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Feature Report

“Inferring from signaling: North Korea’s deterrence strategy and bargaining tactic”. Published by CSIS; Published Aug. 7, 2020

<https://nuclearnetwork.csis.org/inferring-from-signaling-north-koreas-deterrence-strategy-and-bargaining-tactic/>

North Korea is limited, often selective, delayed, and ambiguous. Although its state media conveys Pyongyang’s propaganda on a daily basis, much of this is “noise” to sustain an (intended) image of North Korea’s self-reliance and continuous fight against surrounding imperialists. Kim Jong Un’s rhetoric in 2019 and 2020, the increase and nature of high-level statements as well as missile tests present purposive signals. In adversarial relationships, states signal strategically in line with bargaining contexts; signaling nevertheless provides clues for analyzing the logic of apparent behavior.

Pyongyang’s missile testing serves domestic, bargaining, and technological purposes. In March and mid-April North Korea conducted five flight-tests of ballistic missiles as well as seven army, air force, and artillery drills between the end of February and mid-April. Considering the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, testing activities and military exercises project images of normalcy and enduring strength – although the regime denies any (past or present) cases of infection, public health remains an urgent issue. In the context of North Korea’s general economic and political situation, missile testing serves to mobilize domestic support and prove to internal and external audiences that sanctions do not have intended effects of desperation and surrender. 2020 is the third year under harsh sanctions. It is also the last year of Kim Jong Un’s five-year plan and the ruling Worker’s Party Korea (WPK) celebrates its 75th anniversary on October 10, 2020.³ Preparations of a major military parade for that occasion appear underway.

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NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND DETERRENCE

Air Force Magazine (Arlington, Va.)

Virtual Events: RCO Directors on Mitchell's Space Power Forum, and More

By Jennifer-Leigh Oprihory

Aug. 9, 2020

Aug 13: The Air Force Association's Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies will host its "Space Power Forum: DAFRCO/SpRCO | The Need for Specialized Acquisition Offices" event, featuring Air Force Rapid Capabilities Office Director and Program Executive Officer Randall G. Walden and Space Force Rapid Capabilities Office Director and Program Executive Officer Michael W. Roberts. Event video will tentatively be posted to the think tank's website and YouTube page afterwards.

Aug. 17: AFA's Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies will present a new installment of its "Aerospace Nation" series featuring U.S. Air Force Academy Superintendent Lt. Gen. Jay B. Silveria. Event video will tentatively be posted to the think tank's website and YouTube page afterwards.

Aug. 19: AFA's Mitchell Institute will host a Nuclear Deterrence Forum featuring Lt. Gen. Richard M. Clark, the Air Force's deputy chief of staff for strategic deterrence and nuclear integration. Event video will tentatively be posted to the think tank's website and YouTube page afterwards.

Aug. 26: AFA's Mitchell Institute will host a Space Power Forum about NASA and U.S. Space Force Partnership in Space featuring NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine and USSF Chief of Space Operations Gen. John W. "Jay" Raymond. Event video will tentatively be posted to the think tank's website and YouTube page afterwards.

Aug. 27: AFA's Mitchell Institute, in partnership with the Advanced Nuclear Weapons Alliance Deterrence Center, will host a Nuclear Deterrence Forum featuring National Nuclear Security Administration for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation Brent K. Park as part of their NNSA Series. Event video will tentatively be posted to Mitchell's website and YouTube page afterwards.

Aug. 31: AFA's Mitchell Institute will host a new installment of its "Aerospace Nation" series featuring Maj. Gen. Mark E. Weatherington, who commands Eighth Air Force and the Joint-Global Strike Operations Center. Event video will tentatively be posted to the think tank's website and YouTube page afterwards.

<https://www.airforcemag.com/virtual-events-this-week/>

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Air Force Magazine (Arlington, Va.)

B-2s Deploy to Diego Garcia

By Brian W. Everstine

Aug. 12, 2020

The Air Force's stealth bombers have returned to the Pacific.

Three B-2s arrived Aug. 12 at Naval Support Facility Diego Garcia from Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., for the first Spirit bomber task force since a deployment to Hawaii in January 2019. The deployment marks the first time B-2s deployed to the Pacific since the service's continuous bomber presence ended in April.

After the 29-hour flight to Diego Garcia, the B-2s joined B-1s already deployed to Andersen Air Force Base, Guam.

"We are excited to return to this important location. [Diego Garcia] puts the 'INDO' in INDOPACOM," task force commander Lt. Col. Christopher Conant said in a Pacific Air Forces release. "This Bomber Task Force is our National Defense Strategy in action. We are sharpening our lethality while strengthening relationships with key allies, partners, and our sister-service teammates."

While the bombers are supporting INDOPACOM, Diego Garcia also has been a deployment spot for bombers supporting combat operations in U.S. Central Command. In January, B-52s from the 20th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron deployed to Diego Garcia instead of Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, in response to tensions with Iran, flying combat sorties into Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan.

While the B-2s are at Diego Garcia, they will train with partner nations and serve as a deterrent in areas such as the South China Sea. During the 2019 task force, B-2s flew 27 sorties, totaling 171 hours in both local and long-duration flights.

Meanwhile, the B-1s at Andersen continue to fly long-range sorties with partners. On Aug. 7, a B-1 from the 37th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron flew a bilateral training mission with 8 F-2s and 6 F-15s from the Japan Air Self Defense Force near Japan, and then flew a joint mission with the USS Ronald Reagan Carrier Strike Group in the Sea of Japan, according to a PACAF release.

<https://www.airforcemag.com/b-2s-deploy-to-diego-garcia/>

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Secretary of Air Force Public Affairs (Washington, D.C.)

SecDef Visits B-21 Facilities in Florida

By Secretary of Air Force Public Affairs

Aug. 3, 2020

MELBOURNE, Fla (AFNS) -- Secretary of Defense Dr. Mark Esper, visited the B-21 Raider design and development headquarters at Northrop Grumman, to witness the progress being made on the nation's most cutting edge dual-capable stealth bomber.

"Nuclear modernization is a department priority – especially in our efforts to implement the National Defense Strategy. We have made great strides in ensuring the strength and reliability of our nation's nuclear deterrent. The ability to strike any target, anywhere is the ultimate strategic deterrent and the B-21 Raider will bring that capability," Esper said.

"I am thoroughly impressed by the dedication and progress across the B-21 Raider team."

During the visit, engineers explained how the B-21 Raider uses digital engineering, prototyping and modern software development. The team also described to Esper how the B-21 Raider incorporates lessons from past programs to improve producibility and maintainability, which will enable more efficient production and sustainment. Furthermore, the use of open systems architectures preserves the ability to effectively adapt to future threats.

Gen. Timothy Ray, commander of Air Force Global Strike Command and Air Forces Strategic-Air, U.S. Strategic Command, joined Esper on the facility tour.

“We’re excited to get the B-21 Raider to bases in the mid-2020s. The progress I saw today further adds to my confidence that the B-21 Raider will preserve our long range strike and penetrating bomber capability,” Ray said.

Randy Walden, director of the Department of the Air Force Rapid Capabilities Office and program executive officer for the B-21 Raider program, described the parallel efforts ongoing in Palmdale, California, and throughout the country to expand the production capacity across the supply base: “The first test aircraft is being built, and it’s starting to look like an airplane. Suppliers from across the country are delivering parts that are coming together now. Aircraft programs will always have a few surprises early on, and we won’t be any different, but overall the B-21 Raider is coming along nicely,” Walden said.

<https://www.edwards.af.mil/News/Article/2298433/secdef-visits-b-21-facilities-in-florida/>

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Military Times

Russia Warns It Will See Any Incoming Missile as Nuclear

By Vladimir Isachenkov, The Associated Press

Aug. 10, 2020

MOSCOW — Russia will perceive any ballistic missile launched at its territory as a nuclear attack that warrants a nuclear retaliation, the military warned in an article published Friday.

The harsh warning in the official military newspaper Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star) is directed at the United States, which has worked to develop long-range non-nuclear weapons.

The article follows the publication in June of Russia’s nuclear deterrent policy that envisages the use of atomic weapons in response to what could be a conventional strike targeting the nation’s critical government and military infrastructure.

In the Krasnaya Zvezda article, senior officers of the Russian military’s General Staff, Maj. Gen. Andrei Sterlin and Col. Alexander Khryapin, noted that there will be no way to determine if an incoming ballistic missile is fitted with a nuclear or a conventional warhead, and so the military will see it as a nuclear attack.

“Any attacking missile will be perceived as carrying a nuclear warhead,” the article said. “The information about the missile launch will be automatically relayed to the Russian military-political leadership, which will determine the scope of retaliatory action by nuclear forces depending on the evolving situation.”

The argument reflects Russia’s longtime concerns about the development of weapons that could give Washington the capability to knock out key military assets and government facilities without resorting to atomic weapons.

In line with Russian military doctrine, the new nuclear deterrent policy reaffirmed that the country could use nuclear weapons in response to a nuclear attack or an aggression involving conventional weapons that “threatens the very existence of the state.”

The policy document offered a detailed description of situations that could trigger the use of nuclear weapons, including the use of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction against Russia or its allies.

In addition to that, the document states for the first time that Russia could use its nuclear arsenal if it receives “reliable information” about the launch of ballistic missiles targeting its territory or its allies and also in the case of “enemy impact on critically important government or military facilities of the Russian Federation, the incapacitation of which could result in the failure of retaliatory action of nuclear forces.”

