batteries will always be limited. It's unfeasible to deploy more interceptors to more unprotected locations ad infinitum. Moreover, to attempt to do so is to misunderstand the concept of operations behind regional missile defense. While missile defenses will always be finite, their presence can bolster regional deterrence by introducing doubt, thereby complicating an adversary's decision-making.

Deployed missile defense batteries in a region force the adversary to account for defended targets when planning an attack. To achieve deterrence by denial, one need only do enough to convince an adversary that the odds of him achieving his desired outcome are too low relative to the cost and risk of launching a missile attack. If the adversary makes that calculation due to the presence of missile defenses, he will abandon or alter his attack plans, perhaps choosing a less lucrative target instead.

Choosing which assets to protect is a matter of policy, based on factors such as an assessment of where defenses would provide the most value. Establishing a missile defense force posture in one region often, by default, requires accepting a greater level of risk at undefended locations—e.g., alAsad in January. In a world of finite resources, locating missile defense systems at every base and installation within a given region would prove cost-prohibitive and likely operationally infeasible.

Instead, at unprotected locations, the U.S. military typically relies on passive defense measures like shelter and early warning, while maintaining the option to conduct left-of-launch strikes (i.e., preemptive cyber, electronic, or even kinetic strikes) if intelligence indicates an impending attack. Even though interceptors were not deployed in Iraq, radars (which are part of the missile defense network) provided early warning, giving soldiers some time to prepare for the strikes.

As tension increased between the United States and Iran, perhaps a Patriot system should have been deployed at al-Asad. But if the Iranians knew that al-Asad was adequately protected, might they have just chosen a different unguarded target, instead? There will always be more assets we want to defend than missile defenses available. The real question, then, is how to achieve more with less.

The answer lies in increasing distributed missile defense operations. The Army's new command and control network for missile defense, the Integrated Air and Missile Defense Battle Command System (IBCS), will serve as a necessary step to achieving this solution. Scheduled for initial use in 2022, IBCS will link all missile defense sensors and interceptors to one fire control center, as opposed to today's more stove-piped approach in which each unit independently operates its colocated sensor and launcher. By permitting air and missile defenses to function as a joint kill web, rather than a linear kill chain, IBCS will be able to determine the best shooter to take down an incoming missile.

Such integration permits a commander to disperse each missile defense system's various sensors, shooter, and fire control elements without loss of capability. For example, instead of having to move

an entire Patriot battery or battalion from place to place within a region, a regional commander can separate launchers or sensors from the battery and distribute them more freely. Such flexibility expands the defended area, introduces doubt about where defenses are located, and further complicates an adversary's decision-making.

Other steps toward more flexible operations include THAAD remote launch. If a THAAD unit can remotely fire an interceptor, then a commander does not have to cluster THAAD interceptors near its radar or control system, and can instead locate the interceptors elsewhere to expand the defended area.

The Army also plans to incorporate a Patriot battery's PAC-3 MSE launchers into THAAD units. This would further improve the ability to spread out launchers and expand shooter coverage in a region.

To meet the increasingly complex air and missile threat, acquiring more missile defense batteries for both the United States and its partners would certainly be a welcome step. But improving capacity alone is not a sustainable nor a cost-effective solution. Instead, improved integration, distributed deployments, and flexible concepts of operation will lead to real success in revolutionizing air and missile defense capabilities.

Patty-Jane Geller is a policy analyst specializing in nuclear deterrence and missile defense at The Heritage Foundation's Center for National Defense.

https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2020/04/08/smarter_ways_to_improve_missile_defense_capability_115181.html

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Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (Vienna, Austria)

A Sad Anniversary: New START Turns 10

By Dr. Nikolai Sokov

April 7, 2020

April 8 is the tenth anniversary of the signing of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START)—a bilateral US-Russian treaty that mandated the reduction of American and Russian strategic forces to 1,550 deployed nuclear warheads and 700 deployed delivery vehicles. Overall, the treaty has been a success: the parties have reduced their strategic weapons below these levels. According to the latest exchange of data as of March 1, 2020, the United States had 1,373 deployed warheads and Russia 1,326; the number of delivery vehicles was 655 and 485, respectively. That is, the two countries have fewer strategic weapons than they are entitled to, which is good news.

