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Feature Perspective

“Toward Accountable Nuclear Deterrents: How Much Is Too Much?”. By George Perkovich.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For decades, policy debates in nuclear-armed states and alliances have centered on the question, “How much is enough?” What size and type of arsenal, and what doctrine, are enough to credibly deter given adversaries? This paper argues that the more urgent question today is, “How much is too much?” What size and type of arsenal, and what doctrine, are too likely to produce humanitarian and environmental catastrophe that would be strategically and legally indefensible?

Two international initiatives could help answer this question. One would involve nuclear-armed states, perhaps with others, commissioning suitable scientific experts to conduct new studies on the probable climatic and environmental consequences of nuclear war. Such studies would benefit from recent advances in modeling, data, and computing power. They should explore what changes in numbers, yields, and targets of nuclear weapons would significantly reduce the probability of nuclear winter. If some nuclear arsenals and operational plans are especially likely to threaten the global environment and food supply, nuclear-armed states as well as non-nuclear-weapon states would benefit from actions to physically reduce such risks. The paper suggests possible modalities for international debate on these issues.

The second initiative would query all nuclear-armed states whether they plan to adhere to international humanitarian law in deciding if and when to detonate nuclear weapons, and if so, how their arsenals and operational plans affirm their intentions (or not). The United Kingdom and the United States have committed, in the words of the 2018 U.S. Nuclear Posture Review, to “adhere to the law of armed conflict” in any “initiation and conduct of nuclear operations.” But other nuclear-armed states have been more reticent, and the practical meaning of such declarations needs to be clarified through international discussion.

The two proposed initiatives would help states and civil society experts to better reconcile the (perceived) need for nuclear deterrence with the strategic, legal, and physical imperatives of reducing the probability that a war escalates to catastrophic proportions. The concern is not only for the well-being of belligerent populations, but also for those in nations not involved in the posited conflict. Traditional security studies and the policies of some nuclear-armed states have ignored these imperatives. Accountable deterrents—in terms of international law and human survival—would be those that met the security and moral needs of all nations, not just one or two.

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NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Defense One (Washington, D.C.)

DOD's 2021 Budget Would Trim Arsenal, Shift Funds to Arms Development

By Marcus Weisgerber

Feb. 10, 2020

The Pentagon wants to retire warplanes, drones, and ships, including some less than two decades old, freeing up hundreds of billions of dollars to develop and buy new weapons that defense officials say are necessary to win a war against China and Russia.

With a presidential election looming later this year, the moves laid out in the Defense Department's fiscal 2021 budget proposal sent to Congress on Monday could be the Trump administration's final chance to reshape the U.S. military for decades to come.

"[W]e are moving in the direction that we need to go after looking at our last few years doing land wars and now looking forward to a higher-end fight against an adversary that will have a higher capability," Vice Adm. Ronald Boxall, the Joint Staff director of force structure, resources and assessment, said during a Monday briefing at the Pentagon.

After three straight years of increases, the Trump administration's fiscal 2021 defense budget request totals \$740.5 billion — in line with a two-year budget deal struck by Congress and the White House last year. The Pentagon portion of the budget is \$705.4 billion, down 1.1% from last year's \$713 billion budget, while the remaining \$35 billion is for national security projects overseen by the Energy Department and other government agencies.

Top Pentagon officials said the budget proposal would fund "irreversible implementation of the National Defense Strategy," the document produced under former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis that predicts an era of "great power competition" with China and Russia. That echoes a Jan. 6 memo to the Pentagon from Defense Secretary Mark Esper, who called for "ruthless prioritization" in order to "achieve full, irreversible implementation" of the 2018 strategy.

The Trump administration's first two defense budgets spent heavily on readiness, and particularly on training and maintenance for forces. Now it's spending to develop a new generation of weapons: \$107 billion in the 2021 proposal. But procurement itself would drop to \$137 billion from \$144 billion.

"The broader question for all of the services, as force structure plans contract, is the political perception," said Mark Cancian, a former Office of Management and Budget official who is now a senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "The budget has been going up, but now the forces are getting smaller, and what are we really getting for our money."

If DOD's plan is approved by Congress, the Air Force alone would retire hundreds of warplanes over the next five years — including B-1 bombers; A-10 attack planes; F-15 and F-16 fighter jets; C-130H cargo planes; KC-10 and KC-135 aerial tankers; and high-flying Global Hawk spy drones.

Yet these cuts would only trim the various fleets, reducing capability and increasing strain on the remaining aircraft without eliminating entire supply chains, training requirements, and the like.

"I view it as hedging — that they're afraid to let go of things completely," said Todd Harrison, who directs defense budget analysis and the Aerospace Security Project at CSIS. "They're shooting themselves in the foot because they're guaranteeing that they're going to have a smaller force

structure in the future by making partial fleet reductions now. If you retire whole fleets, you get way more in savings, then you can buy a larger fleet in the future.”

Lawmakers have repeatedly rejected the Air Force’s calls to get rid of planes, like the A-10 Warthog. Meanwhile, the Navy wants to retire four littoral combat ships — lightly armed warships built for operating in shallow water. The four ships on the chopping block — the oldest littoral combat ships — are part of a Navy test squadron in San Diego.

The Army plans to cancel 41 programs and cut or delay another 39, though officials would not immediately specify which ones. Officials said these moves would free up \$13.5 billion between fiscal 2021 and 2025.

The Pentagon strategy of reducing weapons buys and retiring equipment creates near-term risk in the coming years until those new weapons arrive and become battle-ready at the latter part of the decade.

“The Air Force is now in a position of assuming increased risk in the 2020s as it seeks to rebalance for peer conflict, which it has to do,” said Doug Birkey, executive director for the Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies. “However, it is still stuck dealing with lower-tier groups like ISIS, which wears the legacy force thin. This risks wearing out remaining aircraft faster than new iron can be acquired—from both a production and budgetary standpoint.”

The Pentagon plans to put the money it saves the retirements into new weapons, including fast-flying hypersonic weapons; artificial intelligence and hundreds of new, small satellites.

The 2021 budget requests seeks \$29 billion for nuclear weapons, up 18 percent increase from the enacted 2020 amount. The money would go toward new intercontinental ballistic missiles, B-21 stealth bombers, Columbia-class ballistic missile submarines, and a new computer network to transmit launch codes from the president to the launch crews.

The Air Force has been moving quickly, particularly on its ICBMs, in part to make controversial nuclear-weapons projects more difficult to cancel even if Trump is not re-elected.

“[T]hey are speeding toward trying to get the next milestone and...actually get things awarded on contract as quickly as possible so that becomes harder to reverse if there’s a new administration,” Harrison said.

The Pentagon also wants \$18 billion for new satellites, spacecraft and standing up the U.S. Space Force, the new branch of the military within the U.S. Air Force.

The Navy plans to buy eight warships, down from the 12 funded in the fiscal 2020 budget, which Pentagon officials last year billed as the “the largest ship construction budget request” in 20 years as it tries to meet President Trump’s calls for 355 warships.

“We have a balanced force focused on long-term competition through increased investments in lethality and modernization,” a senior defense official said of the 2021 request.

The decrease in shipbuilding was not received well by Rep. Joe Courtney, D-Conn., chairman of the House Armed Services seapower and projection forces subcommittee.

“The President’s shipbuilding budget is not a 355-ship Navy budget,” Courtney said in a statement. “This weak, pathetic request for eight ships – of which two are tugboats – is not only fewer ships than 2020, but fewer ships than the Navy told us last year it planned for 2021.”

A senior defense official noted that the five year spending projections are “not really keeping pace with inflation.” Defense Secretary Mark Esper and other defense officials have said the Pentagon

needs 3 to 5 percent annual increases to its budget to properly fund the priorities of its National Defense Strategy.

While the Defense Department did not release its five-year spending projections, a senior defense official laid out its internal planning figures, for the Pentagon's share of the defense budget.

FY21: \$705 billion (Down 1.1 percent from \$713 billion in fiscal 2020)

FY22: \$722 billion (Up 2.4 percent)

FY23: \$737 billion (Up 2.1 percent)

FY24: \$753 billion (Up 2.2 percent)

FY25: \$768 billion (Up 2 percent)

"We need stable, predictable, adequate and most importantly, timely budgets," a second senior defense official said. "Those are the things we need to make sure that we can sustain the force."

Even if Trump wins a second term, experts do not foresee the types of defense spending increases that Pentagon officials say they need.

Trump "has given the Department of Defense a plus-up, but now he's going to do what Ronald Reagan did, which is in the last two years or three years of his eight years in office, he will start decreasing defense expenditures in order to start doing other things like balancing the budget," John Venable, a retired Air Force colonel who is now a military analyst with the Heritage Foundation.

"Even if the current president is reelected, the military is going to see a decreasing topline," Venable said. "If he is not re-elected and a Democrat comes into place, the budget will definitely take a hit."

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<https://www.defenseone.com/politics/2020/02/dods-2021-budget-would-retire-old-weapons-buy-new-ones-eventually/162997/?oref=d-river>

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Defense News (Washington, D.C.)

Trump Seeks \$46 Billion for Nuclear Weapons Programs in Budget Request

By Aaron Mehta

Feb. 10, 2020

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration's fiscal 2021 budget includes a major increase in nuclear weapons spending from both the Defense Department and the agency in charge of managing nuclear warheads.

Overall spending on nuclear modernization by the Pentagon sits at \$28.9 billion in the request, while funding for the National Nuclear Security Administration comes in at \$19.8 billion, an almost 20 percent increase for the semiautonomous agency within the Department of Energy from FY20 numbers.

Of that funding for NNSA, \$15.6 billion is for the weapons accounts.

Another \$1.7 billion goes to the naval reactors account, 2.2 percent above the FY20 enacted level. That supports three modernization efforts: the Columbia-Class Reactor System Development, the Land-based S8G Prototype Refueling Overhaul, and the Spent Fuel Handling Recapitalization Project

Combined, the Trump budget requests almost \$46 billion for nuclear weapons programs.

The strategic deterrent has been described by Defense Secretary Mark Esper as the top priority for his department, and the budget increase comes weeks after a new, low-yield nuclear warhead made its maiden deployment aboard a submarine.

