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Nuclear agency's new facility to be named after 1st leader

Associated Press, Aug. 22 | Not Attributed

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. -- The federal agency that oversees the nation's nuclear weapons cache and key deterrence initiatives around the globe will name its new facility in Albuquerque after a retired Air Force general who was the agency's first administrator.

The facility now under construction will be named after Gen. John A Gordon, who died April 19, the National Nuclear Security Administration's current leader announced Friday.

NNSA Administrator Lisa E. Gordon-Hagerty, who is also the Department of Energy's under secretary for national security, said the agency continues to build upon the "strong foundation" that Gordon left after serving as the first administrator from 2000 to mid 2002.

The NNSA's new facility is being built on the southern edge of Albuquerque. It's scheduled to be occupied in late 2021 by 1,200 NNSA staff members currently working in 25 separate buildings and facilities, some of which were constructed in the 1940s.

After leaving NNSA, Gordon's final federal leadership position was as President George W. Bush's homeland security adviser.

Gordon began his career as a physicist at the Air Force Weapons Laboratory and went on to serve in posts with the Air Force Space Command, the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Council at the White house.

NNSA Administrator visits Pantex Plant as part of Nuclear Security Enterprise tour

Gordon-Hagerty was Joined by U.S. Rep. Thornberry to Survey and Celebrate the Continuing Efforts of the Pantex Workforce
National Nuclear Security Administration, Aug. 24 | Press Release

WASHINGTON -- Last week, Lisa E. Gordon-Hagerty, Administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) and U.S. Department of Energy's Under Secretary for Nuclear Security, continued her tour of the Nuclear Security Enterprise by visiting the Pantex Plant in Amarillo, Texas. U.S. Rep. William "Mac" Thornberry joined the Administrator's visit where they met with members of the Pantex workforce and toured a number of Pantex facilities.

Coinciding with the 20th anniversary of NNSA's creation, Administrator Gordon-Hagerty continues to make her way across the Nation visiting the agency's eight laboratories, plants, and sites. Having begun the tour in July with visits to the Savannah River Site in Aiken, South Carolina; Sandia

National Laboratories and the NNSA Albuquerque Complex in Albuquerque, New Mexico; and Los Alamos National Laboratory in Los Alamos, New Mexico, she is expecting to complete the tour by year's end.

During her visit to the Pantex Plant, the Administrator and Rep. Thornberry were able to see first-hand the status of ongoing mission work and thank, in person and via video, the over 3,000 dedicated employees who continue working to ensure our national security despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The Pantex Plant continues to get the job done even in the face of all the challenges COVID-19 poses,” Administrator Gordon-Hagerty said. “I am grateful that NNSA has not missed any major milestones or deliverables since the start of the pandemic response. It has been the adaptability and dedication of the Pantex workforce during these difficult times that makes continued success possible.”

During the Administrator's visit to Pantex, she toured several facilities including Zone 12 South to see the continuing work of the B61-12 first production capability units (FPCUs) and the new Pantex history display in the John C. Drummond Center. She also showed her appreciation for the workforce's commitment to their important mission work throughout the pandemic during an event where she and Rep. Thornberry celebrated the FPCU milestone completion of the W88 Alteration 370.

“Those who work at NNSA sites play an absolutely essential role in American national security,” said Rep. Thornberry. “Their hard work, dedication to the mission, and professionalism are invaluable to keeping us all safe and free. I am particularly grateful to those who at work Pantex, in many ways the central hub of our nuclear deterrent work. They have consistently stepped up to meet any challenge thrown at them over the last 20 years, and every step of the way they have also contributed to our communities. I have always been proud of them, the vital work they do, and the people they are.”

Administrator Gordon-Hagerty has focused her tenure on the people at the heart of NNSA's mission. In this spirit, she met with Pantexans being recognized as heroes for their incredible efforts offsite which included a water rescue that saved two individuals from drowning and a traffic accident. She also met with a federal agent involved in the tragic 2018 vehicle accident east of Oklahoma City.

Administration sends mixed signals on nuclear weapons budgeting

<https://www.defensenews.com/congress/2020/08/25/trump-administration-sends-mixed-signals-on-nuclear-weapons-budgeting/>

By: Joe Gould and Aaron Mehta for Defense News

WASHINGTON — Defense hawks in Congress are pushing a contentious plan to give the Pentagon a stronger hand in crafting nuclear weapons budgets, but the Trump administration has been sending mixed messaging over recent weeks about whether the change is needed.

The Senate-passed version of the annual defense policy bill would give the Pentagon-led Nuclear Weapons Council a say in the budget development of the National Nuclear Security Administration, a semi-autonomous agency within the Department of Energy that's responsible for the stockpile's

safety, security, and effectiveness. However, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans, and Capabilities Vic Mercado told reporters that change is unneeded; the status quo between the Defense Department's nuclear modernization efforts and NNSA is appropriate.

"I think right now we have it about right," Mercado said in an interview this month. Nuclear deterrence falls under Mercado's portfolio as an adviser to the defense secretary and undersecretary for policy. The remarks could be read as neutral as the House and Senate debate competing proposals as part of their deliberations on the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act. A Senate-passed proposal would grant the Nuclear Weapons Council new authority to edit NNSA's budget request after the Energy Department crafts it and before the request is submitted to the White House budget office.

The House-passed bill would instead establish the secretaries of defense and energy as co-chairs of the Nuclear Weapons Council, versus the undersecretary of defense for acquisition of sustainment and the NNSA administrator today. Mercado said that he had "heard of all these initiatives to try to skew it one way or the other," but that the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition of Sustainment Ellen Lord, NNSA Administrator Lisa Gordon-Hagerty, the armed services and DoD's policy shop, today all share, "a very healthy and productive" relationship on the topic of nuclear weapons.

"The work we've done with NNSA, as we go through modernization, prioritization and efforts like that to make sure that their industrial base and [plutonium] pit generation is healthy and supports us — I think there's always creative tension, but I think it's healthy tension," Mercado said. Separately, the House passed a prohibition on DoD coordinating the NNSA budget within the Nuclear Weapons Council as part of a larger appropriations package.

The White House's July 30 threat to veto the package objected to that provision, saying: "While respecting the independence of each department is important, ensuring the proper degree of coordination in the nuclear modernization efforts of both departments is also important." Key Republicans on the Senate Armed Services Committee have been pressing for more public advocacy from the administration against those Democrat-led proposals.

At an Aug. 6 hearing, several lawmakers prompted the nominee to be assistant secretary of defense nuclear, chemical, biological, and defense programs, Lucas Polakowski, to argue the council should provide guidance and assistance to the NNSA as it develops its budget each year. SASC Chairman Jim Inhofe, R-Okla., and a top nuclear modernization advocate asked Polakowski: "If confirmed, what would you think if you were prevented from even seeing the NNSA budget until after it was finalized for submission to Congress?"

"I think that would be a mistake and would severely impair not only our existing triad but our modernization efforts going forward in the future and, in fact, could potentially jeopardize our national defense quite significantly," Polakowski responded. Inhofe outlined the House proposal, eliciting

Polakowski's opinion: "I think that's a mistake and I would not support it, senator." Polakowski also agreed with Inhofe that this would give the energy secretary new, "veto power" in the budgeting process.

Inhofe earlier in the year clashed with Energy Secretary Dan Brouillette after he backed a larger budget request than Brouillette sought. In an exchange with Airland Subcommittee Chairman Tom Cotton, R-Ark., Polakowski warned that if DoD didn't participate in NNSA's budget process, it would lead to "uncontrolled spending. And most importantly, our nation's deterrent would suffer."

Polakowski would be designated staff secretary for the Nuclear Weapons Council. A managing member at IT firm Everest Technologies, he previously served as deputy director at U.S. Strategic Command's Center for Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction. Earlier in the hearing, SASC ranking member Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I., told Polakowski of his, "concerns about your expertise in nuclear matters, since you have great experience in chemical and biological weapons.

I would hope you will focus a great deal of your attention on getting up to speed with respect to nuclear matters." As Congress deliberates on the defense policy bill, the conservative Heritage Foundation think tank released its recommendations Tuesday, which argued against elevating the chairmanship of the Nuclear Weapons Council to the secretary level, as the House proposed. For one, the undersecretary of defense for acquisition of sustainment has, "the expertise and time to give nuclear weapons the attention they deserve."

"The House change would put the Secretary of Energy in a position to veto decisions that relate exclusively to DOD capabilities," the report reads. "As the customer of the NNSA, the DOD should maintain its sole leadership of the council."

U.S. defense chief vowing not to "cede an inch" in the Pacific to China

https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-defence-china/u-s-wont-cede-an-inch-in-pacific-esper-says-in-swipe-at-china-idUSKBN25N0D6?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2008.27.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief

By: Ben Blanchard for Reuters News Wire // AUGUST 27, 2020 / 12:12 AM / UPDATED 3 HOURS AGO

(Reuters) - The United States and China traded jibes as military tensions grow between the world's two largest economies, with the U.S. defense chief vowing not to "cede an inch" in the Pacific and China saying Washington was risking soldiers' lives.

Both are at loggerheads over issues from technology and human rights to Chinese military activities in the disputed South China Sea, with each accusing the other of deliberately provocative behavior. In the latest U.S. move against China ahead of November's presidential election, Washington on Wednesday blacklisted 24 Chinese companies and targeted individuals over construction and military actions in the busy South China Sea waterway.

On Thursday, a U.S. Navy warship carried out a routine operation near the Paracel Islands in the South China Sea, something frequently criticized by Beijing as threatening its sovereignty. In Hawaii, U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper said the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) wanted Beijing

to project power globally via its military. “To advance the CCP’s agenda, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) continues to pursue an aggressive modernization plan to achieve a world class military by the middle of the century,” Esper said.

“This will undoubtedly involve the PLA’s provocative behavior in the South and East China Seas, and anywhere else the Chinese government has deemed critical to its interests.” However, Esper said the United States wanted to “hopefully continue to work with the People’s Republic of China to get them back on a trajectory that is more aligned with the international rules based order.” Speaking before a regional tour, Esper described the Indo-Pacific as the epicenter of a “great power competition with China.”

He added, “We’re not going to cede this region, an inch of ground if you will, to another country, any other country that thinks their form of government, their views on human rights, their views on sovereignty, their views on freedom of the press, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, all those things, that somehow that’s better than what many of us share.” President Donald Trump’s administration has repeatedly bashed China over issues including its handling of the coronavirus, a common theme during this week’s Republican National Convention.

In Beijing, China’s Defense Ministry shot back at “certain U.S. politicians” it said were damaging Sino-U.S. military ties in the run-up to the November election for their own selfish gain, even seeking to create military clashes. “This kind of behavior puts the lives of frontline officers and soldiers on both sides at risk,” spokesman Wu Qian told reporters at a monthly briefing on Thursday.

China is not scared of “provocation and pressure” from the United States, and will resolutely defend itself and not allow the United States to cause trouble, he added. “We hope the U.S. side will truly adopt a strategic vision, view China’s development with an open and rational attitude, and leave behind the quagmire of anxiety and entanglement.” The tension has sparked fears of accidental conflict.

A U.S. defense official told Reuters on Wednesday that China had launched four medium-range ballistic missiles that hit the South China Sea between Hainan Island and the Paracel Islands. On Thursday, the Pentagon said it was concerned about China’s recent military exercises, including

the firing of the missiles. “Conducting military exercises over disputed territory in the South China Sea is counterproductive to easing tensions and maintaining stability,” the Pentagon said in a statement.

It added that the U.S. military had told Chinese authorities in July that it would continue to monitor the situation with “the expectation that the PRC (People’s Republic of China) will reduce its militarization and coercion of its neighbors in the South China Sea.”

Reporting by Ben Blanchard in Taipei; Additional reporting by Cate Cadell, Yew Lun Tian in Beijing and Idrees Ali in Washington; Editing by Cynthia Osterman and Rosalba O’Brien

Esper Warns of China’s ‘Self-Serving’ Behavior During Pacific Trip

Air Force Magazine Online, Aug. 27 | Brian W. Everstine

Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper continued his verbal offensive against China, accusing the country of “self-serving” behavior and a disregard for international laws, the same day the Chinese military fired medium-range ballistic missiles during a military exercise.

China is undergoing an aggressive modernization plan to “achieve a world-class military by the middle of the century,” which will embolden Beijing’s expansionist plans and provocative behavior, particularly in the disputed South and East China Seas and “anywhere else the Chinese government has deemed critical to its interests,” Esper said during an Aug. 26 speech at the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Esper is traveling through the Indo-Pacific, including a visit to the Rim of the Pacific exercise, U.S. forces in Guam, and the tiny island nation of Palau. During the speech, Esper highlighted U.S. modernization efforts and outreach to allies.

“As we continue to implement our Indo-Pacific strategy, the United States needs our allies and partners to contribute in ways that are fair and equitable,” Esper said. “We need them to pursue close alignment in policies that uphold a free and open order, and reject decisions that would benefit malign actors to our collective detriment. And we need them to make the necessary investments to improve their capabilities so that, together, we can safeguard our interests, strengthen our readiness, and defend our sovereignty and values.”

Esper highlighted about \$160 billion in U.S. foreign military sales to Indo-Pacific allies, including F-35s to Japan, Seahawk and Apache helicopters to India, and F-16s and M1 Abrams tanks to Taiwan. Several U.S. modernization efforts include equipment that will be vital in the region, including

the B-21 bomber, P-8 maritime surveillance plane, underwater and surface unmanned vehicles, long-range precision munitions, integrated air and missile defense, and a new class of Navy frigates, Esper said.

During his upcoming visit to Guam, Esper said he will see some of these capabilities there, along with the Air Force's current Bomber Task Force of B-1B Lancers at Andersen Air Force Base "that prepare us to defend the Indo-Pacific at a moment's notice," he said.

The trip comes as China is showing some of its capabilities in a large-scale exercise. On Aug. 26, the Chinese military fired four medium-range ballistic missiles that landed in the South China Sea, according to the Defense Department. The exercise over "disputed territory in the South China Sea is counterproductive to easing tensions and maintaining stability," the Pentagon said in a statement.

"This military exercise is the latest in a long string of PRC actions to assert unlawful maritime claims and disadvantage its Southeast Asian neighbors in the South China Sea," the Pentagon said. "The PRC's actions stand in contrast to its pledge to not militarize the South China Sea and are in contrast to the United States' vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific region, in which all nations, large and small, are secure in their sovereignty, free from coercion, and able to pursue economic growth consistent with accepted international rules and norms."

Earlier in the week, the Chinese government accused the U.S. of flying a U-2 surveillance plane over a no-fly zone during its exercises. Pacific Air Forces countered the claim in a statement, saying a U-2 sortie flew in the Indo-Pacific "and within the accepted international rules and regulations governing aircraft flights. Pacific Air Forces personnel will continue to fly and operate anywhere international law allows, at the time and tempo of our choosing."

Trump Admin Confronts U.N. Over Iran Sanctions Impasse

https://freebeacon.com/national-security/trump-admin-confronts-u-n-over-iran-sanctions-impasse/?utm_source=actengage&utm_campaign=FreedomMail&utm_medium=email

U.S. says Europe 'standing in the company of terrorists'

By: Adam Kredo for the WFB // August 25, 2020 6:15 PM

The Trump administration is moving forward with efforts to reimpose all international sanctions on Iran despite opposition from European nations that claim the United States does not have the authority to reinstate the contested economic penalties.

European nations on the United Nations Security Council on Tuesday expressed opposition to a U.S. effort to invoke "snapback," a mechanism included in the Iran nuclear agreement that permits member nations to reimpose sanctions on Tehran that were lifted under the deal. During a virtual meeting of member nations, European diplomats argued that there is not a consensus on the matter and that the United States has no authority to move forward alone.

U.S. officials disagree with this assessment and are prepared to fight the diplomatic battle alone, according to American officials involved in the matter. Kelly Craft, the U.S. ambassador to the U.N., went so far as to accuse traditional U.S. allies such as France, Germany, and the United

Kingdom of "standing in the company of terrorists." The fight over reimposing Iran sanctions has pitted the United States against most of its traditional allies, straining diplomatic ties in the lead up to the 2020 presidential election.

The Trump administration vows to reimpose all economic sanctions on Iran to stop an international arms ban on Tehran from lifting in mid-October. If those restrictions are lifted, nations such as China and Russia will be legally permitted to sell Iran advanced weaponry and military equipment. The Trump administration attempted to advance a U.N. resolution exclusively focused on extending the arms ban, but it was rejected by nearly all the U.N. Security Council members.

Snapback is now the only avenue to keep the arms ban in place and stop Tehran from arming its military and terror proxy groups. The United States maintains that it has full authority under the U.N. resolution that codified the nuclear deal to invoke the snapback mechanism. The administration is now prepared to do battle with traditional foes such as Russia and China, as well as its traditional European allies on the Security Council.

"The United States is on firm legal ground to initiate the restoration of sanctions under [U.N.] Resolution 2231," which solidified the nuclear deal under international law, a spokesperson for the U.S. mission to the U.N. told the Washington Free Beacon. "The fact that some Council members expressed disagreement with our legal position in an informal [teleconference] does not have any legal effect.

The Council already spoke unanimously when it adopted Resolution 2231, which is specifically designed to lead to the reimposition of sanctions without consensus in the Council." Craft, in remarks on Tuesday, called European nations' stance on the matter hypocritical, particularly because they "have expressed privately their concerns about lifting sanctions on Iran, but have taken no actions to address that concern."

"Let me just make it really, really clear," Craft said. "The Trump administration has no fear in standing in limited company on this matter, in light of the unmistakable truth guiding our actions. I only regret that other members of this Council have lost their way and now find themselves standing in the company of terrorists."

Administration Seeks Win on Nuclear Arms Deal with Russia

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/trump-administration-seeks-pre-election-213650061.html?ocid=uxbndlbing>

By: John Walcott for Yahoo News - Time // •August 25, 2020

After three years tuning out, turning off, and dropping out of every arms control and trade treaty within reach, the Trump Administration is now seeking a path toward the most sweeping nuclear arms control agreement in history, one that would include all long-, medium-, and short-range weapons.

The Administration took one small step in that direction last week when U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Arms Control Marshall Billingslea met with his Russian counterpart in Vienna to discuss extending the 2010 New START agreement, which limits both nations' arsenals of long-range weapons and expires in February. Billingslea told Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov that the U.S. wants to extend New START

(Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) as a first step toward limiting both nations' entire nuclear arsenals, a move backed by rare bipartisan consensus on Capitol Hill that a broader nuclear arms deal between the world's two largest nuclear powers is both necessary and overdue.

Though he told reporters in a press briefing following the meeting that the two sides "remain far apart on a number of key issues," Billingslea had quietly shelved a key U.S. pre-condition for the deal — that any extension of the treaty must include China — in an earlier interview as an apparent olive branch before the talks. Current and former defense officials argue the existing agreement allows both nations to field more nuclear weapons because it discounts those carried by strategic bombers.

These officials also say New START's verification and compliance requirements need to be tightened, citing Russia's violations of the Reagan-era Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, which expired last August. The Trump Administration abandoned the treaty on Oct. 20, 2018, 10 months before it expired, because Russia had violated it by deploying medium-range cruise missiles within range of U.S. NATO allies.

Any new agreement must include giving both sides real-time access to one another's telemetry data, U.S. defense officials argue, which would allow the parties to track any missile flights and provide on-site inspectors faster access to test sites. Defense officials and diplomats who favor negotiating a broader agreement say Russia has gained an advantage over the U.S. by keeping its missile production lines open and developing a new generation of nuclear delivery systems, including road-mobile medium-range missiles, a new intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), the Avangard hypersonic missile, a long-range nuclear-capable torpedo, and so-called "battlefield" short-range missiles.

The U.S., for its part, is only beginning to modernize its nuclear arsenal, which still includes the B-52 strategic bomber first flown in 1952 and last produced a decade later. The silo-based Minuteman III ICBM entered service in 1970, and isn't scheduled to be replaced by a new Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent until 2027. A new nuclear arms control agreement, proponents argue, would allow both the U.S. and Russia to focus their resources on other more urgent priorities — like fighting a global pandemic.

Both countries "have better things to spend their money on than weapons that would cause mutual assured destruction," says one U.S. defense official, who requested anonymity to speak without authorization. One major stumbling block toward reaching a broad new agreement remains, however: China, which has a much smaller nuclear arsenal than the U.S. or Russia. U.S. intelligence officials have said Beijing plans to at least double that over the next decade and abandon its "minimum deterrence" strategy as it seeks global parity with the U.S.

