

ICBM EAR week of February 10, 2025 Prepared by Peter Huessy, President of Geostrategic Analysis and Senior Fellow, The National Institute for Deterrence Studies.

Summary: Quotes of the Week from the POTUS and SecDef; Upcoming NIDS nuclear deterrent seminar; Keith Payne on arms control; new nuclear news of note; excellent essay on Ukraine; B61 and B83 bomb news; Triad Support; Congress Budget Resolution News; Winning in Ukraine essay; Sentinel work pause on launch technology; ICBM Ear Essay on Teller and Oppenheimer; ICBM EAR essay on the origin of endless war; What Happens if Putin Falls? Has China developed a sub detection capability? LLNL has an upcoming event; NIDS expert writes about China; Ploughshares Cites Nuclear Dangers; HASC Chairman Mike Rogers Speech; Disinformation About US Provoking Russian Attack on Ukraine.

Quotes of the Week

HASC Republicans: “Supporting the continued modernization of our nuclear triad and our missile defense is vital for strengthening American deterrence.”

UN Secretary General Mark Rutte: Since 2014, European Allies and Canada have added more than 700 billion additional US dollars for defense. In 2024, NATO Allies in Europe and Canada invested 485 billion US dollars in defense, a 20% increase compared with 2023. With a full two-thirds of Allies spending at least 2% of their GDP on defense. But we need to do more, much more. And we need to do it faster.

The USAF: “Has directed Northrop Grumman “to suspend the design, testing, and construction work” related to the Sentinel ICBM program’s command and launch segments due to “evolving” requirements

President Donald Trump: There’s no reason for us to be building brand new nuclear weapons, we already have so many,” Trump said. “You could destroy the world 50 times over, 100 times over. And here we are building new nuclear weapons, and they’re building nuclear weapons.... We’re all spending a lot of money that we could be spending on other things that are actually, hopefully much more productive,”

HASC Chairman Mike Rogers: *We must make the investments necessary to deter, and if necessary, defeat this new axis of aggressors. Yet today, U.S. defense spending as a percentage of GDP is at its lowest level since before World War II. This is not enough to deter our enemies. Just look at the consequences of underfunded and incredible American deterrence over the past four years.*

Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-SD): “Great to meet with South Dakota’s own Troy Meink about his nomination to be secretary of the Air Force. I’m looking forward to working together on the B-21 program, among other things, at Ellsworth Air Force Base.”

Secretary of Defense Hegseth, February 10, 2025; “To spend the next four years reviving the warrior ethos, restoring trust in the military and rebuilding it by matching threats to capabilities and reestablish deterrence by defending the homeland.”

Secretary of Defense Peter Hegseth: “The press said President Trump is abandoning NATO. He’s turning his back on our NATO allies. That’s what is — that’s what the headlines read in 2017 and 2018. What actually happened? That tough conversation created even more investment to the point where almost every NATO country is meeting the 2 percent goal that was said to be egregious when he first said it. Now European countries are stepping up and President Trump continues to ring the alarm bell that even more investment is required considering where we are. So, suggestions of abandonment continue to be disingenuous. We are proud to be part of this alliance and stand by it.”

Secretary of Defense Peter Hegseth: First, as we see it, NATO’s strategic objectives are to prevent great power conflict in Europe, deter nuclear and non-nuclear aggression, and defeat threats to treaty allies should deterrence fail. Second, the US is committed to building a stronger, more lethal NATO. However, we must ensure that European and Canadian commitment to article three of this treaty is just as strong. Article three says that allies, and I quote,

"By means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack."

Secretary of Defense Peter Hegseth: Leaders of our European allies should take primary responsibility for defense of the continent, which means security ownership by all allies guided by a clear understanding of strategic realities and it's an imperative given the strategic realities that we face. And that begins with increasing defense spending. 2 percent is a start, as President Trump has said, but it's not enough, nor is 3 percent, nor is 4 percent. More like 5 percent. Real investment. Real urgency....There is no replacement for hard power. As much as we may not want to like the world we live in, in some cases, there's nothing like hard power. It should be obvious that increasing allied European defense spending is critical as the President of the United States has said."

Upcoming Event of Interest

- **Peter Huessy and the National Institute for Deterrence Studies**
- invite you to this virtual Nuclear Deterrent seminar and Q&A session
 - **Assessment and Update of the Posture Commission**
 - **with Hon. Madelyn R. Creedon and Hon. Frank C. Miller**
 - **February 28, 2025, 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM**
 - (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)

[Register Here!](#)

New Nuclear News From Strategic Command, The Morning Nuke.

Excerpt: Essay of the Week: Keith Payne Again Nails It!

U.S. deterrence strategies are now deeply problematic and the prospect for significant failure is very real. In contrast to the United States, Moscow and Beijing have been expanding their nuclear arsenals for over a decade and appear to view nuclear weapons as coercive tools for expansion. China appears intent on taking Taiwan by force if necessary.¹ Moscow frequently issues audacious nuclear threats and Russia's doctrinal statements emphasize a steady lowering of the threshold for nuclear employment.² This will also be true with regard to China if there is a war over Taiwan. There is an emerging Sino-Russian entente, a Russo-North Korean alliance, and extensive Russo-Iranian-North Korean cooperation in a major war against Ukraine, a Western partner. These marriages of convenience are organizing around the clear common intent to overthrow the post-World War II liberal international order. There is potential for multiple, simultaneous geopolitical disasters. Keith Payne, President, NIPP

Here is the link to the new Payne Essay published by NIPP.



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Secretary Orders Air F



Article - Russia ready
for comprehensive tal



Article - Russia warns
outlook for extending

Trump wants denuclearization talks with Russia and China, hopes for defense spending cuts

[Trump wants denuclearization talks with Russia and China | AP News](#)

By: [ZEKE MILLER](#) and [MICHELLE L. PRICE](#) for AP NEWS // Updated 3:53 AM EST, February 14, 2025

WASHINGTON (AP) — President [Donald Trump](#) said Thursday that he wants to restart nuclear arms control talks with Russia and China and that eventually he hopes all three countries could agree to cut their massive defense budgets in half.

Speaking to reporters in the Oval Office, Trump lamented the hundreds of billions of dollars being invested in rebuilding the nation's nuclear deterrent and said he hopes to gain commitments from the U.S. adversaries to cut their own spending. "There's no reason for us to be building brand new nuclear weapons, we already have so many," Trump said. "You could destroy the world 50 times over, 100 times over. And here we are building new nuclear weapons, and they're building nuclear weapons.... We're all spending a lot of money that we could be spending on other things that are actually, hopefully much more productive," Trump said. While the U.S. and Russia hold massive stockpiles of weapons since the Cold War, Trump predicted that China would catch up in [their capability](#) to exact nuclear devastation "within five or six years." He said if the weapons were ever called to use, "that's going to be probably oblivion."

Trump said he would look to engage in nuclear talks with the two countries once "we straighten it all out" in the Middle East and Ukraine. "One of the first meetings I want to have is with President Xi of China, President Putin of Russia. And I want to say, let's cut our military budget in half. And we can do that. And I think we'll be able to." Trump in his first term tried and failed to bring China into nuclear arms reduction talks when the U.S. and Russia were negotiating an extension of a pact known as New START.

Russia suspended its participation in the treaty during the Biden administration, as the U.S. and Russia continued on massive programs to extend the life-spans or replace their Cold War-era nuclear arsenals. China has [rebuffed past American efforts](#) to draw it into nuclear arms talks, saying the U.S. and Russia first need to reduce their much larger arsenals. A government official reiterated that position on Friday.

"The U.S. and Russia should ... significantly and substantially reduce their nuclear arsenals and create the necessary conditions for other nuclear-armed states to join the nuclear disarmament process," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said at a daily briefing in Beijing. ___ Associated Press writer Ken Moritsugu in Beijing contributed.

China Is Right to Fear America's B61 and B83 Nuclear Gravity Bombs

[China Is Right to Fear America's B61 and B83 Nuclear Gravity Bombs](#)

By: Christian D. Orr for the National Interest // 7h •

America's B61 Nuclear Gravity Bomb Is Getting an Upgrade

The B61 bomb's reported yield will be adjustable to between 0.3 and 50 kilotons. A kiloton is the equivalent of 1,000 tons of TNT. Although not possessing the long-distance standoff capacity of either a ground-launched [Minuteman III](#) intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) or a [Trident II \(D5\)](#) submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM), [old-school airplane-dropped gravity bombs](#) are still very much a part of America's strategic nuclear triad; indeed, air-dropped nukes remain the only delivery system in which nuclear weapons have been employed [in an actual war](#). Accordingly, the U.S. Air Force's (USAF) gravity bomb arsenal is finally receiving a long overdue upgrade. The National Interest now examines this latest facelift (so to speak) to the B61 gravity bomb.