U.S.-Russia relations are at post-Cold War lows over the Ukrainian crisis, the accusations of Russian meddling in the U.S. 2016 presidential election and other differences.

Russian officials have cast the U.S.-led missile defense program and its plans to put weapons in orbit as a top threat, arguing that the new capability could tempt Washington to strike Russia with impunity in the hope of fending off a retaliatory strike.

This shows the launch of what President Vladimir Putin described as a Russian nuclear-powered intercontinental cruise missile. (RU-RTR Russian Television via AP)

The Krasnaya Zvezda article emphasized that the publication of the new nuclear deterrent policy was intended to unambiguously explain what Russia sees as aggression.

“Russia has designated the ‘red lines’ that we don’t advise anyone to cross,” it said. “If a potential adversary dares to do that, the answer will undoubtedly be devastating. The specifics of retaliatory action, such as where, when and how much will be determined by Russia’s military-political leadership depending on the situation.”

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2020/08/09/russia-warns-it-will-see-any-incoming-missile-as-nuclear/>

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Defense News (Washington, D.C.)

Flournoy: Next Defense Secretary Needs ‘Big Bets’ to Boost ‘Eroding’ Deterrence

By Aaron Mehta

Aug. 10, 2020

WASHINGTON — The next U.S. defense secretary must be prepared to invest heavily in game-changing technology, even if it comes at the cost of existing capabilities, in order to maintain a credible deterrent for China and Russia, according to former Pentagon official Michèle Flournoy.

“Our ability to deter is — it’s not gone, but it’s an eroding asset,” Flournoy, who is seen as a top contender for the job of defense secretary should former Vice President Joe Biden win the November presidential election, said at the Aspen Security Forum on Aug. 6. “And we’ve got to pay attention now to making sure that we attend to that and invest in” needed capabilities.

“I think there’s, sort of, two parallel efforts that have to happen. One is investments that may take a decade to be fully realized and integrated into the force. Another is the question of, what can we do in the next five years with what we have, but use it differently,” she explained.

And that requires what she termed “big bets” that may take a while to come to fruition, but which need investment in the near term to get moving — investment that may require cutting legacy forces to free up money from a defense budget that has likely peaked.

“Defense budgets are probably going to flatten in the coming years, no matter who wins the election,” Flournoy said. “That means you have to make trade-offs and you have to make hard decisions, which means you probably need to buy fewer legacy forces in order to invest in the technologies that will actually make the force that you keep more relevant, more survivable, more combat effective, and better able to underwrite deterrence.”

While noting there is a “whole laundry list” of future technologies on which to make big bets, Flournoy highlighted two she considers particularly important. The first is a “network of networks” for secure communications as well as command and control that can survive an attack from any domain — space, air, naval, land and cyberspace — that China could seek to use.

“We need a command-and-control system that is powered by artificial intelligence to enable that kind of resilience in a much more contested environment,” Flournoy explained.

The second is greater investment in unmanned systems in order to augment manned capabilities.

“China has created a set of threat rings that are very, very lethal places for U.S. forces to go,” she said. “We want to augment our manned forces with unmanned systems that are still controlled by a human being, but that dramatically improve ... our ability to project power to defend an interest or an ally who’s under threat.”

As to the second track, Flournoy said “it’s really about changing our mindset and how we imagine using what we have. And so I think there are ways in which new operational concepts that could take, you know, platforms — we have munitions, we have intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance resources ... you put them together in new ways to get a better deterrent effect than what we have today.”

In an April op-ed published by Defense News, Flournoy and co-author Gabrielle Chefitz argued that the Pentagon needs to break a logjam with Congress and find ways to build greater trust with legislators. She picked up on that theme with her Aspen comments, noting the Defense Department needs to improve relations with Capitol Hill for this plan to work.

“Sometimes when the department is trying to make those trade-offs to move money from one program to another, if they don’t do a good job explaining that to Congress they sort of get the hand from Congress,” Flournoy said.

“We really have to make Congress much more of a strategic partner in this exercise. They need to understand why, [that] we know what we’re facing, the urgency. They need to be invited into the war games and to the simulations and to the experimentation, and understand why these trade-offs are being made ... to try to get better buy-in and frankly leadership from some of the key champions on the Hill.”

<https://www.defensenews.com/pentagon/2020/08/10/flournoy-next-defense-secretary-needs-big-bets-to-boost-eroding-deterrence/>

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US COUNTER-WMD

Air Force Magazine (Arlington, Va.)

Coping with COVID Across the Force

By Brian W. Everstine

July 1, 2020

As the new coronavirus pandemic upended daily life across the globe, and its restrictions changed how the Air Force trains and flies, service leaders began to see an opportunity.

The nature of COVID-19, especially how contagious it is and how it spreads, posed some similarities to how a military would face biological threats. A restriction of movement order meant bases were forced to operate in a more isolated way. A gas mask could serve as a type of face covering, a required piece of personal protective equipment (PPE) in the coronavirus era.

Just below the surface in our history and culture is a great starting point from which to adjust operations in this new environment.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David Goldfein

“Just below the surface in our history and culture is a great starting point from which to adjust operations in this new environment,” Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein wrote in an April 28 letter to commanders. “It’s time to dust off those Ability to Survive and Operate manuals. Many of us grew up in the age of Apple Orchards, MOPP levels, operations with PPE, aircraft decontamination procedures, etc. While we have not required it in recent years given our focus in the Middle East, the ability to survive and operate [ATSO] in a CBRN environment is in our DNA.”

Goldfein sent out an order: Major commands and wings should take advantage of the “new abnormal” and plan new exercises to adjust procedures for operating in that chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive threat environment. Because experts don’t project a vaccine to be widely available until as late as December 2021, the Air Force needs to “find ways to survive and operate with a virus likely to return a few times between now and then. I certainly hope I’m wrong and a vaccine comes earlier ... but hope is not a course of action. We must prepare for the long haul.”

The pandemic has hit different regions and communities differently, and each base has a unique mission, so Goldfein’s directive provides wide leeway to individual commanders.

“No two bases will be exactly the same,” he wrote. “Different missions. Different demographics. Different communities. Different leadership. It is why we have continually worked to push decision authority to you and your subordinate commanders. ... We must have trust throughout the organization. [Air Force] Secretary [Barbara] Barrett and I absolutely trust you to get the job done. ... As we have said since the beginning, don’t wait for us. Take the decision authority you have been given and move out as you in turn push decision authority to your subordinate command teams.”

Airmen at Moody Air Force Base, Ga., check their mission-oriented protective posture (MOPP) gear during chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive defense training on Feb. 4. During CBRN training, they learn the different alarm colors and which MOPP gear corresponds with each alarm. Airman Megan Estrada

Commands and wings quickly followed through. Some are following in the momentum of previous exercises, while others are creating new, large-scale training events or changing the overarching goals of planned events.

Bringing CBRN to the Forefront

CBRN defense has long been a part of the Air Force, with groups of dedicated Airmen researching and training for the threats. However, this has been back of mind for the bulk of the service, relegated to once a year exercises and computer-based training. As COVID-19 spread, however, it became a major focus quickly.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David Goldfein bumps elbows with Airmen of the 91st Missile Security Operations Squadron at Minot Air Force Base, N.D. Airman 1st Class Jesse Jenny

“The CBRN community has always been there, always working, and there’s a ton of expertise in the world. But ... CBRN and the WMD threat weren’t front and center,” said Maj. Ryan Ruediger, the chief of air operations in the Air Force’s countering weapons of mass destruction division. “And then, as we’re working in the periphery and continuing to build capabilities, design better equipment, better detectors, do all of these things, all of a sudden COVID gave us an opportunity to bring these capabilities front and center.”

In the past few years as part of an overall push toward full-spectrum readiness, the Air Force has taken a closer look at CBRN defense, rewritten guidance, and thought more deeply on what needs to be exercised, said Col. Leanne Moore, the chief of countering weapons of mass destruction in the office of the deputy chief of staff for strategic deterrence and nuclear integration.

“Our role is to optimize air power, and one of the unique things that we try to do at the Air Staff is to understand the science and behavior of the threat and characterize the hazard,” she said.

At the outset of the outbreak, CBRN experts received calls constantly, asking about the right protective equipment to wear, about how to properly sanitize aircraft, and other protective measures to take. For the Airmen responsible for training for the threats, there was a lot of “connective tissue” between the outbreak and what CBRN threats the service needs to be ready for, Ruediger said.

“We have incredible masks, equipment, and capability that will protect our Airmen in a dangerous chemical or biological environment. But it’s overkill for COVID,” Moore said. “We had a lot of people who wanted [to] pull out their chem gear and get suited up from head to toe and operate that way. When we realized that the threat really could be (mitigated) with washing your hands, wearing gloves, and just wearing a cotton face mask, we could protect our Airmen so they could continue to operate.”

The COVID-19 reality gives the Air Force the chance to better educate itself about CBRN threats, and real-world training to more effectively face similar threats in future CBRN scenarios, said Lt. Col. Paul Hendrickson, the Agile Combat Support Directorate’s AF Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Defense Systems Branch materiel leader.

“So, how do we leverage this new focus on the B in CBRN and turn it into a comprehensive readiness look so that we can make sure that we’re ready for when it really is that chemical or biological interchange with a peer adversary trying to deter or demoralize us,” he said.

Senior Airman Michael Ottaviano (left) and Staff Sgt. Brandon Staines make masks in the aircrew flight equipment shop at the New Jersey Air National Guard Base in Atlantic City in April. The shop sewed and distributed face masks for mission-essential Airmen, their families, and the wider community in response to COVID-19. Staff Sgt. Cristina Allen/NJANG

The Air Force needs to “deliberately train the right way,” by leveraging its experts at the base-level, he said. Training is needed so Airmen understand that if they face a CBRN threat, they can still operate.