So far, Beijing has refused to participate in negotiations with the U.S. and Russia, which Beijing blames on Washington. "I can assure you, if the U.S. says that they are ready to come down to the Chinese level, China would be happy to participate the next day. But actually we know that's not going to happen," Fu Cong, the head of the Chinese Foreign Ministry's arms control department, said last month.

China's stonewalling has left a split in the Trump Administration between China hardliners, such as Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and other officials who think that China's aspirations for great power status will in time convince President Xi Jinping to join the U.S. and Russia onstage. If

the U.S. and Russia do hammer out some kind of new framework agreement without China, there are divisions in the Administration about how, when, where, and by whom such a deal should be announced, multiple officials tell Time.

In one camp are some of Trump's political advisers, who would like to see the President and Russian President Vladimir Putin meet before Election Day in Austria or another third country to make the announcement. "Making the first step toward a deal no one has ever been able to negotiate would leave Obama and Biden in the dust," says one Administration official. It would highlight the president's dealmaking skills, they argue, as well as demonstrate that his controversial relationship with Putin is paying dividends and provide the pre-election political bounce they hoped for but did not get from Trump's announcement that Israel and the United Arab Emirates had agreed on a path toward full diplomatic relations.

"We need something too big for the media to ignore," says the official of the Mideast deal, speaking on the condition of anonymity. Others in the Administration, however, fear that another Putin-Trump meeting would rekindle the controversy over their relationship, and that with Trump trailing Democratic nominee Joe Biden in the polls, any U.S. eagerness for such a meeting would give Russia added leverage in negotiations.

"That's true," says a U.S. intelligence official, also speaking on the condition of anonymity. "But if Putin wants to see the President re-elected, which the intelligence clearly indicates he would, a meeting might be good for him, too."

Nuclear deterrence needed to prevent cyberattacks from paralyzing Beijing's response
Global Times (China), Aug. 25, Pg. 7 | Qin An

The US' maximum pressure campaign against China now has extended to cyberspace. After the Trump administration's ban of TikTok and the Clean Network program that aims at Chinese companies, news on Sunday said that TikTok plans to sue the Trump administration over its executive order banning the app. As the game goes viral, there are concerns about whether the US will launch a cyberattack against China. Will China and the US actually cut off the network connection between them?

Such concerns do not come from nowhere. In 2019 alone, there were three major cyberattacks related to the US. In March 2019, Venezuela's national power grid collapsed. The country's president denounced the attack as a well planned cyberattack by the US. This indicates that cyberwarfare has become a new mode of undeclared warfare - an invisible invasion of sorts.

In June 2019, Trump announced retaliation against Iran with a cyberattack too. This showed that cyberwarfare has moved from the backstage to the front lines, from covert warfare to a declaration of war, and from auxiliary fighting to mainstream combat.

On November 4, 2019, the US invited a number of countries to hold the first ever joint cyberattack and defense exercise with the island of Taiwan. It undertook cyberattack scenarios as a new approach to go beyond beach landings and targeting financial systems. It focused on persistent and chaotic

destructive attacks on key infrastructure and economic systems. This indicates that the US has crossed the bottom line of the one-China principle in cyberspace.

From late June to mid-July this year, some "mysterious explosions" occurred in Iran's strategic facilities causing more than 100 casualties at power plants, nuclear facilities, chemical plants and ammunition depots. Cyber sabotage from Israel and the US were believed to be involved.

This series of actions and events show that the US has not only the ability to paralyze a society through cyberattacks but also the proven will to do so. Will the US use this ability against China? It's completely possible. But the two countries might not disconnect their network.

Although US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has listed the "clean networks," the US' are the ones who are the most unclean. At present, the Chinese enterprises subject to unilateral sanctions by the US are innocent, and their technologies and products are safe as well. The US is fully aware of this. Besides for the US, disconnecting the network with China will actually cut off the easy path to attack China.

However, China must consider how to deal with "disconnection" and take primary precautions mainly in three aspects.

First, it must strengthen the awareness of network crisis. With the advent of the internet age, the international structure is experiencing subversive changes. Sovereign states have entered into an era of "stabilizing and governing with big data." The network's characteristics have increasingly made this concept more prominent: The internet can be used to kill people and overthrow a country.

Second, we must optimize the power structure. Cyberspace has become the fifth dimensional battlefield besides land, sea, sky and space. Although ordinary users form the frontline of defense in cyberspace, cyberwarfare cannot mainly rely on "militia." The sustainable development of a "regular cyber army" has become an important option for the construction of a country powerful in cyberspace.

Third, cyber deterrence needs to be showcased. China not only needs to be capable of launching counterattacks in cyberspace, but also must consider special situations in which other countries' cyberattacks might affect our ability of a nuclear counterattack. We must keep nuclear deterrence to the cyberattacks that aim to paralyze our network.

Russia's latest updated nuclear deterrence strategy lists four conditions that would trigger its implementation of nuclear strikes. In one situation, if the attack undermines its nuclear force response actions, Russia would contemplate using nuclear weapons. Cyberattacks may lead to such situation, therefore Russia's nuclear deterrence takes cyberattacks into consideration.

--The author is head of the Beijing-based Institute of China Cyberspace Strategy

On nuclear weapons, Vladimir Putin will prefer Biden to Trump

Washington Examiner Online, Aug. 24 | Tom Rogan

As with their respective energy policies, when it comes to nuclear weapons, Vladimir Putin would prefer Joe Biden's policy to that of Donald Trump.

This is not to say that Putin wants Biden to defeat Trump in November. The opposite may well be true. That said, Moscow views the status and development of U.S. nuclear forces as a high priority concern. But where Trump has modernized U.S. nuclear capabilities and strategy, Biden opposes the U.S. reservation to employ nuclear weapons preemptively, rejects the deployment of low-yield warheads, and believes the U.S. nuclear forces budget can be cut.

As I say, nuclear weapons are a top concern of the Russian leader.

Reflected by his heavy investment in new hypersonic and undersea strike platforms, Putin views nuclear weapons in much the same way his Soviet predecessors did. Namely, as the irreplaceable means of constraining American hegemony and countering American global influence. Putin recognizes that his conventional armed forces would eventually lose any major conflict with the United States and NATO. But by dangling the credible threat of nuclear annihilation, Putin qualifies the utility of that conventional superiority. At the same time, Putin's development of low-yield nuclear forces gives him the potential to operate in the "gray zone" between nuclear and conventional war. Russia's nuclear weapons also serve as valuable nationalist propaganda tools at home and feature heavily in state media reporting.

So why would Putin prefer Biden to Trump, here?

Well, Trump's nuclear policy has been defined by aggressive moves to counter Russian modernization programs. Relevant actions include Trump's deployment of W76-2 low yield warheads and his investment in the Columbia-class submarine replacement for the Ohio-class nuclear ballistic missile fleet. Trump has also taken political action. We've seen America's withdrawal, supported by its NATO allies, from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty, in protest of Russian breaches of that agreement. Strategic Command, responsible for the operation of U.S. nuclear forces, has also advanced its communications, satellite, targeting, and survivability capacities under Trump.

Although not publicly announced, Strategic Command on Friday conducted a so-called "TACAMO" exercise with nuclear ballistic missile submarines in the Atlantic Ocean. This exercise involves a Navy aircraft taking over nuclear strike communications in a situation where land-based headquarters have been destroyed or inoperable. These trainings and investments have three functions. First, to deny any adversary the prospect of nuclear victory by surprise attack. Second, to ensure that the president is able to order a successful nuclear strike at short notice. Third, to give the nation the best possible chance of winning a nuclear war (absurd as that might sound). While Britain and France operate their own nuclear deterrent programs, they are far smaller in scale than those of the U.S. military.

Biden's statements suggest he would not continue on this course.

Nine days before the Obama administration left office, Biden argued that "given [America's] non-nuclear capabilities and the nature of today's threats, it's hard to envision a plausible scenario in which the first use of nuclear weapons by the United States would be necessary." As with Biden's rejection of low-yield weapons and support for nuclear budget cuts, his stance on first strikes is misguided. To rule out a first-use nuclear strike in any circumstances would limit military options in the face of some threats.

Consider, hypothetically, that in an existing state of crisis and conventional conflict, the U.S. detected North Korea moving nuclear warheads onto mobile launchers in various areas of their east coast. The president is told that there's an 80% likelihood of destroying all the launchers with

conventional airstrikes, but that rises to a 98% probability if nuclear weapons are used. That 20% versus 2% risk factor takes on exigent importance in consideration of Honolulu or Los Angeles being nuked. Yes, this is an unlikely and worst case scenario. But that cuts to the heart of why nuclear deterrence exists in the first place: to prevent nuclear exchanges.

Don't misunderstand me. Nuclear policy demands a robust assessment of costs. While it's true, for example, that missile defenses have utility against nations such as Iran and North Korea with fewer and less advanced nuclear strike platforms, they are not practical in the face of the massed nuclear forces possessed by China and Russia. At the same time, those defense systems fuel the Chinese and Russian pursuit of new weapons that can overcome existing defenses.

However, assessing where Trump and Biden stand on nuclear weapons, it seems clear that Putin would favor the latter. Biden should reconsider his approach.

--Tom Rogan is a foreign policy focused commentary writer for the Washington Examiner. He holds a BA in War Studies from King's College London, an MSc in Middle East Politics from SOAS, and a GDL in law from the University of Law. Among others, he has previously written for National Review, The Telegraph, and The Guardian. Tom is a U.S. citizen with a British accent. He likes William Shakespeare, Ricky Gervais, Harry Truman, Larry David, Winston Churchill, and Karl Pilkington

U.S. Must End Nuclear 'First Strike' Policy
Newsweek Online, Aug. 24 | Greg Mitchell

Seventy-five years have now passed since the United States initiated a policy known as "first use" with its atomic attack on Hiroshima. Three days later, on August 9, 1945, it was affirmed with a second detonation over the city of Nagasaki. No nuclear attacks have followed since, although many Americans are probably unaware that this first-strike policy very much remains in effect.

And that's a problem.

The policy signals that any U.S. president has the authority, without consulting anyone, to order a pre-emptive nuclear strike—not merely in retaliation if and when missiles start flying in our direction. Our warheads could be launched in defense of allies, after the onset of a conventional war involving our troops (think: Iraq, 2003) or in response to a bellicose threat posed by a nuclear (e.g., North Korea) or not-yet-nuclear state (e.g., Iran).

Admittedly, it is not easy to make the case for abandoning this policy, at least in this country, and adopting what's known as "no first use" (NFU). For one thing, as we witnessed again this summer, few American officials or military leaders ever question the only time any country has ever relied on

this policy, 75 years ago against Japan. Media coverage tends to strongly endorse those first atomic attacks, so it's no surprise that polls usually show the majority of Americans also support President Harry S. Truman's decision.

More than that, one president after another has argued, when asked about the possible use of nuclear weapons during any crisis, that "we won't take anything off the table" or "we can't tie one arm behind our back." This seems sensible to many people. It certainly did back in the heyday of the Cold War, when the policy was mainly aimed at deterring a conventional Soviet invasion of Western Europe.

In fact, today, in a vastly changed world, it is profoundly dangerous, although not always in obvious ways.

One risk is rather easy to grasp: Another nuclear nation may "go first," fearing that the U.S. will not only beat them to the punch, but knock out all of its missile sites. This is the use-them-or-lose-them scenario that drove so much of the superpower arms race from the 1950s to the 1980s, leading to everything from reliance on risky hair-trigger alerts to spending countless billions of dollars to expand nuclear stockpiles to tens of thousands of warheads.

Then there are these rather severe risks a "first use" policy either causes or contributes to:

While initiating a limited nuclear attack with junior-sized weapons against a state that cannot respond in kind may prove useful in ending a conflict or preventing a wider war, it is almost certain to cause massive and immediate civilian casualties and—even with smaller warheads—spread radioactive fallout over neighboring states (consider, for example, Iran's position on the map). In fact, recent presidents have touted a new generation of "baby nukes" as potentially more useable in a first strike.

Any first strike on a nuclear power would likely be more extensive and not only vastly increase these tragic effects, but provoke a highly destructive retaliatory attack on our homeland. Further exchanges would threaten the existence of the entire world.

Just from a financial standpoint, bolstering first use is extremely expensive. The late Bruce G. Blair, a leading nuclear policy expert, pointed out that adopting NFU would gut "the rationale for retaining the large arsenal of land-based strategic missiles in silos across the Midwest and the tactical nuclear weapons deployed in Europe. Those missiles are mainly for first use; they are a risky option for second use because they are highly vulnerable to enemy attack. ...[S]hifting to a reliance on submarines and bombers would save about \$100 billion over the next three decades. The elimination of smaller, tactical nuclear weapons would save billions more."

Money saved could be invested in improving our retaliatory "deterrence" policy (which has worked, so far, for seven decades) by fortifying the protection of our command-and-control and communications centers. This would also help guarantee that civilian, not military, leaders will remain in charge during any nuclear crisis.

An NFU policy would also decrease the real, and frightening, current dangers of accidental nuclear war. Those land-based missiles that we eliminate? Due to their vulnerability, they are the ones most likely to be launched because of a glitch or a false alert on incoming missiles. Submarines and bombers, on the other hand, can be quickly deployed and remain "fail-safe" until an actual enemy attack can be confirmed. Kingston Reif of the

Arms Control Association has argued that "a clear U.S. NFU policy would reduce the risk of Russian or Chinese nuclear miscalculation during a crisis by alleviating concerns about a devastating U.S. nuclear first-strike."

In almost any scenario, the U.S., which has (by far) the world's greatest array of conventional weaponry and technology, has all sorts of destructive options to employ without going nuclear. These options also have the benefits of more precise targeting and no danger of spreading radioactive fallout far and wide. This doesn't even count our other advantages in global alliances, in our numerous military bases and troops abroad, our advanced cyber "weaponry" and our economic clout, as well as the world's greatest second strike nuclear capability. Our allies would hardly be deprived of the protection of "extended deterrence."

Some opinion polls show that Americans firmly oppose the idea of the U.S. using nuclear weapons first, as a general matter. Other polls, however, reveal that when they are presented with specific scenarios—such as a war with Iran or North Korea threatening us with a foreign nation's own warheads—they are far more amenable to this proposition. And then we have the precedent of using two bombs against Japan, and wide endorsement of that action today, at least in the United States.

That is why I have concentrated so much of my writing on exploring American attitudes, from the very start, about the use of the bomb and how an official narrative justifying that use has held sway ever since. (My latest book, *The Beginning or the End: How Hollywood—and America—Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*, explores how even the first movie about the atomic bomb, from MGM, was heavily revised under pressure from the military and the White House to strictly adhere to this narrative.)

For all of those reasons, the United States should declare that it will never use nuclear weapons first—and will only do so in retaliation. Short of that, Congress should enact provisions so that no president has the sole authority to order a first strike. We should recall that in recent decades, presidents of both parties have been accused of launching missile attacks or sending troops to war zones without the required permission from Congress, followed by no major censure moves against them later—which only emboldens taking the nuclear initiative.

Dwight D. Eisenhower, then the commanding general in Europe and later president of the United States, opposed the first use of the atomic bomb against Japan, calling it that "awful thing" and urging the U.S. to "avoid shocking world opinion." Admiral William Leahy, President Truman's chief of staff, also criticized that first strike as a "barbarous" weapon against Japan. First use of far more powerful and destructive nuclear weapons must be

strictly avoided today. No single, fallible person should have the authority to take an action that could lead to millions of deaths—or even the end of civilization.

--Greg Mitchell's latest book is *The Beginning or the End: How Hollywood—and America—Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*. Among his ten previous books are *Atomic Cover-up*, *Hiroshima in America*, the bestselling *The Tunnels*, and *The Campaign of the Century*, winner of the Goldsmith Book Prize. He is the former editor of *Nuclear Times*.

The views expressed in this article are the writer's own.

The Pentagon Is Prepared for China

Wall Street Journal, Aug. 25, Pg. A17 | Defense Secretary Mark Esper

China's People's Liberation Army celebrated its 93rd anniversary Aug. 1 with a speech by Chinese Communist Party General Secretary Xi Jinping. Once again, Mr. Xi called for transforming the PLA into a world-class military, one that can further the party's agenda far beyond China's shores. His remarks serve as a stark reminder that we have entered a new era of global competition between the free and open international order and an authoritarian system fostered by Beijing.

The PLA is not a military that serves the nation, let alone a constitution, as the U.S. armed forces do. The PLA belongs to -- and serves -- a political entity, the Chinese Communist Party. A more capable PLA is a military more able to advance the party's domestic vision, the one-sided international system Beijing desires, and an economic and foreign-policy agenda that is often inimical to the interests of the U.S. and our allies. As a consequence, all nations that seek the prosperity and security of a free and open order must carefully consider the implications of PLA requests for access, training and technology.

PLA modernization is a trend the world must study and prepare for -- much like the U.S. and the West studied and addressed the Soviet armed forces in the 20th century. The PLA openly declared its intentions to complete military modernization by 2035 and become a world-class force by 2049. Its comprehensive modernization plan includes a powerful arsenal of conventional missiles alongside a suite of advanced cyber, space and electronic warfare capabilities. It also includes the deployment of artificial intelligence to strengthen its authoritarian grip and continue its systematic repression of its own people, especially its Uighur population.

The Communist Party's emphasis on indoctrinating, modernizing and tightening control over the PLA shows how China's leaders view the military as central to achieving their objectives. Prominent among these is to reshape the international order in ways that undermine globally accepted rules while normalizing authoritarianism, creating conditions to allow the Chinese Communist Party to coerce other countries and impede their sovereignty.

These actions from China have spurred the U.S. Department of Defense to mount a comprehensive response, and to accelerate our implementation of the National Defense Strategy. The NDS guides our efforts to adapt and modernize America's armed forces for great-power competition, with China being our principal focus.

First and foremost, long-term competition with China demands that we have a force that is able to compete, deter and win across all domains: air, land, sea, space and cyberspace. To support this effort, the Pentagon is investing in both advanced conventional capabilities and game-changing

technologies such as hypersonic weapons, 5G communications, integrated air and missile defense, and artificial intelligence -- all of which will be critical to maintaining our advantage for decades to come.

Second, expanding and strengthening our network of allies and partners is also vital to this effort, as this provides an asymmetric advantage that our competitors cannot match. While the PLA continues its aggressive behavior toward its neighbors in the region, such as sinking a Vietnamese fishing vessel, harassing Malaysian oil and gas development, and asserting unlawful maritime claims, American forces continue to strengthen our longstanding partnerships and defend the rights of all countries.

During consultations with my Australian counterpart last month, for example, we signed a statement of principles committing to enhance our defense cooperation and posture in the Indo-Pacific region for the next decade and beyond. Also in July, the U.S., Australia and Japan held our latest defense meeting to promote greater information-sharing and enhance interoperability, as demonstrated by our recent trilateral naval exercise in the Philippine Sea.

Third, because creating broader networks of capable, like-minded partners is core to our strategy to disrupt the Chinese Communist Party's malign influence, the Pentagon continues to build the capacity of our partners globally. This occurs through programs such as the Maritime Security Initiative, where we have provided approximately \$394 million of assistance to bolster the maritime capabilities of allies and partners across the Indo-Pacific region. Actions such as these reduce these nations' vulnerability to Chinese coercion, and help us expand joint training, exercises, operations and planning efforts.

These initiatives reflect America's steadfast commitment to stand with our allies and partners against Beijing's bullying, support the sovereignty of all nations, and defend the free and open international system that has fostered decades of stability and prosperity for billions. Yet the U.S. can't shoulder this burden alone, and we continue to urge our allies to share it with us fairly and equitably as true partners. We also encourage like-minded nations to show solidarity and be more deliberate in aligning their policies on China in defense of our shared goals and interests. The recent decisions by New Zealand and the U.K. to ban Huawei from their 5G networks are prime examples.

Unlike Communist China, the U.S. stands for a free and open global system, where all nations can prosper in accordance with shared values and longstanding rules and norms. And unlike the armed forces of the U.S. and our allies, the PLA is a loyal tool of the Communist Party. As such, I urge all countries to examine -- and consider curtailing -- their relationships with the PLA to make sure they are not helping advance the Communist Party's malign agenda toward our collective detriment.

This week I will travel to Hawaii, Palau and Guam to meet both in person and virtually with my counterparts and other senior leaders from across the region to convey the importance of these efforts and our commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific. Nations valuing freedom, human rights and the rule of law must stand together to counter the coercive role of the PLA in the Chinese Communist Party's aggressive attempts to undermine the sovereignty of nations.