B61: The Latest and Greatest

News of the improvements to the B61 bomb comes to us courtesy of Bill Gertz, longtime national security correspondent for The Washington Times, in a January 9, 2025, article titled "[U.S. completes nuclear gravity bomb upgrade](#)." To wit:

"[T]he B61 has been fully modernized with a new precision guidance system, the Energy Department's [National Nuclear Security Administration](#), or NNSA, announced this week ... The B61-12 replaces several earlier variants of the bomb after more than a decade of life-extension work costing \$9 billion. An estimated 500 of the nuclear bombs are deployed with the Air Force for use in Asia or from NATO bases in Europe ... The modernized bomb includes greater accuracy from a new 'tail kit assembly,' likely modeled after those used by conventional [Joint Direct Attack Munitions](#) kits that turn 'dumb bombs' into precision-guided weapons. The bomb also has 'a substantial reduction in yield, with no overall change in military characteristics,' the statement said. -- The bomb's reported yield will be adjustable to between 0.3 and 50 kilotons. A kiloton is the equivalent of 1,000 tons of TNT.

B61 History and Specifications

Gertz quotes an additional snippet from NNSA which states that "The B61 family of bombs has over 50 years of service, making it the oldest and most versatile weapon in the enduring U.S. nuclear weapon stockpile." Digging deeper, the [National Security Archive](#) at George Washington University (GWU) reports that the B61 began development in 1962. For the basis of comparison, the U.S. [Air Force fact sheet](#) states, "The Minuteman weapon system was conceived in the late 1950s and Minuteman I was deployed in the early 1960s."

It adds that the current Minuteman III iteration was first deployed in June 1970. I will leave it up to NNSA and the USAF to proverbially duke it over semantic bragging rights over which system is truly the oldest. (After all, who doesn't love a good old-fashioned [Federal Government turf battle](#), eh?) That aside, these upgraded B61-12s are currently droppable from the B-2 Spirit stealth bomber, but reportedly F-35 Lightning II fifth-generation fighter jets will be reconfigured for it, as will the planned successor to the B-2, the B-21 Raider sixth-generation strategic bomber.

The Way Forward?

As desirable as the B61-12 upgrades are, they're only a partial, as opposed to an end-all-be-all, solution to the U.S. military's nuclear needs. For one thing, the -12 variant of the B61 doesn't have the deep earth-penetrating capabilities needed to strike many of the Chinese [People's Liberation Army's \(PLA's\) underground nuclear facilities](#). The B61's -11 variant has this deep penetration capability but is an unguided "dumb bomb".

Meanwhile, the proposed B61-13 will have the desirable pairing of precision and penetration and could be deployed as early as September, but is bedeviled by the fact that [the Biden administration](#) only called for fifty of them, which former Pentagon planner Mark Schneider assesses as an insufficient quantity. Gertz concludes his article with a rather pessimistic summing up of the current state of affairs: "Many of the modernization plan's new systems are [behind schedule](#) and over budget, including [new submarines](#), bombers and ground-based missiles."

The B83 is the largest nuclear bomb in America's strategic arsenal, with a yield of 1.2 megatons.

Back on January 30, 2025, The National Interest reported on the U.S. Air Force's long overdue [upgrades to the B61](#) nuclear gravity bomb. ("Gravity bomb" as in an [air-dropped](#) weapon as opposed to a [submarine-launched ballistic missile](#) or ground silo-launched [intercontinental ballistic missile](#).) As desirable as this upgraded version—

known as the B61-12—is, especially in terms of [precision guidance](#), our article also noted the following shortcomings of the B61 family:

The B61-12 doesn't have the deep earth-penetrating capabilities needed to strike many of the Chinese [People's Liberation Army's \(PLA\) underground nuclear facilities](#). The [B61-11 variant](#) does have this deep penetration capability but is an unguided “dumb bomb.” The proposed B61-13 will have the desirable pairing of precision and penetration but was ordered in insufficient quantities by the [Biden administration](#).

Evidently, the Pentagon's senior leadership is taking these concerns to heart, as indicated by a recent report on a major study by the Pentagon's [Defense Science Board](#) (DSB) on America's nuclear weapons capabilities. The DSB is the longest-serving advisory board in the Office of the Secretary of Defense—established in 1956 at the recommendation of [the Hoover Commission](#)—and is also the leading body in providing science and technology (S&T) solutions to support DoD missions and operations.

Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF)

The follow-up story comes to us courtesy of Bill Gertz, longtime national security correspondent for The Washington Times, in a January 23, 2025, article titled “[Pentagon board completes study on use of strategic nuclear forces against hardened targets](#).” To wit: “Eric D. Evans, the board's chairman, said the details were shared with senior Pentagon leaders. Contained in the undisclosed study are options to be used for ‘difficult target defeat’ strikes or other missions for destroying deeply underground, hidden or hard-to-reach targets in a nuclear war, he stated.

The goal is to assure U.S. military ‘operational dominance’ in various wartime and crisis scenarios, he said ... The study appears to be part of U.S. military strategic deterrence efforts against China's large-scale nuclear military buildup and Russia's exotic new nuclear arms. “China's nuclear infrastructure — missiles, warheads and factories — has been built underground in hardened facilities spread out along a network of some 3,000 tunnels dubbed the ‘Great Underground Wall.’ The sole nuclear penetrator in the U.S. arsenal is the B83 bomb, which the Biden administration tried to cancel.” In addition to China, [Russia and North Korea](#) also have extensive hardened underground military facilities.

B83 Nuclear Bomb Specifications in Brief

Regarding [the B83](#), it has been in service since 1983, and it is [the largest nuclear bomb](#) in America's strategic arsenal, with a yield of 1.2 megatons (1,200 kilotons; for the sake of comparison and contrast, “Little Boy” and “Fat Man,” the atomic bombs dropped on [Hiroshima](#) and [Nagasaki](#), yielded the equivalent of 15 kilotons and 21 kilotons of TNT respectively). The weapon has a mass of 2,400 pounds (1,100 kilograms), a length of 12 feet (3.7 meters), and a width of 18 inches (46 centimeters).

The Way Forward?

The study, at least on the surface, falls in line with new U.S. secretary of defense Pete Hegseth's call for a greater “[focus on lethality](#)” as well as “deter[ing] aggression in the Indo-Pacific by Communist China.” Time will tell if the funding for more B83s and/or B61-13s will be provided; on the one hand, President Donald Trump has stated that he will [seek to cut billions of dollars from the Pentagon budget](#) as the next big target in the effort led by Elon Musk to slash spending by Federal agencies.

Along those lines, Hegseth [said he would welcome](#) Musk's [Department of Government Efficiency \(DOGE\)](#) analysts at the Pentagon. On the other hand, Trump has expressed a desire to [bring innovation to the military](#), as evidenced by his call for an [Iron Dome](#) homeland missile defense shield. Presumably, the prospective additional funding for the B61-13 and/or B83 will be categorized as innovation—bolstering our proactive, offensive deterrent to nuclear aggression while the Iron Dome bolsters our defensive capabilities against nuclear strike—and not as wasteful spending. In other words, cut the proverbial fat, not the muscle.

About the Author: Christian D. Orr --- Christian D. Orr was previously a Senior Defense Editor for [National Security Journal](#) (NSJ) and [19FortyFive](#). He is a former Air Force Security Forces officer, Federal law enforcement

officer, and private military contractor (with assignments worked in Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Kosovo, Japan, Germany, and the Pentagon).

Twin political paths President Trump can take to ensure nuclear deterrence

"The fundamental point, though, at least in the short term, would be for Trump to send a political message to Russia via allied consultations that American security is indivisible from NATO," writes Kyle Balzer of AEI in this op-ed.

BreakingDefense.com, Feb. 11 | Kyle Balzer

President Donald Trump enters office at a possible inflection point in the ongoing nuclear competition with China and Russia. Though it is a moment of great peril for the US nuclear modernization program, it is also one of great opportunity — should Trump choose to seize it.

Both China and Russia have exploited America's glacial effort to modernize its aging nuclear arsenal and atrophied defense-industrial base by rapidly expanding their own. Beijing has grown the world's largest fleet of nuclear-capable land-based missile launchers. And Moscow has locked in a glaring theater nuclear advantage in Europe that helped constrain former President Joe Biden's support for Ukraine's defense against Russia. Compounding these developments is the fact that Washington, due to its deficient defense-industrial capacity, cannot reverse these trends in the near term by simply accelerating its troubled nuclear modernization program.

And yet, despite the long-term structural problems with nuclear modernization, Trump still has readily available options at his disposal. Two near-term options, in particular, stand out. Both are political in nature, dealing with the "software" of nuclear alliances and the mechanics of US domestic leadership. And both would generate immediate deterrence payoffs.

First, Trump should move quickly to initiate political consultations within NATO to integrate Poland, in some form, into the alliance's nuclear mission. Following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the deployment of Russian short-range nuclear weapons in Belarus, Warsaw has expressed interest in joining NATO's nuclear-sharing program — an arrangement in which forward-stationed gravity bombs remain in US custody in peacetime but are carried by allied aircraft during crises and wartime.

Poland's fervor to host US nuclear weapons is undoubtedly a reflection of NATO's failure to adjust to two transformations in the post-Cold War European security environment: the migration of the alliance's center of gravity from Germany to Poland, and Moscow's massive theater nuclear buildup that dwarfs the hundred or so American gravity bombs based in countries far from Russia's border, like Germany.