“There seems to be a pervasive belief that when a chem attack or a biological attack happens, the whole base is slimed and you just can’t operate, which couldn’t be further from the truth. With proper warning, sensing, and communication, there is a whole spectrum of operations that can continue.”

Several months into the outbreak, COVID-19 has shown where the Air Force was not ready and the service is working to ensure it is ready in the future to meet a threat, no matter what it is, said Chief Master Sergeant Joseph Trenholm, the Air Force emergency management career field manager. The outbreak “opened up the aperture now on how do we do business” with the threats that exist, he said.

“So, if the CBRN Defense community is given the opportunity to share and shape with what we have available, then the momentum’s not lost,” Hendrickson said. “That’s really where you get your bang for the buck. It’s all fun and games to say we’re going [to] practice it, but if we’re going do it, we have got do it in the right way. And I think if we can—if we can get over that hump and make it a part of our DNA again we can ensure our forces are prepared for the next conflict where a CBRN threat is employed.”

177th Fighter Wing

New Jersey was among the hardest-hit states in the early stages of the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States, and that created a unique challenge for the Air National Guard’s 177th Fighter Wing at Atlantic City International Airport.

The wing’s F-16s sit alert for the North American Aerospace Defense Command’s Operation Noble Eagle mission, ready to launch to protect the nation’s airspace in a region including New York City. The wing acted early to adjust its operations—having pilots quarantine before coming in for alert duty, for example—while also sending Guardsmen out into New Jersey’s communities to help where needed as cases multiplied.

Coronavirus created a “biologically contested environment right here in our backyard,” said Wing Commander Col. Bradford Everman, in an interview. “We can’t just shut down for a week or for a month. ... We don’t have that option. We have to continue getting the job done.”

The 177th was forced to cancel a major exercise—an agile combat employment event in which the wing was to “forward deploy” to a base in Michigan and quickly stand up operations—but with that off the books, the wing is reshaping its October exercise to practice operating in a biological threat environment at home. Wings across the Air Force are required to conduct an ability to survive and operate exercise for CBRN threats, and this will be it.

“We’re going to look at it—rather than looking at it as being in Central Command, or being in Pacific Command, or somewhere around the globe—now we’re gonna look at it as what if we had to operate right here in a true biological warfare environment on the 177th Fighter Wing proper, defend it in three dimensions, and then go out and do our mission from our local base,” Everman said. “And you really can’t write the script any better than in a biologically contested environment, which is the world that we live in, day in and day out right now.”

F-22 Raptors, E-3 Sentrys, C-17 Globemaster IIIs, C-130J Hercules, and C-12F Hurons form up for a “Moose Walk” at JB Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, in a show-of-force display intended to demonstrate readiness in the region, despite COVID-19 complications. Senior Airman Jonathan Valdes Montijo

Alaska Defense

Like the 177th, the 3rd Wing at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, stands alert to protect the homeland. Indeed, the wing's F-22s launched several times in response to Russian aircraft encroaching on Alaska's airspace this past spring and summer. The wing has adjusted daily operations and worked with social distancing to safely keep pilots on alert, and in May, joined with the Air National Guard's 176th Wing at JBER to launch 26 F-22s, two C-12s, two C-130s, two E-3 Sentrys, and three C-17s in a giant "Moose Walk" to demonstrate readiness. Pilots and maintainers worked through distancing and PPE requirements, along with the need to sterilize cockpits, to conduct the event.

"The message is that we're ready—we've always been ready," said 3rd Wing Commander Col. Robert Davis in an Air Force Magazine interview. "And the challenges associated with COVID-19 have not prevented us from being ready to defend the nation in our NORAD alert mission, or to be able to project air power, to deliver air power to combatant commanders."

The "Moose Walk"—an Alaskan tweak to the more familiar "Elephant Walk"—was the first major exercise for JBER in the COVID-19 environment. The wing does CBRN-related training events on a "routine basis," Davis said, and while recent training was canceled as the pandemic began, the wing is rescheduling to train "some of the CBRN skills" soon.

The 176th Wing has kept track of COVID-19 impacts to its operations, relative to operating in the CBRN threat environment, said Wing Commander Col. Anthony Stratton .

"COVID is, to a lesser degree, very similar to how we operate in a chemical and biological environment," he explained. "In that environment we typically double the amount of time that it takes us to do a task, just as our base-level planning factor." Every step needed to generate a sortie—supply, fuel, operations, and maintenance—had to work through the complications imposed by requiring PPE and social distancing in setting up the Moose Walk.

"We want to illustrate to anybody that's out there, that may be considering that our combat capability or capacity to generate [air power might be] ... degraded due to COVID: That's absolutely not the case," Stratton said.

Out in the Pacific

Pacific Air Forces is planning to focus on CBRN and potential outbreaks in multinational training exercises. Future training events in 2021 and 2022 with the Philippines and Thailand will focus on the CBRN threat, applying lessons from the COVID-19 experience, including aeromedical evacuation.

Mobility

Air Mobility Command is applying its CBRN training experience to its COVID-19 response.

"AMC wings have been conducting local, large-scale exercises that emphasize ATSO skills, including proficiency in MOPP levels and use of personal protective equipment," AMC spokeswoman Capt. Nicole Ferrara said in a statement. "Now, AMC is applying these skills to the current operating environment, to help mitigate the threat posed by coronavirus."

For example, the day after Goldfein's letter, McConnell Air Force Base, Kan., assigned a KC-46 aircrew to test the aircraft's intercom voice communications while wearing chem-bio flight gear. Engineers from Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., remotely monitored the test, collecting data with which to create TTPs [tactics, techniques, and procedures] for operating the aircraft in a CBRN environment.

A KC-135 refuels an F-15 during Exercise Point Blank 20-02, normally a quarterly exercise between the RAF and USAF aircraft stationed in the U.K. It was the first Point Blank exercise held during the COVID-19 pandemic. Master Sgt. Matthew Plew

The command hosts its premier exercise, Mobility Guardian, every two years, and trained extensively for a CBRN environment in 2019, including decontamination procedures. The command is planning more of that for its next event scheduled for summer 2021.

Air Force CBRN experts tout Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark., as the standard-bearer for CBRN training. The base conducts monthly ATSO “rodeos” including representatives from many career fields and its C-130s, along with regular radiological recovery training, and exercises to deploy and operate in a threatened environment. The base even has “Thunder Thursdays” when an alarm goes off during a regular day, and Airmen who are a part of the exercise need to quickly put on their protective gear and continue working.

“You roll on base on a Thursday, it’s not weird to see somebody walking around in their gear,” Hendrickson said. “Everybody just says ‘Oh yeah, well, that poor soul’s part of the exercise this quarter.’”

The pandemic prompted research into how CBRN threats affect mobility aircraft and a study on the airflow in mobility aircraft to understand how a virus could spread from the cargo hold to the cockpit, and what can be done to stop it. A new Negatively Pressured Conex system approved for production this spring will be able to transport more highly contagious patients than the existing Transport Isolation System developed after the 2014 Ebola outbreak.

“From adapting aircrew protection measures to implementing aircraft decontamination procedures as needed, AMC has and will continue to seek ways of reducing risk to personnel and passengers flying on our aircraft,” Ferrara said.

Bases across U.S. Air Forces in Europe-Air Forces Africa were among the first to face the COVID-19 threat. For example, Aviano Air Base, Italy, locked down in early March as the pandemic hit northern Italy hard. The base had to change its flying schedule so pilots and maintainers could alternate on-days to avoid crowding and personal contact. The base’s F-16 squadrons, used to flying alongside Italian aircraft and other local allies, instead focused on local training in its own ranges.

Fighting COVID in the U.K.

The story was similar at RAF Lakenheath, U.K., where the 492nd Fighter Squadron broke into teams that operated on alternating weeks. That decreased flying time by about 50 percent, said Capt. Alexandra Deerr, flight commander and instructor pilot with the 492nd FS.

By late May, USAFE had canceled 14 exercises, but decided it needed to go forward with large-scale training amid the pandemic and conducted a major exercise in the North Sea with 38 aircraft from Lakenheath, Aviano, and Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany, along with a NATO E-3 AWACS and the 603rd Air Operations Center at Ramstein Air Base, Germany. Planning was done remotely, with aircrews operating as if facing biological threats. Maintainers worked in shifts and aircraft were decontaminated.

“This is really the first large force exercise (LFE), that I know of, since COVID started,” Capt. Alex Travers, the 52nd Fighter Wing’s electronic combat pilot who flew in the exercise, said in an interview. “All things considered, with the displaced planning and different units coming together for the first time in several months, it went off very well and we got some great training out there. There’s nothing like being at 1.2 Mach and 30,000 feet, and looking over and just seeing all the [USAF] contrails and thinking: ‘This is America ... This is awesome.’ So, I had a great time today.”

“The goal of this was to integrate across multiple platforms, multiple fighters in this case, to ... get into some contested, degraded operations where we can essentially go to another airspace where we’ve never met the people, in person, that we’re fighting with, and actually integrate with them and apply our joint tactics and doctrine with those guys, without having to be physically present for the mission planning,” said Capt. Michael Shaw, an F-16 pilot with Aviano’s 510th Fighter Squadron, in an interview.

The May LFE was the first in a series of similar events to be held throughout the year across USAFE, with each wing taking turns planning.