The \$28.9 billion includes roughly \$14.7 billion for research, development, testing and evaluation (RDT&E) costs. Among the RDT&E costs funded by the Pentagon:

\$4.4 billion for Columbia-class submarines

\$4.2 billion for nuclear command, control and communications

\$2.8 billion for the B-21 bomber

\$1.5 billion for the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent

\$1.2 billion for the Trident II missile life extension program

\$500 million for the long-range standoff cruise missile

\$110 million for nuclear-related costs on the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, which is scheduled to be nuclear certified in FY24

\$50 million on the B61-12 nuclear bomb tailkit

The increase for NNSA's budget had been expected for weeks, following reports that the agency was seeking almost \$20 billion in the request. The Office of Management of Budget attempted to cut that number to \$17.5 billion, a figure that NNSA Administrator Lisa Gordon-Hagerty pushed back on in a Dec. 16 memo, arguing that such a move amounts to "unilateral disarmament" and would result in cutting "NNSA's modernization program in half."

The issue appeared settled by the end of January, with NNSA getting close to its total request. Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Sen. Jim Inhofe, R- Okla., who backed the nuclear budget increase, summed up the discussions between himself and Energy Secretary Dan Brouillette by saying, "The resolution is: I won, you lost."

On Monday, Brouillette, who reportedly supported the lower figure for NNSA, was all smiles when it came to the agency's budget, saying he feels "very strongly" that \$19.8 billion is the "right number."

"As you know, Congress is very supportive, we think, of this number. We know some do not support it, but we're going to work closely with them to get that number as close to \$19.8 [billion] as we possibly can," Brouillette said.

Asked where the big boost in funding would go, Gordon-Hagerty pointed to the five major warhead modernization programs: the B61-12 Life Extension Program, the W80-4 Life Extension Program, the W88 Alteration 370, the W87-1 Modification Program and the W93 warhead program.

The administrator particularly highlighted the need to be able to produce 80 plutonium pits per year by 2030, a congressional requirement that some analysts have questioned as unrealistic. She also noted longstanding infrastructure concerns for the agency.

“This is really driven by a number of issues,” she said.

About Aaron Mehta

Aaron Mehta is Deputy Editor and Senior Pentagon Correspondent for Defense News, covering policy, strategy and acquisition at the highest levels of the Department of Defense and its international partners.

<https://www.defensenews.com/smr/federal-budget/2020/02/10/trump-budget-requests-46-billion-for-nuclear-weapons-programs/>

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Defense News (Washington, D.C.)

The Air Force Is Massively Scaling Back a Major Upgrade for the B-2 Stealth Bomber

By Valerie Insinna

Feb. 12, 2020

WASHINGTON — After years of delays and technical issues, the Air Force is restructuring a key B-2 modernization program, transforming it from a suite of technologies meant to help the bomber evade Russia and China into a less ambitious cockpit display upgrade.

In the Air Force’s fiscal year 2021 budget request, the service zeroes out the Defensive Management System Modernization program, or DMS-M, over the next five years. Instead, it intends to put about \$155 million toward a cockpit upgrade that will include a more advanced graphics processor and modernized displays.

“Delays in the acquisition of B-2 DMS-M reduced return on investment,” the Air Force explained in budget documents. “In response to this shifting timeline, the Air Force realigns funding to address reliability and sustainment of the B-2 cockpit display system until end-of-life, while developing new capabilities aligned to the National Defense Strategy.

According to the budget, restructuring the DMS-M program will save the Air Force about \$327.9 million in fiscal 2021. However, it comes at a cost to the aircraft’s future survivability, omitting new antennas and avionics that help detect and identify ground-based air defense systems and other threats.

Last October, Bloomberg reported the DMS-M program was three years behind schedule, and that it would take until at least September 2024 to upgrade eight of the 20 operational B-2s. As of August, one B-2 had received the DMS-M modifications, said Richard Sullivan, B-2 program manager for prime contractor Northrop Grumman, during a 2019 briefing.

The Air Force has opted to invest in the advanced processor because the current system lacks the power to provide situational awareness to B-2 crews, making them more vulnerable in environments with dense surface-to-air threat. Further, the cockpit display upgrades are also necessary because legacy display units are “not supportable” due to ongoing parts obsolescence and maintenance problems, the budget read.

“Without this program, display availability will severely impact aircraft availability”—a major challenge for the B-2 fleet, one of the Air Force’s smallest at only 20 planes.

DMS-M is just one of the upgrades planned to keep the B-2 in the run up to the fielding of the Air Force’s newest bomber, the B-21 Raider. The Raider is expected to fly as early as December 2021, with initial operational capability planned in the mid-2030s.

"The Air Force continues to execute over \$1.3 billion in B-2 modernization efforts including armament upgrades, communications upgrades, and low-observable signature and supportability modifications to address obsolescence," Air Force spokesman Capt. Clay Lancaster said in a statement to Defense News.

About Valerie Insinna

Valerie Insinna is Defense News' air warfare reporter. She previously worked the Navy/congressional beats for Defense Daily, which followed almost three years as a staff writer for National Defense Magazine. Prior to that, she worked as an editorial assistant for the Tokyo Shimbun's Washington bureau.

<https://www.defensenews.com/smr/federal-budget/2020/02/12/the-air-force-is-massively-scaling-back-a-major-upgrade-for-the-b-2-stealth-bomber/>

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Aiken Standard (Aiken, S.C.)

10-Year-Plan: Nuclear Executives Reiterate Pit Production Pressures

By Colin Demarest

Feb. 11, 2020

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The plutonium pit production deadline is but a decade away, National Nuclear Security Administration chief Lisa Gordon-Hagerty said Tuesday afternoon, again highlighting a project timeline that officials continue to describe as tight.

"Since 2018, we have accomplished a great deal," said Gordon-Hagerty, who was speaking at the 2020 Nuclear Deterrence Summit via livestream from Vienna, Austria. "And what our enterprise is undertaking to reestablish the critical elements of the nuclear deterrent is nothing less than astounding."

About two years ago, the National Nuclear Security Administration and the U.S. Department of Defense together recommended producing plutonium pits, nuclear weapon cores, in both South Carolina, at the Savannah River Site, and in New Mexico, at Los Alamos National Laboratory.

Pit production at the site, they counseled, should be done at a wholly renovated Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility, the never-completed, multibillion-dollar nuclear fuel plant that was recently axed.

At least 80 pits per year are needed by 2030, according to the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review. Not hitting the mark would mean more demand for pits – though critics question the need for any number more – and higher costs, according to the major nuclear policy doctrine.

Two sites, Gordon-Hagerty said Tuesday, would help avoid devastating single points of failure; previous pitches have lauded the tandem approach as resilient and flexible.

"It was certified by the Nuclear Weapons Council as the most viable option to meet DOD's requirements," Gordon-Hagerty said.

The National Nuclear Security Administration's Savannah River Site manager, Nicole Nelson-Jean, speaking to the Aiken Standard on Tuesday, reiterated what's been said before: Resuscitating and fleshing out the U.S.'s pit production abilities in 10 or so years is ambitious.

"It's an aggressive schedule," Nelson-Jean said.

Los Alamos National Lab Director Thomas Mason, also speaking to the Aiken Standard on Tuesday, affirmed the pressure to produce is not felt just in the Palmetto State. Mason said there's a lot of work to be done in New Mexico – a full plate, as he put it.

While the remarks are new, the motif necessarily isn't. In August 2019, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions President and CEO Stuart MacVean said, "We are going like gangbusters on this." Fluor-led Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, the longtime Savannah River Site management and operations contractor, is spearheading the MOX-to-pits transition.

Energy secretary overhauls policy office, announces executives in internal email

"It's going to ask us to do in 10 years what would typically take 15 to 20 in today's environment," MacVean said during the same speech, alluding to, at one point, the Cold War.

In a June 2019 interview with the Aiken Standard, Gordon-Hagerty described the 2030 deadline as a challenge.

"But I believe that our entire infrastructure, the investments that we're making, and the commitment of our enterprise," the administrator explained, "we can do it."

President Donald Trump's fiscal year 2021 budget request, released Monday, included \$19.8 billion for the NNSA, the U.S. Department of Energy's weapons-and-nonproliferation arm.

Colin Demarest covers the Savannah River Site, the U.S. Department of Energy, the National Nuclear Security Administration and government in general. Follow him on Twitter: @demarest_colin

https://www.aikenstandard.com/news/year-plan-nuclear-executives-reiterate-pit-production-pressures/article_f21050ac-4d0d-11ea-bd52-b7b3e6acf306.html

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Air Force Magazine (Arlington, Va.)

The Euromissile Showdown

By John T. Correll

Feb. 1, 2020

In March 1976, the Soviet Union began deploying a new missile, the SS-20, that upset the balance of power in Europe. It was one of the pivotal events of the Cold War, igniting a confrontation between NATO and the USSR over medium-range "Euromissiles."

The multiple-warhead SS-20 differed significantly from its outmoded predecessors, the SS-4 and SS-5. It had a range of 5,000 kilometers—just short of the 5,500 that would have made it subject to SALT treaty arms control—and could hit any point in Western Europe from launch sites in the Soviet Union. It was more accurate than the older missiles. It was also mobile and easily concealed.

NATO had nothing comparable. Its forward-deployed nuclear forces in Europe were relatively short range, intended for operations along or just behind a European battlefield. They could not easily reach targets in the Soviet Union.

For strategic deterrence—holding the Soviet homeland at risk—NATO relied on the promise of extended protection by US intercontinental weapons, but the Europeans were not certain the US would use them in response to a limited attack.

"Every Soviet leader since Khrushchev saw the lesson that Khrushchev had been deposed in 1964 because he had lost the Cuban Missile Crisis against Kennedy in October 1962."

NATO Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges Jamie Shea

The Soviets hoped that even without an actual military conflict, the SS-20s would intimidate the Europeans, erode NATO cohesion, and perhaps lead to “decoupling” Europe from the US deterrent.

The Europeans were alarmed, especially the West Germans, who wanted the United States to take action to restore NATO’s “flexible response” strategy in which weapons based on European soil were supposed to be a credible deterrent against a limited attack.

The United States was initially reluctant to make any big changes, but to reassure the Europeans and head off Soviet intentions, agreed to support the “Dual Track” policy that NATO adopted in 1979.

One track sought to resolve the issue through negotiation. The second track was to deploy US intermediate- range weapons—ground-launched cruise missiles and Pershing II ballistic missiles—if arms control failed.

The Soviets would not give up the SS-20s, so NATO began deployment of the US missiles in 1983. There was great furor on the European left, accusing the United States of fomenting an arms race. The US, which had acted in response to European concerns, had gained ownership of the problem. As a consequence of the NATO deployments, the Soviets walked out of the arms talks.

Negotiations did not resume until 1985. Finally in 1988, the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty eliminated all ground-launched missiles on both sides with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers.

The INF Treaty endured for 30 years before it was undercut by blatant violations by the Russians. The United States pulled out of the treaty in 2019, and shortly thereafter, so did Russia.