--Mr. Esper is U.S. defense secretary

News & Opinion

New missile work to begin at Malmstrom in 2026, Air Force says

Great Falls Tribune Online (Montana), Aug. 21 | Phil Drake

The Air Force has announced installation of a new weapons system at three existing missile locations, with construction expected to begin in 2026 at Malmstrom Air Force Base.

The acting chair of the Montana Defense Alliance, a subcommittee of the Great Falls Area Chamber of Commerce, called it “exciting” news.

Steven Grooms said the Minuteman III has just celebrated its 50th anniversary and officials have learned it is more expensive to continue to piece it together to make it last a little longer, than just go with a new platform, which is the GBSD.

Grooms said it was expected to take 10 years to transition.

He said Gen. Timothy Ray, commander of Air Force Global Strike Command, had talked with the Great Falls panel recently and said the program was so important to strategic deterrence that he was confident it would have the support needed to see it through.

There have been some worries over the years that Malmstrom, which has about 4,000 people on base, could fall victim to military cuts.

"We have always been told, and firmly believe, we need to continue to perform the mission we have and as long as the mission is there we will be there," Grooms said. "But in the environment we are in, Congress is always looking for ways to save money. We feel strongly it will take three bases to have the proper infrastructure and the training opportunities to continue to have airmen prepared, leadership prepared to lead the next generation of protectors ..."

Military officials said Aug. 14 they plan to begin replacing aging Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missiles with Ground Based Strategic Deterrent, pending completion of environmental studies.

Air Force officials said they will begin similar construction as early as 2023 at F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Wyoming and Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota in 2029.

Defense News reported in April that Northrop Grumman, the sole bidder, is expected to get an estimated \$85 billion to design and build the GBSD. A decision is expected by the end of September.

Military officials said construction will be prior to deployment of GBSD to make facilities are ready for mission equipment, support training and operational certification before getting operational status at each wing.

Using infrastructure at current locations allows both the Minuteman III and GBSD weapons systems to continue meeting all nuclear surety and safety standards throughout their operational lives, particularly during the transition period.

“Ensuring missile bases remain missile bases makes the most sense for the taxpayer and the mission,” Ray said in the news release. “The Minuteman III is 50 years old; it’s past time to upgrade the missile systems. Our goal is ensure our systems remain fully safe, secure and effective in the defense of our nation and allies.”

GBSD is the most cost-effective option for maintaining a safe and effective ICBM leg of the nuclear triad, military officials said.

Its goal is to improve ICBM's capabilities, deliver a low-technical risk, affordable, total system replacement and offer more efficient operations, maintenance, and security at lower costs.

The news about GBSD comes at an interesting time.

On Aug. 19, 1970, Strategic Air Command placed the first flight of 10 Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missiles on alert at Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota. At first, it had a planned service life of 10 years.

Missiles weigh about 79,432 pounds and have a maximum range of about 6,000 miles.

Air Force Global Strike Command consist of more than 33,700 airmen and civilians assigned to two numbered air forces, 11 wings, two geographically-separated squadrons and one detachment in the continental United States, and deployed to locations around the globe.

Work on Kings Bay expansion continues

Brunswick News Online (Georgia), Aug. 22 | Gordon Jackson

Activity at Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay is ramping up in preparation for the arrival of the replacement fleet of ballistic missile submarines.

The USS Alaska is in dry dock undergoing a major, year-long renovation that is only scheduled once a decade. And at the same time, the dry dock is undergoing a \$592 million expansion and renovation to accommodate the arrival of the first Columbia-class ballistic missile submarine in eight years.

The first phase of work includes construction of temporary facilities that will be displaced during the overhaul of the dock, as well as repairs to the steel caisson and procurement of materials. The first phase is scheduled for completion by July 2021.

The second phase includes concrete repairs, overhaul of the bridge cranes, upgrades to electronics and electrical systems, new piping, re-coating the entire superstructure and replacement of roof and wall panels. Work is scheduled for completion by October 2022.

The final phase of work includes work to the utility tunnel and replacement of the utility service building equipment and improved electronics. Work is planned for completion in April 2023.

Scott Bassett, public affairs officer at Kings Bay, praised the coordination and planning to prepare for the new submarines while maintaining the submarines ported at the base.

“Trident Refit Facility and Submarine Group 10 have done an amazing job,” he said. “It was a fantastic amount of coordination.”

Work is also planned to expand Trident Training Facility to accommodate two different classes of submarines that will be ported on base until the last Ohio-class sub is phased out of commission around 2040.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper, who visited Kings Bay on July 30, toured some of the base facilities and had lunch with crew members from the Alaska, Bassett said.

The ongoing renovations to the Alaska were never planned when the boat was built 34 years ago. But when the Department of Defense decided to extend the life of the boats from 30 years to 42 years of service, the work had to be done.

About a quarter of the sailors from the two crews that alternate sea duty are living aboard the Alaska, with three sailors limited to each berthing room for social distancing.

The USS Wyoming is the last submarine ported at Kings Bay to undergo a refueling of nuclear fuel. The work is being done at shipyards in Norfolk, Va.

The last of 10 Ohio-class submarines on the West Coast, USS Louisiana — originally ported at Kings Bay — is undergoing a similar refueling at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard.

Why the U.S. Military Needs Both 'Tactical' Nuclear Weapons and ICBMs

National Interest Online, Aug. 21 | Kris Osborn

It might seem like a paradox: be ready to fight a limited “tactical” nuclear war and maintain an ability to ensure catastrophic annihilation of an enemy with nuclear weapons to keep the peace.

This contradiction in terms, one might say, forms the conceptual basis for the Pentagon’s current nuclear-weapons strategy which not only calls for a new generation of ICBMs, but also directs the development and deployment of several low-yield, tactical nuclear weapons options.

This includes nuclear-armed cruise missiles, submarine-launched nuclear weapons with low-yield warheads, and scalable air-launched nuclear missiles and glide bombs.

“The central idea is we must be able to survive in a conflict where the environment is characterized by the use of a nuclear weapon,” Lt Gen Richard M. Clark, Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Deterrence and Nuclear Integration, told the Mitchell Institute for Aerospace in a video discussion.

The strategic basis for this, Clark maintained, is grounded in what he called CNI, meaning Conventional-Nuclear Integration. Such a tactical aim incorporates the development of dual-use weapons systems such as the emerging Long-Range Stand-Off weapon air-launched nuclear cruise missile which can fire with or without a nuclear payload.

The Pentagon has already deployed a new “low-yield submarine-launched ballistic missile,” armed with a nuclear payload enabled by a modified Trident II D5 re-entry body. The weapon, Pentagon officials tell TNI, is called the W76-2. The Pentagon used to have a nuclear-armed Tomahawk missile, something which seems to introduce some interesting questions about additional applications for low-yield warheads.

The Air Force is now refining a CNI Capstone Concept and report for Congress and the Pentagon leadership on the topic, to ensure that weapons development continues to incorporate a full-spectrum of nuclear-weapons capabilities.

The goal of developing tactical or “lower-yield” nuclear weapons, Clark explained, is quite different than that pursued by the U.S. during the Cold War.

“This is different from a Cold War mentality where we had nuclear artillery, short-range rockets where we had weapons that would allow us to fight tactically in a conflict. Today we are trying to prepare ourselves to respond with whatever force is necessary in a nuclear environment. It is not just to fight tactically but the ultimate goal is to deter,” Clark explained.

Interestingly, some have raised a concern that developing nuclear and conventional variants of the same weapon might lead an adversary to mistake a conventional attack for a nuclear one, therefore causing major unwanted escalation and starting a nuclear exchange. Others also maintain that there should not, in any fashion, be room for the concept of a “tactical” or “limited” nuclear war. Any use of nuclear weapons, the thinking goes, should result in complete and total nuclear destruction of the attacker.

Responding to some of these concerns, Clark maintained that there is a significant need for the U.S. to have and deploy a wide range of nuclear weapons for the specific purpose of ensuring an adversary does not ever “attempt” to use low-yield nuclear weapons by virtue of being assured they would face immediate nuclear retaliation.

“We want to raise the threshold to the highest level possible and let adversaries know we can counter any action that they may take and deliver consequences should deterrence fail. Deterrence is the ultimate goal, and this allows us to deter along the full spectrum of conflict. The ultimate goal is to ensure that the adversary does not miscalculate and think we have a weakness in this area,” Clark explained.

--Kris Osborn is the new Defense Editor for the National Interest. Osborn previously served at the Pentagon as a Highly Qualified Expert with the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army—Acquisition, Logistics & Technology. Osborn has also worked as an anchor and on-air military specialist at national TV networks. He has appeared as a guest military expert on Fox News, MSNBC, The Military Channel, and The History Channel. He also has a Masters Degree in Comparative Literature from Columbia University

Nuclear deterrence needed to prevent cyberattacks from paralyzing China's nuclear response

By Qin An Source: Global Times Published: 2020/8/24 14:42:17

The US' maximum pressure campaign against China now has extended to cyberspace. After the Trump administration's ban of TikTok and the Clean Network program that aims at Chinese companies, news on Sunday said that TikTok plans to sue the Trump administration over its executive order banning the app. As the game goes viral, there are concerns about whether the US will launch a cyberattack against China. Will China and the US actually cut off the network connection between them?

Such concerns do not come from nowhere. In 2019 alone, there were three major cyberattacks related to the US. In March 2019, Venezuela's national power grid collapsed. The country's president denounced the attack as a well planned cyberattack by the US. This indicates that cyberwarfare has become a new mode of undeclared warfare - an invisible invasion of sorts.

In June 2019, Trump announced retaliation against Iran with a cyberattack too. This showed that cyberwarfare has moved from the backstage to the front lines, from covert warfare to a declaration of war, and from auxiliary fighting to mainstream combat.

On November 4, 2019, the US invited a number of countries to hold the first ever joint cyberattack and defense exercise with the island of Taiwan. It undertook cyberattack scenarios as a new approach to go beyond beach landings and targeting financial systems. It focused on persistent and chaotic destructive attacks on key infrastructure and economic systems. This indicates that the US has crossed the bottom line of the one-China principle in cyberspace.

From late June to mid-July this year, some "mysterious explosions" occurred in Iran's strategic facilities causing more than 100 casualties at power plants, nuclear facilities, chemical plants and ammunition depots. Cyber sabotage from Israel and the US were believed to be involved.

This series of actions and events show that the US has not only the ability to paralyze a society through cyberattacks but also the proven will to do so. Will the US use this ability against China? It's completely possible. But the two countries might not disconnect their network.

Although US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has listed the "clean networks," the US' are the ones who are the most unclean. At present, the Chinese enterprises subject to unilateral sanctions by the US are innocent, and their technologies and products are safe as well. The US is fully aware of this. Besides for the US, disconnecting the network with China will actually cut off the easy path to attack China.

However, China must consider how to deal with "disconnection" and take primary precautions mainly in three aspects.

First, it must strengthen the awareness of network crisis. With the advent of the internet age, the international structure is experiencing subversive changes. Sovereign states have entered into an era of "stabilizing and governing with big data." The network's characteristics have increasingly made this concept more prominent: The internet can be used to kill people and overthrow a country.

Second, we must optimize the power structure. Cyberspace has become the fifth dimensional battlefield besides land, sea, sky and space. Although ordinary users form the frontline of defense in cyberspace, cyberwarfare cannot mainly rely on "militia." The sustainable development of a "regular cyber army" has become an important option for the construction of a country powerful in cyberspace.

Third, cyber deterrence needs to be showcased. China not only needs to be capable of launching counterattacks in cyberspace, but also must consider special situations in which other countries' cyberattacks might affect our ability of a nuclear counterattack. We must keep nuclear deterrence to the cyberattacks that aim to paralyze our network.

Russia's latest updated nuclear deterrence strategy lists four conditions that would trigger its implementation of nuclear strikes. In one situation, if the attack undermines its nuclear force response actions, Russia would contemplate using nuclear weapons. Cyberattacks may lead to such situation, therefore Russia's nuclear deterrence takes cyberattacks into consideration.

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US nuclear weapons budget could skyrocket if Russia treaty ends

https://www.defensenews.com/congress/2020/08/25/cbo-us-nuclear-weapons-budget-could-skyrocket-if-russia-treaty-ends/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBB%2008.26.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief
By: Joe Gould for Defense News

WASHINGTON — The New START nuclear pact's demise could cost the Department of Defense as much as \$439 billion for modernization, plus \$28 billion in annual maintenance costs, the Congressional Budget Office said in a report published Tuesday.

That price estimate, as the United States and Russia remain at odds over the treaty, reflects a threefold increase in weapons production costs. With Washington and Moscow's responses to the expiration of New START unclear, CBO explored several possible paths, including other less expensive options. "If the New START treaty expired, the United States could choose to make no changes to its current plans for nuclear forces, in which case it would incur no additional costs," the CBO study found.

"If the United States chose to increase its forces in response to the expiration of the treaty, modest expansions could be relatively inexpensive and could be done quickly. Larger expansions could be quite costly, however, and could take several decades to accomplish." The New START treaty limits each country to no more than 1,550 deployed nuclear warheads and 700 deployed missiles and bombers.

Signed in 2010 by then-U.S. President Barack Obama and then-Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, the pact would expire Feb. 5, but includes an option to extend it for another five years without needing the approval of either country's legislature. The analysis comes amid predictions of flattening defense budgets and as the United States and Russia concluded two days of arms control talks in Vienna last week with some signs of a possible willingness to extend the existing New START deal.

A key sticking point is the U.S. demand to include China in any new treaty, even as China has repeatedly refused. U.S. government leaders argue that any new nuclear arms limitation treaty should cover all types of warheads, include better verification protocols and transparency measures, and extend to include China, which has been increasing its own arsenal. Russia has offered an extension without any conditions.

U.S. negotiator Marshall Billingslea indicated the U.S. was willing to talk about an extension but only if there were a politically binding framework for making changes to New START, which he called “deeply flawed.” Arms control advocates have warned against the U.S. allowing the treaty to lapse with no limits on their nuclear arsenals, after both Moscow and Washington withdrew from the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty last year.

“Ever-increasing spending on nuclear weapons without an arms control framework that bounds U.S. and Russian nuclear forces is a recipe for budget chaos, undermining strategic stability, and damaging the health of the global nonproliferation regime,” said the Arms Control Association’s director for disarmament and threat reduction policy, Kingston Reif. “Such an approach also flies in the face of longstanding bipartisan Congressional support for the pursuit of modernization and arms control in tandem.”

An expansion in defense spending would likely place pressure on other parts of the national defense budget. CBO previously concluded the U.S. will spend \$1.2 trillion over the next three decades on nuclear-weapons. Meanwhile, the Pentagon is not budgeting for New START’s expiration, according to a recent GAO report. U.S. lawmakers of both parties are pressuring the White House to extend the pact.

The House Foreign Affairs Committee’s Democratic chairman, Rep. Eliot Engel, and ranking Republican, Rep. Michael McCaul, sponsored legislation last year calling for a treaty extension until 2026. The New START treaty is the latest in a series of strategic nuclear arms control treaties—following START I, START II, and the Moscow Treaty—between the United States and Russia (or the Soviet Union).

CBO offered estimates of the cost of expanding to the limits under each of those previous treaties, but did not consider decreasing any components of the nuclear triad. An expansion from the current 1,550 warhead cap to 2002 Moscow Treaty cap of 2,200, would not exceed the cost of current plans, CBO found. That and remaining on the current course were least expensive options. Expanding to 1993 START II Treaty limits, for forces that would carry up to 3,500 warheads, would either upload warheads on existing and next-generation forces at \$100 million, while a more flexible approach would purchase enough additional next-generation delivery vehicles to reach START II limits using current warhead loadings at more than \$114 billion and \$3 billion annually.

Expanding to 1991 START I Treaty limits would require even more delivery systems and warheads. Minimizing delivery systems, it would cost more than \$88 billion and more than \$4 billion annually. Maintaining the current number of warheads on new delivery systems would cost as much as \$439 billion and \$28 billion annually. CBO did not estimate the cost to produce, sustain and store new warheads under each treaty but said it could range from \$15 million to \$20 million each, which equates to \$45 billion to \$60 billion to reach the START I limit of 6,000 warheads.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Radiation detections in northern Europe: what we do and don’t know

Radiation detections in northern Europe: what we do and don’t know

By Cheryl Rofer, for the UCS // August 21, 2020

Alarming events may not be what they initially seem.

When an enormous explosion created a mushroom cloud over Beirut on August 4, some people immediately jumped to the wrong conclusion, spreading rumors on social media that a nuclear bomb had gone off. It hadn't. Eventually it became clear that the explosion was caused by chemicals stored improperly in warehouses at Beirut's port. But weapons experts knew from the start that the powerful explosion was not nuclear, because it did not produce a blinding flash of light, or a blast of heat intense enough to set a city on fire.

In the hours that followed the explosion, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), which operates a network of monitoring stations around the world, did not detect a telltale spike in atmospheric radiation. That last clue is how experts are able to narrow down the location of nuclear events, from the smallest accidents to major disasters like Chernobyl, and to make educated guesses about what happened. A release of nuclear material spreads its signature on the wind. But that signature is often incomplete or garbled.

Nuclear experts are still puzzling over a mysterious event that happened in June, when several monitoring stations in northern Europe detected extremely small quantities of radionuclides in the atmosphere. That event was not a nuclear weapons test, because the CTBTO stations did not detect any seismic activity. So what was it? Experts have scrutinized the radiation signature and narrowed down the possibilities. The finger points to Russia.

Radiation alerts. Radioisotope monitoring stations cover most of the globe. The CTBTO runs the biggest network. National radiation safety agencies—for example, in Finland and Sweden—operate other stations. Universities also operate monitoring stations, often in cooperation with the CTBTO or national agencies. Independent monitoring organizations, like the volunteer-driven Safecast, also report radiation measurements.

In early June, Norwegian monitoring stations and a CTBTO station detected iodine 131 in far northern Norway. On June 16 and 17, Finland's Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority (STUK) detected cobalt 60, ruthenium 103, cesium 134, and cesium 137 in Helsinki. On June 22 and 23, a CTBTO station in Sweden detected ruthenium 103, cesium 134, and cesium 137.

Radiation is easy to detect at low levels. The iodine 131 readings were around 1 microbecquerel per cubic meter of air. (A microbecquerel is one atomic disintegration per second in one million cubic meters of air.) But our knowledge of the Chernobyl explosion began with measuring small amounts of radionuclides, so any detection raises an alert.

Interpreting the detections. The types of radionuclides detected also provide information. The radionuclides detected in June, except cobalt 60, are produced by nuclear fission. The half-lives of iodine 131 and ruthenium 103 are 8 days and 39 days, respectively, so they must be from recent fission events. These are common fission products from a nuclear reactor. A wider suite of radionuclides would help to pin down what kind of reactor.

The iodine 131 detection is ambiguous, though. It is produced by fission, but it is also used fairly commonly to treat hyperthyroidism, in pet cats as well as people. It is easily sent into the air. So it may come from sewage plants or other sources. The fact that it showed up without the other fission products means that its source may be something other than a nuclear accident.

Cobalt 60 is not a fission product, but rather an activation product of steel that has been in or very close to a nuclear reactor. It doesn't usually show up with fission products. It could mean that something was broken in the reactor that released the fission products, or it could be that the Finnish reading was in error. Narrowing down the location. Airborne radionuclides by themselves cannot tell us how or precisely where they were released. The CTBTO tweeted a map indicating the region in northern Europe where the June release may have occurred. This map was probably constructed by tracing the winds during the period just before the radionuclides were detected.

A couple of Russian nuclear power plants are located in the area identified, which also covers the location where the United States believes a Russian experimental reactor exploded last summer while it was being raised from the seabed. Last month's release was probably a minor incident, like a breach in a filter at a nuclear power plant. But Russia has said that there were no incidents at its nuclear power plants. The presence of cobalt 60 and the location have led some to suggest that the release may have been from a new attempt to raise that experimental reactor.

It's not possible, with the limited additional data available so far, to do more than guess the origin of the June radionuclides. The source of a similarly ambiguous release of ruthenium 106 in 2017 took two years to identify. In that case, the release of a single fission product suggested a processing facility, and the wind patterns suggested the Mayak facility in Russia. A detailed study of the stable ruthenium isotopes collected with the ruthenium 106 confirmed those early provisional conclusions.

Pinning down the source. Last year's deadly accident seems to have occurred when a reactor for an experimental nuclear-powered cruise missile was being lifted from the seabed. Again, radionuclide readings from monitoring stations some distance from the source gave early warning to the rest of the world. The amounts and numbers of radionuclides were larger than in the recent release, and reporting on the accident, as people were brought to hospitals, provided more information, including radioisotope detection closer to the site, along with satellite photos and, later, photos of the damaged barge.