USAFE Commander Gen. Jeffrey L. Harrigian told Air Force Magazine that the pandemic provides a chance to get back to “our fundamentals” and train in a way “that forces our Airmen to work through problem sets.”

“As we look at these large force exercises and some of the other internal exercises that we’re going to do inside of USAFE I think, ultimately, what we want to look at is: Recognize that the virus is not going away, it’s gonna come back,” Harrigian said in an interview. “We’re gonna have to work our way through that. And so as we look at these exercises, how do we continue to employ the techniques that we’ve learned over the last couple months, to be able to generate sorties, generate combat power, while operating in this environment? That’s ultimately the key to our success while also looking at some of the other challenges associated with a chem or bio environment.”

<https://www.airforcemag.com/article/coping-with-covid-across-the-force/>

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Defense News (Washington, D.C.)

Alaska-based Long-range Ballistic Missile Defense Radar Fielding Delayed by a Year

By Jen Judson

Aug. 7, 2020

WASHINGTON — The fielding of a U.S. Air Force radar to detect ballistic missile threats, currently being installed at Clear Air Force Station, Alaska, is delayed by roughly a year, according to a recent Government Accountability Office report.

Information provided by the Missile Defense Agency in June to the GAO indicated all construction and integration activities for the Long Range Discrimination Radar had stopped in March due to the coronavirus pandemic.

While initial fielding was planned for fiscal 2021 and transfer to the Air Force was planned for fiscal 2022, the service is now expected to take ownership of the operational radar in late fiscal 2023.

“We did have some fallback in developing and delivery of systems because it requires people to be in close, confined spaces and sitting at computer terminals working through really tough problems like the development of an algorithm,” MDA Director Vice Adm. Jon Hill said at the virtually held Space and Missile Defense Symposium on Aug. 4.

MDA shut down radar installation efforts due to the COVID-19 pandemic, entering a “caretaker status,” Hill said. “That requires additional work. I mean, you’ve got a radar that is being built in a tough environment like Alaska — you can’t just stop. You have to go in and make sure the radar arrays are protected,” he added.

The LRDR is an S-band radar that will not only be able to track incoming missiles but also discriminate the warhead-carrying vehicle from decoys and other nonlethal objects for the Ground-Based Midcourse Defense System, which is designed to protect the continental U.S. from possible intercontinental ballistic missile threats from North Korea and Iran.

Lockheed Martin is LRDR's manufacturer.

The program, according to the GAO report, wrapped up its system prototype assessment in an operational environment in FY19, which showed the hardware and software was mature ahead of full-rate manufacturing. That assessment was delayed from FY18, the report noted, after testing took longer due to "required antenna reconfigurations and software fixes to complete."

The fixes resulted in a cost overrun of \$25 million and caused a delay in completing a developmental step associated with satellite tracking expected in FY18, according to the report.

"While construction was ongoing in [FY19], the program was monitoring risks that could threaten the upcoming transfer of LRDR custody and ownership to the government," the report stated. "Specifically the program was focusing on manufacturing of the Array Panels, Sub Array Assembly Suite modules, and Auxiliary Power Group cabinets, as well as ensuring integration on site."

Those issues "depleted schedule margin on the path towards the transfer," which was scheduled for the fourth quarter of FY20, according to the GAO, and the transfer of LRDR custody to the government was pushed back to the first quarter of FY21 due to radar component production issues.

"The good news is construction is back up and running," Hill said, "and we are delivering those arrays that are going into low-power and high-power testing later this year, so we are pretty excited about that."

According to the GAO, the current test plan for LRDR has just one flight test scheduled in the third quarter of FY21, after two ground tests. The report does not clarify if the pandemic has caused a delay in these tests.

The GAO indicated concern about conducting two ground tests before the program's only flight test, as it "increases the likelihood that the models will not be accredited when testing is complete."

As a result, "the performance analysis and the majority of the model validation and accreditation will have to be made concurrently, just prior to the LRDR Technical Capability Declaration," scheduled for the third quarter of FY21, the report stated. "This increases the risk of discovering issues late in development, which could result in performance reductions or delivery delays."

<https://www.defensenews.com/digital-show-dailies/smd/2020/08/07/alaska-based-long-range-ballistic-missile-defense-radar-fielding-delayed-by-a-year/>

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Defense News (Washington, D.C.)

Support to Pursue Hawaii-based Missile Defense Radar Continues after DoD Drops Funding

By Jen Judson

Aug. 8, 2020

WASHINGTON — Support is growing both in Congress and in the Pentagon to pursue a Hawaii-based ballistic missile defense radar that the Missile Defense Agency did not include in its fiscal 2021 funding request.

Previous MDA budget requests in FY19 and FY20 asked for funding for the discriminating radar as well as another somewhere else in the Pacific. The plan in FY19 was to field the Homeland Defense Radar-Hawaii, or HDR-H, by FY23, which meant military construction would have taken place beginning in FY21. Then in FY20, MDA requested \$247.7 million for the radar. Lockheed Martin received an award to develop the radar in December 2018.

But in FY21, funding for both the Hawaiian radar and the Pacific radar was missing in the request. MDA Director Vice Adm. Jon Hill said in February, when the request was released, that the agency decided to hit the brakes on its plans to set up the radars in the Pacific, instead planning to take a new look at the sensor architecture in the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command region to figure out what is necessary to handle emerging threats.

Hill noted that the area is covered by a forward-deployed AN/TPY-2 radar in Hawaii as well as the deployable Sea-Based X-Band radar. Additionally, Aegis ships with their radars are mobile and can be repositioned as needed to address threats in the near term, he added.

Yet, over the summer, the Hawaiian radar gained traction in Congress via funding support in the House Appropriations Committee's defense subcommittee's version of the FY21 defense spending bill and the Senate Armed Services Committee's version of the defense policy bill.

The House subcommittee injected \$133 million to pursue the homeland defense radar in Hawaii, and the SASC added in \$162 million to continue HDR-H development. The SASC also included language that essentially reminded the Pentagon that HDR-H was a response to a mandate in the FY18 National Defense Authorization Act to improve coverage for the threat of ballistic missiles in Hawaii.

The HDR-H was also listed as an unfunded requirement for FY21 by Indo-Pacific Command.

The SASC also directed the MDA to provide an updated plan that accounts for delays related to finding a site in Hawaii, noting it expects the Pentagon to fund the program in subsequent budget requests.

During a presentation at the virtually held Space and Missile Defense Symposium on Aug. 4, Hill showed a slide listing focus areas for the agency in FY21. The presentation included the currently unfunded radar, third from the top of the list.

"The potential for getting a radar onto Hawaii as part of another major sensor allows us to have that launch-all-the-way-to-intercept view out in a very large ocean area in the Pacific," Hill said.

The HDR-H is categorized as a focus area for the MDA "because if the [Defense] Department decides to move forward with HDR-H, then the HDR-H will be deployed as part of the U.S. homeland defense architecture against long-range threats," Mark Wright, MDA spokesman, told Defense News in an Aug. 6 statement.

The missile defense architecture "must evolve with advancements of the threat," he added. "Space sensors do not replace but complement ground-based radars by providing track custody during

radar coverage gaps. Having both terrestrial radar and space sensors provides dual phenomenology to accurately track and discriminate the threat as it continues to become more complex.”

<https://www.defensenews.com/digital-show-dailies/smd/2020/08/07/support-to-pursue-hawaii-based-missile-defense-radar-continues-after-dod-drops-funding/>

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US ARMS CONTROL

Yale Insights (New Haven, Conn.)

In the Second Nuclear Age, Information Advantage Defines the Balance of Power

By Paul Bracken

Aug. 11, 2020

In the opening years of the Cold War, the world was one misunderstanding away from a nuclear war. But eventually the United States and the Soviet Union entered arms-control talks and developed a set of shared expectations. The stabilization of the decades-long standoff became possible in part because of the comparative simplicity of a bipolar conflict between two superpowers.

In the years since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, an era that Yale SOM strategy expert Paul Bracken calls the second nuclear age, the world has become multipolar, with a growing number of nuclear powers, including Pakistan, North Korea, India, and Israel, joining Russia, China, and the United States and its Cold War allies the UK and France. The increasing number of power centers has added significantly to strategic complexity and the danger of conflict, Bracken says.

Bracken also warns against focusing exclusively on nuclear weapons. Today, strategic advantage often flows from information: data from drones, satellite images, cell phones, license plate cameras, all ingested and appraised by artificial intelligence. The demand for such information, and the power that comes with it, is driving a technology arms race.

Q: What is the second nuclear age?

I define the era after the Cold War as the second nuclear age. Rather than two dominant superpowers, we have many powers with big GDPs, advanced technology, and in many cases nuclear weapons. The different world views and different problems facing these powers lead to a different pattern of relationships.

Q: What was the role of technology in shaping each age?

The Cold War and the second nuclear age are both dynamic. Within each period the problems change over time. When the Cold War began in the late 1940s and into the 1950s, people simply did not understand the new technologies. I don't mean just nuclear weapons. Let's recall that jet aircraft, faster missiles, nuclear submarines, radar, and eventually satellites were all so new that while you knew who the enemy was you didn't know how they were going to use the technologies.

“How do you know that video from a drone, data from an automatic license plate reader, a satellite picture, and audio from a hacked cellphone could all contribute to understanding the same issue? This is where artificial intelligence comes in.”

Most Cold War experts conclude that the chance of an accidental launch or a hair-trigger firing of a weapon was much higher in that first decade. In the 1960s and 1970s, as the two sides got to know each other, they built up a set of expectations which wouldn't guarantee security but would tell you if there was going to be some sudden eruption. This added to stability.