A Soviet SS-20 missile launches from its transporter- erector-launcher in the mid-1980s. The introduction of the SS-20 was a provocation at a time when the Soviet Union’s missile forces had largely caught up with those of the US. Photo: Federation of American Scientists

Stirring the Balance

There was no compelling reason for the Soviets to introduce the SS-20. It was a provocative step when things were already going their way. Soviet missile forces, once clearly inferior to those of the West, had moved to a position of equality.

In the mid 1960s, the United States abandoned the goal of strategic superiority, canceled weapon systems, imposed a ceiling on missile and bomber forces, and sought parity with the Soviet Union. In 1969, the objective of détente—the relaxation of tension—was adopted, with the planning principle of “strategic sufficiency.”

By 1974, the Soviets were substantially ahead of the United States in ICBM launchers and reentry vehicles. The US and NATO were outnumbered in conventional forces as well.

The decision to deploy the SS-20 was made by Soviet General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev on the advice of Defense Minister Dmitry Ustinov. Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, a future chief of the general staff, counseled against it.

In the opinion of Brezhnev’s eventual successor, Mikhail Gorbachev, the deployment was “an unforgivable adventure” that “reflected the style of the Soviet leadership at the time” and “decision-making fraught with grave consequences for the country.”

There was some belief that the SS-20 was simply modernization of the aging Soviet medium-range force, but that does not seem to have been the primary reason.

“Every Soviet leader since Khrushchev saw the lesson that Khrushchev had been deposed in 1964 because he had lost the Cuban Missile Crisis against Kennedy in October 1962,” said NATO Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges Jamie Shea. “Everybody feared failure above everything else.”

Brezhnev had been part of the coalition that ousted Khrushchev. Looking back, Brezhnev made two big miscalculations. He underestimated the NATO reaction to the SS-20, and he did not believe the Alliance would deploy its own missiles to counter it.

A ground-launched cruise missile emerges from the transporter-erector launcher during a test firing at the Utah Test and Training Range in 1982. GLCMs were deployed to Belgium, Britain, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands. Photo: National Archives/DOD

Dual Track

The SS-20 was brought to public notice by West German chancellor Helmut Schmidt in a speech in October 1977. His references were general and indirect—he cited “disparities between East and West in nuclear tactical and conventional weapons”—but the US State Department and informed observers took notice and got the message.

The Europeans looked to the United States to take a central role. One choice was to deploy new missiles to counter the SS-20. President Jimmy E. Carter hoped to avoid that, having come to office earlier that year with nuclear arms reduction as one of his principal themes.

The Soviets were unrelenting, however, and two possibilities were advanced. The US Army’s Pershing missile could be upgraded to Pershing II status with better range and accuracy, and the Air Force could adapt the Navy’s sea-launched Tomahawk as a mobile ground-launched cruise missile (GLCM) with even longer reach.

The perception of the Carter White House was that “the Soviets would not risk launching SS-20s against Western Europe, but they would play upon European fears of vulnerability in order to obtain valuable political concessions from the West Europeans,” said William Leonard in an analysis for the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Carter went ahead with Pershing II and GLCM to reassure the Europeans of the US commitment, to restore the credibility of NATO’s flexible response, and as bargaining leverage as arms control efforts continued.

Brezhnev reacted with threats and bluster. He offered to freeze SS-20 deployments at a total of 120 but only if NATO turned down the US missiles.

Despite hesitation by several member nations, notably the Netherlands and Belgium, the NATO ministers unanimously approved the Dual Track strategy Dec. 12, 1979. The Soviet Union was put on four-year notice. Unless the Soviets agreed to a negotiated solution, NATO would begin the deployment in December 1983 of 108 Pershing II launchers and 464 GLCMs. To preclude an escalation in numbers, the US would more than compensate by a reduction of 1,000 in tactical nuclear warheads already in place.

The Missiles

The missile known to NATO as the SS-20 Saber was officially called the RSD-10 Pioneer by the Soviet rocket forces. It was a big improvement on the SS-4 and SS-5, which were described by The New York Times as “decrepit.”

The older missiles were not very accurate, liquid fueled, and slow to launch. The solid fuel SS-20 was highly accurate. Its range was 5,000 kilometers, a substantial gain on 2,000 for the SS-4 and

4,000 for the SS-5. It was shuttled around on a multi-wheeled transport vehicle and accompanied by extra missiles so it could be reloaded.

Most of the SS-20s were based in the Western Soviet Union opposite NATO. From sites in the Urals, they could reach London with range to spare.

As decision time on the Dual Track policy approached in 1983, the Soviets were deploying SS-20s at the rate of one a week. More than 300 of them had been fielded, with 900 warheads.

The SS-4 and SS-5—like Pershing II and GLCM—had one warhead each. The SS-20 carried three independently targeted warheads.

The US Pershing II was a ballistic missile with fast launch and good accuracy. It could strike points in the Soviet Union in six to eight minutes. Its operational range was 1,770 kilometers, not enough to hit the USSR from England or Italy, so it had to be forward-based in Germany.

The Air Force's BGM-109G GLCM flew a course like that of an airplane. With an operational range of 2,500 kilometers, it could reach the Soviet Union from bases in Britain.

GLCM was transported by a huge tractor-trailer. It was blasted out of the launch tube by a rocket booster. Seconds later, the stubby wings and control fins snapped into place and a turbofan engine took over to fly the GLCM on a planned path to its target. Sensors in the guidance system constantly matched the contour of the ground below with a digital map in the missile's computer. It entered hostile territory at an altitude of about 50 feet. The GLCM's capability to fly under the radar was a problem for the Soviets.

Negotiations Fail

The Soviets refused for almost two years to engage in INF arms discussions unless NATO revoked its deployment decision, but then relented. Between 1981 and 1983, US and Soviet negotiators met repeatedly without any results.

In November 1981, President Ronald W. Reagan proposed the "Zero Option": The United States would eliminate all of its Pershing IIs and GLCMs if the Soviet Union would dismantle all of its SS-20s, SS-4s, and SS-5s. The Soviets declined.

Brezhnev's idea of a deal, which he put forth in 1982, would have included the British and French weapons—mostly submarine-based missiles not under NATO control—in the count. The Soviets would keep the 300 SS-20s already deployed, but none of the US missiles would be permitted.

Another Soviet offer would have included removing from Europe US tactical aircraft that could carry nuclear weapons. The Soviets wanted to count several hundred F-4, A-6, and A-7 American fighter-bombers, but not 2,700 of their own Su-17s, Su-24s, and MiG-27s.

Brezhnev died in November 1983 and was succeeded by Yuri Andropov. If anything, the Soviet position became more belligerent. Seeking to frighten the Europeans, the Soviets threatened to shift to a hair-trigger, launch-on-warning strategy if NATO deployed the Pershing II and GLCM.

Soviet threats had some effect in Europe, leading to large protests and demonstrations. "The leaders of the peace movement tend to ignore the fact that by deploying these new missiles, the West is responding to an existing Soviet challenge," said Bernard Kalb of NBC TV. Critics in the West predicted that the Soviets would never agree to zero-zero and urged NATO to take the best deal it could get.

Helmut Schmidt was isolated within his own Social Democratic Party and swept from office. However, Helmut Kohl and the Christian Democrats, solidly aligned with the US deployment, won

the 1982 German elections. In Britain, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, also a strong supporter, led the Tories to a decisive victory in 1983.

In March 1983, NATO defense ministers endorsed Reagan's Zero Option as the primary objective in arms talks, and in June, NATO foreign ministers gave formal approval to deploy US missiles. Only the Socialist government of Greece refused to agree.

In November, with the first Pershing IIs and GLCMs arriving in Europe, the Soviets walked out of the negotiations.

The Missiles Arrive

The British anti-nuclear protesters got to the first GLCM base, RAF Greenham Common in Berkshire, before the missiles did. A clutter of tents, house trailers, and rough facilities known as the "Women's Peace Camp" had been set up outside the main gate since 1981.

The first GLCMs arrived Nov. 14, 1983, aboard an Air Force C-141. The first Pershing IIs were delivered by truck to the Army base at Mutlangen, West Germany, on Nov. 26. Protesters did not manage to interfere with either deployment.

NATO decided to withdraw another 1,400 nuclear warheads. This was in addition to the 1,000 removals that had been part of the original Dual Track package, a net reduction of 2,400 warheads since 1979. This would bring NATO's nuclear stockpile to the lowest level in many years.

All of the Pershing IIs went to West Germany, but the GLCM was based in Italy, Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands in addition to two locations in Britain. Deployments of both the US missiles and the SS-20s continued, as did anti-nuclear activity.

The women at Greenham Common came from all over the world. At one point, their numbers were sufficient to completely surround the base. In another instance, thousands of protesters formed a human chain that stretched 14 miles across the English countryside between Greenham Common and a nuclear weapons factory at Burghfield.

The demonstrators were often disruptive, but they did not have a serious effect on operations or readiness of Pershing II or GLCM.

In February 1984, the Oxford Union staged a debate spun off the Euromissile issue. The proposition, as stated, was that "there is no moral difference between the US and USSR." A noted Marxist argued for the resolution but to the surprise of the leftists, the debate was won—by a 271-232 vote of those attending—by US Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger, who spoke against it.

The INF Treaty

The INF talks, suspended with the Soviet walkout in 1983, were resumed in 1985, concurrent with sweeping changes in the leadership of the Soviet Union. The new general secretary was reformer Mikhail Gorbachev, following the brief regimes of Andropov (1982-1984) and Konstantin Chernenko (1984-1985).

Success of the negotiations was not immediate. The Soviets tried their old line one more time, proposing that the number of SS-20 warheads allowed be equal to that of the GLCM and the British and French forces combined. NATO did not agree.

In December 1987, Reagan and Gorbachev signed the INF Treaty and it went into effect in June 1988. It provided for all US and Soviet ground-launched missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers to be eliminated.

In effect, it was Reagan's Zero Option. A total of 2,692 US and Soviet missiles were taken out: Pershing I, Pershing II, and the GLCM for the United States, and for the USSR, the SS-20, SS-4, SS-5, SS-12, and SS-23.

The last of the cruise missiles left Greenham Common in 1991, but the Women's Peace Camp was not disbanded. It was maintained as a general protest against nuclear weapons until 2000, when it became a commemorative and historic site.

The INF Treaty had a long run but it did not last. The Russians, again dissatisfied with the balance of power, began covert development in 2008 of a short-range cruise missile, the 9M729. Road mobile and ground launched, it was tested in 2014 and entered service in 2017.