The radioisotopes indicated that a fission source was involved, although early reports from Russia described an "isotopic source," a phrase usually reserved for single-isotope heat sources, which would be unsuitable for propulsion. In all three of these cases over the past three years, the radionuclides initially detected by air sampling were ambiguous. Additional information was needed to pin down a source. The best information would come from the country responsible for the release – in all three cases, Russia, which is a signatory to the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident. Somebody knows what happened in these cases. We need to hear from them.

Once a near-nuclear power, Taipei has since been an exemplary anti-proliferator — in cold contrast to Beijing

<https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2020/08/add-taiwan-international-atomic-energy-agency/167927/>

By: Andrea Stricker for Defense One // August 24, 2020

Washington recently showed solidarity with Taipei by sending a delegation led by Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar, the most senior U.S. official to visit Taiwan in decades.

But amid rising Chinese efforts to infringe the sovereignty of its neighbors, including provocative military maneuvers and verbal threats, the United States can do more to protect Taiwan's independence — starting with galvanizing support for Taipei's membership in international organizations and

UN agencies. There is an especially strong case for Taiwanese admission to the International Atomic Energy Agency, which monitors global nuclear proliferation.

Taiwan has stellar non-proliferation credentials, whereas China bears responsibility for the proliferation of nuclear-weapons technology to some of the world's most dangerous regimes. But it is Taipei that was ejected from the IAEA, thanks to the UN's 1971 decision to switch official recognition to the People's Republic of China on the mainland — and Taipei that has been blocked by Beijing as it bids to join or rejoin various international organizations, pacts, and regimes.

Taiwan not only adheres to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty despite its official non-member status; it is a top performer. Assisted by a U.S.-IAEA-Taiwan agreement, Taipei applies the IAEA's highest standard of "integrated safeguards" to its civilian nuclear program, as well as the watchdog's rigorous verification agreement, the Additional Protocol. Yet Taiwan was not always so upstanding. Until 1988, Taipei had a relatively advanced nuclear weapons program, sparked by the first Chinese nuclear test in 1964.

By the program's end, and shortly before Taipei rejected authoritarian governance in favor of democratic reform, Taiwan was roughly one to two years away from having nuclear weapons. Following U.S. pressure, Taiwan shut down its nuclear weapons program and became a non-proliferation paragon. Every year since 2006, the IAEA has reached a "broader conclusion" that all of Taipei's nuclear materials and activities are in peaceful uses. The agency reportedly continues to inspect Taiwan's defunct nuclear weapons-related sites.

By contrast, despite being an IAEA member state since 1983, Beijing has contributed to some of the world's most intractable proliferation problems. It directly provided nuclear facilities to North Korea, Iran, and Pakistan. Beijing also looked the other way as Chinese companies sold related equipment and technology to all three regimes, as well as to others. Most recently, a U.S. intelligence report leaked to the media alleged that China may be helping Saudi Arabia to construct two covert facilities in remote desert areas, which Washington suspects have a nuclear use. This is in spite of Riyadh's crown prince openly pledging to match Iran's nuclear capabilities.

With China's assistance, Saudi Arabia is also constructing another clandestine facility for ballistic missiles. Beijing has plans to roughly double its own nuclear weapons stockpile over the next decade, Washington estimates, a clear departure from current downsizing trends for states that possess nuclear weapons under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency also suspects that China plans to upgrade its nuclear-capable missile delivery capabilities.

Even though Taipei clearly merits a role at the IAEA, the UN's 1971 decision to revoke recognition of Taiwan poses non-trivial legal obstacles. The IAEA is a UN subsidiary agency and the international community has not recognized Taiwan as a state. The IAEA's statute does not prevent non-UN members from joining, but it does refer to members as "states." If the IAEA's members moved to support Taipei's membership in any case, the 35-member IAEA Board of Governors would need to recommend it by a vote of two-thirds.

Next, the IAEA General Conference, composed of 171 member states, would need to do the same. Even if the smaller Board of Governors recommended Taipei's membership, it is unlikely today that the General Conference would concur, since many members of the 125-nation Non-Aligned Movement, which frequently vote as a bloc, support China. Beijing would use all means of diplomatic and economic coercion or threaten to prevent Taipei's membership.

However, China's own actions may be turning the tide in favor of support for Taiwan's membership in the IAEA and other international organizations. Beijing's provocations include myriad violations of its international agreements, aggression against Hong Kong, India, and nations in the South China Sea, and construction of concentration camps for Muslim Uighurs at home. China's actions have dashed any hope it could become a "responsible stakeholder" in the post-Cold War order. These actions also make it imperative to defend those whom China may next assault.

Washington and its allies should make clear to Beijing the ramifications of its threats to violate the autonomy of Taiwan. These measures should include, but not be limited to, the U.S. elevating Taipei's status in international organizations. Congress has already expressed support for Taiwan's expanded membership in international organizations. In March 2020, it passed into law the Taiwan Allies International Protection and Enhancement Initiative Act, or the TAIPEI Act, which directed the U.S. government to "advocate, as appropriate...for Taiwan's membership in all international organizations in which statehood is not a requirement and in which the United States is also a participant" and to work for Taipei's observer status in other international organizations.

As encouraged under the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act, America should also improve the quality and deterrent factor of its defense assistance to ensure Taipei's security. U.S. protection of Taiwan's sovereignty through support for its membership in key organizations would both raise Taipei's profile internationally and send a clear message to China about contemplating aggression against its smaller neighbor. Unlike China, Taiwan has proven it is a reformed, model member of the global community when it comes to non-proliferation and many other issues. It should be treated accordingly

By Andrea Stricker Research Fellow, Foundation for Defense of Democracies

Report: China Has Second-Largest Fleet of Satellites

https://freebeacon.com/national-security/report-china-has-second-largest-fleet-of-satellites/?utm_source=actengage&utm_campaign=FreedomMail&utm_medium=email

By: Jack Beyrer for the WFB // August 24, 2020 3:40 PM

China now operates the second-largest fleet of satellites in orbit, The Wire China reported Sunday.

A database maintained by the Union of Concerned Scientists shows China owns 363 of the 2,667 recorded satellites in orbit, a number only surpassed by the United States. Russia sports 169 satellites of its own with the world's third-largest satellite fleet. The preponderance of Chinese satellites are owned by the People's Liberation Army and Chinese government, while private satellites are often accessible to Chinese authorities through civil-military fusion and state-owned enterprises.

Nearly all Chinese satellites, therefore, potentially pose a national security threat to the United States. In recent months, Beijing and Moscow have increased cooperation in space and Arctic operations while building up arsenals of missiles and satellite weaponry that threaten American space operations. Even further, China has upgraded its space capacities with an eye toward Mars, while U.S. efforts to deescalate tensions with the Kremlin in space have so far brought little success.

China's propensity to flex its muscles directly creates risk for emerging American technologies, says Dean Cheng, Heritage Foundation senior fellow and member of the National Space Council Users' Advisory Group. "China has demonstrated that it will strive to circumvent or twist other nations' laws in order to access key technologies, including space technologies," Cheng said. "The case of Global IP, an American company which had arranged to purchase a Boeing satellite, is a prime example."

Though the current White House has gone to significant lengths to counter growing competition in space, experts such as Cheng still believe much more can be done. "Far from rewarding such bad behavior as failing to control its reentering space vehicles and failing to inform potential victims, it is essential to make clear that such failures have consequences," Cheng said.

"Allowing the Chinese to blithely claim that they have a reentering spacecraft under control, only to admit years later that they do not, is unlikely to promote responsible behavior or adherence to norms," Cheng added. "Similarly, Chinese efforts to subvert arms export regulations and intellectual property laws need to be rebutted firmly, rather than efforts to expand business 'cooperation.'"

U.S. Mulls Repercussions for Europe's Alliance With Iran

https://freebeacon.com/national-security/u-s-mulls-repercussions-for-europes-alliance-with-iran/?utm_source=actengage&utm_campaign=FreedomMail&utm_medium=email

After Europe breaks with U.S. on Iran arms ban, diplomatic ties hit historic low

By: Adam Kredo for the WFB // AUGUST 27, 2020 12:30 PM

Multiple European nations' diplomatic priorities may be on the line as the Trump administration examines a range of options to pressure these countries after their refusal to back the United States in its efforts to expand sanctions on Iran, according to current and former U.S. officials.

U.S. diplomats are seeking to force European allies to split with Iran and its allies, Russia and China. Multiple sources who spoke to the Washington Free Beacon outlined a range of European priorities the administration could leverage in this pressure campaign, including a free trade agreement sought by the British, increased coordination on Lebanon needed by the French, and a range of items the Germans have sought to revive ties with America.

These sources spoke only on background about ongoing discussions in the administration about how to respond to Europe's intransigence on Iran. Relations between the United States and its European allies are at historic lows following a failed vote at the United Nations Security Council earlier this month to indefinitely extend a ban on Iran's purchase of advanced weaponry. With the embargo set to lift in mid-October, the administration is

now pushing to reimpose all sanctions on Tehran that were lifted under the nuclear deal—an effort that traditional allies France, Germany, and the United Kingdom publicly oppose.

These European nations joined with Russia and China in opposing the United States. Senior U.S. officials told the Free Beacon earlier this month that they are livid with Europe for abandoning America as it sought to extend the Iran weapons ban. The dispute spilled into public view on Tuesday, when U.S. ambassador to the U.N. Kelly Craft accused European allies of "standing in the company of terrorists."

The administration shows no signs of backing down from the diplomatic fight, which is likely to elevate foreign policy issues in the lead up to the 2020 presidential election. U.S. ties to Europe have chilled in recent years due to the Trump administration's bid to pressure NATO allies into paying a greater share of the alliance's costs. "The Europeans are clearly upset with the Americans for leaving the [Iran nuclear deal], but that doesn't seem like a good enough reason to essentially greenlight an influx of weapons to Iran," one U.S. diplomat familiar with discussions at the U.N. told the Free Beacon. "That's got to be quite difficult to explain to their citizens."

Trump administration allies in Congress remain angry with Europe and acknowledge that relations with the United States could crumble over the Iran dispute. A spokesman for Sen. Ted Cruz (R., Texas), an Iran hawk, said "the fecklessness shown over the last few weeks by Britain, France, and Germany will obviously and unfortunately complicate our relations." "Sen. Cruz believes that America's allies should stand with us and not with Iran's regime that chants 'death to America' and wants to build nuclear weapons to incinerate American cities," the spokesman said.

To boost pressure on France, Germany, and the United Kingdom—the E3—the United States could move forward with plans to impose sanctions on a financial body known as INSTEX, which has been used by Europe to circumvent sanctions on Iran. The United States could also freeze assets and deny visas to European diplomats who work with INSTEX to help Iran gain access to cash assets, according to a former senior administration official familiar with the matter.

Trump administration officials are particularly outraged with U.K. prime minister Boris Johnson, who has been seeking a revamped free trade agreement with the United States that could be used as leverage in the Iran fight. The United States could also apply pressure on Johnson to rid Britain of China's Huawei on an earlier timetable than is currently being considered. Germany and France are also seeking U.S. cooperation on several items, including Russia's contested Nord Stream 2 energy pipeline and a U.N. force agreement in Lebanon. France and the United States are reportedly on a "collision course" over the Lebanon deal due to American demands that the number of troops stationed in the country be reduced and that U.N. forces are granted access to areas where the Iranian terror group Hezbollah is believed to be operating.

Europe's alliance with Iran is not likely to end anytime soon. International nuclear inspectors working for the U.N. inked a new pact with Tehran this week that grants them permission to visit two contested nuclear sites that had long been off limits. This concession by Iran shores up Europe's continued commitment to the nuclear accord that was abandoned by President Donald Trump in 2018.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, during remarks in New York City last week after the failed U.N. vote, warned the E3 that its concessions to Iran endanger the continent. "Our friends in Germany, France, and the United Kingdom—the E3—all told me privately that they don't want the arms embargo lifted either," Pompeo said. "And yet today, in the end, they provided no alternatives, no options. No country but the United States had the

courage and conviction to put forward a resolution. Instead, they chose to side with ayatollahs. Their actions endanger the people of Iraq, of Yemen, of Lebanon, of Syria—and indeed, their own citizens as well."

Blessed Are the Peacemakers: In Praise of Nuclear Strategists

https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2020/08/27/blessed_are_the_peacemakers_in_praise_of_nuclear_strategists_575462.html

By Francis P. Sempa for Real Clear Defense // August 27, 2020

We recently commemorated the 75th anniversaries of dropping the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki that forced a reluctant Japan to surrender and thereby end the Second World War.

As usual, there was much soul searching and beating of breasts about America's "sin" of ushering in the nuclear age. But the harsh reality is that the United States (with help from Great Britain) succeeded in harnessing the destructive power of the atom just in time—if Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union got there first, the “liberal” world order of the previous 75 years would have been aborted, and what Winston Churchill called a “new Dark Age, made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of perverted science,” would have descended on the world.

Soon, we will commemorate the formal Japanese surrender that took place on the USS Missouri, presided over by General Douglas MacArthur. It was MacArthur who would have led U.S. forces in the planned invasion of mainland Japan had the atomic bombs not ended the war. Most historians and scholars who have studied both the American plan to invade Japan’s home islands (Operation Downfall) and Japan's plan to defend those islands (Ketsu-Go) have concluded that the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs saved both American and Japanese lives.

What is not similarly appreciated is the role of Western—mostly American—nuclear strategists in helping to prevent the outbreak of a third global kinetic conflict that would likely have produced even greater casualties than the First and Second World Wars. The invention of nuclear weapons did not change human nature, and one of the constants throughout human history is war. There have been plenty of wars since the dawn of the nuclear age, but none of them has come close to the scale of the 20th century’s two world wars.

The major world powers have refrained from all-out war principally because of the fear of nuclear destruction. Nuclear deterrence has worked to limit the size and destructiveness of modern war. This is the paradox of the nuclear age. And deterrence—even nuclear deterrence—did not just happen. The mere existence of nuclear weapons did not and does not guarantee the effectiveness of deterrence. Since the dawn of the nuclear era, strategists—mostly civilians—have thought about and planned for the “unthinkable,” a nuclear war.

Deterrence to be effective must be credible. The credibility of a threat to use nuclear weapons involves questions of relative force structure, doctrine, deployments, and will. It is those questions that Western nuclear strategists thought about, wrote about, and debated to promote deterrence and preserve what one of them, Albert Wohlstetter, called “the delicate balance of terror.” Beginning in the late 1940s and early 1950s and continuing

throughout much of the Cold War, Wohlstetter was joined in this intellectual effort by Herman Kahn, Bernard Brodie, Thomas Schelling, Henry Kissinger, France's Raymond Aron, Paul Nitze, Britain's Colin Gray, Edward Luttwak, Gen. Daniel Graham, and Robert Jastrow, among others.

Their output of books and articles, and their frequent role as defense consultants, helped Western statesmen and militaries construct a nuclear force and develop nuclear doctrines that prevented global war and lessened the scope of fighting in limited wars. Wohlstetter wrote about "the logic of war in the thermonuclear age" and the fragile and shifting nuclear balance in his seminal Foreign Affairs article, "The Delicate Balance of Terror" (1959).

He also brilliantly dissected the flaws of Catholic Bishops and elder statesmen's nuclear disarmament schemes in "Bishops, Statesmen, and Other Strategists on the Bombing of Innocents" in the June 1983 issue of Commentary. You can read these and his other articles on nuclear strategy in Nuclear Heuristics (2009). Henry Kissinger wrote Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy (1957) wherein he analyzed nuclear war, including limited nuclear war, in the context of global geopolitics.

He explained that "nuclear technology makes it possible for the first time in history, to shift the balance of power solely through developments within the territory of another sovereign state." The numbers of weapons and delivery systems mattered. Three years later, Herman Kahn wrote On Thermonuclear War, where he explored deterrence, warfighting, escalation, limited nuclear war, counterforce and counter-value doctrines, targeting, accuracy, survivability, basing of weapons, first-strike capability, and various war scenarios.

Kahn sought to be the Clausewitz of nuclear war. Some of Kahn's ideas were anticipated by France's Raymond Aron in On War (1958). Meanwhile, Bernard Brodie in Strategy in the Missile Age (1957) and Thomas Schelling in The Strategy of Conflict (1960) emphasized deterrence, anticipating the Kennedy-Johnson administration's adoption of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD), which held that as long as nuclear powers maintained a sufficient "second-strike" retaliatory capability, no nuclear power would launch a first strike.

Later in the Cold War, as U.S. and Soviet nuclear arsenals became roughly equal, Edward Luttwak brilliantly analyzed "How to Think About Nuclear War," the title of one of his articles collected in On the Meaning of Victory (1986). Luttwak concluded that "without nuclear deterrence, great-power politics would resume as before 1945." Looking back on all of the Cold War crises, he continued, "it is impossible to believe that another world war could have been avoided had it not been for the terror that nuclear weapons inspire."

Nuclear weapons helped keep the general peace during the Cold War. Deterrence worked. It continues to work in the post-Cold War world. The nuclear strategists who wrote about weapons of mass destruction, including plans for their deployment and use, were effectively the "peacemakers" of the nuclear era. They did far more to preserve general peace than the pacifists and disarmament groups who repeatedly called for abolishing nuclear weapons and Western unilateral disarmament. As Edward Luttwak noted, the Cold War's many crises never escalated to the point of all-out war. We should all be grateful for that.

"Blessed are the peacemakers."

Arms Control Addiction

<https://www.newsmax.com/peterpry/armscontrol/2020/08/25/id/983778/>

By Dr. Peter Vincent Pry for Newsmax // Tuesday, 25 August 2020

Talks extending the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), which expires in 2021, apparently failed — Thank God!

U.S. negotiators tried to persuade Moscow to improve New START verification provisions, expand the treaty to include tactical nuclear weapons, and possibly make the treaty trilateral by including China. But Moscow and Beijing rejected U.S. conditions for continuing New START. Why Washington gambles national security on arms control with Russia and China, who consistently cheat, defies common sense. Arms control is a long record of failure, constraining only U.S. capabilities, while adversaries cheat, gaining strategic advantages:

In 2020, the State Department finally acknowledged Russia and China have been violating the 1996 Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), clandestinely conducting low-yield tests for advanced nuclear weapons for 25 years. The U.S. has faithfully observed the unratified CTBT unilaterally, conducting no nuclear tests since 1992.

Russia cheated on the 1991 Presidential Nuclear Initiative, wherein Moscow and Washington agreed to abolish tactical nuclear weapons. The U.S. dismantled its Cold War inventory of 15,000 tactical nuclear weapons, reducing to 180 operational weapons today, while Russia retains at least 2,000 tactical nuclear weapons — an advantage of at least 10-to-1.

Russia cheated on the 1988 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. The Obama Administration covered-up Russian testing and deployment of prohibited intermediate-range nuclear missiles, compelling President Trump to withdraw from the INF Treaty in 2019.

North Korea cheated on President Bill Clinton's 1994 Agreed Framework, that gave Pyongyang economic support in exchange for supposedly abandoning development of nuclear weapons. Today North Korea has the H-bomb and nuclear missiles capable of striking any city in the United States.

Iran is cheating on President Obama's Joint Comprehensive Plan Of Action (JCPOA) that gave Tehran billions of dollars, a pass for being the world's leading sponsor of international terrorism, and even a legitimate pathway toward the "Islamic Bomb." Yet Iran probably already has nuclear missiles (see "Underestimating Nuclear Missile Threats From North Korea And Iran" National Review February 12, 2016).

Although the State Department assesses Russia is in compliance with New START (which limits both sides to 700 long-range strategic bombers and missiles and 1,550 nuclear weapons), the verification provisions are grossly inadequate to ensure Russia is not cheating. Experts like Dr. Mark Schneider and Dr. Stephen Blank warn that Russia is cheating on New START (see Schneider "Does Russia Have 2-to-1 Advantage In Deployed Strategic Nuclear Weapons?" RealClearDefense January 12, 2019).

Given Moscow's long record of cheating on arms control agreements, it is highly unlikely Russia is in compliance with New START. The U.S. keeps getting suckered, and national security increasingly imperiled, because Washington is addicted to arms control. Arms control is a great vulnerability in Western strategic culture. Democratic polities have blind faith that all differences can be negotiated, all negotiations can become "win-win" outcomes, and national security guaranteed by treaties (see "The Case Against Arms Control" RealClearDefense January 12, 2019).