Integrating Poland into NATO's nuclear-sharing system would address NATO's changing geography and Warsaw's growing fear of Russia's theater buildup. Washington would not necessarily have to station gravity bombs in Poland, where they would be more vulnerable to preemptive attack. Polish pilots, after all, could always fly dual-capable aircraft based in Germany, as both nation's pilots will soon be trained on the F-35A.

A larger wrinkle would be to bring Finland into the nuclear fold and field weapons in both Poland and Finland — whether permanently or only for temporary rotations. This alternative might appeal to Helsinki, which has expressed a nascent interest in revising its long-held prohibition of nuclear weapons transiting its territory. It would mean Poland was not the only nuclear-armed NATO member along Russia's border. And it would have the bonus effect of creating a nuclearized perimeter on Russia's frontier that would greatly complicate Kremlin planning.

Of course, one can never know what, exactly, will deter Moscow. But Russia has a historic tendency to pick on the "little guy" — and a nuclear-capable NATO frontline is no small matter. The fundamental point, though, at least in the short term, would be for Trump to send a political message to Russia via allied consultations that American security is indivisible from NATO.

To be sure, this option is not a rationale for dramatically scaling back US conventional forces in Europe — which would only weaken the alliance’s overall deterrence. Nor should it be wielded as a bargaining chip in whatever negotiations Trump might pursue regarding the Russia-Ukraine war. Nuclear consultations should be treated on their own terms: as an effort to reinforce NATO via two allies who are already devoting vast resources to their own defense.

The second option readily available to Trump would be for him to get the White House back in the business of explaining to the American people the mounting threats they face — and what this means for their security. Here, Trump has a tremendous opportunity to outshine Biden, who neglected his duty to make the public case for greater defense spending. The simple act of adequately resourcing the military will have a deterrence effect by showing Beijing and Moscow that Washington is serious about defense. But sending this message will be impossible unless Americans hear from their president why they should support a larger defense budget.

Indeed, Trump can rip a page directly out of the Cold War playbook of Ronald Reagan, the last president to make the case for and oversee a military buildup to counter a nuclear-armed peer adversary. Beginning in the mid-1970s, Reagan hammered home the point that the country was on the wrong end of adverse trends in the Soviet-American strategic balance. And he clearly articulated, in speech after speech, why the country required modernized missiles and bombers to penetrate improved Soviet air defenses.

Reagan’s rhetoric and preparations to deploy these new capabilities ultimately had a demoralizing impact on the Soviets and yielded a landmark arms-control agreement on theater nuclear forces. Indeed, the Kremlin, as one Soviet official later recalled, was “already compromising” before the US nuclear buildup even began to pick up steam in the mid-1980s.

Fortunately for President Trump, the measures discussed above don’t require immediate solutions to America’s troubled defense-industrial base. They simply require the will to speak frankly with allies and the American people.

That nuclear modernization is beset with delays, a work-force shortage, and funding gaps is no reason to surrender to despair. President Trump, like Reagan, can achieve peace through strength if he seizes the opportunities before him.

--Kyle Balzer is a Jeane Kirkpatrick Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute

Here’s Why America’s “Nuclear Triad” Is So Important

[Here’s Why America’s “Nuclear Triad” Is So Important](#)

By: Harrison Kass for The National Interest // 1h

The sea-based leg of the nuclear triad is arguably the most vital for America’s national defense.

In the nuclear age, nation states have aspired to, and in a few cases realized, the nuclear triad—a three-pronged military structure that allows for the diversification of nuclear weapons. Consisting of 1) strategic bombers capable of deploying nuclear bombs and missiles, 2) land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), and 3) submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), the nuclear triad gives a nation myriad options for deploying a nuclear attack, while essentially eliminating an enemy’s ability to prevent the triad-possessing nation from deploying a nuclear attack.

This result is of the utmost importance in nuclear deterrence, as it ensures that a nation always has “second-strike capability” to annihilate a nation that tries to annihilate it first. Only the United States, Russia, India, and China are known to possess the nuclear triad, while Israel is thought to have developed the triad in secret (though it has refused to confirm any details about its nuclear program). Let’s take a closer look at the [U.S.’s nuclear triad](#)—on air, land, and sea.

Air

The United States has two nuclear capable strategic bombers. Both the B-2 Spirit and B-52 Stratofortress are nuclear-equipped. America's other strategic bomber, the B-1B Lancer, was nuclear-capable until 1994, when the airframe's nuclear mission was eliminated. The B-2 can carry the B61 and B83 nuclear bombs. The B-52, meanwhile, can carry a variety of air-launched cruise missiles outfitted with nuclear warheads, such as the AGM-86B and the AGM-129.

The [B-2](#) is especially potent for its ability to evade detection. The forthcoming [B-21 Raider](#), which will replace the B-2 and the B-1B, will be nuclear capable, and should have the ability to evade detection, even against modern anti-air systems. In addition to strategic bombers, certain fighter aircraft can also carry nuclear weapons, although these fighters represent more of a tactical option. Nuclear-capable U.S. fighters include the F-15E Strike Eagle, the F-16 Fighting Falcon, and the F-35A Lightning II.

Land

The U.S. only has one land-based ICBM, the [LGM-30G Minuteman III](#). The Minuteman, which has been in service since the 1970s, will eventually be replaced with the LGM-35A Sentinel, but for now the Minuteman remains capable and ready. The United States has 400 Minuteman ICBMs standing by, located in the Rocky Mountain region and the Dakotas. The Minuteman, a three-stage solid-fuel missile, has a reported 8,000 mile range, meaning that an ICBM launched from the western United States could reach as far as North Korea.

Sea

The United States operates 14 [Ohio-class](#) ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) and four cruise missile submarines (SSGNs). The USS Ohio is the largest submarine the U.S. has ever built and is capable of carrying 24 Trident II missiles per boat. The Trident is a three-stage solid-fuel SLBM with an operational range of 7,500 miles. The sea-based leg of the nuclear triad is arguably the most vital for America's national defense. Air- and ground-based nuclear weapons could theoretically be devastated by a massive nuclear attack on the American mainland.

However, the Ohio is invaluable for its ability to remain in constant motion, typically without detection—meaning that it could target just about anywhere on Earth, secretly, at any time. The Columbia-class submarine will eventually replace the Ohio, but for now the Ohio rounds out the U.S. nuclear triad, perhaps the most feared nuclear deterrence structure in the world.

About the Author: Harrison Kass --- Harrison Kass is a senior defense and national security writer with over 1,000 total pieces on issues involving global affairs. An attorney, pilot, guitarist, and minor pro hockey player, Harrison joined the US Air Force as a Pilot Trainee but was medically discharged. Harrison holds a BA from Lake Forest College, a JD from the University of Oregon, and an MA from New York University. Harrison listens to Dokken.

Congressional Developments

Senator Tina Smith (D-MN) is not going to be seeking re-election, joining Senator who is also not seeking re-election. Senator Gary Peters (D-MI) is also not seeking re-election.

The House Budget Committee approved a new budget resolution, as members from across the political spectrum came together. The resolution supports making permanent the 2017 tax and jobs act, while also seeking some \$1.5 Trillion in spending reductions over the next decade. Additional budgetary support for the US Department of Defense and Homeland Security was also approved, particularly for border security. A summary of the markup from the Committee Chair is post at the end of this weekly report. Defense will received \$100 billion more for the next year in the House budget and \$150 billion in the Senate budget resolution.

Mike Rogers (R-AL) and the HASC Chairman held a threat briefing. His introductory remarks are posted later in this report.

Ukraine Update: Colleague, College Classmate and Friend James McGee Writes About Ukraine

Trump understands that our goal in Ukraine must be a genuine peace, not merely a sham and prelude to yet another conflict.

by [JAMES H. MCGEE](#)

January 19, 2025, 10:20 PM

On the eve of Donald Trump's second inauguration, we would do well to pay close attention to what he has said, over and over again about foreign policy — and not the words put in his mouth by others, frequently card-carrying members of the globalist foreign policy blob. Make America Great Again has a distinct foreign and national security policy component. Trump's "America First" agenda has never meant the isolationism imputed to it by the globalist foreign policy establishment. [He made this clear in his first administration, in important policy addresses, such as his famous Warsaw speech on July 6, 2017, a speech I've commended](#) to *American Spectator* readers [on more than one occasion](#). [D]on't pretend that aid for hurricane or wildfire victims versus military assistance to Ukraine is a zero-sum game.

His message then — and the message he continues to send, be it with respect to hemispheric security — think Greenland and the Panama Canal — or with his position toward China and Iran, is that the U.S. should always be "first" among nations, respectful of others who share our views, insistent that our support be matched by a willingness on the part of allies to do their fair share. Thus, Trump's appreciation of the military spending efforts of NATO's eastern European "front line states" and his abiding contempt for the continued underperformance of, for example, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom.

Trump respects those who respect themselves, who stand up for themselves, and he wants them to stand alongside us. Moreover, he understands that these are the only allies worth having in a world where others, notably China, wish to consign U.S. leadership to the "dustbin of history." This vision also embraces the position he's taken on the war in Ukraine. In his Warsaw speech, referencing the hybrid war Russia had initiated in Ukraine in 2014, he urged "Russia to cease its destabilizing activities in Ukraine."