The new missile, called the SSC-8 in the West, was a violation of the INF Treaty. The Obama administration in the United States protested repeatedly to Russia but was not willing to take the major step of withdrawing from an arms control treaty.

The Russians claimed the 9M729 had a range of only 490 kilometers—conveniently short of INF constraint by the whisker margin of 10 kilometers—but US intelligence reported flights longer than that from the Russian base at Kasputin Yar.

Withdrawal

In October 2018, President Donald Trump's administration announced that the United States would leave the treaty and formally suspended compliance Feb. 2, 2019. US withdrawal would follow in six months unless Russia returned to compliance by eliminating the 9M729. The next day, Russian President Vladimir Putin also declared suspension.

On Aug. 2, 2019, the State Department said Russia was still in "material breach" of the treaty and announced that the United States had formally withdrawn. The Russian Foreign Ministry said that "the US has embarked on destroying all international agreements that do not suit them."

There was considerable speculation that the end of the INF Treaty would bring on a new arms race. If so, the Russians began early. They already have four battalions of 9M729s, nuclear-capable but probably conventionally armed so far.

Concerned about the Russian INF violations, the US Congress in 2017 and since has given approval and funding for development of conventional ballistic and cruise missiles to counter the 9M729. The ground-launched cruise missile, a modified Tomahawk, was test fired in August 2019 and again in December 2019.

Even so, the Russian missile is not equal to the SS-20 by a long shot, and both sides have substantial numbers of air- and sea-launched cruise missiles operating at intermediate ranges. The immediate threat of destabilization is not nearly as great as it was during the Euromissile crisis in the 1970s and 1980s.

A key question is whether withdrawal from the INF Treaty is a preview of things to come. The New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty—New START—expires in February 2021 unless the US and Russia agree to extend it.

New START limits the numbers of long-range missiles and bombers and the warheads they carry, but the demise of the INF Treaty has done major damage to the spirit of arms control.

"Without New START, there would be no legally binding limits on the world's two largest nuclear arsenals for the first time since 1972," the Arms Control Association said in a recent issue brief.

John T. Correll was editor in chief of Air Force Magazine for 18 years and is a frequent contributor. His most recent article, "The Ups and Downs of Close Air Support," appeared in the December issue.

<https://www.airforcemag.com/article/the-euromissile-showdown/>

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US COUNTER-WMD

Defense News (Washington, D.C.)

Pacific Missile Defense Radars Nixed, MDA to Study Sensor Architecture in Region

By Jen Judson

Feb. 11, 2020

WASHINGTON — The Missile Defense Agency has decided to abandon its plans to set up ballistic missile defense radars in the Pacific and is now planning to take a new look at the sensor architecture in the Indo-Pacific Command region to figure out what is necessary to handle emerging threats, according to Vice Adm. Jon Hill, the agency's director.

Neither the Homeland Defense Radar-Hawaii (HRD-H) or the Homeland Defense Radar-Pacific (HDR-P) appeared in supporting fiscal 2021 budget request documents released Feb. 10.

Hill explained during a briefing to reporters at the Pentagon that the agency had decided to push the Pacific radars "to the right because of host nation issues that we have to come through," Hill said. "We still have that issue and the Pacific radar is no longer in our budget. We moved it out."

The director said he didn't know where the money that would have funded the two radars would be reallocated, but said it likely went toward funding other Pentagon priorities in the budget request.

In the meantime, Hill said the region is covered against today's ballistic missile threats using the forward-deployed AN/TPY-2 radar in Hawaii as well as the deployable Sea-Based X-Band (SBX) radar. Additionally, Aegis ships with their radars are mobile and can be repositioned as appropriate "so that is really the answer for how you would handle that in the near term."

When looking at how the U.S. might defend against future threats like hypersonic weapons, for instance, the agency is beginning a study to look at the ballistic missile defense sensor architecture in the Indo-Pacific region in terms of what options might exist for developing a robust layer of detection capabilities, according to Hill.

"The Pacific radars would have added substantially improved capability to better intercept North Korean [Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles] using Ground-Based Interceptors in Alaska. But if MDA is going to reevaluate the overall sensor architecture, an attractive alternative would be to double down on a global space sensor layer to track various threats, from various places," Tom Karako, missile defense analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, told Defense News.

The radar data would have fed into the Ground-Based Midcourse Defense System designed to protect the homeland from ICBM threats coming from North Korea and Iran. The GMD systems consists of 44 GBIs buried in the ground at Fort Greely, Alaska, and Vandenberg Air Force Base, California, designed to counter incoming ballistic missile threats.

The FY19 MDA budget request had outlined plans to spend \$95.8 million to design and build two discriminating radars in the Pacific. One radar would be located in Hawaii and another somewhere else in the Pacific.

The plan was to field the HDR-H by FY23, which means military construction would have taken place for the radar beginning in FY21.

Site surveys for the Pacific radar began happening in FY19 with the expectation to begin construction in FY22 followed by a fielding in FY24.

In FY20, MDA requested \$247.7 million in FY20 on the Hawaii radar and another \$6.7 million to develop the Pacific radar. The Pacific radar program had already slipped by then, with the MDA looking at a 2026 fielding timeframe for the radar because it had yet to determine a location for the radar.

About Jen Judson

Jen Judson is the land warfare reporter for Defense News. She has covered defense in the Washington area for eight years. She was previously a reporter at Politico Pro Defense and Inside Defense. She won the National Press Club's best analytical reporting award in 2014 and was named the Defense Media Awards' best young defense journalist in 2018.

<https://www.defensenews.com/smr/federal-budget/2020/02/11/pacific-missile-defense-radars-nixed-mda-to-study-sensor-architecture-in-region/>

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Defense News (Washington, D.C.)

MDA's FY21 Budget Paves Way for New Homeland Missile Defense Plans

By Jen Judson

Feb. 11, 2020

WASHINGTON — The Missile Defense Agency's fiscal year 2021 \$9.2 billion budget request shows a refocus on developing and deploying a layered homeland ballistic missile defense system. The focus: operational regional missile defense capability to underlay the current Ground-Based Midcourse Defense System designed to protect the continental United States, following the abrupt cancellation of an effort to upgrade the system's interceptors.

The MDA is funding a Next-Generation Interceptor instead of pursuing the now-canceled Redesigned Kill Vehicle (RKV) program, which would have upgraded GMD's current GBIs with a more capable kill vehicle than is currently deployed at Fort Greely, Alaska, and Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

But the agency is also going to take regional missile defense capability already resident within the Navy and Army and use it to provide a layered defense against intercontinental ballistic missile threats to the United States homeland.

The FY21 budget "supports reprioritizing funds to improve homeland defense," Michelle Atkinson, the MDA's director for operations, told reporters at the Pentagon during a Feb. 10 briefing on the FY21 budget request. In addition to its request of \$664.1 million in FY21 for NGI, the agency is also "adapting regional systems such as Aegis and [the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense System] THAAD to provide a layered homeland defense."

According to supporting budget request documents, the agency plans to add these layers of defensive capability to its architecture and is taking steps to assess the Aegis Weapon System to determine if it can be upgraded to bolster homeland defense against ICBM threats, particularly the

SM-3 Block IIA missiles used in the system. The MDA wants to spent \$39.2 million in FY21 looking into this possibility.

Additionally, the agency would like to spend \$56.6 million in FY21 to modernize the Aegis system and test the feasibility of operationalizing the Aegis Ashore Defense Test Complex in Hawaii. Funding also includes adding SM-3 to the Aegis Ashore arsenal to provide “an exo-atmospheric defense against short- to intermediate-range ballistic missile threats in the later stages of flight,” the budget documents describe. The Romania Aegis Ashore site has already been upgraded with the missile.

MDA is also requesting \$273.6 million for THAAD development efforts to include funding for a THAAD homeland defense tier. Specifically, the agency is asking for \$139 million in FY21 to start the development and demonstration of a new interceptor prototype for THAAD, which could support a tiered and layered approach to homeland defense.

“This effort will develop prototype software and hardware and perform a series of demonstrations to prove the technologies to enable expansion of engagement options and coverage areas for the THAAD weapon system in a flight test in FY23,” the budget documents state.

MDA Director Vice Adm. Jon Hill said while the agency is confident in its existing fleet and homeland defense capability, it is also aware that threats will evolve.

“We know some time in the mid to late ’20s, you will start to see a fall-off in the ability of [the GBI] missile to take on those threats. You will start to see reliability issues, kind of normal for any weapons system that is deployed for that long,” he said, noting the first GBI went into the ground in 2004.

The agency does not plan to buy any more GBIs even though President Trump pushed for and Congress approved the purchase of 20 additional interceptors and a new silo to house them.

“When we prove that we can take out an ICBM with an Aegis ship or an Aegis Ashore site with an SM-3 Block IIA, then you want to ramp up the evolution of the threat on the target side and go against more complex threats,” Hill said.

The Pentagon will also have to make sure it can upgrade the combat system that is on a ship to take in engage-on-remote data from other sensors and can control the missile, Hill said.

The whole point of layered defense is to give combatant commanders options, so in addition to firing a GBI against a target — or the future NGI — there will be an option to fire an SM-3 Block IIA or even a THAAD interceptor, Hill described.

The agency is “challenging ourselves” to figure out how to develop a THAAD interceptor that would work against an ICBM, he said. To do that, the MDA is seeking to draw from building THAAD batteries for Saudi Arabia to study what might be needed, according to Hill.

And the agency is also looking at the engineering trade space today.

“We may consider an upgraded propulsion stack to give [THAAD] extended range, don’t know yet,” he said. “It could be that we don’t want to update the propulsion. Maybe there is something in the seeker that would buy us more in the trade space now.”

The THAAD interceptor program is a new start in the FY21 budget request, Hill noted. “We are working our way through what that program would look like.”

Meanwhile, the agency plans to release its request for proposals to industry for its NGI program by the end of the month, Hill said. MDA plans to make an award by the end of the calendar year, he added, but overall its procurement schedule isn’t refined.

While the agency anticipates testing of the NGI in the mid 2020s, and placing them in the ground roughly in 2027 or 2028, industry proposals will dictate final schedules and what is doable.

MDA is funding the NGI program at \$4.9 billion across the five-year budget plan, which does not include procurement dollars, according to Atkinson.

<https://www.defensenews.com/smr/federal-budget/2020/02/11/mdas-fy21-budget-paves-way-for-new-homeland-missile-defense-plans/>

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Jerusalem Post (Jerusalem, Israel)

Ex-CIA Official Warns of Iran, ISIS Drones Armed with Chemical Weapons

By Yonah Jeremy Bob and Neville Teller

Feb. 10, 2020

The greatest threat confronting the US and Israel may be swarms of drones armed with chemical weapons released by Iran or ISIS, an ex-CIA official has told The Jerusalem Post.