These figures conceal rather grim reality, however. In 2018, I wrote an article analyzing the state of strategic arms control and concluded that the prospects were not good: chances for the next treaty were slim and parties were nowhere near serious discussion of issues that divided them. Two years later, I can only conclude that things have become worse.

The future of New START remains uncertain. It expires in less than a year, but can be extended by another five years. The need for extension was obvious already in 2018—this was the only chance to maintain predictability and transparency of US and Russian strategic forces while at the same time buying time to negotiate a new treaty. Today, less than a year from the expiration of New START, extension is still pending, same as it was two years ago. Moscow keeps calling for extension almost weekly. Washington remains silent and appears to condition any movement on arms

control, whether New START extension or new negotiations, on the participation of China, which is not particularly eager to join the process, to put it mildly.

Russia, in principle, supports multilateralizing the nuclear arms control process, but objects to linking it to New START extension. As explained recently by the Russian Ambassador to the United States Anatoly Antonov, Moscow continues to believe that New START should be the last bilateral treaty and that the next one must be multilateral. At the same time, it insists involvement of China in the nuclear arms process should be achieved by patient persuasion rather than pressure, and says there is simply not enough time to do that. Furthermore, for Russia, multilateralization means involving all five “official” (i.e., listed in the Nonproliferation Treaty) nuclear powers, that is, including the United Kingdom and France. Few in the United States even take note of that Russian position although it has been consistently repeated for many years.

There is an almost universal consensus that New START should be extended, and it seems likely that at the last moment the White House will agree to extension. How exactly this will work is far from obvious, since Moscow keeps repeating that it needs several months to have the parliament agree to it. On the other hand, the Kremlin will hardly allow legal formalities stand in the way. Overall, the situation will likely remain tense until the last moment.

There is still no new treaty in the works that could replace New START. Two years ago, I assessed the chances of negotiating a new treaty to replace New START as very low; today, they are even lower. New START itself was a replacement for START I, which had been signed in 1991 and expired in 2009. The transition from START I to New START was not smooth—the United States and Russia had to live without a strategic arms treaty for more than a year (from December 6, 2009 to February 5, 2011), but during that time they were either negotiating or ratifying, so it was obvious the replacement would come soon. Today, the parties have not even begun serious discussion of issues that were on the agenda two years ago, such as missile defense, long-range conventional strike weapons, and tactical nuclear weapons, and new issues have emerged since.

Even as parties were reducing their strategic nuclear weapons, qualitative upgrades have continued unabated. On March 1, 2018, Russian President Vladimir Putin presented a host of new weapons programs, including Avangard, a hypersonic glide warhead for strategic missiles; a new heavy intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), Sarmat, capable of reaching the United States from the south and thus undermining the effectiveness of NORAD; Kinzhal, an air-launched ballistic missile; Burevestnik, a nuclear powered air-launched cruise missile (ALCM) of supposedly unlimited range; and an unmanned underwater vehicle Poseidon. The latter two are still in the development stage (Burevestnik has reportedly suffered major setbacks as a result of a failed test), but the former three have either entered the deployment stage (Avangard and Kinzhal) or are near completion (Sarmat).

The United States insists that new Russian weapons are covered by strategic arms control regimes. Moscow has already said that Avangard and Sarmat (when it enters the deployment stage) will be accountable under New START, but other systems will require separate discussions and may become part of a new treaty—presumably in exchange for concessions by the United States.