Throughout his 2024 presidential campaign, Trump focused on the tragic aspects of the Ukraine war and insisted that finding peace was one of his highest priorities — which, by the way, is how his "peace plan on Day One" rhetoric should have always been read. Trump clearly wants the war to end, and he very much wants to succeed as a peacemaker — something very different, by the way, from simply being perceived as a peacemaker, [as Obama and Biden have been wont to do](#). For Trump, the model remains the "Abraham Accords," an agreement of substance upon which lasting peace can be built, in sharp contrast to the performative emptiness of Obama's Iran nuclear deal.

Bringing Ukraine to the peace table will be relatively easy, partly because U.S. leverage over Ukraine is obviously greater, but mainly because Ukrainian goals are more clear cut — end the fighting in a manner that minimizes Russian possession of its ill-gotten gains, accompanied by sustained support for a Ukrainian military capable of deterring a repeat invasion whenever it suits Putin's purposes.

Persuading Russia to enter meaningful peace talks will be more complicated. Russia's willingness to negotiate ebbs and flows, increasing with every military setback, declining with every Russian battlefield success. Moreover — and despite what many Putin apologists would have us believe — Russia's war aims have always been expansive. Ridding Ukraine of "Nazis," installing a puppet government in Kyiv, incorporating so-called "Russian" territories outright, eliminating the "NATO threat" — these are the terms upon which Putin has sold three years of national sacrifice to the Russian people.

Peace negotiations — genuine negotiations, not simply an enforced Ukrainian capitulation — require convincing Putin that continuing the war through 2025 comes at a price he can no longer expect to pay. [As the new Trump team understands](#), the U.S. controls part — but only part — of the value proposition involved here, namely letting Putin

know that, if he fails to enter negotiations, we will ramp up our military aid to Ukraine and remove some or all of the incoherent restrictions placed by Biden on the weaponry we have supplied.

Still, the larger portion of this leverage depends upon the continued staying power of the Ukrainian nation, and specifically its armed forces. Ukraine has suffered grievously. Many Western “experts” now assume that the Ukrainians can’t possibly stay the course against their much larger and richer neighbor, particularly since the restrictions placed by Biden on the use of long-range weaponry have meant that Ukraine has suffered disproportionate damage, forced to take repeated body blows without inflicting the same in return.

But I don’t trust these “experts,” many of whom have little or no time on the ground in Ukraine and little engagement with actual Ukrainians. Moreover, more than a few are slaves to the ever changing journalistic narratives, more attuned to each other than to what is actually happening in Ukraine. Some have become the handmaidens of the Russian propaganda machine. And some, sadly, have simply become bored as the war grinds into its third year. Events in Ukraine no longer move the news cycle in the Western press the way they once did.

Instead, I’ve turned to the son of a trusted friend and former national security colleague, a young(ish) man who has spent many months going back and forth to Ukraine as a private citizen. With both prior military experience and significant electronics expertise, he’s worked closely with his Ukrainian counterparts in weapons development and, in turn, learned much from them that could well inform a new generation of U.S. drone and counter-drone technology. We forget, after all, that the process of military assistance hasn’t simply flown in one direction — forced to improvise from the very beginning, the Ukrainians have refined vital new technologies in the crucible of battle, [something many in the U.S. military still fail to understand](#).

My young friend has been across the length and breadth of Ukraine, and not simply in the rear areas — he’s spent many weeks under fire in the front lines. Unlike so many so-called “war correspondents,” his conclusions are informed by much more than conducted PR tours to safe areas or gossip between journalists in hotel bars. His is a unique and valuable perspective.

My first question to him concerned Ukrainian staying power, specifically the willingness of the ordinary Ukrainian, military or civilian, to go on fighting. He readily acknowledges that Ukraine has suffered mightily since the war began; he’s seen much of the damage first-hand. Do they long for peace? Absolutely, and none more so than the troops fighting in the front lines and the civilians driven from devastated towns and villages. But they have also experienced the Russian contempt for human life, both the contempt expressed in atrocities wantonly committed and the contempt with which Russian commanders expend the lives of their own soldiers.

So, their longing for peace is tempered by an understanding of just what is at stake for themselves and their families. No one wants a peace that leaves them under Putin’s boot. The fruit of an unjust peace will be a guerilla war in Ukraine that will make the Russian experience in Chechnya and Afghanistan pale in comparison

This dedication and will to fight on as the war goes forward — is the single most important element in the peace calculation. Ukrainians remain ready to endure and have a measured contempt for the few among them who now speak in terms of giving up the fight. But this is not just a matter of will, but as decisive as that may be. My young friend also explains that the Ukrainians have become more effective and efficient in their approach to warfighting.

Take drones, for example. Early in the war, these were used mainly for reconnaissance and deployed in limited numbers. Now highly agile attack drones have been deployed in vast numbers by Ukraine, operated by veteran pilots immensely skilled in their use. Earlier, these drones might have been husbanded for employment against high value hardware, vehicles, weapons systems, or supply dumps. [Now the Ukrainians are even using them to target individual Russian soldiers, a form of sniper warfare hitherto unimagined by Western armies](#).

And in this, and in other innovations, Ukraine’s warfighters have exacted — and continue to exact — a [massive toll](#) in [killed](#) or [wounded](#) Russians. Which brings us to most important factor in judging the “ground truth” as the war enters year three. While the Russian population is three times that of Ukraine, all the easy sources of military

personnel have already been tapped out, and this is something [that North Korean volunteers cannot redress given their horrendous casualty rates](#).

For the Russians to continue the war, at its present scale, for another year or more, means reaching deeply into the Russian working and middle classes. Putin has worked very hard to leave these groups relatively untouched, but as their sons go off to war, his current insistence that peace can only happen on his terms may change very quickly. Herein lies the real opening for Donald Trump in his efforts to bring about a negotiated settlement.

So, let's not indulge the hubris of our foreign policy "experts." Cut off aid, and the war will not end. The only way to bring it to an end is by making it clear that Ukraine can count on our support at a level sufficient to force Putin to make hard choices, through continued economic sanctions on Russia, continued humanitarian assistance, and, above all, a sustained level of military aid sufficient to deny the invaders their objectives.

This doesn't require unreasonable expenditure, unless one assumes, with the Russian trolls, that any support for Ukraine is unwarranted. The widely-accepted figure for U.S. military aid to date is around \$65 billion. During the years of the Ukraine war, the U.S. has spent roughly the same amount on Halloween and Valentine's Day. Surely deterring aggression and sending a signal of seriousness to China, Iran, and North Korea matters more than inflatable witches, plastic pumpkins, and Hallmark cards.

Don't get me started about student loan "forgiveness," and don't pretend that aid for hurricane or wildfire victims versus military assistance to Ukraine is a zero-sum game — not when California has wasted billions on a high speed rail project that remains unbuilt and the billions appropriated for building EV chargers remain unused. Further, don't pretend that this is the slippery slope leading to American "boots on the ground." My young friend was very clear about this — the Ukrainians neither need nor want American combat troops.

The stakes for the U.S. couldn't be higher. [A recent study, "The Geopolitical Consequences of Ukraine's Defeat,"](#) has received wide circulation in the national security community, and deservedly so. I recommend it strongly, above all for its discussion of the implications for the U.S. ability to deter China's ambitions in the Indo-Pacific, something too often ignored by those who hang their foreign policy priorities on a "pivot" to China.

The incoming Trump national security team clearly understands this. Our goal in Ukraine must be a genuine peace, not merely a sham and prelude to yet another conflict. Moreover, it's clear that their goal is getting it right. The campaign rhetoric of a plan "on day one" has given way, more realistically, to "the first hundred days." Clearly, the new administration takes this seriously and means to get it right. President Trump's most important national security promise has been "peace through strength." Let this start with Ukraine.

James H. McGee retired in 2018 after nearly four decades as a national security and counter-terrorism professional, working primarily in the nuclear security field.

Administration Developments of Significance

Certain aspects of the Sentinel launch programs were suspended by the US. Here is the link to the administration action: <https://www.defenseone.com/defense-systems/2025/02/air-force-halted-work-parts-new-icbm-program/402897/>

Huessy Essay of the Week: Oppenheimer and Undermining Deterrence

The movie Oppenheimer, the best-selling Annie Jacobson book on nuclear war along with the New York Times series of nuclear essays "At the Brink," all argue to sharply diminish the role of nuclear weapons in US security strategy, including the adoption of such policies as no first use and minimal deterrence.

In that US extended deterrence in Europe and Asia is predicated on deterring conventional conflict with the threatened retaliatory use of nuclear weapons, taking down the nuclear threat would make the world safe for conventional war especially wherever our adversaries had regional conventional dominance.

Ending extended nuclear deterrence would also compel our allies to look at developing their own nuclear forces, a proliferation that has largely been held in check by the US extended deterrent and the formal international agreement in the NPT or Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Once extended deterrence goes away, the disarmament crowd would push the US to reduce its nuclear forces---unilaterally---to between 500-1000 as a first step toward complete disarmament, what is known as global zero.