Information technology has been critical to the second nuclear age. Today, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, data analytics, and cyber warfare are all transformative technologies. There's such tremendous collection of information going on—think of cyberattacks, hacked phones, automatic license plate readers, and on and on—there's simply no comparison between the information systems of the Cold War and today. We were really blind back then. Now, we're not blind—at least in peace time. We don't know how these systems would function in war time.

Q: Your book *The Command and Control of Nuclear Forces* helped focus attention on the importance of information flows as a part of nuclear strategy. What was the approach when you published the book in 1983?

People focused on the number of nuclear weapons, but they wouldn't address how they were managed, what information would be available to decision makers in the White House and in the Kremlin during a severe crisis or an actual war. A lot of people, including myself, concluded that the system would, at an informational level, very likely fall apart. Leaders would only have access to very poor or even entirely inaccurate information.

Understanding that led to a shift of strategy. The Reagan administration conducted some war games inside the Pentagon, which I was involved with, that convinced the secretary of defense to redirect the technological thrust of the United States to conventional forces and away from nuclear systems, which required very sophisticated information processing to conduct a nuclear war.

Q: Ostensibly, the Cold War and the second nuclear age are both defined by nuclear weapons. Has that technology changed?

There's been some innovation of the nuclear technologies themselves, but it's much less important than the innovations in the surrounding information systems used for targeting and to move weapons around to avoid enemy detection. Is a country preparing weapons for launch? Is North Korea moving their mobile missiles from one province to another? The information advantages are more important than the weapons themselves.

But it's not just information; it's being able to manage the flow of real-time, diverse, voluminous information. How do you know that video from a drone, data from an automatic license plate reader, a satellite picture, and audio from a hacked cellphone could all contribute to understanding the same issue? This is where artificial intelligence comes in. No human mind, no military staff could manage this amount of information. That was one of the big drivers behind China's decision to become the world leader in AI.

When you have these tools, you end up with very subtle and creative possibilities. You can track the license plate of the motorcycle of a member of a particular unit in the Pakistani army's nuclear force. You can hack into the security cameras in Islamabad, which there's good reason to think Huawei has done. When he gets an alert, which is intercepted, saying, "Report to your station in the next two hours," you have valuable intelligence. That level of information was unthinkable even a few years ago.

An information advantage changes the military balance. I would say China is in the lead on information. The U.S. is now responding vigorously in various ways. It's a dynamic state of affairs.

Q: And these new technologies are being introduced into a complex, multipolar world.

It's worth noting: the bipolar world of the Cold War was rare historically. Through most of recorded history, you had multiple decision-making centers with significant military and economic power. The world has normally been multipolar, particularly Europe and Asia. Even during the Cold War, the idea that it was a bipolar world was, to some extent, a useful fiction because let's not forget that the French, the British, and after 1964, the Chinese all had nuclear weapons, too.

The point is a multipolar world is more complex. Let me just define complexity because it's one of the most overused, undefined terms out there. All I mean by complex is there are many moving parts, many decision-making centers. The increase in the number of powers is significant. One of the big divisions in game theory is between simple game theory, which has two players, and n-person game theory where n is any number of players. We have nine states with nuclear weapons. We have 18 states that host nuclear weapons or other critical infrastructure for nuclear systems.

The single biggest lesson that game theory teaches is that coalitions form as soon as you have more than two players. The U.S. can align with Germany, Great Britain, and India. Russia can align with China, possibly with North Korea and Pakistan. You have coalition dynamics. How do we keep our coalition together? How can we drive a wedge into our enemy's coalition so that it's not as stable?

Read a related study:

Our Complicated and Dangerous Multipolar Nuclear World

Nixon's efforts to open China were part of the U.S. effort to drive a wedge in the communist bloc. The role that nuclear weapons played in this is not that well known. When Richard Nixon went to Beijing in 1972, his assistant Henry Kissinger had in his briefcase the locations, longitude and latitude, of every Soviet nuclear weapon. We gave this information to the Chinese in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing as a sign of good faith. It gave the Chinese information they could never possibly have collected on their own.

That information transfer was instrumental in changing the coalition. It probably made China a less reliable ally of Moscow. It's likely that Russia increasingly saw China as in alliance with the United States. The whole point was to keep the Soviets from planning a war on Europe without worrying what might happen in Asia.

Q: How does this research show up in your teaching at Yale SOM?

There are easily 15 technologies that are critically important to national defense strategy. That number is so large that the Pentagon doesn't know which ones to focus on. Moreover, they think of these technologies in isolation from each other. One course that I teach at SOM focuses on the need to think about technology packages—two or three technologies integrated with each other.

"The U.S. and China are not going to go to war. We both have too much to lose. But it's all too easy to imagine some general seeking power setting off a change of government in North Korea or a war between India and Pakistan."

Where there's a breakdown, as I see it, is in the area of leadership. There's a tremendous amount of innovation but it's bottom up, not top down. These technologies are developed and supplied by contractors and engineers with specialties in the various technologies. What we don't do a good job on in the United States is to establish a direction—that is, provide leadership from the top. There's value in offering guidance to build technology packages to do certain things and not other things. That's actually true in the corporate world as well as the DOD. If the students at SOM are any indication, there's a real desire to learn technology management and leadership.

Q: Where do you see the multipolar world going?

We can think about plausible futures looking out 10 years. One is what happened in the first part of the Cold War, which is to say, everybody wants these technologies, so there's a kind of mad catch-up attitude that leads to a technology arms race.

If everybody goes down that road, we're going to have a very unstable system. We went through that during the Cold War. The paranoia about communism in the 1950s meant any discussion of cooperation with Moscow on arms control was dismissed out of hand. By 1965, there was a complete reversal. We were all about arms control and building up relations with the Soviets so that we didn't misunderstand each other and get into a disaster.

The cycle is likely to repeat itself. But there needs to be a focus on second-tier nuclear states like Pakistan and North Korea, perhaps Iran, perhaps Israel. The U.S. and China are not going to go to war. We both have too much to lose. But I think Pakistan and North Korea are fundamentally unstable. It's all too easy to imagine some general seeking power setting off a change of government in North Korea or a war between India and Pakistan

Right now, China is focused on us, but Pakistan is on their border. North Korea is on their border. It doesn't seem to have dawned on the Chinese yet that these countries are more likely than the U.S. to be a source of a catastrophe that they don't want to get sucked into.

Q: Should we be thinking about arms control negotiation with the Chinese?

I came out of the think tank world, where the biggest single difficulty is to break out of the current mindset. Today, all anyone can think about is coronavirus, no matter what you are studying. In 1978, all anyone could think about was the energy crisis. In 1956, at the height of the Cold War, someone who said "I want to see if we could stabilize the arms race through an arms-control agreement with the Soviets" would get laughed out of the room.

When I suggest U.S.-China arms control today, the response is similar. I guarantee you it will be something we are talking about in six or seven years which is precisely why now is a good time to think about it, because there's no pressure. Nobody's going to take it seriously. You may be ridiculed but it's important to do the foundational work before it's needed.

In my course on problem framing, I continually say, you can't focus on the most likely outcome; you've got to focus on what could do you the most damage and, alternatively, what could lead to the biggest opportunity.

Don't tell me what is going to happen; look at the full band of possibilities. Give me scenarios A, B, and C. And if C means we're in real trouble, tell me how we come up with a plan beforehand to make sure that it's not too disastrous.

Too often, decision makers hear "unlikely" and immediately reduce a small probability to zero, then pay it no attention whatsoever. We're living through a case study of that. Preparing for a pandemic is a lot more effective and less expensive than dealing with one after it arrives. On the positive side, I think COVID-19 will lead people to appreciate the importance of not focusing entirely on the most likely case. Particularly in leadership roles, they're going to look for a band of possibilities.

Interview conducted and edited by Ted O'Callahan.

<https://insights.som.yale.edu/insights/in-the-second-nuclear-age-information-advantage-defines-the-balance-of-power>

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The Mainichi (Tokyo, Japan)

UN Urges US, Russia to Extend Nuclear Arms Control Pact

By Mainichi

Aug. 11, 2020

TOKYO (Kyodo) -- The United States and Russia should extend a bilateral arms control treaty, due to expire in February, as otherwise global efforts toward nuclear abolition involving other major countries will become even more difficult, the U.N. disarmament chief said Tuesday.

"Including other nuclear nations such as China into negotiations will not be possible in a short time (without the extension)," Izumi Nakamitsu, undersecretary general and high representative for disarmament affairs, told a press conference in Tokyo.

"They bear special responsibilities," said Nakamitsu, who recently visited Hiroshima and Nagasaki to attend ceremonies to mark the 75th anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombings of the two Japanese cities.

The 2010 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty is the only remaining arms control treaty between the United States and Russia, which possess the world's biggest nuclear arsenals.

"If this (treaty) vanishes, there will not be any control over nuclear weapons and it will be very dangerous," she said at the Japan National Press Club.

U.S. President Donald Trump has called for an arms control framework that also involves China, but Beijing has so far been reluctant to commit to the idea.

The highest-ranking Japanese at the United Nations said China has come to be recognized as a superpower, not only because of its economic influence but also in terms of its military clout, and that the Asian country needs to assume responsibilities commensurate with its international status.

As the world has been battered by the novel coronavirus pandemic for months, Nakamitsu believes many countries have to put more money into their economies, rather than in the realms of military and national security.