The warning takes on greater meaning following a call on January 28 by ISIS's new leader, Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Quraishi, to direct greater attention to attacking Israel and Jews, including using chemical weapons.

Some dangerous countries and terrorist groups may already have their hands on chemical weapons – ISIS and multiple other groups used them in Syria in recent years – and anyone who does not, may be able to get them from North Korea, former CIA agent Tracy Walder told the Post.

Regarding ISIS, there are “a couple of different prongs” to their interest in chemical weapons, she said.

Part of what eventually became ISIS came out of groups run by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi – “someone I followed a lot” while at the CIA, Walder said.

Zarqawi was very interested in “acquiring small-scale chemical weapons,” she said. “We are talking about anthrax, which contains spores, [and] even ricin.” Deploying the chemical weapons “is a very easy thing to do if you have access to a drone.”

Walder said she was personally involved in tracking Zarqawi and those associated with him in the post-9/11 era, as well as thwarting some of their planned poison attacks in European countries. CIA secrecy rules prevent her from revealing exactly where, she said.

Regarding Iran, Walder said: “You won’t see a head of state such as from Iran [openly] say, ‘I want to acquire’ [chemical weapons], but we know Iran has been working to destabilize [the region] through proxies, the Houthis, Hezbollah. It’s less about Iran as a state, but more about Iran as a state actor” which can activate proxy groups on its behalf.

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Quds Force chief Qasem Soleimani, who was killed by the US in January, had been ingeniously using proxy groups to spread terrorism in the Middle East, she said, and Iran could use these groups to deliver devastating chemical-weapons attacks.

Regarding the acquisition of chemical weapons by ISIS, Iran, its proxies, Syria or al-Qaeda, Walder said that North Korea is the greatest threat as a no-holds-barred seller.

Pyongyang has stockpiled chemical weaponry and materials, and would be more than ready to sell them to any bidder, she said, adding that besides North Korea, small-scale chemical weapons and drones can all be assembled using information online.

Walder said she was particularly concerned that even the best counterterrorism efforts “wouldn’t see any signs of alarm if [the weapons] were acquired using a piecemeal approach” of purchasing low-cost and seemingly unrelated parts.

Chemical weaponry could emerge in the form of a sort of dirty bomb rather than being used directly on the battlefield, as in World War I, she said.

A NEW widening threat was Iranian drone swarms, and they could be modified to carry chemical weapons, Walder said.

The US is even more concerned about Iran’s development of sophisticated, technologically advanced drones than about its current nuclear capabilities, she said.

Part of what makes drone swarms carrying chemical weapons so dangerous is that they are uniquely capable of evading detection by radar.

Last September, Iran launched a devastating swarm of drone strikes on Saudi oil fields. The Saudis had significant air-defense capabilities against an attempted strike by Iranian aircraft, but they were not ready for low-flying drones coming in under their radar.

Regarding intelligence sharing, Walder told the Post that such sharing between the US and Israel was very strong. She declined to go into detail.

Walder singled out certain African intelligence agencies as being particularly helpful in tracking down individual terrorists.

“I spent so much time there,” she said. “I know a lot about them. For many of the African countries, they are just coming out of civil war and unrest.”

“Look at the [Osama] bin Laden history,” Walder said. “He made a lot of inroads in Africa... he was responsible entirely for a lot of the infrastructure and roads in Sudan... But after the countries’ civil wars, some have scores to settle with al-Qaeda. Some couldn’t wait to help the US.”

African countries “can help us infiltrate [terrorist] networks in their country, she said. “They are much more familiar with the inner workings, so they can help us rid their countries of a nuisance.”

Terrorist groups were sometimes less careful covering their tracks in Africa because they believed no one was paying attention to that forgotten continent, Walder said.

She endorsed recent reports about US-Netherlands intelligence cooperation leading to a successful cyber attack on Iran’s nuclear program. But she had left the CIA before the operation.

After complimenting the cooperation of some foreign agencies with the US, Walder said there were chronic inefficiencies regarding US intelligence cooperation with Europe.

The relationship with Britain always was particularly close, and Brexit would not affect that, she said.

The US has to manage lines of intelligence communications with 27 different European nations to get a full picture, something that is highly inefficient, Walder said.

Noting that the EU already has a foreign minister who coordinates policy, she said having one central hub for intelligence coordination could be even more important. This is because thwarting threats to national security can sometimes be a question of whether information is relayed a few days or even minutes before an attack, she explained.

The 27-nation split in the EU heavily dampens the ability to share information fast enough to keep up with attackers who may be operating using a cross-border strategy to make themselves hard to track, Walder said.

The US would greatly welcome greater coordination of counterterrorism activities within the EU, she concluded.

<https://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Ex-CIA-official-warns-of-Iran-ISIS-drones-armed-with-chemical-weapons-617132>

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US ARMS CONTROL

The Hill (Washington, D.C.)

Trump Under Pressure to Renew Last Nuke Treaty With Russia

By Rebecca Kheel

Feb. 9, 2020

Supporters of a key arms control treaty between the United States and Russia are raising pressure on the Trump administration to renew the pact after the one-year deadline to do so passed.

Democratic lawmakers, arms control advocates and at least one Republican issued a flood of statements this week urging President Trump to renew the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), which they fear he will allow to lapse.

Whether their pressure campaign is working is another question.

Administration officials have said they want to update the treaty by adding China and expanding it to cover new weapons, but there has been no apparent movement on talks as the agreement's expiration looms.

National security adviser Robert O'Brien said this past week arms control talks with Russia would begin "soon."

"We'll start negotiations soon on arms control and on the nuclear issue, which is, you know, important to the safety of the world, to every country, not just the U.S. and Russia," O'Brien said in an address at the Meridian International Center.

The New START represents the last major treaty binding the U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals.

The agreement, which was negotiated by the Obama administration, caps the number of deployed nuclear warheads each country can have at 1,550 a piece. There are also limits on deploying weapons, such as intercontinental ballistic missiles, that could deliver the warheads. And the treaty lays out a verification regime that includes 18 on-site inspections per year.

The agreement expires Feb. 5, 2021, but there is an option to extend it another five years after that.

Russia has offered to extend the treaty immediately with no preconditions. China, meanwhile, has rejected joining the talks.

Arms control advocates have been sounding the alarm on New START since Trump withdrew last year from a separate arms pact with Russia known as the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.

The demise of the INF Treaty left New START as the lone treaty limiting U.S. and Russian nuclear weapons, and Trump letting New START expire would mean the world's two largest nuclear powers have no legal constraints on their arsenals for the first time in five decades, advocates warn.

The New START's expiration date comes a couple weeks after the next presidential inauguration date, meaning the decision to renew it could be left to Trump's successor if he's defeated in November. Major Democratic candidates — including former Vice President Joe Biden; former South Bend, Ind., Mayor Pete Buttigieg; Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.); and Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) — have backed renewing the treaty.

But it's unclear whether a new president would have enough time to act. Russia has suggested it won't wait until the last minute to renew the treaty.

"I would think there would be enough time, but I don't know for sure," House Armed Services Committee Chairman Adam Smith (D-Wash.) said.

Smith said it's imperative lawmakers keep pressure on the Trump administration to stay in the treaty, but acknowledged "there's only so much we can do."

"We've had a sense of urgency for some time because the administration has signaled reluctance to extend it. As far as if there's anything we can do, we have to put pressure on them to keep going, to continue the treaty," he said, adding that pressure can come by bringing "public attention to the issue of how dangerous a nuclear arms race would be."

To that end, supporters of renewing the treaty put out a slew of statements this past week as the agreement reached its ninth anniversary and final year before expiration.

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace tweeted out a page on its website titled "The Last Nuclear Arms Treaty" with a red countdown clock ticking down the seconds until New START expires.

Global Zero, which advocates for the elimination of nuclear weapons, released a statement from Executive Director Derek Johnson marking the start of "a countdown to nuclear chaos."

"If Donald Trump lets New START expire, there will be no restraint, no inspection, no verification whatsoever of American and Russian nuclear activities for the first time since 1972," Johnson said in the eight-paragraph statement. "Both nations will be free to build even more nuclear weapons, with no obligation to declare, display, or control any of them. It will be a return to the most dangerous days of the Cold War, and the security of the entire planet hangs in the balance."

While covering China and new Russian weapons systems in an agreement are "worthy goals," Johnson added, "they won't happen unless the current system of restraint and verification is maintained and strengthened."

Arms Control Association Executive Director Daryl Kimball similarly warned in his own statement that a lapse in New START would "open the door to unconstrained nuclear competition that President Trump says he wants to avoid."

In Congress, House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.) and Senate Foreign Relations Committee ranking member Bob Menendez (D-N.J.) released a joint statement urging Trump to extend the treaty.

"It is time for President Trump to listen to reason, expertise, and our allies who recognize the treaty as an indispensable pillar of security," Engel and Menendez said.

Meanwhile, Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.) tweeted that New START "has reduced the threat posed by nuclear weapons around the globe and helped maintain our world order," while Sen. Bob Casey

Jr. (D-Pa.) tweeted that “we risk a 21st-century nuclear arms race” if Trump doesn’t extend the “indispensable pillar of security” of New START.

Sens. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) and Todd Young (R-Ind.), co-sponsors of a resolution supporting New START’s extension, also put out statements about the impending expiration.

“Today, New START remains critically important as relations between the U.S. and Russia become increasingly strained and with our own nuclear arsenal in desperate need of modernization,” Young said. “With nuclear threats emanating from Russia and emerging from China, it is paramount that we work together to curb the threats posed by nuclear war and extend the New START Treaty.”

Many of Trump’s Republican allies in Congress, though, oppose the treaty, arguing it handcuffs the United States when China is not a party to it and Russia may not be trusted to comply.

Russia violated the INF Treaty ahead of the U.S. withdrawal, but it has complied with New START. China, meanwhile, is known to have a fraction of the number of nuclear warheads possessed by the United States or Russia.

Last year, Rep. Liz Cheney (R-Wyo.) and Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) introduced companion bills in their respective chambers to limit funding for New START unless it covers China and all Russian nuclear forces.

In his address to dozens of foreign ambassadors, O’Brien said there’s “no more serious issue” a president can face than nuclear weapons, but suggested the administration has not yet settled on a structure for arms control.

“How the framework is set up for those negotiations, whether it’s a new treaty, whether it’s an extension of New START, those are things that we’ll have to work out,” he added. “But I also think, and more importantly the president believes, that it shouldn’t just be the United States and Russia. We think that China is going to need to become involved in any serious arms control negotiation. And so we’re going to work on those talks in the coming months and year.”