The Times series of essays is designed to make the idea of zero nuclear weapons a realistic goal; the Jacobson book is designed to do away with nuclear deterrence itself as the author says such a strategy is unworkable, immoral and “mad.” And what the Oppenheimer movie did was argue that if even the scientist most associated with developing America’s nuclear arsenal had serious doubts whether the US should have done so, maybe it is time to resurrect the plan of Ambassador Bernard Baruch to put all nuclear weapons under UN control, with the goal of getting rid of all nukes. After all it is argued, there was time for such an agreement to be nailed down, since the Soviets would not explode their first nuclear bomb until August 1949, some four years after the US dropped two bombs on Japan.

However, Oppenheimer’s opposition to developing the H-Bomb which was the central theme of the movie “Oppenheimer” was far more consequential than the surface narrative that Oppenheimer was for a nuclear free world and Edward Teller and other “hardliners” were not. Whether the triumvirate of nuclear scientists-- Oppenheimer, Lilienthal and Fermi-- knew this at the beginning of the nuclear age, the development of the H-Bomb was critical to the US developing a survivable, stabilizing, effective and affordable deterrent.

Let me explain. As Curtis LeMay, the USAF Chief of Staff told Congress, the US stored its gravity nuclear bombs at 14 storage areas, which would put the USA out of the nuclear business if destroyed by Soviet bombers---US nuclear weapons were not on airplanes ready to go as they later would be. And the storage areas were completely vulnerable to attack.

LeMay urged Congress and the administration to move to develop missiles to be launched from silos and submarines. The IRBMs the US deployed such as Jupiter and Thor, could only travel 1500 miles and thus to reach the USSR had to be deployed in such a NATO nation as Turkey. The US later developed the Titan and Atlas which had ranges over 5000 miles and were 100 feet long. But they were also liquid fueled, which required fueling prior to be launched, as opposed to the Minuteman or Trident D-5 missiles we now have which use solid fueled propellant which allows the missiles to be on alert 24/7/365, and day-to-day remain without any change in their status, steady as you go.

Titan and Atlas were very large missiles and they had to carry very large nuclear warheads of relatively low yield. As the USAF Office of the Historian official history of ICBMs, the development of the H Bomb was the key to discovering the US could build small warheads but of very high yields. This allowed the development of Polaris for US submarines and Minuteman for the US silo based force, both initiated at the end of the 1950’s and deployed primarily in the decade of the 1960’s. The key to understand is that as one nuclear expert wrote: “Without the development of the H-bomb we would not have been able to build and deploy the Polaris and Minuteman deterrent.”

In short, if Oppenheimer had been successful and the US did not develop the H-bomb, the US deterrent would have relied on long range bomber and very heavy, very expensive, difficult to maintain and often failing to work ICBMs such as Titan and Atlas. And given the size of these missiles, developing a submarine fleet of hundreds of missiles and dozens of submarines, as we did with Polaris, Poseidon and Ohio would probably have been impossible.

And in addition, the benefit of small warheads of high yield meant that with better accuracy, the US arsenal could be constrained to where arms control limits would not necessarily undermine the effectiveness of our deterrent. In fact, with arms control limits being verified with national technical means and creative inspections and portal monitoring, for example, we could work as we did with START 1 to reduce Soviet and now Russian nuclear forces as well.

The highly survivable force in the oceans gives the US a secure retaliatory capability that is central to strategic stability. The size of warheads are such that multiple warheads can be placed on a single sea-launched ballistic

missile, which also allows the US to deploy on the sea-based leg some two-thirds of the missile warheads in our deterrent force, and to do so at an affordable cost and in a survivable, stabilizing mode.

Oppenheimer may not have foreseen this, but it must be part of the history books, that Edward Teller's pursuit of the H-Bomb allowed the US to build the sea, land and air-based nuclear deterrent we have which has now for 80 years kept the nuclear peace. He is the hero, not Oppenheimer.

Hegseth makes first visit to NATO as allies await US plans for Ukraine

https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2025/02/12/hegseth-makes-first-visit-to-nato-as-allies-await-us-plans-for-ukraine/?utm_source=sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=air-dnr

By: Lorne Cook, for The Associated Press to the Military Time // Feb 12, 2025, 09:34 AM

BRUSSELS — U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth on Wednesday made the first trip to NATO by a member of the new Trump administration, as the allies wait to learn how much military and financial support Washington intends to provide to Ukraine's government.

Hegseth held talks with U.K. Secretary of State for Defense John Healey before a meeting of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group at NATO headquarters in Brussels. Hegseth's predecessor, former Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, set up the forum for drumming up arms and ammunition for Ukraine in 2022. Over nearly three years, around 50 countries have collectively provided Ukraine more than \$126 billion in weapons and military assistance.

But the meeting this week was convened by another country for the first time: the United Kingdom. All previous gatherings of the forum were chaired by the United States. No decision has been made on who might chair the next meeting, if one is called. Hegseth wasn't expected to make any announcement on new weapons for Ukraine. His trip comes less than two weeks before the third anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022.

Most U.S. allies fear that Russian President Vladimir Putin won't stop at Ukraine's borders if he wins, and that Europe's biggest land war in decades poses an existential threat to their security. U.S. President Donald Trump has promised to quickly end the war. He's complained that it's costing American taxpayers too much money. He has suggested that Ukraine should pay for U.S. support with access to its rare earth minerals, energy and other resources.

Some U.S. allies worry that a hasty deal might be clinched on terms that aren't favorable to Ukraine. On top of that, Trump appears to believe that European countries should take responsibility for Ukraine's security going forward. Washington's 31 NATO allies also want to hear what Trump's new administration has in store for the world's biggest security organization. Trump traumatized his European partners during his first term in office by threatening not to defend any member that doesn't meet NATO guidelines for military spending.

NATO is founded on the principle that an attack on any ally must be considered an attack on them all and met with a collective response. Membership is considered to be the ultimate security guarantee, and it's one that Ukraine is trying to secure. Ukraine's security needs and defense spending will be discussed Thursday. European allies have hiked their military budgets since Putin ordered his troops into Ukraine, and 23 are estimated to have reached or exceeded last year the target of spending 2% of gross domestic product.

However, a third of members still haven't reached that threshold, and Trump is almost certain to target them again. Recently, Trump called for NATO members to increase defense spending to 5% of GDP, a level that no member has reached so far — not even Poland, which is the closest, spending more than 4% and expected to approach 5% this year. Speaking to reporters in Germany on Tuesday, Hegseth wouldn't commit to having the U.S. increase its defense spending to 5% of GDP.

Hegseth said that he believes that the U.S. should spend more than it did under the Biden administration and "should not go lower than 3%." He said any final decision would be up to Trump but added that "we live in fiscally

constrained times” and need to be responsible with taxpayer money. The U.S. spends about 3.3% of GDP on defense. NATO leaders are expected to agree on new spending targets at their next planned summit, in The Hague, Netherlands, on June 24-26. ----

Deterring China, slashing waste top Pentagon priorities, Hegseth says

By Stephen Losey

Feb 8, 2025, 02:12 PM

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth discussed deterring China without provoking a conflict during a town hall meeting for DOD personnel at the Pentagon on Feb. 7. (Senior Airman Madelyn Keech/Air Force)

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth on Friday pledged to demonstrate to China that the United States will continue supporting its allies in the Indo-Pacific region.

The U.S., however, is not going to create unnecessary conflict with Beijing, Hegseth said in a question-and-answer session during a town hall with Defense Department personnel.

“We’re clear-eyed about the communist Chinese, the [People’s Republic of China], but we’re also not attempting to initiate conflict or create conflict where it otherwise doesn’t need to exist,” Hegseth said. “We’re going to stand strong with our partners. And then President Trump, at his strategic level, is the one who’s having the conversations to sort of ensure that we don’t ever have a conflict.

“We don’t want that, [the Chinese] don’t want that,” Hegseth continued. “We just have to remain strong in order to be in the best possible position.”

The Pentagon posted a transcript of the town hall Friday evening, after a livestream of the event was cut off following Hegseth’s 15 minutes of opening remarks.

Hegseth’s comments about China came after an Air Force official asked him whether the Defense Department would be more assertive in the “gray zone” area — short of war — to deter China and Russia.

“There’s gray zone activities that exist, some of which you can acknowledge, some of which you cannot,” Hegseth said. “But certainly, we want to send the signals to China that the [Indo-Pacific] area will be and continues to be contested.”

In response to a question about potential staff cuts at DOD, Hegseth also said that “there are thousands of additional ... positions [across the Defense Department] that have been created over the last 20 years that don’t necessarily translate to battlefield success.”

“[There are] additional staff, additional layers of bureaucracy [and] additional flag officer positions that we would be remiss if we did not review,” he said.

Hegseth noted that the department operates in a “budget constrained environment,” and highlighted the armored cavalry unit at Fort Bliss, which has had to cut a series of upcoming training assignments due to tight budgets.

“When you’re living off of continuing resolutions and caps, and then you have contingency operations and things that change, suddenly you have shortfalls and now unit training falls by the wayside,” Hegseth said. “From my perspective, that’s completely unacceptable.”

Hegseth said that in addition to rooting out waste, fraud and abuse, the Pentagon needs to slash hierarchies and layers of bureaucracy that aren’t serving the military.