Under such circumstances, there may be more chances to boost confidence-building measures and work toward international stability through negotiations.

"While seizing this opportunity, the United Nations would like to proactively call for a return to the policy of using dialogue," she said.

<https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20200811/p2g/00m/0in/131000c>

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The Hill (Washington, D.C.)

Trump, US Face Pivotal UN Vote on Iran

By Rebecca Kheel and Laura Kelly

Aug. 9, 2020

The Trump administration's Iran strategy will face a key test this week as the United States calls for a vote at the United Nations on its resolution to extend an arms embargo against the Islamic Republic.

If the resolution fails — which experts say is the most likely scenario — the Trump administration has threatened to invoke snapback sanctions, which supporters of the Iran nuclear deal fear will be the agreement's death knell.

The gambit also risks further alienating the United States from its allies, which continue to support the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) nuclear deal and have rebuffed the Trump administration's so-called maximum pressure campaign against Tehran.

"The Trump administration knows that the arms embargo isn't going to get renewed and, more than anything, this is a driver for them to try to invoke snapback and destroy what's left of the JCPOA," said Ilan Goldenberg, senior fellow with the Center for a New American Security.

At issue is a U.N. Security Council resolution that was passed in 2015 in support of the nuclear deal between Iran and several world powers that President Trump withdrew the United States from in 2018. Under the resolution, a ban on imports and exports of conventional weapons to and from Iran is set to lift Oct. 18.

This past week, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the Security Council would vote in the coming week on the U.S. resolution to extend the embargo.

"The proposal we put forward is eminently reasonable," Pompeo said at a press briefing. "One way or another, we will do the right thing. We will ensure that the arms embargo is extended."

But Russia and China, which wield veto power in the U.N. Security Council, have already rejected the U.S. bid.

In the face of likely defeat, Pompeo has threatened another tactic: argue the United States remains a participant in the nuclear deal as defined by the Security Council resolution despite Trump having withdrawn from the agreement. Doing so could allow the United States to invoke a snapback of all U.N. sanctions that were in place before the nuclear deal, thereby extending the arms embargo.

"We're deeply aware that snapback is an option that's available to the United States, and we're going to do everything within America's power to ensure that that arms embargo is extended," Pompeo said. "I'm confident that we will be successful."

The United States would have to trigger snapback sanctions by Sept. 17 at the latest to have them in place by the time the arms embargo expires.

In an additional wrinkle, the State Department's top Iran envoy, Brian Hook, announced Thursday his departure from the administration. He will be replaced by Elliott Abrams, who has been the administration's top Venezuela envoy since 2019.

Over the last several months, Hook has traveled the world seeking to build support for the U.S. resolution to extend the arms embargo, with little apparent success. In a virtual appearance at the Aspen Security Forum the day before his resignation, Hook stressed support for extending the

embargo among Gulf nations and Israel, adding that “no one thinks that what is missing from the Middle East are more Iranian weapons.”

Abrams, an Iran hard-liner, is perhaps most known for pleading guilty to withholding information from Congress during the Iran-Contra affair. He was later pardoned by President George H. W. Bush.

“Hook’s departure and replacement by Abrams — a hardline, veteran Middle East and Latin America hand — raises the risks surrounding the final few months of Trump’s first term,” the political risk consultancy Eurasia Group said in a note to clients and the media this past week.

The firm previously said last month that the United States invoking snapback sanctions “will raise overall tension with Iran and introduce new uncertainty into the calculations of the Iranian leadership” and “could induce Iran to take more risky action in the nuclear realm, or retaliate for JCPOA snapback in Iraq or the region.”

The arms embargo itself has bipartisan support among U.S. lawmakers as well as support among the United States’s European allies.

But the Trump administration’s approach as it seeks to rally international support for renewing the embargo has rankled those same allies.

“Other JCPOA signatories do not necessarily like to see the arms embargo be lifted, but they view Trump’s actions as dishonest and aimed at simply killing the JCPOA,” said Trita Parsi, executive vice president of the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft.

A European diplomat echoed that position to The Hill.

“In general we would support the arms embargo, but we don’t like some of the unilateral sanctions that the U.S. are imposing on Iran,” the diplomat said.

In a phone call Friday with French President Emmanuel Macron, Trump discussed “the importance of extending the U.N. arms embargo on Iran,” White House spokesman Judd Deere said in a statement.

When Pompeo took his argument for extending the sanctions directly to the Security Council in a June speech, representatives of Britain, France and Germany expressed angst at both the expiration of the embargo and the United States’s threat to invoke snapback sanctions.

“It is very unfortunate that the United States left the JCPOA and by doing this actually violated international law,” Germany’s U.N. ambassador, Christoph Heusgen, said at the June virtual meeting.

Whether the United States snapping back sanctions ultimately kills the nuclear deal depends on how Iran responds, said Barbara Slavin, director of the Future of Iran Initiative at the Atlantic Council.

“Everything will depend on what the Iranian response will be, and it’s a little hard to predict,” she said. “I still think they’ll just scream and yell and say it’s illegitimate and that they still intend to return to the deal if a future U.S. administration does, especially if they have really strong support from the Russians and the Chinese.”

It’s also possible, she said, that even if the Trump administration claims victory in reimposing sanctions, other countries will ignore the sanctions, particularly Russia and China, which are the countries most likely to sell Iran weapons.

“Other members of the Security Council will reject the U.S. standing to do that since the U.S. announced that it was no longer a participant to the JCPOA, even if it wants to pretend otherwise now for this purpose,” she said. “So it’s going to be a colossal mess.”

A U.N. Security Council diplomat similarly raised the possibility that member countries wouldn't reimpose sanctions regardless of the U.S. efforts.

"They could try to get the U.N. to impose additional sanctions, as the snapback mechanism calls for, but if member states don't want to do that, they wouldn't impose those sanctions," the diplomat told The Hill.

Still, the Center for a New American Security's Goldenberg argued the 2015 Security Council resolution is a "key piece of the architecture that keeps what's left of the JCPOA alive."

"If you break it, you might just collapse the entire deal. Nobody really knows what will happen," he said. "The administration's position is that lifting the arms embargo is absolutely unacceptable. But their real position is, we want to break the JCPOA, and we think we can use this to do it."

<https://thehill.com/policy/defense/511116-trump-us-face-pivotal-un-vote-on-iran>

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COMMENTARY

Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists (Chicago, Illinois)

What Can a Pandemic Teach Us about Nuclear Threats?

By Ted Lieu

Aug. 7, 2020

When Barack Obama became the first US president to visit Hiroshima in 2016, he stated: "Technological progress without an equivalent progress in human institutions can doom us." Those words ring true today. At the 75th anniversaries of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we stand in another moment of global chaos and profound loss.

Over 700,000 people worldwide have died from COVID-19, including over 160,000 in the United States. SARS-CoV-2 spread like wildfire in part due to global and domestic travel made far easier by technological progress. At the same time, failures in human institutions allowed the virus to escalate out of control in numerous places.

The lessons learned from this pandemic make the case for re-thinking the United States' national security framework to decide which investments truly improve US national security and which seek to win yesterday's wars. Who would have thought that the equipment needed to fight an enemy that has already killed far more Americans than died in World War I was not the Trident missile or B-1 Bomber, but face masks and ventilators? Or that the heroes risking their lives this year are health care workers and grocery store employees?

The United States has already learned three important lessons from its failed pandemic response that should inform its nuclear strategy, so it doesn't repeat similar mistakes in the future: investing in prevention is key; experts matter; and America needs to adjust to a new communications environment.

Investing in catastrophe prevention. Until 2017, both Democratic and Republican administrations understood the importance of preventing a pandemic. Before leaving office, the Obama administration set up the White House National Security Council Directorate for Global Health Security and Biodefense. In 2005, President George Bush spoke at the National Institutes of Health and said, "If we wait for a pandemic to appear, it will be too late to prepare." Indeed, one of the

principal reasons for the existence of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which was created in 1946, is “detecting and confronting new germs and diseases around the globe to increase our national security.”

Unfortunately, the Trump administration eliminated the NSC Directorate for Global Health Security and Biodefense in 2018. The administration declined to renew funding for a federal pandemic detection program in 2019. The administration also proposed budget cuts to the CDC. And the Trump Administration ignored a step-by-step guide the Obama administration created on how to prevent a pandemic.

China’s early actions—suppressing information about SARS-CoV-2 and providing misleading information about the virus—are indefensible. At the same time, the Trump administration’s lack of preparation for the pandemic left the United States flat-footed when the virus—as a result of global air travel—started pouring into America from Europe. Even today, there is no national testing strategy, no national contact and tracing program, and no national pipeline for personal protective equipment, forcing hospitals and states to compete with one another to secure PPE, sometimes at exorbitant prices.

Prevention is and always has been the best strategy when it comes to disasters, whether they come in the form of disease or war. Unfortunately, the current administration has taken actions that increase, rather than decrease, the risks of nuclear war. From cuts and disarray at the State Department to withdrawing from arms control treaties to making it easier to use nuclear weapons, the last few years have been a disaster for nuclear conflict prevention.

The case for a unified national security budget—one that strikes the right balance among our diplomatic, informational, military, and economic instruments of power to prevent conflicts—has never been stronger. Instead, the budgets under the Trump administration have prioritized military spending over all other instruments of national power. We can already destroy the world several times over with our nuclear and conventional weapons. It is time to invest in our other instruments of national power.