Unlike Russia, China, North Korea and Iran, in the United States the ideology of arms control is deeply embedded in our foreign policy and defense establishments. Universities teach that "strategic studies" and "arms control" are virtually synonymous. State Department arms control negotiations

are their bread and butter, and ratification of another treaty the acme of a successful career. Presidents and the press mistakenly equate maintenance of past and conclusion of new arms control agreements with betterment of national security and the ultimate test of statesmanship.

America as a free and open society is unilaterally vulnerable to disinformation operations designed to persuade U.S. policymakers and the public to swallow "poison pill" arms control proposals that are increasingly outrageous and dangerous. For example, Communist China's "analyst" Tong Zhao recently published an article for an American audience "Managing the Sino-American Dispute Over Missile Defense" and an English-language book on the same theme "Narrowing the U.S.-China Gap on Missile Defense:

How To Help Forestall A Nuclear Arms Race" published by the Carnegie-Tsinghua Center for Global Policy. Very well written propaganda, crafted to appeal to the "logic" of the U.S. arms control community. Zhao's modest proposal is that the U.S. Space Force should never deploy space-based missile defenses, which U.S. "threat" is supposedly driving China and Russia to greatly build-up their offensive nuclear missiles.

Beijing has also proposed that, if China joins New START, the U.S. should reduce its nuclear deterrent from 1,550 weapons to 300 weapons, supposedly the size of China's strategic nuclear arsenal (according to the U.S. arms control community.) However, only Beijing knows how many nuclear weapons China really has — some estimate not 300, but 3,000. Another recent article, "Democrats and Republicans Agree:

Phase Out Land-Based Nuclear Missiles" Forbes (August 12, 2020), describes a poll by the University of Maryland designed to persuade 80,000 Americans that U.S. ICBMs are unnecessary. Russia and China would love elimination of U.S. ICBMs. They can destroy all U.S. bombers and two-thirds of missile submarines with just five warheads, but destroying all U.S. ICBMs requires at least 400. Let's hope New START negotiations are dead, since Washington's arms control establishment is dumb enough to trust the Carnegie-Tsinghua Center for Global Policy.

Dr. Peter Vincent Pry is executive director of the Task Force on National and Homeland Security. He served on the Congressional EMP Commission as chief of staff, the Congressional Strategic Posture Commission, the House Armed Services Committee, and the CIA. He is author of "Blackout Wars," and also of "The Power and the Light," available on Amazon.com.

Missiles are advancing so quickly that their names need to change, report finds

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/missiles-are-advancing-so-quickly-that-their-names-need-to-change-report-finds/ar-BB18qT28?ocid=msedgdhp>

By: Paul Sonne for the WaPo // 8 hrs ago

Missiles are developing so quickly that the old conventions for naming them no longer suffice, according to a new report, which suggests scrapping catchall descriptors like cruise, ballistic and hypersonic and moving to a more precise taxonomy for characterizing both U.S. and foreign missiles.

The report from the Aerospace Corporation, a nonprofit space research corporation in California, argues that the boundaries between the established categories of missiles are blurring as technology advances, and in many cases blurred many years ago, underscoring the "need for more nuanced

distinctions.” One example the authors cite is China’s DF-100 anti-ship missile. Though described as a cruise missile, it travels at speeds and distances traditionally associated with ballistic missiles and uses a large rocket booster to launch akin to those that power ballistic missiles.

Simply dubbing it a cruise missile would fail to capture its full range of capabilities, the authors suggest. Their call for new missile names comes as the Pentagon grapples with the proliferation of new missile technology among its competitors in Russia, China, North Korea and Iran. Missiles are faster and more agile than they have ever been before, creating a challenge for Pentagon war planners as they worry about being able to defend against the advancing threats.

The report argues that the way missiles are named matters. “It’s definitely relevant in terms of supporting decision-making on how to respond to the threat,” said Jamie Morin, vice president of defense systems operations at the Aerospace Corporation, who previously served as director of cost assessment and program evaluation at the Pentagon. “If people think things fit neatly into categories, but they’re not really categories, but a spectrum, you may end up with the wrong policy solution. We’d like the decision makers to be able to think clearly.”

The report argues that the classification of missiles influences not only arms control negotiations with foreign powers but also the U.S. military’s missile warning protocols, missile defense systems and contingency plans. If the Defense Department uses terms that lack clarity, the United States could find itself ill-equipped to handle future threats, the report warns. “Today, we should no longer think of ballistic missile trajectories as following a predictable parabolic arc. Nor can we think of cruise missiles as maneuverable but slow,” the report says.

“Nor should we think of hypersonic glide vehicles as some completely new category unrelated to these more traditional threats.” The authors of the report, Steven T. Dunham and Robert S. Wilson, analyzed 77 unique missile systems already deployed or in flight testing in China, Iran, North Korea and Russia. Though they are all described as ballistic missiles, only 26 of them actually fit the classic definition — a missile that follows a predictable parabolic arc after its launch and doesn’t maneuver to change course midflight.

The rest have some ability to maneuver after launch — and many can deviate significantly from their ballistic trajectories. “Missiles are not just ballistic anymore, even many of the ones that are called ballistic. We need to evolve accordingly,” the report says. “Using old classifications, we risk mischaracterizing the threats missiles pose and pursuing incorrect and ineffective ways to mitigate them.”

The report also contends that the delineation between ballistic missiles and cruise missiles is becoming increasingly artificial. A traditional cruise missile is launched with a small booster motor, or sometimes no booster motor at all, if it’s fired from an airplane, and can swerve its trajectory dramatically before impact. Traditionally, a cruise missile travels slower than a ballistic missile and stays closer to the ground, sometimes skimming along the sea or land.

But according to the authors of the report, some new cruise missiles are now using large ballistic missile-like booster motors and can travel at supersonic speeds, making some of the assumptions implicit in how the missiles are categorized inaccurate. The DF-100 is an example. The authors

propose a new method of naming and classifying missiles that not only communicates the range of the projectile weapon but also describes the capabilities of its payload, the part of the missile that includes the warhead.

Many payloads have a propulsion system that allows them to motor on their own after being launched into flight. Others, such as those on hypersonic glide vehicles, travel unpowered after launch using aerodynamics through the atmosphere more than five times the speed of sound. The Aerospace Corporation researchers' proposed new taxonomy would break down missiles into five categories of range and five categories of payload type, instantly giving defense officials more information about a given weapon through its name alone. "Modern missiles are complex," the report says, "and we need to acknowledge that."

Air Force fast-tracks new ICBM to avoid 'missile gap'

The existing GBSD program is being engineered to bring new levels of reliability

Fox News, 24 Aug 20

Kris Osborn

Senior Air Force weapons developers are concerned about a potential intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) readiness gap caused by the decline of existing Minuteman III weapons and a potential delay with bringing the new Ground Based Strategic Deterrent (GBSD) online.

The Air Force's GBSD program, an effort to build as many as 400 new ICBMs, is slated to emerge toward the middle or end of the 2020s. However, existing Minuteman III are now more than 50 years old and on the decline due to obsolescence.

This scenario presents a significant predicament for nuclear deterrence, according to Lt. Gen. Richard M. Clark, deputy chief of staff for Strategic Deterrence and Nuclear Integration, who expressed concern that potential delays with the GBSD could risk a "gap."

"A gap between Minuteman III and GBSD is not something we can have, especially since the ICBM is the cornerstone of our nuclear defense," Clark told The Mitchell Institute Nuclear Defense Forum.

A small emerging gap may already be taking place, according to a Government Accountability Office report, which stated that the Minuteman III may not be able to meet full mission requirements by 2026.

While Clark wants to make sure that the GBSD is fully funded with solid requirements and making technical progress with prototypes, he also explained that the Air Force is now pursuing as many as 20 modernization programs for the Minuteman III.

Recognizing that the 50-year-old weapon certainly has limitations and can only be upgraded to a certain extent, Clark explained that there is important ongoing work to improve the missile itself, as well as its launchers and boosters.

"All of these programs are intended to extend Minuteman III before it falls off a cliff. We are investing to keep the gap closed but that margin is fragile," Clark said.

The existing GBSD program is being engineered to bring new levels of reliability, targeting and guidance technologies to sustain the U.S. ground-fired ICBM fleet well into the 2080s and beyond. The Air Force is already working on prototypes and, according to Will Roper, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, Acquisition, Technology & Logistics, is using digital modeling to expedite the developmental process.

"With digital engineering we can look at 10 to 20 designs," Roper told an audience as far back as several years ago at an Air Force Association Symposium.

The new ICBMs will be deployed roughly within the same geographical expanse in which the current weapons are stationed. In total, dispersed areas across three different sites span 33,600 miles, including missiles in Cheyenne, Wyoming, Minot, North Dakota and Great Falls, Montana.

-- Kris Osborn is the Managing Editor of Warrior Maven and The Defense Editor of The National Interest --

Air Force and Navy air-launch ICBM

<https://www.foxnews.com/tech/air-force-and-navy-air-launch-icbm>

The Air Force's GBSD is testing prototypes and making rapid developmental progress with a new class of ICBM

By Kris Osborn | Warrior Maven for Fox News // 25 Aug 2020

Land-based ICBM launch silos are destroyed, nuclear-armed ballistic missile submarines have been found and neutralized, nuclear-capable aircraft cannot get over enemy airspace and the continental U.S. is suffering a catastrophic nuclear weapons attack.

It's quite a scenario, however unlikely, but not impossible. It might seem as though there might be few or even no options to retaliate against the attacker to assure mutual destruction or simply halt the attack. These types of contingencies point precisely to the reason why the U.S. nuclear triad exists. It is specifically constructed to ensure a decisive retaliatory strike.

Such an ability, drawing upon nuclear-armed aircraft, land-based ICBMs and submarine-launched nuclear weapons, guarantees a massive response, thereby keeping the peace. The U.S. nuclear triad has been effective for decades. What if, as posited, there did not appear to be a way to launch nuclear weapons because all existing modes of nuclear attack and command and control were destroyed or neutralized? Would the U.S. be doomed to cataclysmic destruction?

Maybe not. The U.S. Air Force and Navy just tested an aircraft-mounted ICBM launcher able to fire off a massive nuclear attack ... from the air, using a technology called the Airborne Launch Control System. An unarmed Minuteman III ICBM, equipped with three test reentry vehicles, was successfully launched from a Navy E-6 aircraft. "A joint team of Air Force Global Strike Command Airmen and Navy sailors launched an unarmed Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile equipped with three test reentry vehicles from aboard the Airborne Launch Control System at 12:21 a.m. Pacific Time Aug. 4 from Vandenberg Air Force Base, California," an Air Force report stated.

An air-coordinated launch brings new tactical mobility to the prospect of nuclear attack, as naturally something as large as an ICBM brings much more potential devastation than, for instance, an air-dropped nuclear weapon from a B-2. Also, air-launch can help optimize the launch process,

given that ICBM silos are dispersed across a wide swath of three states, including expansive land areas in Montana and Wyoming. Should some ICBMs be disabled, an air launcher might be well suited to locate the best launch opportunities.

There is certainly no mistaking the current global tensions and threat environment, yet of course, the Air Force report was careful to include the “test launches are not a response or reaction to world events or regional tensions.” The reentry vehicles traveled more than 4,000 miles during the test, in a clear demonstration of the intercontinental ability of the nuclear weapon.

Interesting that a Minuteman III was used, as the decades-old weapon has, according to many, long been in need of replacement. While it has been upgraded many times throughout the years and is, of course, still functional, the age of the weapon has provided at least part of the inspiration for the current Air Force Ground Based Strategic Deterrent (GBSD) program.

The Air Force is now moving along with efforts to build as many as 400 new, high-tech, more capable ICBMs intended to bring U.S. nuclear weapons capability into a new era. The Air Force’s GBSD is already testing prototypes and making rapid developmental progress with a new class of ICBM engineered with greater reliability, targeting and flight-path navigational stability.

The GBSD is still in development, so naturally, the Pentagon seeks to successfully sustain Minuteman III functionality. “The Minuteman III is 50 years old, and continued test launches are essential in ensuring its reliability until the 2030s when the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent is fully in place. Most importantly, this visible message of national security serves to assure our allies and dissuade potential aggressors,” Col. Omar Colbert, 576th Flight Test Squadron commander, said in the Air Force report.

-- Kris Osborn is the Managing Editor of Warrior Maven and The Defense Editor of The National Interest

Missile Replacement: It's A Go

Air Force Announces That Work Will Begin In 2023 At Warren AFB
Western Nebraska Observer Online (Kimball, NE), 27 Aug 20
Daria Anderson Faden

The Air Force announced that F.E. Warren AFB, Wyo., will begin military construction in 2023 to replace the 50-year-old Minuteman III ICBMs in Colorado, Nebraska and Wyoming.

The second installation will be in Malmstrom AFB, Mont., followed by Minot AFB, N.D., in 2026 and 2029, respectively.

Congress has already appropriated \$90 billion for the replacement of the old missiles and the installation of the new missiles at the three missile bases.

According to the release, "Using infrastructure at current locations allows both the Minuteman III and GBSD (Ground Based Strategic Deterrent) weapons systems to continue meeting all nuclear surety and safety standards throughout their operational lives, particularly during the transition period."

Air Force Global Strike Command, which includes 33,700 professionals, is the headquarters for the 20th Air Force at F.W. Warren, the 8th Air Force at Barksdale, La., along with nine wings, two geographically separated squadrons and one detachment in the continental United States.

The Cheyenne Greater Chamber of Commerce said that no additional information would be released for at least two more weeks. The chamber told the Observer that there are lots of questions, and they are trying to figure it all out.

According to the chamber when missile builder Northrop Grumman Corp. decides to roll out the information, they will get it out, but until then, information is quite scarce.

The Observer obtained this statement from the Air Force Global Strike Command Public Affairs Office in reference to the impact the project would have on local communities: "As all military construction activities are dependent on the completion of the Environmental Impact Statements for each base, it is too early in the process to know this information. There are several variables that can determine when and where military construction can begin such as weather, skills, equipment and supplies.

"Given the gravity and importance of nuclear deterrence, the Air Force will not rush this effort. The Air Force is following a thorough process to ensure the deployment of a safe, secure, reliable, and effective weapon system."

The economic impact in this area is predicted to be extensive, and for many that would a dream come true.

The Ground Based Strategic Deterrent weapons system is expected to be operational until 2075.

Why is the U.S. Military Building So Many New Weapons? (Like Smaller Nukes)

It is all about matching and deterring Russia and China
National Interest Online, 27 Aug 20
Kris Osborn

The Pentagon is celebrating multiple accomplishments towards the implementation of the 2018 National Defense Strategy. These include progress towards having hypersonic weapons by 2023, the launch of U.S. Space Command and the largest proposed research and development budget in history. Furthermore, the military has created of a first-of-its-kind low-yield, submarine-launched ballistic missile warhead. All of these milestones are cited in a recent Pentagon report.

These are all quite significant, yet the existence of a low-yield nuclear weapon and the anticipated arrival of U.S. hypersonic weapons are of particular tactical and strategic relevance. This is because, in part, they are technical arenas in which both Russian and China are extremely advanced compared to America.

Given Russian and Chinese testing of both hypersonic missiles and tactical, lower-yield nuclear weapons, U.S. equivalents simply cannot come soon enough for Pentagon weapons developers. The Department of Defense report on the National Defense Strategy says the Pentagon plans as many as

forty hypersonic weapons tests over the next five years and has “already fielded” the new, low yield W76-2 weapon.

The new low-yield nuclear weapon is as it sounds: smaller, more surgical and less destructive than most nuclear weapons.

“There are currently over 1,000 nuclear warheads in the U.S. arsenal that have low-yield options. A yield is considered low if it’s 20 kilotons or less,” a 2018 an essay from the Federation of American Scientists states.

The existing Trident II D5, currently launched from ballistic missile submarines, carries what’s called a W-76 thermonuclear warhead carried inside a Mk-4 re-entry vehicle. The current Trident II D5 has a massive 100-kiloton yield, bringing massive destructive power to entire cities and well beyond.

A smaller warhead on a Trident would still bring the advantage of a long-range strike, yet afford commanders the options to launch a smaller scope, and therefore less destructive, attack.

The prospect of a low-yield tactical nuclear weapon, articulated in the Pentagon’s Nuclear Posture Review, was advocated before Congress by former Defense Secretary John Mattis, who said there was a pressing need to field such a weapon given that Russia already had one.

The goal, Mattis explained at the time, was not to fire nuclear weapons as much as match Russia’s hostility with an equivalent deterrent and force them to the negotiating table. The idea was to send a message to Russia that it would not be possible or in their interests to consider any kind of limited nuclear war.

While America’s emerging new B-21 bomber will be configured to fire lower-yield, more precise B61 Mod 12 weapons, a submarine-launched nuclear weapon enables an ability to attack without having to operate planes in the air above enemy air defenses.

--Kris Osborn is the new Defense Editor for the National Interest. Osborn previously served at the Pentagon as a Highly Qualified Expert with the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army—Acquisition, Logistics & Technology. Osborn has also worked as an anchor and on-air military specialist at national TV networks. He has appeared as a guest military expert on Fox News, MSNBC, The Military Channel, and The History Channel. He also has a Masters Degree in Comparative Literature from Columbia University

Unwitting investors in China

Washington Post, Aug. 28, Pg. A27 | Josh Rogin

On Wednesday, China fired medium-range missiles into the South China Sea, a defense of China's illegal militarization of artificial islands in disputed territory and a provocation aimed at the U.S. Navy. Millions of Americans likely don't realize they are personally invested in the Chinese state-owned company that built those islands — as well as scores of other Chinese companies that are bolstering Beijing's expansion and aggression.

That company, the China Communications Construction Company (CCCC), was sanctioned Wednesday by the State and Commerce departments, along with five subsidiaries and 18 other Chinese entities. U.S. firms and individuals are now banned from working with these companies, and their

executives are banned from getting U.S. visas. But these companies can still raise billions from U.S. capital markets, with the help of Wall Street firms that are funneling them cash with complete disregard for the risks to U.S. investors.

Although CCCC and its subsidiaries are listed on the Hong Kong and Shanghai stock exchanges, they raise money from U.S. capital markets because they are listed by major Wall Street index providers such as MSCI and FTSE Russell, whose indexes are tracked by pension funds, university endowments and other large institutional investors. These index providers have been drastically increasing their holdings of Chinese companies, including CCCC, directing billions of U.S. dollars into their coffers each year.

"Scores of millions of average American investors are unwittingly helping fund CCCC and other Chinese state-owned giants through their stock and bond index funds, pension funds and other investment vehicles that Wall Street fund managers and others are mainlining into their investment portfolios," said Roger W. Robinson Jr., president and chief executive of RWR Advisory Group, a D.C.-based research and risk management consultancy.

CCCC is not only building islands in the South China Sea. The company is also central to Beijing's worldwide Belt and Road initiative, which offers developing countries huge infrastructure projects that often come saddled with corruption, excessive debt, environmental destruction and forced labor practices. There have been documented abuses by CCCC in several countries, including Tanzania, Kenya and Sri Lanka. The company is also deeply intertwined with the People's Liberation Army (PLA). It has a Military-Civil Fusion Office, and its subsidiaries build everything from PLA Navy ships to military telecommunications networks to military training facilities.

Last month, Assistant Secretary of State David Stilwell called CCCC and other Chinese state-owned enterprises People's Republic of China "instruments of abuse" and "modern-day equivalents of the East India Company," the British colonialist firm of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Some Trump administration officials have tried to warn large U.S. institutions, such as universities, that their holdings of Chinese companies are bad for them as well as bad for the country.

"The boards of your institution's endowment funds have a moral obligation, and perhaps even a fiduciary duty, to ensure that your institution has clean investments and clean endowment funds," Undersecretary of State Keith Krach wrote in an Aug. 18 letter to the Governing Boards of American Universities. "I urge you to divest from companies that are on the Entity List or that contribute to human rights violations."

Several MSCI and FTSE Russell indexes include CCCC or its subsidiaries. Therefore, if the value of CCCC stock goes down because of U.S. sanctions, millions of American investors will take a hit. Beijing has pressured these indexes to take on this risk because it gives Wall Street a huge stake in the success of Chinese firms that are working against the United States.

Where investment in Chinese firms goes, corruption often follows. Ben Meng, the chief executive of the largest state pension fund in the United States, CalPERS, resigned this month days after allegations surfaced that he failed to disclose personal investments in Chinese companies he was

simultaneously steering billions of dollars of California pension money to. Meng was part of a Chinese Communist Party talent recruitment effort called the Thousand Talents program.