That could also involve a reduction in the number of four-star generals and flag officers, he said.

“We won World War II with seven four-star generals,” Hegseth said. “Today we have 44. Do all of those directly contribute to warfighting success? Maybe they do. I don’t know, but it’s worth reviewing to make sure they do.”

During the town hall an official from the Pentagon’s Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation office, which provides independent analysis on DOD programs, asked whether the military’s acquisition process should focus on smaller capabilities that could be fielded more quickly, or larger-scale capabilities that can do more to deter adversaries.

“In a perfect world, I would say both,” Hegseth said, citing the effectiveness of low-cost drones in the war in Ukraine.

The Pentagon can work with Silicon Valley and fast-moving new contractors that are able to rapidly field new systems, he said.

And the Pentagon needs to speed up its testing process so commanders can see how new systems work in the field and then scale up production once it’s clear how practical use those new technologies have.

Additionally, Hegseth noted one question that highlighted the challenges facing military families, such as frequent moves, was “100% right.” And he suggested that massive military programs may need to take a backseat to family concerns.

Families’ frustrations are “a massive readiness and retention issue and a morale issue,” he said.

“Funding one more multibillion-dollar system is not as important as funding the families and the capabilities of our human systems that make it all happen.”

ICBM EAR” The Origin of Endless Wars?

The critics of USA security policy have asked why the country engages in what have become known as endless wars, and that end in what can only be described as defeat for the United States. To many Americans, this is incongruous. Having been repeatedly reminded the US was the world’s sole superpower, it became bewildering to most Americans that over two decades the United States could not defeat the Afghan Taliban, or an Iraqi insurgency, even having with great skill and speed, initially eliminated the Taliban from power in Afghanistan in 2001 and rapidly took down Saddam Hussein’s government in early 2003.

Victor Davis Hanson has one explanation. The United States in Korea and in Vietnam assumed that such conventional conflicts could easily become nuclear if pursued too vigorously by the United States. So, the United States repeatedly pulled its punches and settled for less than victory. This resulted in the case of Iraq and Afghanistan victory for our enemies, and not even the status quo ante we achieved in Korea for example.

A retired senior US military officer writes that he thinks there is strong historical support for Hanson’s analysis. He writes however about a companion concern: “We could at least try to think through how to end a crisis or conflict leaving US security better off than when the conflict started.” He explains further: “Even when the US actually seem to settle for the status quo ante, we often never actually achieve such an objective, as we seem to always end up leaving the security of the United States a little worse off as opposed to ending up better than when such a conflict started.”

The American people assume that no American leader would do this on purpose so the reason for such outcomes must be found in some other explanation. The default often assumed is the military industrial complex or profit making defense contractors. Actually, the defense industry never asked for nor campaigned for such conflicts. Wars actually often harm readiness and other military requirements especially modernization of the force that takes a back seat to supporting, for example, the costly force sustainment accounting literally for trillions of dollars taking on counter insurgency in such places as Afghanistan and Iraq.

My senior retired military officer friend further explains “This problem is even worse or more challenging for strategic and nuclear deterrence evidence of our practice of confusing the avoidance of confrontation as an undermining deterrence as we appear unwilling to use our deterrent force.” He warns: “We are not recognizing that deterrence will fail if we’re unwilling to make such threats simply because they’re considered escalatory. What is not recognized is that very few in the US security establishment understand how deterrence works, particularly in the nuclear business, which is now limited to a very small circle of military and civilian professionals.”

Taking “escalation off the table” takes much of deterrence off the table, and cedes the initiative to our adversary, Putin, especially in the case of Ukraine. And thus, after three years of war and nearly one million casualties, there is no prospect for victory for Ukraine and its NATO allies. Deterrence after all is the threat to escalate to a higher and more effective use of military force, as well as companion economic, political and diplomatic measures. That is what the Chinese communists are currently doing under the rubric of “unrestricted warfare.”

If economic sanctions don’t really cut off Russian gas sales, for example, but do so only in part, and actually overall produce high revenue for Moscow for oil and gas sales, the United States has ended up filling up Moscow’s exchequer with much needed cash as opposed to the opposite. Taking military options off the table and leaving most of Russia in a sanctuary from harm, tells Moscow the US is less than serious about winning the conflict, further underscored by senior US military officers telling our allies there is no way Ukraine can “win.” When the first option chosen by the United States is restraint, the first option for our enemies will be the opposite---to further pursue military force.

Two Strategic Developments

- Putin’s fall will disintegrate Russia—who then controls all those nuclear weapons? Would there then be a proliferation disaster
- China says it can detect submarines under water---all the more reason to keep the ICBM leg of the Triad as well as strategic bombers. What effect would this have on deterrence?

Putin’s Fall Will Lead To Russian Disintegration As Moscow Sits On Volcano Of Civil War, Ethnic Conflict: Separatist Group

By

Shubhangi Palve

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February 10, 2025

Russia would descend into a “massive ethnic conflict” when Vladimir Putin’s regime collapses, according to the Russian separatist group ‘Atesh.’ Emerged just two years ago, Atesh has challenged Russia’s long-held stability, and its growing influence has sparked concerns over the prospect of civil war in Russia. In an interview with the UK-based Daily Express, members of the group asserted that internal uprisings could play a crucial role in weakening Moscow’s grip.

An Atesh member disclosed their strategy, revealing that they are building alliances with other Tatar groups within Russia to spark an ethnic uprising against Putin’s regime. “We see great potential in this,” the group stated. “Weakening Russia through internal uprisings could be a crucial step toward ending its aggression.” The group further projected a turbulent post-Putin era, claiming, “We are confident that after the defeat of the Putin regime and the death of the dictator himself, massive ethnic conflicts will begin in Russia.”

What Is The Atesh Group?

The word Atesh, meaning “fire” in Tatar—a Turkic language—symbolizes the group’s fierce resistance against Russian control. Tatars, a Turkic-speaking ethnic group, are native to regions in Central Asia and Eastern Europe. Historically, European scholars used the term to describe non-Russian peoples. Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, long before launching its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. While ethnic Russians form the majority in Crimea, the

peninsula remains home to significant Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar minorities. In response to Russia's aggression in 2022 against Ukraine, Atesh emerged as an underground resistance network, primarily comprising Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians.

The group claims to have grown from a small band of fighters into a movement with "thousands" of members as of now. Russia's demographic landscape is diverse, with over 190 nationalities. The Tatars, numbering over 5.3 million as per the 2010 census, are the largest Turkic ethnic group in Russia. Alongside the Bashkirs, they primarily reside in the autonomous republics of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, where national movements for independence from Moscow have been gaining traction.

Operating in occupied territories, Atesh engages in sabotage, intelligence gathering, and aiding pro-Ukrainian resistance forces. Their commitment is evident in an oath posted on Telegram in September 2022, declaring: "I swear by my blood and my soul to be faithful to the Atesh movement and fight for the Ukrainian state." While the Kremlin has labeled Atesh a terrorist organization and banned it, the group continues to challenge Russian authority from the shadows.

Atesh's Strategic Role In Resistance

According to a BBC report, the group specializes in gathering vital intelligence on Russian military movements, primarily in Crimea, but also in other occupied regions and even within Russia's borders. Atesh has emerged as a key player in Ukraine's resistance efforts, notably carrying out the attack on Russian military forces in September 2023. Their intelligence played a crucial role in guiding high-profile Ukrainian strikes in Crimea, including attacks on the Russian landing ship Minsk, the submarine Rostov-on-Don, and a devastating assault on the headquarters of Russia's Black Sea Fleet. Atesh provided detailed information on air defenses, military depots, bases, and troop movements, with some operatives conducting surveillance for weeks. These efforts resulted in significant Russian officer fatalities.

Atesh's Recent Operations

In October 2024, 'Kyiv Post' reported that Atesh Partisans had infiltrated Russian military ranks. With Russia beginning to draft Ukrainians from newly occupied territories, Atesh agents seized the opportunity, volunteering at military enlistment offices. This strategy allowed them to operate within Russian military units, gathering crucial intelligence for future operations. In November 2024, Atesh claimed responsibility for a sabotage operation targeting a key railway in occupied Zaporizhzhia Oblast. The attack disabled electrical equipment, disrupting Russia's military supply lines. An operative set fire to a relay cabinet near Tokmak, a city under Russian control, intensifying the logistical challenges for Russian forces.

By December 2024, Atesh escalated its operations even further, infiltrating a Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) facility and sharing photos of the secretive site on social media. The images, reportedly taken at the Danilovo military airbase in the Republic of Mari El, showed multi-purpose helicopters and transport aircraft stationed there. Atesh noted a 'lack of qualified personnel at the base,' adding to Russia's growing vulnerabilities. Later that month, Atesh claimed a disturbing rise in suicides among Russian soldiers in the occupied Kherson region. The deaths attributed to Russian soldiers from the Dnepr group reflect increasing morale issues among the troops stationed in this contested area, further undermining Russia's military position.