Unfortunately, in the last few years, our diplomatic capacity has withered. As a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I have seen how, under the Trump Administration, the US State Department has been gutted, as employees depart and positions go unfilled; morale has fallen; and several ambassadors and the Secretary of State have come under investigation for inappropriate or illegal behavior. We need to reverse course and re-invest in a large, professional, and ethical diplomatic corps.

We have also seen an unfortunate shift towards go-it-alone US nuclear policy that expands the risk of miscalculation and escalation. Withdrawing from nuclear arms control treaties and expanding the capabilities of our nuclear arsenal are destabilizing. The Trump administration’s decisions to withdraw from Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty last year, to announce its formal intent to withdraw from the Open Skies Treaty this year, and to lay the groundwork for allowing the New START Treaty to expire early next year all amount to a regressive policy that increases the chances of a nuclear conflict.

Similarly, the Trump administration’s decision to produce new low-yield warheads increases the risk that nuclear weapons will be used. And the use of a low-yield nuclear weapon can easily escalate a conflict to an all-out nuclear war that cannot be won. That’s one reason I and other members of Congress introduced the bicameral “Hold the LYNE Act” to prohibit low-yield nuclear weapons for submarine-launched ballistic missiles.

Instead of moving away from a prevention strategy, the United States needs to move toward one. Among the more obvious ways a catastrophic nuclear war could start is if a president launched a

nuclear first strike. In October 2016, Sen. Ed Markey and I introduced the “Restricting First Use of Nuclear Weapons Act” to mitigate that possibility and to reassert the war making authority that the framers of the Constitution gave to Congress alone.

The current nuclear launch approval process gives the president the sole authority to decide whether and when to launch a nuclear first strike. No member of the cabinet, the judiciary, or Congress is required to be involved in that decision. And once the President orders the launch, the execution of the order would occur frighteningly fast.

The framers of the Constitution, however, went to great lengths to put checks and balances on the president. They created an entire judicial branch to check the president. They created a legislative branch to check the president. And then then gave the gravest power they knew at the time—the power to declare war—to Congress alone. There is no way the framers would have authorized one person to launch weapons that could kill hundreds of millions of people in less than an hour and not have called that war.

Our legislation enacts the vision of the framers and requires the president to get congressional authorization before launching a nuclear first-strike (except in cases when another country has already launched a nuclear weapon at the United States). Not only would our bill correct a constitutional defect, it would also reduce the incentive for other nuclear-armed countries to strike the United States.

Having served on active duty in the US Air Force, I have long understood that countries such as Russia and China have the capability to annihilate America with their nuclear weapons. One reason they don’t use those weapons is their understanding that no matter how many missiles they launch, the United States has a robust second-strike capability that would annihilate them in return.

Mutually assured destruction relies on strengthening second-strike capabilities; a first-strike option is not only unnecessary, it is destabilizing. If these countries believe an unhinged president could rapidly launch a nuclear first strike, their calculation changes, and they are forced into a “use it or lose it” scenario with their weapons. Our legislation injects the crucial elements of time and approval by Congress to slow down any potential nuclear escalation.

The United States knew the risks and failed to prevent the outbreak of a novel coronavirus from becoming a deadly pandemic. It cannot fail to prevent a diplomatic or conventional military conflict from becoming a cataclysmic nuclear war. The United States needs to invest in diplomacy, to stop withdrawing from arms control treaties, and to curb the production of nuclear weapons. Buying new nukes doesn’t make us safer; strengthened alliances and prioritized diplomacy do. There is strength in tackling problems before they arise, and America is living through what happens when prevention is underfunded or ignored.

The value of expertise. Another reason America leads the world in COVID-19 cases and deaths involves the failure of far too many people, including government officials, to listen to experts. Earlier this year, the Trump administration worked with medical experts and created a set of coronavirus guidelines for states to follow before they reopened businesses and other aspects of public life that had been restricted to slow the spread of COVID-19. What happened? Many states—and the president himself—ignored those guidelines. The president tweeted multiple times that various states should “liberate” themselves and reopen, even though none of those states met the reopening guidelines set forth by his own administration. As a result, COVID-19 cases and deaths started to spike again, and the virus continues to surge in many areas.

Medical experts have repeatedly told the American public to practice social distancing, wear masks in public, and avoid crowded indoor areas to help stop the spread of the virus. What happened? A number of Americans refused to wear masks in public, and the president spent those critical first

months of the pandemic disparaging those who wore masks. It wasn't until recently that the president reversed himself and finally said that people should wear them. A number of Americans engaged in dangerous behavior, like going to bars, indoor parties, and a presidential indoor rally where social distancing was not observed and masks were not required.

In many ways, this pandemic has taught us exactly what not to do in a nuclear-armed world where the Doomsday Clock says it is 100 seconds to midnight. We need to stop rejecting science. We need to prepare for worst-case scenarios. We need to listen to the experts screaming from the mountaintops that we're not doing enough. Earlier this year, some argued that a robust pandemic response would cause the public to think that the government was over-reacting. In the case of a potential nuclear conflict, there is no such thing as being over-prepared.

Experts in academia, in the private sector, in government, and at the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists have provided numerous common-sense recommendations for how to prevent a nuclear conflict, from strengthening command and control systems to reducing nuclear proliferation. We should listen to them. If the American people choose a new president in November, one of the first orders of business should be to re-invest in the State Department, put the United States back into arms control treaties, and to stop the production of low-yield nuclear weapons. And of course, ensure the "Hold the LYNE Act" and the "Restricting First Use of Nuclear Weapons Act" become law.

Adjusting to a new communications environment. Technological progress is a double-edged sword. Obviously, it was technological progress that resulted in nuclear weapons. The ease of global and domestic travel made possible by technology—from comfortable, fast aircraft to online booking sites—is what swiftly turned the novel coronavirus into a worldwide pandemic. At the same time, it is science and technology that will one day give us a vaccine or drug therapy to stop the pandemic.

In the area of communications, technology has advanced so rapidly that our institutions and citizenry have been caught off guard. For example, it can be difficult to know if a Facebook post was written by an American in your state—or a Russian agent in the Kremlin. US officials have alleged that Russia is actively participating in disinformation campaigns about COVID-19 in America, as well as hacking COVID-19 research centers. And with the existence of deep-fake technology, it is nearly impossible for ordinary Americans to know if a video they are seeing is reality or fantasy.

False information about the virus—whether created intentionally or unintentionally—routinely shows up on multiple social media platforms. The president—with over 84 million Twitter followers—has repeatedly tweeted or retweeted misleading information about COVID-19. In our current communications environment, a lie disguised as fact or a manipulated video can reach hundreds of millions of people in seconds. Add the fact that high-profile social media accounts were recently hacked, and it is easy to imagine potentially dangerous situations when it comes to nuclear conflict.

What happens if a hacker gains control of the president's Twitter account and posts a tweet that leads foreign leaders to believe the president ordered a nuclear first strike? Or what if the hacker uses Twitter's direct messaging function, so no one knows except the people who receive the direct message? What if someone posts a deep-fake video of North Korea launching a nuclear missile at Hawaii? What if Hawaii issues a nuclear missile alert from North Korea that instantaneously went to all cellphones?

Oh wait, that last one happened. And it caused a lot of people in Hawaii to panic. Some cars reportedly sped up to 100 miles per hour after the alert was issued. Tourists in Kaneohe were reportedly taken up to a bunker in the mountains. Officials at the Sony Open PGA Tour golf tournament on Oahu evacuated the media center, while staff sought cover in the players' locker room. A man suffered a heart attack after saying what he thought were his last goodbyes to his

children after the alert. And the 911 call system was overwhelmed, with many calls not being able to go through.

Technological advancements in communications have resulted in at least two consequences: one, information, whether true or false, can be distributed to a massive amount of people nearly instantaneously, and two, it is fairly easy to create false information that looks true. The first consequence will not be fixed, because there is often merit in being able to reach many people very quickly. Fixing the second consequence requires some combination of media literacy and better cyber security. Both consequences suggest that injecting more time and congressional authorization into nuclear situations is what is needed in our brave new advanced communications world.

Wake up. America's failed response to the pandemic should serve as a wake-up call to our nation that we have become complacent in critical areas of national security. To the extent there was a nuclear component to the global war on terrorism, it was the fear of a terrorist network acquiring a nuclear weapon, smuggling it into the United States, and detonating it. With the 2017 National Security Strategy's shift to great power competition, we have now turned our attention back to two nuclear powers with advanced delivery systems and track records of brazen behavior. We cannot afford to wait before we invest serious diplomatic capital to ensure none of our conflicts with China or Russia escalate to nuclear war.

Withdrawing from arms control treaties and buying easier-to-use nuclear weapons will not make us safer from nuclear conflict. Strengthening our alliances—our biggest competitive advantage over our adversaries—and showing up to lead coordinated diplomatic efforts will. At the same time, we can reduce the risk of nuclear conflict by requiring the president—any president—to seek authorization from Congress before launching a nuclear first strike.

We also need to listen to experts. To prevent a catastrophic disaster—whether a pandemic or a nuclear conflict—we need to stop rejecting facts and science. Unfortunately, the new world of instantaneous communications can make it more difficult to ascertain the truth. Government officials and the public need to adjust to this new environment. Lives are at stake.

<https://thebulletin.org/2020/08/what-can-a-pandemic-teach-us-about-nuclear-threats/#>

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Atlantic Council (Washington, D.C.)

What We're Forgetting about the Cold War

By Mathew J. Burrows

Aug. 10, 2020

Who's nostalgic for the Cold War?

Not me. I can remember crouching under my desk at Goldwood Elementary School in northern Ohio during duck-and-cover drills.