The United States has only begun deployment of a low-yield warhead W76-2 on Trident II submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), which, like Avangard, does not directly affect accounting under New START, which does not differentiate between various types of warheads. In the coming years, however, the United States will embark on an almost wholesale replacement of its aging strategic delivery vehicles. The new systems will be more advanced than existing ones. In other words, the United States follows the same path as Russia, but with significant delay—the loss of production and maintenance capacity forces the latter to begin the replacement cycle sooner.

It is difficult to gauge how new systems may be fitted into the next treaty. For example, the Kinzhal aeroballistic missile is in many ways (range, likely missions) similar to ALCMs but is deployed on non-strategic aircraft, whereas ALCMs can only be carried by heavy bombers. There will be other difficult questions. Further aggravating challenges of new negotiations will be the dual capability of ALCMs and sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs) as well as the old Russian demand that even purely conventional ALCMs and SLCMs be included into arms control negotiations one way or another (although Russia has been voicing its demand for at least two decades, it has not yet operationalized it in a set of specific accounting and limitation rules).

In any event, the traditional refusal of the United States to include long-range conventional assets into the strategic arms control process has become outdated and even dangerous because Russia has conventional ALCMs and SLCMs and is quickly increasing their numbers; Russian conventional capability is becoming a major headache for NATO. Yet, US Senate's advice and consent resolution on New START expressly prohibits negotiations on these weapons, and how the current or the next US administration may handle that situation is far from clear.

Another old controversy, missile defense, also remains without change. Russia continues to insist that missile defense becomes part of a future treaty, one way or another, whereas the United States continues to refuse. The US Senate resolution on New START prohibits negotiations on that issue. Yet, Russia is slowly but surely increasing its own missile defense capability, and eventually the United States will need to contend with it, just as it now has to contend with the Russian long-range conventional capability. The issue of missile defense is primarily a matter of domestic politics, so it is difficult to predict how it may be resolved, but it may end up once again as a major impediment to arms control.

The state of arms control overall has significantly worsened since 2018. The most important development is, of course, the end of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in 2019 after several years of increasingly acrimonious conflict: the United States accused Russia of violation while Russia denied it and, in turn, levied its own accusations against the United States. As both sides prepare for responses and counter-responses, Europe is slowly crawling into another Euromissile crisis similar to the one that took place in the early 1980s, but this time perhaps more intense because weapons are more capable and will likely be more numerous. One can already hear familiar talk about the need to deploy weapons to force Russia into arms control, a repeat of the 1980s gambit. But with the near-zero probability of a new Mikhail Gorbachev coming to power, this gambit is unlikely to work a second time.

Other arms control agreements ended even earlier, including keystone ones such as the 1990 Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty or the 1991 Presidential Nuclear Initiatives (PNIs), which reduced non-strategic nuclear weapons. Today, New START is the only remaining nuclear arms control treaty that regulates US and Russian nuclear weapons. If it expires in 2021, the nuclear weapons of the two countries, for the first time since 1972, will be completely unregulated by any agreement whatsoever.

In short, little has changed since my 2018 piece and the few things that have changed are for the worse. Some hope that if a new US president is elected in 2020, things will get better—New START will be extended and negotiations on a replacement treaty will begin; five years should be sufficient to agree on a new bilateral treaty. In the meantime, both the United States and Russia could jointly try to convince China (perhaps also the United Kingdom and France) to join the process in one form or another. Indeed, challenges create opportunities and crises can produce innovative solutions. There is only one condition—there should be political will to use the opportunities and to find solutions.

Unfortunately, the outlook remains bleak. Positions of the two sides remain very different and there is little political will to bring them closer. Furthermore, including new classes of weapons (such as intermediate- and long-range conventional and dual-capable missiles, missile defense, etc.) will require new approaches: the framework of START was not designed to incorporate them. Resumption of serious arms control will require a truly cooperative atmosphere, which characterized INF and START I negotiations in the late 1980s. The main question is not whether we can solve outstanding issues—we certainly can. The question is whether we can muster enough political will to search for solutions.

<https://vcdnp.org/a-sad-anniversary-new-start-turns-10/>

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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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