In June, President Trump resurrected a Presidential Working Group on Financial Markets to examine these issues. But its report, issued this month, deals only with U.S. stock exchanges and barely mentions index providers. Moreover, its remedies for cleaning up the U.S. stock exchanges are full of loopholes Beijing will surely exploit.

Some will argue that cutting off Chinese companies from U.S. capital markets is a drastic step that will increase bilateral tensions, push businesses toward competing markets and disadvantage U.S. investors who want to make money from investing in Chinese firms. But as long as China uses its state-controlled enterprises to spread misery, expand militarily and otherwise act criminally, the U.S. government will be compelled to punish them, regardless of whether U.S. investors suffer.

Wall Street must cease steering billions of U.S. dollars to Chinese state-owned firms committing bad acts. We may not be able to stop China from militarizing the South China Sea. But, at the very least, we should stop forcing Americans to pay for it.

CONGRESSIONAL

By Susan Cornwell

The Senate is in recess until September 8
The House is in recess until mid September

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION

SASC and HASC have passed their respective Bills
ALL ICBM PEs at PB

AUTHORIZATION CONFERENCE

November: Tentative timeframe for markup

SASC HEARING

Wednesday, September 16, 2020 (09:30 AM-Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building)

SASC SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT hearing to receive testimony on supply chain integrity.

Witnesses: Honorable Ellen M. Lord Under Secretary Of Defense For Acquisition And Sustainment

For this hearing, the Senate Armed Services Committee will follow guidelines developed in consultation with the Office of the Attending Physician (OAP), the Senate Sergeant at Arms, and the Senate Rules Committee to protect the health of Members, witnesses, staff, and the public. This includes maintaining six-foot social distance spacing in the hearing room.

Pursuant to this guidance from the CDC and OAP, Senate office buildings are not open to the public other than official business visitors and credentialed press at this time. Accordingly, in-person visitors cannot be accommodated at this hearing.

We encourage the public to utilize the Committee's livestream of the hearing, which will be available on this page.

Questions about the feed or general questions about media attendance can be directed to: SASC_Press@armed-services.senate.gov

HASC PRESS RELEASE ON START TREATY

Smith and Menendez Statement on the Immense Costs of Allowing the New START Treaty to Expire
August 26, 2020

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Representative Adam Smith (D-Wash.), Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, and Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, today issued the following statement after the Congressional Budget Office

(CBO) published a new report regarding the potential costs of expanding U.S. strategic nuclear forces if the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) Expires:

“CBO’s nonpartisan report is clear: The Trump administration’s unwillingness to continue the decades of strategic arms control by failing to extend the New START Treaty is driving the United States toward a dangerous arms race, which we cannot afford. While this report only begins to account for the costs of the Administration’s preposterous claims that we can ‘spend the adversary into oblivion,’ it is further proof of why New START is essential to U.S. and international security.

“If the United States lets the New START Treaty expire, Russia, which is already ahead of America’s nuclear modernization program, would use a U.S. exit from the New START Treaty to quickly expand its arsenal without any legal constraints for the first time in 50 years.

“Extending the New START Treaty for a full five years is clearly the right financial and national security choice. America cannot afford a costly and dangerous nuclear arms race, particularly in the middle of our current economic, political, and health crises. We again call on the Trump Administration to extend the New START Treaty today.”The full CBO report can be found here.

DEFENSE APPROPRIATION

HAC

July 8: HAC-D Marked up the FY21 Defense Bill

GBSD lost \$60M

Missile Repl/Eq Ballistic lost \$1.53M

ICBM Fuze Mod lost \$3.458M

MM Mods lost \$23.684M and transferred \$4.173 to another line

SAC

TBD: Markup

APPROPRIATION CONFERENCE

TBD: Markup

AROUND THE WORLD



RUSSIA:

Russia's Lavrov Calls Washington's Conditions for Preserving New START Treaty Unrealistic

Sputnik News, Aug. 23 | Not Attributed

SOLNECHNOGORSK, Russia -- The United States put forward unrealistic conditions for preserving the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said at a youth forum in the Moscow region on Sunday, calling talks with the US on the treaty exhausting.

Following the Vienna talks earlier in August, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov said that the priorities of the two countries are "very different" at the moment. According to the diplomat, US did not rule out extending New START, but declined to record this intention. As for Russia, it is not ready to extend the treaty at any cost, Ryabkov noted.

"They are now holding such exhausting negotiations with us on keeping the START treaty in force. We proposed to extend it for five years, as provided by the document, without any preconditions. The US in negotiations, held by my deputy Sergey Ryabkov last week in Vienna with US Special Presidential Envoy [for Arms Control Marshall] Billingslea, insists on conditions that, to be honest, are simply unrealistic, including the requirement that China definitely join this document or some future document," Lavrov said.

According to the diplomat, the result of the talks on preserving the treaty is still unclear, but Russia, in any case, will not meet Washington's requirements, including those regarding China's participation in the treaty.

"If the US sets preconditions, which cannot be simply implemented — for example, we must persuade China, we will not do this, we respect the Chinese position — then let this treaty expire," the minister stressed, adding that this will mean the loss of the last instrument that regulates the situation with nuclear weapons.

The minister added that Washington would make a huge mistake if did not make efforts to preserve the treaty.

"We are sure that we are able to protect ourselves, so there should be no concern in this regard, and we will be ready to resume talks since the very beginning, from scratch, but it will be a very big mistake if our US colleagues decide to destroy the last document [in the field of nuclear weapons]," the diplomat said.

Lavrov also said that though the situation in the sphere of strategic stability did not inspire optimism, Russia was ready to continue the dialogue with the United States, including on new weapons systems, on a reciprocal basis.

Tests of increased-range BrahMos cruise missiles set for 2020

<https://tass.com/defense/1193189>

Earlier this summer, BrahMos's air-based modification, BrahMos-A, was successfully certified in India, the Tactical Missiles Corporation JSC CEO recalled
From Russia News Agency, TASS // 24 AUG, 10:41

KUBINKA /Moscow Region/, August 24. /TASS/. Tests of several modifications of the Russian-Indian BrahMos cruise missiles with extended range are planned for 2020, Tactical Missiles Corporation (TMC) JSC CEO Boris Obnosov told TASS Monday.

"Tests of BrahMos modifications with increased range planned for this year," he said at the Army-2020 international military forum. Earlier this summer, BrahMos's air-based modification (BrahMos-A) was successfully certified in India, Obnosov noted. "Quite recently, on June 10, the air-based supersonic cruise missile obtained its first permission for use, provided by India's CEMILAC certification agency. All specifications for the Indian Air Force have been confirmed.

The BrahMos has become the first Indian aviation missile to obtain this permission," the TMC CEO said. According to Obnosov, the BrahMos-A air-based cruise missile will significantly increase capabilities of the Indian Air Force. "The BrahMos's launch range to the target is 300 km, while Su-30MKI jet fighter's range with air refueling is over 3,000 km - together, this provided [Indian] Air Force with a huge advantage in their actions in the Indian Ocean zone," Obnosov noted.

The CEO highly praised the work of the Russian-Indian BrahMos Aerospace joint venture. "This rapidly developing joint venture is one of the best examples of military-technical cooperation," he underscored.

US Backs Down From Proposal to Add China to New START Talks, Set Other Conditions – Ryabkov

Sputnik News (Russia), Aug. 22 | Not Attributed

MOSCOW -- The United States has backed down from a proposal to add China to the talks on the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) but set other conditions with the negotiations still being bogged down, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov said on Saturday.

Earlier this week, US Special Presidential Envoy for Arms Control Marshall Billingslea said that the US administration dropped its demand for China to join the negotiations. Washington now aims at first securing a political agreement with Russia and then urging China to join the talks and subsequently a deal.

"China's participation in possible future talks, discussions in various formats, on arms control, in particular, nuclear arms control, was touched upon by the US representatives in Vienna all the time, so the topic is still on the table," Ryabkov said.

At the same time, the diplomat noted that Russia's position on the matter, including the mandatory participation of the UK and France in the future talks in case of the expansion of the list of those involved, did not change.

"We have not reached a consensus on this whole range of issues. And again, in this regard, we have to state that, accordingly, the optimal way [to hold talks] is a bilateral, the Russian-US one, in order to avoid filling the agenda with topics that, by and large, depends on what decisions on this topic will be made and whether they will be made at all in Beijing, London and Paris. Therefore, this part seems to have been worked out in a completely predictable manner and there are no shifts, changes in the approaches of the parties," Ryabkov said.

As for the treaty extension, the situation is complicated by the fact that Washington has set a number of conditions to a hypothetical decision in favor of the extension.

"Formally, Billingslea is, of course, right, saying that this issue is now being worked out bilaterally, and the 'Chinese factor' does not directly affect the extension of the START Treaty," the diplomat said.

At the same time, the official noted that Russia's position voiced by President Vladimir Putin regarding the extension without preconditions for five years in the form, in which it was signed, "has not changed in any way."

"Secondly, we do not see how this treaty could be changed, especially in the time remaining before its expiration, given the United States' unwillingness to take into account our priorities and our concerns in the field of nuclear missile arms control. We took their conditions, their formulated wishes into consideration, but on the US side, too, must go their part of the way, do some homework," Ryabkov added.

"So far, everything is still bogged down," the diplomat concluded.

Russia achieves certain success in helping China set up its missile attack warning system

TASS (Russia), Aug. 24 | Not Attributed

Russia has started work on some elements of the Chinese missile attack warning system and has achieved certain success in this area, Chief Designer of Russia's missile attack warning system, CEO of Vimpel Company Sergei Boyev told TASS at the Army-2020 forum on Monday.

"Today we are carrying out work in a whole number of areas, on the elements [of the system] under the contracts signed, in particular, in the area of space control. There are certain successes, certain results," Boyev said, replying to a question about the work on China's missile attack warning system.

However, it is early to speak about creating a full-fledged system, he said.

"Cooperation is proceeding in a planned manner and all that relates to more specific things will be understandable at the next stage when the preliminary studies are complete and assessments are given," the chief designer said.

The pace of the work was affected by the restrictions introduced over the coronavirus pandemic and that is why it is now difficult to give the specific timeframe of completing the work on creating this system, he said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin announced in December 2019 that Russia was helping China to develop its national missile attack warning system. The Russian leader said that the system would radically increase China's defense capabilities because only the United States and Russia had such systems today.

Russia's missile attack warning system

The Russian missile attack warning system is designed to warn about attacks on state and military command centers and provides data for Moscow's anti-ballistic missile defense, as well as information on space objects for space control facilities.

The system comprises the ground and space-based echelons. The ground-based component consists of a network of radar stations and is capable of detecting missiles in their flight path at a distance of up to 6,000 km.

The space-based echelon comprises satellites that can detect launches of ballistic missiles from the territory of any state in real time.

U.S. not against extending New START if framework agreements on strategic stability achieved – ambassador
Interfax (Russia), Aug. 24 | Not Attributed

MOSCOW -- The United States is not opposed to extending the New START Treaty, but that will be possible only if framework agreements on strategic stability are drawn up, U.S. Ambassador in Moscow John Sullivan said.

"We are willing to contemplate the extension of the New START, but such an extension will only occur if we agree on a broader framework. Three things here. One. Address concerns that we have with Russia's build-up of its unconstrained nuclear weapons, so-called non-strategic nuclear weapons, which include short- and medium-range systems. Two strengthening verification mechanism under the existing New START agreement. And three. Enable China's future inclusion in nuclear arms control discussions and ultimately future arms control agreements," Sullivan told reporters on Monday.

"With those conditions, I think, Marshall [Billingslea] put it the way that he would be prepared to recommend to the president that the New START be extended," Sullivan added.

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun will meet with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov on Tuesday; the arms control could be discussed at this meeting, the ambassador said.

"I'm hopeful we will get a positive feedback from the Russian side on the presentations that Marshall and his team made last week in Vienna. I wouldn't at all be surprised if that was a topic for discussion tomorrow with Deputy Secretary Biegun," he said.

NATO chief urges Russia not to meddle in Belarus crisis
Agence France-Presse, Aug. 27 | Not Attributed

NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg on Thursday called on Russia not to meddle in the crisis engulfing Belarus following a disputed presidential election.

"Belarus is a sovereign and independent state. And nobody, including Russia, should interfere there," Stoltenberg was quoted as telling Germany's bestselling Bild daily.

Russian President Vladimir Putin earlier Thursday vowed military support for close ally and Belarusian leader Alexander Lukashenko, while urging a peaceful resolution to the unrest and protests that erupted after the disputed August 9 vote.

In an interview with Bild, Stoltenberg said it would be "unacceptable" for the Belarusian regime to use violence to quash peaceful opposition protests.

"President Lukashenko and the regime in Minsk must ensure that the people of Belarus can also decide and determine the future of Belarus," he was quoting as saying, in comments translated into German.

Lukashenko has dismissed calls to resign or host new elections, instead accusing Western countries and Russia of stirring political unrest.

Putin said he would only send in military backing if "the situation starts to get out of control".

But the Russian leader also called on the authorities in Minsk and the opposition to "find a way out" of the crisis peacefully.

Putin: Russia is ready to provide security help to Belarus

Associated Press, Aug. 27 | Yuras Karmanau and Vladimir Isachenkov

MINSK, Belarus -- Russian President Vladimir Putin warned that he stands ready to send police to Belarus if protests there turn violent but sees no such need yet, while Belarusian police dispersed a protest in the capital with renewed vigor Thursday, detaining about 180 people and raising pressure on the opposition.

Belarus' authoritarian president of 26 years, Alexander Lukashenko, has been facing weeks of protests against his reelection to a sixth term in the Aug. 9 vote, which the opposition says was rigged.

Putin told Russia's state television Thursday that Lukashenko has asked him to prepare a Russian law enforcement contingent to deploy to Belarus if necessary. Putin said he and Lukashenko have agreed that "there is no such need now, and I hope there won't be."

"We have agreed not to use it until the situation starts spinning out of control and extremist elements acting under the cover of political slogans cross certain borders and engage in banditry and start burning cars, houses and banks or take over administrative buildings," he said.

Hours after Putin's interview, hundreds of riot police dispersed a protest on the Belarusian capital's main square in a move that underlined Lukashenko's determination to squelch protests. Scores of reporters, including AP journalists, were also detained.

The Coordination Council, created by the Belarusian opposition to facilitate a peaceful transition of power, criticized Putin's statement, saying it's "inadmissible" for any country to form armed units for use in Belarus.

In an apparent jab at the West, which has condemned Lukashenko's crackdown on protesters and urged him to launch a dialogue with the opposition, Putin accused unidentified foreign forces of trying to win political advantages from the turmoil in Belarus.

Russia sees neighboring Belarus as a key bulwark against Western expansion and an important conduit for Russian energy exports. The two countries have a union agreement envisaging close political, economic and military ties, and Lukashenko has relied on cheap Russian energy and other subsidies to keep Belarus' Soviet-style economy afloat.

Despite the close cooperation, Russia-Belarus relations have often been strained by disputes. Lukashenko has frequently made overtures to the West and accused Moscow of hatching plans to incorporate Belarus.

Just before the election, Belarus arrested 32 private Russian military contractors on charges of planning to stage riots. Belarusian authorities released the men shortly after the vote.

In the interview, Putin described the incident as a provocation by the Ukrainian and the U.S. spy agencies, charging that they lured the Russians to travel to Belarus by promising them jobs in a third country and made Belarusian authorities believe they had a mission to destabilize the country ahead of the vote.

The United States and the European Union have criticized the Aug. 9 election that extended Lukashenko's rule as neither free nor fair and encouraged Belarusian authorities to engage in a dialogue with the opposition.

The Belarusian leader, who has ruled the nation of 9.5 million with an iron fist since 1994, has dismissed the protesters as Western puppets and refused to engage in dialogue with the opposition.

After a brutal crackdown in the first days of post-election protests, when nearly 7,000 people were detained, hundreds were injured and at least three protesters died, the authorities changed tactics and let daily demonstrations go unhindered for nearly two weeks. The government, meanwhile, has maintained pressure on the opposition with threats and selective jailing of its leaders.

On the 19th straight day of protests Thursday, several dozen women stood on the Belarusian capital's main Independence Square with their hands bound to protest the police dispersal of a rally there the previous night. Amid Wednesday's crackdown, police blocked the doors of a Catholic church facing the square where several dozen protesters found refuge, causing public outrage and drawing a strong rebuke from the archbishop of Minsk and Mahilyow, Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz.

"Putin must be ashamed, he's promising to add Russian clubs to the Belarusian ones," said 45-year-old protester Regina Fustovich.

As the evening came, about 1,000 demonstrators marched across the city to Independence Square, chanting "Freedom!" as motorists honked in support.

“Putin has untied Lukashenko's hands,” said 20-year-old student, Anton Gavrillovich. “The protest will win sooner or later, because we are the majority, but Belarusians will not forget that.”

Another protester, Irina Furs, a 30-year-old medical worker, suggested that “the Kremlin is afraid that the Belarusians could show an example of a successful peaceful struggle.”

The Viasna rights center said about 180 people, including several Belarusian and foreign journalists, were detained by police on Independence Square.

“The authorities move deliberately to escalate the situation, trying to turn peaceful protests into clashes that would justify the use of force,” Viasna's Valiantsin Stefanovich told The Associated Press. “We are seeing this escalation and toughening of repressions after the Kremlin's intervention. It's important for Lukashenko to show Putin that he controls the situation.”

In the interview, Putin defended the Belarusian authorities' response to protests, saying that police in Belarus have shown “restraint.”

He accused Western critics of Belarus of hypocrisy and double standards, pointing at examples of violent police action, such as when “they shoot an unarmed man in the back while his three children were sitting in a car” in an apparent reference to the U.S. police shooting of a Black man, Jacob Blake, in Kenosha, Wisconsin, on Sunday.

As part of a multi-pronged effort to stifle protest, Belarusian prosecutors have opened a criminal probe against the opposition Coordination Council, accusing its members of undermining the country's security. Belarusian courts this week handed 10-day jail sentences to two council members and summoned several others for questioning, including Svetlana Alexievich, who won the 2015 Nobel Prize in literature.

Another council member, Maria Kolesnikova, a close associate of Lukashenko's main opposition challenger in the vote, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, was called in for questioning Thursday.

“It's part of the pressure on civil society,” she told reporters outside Belarus' Investigative Committee headquarters. “The authorities are refusing to listen to the people.”

The EU ambassadors to Belarus warned Thursday that “prosecution of Coordination Council members on grounds presented by the authorities is unacceptable.”

EU foreign ministers are expected to approve a list of 15-20 Belarus officials who would face travel bans in Europe and a freeze on their assets. Lithuania is demanding that 118 people be blacklisted.

--Vladimir Isachenkov reported from Moscow. Geir Moulson in Berlin, and Vanessa Gera in Warsaw, Poland, contributed to this report



CHINA:

China test-fires ‘carrier killer’ missile in disputed sea

https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2020/08/27/report-china-fires-carrier-killer-missile-in-disputed-sea/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Air%20Force%20DNR%208.27.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Air%20Force%20-%20Daily%20News%20Roundup

From The Associated Press // 16 hours ago

BEIJING — China's military test-fired two missiles into the South China Sea, including a "carrier killer" military analysts suggest might have been developed to attack U.S. forces, a newspaper reported Thursday.

The DF-26B and DF-21D missiles fired Wednesday targeted an area between the southern island province of Hainan and the Paracel Islands, The South China Morning Post newspaper of Hong Kong reported, citing unidentified sources close to the Chinese military. The ministries of defense and foreign affairs in Beijing didn't immediately respond to requests for confirmation. Disputes over control of the South China Sea, one of the world's busiest trade routes, are a growing irritant in Beijing's relations with Washington and its southern neighbors.

The Trump administration this year rejected most of Beijing's claims to sovereignty over the majority of the disputed sea, portions of which also are claimed by Vietnam, the Philippines and other governments. Wednesday's launches followed Chinese complaints that a U.S. U2 spy plane entered a "no fly zone" declared by Beijing during a military drill off its northern coast. The DF-21 is unusually accurate and was dubbed "carrier killer" by military analysts who believe it was developed to target U.S. aircraft carriers that might be involved in a potential conflict with China.

Beijing has spent heavily over the past two decades on trying to develop missiles, fighter aircraft, nuclear submarines and other weapons to allow China to expand its military reach beyond its shores. The DF-26B was launched from the northwestern province of Qinghai while the DF-21D was fired from Zhejiang province south of Shanghai on the east coast, The South China Morning Post said.

The DF-26 is believed to be capable of carrying nuclear or conventional warheads. That would violate the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty signed by Washington and Moscow during the Cold War. The Trump administration cited China's development of the DF-26 and similar weapons when it withdrew from the treaty last year.