Yet there seems to be a lot of enthusiasm for a rerun, this time with China. The media is full of talk about the dawn of a "New Cold War." Many people think we're already in it. Gone are worries about the high probability of war when an upstart power spooks a reigning rival—the so-called "Thucydides trap." That was so last year.

During my time in the US intelligence community, I heard many senior intel types talk about how much easier it was during the Cold War. You knew the enemy. You didn't have to face a plethora of

terrorist groups and networks, and struggle to discern what type of relationship each had with al-Qaeda. Whereas the War on Terror was composed of a thousand shades of gray, the Cold War had been helpfully black and white.

But as President Donald Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden each accuse the other of going soft on China, we have forgotten the tense moments, close calls, and widespread suffering of that first Cold War and somehow grown fond of it instead.

For those who need a refresher: The term “Cold War” was popularized by Bernard Baruch, an adviser to Harry Truman, in a 1947 speech to the South Carolina legislature. Waged across four decades, from the end of the Second World War until the fall of the Berlin Wall and Soviet Union, the Cold War split countries and divided maps, with many nations falling under communist rule and others subjected to US military interventions. The Soviet Union sent troops to preserve communism in East Germany (1953), Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968), and Afghanistan (1979). The United States overthrew a left-wing government in Guatemala (1954), supported an unsuccessful invasion of Cuba (1961), invaded the Dominican Republic (1965) and Grenada (1982), and launched a failed, decade-long war in Vietnam that tore American society apart.

Then there were the tense moments when war seemed likely. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, one of the Atlantic Council’s founders, Dean Acheson, advocated air strikes to take out Soviet missile sites on the island, discounting the possibility of retaliation. We know now that then-Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev authorized (leading up to the US blockade) the Soviet commander in Cuba to use his tactical nuclear warheads against invading US troops if an attack were underway and he could not reach Moscow to confirm permission. Other Soviet documents showed that sixty nuclear warheads for medium-and intermediate-range missiles had already arrived in Cuba prior to the blockade in addition to ninety-eight tactical nuclear warheads.

President John F. Kennedy wisely opted for a blockade of Cuba instead of an invasion or air strikes. The Soviets removed the missiles in return for Kennedy promising to not invade Cuba and the president’s brother, Robert, giving private assurances to Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin that US missiles in Turkey would be dismantled. Such a delicate diplomatic minuet would be difficult if not impossible to reenact in today’s supercharged, social media-driven, leaderless, and leaky world.

So why the Cold War nostalgia? In part because what people remember about the period are the decades after the Cuban Missile Crisis and Vietnam War: Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger opening up to communist China; the initiation of US-Soviet détente in the early 1970s and the cooling of tensions between the superpower rivals; the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union, as George Kennan predicted decades before. Because of that victory, we may all assume that the West would prevail again in a contest with China.

That assumption, however, may very well be misguided.

By any measure, the Chinese “threat” to the United States and the West is quite different than the Soviet one. From the very start of the Bolshevik Revolution, Russian communists waged an ideological war with the West, which eagerly reciprocated. Today’s Chinese leaders only mouth Marxism while practicing state capitalism, and the United States has benefitted enormously from interdependence with China. American economic and intellectual ties with the Soviets, even after the 1975 Helsinki Process inaugurated greater exchanges, were tiny by comparison with, say, the 369,000 Chinese students who came to the United States prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. China is a key driver of the world’s economy while the Soviets were completely cut off (largely by their own choice) from global trade. China’s increasing military budget is still a fraction of the US military budget, whereas military goals and spending dominated the Soviet economy. And though we in the

US have differences with China, they are not comparable to the worries we had about a Soviet invasion of Western Europe and nuclear annihilation.

We got a glimpse of what the forced decoupling of the US-China relationship would look like with the Trump administration's tariff hikes, which were intended to help US manufacturing but instead resulted in fewer jobs in the sector, and triggered retaliatory tariffs that increased producer costs. Most US companies don't want to move lock, stock, and barrel out of China—a likely occurrence in a cold war—and thus deny themselves market share in a booming market and leave themselves no choice but to raise prices for US consumers. Onshoring—repatriating business operations—is a popular concept, but this era of robotics and artificial intelligence will probably accelerate the replacement of humans with machines, not the reverse. And who is to say that America's allies will follow Washington's lead—a big, untested assumption in Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's recent speech on the coming confrontation with China. COVID-19 has certainly exposed the limited appeal of American soft power, but even before the pandemic Europeans were planning to stake out “strategic autonomy” and Asian allies were overly reliant on trade and investment with China. Is middle America, moreover, ready for another jolt to living standards there because the United States wants to isolate China?

Science tells us that the human brain needs mental frameworks for cognition. But we need to be careful about which frameworks we use. The domino theory of the 1950s and 1960s led to the Vietnam War, arguably the worst military disaster in US history. A supposed Cold War with China may cause us to believe we are engaged in a titanic struggle with an enemy to whom we need not show any compassion, instead of encouraging us to find ways to lower tensions and identify areas of cooperation. Is that what we want?

Mathew J. Burrows is the director of the Atlantic Council's Foresight, Strategy, and Risks Initiative in the Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security. Follow him on Twitter @matburrows.

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/content-series/past-is-prologue/what-were-forgetting-about-the-cold-war/>

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Arms Control Wonk

Can Beijing Make Good Trouble?

By Michael Krepon

Aug. 9, 2020

Lyric of the week:

All alone the captain stands

Hasn't heard

From his deck hands

The gambler tips his hat

And walks towards the door

It's the second half

Of the cruise

And you know he hates to lose

–Neil Young, “Cripple Creek Ferry”

Quote of the week:

“Something further may follow of this Masquerade”

–Herman Melville, The Confidence-Man

The Trump administration has embarked on a sunset cruise to count every Russian and Chinese warhead. It’s a noble destination, one that I endorse. It’s also an ill-fated voyage if it means that next steps to stabilize the nuclear arms competition and to reduce warheads and risk taking must await this port of call.

The Captain of this cruise is a confidence man and a gambler. He’s been sold a bill of goods and now he’s selling it to us. He’s thrown the dice without being aware of the downstream consequences. The authors and strongest backers of this proposal – John Bolton, Senator Tom Cotton, Tim Morrison, and Marshall Billingslea, among them – have demonstrated more interest in treaty tear downs and strategic modernization programs than in new agreements. Indeed, they seek no new arms limitations or reductions. Instead, they seek a transparency measure. Failing to make progress, they threaten a short extension of New START.

This film flam isn’t hard to discern. Beijing will have no part of a count-every-warhead negotiation, so its absence gives license to those who seek to shorten New START’s lifespan. A pause in treaty negotiations would suit them just fine as strategic modernization programs proceed. The shorter the extension for New START, the greater the degree of difficulty to negotiate something better.

Pulling the plug on New START means ending intrusive monitoring of nuclear facilities and counting the very warheads atop missile launchers that supporters of Trump’s initiative say they want.

A brief extension of New START would also mean the premature death of strategic arms treaty protections of national technical means to monitor compliance. If you are worried about warfare in space and think that treaty protections against interfering with satellites, however modest, are a good thing, then you would logically conclude that extending New START for a full five years is also a good thing.

Backers of the count-every-warhead initiative seem comfortable with these losses. They’re playing for higher stakes — liberation from treaty constraints. They hint broadly that if Beijing keeps its distance from three-nation talks, the result would be a short stay of execution for New START. This was the game plan that Bolton sold Trump, as revealed in his White House memoir, *The Room Where it Happened*. This plan is being executed long after Bolton and Trump’s messy divorce.

Beijing has clarified that it won’t be a party to count-every-warhead talks, and Moscow has clarified that it won’t be carrying Trump’s water to convince Beijing to join. Putin has dropped his conditions for a five-year extension – conditions likely to be reintroduced when New START dies – so the ball on extension is in Trump’s court.

Maybe it’s the well water I’m drinking here on Tom Mountain, but I harbor the fanciful idea that Beijing will figure out how to make ‘good trouble,’ to use John Lewis’s phrase, to extend New START for a full five years — a goal China endorses. I propose that Beijing condition its participation in three-nation talks to Trump’s OK to a full five-year extension of New START.

In my dreamscape, Beijing figures out that if it joins Moscow, the math becomes two against one. With both China and Russia rejecting a count-every-warhead agenda, they could propose discussing more incremental transparency measures along with a norms-based approach to reduce nuclear danger.

What if Beijing maintained its staunch opposition to Trump's count-every-warhead initiative and instead proposed a three-party agreement to extend the foundational norms of no battlefield use and no testing of nuclear weapons? Wouldn't that be interesting?

This would throw sand in the gears of a short New START extension, just as Mikhail Gorbachev's threw sand in the gears by accepting the Zero Option in the Intermediate Nuclear Forces talks. The Kremlin was supposed to say "nyet" to zero, allowing those in the Reagan administration who sought new missile deployments to proceed. Instead, they got a treaty preventing deployments.

Saying "shi" to Trump's call for three-nation talks could again upend the calculations of those counting on the answer being "méiyǒu."

Is Beijing savvy enough to move beyond 'Hell, no?' I'm not betting on it. We're all too deeply hunched in the foxholes we've dug to realize the possible consequences of proposing three-nation talks where two of the three are strategic partners.

But, hey, it's my dreamscape. I can imagine Beijing making good trouble by saying 'yes' to three-nation talks while changing the focus of discussion. At the very least, this would expose the film flam game underway for a short extension of New START.

<https://www.armscontrolwonk.com/archive/1209833/can-beijing-make-good-trouble/>

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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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