<https://thehill.com/policy/defense/482119-trump-under-pressure-to-renew-last-nuke-treaty-with-russia>

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VOA (Washington, D.C.)

Experts: Sanctions Relief Will Not Make North Korea Denuclearize

By Christy Lee

Feb. 6, 2020

WASHINGTON - North Korea is unlikely to give up its nuclear weapons even if sanctions are eased, according to experts who think increasing pressure and enforcing sanctions will lead Pyongyang to relent on its nuclear program.

“I do not believe North Korea would give up its nuclear weapons if sanctions are lifted,” said Joseph Bosco, an East Asia expert at the Institute for Corean-American Studies (ICAS). “Instead, they would increase their demands.”

Joshua Stanton, a Washington-based attorney who helped draft the North Korea Sanctions Enforcement and Policy Enforcement Act in 2016, said, “If there is any chance of denuclearizing North Korea, it is to put so much pressure on Kim Jong Un that he or the generals around him decide that denuclearization is their only alternative to the collapse of the state.”

As talks on denuclearization between Washington and Pyongyang remain stalled, the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) members are divided on whether sanctions imposed on North Korea should be relaxed.

Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve, the Belgian ambassador to the U.N. who is currently serving as the president of the UNSC said Monday at a press conference that some Security Council members think sanctions on North Korea should be “a little bit eased.”

At the same time, he said other members believe that sanctions “have to be maintained and really severely implemented in order to put pressure on North Korea to negotiate.”

He did not name which member states support or oppose sanctions relief.

Russia, China: Ease sanctions

In December, Russia and China, both permanent members of the Security Council, proposed the UNSC lift sanctions on North Korea. The U.S. rejected the proposal at the time. In response to a question about their proposal, Buytswerve said, “There is no work being done about it,” adding that “it stays where it is.”

Sanctions were a key reason working-level talks between Washington and Pyongyang broke down in Stockholm in October. Discussions have remained deadlocked since then. Washington has been maintaining the position it took at the Hanoi summit in February 2019 on keeping sanctions on North Korea until it takes substantial steps toward denuclearization, while Pyongyang has been demanding that the U.S. change its stance.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un apparently gave up on that demand as he said in January the country will now focus on building its economy through self-reliance without expecting sanctions to be lifted.

Experts think relaxing sanctions at this point would do more harm than good because Pyongyang has not made new offers to move toward denuclearization.

“In the absence of steps by North Korea on its nuclear program, easing sanctions unilaterally could send the wrong signal to Pyongyang — that if it continues to hold out, the international community will loosen sanctions further,” said Troy Stangarone, senior director of the Korea Economic Institute.

Bruce Klingner, former CIA deputy division chief for Korea and current senior research fellow at the Heritage Foundation said, “To ease sanctions without positive North Korean action would be to provide the regime with unique immunity for violating U.N. resolutions.”

If sanctions are eased, Bosco thinks North Korea would pressure the U.S. for additional concessions such as a formal end to the Korean War, recognition of its status as a nuclear state, and increased aid to compensate for losses caused by sanctions.

“They will conclude, as communist regimes always do, that Western concessions indicate weakness, and they become more adventurist and aggressive to extract more concessions,” Bosco said.

Also, if sanctions were lifted, experts said re-imposing them would be difficult if North Korea refused to return to the negotiations.

“A better approach would be an agreement not to increase sanctions if North Korea refrained from further tests and engage in substantive talks,” Stangarone said.

William Brown, former U.S. intelligence official who heads the Northeast Asia Economics and Intelligence Advisory, said “It would be hard to put tough sanctions, like we have now, back in place without some other larger North Korean provocations.”

An argument for relief

Ken Gause, director for the Adversary Analytics Program at CNA, thinks sanctions relief could get North Korea to freeze its nuclear weapons program and does not see the U.S.-led pressure campaign leading to denuclearization.

"I don't see any way forward with a pressure-only campaign to bring about the intended goal of the UNSC of curbing North Korea's nuclear program," Gause said. "In an ironic way, it might actually accelerate the program."

Gause added that without China and Russia enforcing sanctions, it would be difficult to bring about a change in North Korea's position on nuclear weapons.

China in particular has been helping Pyongyang evade sanctions that restrict fuel export to North Korea and prohibit coal imports from the country.

Despite sanctions, Chinese merchants have been smuggling goods such as automobile and machinery parts across the border.

Klingner sees that illicit smuggling will likely be reduced because of North Korea's response to the coronavirus scare.

"This will, indirectly, increase enforcement of required sanctions and put greater pressure on the regime," Klingner said. "Reduction in smuggled fuel and other imports will impact the North Korean economy."

North Korea closes border

North Korea has temporarily closed the border it shares with China and banned all train and air links to and from China in an effort to keep the coronavirus at bay. [[]] Pyongyang also imposed strict quarantine measures on foreigners entering and exiting the country, and set up medical checkpoints in the provinces that border China.

Stangarone said China is an important source of food and intermediary goods for North Korea, and if North Korea is unable to import them from China for a prolonged time because the border is closed, its economy could be disrupted.

"Reports indicate that cargo shipments have been stopped, which means that the closure could have a wider impact on the economy," Stangarone said. "If it is closed for an extended period of time, and North Korea does not reopen its border to cargo shipments, the impact on the economy would be deeper."

Brown said if the epidemic continues, North Korean workers remaining in China, who were supposed to return home by Dec. 22, 2019, deadline, may end up staying there.

"This may actually protect workers still in China for a short while," Brown said. "But it may, in the end, make it harder for already returned workers to go back. So the net impact is likely to further push the North Korean and Chinese economies apart."

Oh Taek-song and Han Sang-mi contributed to this report, which originated in VOA's Korean Service.

<https://www.voanews.com/east-asia-pacific/experts-sanctions-relief-will-not-make-north-korea-denuclearize>

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VOA (Washington, D.C.)

Amid Soaring Tensions, Leaders Prepare for Key Global Security Summit

By Henry Ridgwell

Feb. 13, 2020

MUNICH, GERMANY - U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Pentagon chief Mark Esper will join hundreds of global leaders in Germany Friday for the three-day Munich Security Conference.

Numerous security flashpoints around the world, from Syria, Yemen and Iran to Hong Kong, Ukraine and Libya, add to the growing tension and unease ahead of the summit, which takes place against the backdrop of the coronavirus outbreak and a global climate emergency.

The United States' large delegation is a sign that the Washington wants to counter accusations that it is disengaging, says analyst Elisabeth Braw of Britain's Royal United Services Institute, who is attending the annual Munich conference.

"As we speak actually the U.S. is beginning its largest military exercise in Europe in a quarter of a century," noted Braw in an interview with VOA. "And that's worth remembering when we talk about the U.S. disconnecting or disengaging from Europe."

US-Iran tensions

Washington's biggest showdown in Munich is likely to be with Iran, which is sending Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Zarif to the summit. He and several other world leaders and government ministers will be given around 15 minutes to address the conference, before question and answer sessions. Several bilateral meetings usually take place on the sidelines of the conference, which is seen as a key annual event to sustain dialogue between global strategic rivals.

The U.S. killed top Iranian General Qassem Soleimani in a drone strike earlier this year. Retaliatory air strikes by Iran on U.S. bases culminated in the accidental shooting down of a Ukrainian Airlines passenger jet, killing all 176 people on board.

Conference host, former German Ambassador Wolfgang Ischinger, hopes the conference will offer a lifeline for the Iran nuclear deal that the U.S. withdrew from, with Europe at the forefront of negotiations.

"To stick to it and to expand on it through negotiations on ballistic systems, regional security architecture, the fight against terrorism. Could Iran stop supporting Hezbollah?" Ischinger suggested at a press conference Wednesday ahead of the conference.

The killing of Soleimani on Iraqi soil triggered a backlash from Baghdad, and a non-binding vote in the Iraqi parliament to expel the five-thousand U.S. troops in the country.

NATO is discussing taking over the training mission for Iraqi forces battling Islamic State – a proposal welcomed by U.S. Secretary of Defense Esper, who spoke to reporters en route to Europe.

"To the degree that NATO can offset the U.S. presence, that would over time allow us to bring some forces home," Esper said.

Meanwhile the conflict in Syria continues to destabilize the Middle East region, with Ankara warning of revenge against Damascus for the deaths of Turkish soldiers in clashes this week.

The escalating war in Libya is also top of the European agenda, with fears growing of a proxy war as global powers back rival sides in the conflict. The EU fears a spike in migrant arrivals across the Mediterranean. Europe is also pushing for the climate change to top the security agenda at the meeting.

There is hope that peace talks may be progressing in Afghanistan, with reports the U.S. and the Taliban could be close to a deal.

Coronavirus fears

China's foreign minister Wang Yi will attend the conference against the backdrop of the coronavirus outbreak, the pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong, and U.S.-led efforts to halt the rise of Chinese telecoms firm Huawei.

The director-general of the World Health Organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, will update the conference on the global fight against the spread of the coronavirus, which has been officially named as 'COVID-19'. The WHO recently warned that the global threat from the virus could exceed that of terrorism.

Meanwhile Russia's support for rebel forces in eastern Ukraine continues to stoke tensions with Europe. France recently called for re-engagement with Moscow, and President Emmanuel Macron will attend the Munich Security Conference for the first time. His message will not be universally welcomed, says analyst Braw.

"Many central and eastern Europeans would be very concerned if other European countries and the U.S. made overtures towards Russia."

Moscow will be represented by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

As global tensions soar, leaders from across the world will be confined to the historic Bayerischer Hof hotel in central Munich, for three days of what will likely be fiery talks.

<https://www.voanews.com/europe/amid-soaring-tensions-leaders-prepare-key-global-security-summit>

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COMMENTARY

Defense News (Washington, D.C.)

Avoiding a Nuclear Arms Race in the Middle East

By Gen. Kevin Chilton (ret.) and Harry Hoshovsky

Feb. 13, 2020

U.S. President Donald Trump recently remarked that his foremost priority regarding Iran is preventing its regime from acquiring a nuclear weapon. Refocusing attention on Tehran's nuclear program is critical given its announcement that it will exceed the limits on how many centrifuges it can operate for uranium enrichment. This decision not only renders the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, as increasingly obsolete, but it will also accelerate Iran's breakout timetable, which some experts now believe is only four to five months.

This raises two immediate concerns. First, should Iran race for the bomb, it is almost inevitable that the United States and/or Israel will take preventative military action to stop it from crossing that fateful threshold. This could easily spiral into a regional war as Iran activates its various proxy forces against the United States and its allies.