Atesh's Expanding Network And Influence

In the last two years, Atesh has become the most expansive partisan group active in Russia and Ukraine. The movement's reach now extends from the Baltic shores of Kaliningrad to the frozen expanses of Siberia, encompassing major urban centers like Moscow and Saint Petersburg. Furthermore, Atesh claims strong backing from Turkic and Caucasian communities within Russia, adding weight to their mission. "We feel the support of the Turkic and

Caucasian peoples in Russia,” they state. “With their backing, we have the resources to strike at Putin’s war machine.” This growing support network enhances Atesh’s capabilities, positioning the group as a formidable resistance force in the ongoing conflict.

According to a Daily Express report, a member of Atesh emphasized the group’s increasing resonance across Russia’s diverse ethnic communities: “The peoples of the Russian Federation are under constant pressure, often losing their identity and culture,” they stated. “This is why many representatives of national minorities in Russia join our movement. With us, they find a platform to dismantle the so-called ‘Russian Federation’ and fight for a better future for their peoples.” With a goal of expanding regional cells and intensifying attacks within Russia, the group aims to destabilize the Kremlin’s authority from within. Perhaps most threatening to Moscow is Atesh’s ability to tap into the simmering discontent among Russia’s ethnic minorities.

The Art Of Infiltration

Atesh’s rising influence has cast a shadow over Russia’s future stability, sparking debate about the potential for internal unrest. Despite Atesh’s growing impact, it is unclear whether it can ignite a full-scale revolt or ethnic conflict within Russia. Facing a formidable enemy like Russia, Atesh’s operations remain largely confined to guerrilla tactics and covert actions. Yet, their resolve to destabilize Russia from within persists. Through ongoing sabotage and subversive operations, Atesh continues its fight to weaken the Kremlin.

- *Shubhangi Palve is a defense and aerospace journalist. Before joining the EurAsian Times, she worked for ET Prime. She has over 15 years of extensive experience in the media industry, spanning print, electronic, and online domains.*

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U.S. Nuke Submarines Under Chinese Thumb? Scientists Claims Developing New-Age Tech That Can Detect Stealthy Subs

By

Sakshi Tiwari

February 9, 2025

The US Navy’s nuclear-powered submarines are considered some of the world’s most stealthy war machines. However, with advancements in submarine-detection technology, Chinese scientists are claiming that they can now detect even the most-silent nuclear submarines.

Researchers from Northwestern Polytechnical University (NPU) in Xian claim they can now detect even the quietest submarines by harnessing the magnetic fields created by their wakes (complex, turbulent flow fields generated around the moving vessel). They reckon this novel technique can revolutionize naval combat, as reported by the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post. The team, led by associate professor Wang Honglei has reportedly modeled the Kelvin wake, a V-shaped surface disturbance produced by submarines as they cut through the water. The report says, “This wake, previously studied for radar-based imagery detection, generates a faint but detectable magnetic field when seawater ions – disturbed by the vessel’s motion – interact with the Earth’s geomagnetic field.”

The researchers measured the changes in these magnetic signatures with submarine size, depth, and speed using computer simulations. “For example, increasing speed by 2.5 meters per second (8.2 feet per second) boosts magnetic intensity tenfold; reducing the depth by 20 meters (66 feet) doubles the field strength; and longer submarines produce weaker fields, while wider hulls amplify them.” According to Wang and his colleagues, the wake’s magnetic field can reach 10^{-12} tesla for a Seawolf-class submarine traveling at 24 knots (12.5 meters per second) and 30 meters (98 feet)

depth. This is “well within the sensitivity range of existing airborne magnetometers.” Detailed in the peer-reviewed Journal of Harbin Engineering University on December 4, the team’s approach makes use of a crucial flaw: “Kelvin wakes cannot be silenced.” The research paper singled out the Seawolf-class submarine for its study. Interestingly, the US Navy’s nuclear-powered fast-attack submarine, the USS Seawolf, was spotted in China’s backyard—in Yokosuka, Japan, last October.

The Seawolf-class subs have the reputation of being one of the most powerful, lethal, complicated, and expensive underwater combat platforms of the US Navy designed for high-end missions close to an adversary’s shore. Known as “silent killers” due to their capability to dive far and pursue targets for months, Seawolf-class submarines are equipped with a significant quantity of Tomahawk missiles and torpedoes that can seriously endanger China’s coastal infrastructure and the PLA Navy.

One of the Seawolf-class submarines—the USS Connecticut—crashed into an underwater seamount in the contentious South China Sea in October 2021. Since the submarine was on a classified mission, its whereabouts were not known. This triggered a fierce reaction from China, with the Chinese state-owned publication Global Times publishing a report criticizing the US for not releasing crucial information about the accident of a nuclear-powered submarine.

Wang said in his paper that until now, militaries have relied on sonars to detect acoustic signatures of submarines. However, in contrast to acoustic detection, which modern submarines evade via sound-dampening coatings and pump-jet propulsion, the magnetic wakes linger long after a submarine passes, creating “footprints in the ocean’s magnetic fabric. “Thus, making submarine detection a lot easier.”

However, this is barely the first time that Chinese scientists and researchers have claimed to have developed a technology capable of detecting submarines. As tensions between China and the United States continue to mount and the threat of conflict looms large, Beijing is on a mission to build anti-submarine warfare capability. The first step, however, would be detection.

China Is Building Submarine Detection Capability

Unlike conventional submarines, which are typically diesel-electric powered, nuclear-powered submarines (SSNs) have many advantages. For instance, they can operate over greater distances, dive deeper, and move faster. Therefore, they are far more difficult to detect and eliminate than conventional submarines. The United States, for one, only operates nuclear-powered submarines. With military bases located all over the world and two vast oceans separating it from the rest of the world, the United States needs nuclear-powered submarines for their extended range. Additionally, these submarines are routinely deployed to accompany American aircraft carrier battle groups across the world’s oceans.

This means that in a potential conflict between the US and China, US nuclear submarines will have a significant role to play. Loro Horta, an academic and author from Timor Leste, explained in a previous EurAsian Times op-ed: “In a possible conflict over Taiwan, the 14 SSNs the US currently operates, not all deployed in the region, would have to get closer to the Chinese coast to support their surface fleet and hunt for Chinese submarines.” China has, therefore, focused its attention on building submarine detection capability. Last year, for instance, a team of scientists from Shanghai Jiao Tong University claimed they could locate and monitor undersea military targets by analyzing low-frequency emissions. They said they had developed a detector—the size of a truck—that was able to pick up weak electromagnetic waves from a rotating propeller at a distance of around 20 kilometers.

The scientists claimed that with a detection range around ten times longer than anything previously documented, the device could offer China a competitive edge in the escalating underwater arms race. The team said that the technique is to monitor the seabed to detect electromagnetic signals emitted by the submarines. The findings were published in the Chinese peer-reviewed Journal of Vibration and Shock. Later, in 2024, another team of scientists claimed that they

used high-energy microwave synthesis technology to create a radio-emitting source in the sky, which led to a breakthrough in submarine detection.

They stated that this virtual signal source, sometimes known as a ghost radar, is capable of continually emitting electromagnetic waves while moving at almost the speed of light. The findings were published in the Chinese academic journal *Modern Radar* on November 25. “For an observer on Earth, the wavelength of these electromagnetic waves, emitted by a source moving away at such high speeds, would significantly expand. This would result in a reduction of the signal frequency, similar to the redshift – the move towards the red end of the electromagnetic spectrum – of some distant stars. These extremely low-frequency (ELF) electromagnetic waves can penetrate seawater, making it possible to detect submarines hiding hundreds of meters beneath the surface,” read a report in SCMP.

China has been making large investments in sonar, anti-submarine lasers, and sophisticated underwater sensors to better detect and target US submarines. As a result, China is likely becoming more adept at spotting American submarines at considerable distances. Some analysts believe that anti-submarine warfare will become so sophisticated in the next 20 years that the submarine will become obsolete. Although this is debatable, it is undeniable that new technology is making submarine operations much riskier.

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Registration link: <https://lnlfed.webex.com/weblink/register/r2592a9a660a4ebce7e3a534c72024423>

Summary: on February 25th, the Lawrence Livermore Global Security folks and Brad Roberts will host a discussion on strategic stability. This article draws on the stability-instability paradox to compare the prospect for limited war between the United States and China to the U.S.-Soviet rivalry Cold War. The term was coined during the Cold War and highlights that stability at the strategic nuclear level makes limited wars appear safer to fight. We argue that two key factors – geography, and the prevalence of territorial disputes – affect the intensity of the stability-instability paradox. Comparing the Cold War to the contemporary U.S.-China rivalry, we highlight that the prospects for keeping a conventional war limited in maritime East Asia is greater than in a land theater in Europe. This may increase both China and the United States’ willingness to take risks and exacerbate the intensity of the paradox. In addition, unlike Cold War Europe, contemporary East Asia is rife with territorial disputes, which may trigger a conflict. **We further argue that the nature of the East Asian theater, coupled with technological shifts, makes the risk of limited nuclear employment higher now than during the Cold War. Because of these differences, a “double trouble” is emerging, where the risk of both limited, conventional war, and deliberate limited nuclear first use is higher than during the Cold War**

Inside the threat of China-controlled ports in the Western Hemisphere

BY Christina Leah, Fellow at NIDS: <https://globalsecurityreview.com/nuclear-order-and-disorder-in-the-asia-pacific/>

China’s extensive network of commercial ports near the U.S. poses significant security threats, a panel of analysts — including intelligence and Defense Department official Matthew Kroenig and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace China analyst Isaac Kardon — told the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Transportation and Maritime Security on Tuesday.