Reported missile launch ‘shows saturated attack capability’

Global Times (China), Aug. 28, Pg. 4 | Liu Xuanzun

The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) on Wednesday launched multiple anti-ship ballistic missiles into the South China Sea in a military exercise, overseas media reported. The missile launches, if true, demonstrated the PLA's ability to hit maritime targets with powerful ballistic missiles from multiple directions in coordinated, saturated attacks against which there is no defense, analysts said on Thursday.

US media outlet Bloomberg reported on Wednesday, citing an anonymous US defense official, that China launched four medium-range ballistic missiles into the South China Sea.

As a part of broader military exercises, the missiles landed in the sea in an area between South China's Hainan Island and the Xisha Islands, according to the report.

The PLA exercises are being held in the waters from Monday to Saturday, according to a navigation restriction notice released by the Hainan Maritime Safety Administration on Friday, which did not provide further details regarding the drills.

Citing an anonymous source "close to the Chinese military," the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post claimed that China launched a DF-26 missile from Northwest China's Qinghai Province and a DF-21D missile from East China's Zhejiang Province into the South China Sea on Wednesday morning.

The PLA had not confirmed the launches as of press time.

China's DF-26 and DF-21D are the world's first ballistic missiles capable of targeting large and medium-sized vessels, earning them the title of "aircraft carrier killers," military observers said.

Song Zhongping, a Chinese military expert and TV commentator, told the Global Times on Thursday that using different missiles launched from different regions in attacking targets in the same area showed the PLA tactic of saturated attack.

China can use different ways to attack one or more targets at the same time, so the enemy will not be able to intercept these attacks, Song said, noting that despite US aircraft carriers' air defense capability, they cannot defend themselves against ballistic missiles.

A Beijing-based military expert told the Global Times on Thursday on condition of anonymity that the coordinated attack also showed China has a complete system to detect, track and lock on enemy ships. The system, which possibly consists of reconnaissance aircraft, radar, satellites and warships among others, can direct and coordinate missiles to find moving maritime targets, so they can adjust their trajectories when initiating the final attacks after re-entry.

On Wednesday morning, the time of the reported missile launches, the US sent an RC-135S ballistic missile-detection plane to the South China Sea. Chinese military analysts speculated that the US believed the PLA would launch anti-ship ballistic missiles like the DF-21D or the DF-26 in the drills.

Fu Qianshao, a Chinese military aviation expert, told the Global Times at that time that China is the only country that has the technology to develop anti-ship ballistic missiles, and the US is eager to learn about China's methods.

Some of the reports hyped the "China threat" in the South China Sea, but it is the US that has sent aircraft carriers and spy planes to the region, which brings instability, analysts noted.

In July, a US dual aircraft carrier strike group featuring the USS Ronald Reagan and the USS Nimitz conducted exercises in the South China Sea. The USS Ronald Reagan again entered the South China Sea on August 14 after sailing in the East China Sea near the island of Taiwan, according to the monitoring of Beijing-based think tank the South China Sea Strategic Situation Probing Initiative.

The US has also frequently sent spy planes near China for close-up reconnaissance.

Chinese Defense Ministry spokesperson Wu Qian said at a regular press conference on Thursday that recent Chinese military exercises are routine and not targeted at any country.

US 'walking on thin ice' with spy plane flight

China Daily (China), Aug. 27, Pg. 3 | Zhang Zhihao and Wang Qingyun

Chinese experts warned that the United States military is "walking on thin ice" by allowing one of its U-2 spy planes to trespass into a no-fly zone over Chinese live-fire military drills, calling the move extremely provocative and prone to misjudgment.

On Tuesday, a Lockheed U-2 high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft trespassed into the no-fly zone that is hosting a live fire drill by the People's Liberation Army Northern Theater Command, Senior Colonel Wu Qian, spokesman of the Ministry of National Defense, said in a statement on Tuesday.

Wu said the trespass had "seriously disrupted China's regular training activities" and violated China-US maritime and flight safety codes and international norms.

"The incident could very easily lead to misunderstanding and misjudgment, and may even lead to an accident," he said. "It is also a blatant provocation that China resolutely opposes."

Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said in a news briefing on Wednesday that China resolutely opposes the US trespass and urged the US to immediately stop such provocative acts and take concrete measures to maintain regional peace and stability.

The US Pacific Air Forces said in a statement on Tuesday that a U-2 flight had been conducted in the Indo-Pacific region and it had operated within the accepted international rules and regulations governing aircraft flights.

"Pacific Air Forces personnel will continue to fly and operate anywhere international law allows, at the time and tempo of our choosing," it added.

The South China Sea Strategic Situation Probing Initiative, a Chinese nonprofit research institution, said a US RC-135S intelligence aircraft entered air space above the South China Sea on Wednesday morning via a flight path above the southeastern waters of Hainan province, where the Chinese military is holding a drill nearby.

Naval drills

According to local maritime safety administrations, China is holding major naval drills in all four of its major adjacent waters, namely the Bohai Sea, the Yellow Sea, the East China Sea and the South China Sea. Since late July, the Chinese military has conducted a total of 22 drills in these waters.

The exercise in the Bohai Sea, which is the northwestern and innermost gulf of the Yellow Sea bounded by the coastlines of Hebei, Shandong and Liaoning provinces, began on Aug 21 and ends on Friday. The drill in the South China Sea began on Monday and ends on Saturday.

On Wednesday, the local maritime authority in Zhejiang province said the Chinese military will conduct "real weapons training" in the East China Sea from Thursday to Sunday, and prohibited ships from entering the training area.

Major General Zhang Shaozhong, a military commentator, said according to international norms, any nation has the right to declare a temporary no-fly zone for military testing and training, and the announcement must be made in public and in advance.

"It is extremely dangerous to deliberately trespass into a no-fly zone after receiving clear notification, because the radars on live missiles may pick up the wrong signal and pursue the wrong target, causing accidental damage," he said on microblogging platform Sina Weibo on Tuesday.

A military historian who spoke on condition of anonymity said seeing a U-2 spy plane trespassing into a Chinese no-fly zone is like seeing a "ghost of the Cold War", because the plane is infamous for its aggressive intelligence gathering capability and had been shot down multiple times in the 1960s.

Developed in the early 1950s, the U-2 is a single-pilot, high-altitude spy plane known for conducting photo-reconnaissance deep into enemy territory and picking up radio signatures from radar, data links and telecommunication equipment from an extreme operating height of 21.3 kilometers.

"It is a notoriously high-profile target that no competent military could allow to roam freely around their borders," the historian said, adding that the plane played a major role in the Cuban missile crisis, the Vietnam War and the Gulf War.

"The recent trespass was in a temporary no-fly zone, not our territorial airspace. It would be a perilous overreaction and escalation if we tried to intercept or shoot the plane down, and the US knows we can't risk this," the historian said.

"But the US military is also walking on thin ice here. Flying a Cold War relic directly in China's face, our military will not take this insult lightly."

Zhu Feng, executive director of the Collaborative Innovation Center of South China Sea Studies, said the US is sparing no effort to stir up tension in the South China Sea and around China, and is hoping to "artificially manufacture a China crisis".

"History has repeatedly shown that the only way to heal a divided US is for it to tackle a serious external threat, so people could rally around the American flag," he said. "We must see through this insidious ploy and remain calm and collected."

Groundless claims

In another development, Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao on Wednesday rebuked an article by US Secretary of Defense Mark Esper, published in The Wall Street Journal on Monday, saying his claims about the role of the PLA were "totally groundless".

Zhao said China upholds a defensive national defense policy, and the Constitution of the Communist Party of China and the Constitution of the People's Republic of China have made it clear that China follows a path of peaceful development and opposes hegemony.

"Can the US make such a declaration?" Zhao asked.

"Which country owns hundreds of military bases around the world, waged war or conducted military actions illegally against countries such as Iraq, Syria and Libya, and sent vessels and aircraft to flex its muscles in distant waters away from its own territory?" he said.

"Which country is sticking to a Cold War mentality, withdrawing from treaties and organizations, wielding its 'clubs and fists' and undermining global rules wantonly?" Zhao said.

Also, China has sent more peacekeeping troops than any other permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, Zhao said, pointing out that since 1990, the Chinese military has participated in more than 20 UN peacekeeping operations and sent more than 40,000 peacekeeping troops.

Chinese military: Rocket Force drills prepare for possible US nuclear weapons attack

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3098727/chinese-military-rocket-force-drills-prepare-possible-us>

Anti-CBRN exercises are a major training focus, simulating defence against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear warfare
Rocket Force's largest anti-nuclear weapon drill involved thousands of soldiers and hundreds of military vehicles in the Gobi Desert
By: Minnie Chan for The South China Morning Post // Published: 6:00pm, 25 Aug, 2020 -- Updated: 11:15pm, 25 Aug, 2020

The People's Liberation Army Rocket Force has stepped up its drills for chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) warfare, in what military experts say is preparation for a possible nuclear attack by the United States.

Since April, anti-CBRN exercises have become a major training focus in the Western Theatre Command and with the PLA's Rocket Force troops, according to online reports and video footage posted on the WeChat social media accounts of the army's military mouthpiece, the PLA Daily, and the missile force. One drill video posted online on August 22 showed four first aid brigades from the Rocket Force called to rescue wounded soldiers from a base under a simulated nuclear weapons at night.

The base was more than 2,000km (1,240 miles) away and the medical officers and first aid crews also needed to overcome "accidents" and "raids" on their way to the nuclear battlefield, according to the video. The other drill – the rocket force's largest ever anti-nuclear weapon drill involving thousands

of soldiers and hundreds of military vehicles – had workers and combat troops wearing chemical protection suits while working in the Gobi Desert, where the temperature is over 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit).

Medical staff also set up tents as temporary casualty stations for emergency surgery. “Taking part in joint cooperation drills with frontline troops can help us understand nuclear accidents and battlefield situations in detail, which is helpful when we are making training plans for specific nuclear-attack treatments,” said Wang Jianan, director of the Rocket Force’s nuclear treatment centre, in the video.

Hong Kong-based military commentator Song Zhongping, a retired instructor from the Second Artillery Force, the predecessor of the Rocket Force, said the PLA must improve its anti-CBRN defence, indicating the PLA’s second-strike capability in the event of a nuclear weapons attack, particularly since the US Trump administration had started adding low-yield W76-2 nuclear warheads to the country’s Trident missiles and submarines.

“The US doesn’t give up on taking pre-emptive nuclear strikes. As China’s strategic missile force, the Rocket Force is also the major target of their American rival,” said Song, who is now a commentator for Phoenix Television. “It’s a must for the Rocket Force to prepare for all worst-case scenarios, including how to self-rescue when being attacked by enemies or a nuke leak happens, as well as other emergency simulation drills.”

Song said the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic had also provided comprehensive actual combat training to the PLA. The Rocket Force had learned and experienced how to perfect its anti-CBRN defence through joint operations with other branches. Macau-based military observer Antony Wong Tong said the Gobi Desert exercises had seen the PLA’s 77th Army Group mobilise their main battle tanks – such as the Type 89, Type 86 and Type 96A heavy armaments – in the joint operation, indicating that the military had been preparing for a possible nuclear war with the Americans.

Zhou Chenming, a researcher from the Yuan Wang, a Beijing-based military science and technology institute, said anti-CBRN drills had become a compulsory training subject in other military units of the PLA. “Anti-CBRN is one of the subjects on scheduled drills that should be counted in annual assessment, related to the future promotion and treatment of officers and soldiers because of its importance in modern warfare,” Zhou said.

China's Communist Party is a threat to the world, says former elite insider

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/08/22/asia/chinas-communist-party-threat-world-intl-hnk/index.html>

By CNN Staff // Updated 8:07 PM ET, Sat August 22, 2020

Hong Kong (CNN)Cai Xia is no stranger to defying expectations. During her years at the Chinese Communist Party's top training center and think tank, the outspoken professor had surprised many with her liberal ideas and support for democratic reform.

More recently, she caused a stir with a spate of scathing denunciations of China's ruling elite and the country's leader Xi Jinping -- a rare rebuke from a longtime insider that led to her expulsion from the Party earlier this week. In an interview with CNN from the United States, where she has lived since last year, Cai went a step further by calling on the US government to double down on its hardline approach towards Beijing.

She said she supported the Trump administration's ban on telecommunications giant Huawei, which Washington claims is a national security risk due to its alleged connection to the Chinese government -- an allegation Huawei has repeatedly denied. Cai also called for sanctions on top Chinese officials

and appealed to the international community to join hands in stopping the Communist Party from "infiltrating" global institutions and spreading Xi's "totalitarian" ideals.

"The relationship between China and the United States is not a conflict between the two peoples, but a contest and confrontation between two systems and two ideologies," Cai told CNN. Cai said she had been stranded by the coronavirus pandemic after arriving in the US last year as a tourist. She declined to disclose more details about her current situation or plans for the future, citing fears over her personal safety.

Since coming to power in late 2012, Xi has consolidated his position and authority over the Party, which ranks among the world's largest political organizations with 90 million members. He has unleashed a sweeping crackdown on political dissent, civil society and the mostly Muslim Uyghur minority in the Xinjiang region, and tightened control over Hong Kong, a former British colony that was promised a high degree of autonomy when it was returned to Chinese rule in 1997.

Now, according to Cai, the Communist Party aims "to replace the free and democratic system of modern mankind represented by the United States, and the values and order of peace, democracy, freedom and justice," with its own model of governance. Cai's comments come as relations between the US and China deteriorate to their lowest point in decades.

The world's two largest economies have sparred in nearly every aspect of their bilateral relationship, including on trade, technology, human rights, and financial flows. The Trump administration has moved to decouple the two economies, including most recently issuing executive orders that would ban popular Chinese mobile apps from operating in the US. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has portrayed China as an existential threat to the US, giving a speech in July that called for "the free world to triumph over this new tyranny ... the old paradigm of blind engagement with China simply won't get it done. We must not continue it."

The Chinese government has repeatedly rejected similar accusations. "We have no intention of becoming another United States. China does not export ideology, and never interferes in other countries' internal affairs," Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said earlier this month. Criticism from overseas is of course easier to deflect than criticism at home. Cai, 67, is one of a small but growing number of prominent insider voices who have spoken out against the Party and its authoritarian turn under Xi.

But her decades-long career as a Communist Party scholar and adviser has given her criticism a special weight -- and dealt an embarrassing blow to the Party. On Wednesday, the Global Times, a Chinese government-run tabloid, called Cai's recent public remarks a "blatant betrayal" to China that is "totally indefensible," and accused her of colluding "with external forces to hurt the interests of the motherland."

The Central Party School, where Cai taught for 14 years before retiring in 2012, announced on Monday that she had been expelled from the Party for "making remarks that have serious political problems and damaged the country's reputation." It also cut off her pension and other retirement benefits. The announcement offered scant details, but Cai said the school's internal statement listed three things that led to her removal: a short essay she wrote in May that decried Beijing's national security law on Hong Kong as "brutalizing the Hong Kong people," a leaked audio recording in which she labeled the Party a "political zombie" and referred to Xi as acting like a "mafia boss," and an online petition she signed in February calling for freedom of speech following the death of Li Wenliang, the Wuhan doctor who was reprimanded by police for attempting to raise the alarm about the country's coronavirus outbreak. Li later died after catching the virus.

Cai said she shared the essay and speech with friends in private and had not expected her words to make waves online. Both were swiftly censored in China but circulated widely overseas. But now that she no longer belongs to the Party, she said she felt obliged to speak out publicly.

An insider-turned critic

For more than three decades, Cai had closely dissected the Party from within. Throughout her academic career, she examined its internal workings and ideologies. She taught class after class of officials, first at a local Party school in her home province of Jiangsu and later at the Central Party School in Beijing -- the elite training ground for China's most senior cadres and political rising stars.

Her research focus later shifted from ideology to democratic political transition, in the hope that the Party could one day begin to reform itself internally by allowing wider intra-party democracy. But it was from the inside that Cai watched the Communist Party, which is the sole governing party within mainland China, taking a harder stance on internal debates and dissent. Under former President Hu Jintao, Xi's predecessor, dissent was still tolerated -- although the space was already shrinking, Cai said. Since Xi came to power, however, intra-party democracy has become nothing but an empty name, she added.

"What he emphasized was the concentration of power and the absolute conformity and loyalty to the Party's central leadership," she said. "He does not allow dissenting voices from within the Party, punishing those who air a different opinion with Party discipline and corruption charges." Last month, the Party expelled Ren Zhiqiang, an influential real estate tycoon and longtime Party member, for "serious violation" of Party discipline and law, after he penned an essay criticizing Xi's response to the coronavirus epidemic.

In a statement, the Party's disciplinary watchdog accused Ren of not toeing the Party line on "major matters of principle," "smearing the Party and country's image," and being "disloyal and dishonest with the Party." It also accused Ren of corruption and handed him to prosecutors for criminal investigation. Cai had previously voiced support for Ren when the outspoken tycoon was silenced from Chinese social media in 2016 after he questioned Xi's order that all state-run media must stay loyal to the Party in comments online. This time, she penned an essay in his defense, calling Ren the latest victim of Xi's "ruthless crackdown" on dissent within the Party.

Speaking to CNN, Cai said Xi's "reign of terror" did not come from a position of strength -- instead, it exposed his deep sense of insecurity. "He's the one who's the most scared. That's why he launched round after round of purges inside the Party," she said. "The person holding supreme power always feels that others are plotting a power grab."

In the current political climate, few dare to speak up publicly, Cai said. "When reporting information to their superiors, officials often conceal the truth and only report what they would like to hear. The information conveyed upwards is false, and there is no more scientific, democratic, open and transparent decision making," she said. "Under such circumstances, major problems will definitely arise in policy making."

Some critics have blamed China's slow initial response to the coronavirus outbreak on its political system and culture of discouraging lower-level officials from reporting unpleasant truths. In the early days of the outbreak in Wuhan, where the virus first emerged, healthcare workers like Doctor Li Wenliang were punished for trying to sound the alarm. Wuhan officials later admitted they had not disclosed information on the coronavirus "in a timely fashion."

But the Chinese government eventually managed to contain the outbreak, after imposing stringent lockdown measures that brought much of the country to a halt. As the virus spread to other parts of the world, however, many governments, including the United States, have floundered in their own attempts to curb its spread. As of Sunday, the coronavirus has infected more than 23 million people and claimed over 800,000 lives worldwide, according to Johns Hopkins University.

Cai accused the Chinese government of initially covering up the outbreak and causing the virus to wreak havoc across the globe -- a claim which Chinese officials have repeatedly and strenuously denied. Propelled by this view and the US-China trade war, Cai said countries are no longer willing to appease China, as they now have a "clear picture of Xi."

'Returned to the side of the people'

Cai was born into a so-called "red family" -- her grandfather joined the Party in the early years of its founding and her parents fought in the Communist revolution that brought the Party to power. She had a strict upbringing, ingrained with her parents' revolutionary belief that the people should be freed and empowered to rule the country. When Cai was a young teenager, Chairman Mao Zedong launched the Cultural Revolution, unleashing ten years of political and social turmoil.

In 1966, Cai traveled to Beijing and joined thousands of student paramilitaries, known as the Red Guards, who gathered fervently in a rally in Tiananmen Square to greet Mao. But she said she also witnessed the terror of the movement, including the brutal beatings of teachers. "I saw how miserable people could be without any rule of law, any protection of rights. It scarred me deeply, and since then I've always been on alert that our country cannot return to that era," she said.

"Since Xi came to power, however, his language, ideas and actions are all harking back to the Cultural Revolution -- for us who have been through that period, we're very sensitive (to that shift)." Cai said she believes there is widespread discontent within the Party over Xi's policy directions, especially among the generation of officials who went to college after the Cultural Revolution, rose through the Party ranks during former leader Deng Xiaoping's reform and opening era in the 1980s, and witnessed China's rapid economic and social development in the ensuing decades. But she said there is little chance for any form of opposition to organize under Xi's heavy-handed rule.

Cai holds a grim view for the future. Xi is leading the country away from the path of reform and opening, she said. Without internal reforms, conflicts and tensions will build up and one day erupt all at once, causing the sudden collapse of the Party-state system and plunging the country into chaos, according to Cai. Xi, for his part, has repeatedly said he is committed to reforming China. "What should be and can be reformed, we will resolutely reform. What should not or cannot be reformed, we will resolutely not reform," he said in a speech commemorating the 40th anniversary of Deng's policy of reform and opening in 2018.