Second, an Iranian nuclear breakout attempt could spur a proliferation cascade throughout the Middle East, beginning with Saudi Arabia.

Mohammed bin Salman, the Saudi crown prince, openly stated in 2018 that if Iran developed nuclear weapons, Riyadh would quickly “follow suit.” One suggested approach would see Saudi Arabia purchase a nuclear power reactor from a major supplier like South Korea and then build a reprocessing plant that would yield enough weapons-grade plutonium in five years.

A half-decade delay isn’t optimal, however, when the goal is achieving nuclear deterrence quickly. Thus, there is the so-called Islamabad option.

This refers to Riyadh’s role in financing Pakistan’s nuclear weapons program and an alleged commitment from Islamabad that it would repay the favor. While Pakistani and Saudi officials have denied any such understanding, there is the possibility that the two could work out an arrangement where Islamabad could deploy some of its nuclear arsenal on Saudi soil following a successful Iranian breakout.

Although this maneuver would draw sharp, international criticism, in theory, it would allow Riyadh to remain in good standing vis-a-vis the nuclear nonproliferation treaty. Nevertheless, Pakistan might not be willing to play spoiler against a nuclearized Iran. If it is, Middle Eastern geopolitics would become extremely unstable.

If Saudi Arabia acquires nuclear weapons, many believe Turkey would follow suit. Last September, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan declared that he “cannot accept” the argument from Western nations that Turkey should not be allowed to attain nuclear weapons. In 1958, Charles de Gaulle proclaimed that a nation without nuclear weapons “does not command its own destiny”; two years later, France tested its first bomb. Erdogan’s comments echo those earlier remarks and raise the possibility that Ankara could become the second NATO member to leave the alliance’s nuclear umbrella in favor of its own independent arsenal.

On the plus side, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates will probably refrain from joining the proliferation cascade. After initially flirting with a nuclear weapons program under Gamal Abdel Nasser, subsequent Egyptian presidents made nuclear disarmament a core pillar of their foreign policy objectives. For the UAE, it signed a “123 Agreement” with the United States in 2009 that contained what is now termed the “gold standard” addendum whereby Abu Dhabi forswore enrichment and reprocessing.

While the Emirates were understandably unhappy with Washington’s subsequent signing of the far less restrictive JCPOA, reneging on their own nuclear commitments would only damage relations with Washington at this point.

Of course, concerns about a nuclear cascade can be avoided if Iran is prevented from going nuclear in the first place.

A possible solution to Riyadh’s dilemma would see the U.S. commit to extending its nuclear umbrella over Saudi Arabia should Iran declare itself a nuclear weapons power. This could help repair American credibility in the kingdom’s eyes, which has slowly eroded over the last decade as Riyadh increasingly doubts Washington’s strategic commitment to the region.

Earlier this month, national security adviser Robert O’Brien told President Trump that continued sanctions and burgeoning civil unrest “will force [Iran] to negotiate.” This process can be accelerated if Washington rallies its European allies to reimpose the so-called snapback sanctions. This refers to the fact that any JCPOA participant can officially complain about a possible Iranian violation of the accord. This launches the bureaucratic process that can conclude with the reimposition of U.N. sanctions if the complaint remains unresolved.

On this point, Germany, France and the United Kingdom announced that they would trigger the snapback dispute mechanism after rejecting Iran's argument that it was justified in violating the JCPOA because the United States had withdrawn from the deal.

Unfortunately, this does not necessarily mean the return of multilateral sanctions, as the Europeans are still focused on bringing Tehran back into compliance with the nuclear accord. China and Russia have similarly called for diplomacy to save the JCPOA; however, their motivations are primarily self-serving. Beijing is Iran's largest trading partner, and bilateral trade has suffered because of U.S. sanctions; and Moscow views Tehran as a lucrative future market for its weapons, and is actively fighting attempts to extend the U.N. arms embargo that expires later this year.

For its European partners, Washington could argue that while its unilateral sanctions have put Tehran on the ropes, reinstating multilateral snapback sanctions can deliver the final knockout blow to a regime that has once again turned its guns on its citizens who seek its removal. While that argument may not appeal much to Russia and China, neither wants a nuclear proliferation cascade that undermines their various interests throughout the region.

Retired U.S. Air Force Gen. Kevin Chilton led U.S. Strategic Command and has participated in the Jewish Institute for National Security of America's Generals and Admirals Program. Harry Hoshovsky is a policy analyst at JINSA's Gemunder Center for Defense and Strategy.

<https://www.defensenews.com/opinion/commentary/2020/02/13/avoiding-a-nuclear-arms-race-in-the-middle-east/>

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Defense One (Washington, D.C.)

Where Could the US Put Its Post-INF Missiles?

By Samantha Bowers

Feb. 11, 2020

The Trump administration said leaving the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty would allow the development and deployment of strategically and tactically new missiles in the Pacific region. But it's not at all clear that U.S. officials will be able to persuade its allies to accept these missiles in useful locations.

"The United States absolutely needs a unified defensive concept for the First Island Chain in Asia, and this may rely on ship or land-based missiles. There is, however, very little allied appetite for receiving U.S. ground-based missiles at the moment," said Mira Rapp-Hooper, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations.

This became apparent even before the U.S. withdrew from the INF pact. Last August, Defense Secretary Mark Esper said he wanted to deploy a new generation of soon-to-be-unbanned ground-launched missiles to Asia. Officials in Australia and South Korea quickly responded that they had no plans to discuss the deployment of such missiles on their soil.

Yet Thomas Karako, Senior Fellow at the Center for Strategic & International Studies said a wider-ranging dialogue about Asia-Pacific security and mutual defense goals would lead to fruitful basing agreements with allies. "It's imperative to connect our security objectives first before discussing how these missiles might serve us and our allies."

Others were less optimistic. Steven Pifer, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, noted that even missile-defense deployments are a hard sell to America's Pacific allies; reaching any sort of hosting agreement would "take a lot of American negotiating capital."

And even if some allies agree to host U.S. missiles, the Heritage Foundation's Dean Cheng said, they may not be willing to involve themselves in a crisis between the United States and China or Russia.

Aside from a patient dialogue with allies over basing agreements, what other options are there? In a December op-ed, the Hudson Institute's Rebecca Heinrichs and Tim Morrison, former senior arms control official at the National Security Council suggested that the Trump administration reach out to Pacific allies to co-finance and co-develop missiles, both to shoulder more of the burden of their defense, and to get around any reluctance to harbor U.S.-made arms.

But other experts said such proposals were unlikely to bear fruit. For one thing, the Missile Technology Control Regime discourages nations from proliferating missiles and missile technology.

"The MTCR remains on the books as a regional and international commitment, so transferring technology that would help lead to longer range missile development is currently discouraged," Cheng said. "This would include helping in development or outright transfer. [It is not] clear that this would necessarily improve regional security, since such technology transfers may lead to subsequent sales or transfers to third parties."

Rapp-Hooper said that burden-sharing agreements were unlikely, "yet allies might be persuaded to develop indigenous systems, which they would ideally network over time — itself a major political and technical lift."

U.S. allies in the region, notably Japan and South Korea, already are developing intermediate-range missile technology.

The experts were more sanguine about the chances that deploying new post-INF missiles would destabilize the Asia-Pacific region. They noted that Russia and China have already been manufacturing and deploying such missiles.

"The U.S. deployment of these missiles would not introduce a new capability into the region, but rather give the U.S. more options to meet a growing military challenge from Beijing," said Abraham Denmark, who runs the Woodrow Wilson Center's Asia Program. "That being said, it is important for Washington to engage Beijing and Moscow on these issues, and identify opportunities to enhance transparency and address concerns about stability and crisis management."

Pifer suggests that this moment offers a chance to develop an agreement to limit INF-type weapons between China, Russia, and the United States.

Karako believes that moment will come only after years of intermediate-range missile deployment in the region.

Bottom line, Denmark said: "The U.S. still has a lot of homework to do on what kind of missiles it would look to field and how they would operate in various regional contingencies. If the U.S. can make the case to its allies and partners that the deployment of these missiles would enhance deterrence and strengthen U.S. capabilities, some allies may start to come around."

Samantha Bowers is a master's student at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service.

<https://www.defenseone.com/politics/2020/02/where-could-us-put-its-post-inf-missiles/163004/?oref=d-river>

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

To Deter China, The Naval Services Must Integrate

By Rep. Mike Gallagher

Feb. 4, 2020

Change on the scale envisioned by the National Defense Strategy isn't always easy, or pretty. Observers of American strategy often wonder how the United States will focus on great power competition when it cannot escape the gravitational pull of the Middle East. This is a worthy topic of debate and causes me no small amount of consternation as well. But even as Washington might look for ways to bring its commitments in the Middle East to a more sustainable level, let's not ignore the lessons simmering conflicts there and elsewhere have for facing down great powers in the Indo-Pacific and Europe.

As most War on the Rocks readers will know, just a few months ago an Iranian drone and missile attack against the Abqaiq and Khurais oil facilities forced Saudi Arabia to shut down half of its oil production. There were Patriot missile batteries in the area, but these were optimized to combat ballistic missiles rather than low-flying cruise missiles. Then, in October, five U.S. marines were wounded in a rocket attack on a U.S. base in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. This month, a small number of al-Shabaab militants killed three Americans and damaged several aircraft in an attack on a base in Kenya. And of course, after the president ordered the killing of Qasem Soleimani, roughly a dozen Iranian ballistic missiles struck joint U.S.-Iraqi bases. No one was killed in this final attack, but it is widely recognized that Iran's response was restrained and signaled in advance to Baghdad. If Iran's leaders actually wanted to kill many American servicemembers on Iraqi bases, could the United States have stopped them?

Probably not.

All of these attacks demonstrate an important, uncomfortable truth: Fixed bases are increasingly vulnerable to attack, especially by missiles and rockets, but also low-tech ground assault. Given the small number of large fixed bases we have in Indo-Pacific Command, the warning signs are flashing red. If weaker adversaries using less sophisticated weapons can catch us off-guard in the Middle East and East Africa, China could do far more damage in the Indo-Pacific.

Not only did the National Defense Strategy designate Indo-Pacific Command's area of responsibility, rather than that of Central Command, the priority theater, it signaled the need to shift the U.S. military's posture from one of deterrence by punishment to deterrence by denial. This means the U.S. military ought to be able to deny potential adversaries their objectives in the first place, rather than relying on the threat of extraordinary costs against the aggressor after the fact. Deterrence by denial hinges upon forward forces. No matter how lethal they might be, forces stationed at home are too far away to deny adversary aggression in real time, or to bolster allied resolve in the face of peacetime coercion. The U.S. military cannot do the job the American people need it to do without forces positioned forward to constantly signal to rivals and enemies that America and its allies stand united.

How does all this tie together? So, the new U.S. defense strategy prioritizes forward forces as the key to deterring aggression by denial, yet recent history against relatively less capable opponents suggests these forward forces are increasingly vulnerable in large, concentrated ports and bases. Under these circumstances, the U.S. military's current forward posture in the Indo-Pacific is less a deterrent and more an invitation to aggression. Those who think deterrence by denial is possible under these circumstances are in a state of denial themselves.

The course correction I'd propose is simple, but not easy. The Department of the Navy offers the United States the ability to operate forward in the strategically decisive first island chain and its surrounding seas and littorals. If the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps adopt a unified concept of operations, and if they are willing to make big changes to truly integrate as a forward-positioned naval force, they can deny America's primary adversary, the Chinese Communist Party, its core objectives.

There Is Some Good News...

We will look back at the publication of the Commandant's Planning Guidance as the moment when the National Defense Strategy started to go from concept to reality. The commandant deserves credit for marking sacred cows for slaughter and charting a course for the Marine Corps to play a key role in deterrence by denial. But he is also the third commandant in my lifetime to emphasize naval integration, which suggests he will need help to bring his vision to life.

At its heart, the commandant's vision involves a concept known as "expeditionary advanced basing operations" — small teams of combat-credible marines deployed forward "with sufficient resilience to persist within the weapons engagement-zone once actively contested" and create denied spaces for the enemy. The current force is not organized to do this. Therefore, the Marine Corps needs to change dramatically. This means accepting risk in areas where it must shed certain legacy capabilities and reinvesting those savings in capabilities it does not yet have, such as intermediate-range, ground-based fires.

Yet the Marine Corps is only half of the equation. The Navy-Marine Corps team (and I'd emphasize the word "team") needs to integrate, down to the level of wargaming and budget development. The chief of naval operations' Fragmentary Order, outlining the Navy's key efforts towards warfighting, personnel and modernization, likewise emphasizes integrated American naval power as the linchpin of the National Defense Strategy. As the chief of naval operations put it, "We fight and win as a team. We are greater when we integrate more closely with the Marine Corps."

Acting Secretary Thomas B. Modly is on the same page. In his first "vector" to the fleet, he emphasized that successful implementation of core Navy objectives "will depend upon an integrated Navy and Marine Corps leadership team." In fact, writes the secretary, "All future high-level strategies, visions, and guidance emanating from our Navy and Marine Corps team must start and finish as integrated efforts, not as final phase 'bolt-ons' from one to the other." This is an extraordinary commitment.

...But There Is More to Do

While there is a lot to smile about, even those who are paying attention still don't know what this integrated naval force would look like, how it would fight, and how it would deter by denial. For instance, Congress does not yet have answers to what new specific platforms the naval services would need, how they would facilitate new concepts of operations, and how they would deny adversary objectives. What is both strategically necessary and politically possible?

This integrated force ought to be persistently present and dispersed throughout the first island chain, both reassuring America's allies and complicating Chinese targeting. Whereas currently Chinese military leaders only have to worry about neutralizing a handful of concentrated American naval and air bases in the Western Pacific, the United States should make them worry about a more numerous and constantly shifting array of locations. As suggested in these pages, this can be done by small teams of marines equipped with ground-launched missiles and loitering munitions of intermediate ranges, dispersed and constantly moving throughout the first island chain. Some of these missiles could be loaded onto mobile, fast-moving platforms such as autonomous Joint Light Tactical Vehicles.

It is also time to start “containerizing” intermediate-range missiles. This administration and its military leaders should seriously consider scattering conex boxes across the first island chain. Some of these boxes would have anti-ship, anti-air, and perhaps even land-attack missiles; others wouldn’t. But in the tradition of the “ghost army” of World War II, the U.S. military would use deception to keep the adversary on its toes and force it to account for both real and decoy targets — all of which could frequently be on the move. In peacetime, the goal would be to reassure allies and create enough “aim points” that the Chinese could not guarantee a successful first strike — and therefore deter one. In wartime, these missiles would form a picket line that would deny the enemy control of the sea around the first island chain and buy time for the blunt force to arrive.

At sea, Marine units can also contribute to the maritime defense of the first island chain. We’re already seeing work to integrate the long-range anti-ship missile onto Mark VI patrol boats. You could imagine a fleet of small boats to harass, interdict, and destroy much larger combatants, not unlike the PT boats of World War II, Iran’s fleet of fast-attack craft in the Persian Gulf, or the small boats and daring men of the Navy’s earliest days. In peacetime, these boats would constantly be on patrol, guarding key geographic features and choke points such as the Strait of Malacca.

Further out at sea, the Navy would likewise play a critical role. As envisioned by the authors of the distributed lethality concept, every ship forward should be expected to be able to destroy enemy surface targets at long ranges, from the smallest surface combatant to amphibious transports. If it floats, it fights, and at long range. As on land, the Chinese should have to worry about a large number of hulls in theater at the zero hour. Surface combatants like the forthcoming frigate should constantly circle contested areas like the South China Sea, ready at a moment’s notice to jump into action. Once the shooting starts, of course attack submarines will play a critical role in degrading the enemy fleet and suppressing its battle networks, and carriers will help the blunt force land a decisive blow as they make their way across the Pacific. Yet denial of the adversary’s objectives will largely rest on the backs of the forward-deployed surface fleet. It’s the surface fleet that, in concert with marines ashore and in the littorals, will be the first and foremost line of defense. It’s up to policymakers in Congress and the Navy to ensure they have the range and capacity to be effective.

That’s a broad vision for how the integrated Navy-Marine Corps team can actually do what the National Defense Strategy asks it to do. How do we make this happen? If we are still having this exact same conversation about naval integration in a decade, we will have failed in a way the United States cannot afford.

First, the United States ought to develop intermediate-range conventional missiles as rapidly as possible. Since the overdue death of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, the U.S. military has conducted two intermediate-range missile tests based on capabilities coming out of the Strategic Capabilities Office: the ground-launched cruise missile and the ground-launched ballistic missile. Although these tests were successful, both the Marine Corps and Army seem determined to develop service-native capabilities. I cannot overstate the foolishness of such a decision. The Strategic Capabilities Office has done great work to get these capabilities to the test range. The services should build on those successes and get them operational as soon as possible, along with an enabling intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance architecture, while the State Department works hard to write and sign military access agreements with allies and partners. While China has explicitly threatened U.S. allies that might consider hosting intermediate-range missiles, it simultaneously maintains an arsenal of thousands of intermediate-range ground-based missiles. Without downplaying the diplomatic challenges this will entail, it defies self-interest to expect the countries most threatened by China will permanently cede to Beijing an entire class of conventional weapons that could be defending their shores.

Second, there is a clear need for new ships to support, resupply, and maneuver marines around the first island chain's littorals. In a high-threat environment where speed and mobility serve as the primary defense, hulking L-class amphibious ships do not make sense for every situation. I applaud Gen. David Berger for embracing possible solutions from unmanned craft, stern landing vessels, and new intertheater connectors, while making clear that he is moving on from legacy amphibious fleet goals that are less relevant today.

I've saved the most difficult step for last. The U.S. Navy is in dire need of structural changes. If America's maritime services are not integrating their planning and budgeting, they are failing the nation. If we think of the Navy and Marine Corps as subsystems of a larger integrated naval fight — as we should — then these component parts only make sense if they magnify each other's strengths and cover weaknesses. It is time to pull the Navy and Marine Corps' staffs responsible for aligning programs and resources, known respectively as Navy N8 and Marine Corps Programs and Resources, out from their respective service chains of command and co-locate them on equal footing under the secretary of the Navy. Without top-down integration from the earliest steps in the planning, programming, budgeting, and execution process, integration will never happen.

These three supporting lines of effort are wrapped up in a fourth and overarching main effort for the naval services. Modly and the chief of naval operations are right: The Navy has to substantially and rapidly grow the fleet and provide more resources to the naval capabilities that most directly support the objectives of the National Defense Strategy. Calling for more resources to get to 355 is not enough. As I have said and written before, we need a national conversation about seapower and the value of an integrated naval force that Congress and the American people can understand.

A truly integrated Navy-Marine Corps team holds the key to unlocking a successful future for the United States and is therefore worthy of a disproportionate share of the budget. Correspondingly I believe that within the Department of the Navy, accounts like shipbuilding that directly facilitate naval force structure should receive priority.

To get there, the White House will need to adjudicate the conflicts we've seen between the Pentagon, the Navy, and the Office of Management and Budget. Recent leaks and mixed messages troubled me. We all need to row in the same direction. At a time when the United States ought to be growing its fleet with haste, we instead appear to be steaming toward cuts to naval force structure. This is unacceptable. After all, with about 100 ships at sea on any given day, the U.S. Navy cannot be truly "ready" until it is large enough to find the slack time in its home cycle to go through the yards for maintenance. The siren song of budget cutters is indeed enticing, but do not be fooled: We cannot substitute capacity with capability.

To help enable this, Congress ought to make tough choices that help the Navy-Marine Corps team rebalance its investments away from systems that don't allow U.S. forces to deter rivals by denial. I suggest we start by taking a hard look at amphibious L-class ships and short-range aviation, both fixed- and rotary-wing.

An Ambitious and Necessary Agenda

Recently, the world watched a crisis play out between the United States and a dangerous yet second-tier adversary. Deterrence held. Missiles failed. The missiles that did launch successfully against forward bases appear to have been calibrated to avoid harming Americans. Tragically, over the course of this crisis the incompetence of the Iranian regime led to the murder of 176 individuals — many of them Iranian — aboard Ukrainian International Airlines Flight 752.

We can count on precisely none of this in an escalating crisis against China, where the United States ought to be able to deny in near-real time instead of relying on the threat of punishment. China is

already the largest naval force in the Pacific. China's missiles won't fail. Washington won't be able to sanction Beijing's economy to the point of collapse.

Therefore, we have to up our game. We'll have to make big changes to our concepts of operations, our programming, our budgets, and our bureaucracy. I wish I could tell you failure is not an option. But it is. History is full of navies that have failed to adapt to changing circumstances and thereby fatally weakened their countries. Let's work together, as a team, to avoid this fate.

Mike Gallagher is a Marine Corps veteran and Republican Congressman from Wisconsin's 8th district. He is a member of the House Armed Services Committee.

<https://warontherocks.com/2020/02/to-deter-china-the-naval-services-must-integrate/>

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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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