But according to Cai, the only way to prevent future calamity, is to replace Xi as the top leader, who she accused of "kidnapping" the country. "China won't be able to head towards democratic politics under Xi," she said. "Only by letting Xi step down, can the pro-reform voices arise within the Party and pro-reform forces play their role in adjusting the direction that China is heading in."

But that might not happen anytime soon. Xi was expected to step down in 2023, but in 2018, he abolished the presidential term limit, clearing the way for him to stay in power indefinitely. For now, Cai said she was happy to be expelled from the Party, which she said no longer resembled the Party she grew up believing in. She had already wanted to quit in 2016, when Ren, the property tycoon and fellow Party member, was silenced on social media. Cai spoke out in Ren's defense, only to be warned herself by the Party to hush up. She argued that she had the right to speak up as a citizen.

"They told me: 'you're first a Communist Party member, and your identity as a citizen comes later.'" Cai recalled. "I thought to myself then, I would rather have my rights as a citizen than Party membership." "Now, I feel like I've finally returned to the side of the people," she said.



NORTH KOREA:

Unexpected Mystery Submarine In North Korea

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/hisutton/2020/08/25/unexpected-mystery-submarine-in-north-korea/?ocid=uxbndlbing#771038b36a38>

From: Forbes · by H I Sutton · // August 26, 2020

There are very few countries that can build an entirely new class of submarine without the rest of the world knowing.

Submarine technologies and specifications are often secret, but the mere existence of the submarine isn't. Except in North Korea, where the first we know of a new submarine may be when it shows up in satellite images. This is exactly what has happened. A recent satellite image, taken August 7, clearly shows the new submarine on the quay at Sinpo, North Korea probably possesses the largest fleet of submarines in the world, but they are mostly old and technologically basic.

Despite this they continue to pose a threat other any country operating off the isolated country. Any new class will be watched closely by intelligence agencies and its capabilities assessed.

We do not have an official name for the new North Korean Navy submarine yet. In my analysis I will provisionally label it the Sinpo-D Class. This is in reference to the secretive submarine building and test facility where it has been seen.

The previous unexpected type, now known as the Gorae Class, was initially labeled Sinpo-B Class for this same reason. Sinpo-C would be a modified Romeo class submarine converted to carry ballistic missiles. The new type was first reported, simply as an 'Unusual object,' by North Korean monitoring group 38 North on May 29. My own initial assessment was that it was likely to be a new class of midget submarine or extra-large uncrewed underwater vehicle (XLUUV).

Since then it has been possible to gather additional satellite images and slowly build a clearer picture of this new submarine. There has yet to be any announcement by North Korea. South Korean and Western intelligence agencies have also been silent. I stand by my initial assessment that it could be

either a regular crewed submarine or an uncrewed robot submarine (aka XLUUV). However, I now consider a crewed midget submarine more likely for two main reasons.

Firstly it has a distinct sail, meaning the raised fairing we are used to seeing in the middle of a submarine. One use for this is to allow the crew to safely enter and exit the submarine at sea without it being flooded by waves. So it is an indication of crew access. And secondly because the technology involved in an XLUUV project would be so much more difficult. North Korea has limited resources and crewed types are likely to be more reliable at meeting their needs.

However some XLUUV designs do have the sail anyway just to carry the masts and snorkel (for a diesel generator) so the XLUUV option cannot be ruled out purely because of the external form. Additionally, Iran has recently revealed a low-tech XLUUV design. These projects might be related in general terms but they are almost certainly not identical. The Iranian XLUUV has a much smaller 'sail' and is smaller overall. But if Iran can, North Korea can. North Korea did, after all, help Iran set up their submarine programs.

Either way it is much smaller than regular types. Such small craft have their own strengths and weaknesses. They are well suited to operating inshore, and of course they are cheaper. They can only carry a small weapons load, limited sonar, and have a short range. North Korea has a long history of building midget submarines and has operated them aggressively against South Korea in the past.

Their effectiveness was brought into sharp focus on March 26, 2010. The South Korean warship ROKS Cheonan was blown in two by a torpedo. A North Korean MS-29 Yono Class midget submarine is believed to have been the launch platform. The new type is likely to be similar to the MS-29, although significantly smaller still. This new submarine isn't yet in the books, but it can now be considered a fact. For the moment we can call it Sinpo-D, and hopefully soon new information or even photos may appear. Watch this space.

NK leader's sister in control of key Workers' Party unit, Seoul's defense chief says

<https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20200825008751315>

By: en.yna.co.kr · by 이치동 · | Yonhap News Agency // August 25, 2020

SEOUL, Aug. 25 (Yonhap) -- South Korea's defense minister said Tuesday that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's younger sister, Kim Yo-jong, seems to be in control of a key Workers' Party unit, as she is apparently in charge of South Korea and U.S. affairs.

Keen attention is being paid to the role and authority of Kim, whose official title is first vice department director of the Workers' Party Central Committee. Asked by a lawmaker during a National Assembly session if she has a substantial grip on the Organization and Guidance Department of the committee, Defense Minister Jeong Kyeong-doo said he thinks so. But Kim Jong-un is believed to maintain his sole control of the party, the regime and the military, while he has delegated some "roles and responsibilities" to his aides, the minister said.

On a view that Kim's sister oversees Pyongyang's strategy on Seoul and Washington, the minister said, "It appears to be true, as she expressed so." Jeong said there's no unusual activity by North Korea in connection with the possibility of a provocative move. On a question about whether taking a military measure is an option to counter the North's possible provocation, he replied yes. "No matter what the situation is, (the military) will do its best to protect the security of the Republic of Korea, the lives and property of the people," he added, using the formal name of South Korea.

Jeong also said the North is continuing to develop a submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) off its eastern coast. It has acquired the capability to fire a rocket from a fixed launcher placed under water and is conducting "various" related experiments, Jeong added. During a separate parliamentary committee meeting, Suh Choo-suk, deputy director of national security at Cheong Wa Dae, said North Korea is known to be suffering the triple troubles of sanctions, COVID-19 and flood damages. He predicted that North Korea's worsening economic situation will serve as a "foundation" for its push for "new changes."

(ATTN: UPDATES with minister's remarks on SLBM in paras 9-10) -- lcd@yna.co.kr (END)



SOUTH KOREA:

South Korea: The Next Nuclear Weapons State?

Unsurprisingly, there is a renewed call among parts of South Korea's security establishment to revisit the prospect of acquiring a nuclear deterrent. National Interest Online, Aug. 26 | Mark Episkopos

As the Republic of Korea (ROK) ramps up its ongoing efforts to deter a prospective North Korean strike, the spectre of a limited nuclear deterrent is slowly emerging from a fringe position to an increasingly prominent part of mainstream South Korean political discourse.

Seoul entered the U.S. nuclear umbrella in 1958 when Washington stationed over one hundred nuclear warheads in ROK on the heels of the Korean War and the proliferation of the U.S.-Soviet competition into East Asia. But the ROK never fully abandoned its nuclear ambitions even at the height of the Cold War, actively exploring the prospect of acquiring an independent nuclear deterrent in the early 1970s.

Washington vigorously discouraged South Korea's nascent nuclear ambitions, conditioning further military aid on the complete cessation of nuclear weapons development. The Park Chung-hee administration caved to US pressure and formally renounced any future plans to acquire nuclear weapons with South Korea's 1975 ratification of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), but private doubts persisted in Seoul; the Vietnam War, which formally ended that same year, was a particularly stark illustration of the limits of the American security guarantee.

On a wave of misplaced optimism following North Korea's 1985 accession to the NPT, Washington agreed to withdraw all U.S. nuclear warheads from South Korea in 1991. This was shortly followed by the Joint Declaration of Denuclearization, envisioning a future of North-South reconciliation on a denuclearized Korean Peninsula.

South Korea's abandonment of nuclear ambitions had been and continues to be, premised on two political tenets of faith: the continued viability of the U.S. security guarantee, and the hope that North Korea will work with ROK in good faith to achieve the full and permanent denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Both of these hopes have proven increasingly ephemeral in the present day. There is a growing consensus among experts, as

well as the South Korean population, that North Korea will never willingly surrender its burgeoning nuclear arsenal. The future of the U.S. security guarantee is also murky—although the military alliance is highly unlikely to be abandoned outright, the Trump administration has recurrently indicated its possible intentions to reconsider the scale of U.S. security commitments in East Asia.

Unsurprisingly, there is a renewed call among parts of South Korea's security establishment to revisit the prospect of acquiring a nuclear deterrent. Former South Korean foreign minister Song Min-soon posed the challenge directly in a 2019 editorial: "It's necessary for South Korea to move on to a self-reliant alliance from a dependent alliance . . . a defensive nuclear capacity, with a missile range limited to the Korean Peninsula, is justified." It is rather more surprising that a whopping 60 percent of South Koreans agree with Min-soon's sentiment, voicing their support for an independent nuclear deterrent in a 2017 Gallup poll. Once a fringe position, nuclear armament has become an increasingly mainstream idea on the heels of several failed rounds of North-South negotiations and decades of North Korean military buildup.

To be sure, ROK's subtly changing tone on nuclear weapons raises a cascade of difficult policy questions: if it comes to that, can Washington successfully squash South Korea's nuclear ambitions as it did five decades ago? If the sentiment in favor of nuclearization is formally adopted by Seoul, how would Japan react to such a drastic attempted revision of East Asia's security architecture?

This ongoing shift in South Korean popular and elite opinion on nuclearization comes at a time when ROK is not only seeking proactive military solutions to contain North Korea but to project power across the East Asia region in light of the increasingly assertive foreign policy stance being taken by Beijing.

--Mark Episkopos is a frequent contributor to the National Interest and serves as a research assistant at the Center for the National Interest. Mark is also a Ph.D. student in History at American University

Esper renews 'complete, verifiable, irreversible' North Korea denuke goal, but stresses diplomacy

Yonhap News Agency (South Korea), 27 Oct 20

Song Sang-ho

SEOUL -- U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper on Thursday renewed Washington's goal of the "complete, verifiable and irreversible" denuclearization of North Korea, calling diplomatic negotiations with Pyongyang "the best path forward."

The Pentagon chief made the remarks during a security forum arranged by the Hawaii-based Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies when asked about the possibility of achieving the hitherto elusive disarmament goal.

"Our policy remains the same. We want to pursue the complete verifiable irreversible denuclearization of North Korea. That's our stated goal and policy. President Trump has been very clear about that," Esper said.

"The U.S. has presented them an alternative of what the North Korean future could look like if they would sit down and negotiate with us and come to an agreement on that policy goal we've outlined," he added.

Noting that the U.S. State Department has been leading negotiations with the North, Esper pointed out that the Pentagon's role is to back ongoing

diplomacy to promote peace with the recalcitrant regime.

"Our role in the Department of Defense is to support those negotiations, which I think ... (are) critically important ... That is the best path forward clearly," the secretary said.

"In the meantime, we have our responsibility, working alongside our partners in the Republic of Korea to maintain readiness and prepared stance -- the fight tonight capability -- so that if things go bad, we can deter, (and) if necessary fight and win," he added.

Nuclear talks between Washington and Pyongyang have been stalled since the summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un ended without a deal in Hanoi in February last year.



IRAN:

IAEA chief in Tehran, seeks access to Iranian nuclear sites

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-nuclear-iaea/iaea-chief-in-tehran-seeks-access-to-iranian-nuclear-sites-idUSKBN25K2AY>

From Reuters News Wire World News // August 24, 2020 / 3:21 PM

DUBAI (Reuters) - The U.N. nuclear watchdog's chief Rafael Grossi arrived in Iran on Monday, Iranian state TV reported, as he seeks access for inspectors to two suspected former atomic sites after a months-long standoff between Tehran and the body.

Tehran said Grossi's visit would "strengthen ties and build trust" between Tehran and the IAEA. However, in a statement on Saturday, Grossi said he would address "the outstanding questions, in particular, the issue of the access". "As long as the IAEA moves based on impartiality, independence and distances itself from political pressure of another countries, there will be no problems between the IAEA and Tehran," Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh told reporters, state TV reported.

A senior Iranian nuclear official said on Sunday that the IAEA wanted access and inspection of "two places", one near Tehran and the other near the central city of Isfahan. Grossi's visit comes after Washington's last week pushed at the U.N. Security Council to reimpose international sanctions on Tehran that were lifted under Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. However, Iranian authorities said Grossi's visit was not related to the U.S. move to return all sanctions on Iran, which other parties to the deal - Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany - have not supported.

In 2018, President Donald Trump pulled the United States out of the agreement and reimposed some sanctions that have crippled Tehran's economy. Iran has retaliated by reducing compliance with the pact's restrictions. Khatibzadeh said Grossi would meet high-ranking Iranian officials during his visit, including the foreign minister and the country's nuclear chief.

Writing by Parisa Hafezi; Editing by Alex Richardson

Iran Confirms ‘Act of Sabotage’ at Nuclear Site

https://freebeacon.com/national-security/iran-confirms-act-of-sabotage-at-nuclear-site/?utm_source=actengage&utm_campaign=FreedomMail&utm_medium=email

Adam Kredo - August 24, 2020 3:02 PM

Iran on Monday confirmed that a mysterious explosion last month at one of its nuclear facilities was an "act of sabotage," but provided few other details about who was behind the attack.

A July explosion at Iran’s Natanz nuclear enrichment facility sparked allegations that Israel may have struck a site that both it and the United States believe is fueling Iran’s undisclosed work on an atomic weapon. The site is home to equipment that allows Iran to enrich uranium, the key component in a nuclear weapon, to levels needed to power a bomb.

"Security investigations confirm the sabotage nature of this action and what is certain is that the explosion took place in Natanz, but the security officials will announce the details of the explosion and how it took place in due time," Behrouz Kamalvandi, a spokesman for Iran’s Atomic Energy Organization, said in an interview with Iran’s state-controlled media.

The allegations of sabotage come as international nuclear inspectors travel to Iran in a bid to obtain greater clarity on its increased nuclear work, which includes stockpiling heavy water—a nuclear byproduct that also could fuel a weapon. Iranian officials say they will continue to export excess heavy water to European countries for storage, but they would not name which countries due to concerns over U.S. sanctions.

Meanwhile, the United States continues to push a United Nations measure to reimpose all sanctions on Iran that were lifted as part of the landmark nuclear accord with the country. This effort is opposed by European nations still party to the agreement and is likely to emerge as a diplomatic flashpoint in the leadup to the 2020 U.S presidential elections.



INDIA:

Tests of increased-range BrahMos cruise missiles set for 2020

<https://tass.com/defense/1193189>

Earlier this summer, BrahMos’s air-based modification, BrahMos-A, was successfully certified in India, the Tactical Missiles Corporation JSC CEO recalled

From Russia News Agency, TASS // 24 AUG, 10:41

KUBINKA /Moscow Region/, August 24. /TASS/. Tests of several modifications of the Russian-Indian BrahMos cruise missiles with extended range are planned for 2020, Tactical Missiles Corporation (TMC) JSC CEO Boris Obnosov told TASS Monday.

"Tests of BrahMos modifications with increased range planned for this year," he said at the Army-2020 international military forum. Earlier this summer, BrahMos's air-based modification (BrahMos-A) was successfully certified in India, Obnosov noted. "Quite recently, on June 10, the air-based supersonic cruise missile obtained its first permission for use, provided by India's CEMILAC certification agency. All specifications for the Indian Air Force have been confirmed.

The BrahMos has become the first Indian aviation missile to obtain this permission," the TMC CEO said. According to Obnosov, the BrahMos-A air-based cruise missile will significantly increase capabilities of the Indian Air Force. "The BrahMos's launch range to the target is 300 km, while Su-30MKI jet fighter's range with air refueling is over 3,000 km - together, this provided [Indian] Air Force with a huge advantage in their actions in the Indian Ocean zone," Obnosov noted.

The CEO highly praised the work of the Russian-Indian BrahMos Aerospace joint venture. "This rapidly developing joint venture is one of the best examples of military-technical cooperation," he underscored.



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JAPAN:

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe resigns, citing health reasons

Washington Post Online, Aug. 28 | Simon Denyer and David Crawshaw

TOKYO -- Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said Friday he had decided to resign because of illness, after weeks of speculation about the conservative leader's political future following recent visits to the hospital.

In a news conference in Tokyo, Abe told reporters that he had been "struggling" with his health, which had begun to deteriorate in mid-July, and he was ready to call time on his leadership of the world's third-largest economy.

"My poor health should not lead to wrong political decisions," he said. "As I'm no longer able to meet the expectation of the mandate of the people of Japan, I have decided that I should not stay in the position as prime minister anymore. So I have decided to step down."

Abe is known to have battled chronic ulcerative colitis, and public broadcaster NHK reported that medical tests conducted Aug. 17 showed that his condition had worsened. An alternative medicine was prescribed when Abe returned to the doctor a week later but the prime minister was told treatment would take a year, the broadcaster reported.

Abe, 65, is Japan's longest-serving leader, having overseen a period of relative stability in a nation previously known for frequent leadership changes. He began his current term after a landslide victory in 2012, following an earlier stint as prime minister in 2006-07.

His tenure has been marked by efforts to revive Japan's economy through a policy package known as Abenomics, although he failed to follow through with the fundamental changes many economists believe were necessary.

Other policies have included a contentious expansion of Japan's military defenses. Abe tried unsuccessfully to modify Japan's pacifist postwar constitution to explicitly recognize the role of the country's military self-defense forces, as part of a broader effort to counter the threats of a rising China and nuclear-armed North Korea.

More recently, Abe has enjoyed a close relationship with President Trump, with whom he has played golf several times and with whom he shares a right-wing outlook and distrust of the media. Ties with China and South Korea, meanwhile, have been sometimes tense, complicated by territorial disputes and historical grievances over Japan's militaristic past, the nationalist hue of Abe's administration and its reluctance to acknowledge wartime abuses.

Challenges faced by Abe's government have included Japan's recovery from the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster, and demographic difficulties stemming from Japan's aging population.

Jeff Kingston, director of Asian studies at Temple University Japan, said Abe had failed to push through the structural reforms Japan needed, and had been unable to significantly raise the profile of women as he had promised.

"The real problem is he promised to overturn the status quo, but his party represents the vested interests of that status quo," he said. "So it hasn't been a very easy task to institute reform."

Abe had hoped to signal Japan's revitalization by hosting and presiding over the Olympics in Tokyo this summer, before the coronavirus pandemic forced officials to defer the Games until 2021. The prime minister has faced criticism for his handling of the health crisis, and his support slipped to near record lows in recent months.

Stocks in Tokyo fell sharply on Friday in response to the news of Abe's impending departure.

Abe's exit raises the question of succession. Among the candidates are Shigeru Ishiba, 63, a former defense minister who lost the leadership race to Abe in 2012 and has since been critical of his stewardship; Fumio Kishida, also 63, a former foreign minister who is seen as relatively moderate member of the Liberal Democratic Party; and Yoshihide Suga, 71, who serves as chief cabinet secretary and the government's main spokesman, and is seen as a trusted aide of the prime minister.

Deputy Prime Minister Taro Aso, 79, is next in line if Abe steps down suddenly but is reportedly not interested in taking over after serving as prime minister from 2008-09.

Yu Uchiyama, a political science professor at the University of Tokyo, said Abe's legacy was to have "established a stable administration," after a period of constant leadership changes, under much firmer control of the prime minister's office.

--Crawshaw reported from Hong Kong. Akiko Kashiwagi contributed to this report



TAWIAN:

Taiwan's Tsai emphasizes defense amid growing China threat

Associated Press, Aug. 28 | Not Attributed

TAIPEI, Taiwan -- Amid rising threats from China, Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen on Friday said the self-governing island was determined to strengthen its defenses.

Speaking at the opening of a maintenance center for the island's F-16 fighter jets, Tsai said Taiwan wanted to "let the world to see our strong will in protecting the country."

China claims Taiwan as its own territory and has recently stepped up its threats to use force to annex it if it deems necessary.

China has protested recent moves by the U.S. to boost government and military contacts with Taiwan by staging war games in the Taiwan Strait that Beijing's Defense Ministry said were a "necessary move responding to the current security situation in the Taiwan Strait and were meant to safeguard national sovereignty."

Taiwan's F-16 fleet forms the backbone of its defense against a numerically superior Chinese force that has sent planes to circle the island and push up against the dividing line between the sides in the Taiwan Strait.

Taiwan is upgrading the existing fleet of F-16s and buying 66 of the latest version of the fighters. It's also investing in its domestic defense industry.

The new maintenance center will reduce the time required to keep the jets in the air, Tsai said.

"Building up our defense industry is the cornerstone of Taiwan's national defense and it enhances the combat capability of the army. It's a symbol of Taiwan's determination," Tsai said.



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