Mr. Kroenig, now with the Atlantic Council’s Scowcroft Center, testified that “Washington and regional states should work together to decouple from Chinese investments in ports and other areas critical to national security,” asserting that Chinese-managed port facilities at either end of the Panama Canal are facilitating the shipment of deadly fentanyl into the United States.

Mr. Kardon said U.S. officials have seen limited Chinese warship visits to the region, and the major dangers are China's use of the ports for intelligence gathering and surveillance and the potential disruption of shipping operations in a crisis. The hearing followed recent comments by Mr. Trump claiming that China has effectively taken control of the Panama Canal from Panama and that the U.S. plans to take it back.

The "absence of diplomatic engagement with North Korea during the past four years has resulted in a more belligerent North Korea, now more aligned with Russia and China," writes Joseph R. DeTrani, a former senior U.S. intelligence official and opinion contributor to Threat Status.

"Those who disagree will say we tried, but we ignored North Korea, hoping that a policy of 'containment and deterrence' would suffice. Well, it didn't," writes Mr. DeTrani.

"North Korea will see value in having a meaningful dialogue with the U.S. if it realizes it is dealing with a Trump administration that is bold and flexible," he writes, adding that "engaging boldly and flexibly now with North Korea would get the attention of Russia and China, both concerned that North Korea would prefer a normal relationship with the U.S. over an alliance with the North's two neighbors."

PLOUGHSHARES FUND

Ploughshares: February 14, 2025: A new message: Despite Iran's compliance, the JCPOA unraveled after the US reimposed sanctions in 2018...Iran's nuclear capability continues to grow. The INF treaty was abandoned and opens the door for the deployment of previously banned missiles. China and India joined the chorus against nuclear first use. NK's arsenal continues to expand. China, too, to rapidly expanding its nuclear arsenal and moving away from minimal deterrence.

Mike Rogers:

Rogers: Our Adversaries are No Longer Acting Alone

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Representative Mike Rogers (R-AL), Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, delivered the following opening remarks at a hearing on protecting American interests in a convergent global threat environment.

Chairman Rogers' remarks as prepared for delivery:

*In our first hearing of the 119th Congress, we will examine a hard truth:
The United States faces the most challenging threat environment since World War II.
China is investing heavily in its military and threatening to outpace the United States.
Russia's military, despite suffering massive casualties in Ukraine, is rapidly reconstituting.*

*In fact, the Russian Army is larger today than it was before the invasion.
North Korea has doubled down on expanding its nuclear capabilities.
And while Israel has dealt a blow to Iran, the Ayatollah continues to harbor nuclear ambitions.
And with the help of his terrorist proxies, he's attacking commercial shipping in the Red Sea and American troops across the Middle East.*

*Alone, each of these adversaries poses a significant threat to the United States.
But they're no longer acting alone.*

*They're building an alliance dedicated to countering American interests.
China, Iran and North Korea are actively supporting Putin's war machine.
Iran is providing Russia with thousands of drones.
North Korea is supplying thousands of artillery shells, ballistic missiles, and soldiers.
However, it's China that's become Russia's most important lifeline.*

In accordance with their "no limits" partnership, Xi is keeping Putin's economy afloat by buying Russian oil and gas. And without Chinese semiconductors and dual-use components, Russia's defense industrial base would have already come to a screeching halt. This growing cooperation extends well beyond the war in Ukraine. Putin has expressed public support for Xi's ambitions to reunify Taiwan.

Meanwhile, Russia has helped China expand its nuclear arsenal, as well as enhance its air defense, antiship, and submarine capabilities. In defiance of Western sanctions, Russia and China have funded the Ayatollah's malign agenda by purchasing large amounts of Iranian oil.

As for North Korea, Russia reportedly intends to share advanced space and satellite technology to aid Kim's development of ICBMs. This deepening alignment creates the risk that conflict anywhere could quickly become a multi-front war. We must take this threat seriously.

We must make the investments necessary to deter, and if necessary, defeat this new axis of aggressors. Yet today, U.S. defense spending as a percentage of GDP is at its lowest level since before World War II. This is not enough to deter our enemies. Just look at the consequences of underfunded and incredible American deterrence over the past four years.

*The Taliban retook Afghanistan. Russia launched a full-scale invasion of its neighbor.
Iran and its proxies perpetrated the worst attack on Israel since the Holocaust.
Kim abandoned the pursuit of peaceful reunification and instead put his country on a war footing.
And China has become increasingly aggressive, escalating against Taiwan and the Philippines. Given these threats, it will take significant investments to restore peace through strength.*

*We must get back above 4 percent of GDP.
That starts with a reconciliation process that includes robust defense funding.
Our allies and partners must follow suit and spend more on their own defense too. The United States cannot
and should not face this convergence of threats alone.*

*But just spending more is not the answer.
The weapons we are buying cost too much and take too long to get to the warfighter.
Every dollar has to be spent smarter.
As such, additional investments must come hand in hand with reforms to field innovation faster and improve
efficiency across the DoD.*

*I truly believe we are living through a watershed moment.
The decisions we make in the months ahead could be the difference between war and peace.
I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on their assessment of these threats and what advice they have
for this committee on how to deter them.*

Disinformation Russian Style

The Soho Forum puts on debates on key public policy subjects. The EAR spoke at a forum in New York City in September 2023 on whether the US should commit to a nuclear free world, taking the position that the US needed to sustain nuclear deterrence. Recently the forum hosted a debate at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire on the proposition that the United States provoke Russia into attacking Ukraine by instigating a new Cold War. Making this case was Scott Horton, the director of the Libertarian Institute and host of Antiwar radio. Horton makes two points where he blames the US for killing START II and threatening Russia with ballistic missile defenses in Poland and Romania. Here is the key passage from the Dartmouth Debate. Following is my analysis which is in summary the following:

Scott Horton: “Now when Bush came in, he tore up the anti-ballistic missile treaty and in effect killed START II, which would have banned all multiple reentry vehicles, which was maybe the worst decision any human man ever made come to think of it. But he did that and he also did the color coded revolutions.

He installed these anti-ballistic missile sites in Romania and Poland, that these anti-ballistic missiles are launched from dual use launchers, the MK or Mark 41 missile launchers, that can host Tomahawk cruise missiles that can be tipped with hydrogen bombs. So, they [Bush administration] started violating the spirit of the INF Treaty first. And they launched what are called the color revolutions”

From The Soho Forum Debates: Did the U.S. Provoke Russia's Invasion of Ukraine?, Feb 8, 2025
[https://urldefense.us/v3/https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-soho-forum-debates/id1485021246?i=1000690389567;!!MWKTFZLPJvMV!fzWEq6CB3VUD6sBKD-CEFMV6q7Gsq1UbTFdfuDdTYpR3g4bYuv0x3fo0mdo41Z2jyVyrwU5gRgJdGhonV6TdRmW69Q\\$](https://urldefense.us/v3/https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-soho-forum-debates/id1485021246?i=1000690389567;!!MWKTFZLPJvMV!fzWEq6CB3VUD6sBKD-CEFMV6q7Gsq1UbTFdfuDdTYpR3g4bYuv0x3fo0mdo41Z2jyVyrwU5gRgJdGhonV6TdRmW69Q$)

Analysis of Horton Claims of US Provoking the current Cold War with Russia

First, the US withdrawal from the ABM Treaty took place AFTER the Russian Duma turned down START II in 1997 by adding an amendment requiring all US missile defense work to be kept in the laboratory. The US Senate rejected this unilateral change to the treaty.

Second, Russia then consequently signed on to the Moscow (2002) and New START (2010) agreements that reduced nuclear weapons to some 4500 warheads below START I and 2000 below START II levels although unfortunately did not include the START II ban on land based multiple warhead missiles. A ban which the Russians opposed for financial and strategic reasons, despite initially signing the treaty in January 1993.

Third, while the Bush administration proposed missile defenses in Poland and Romania, the interceptor plan was never built and was killed by the Obama administration. A substitute missile defense system with shorter range interceptors called Aegis Ashore was proposed by the Obama administration but did not get deployed until 2016 and 2024, respectively, after the Russian 2014 invasion of Ukraine.

Fourth, while the Aegis ashore launcher could be used to launch a Tomahawk missile, the US has only conventionally armed Tomahawks. They can be launched from the Baltic or Mediterranean Seas from submarines or surface Naval vessels but were never going to be deployed in Ukraine.

Fifth, all nuclear armed Tomahawks have been taken down (Bush in 1991) and actually destroyed (Obama 2009). Only years after the 2022 invasion by Moscow of Ukraine did Congress put funds into the defense budget for a sea-based nuclear armed cruise missile. As for current regional or theater nuclear forces, Russia has anywhere from a 10/20 to 1 ratio of such weapons compared to the United States, where the US has a few hundred gravity bombs on short range aircraft in Europe but zero in the entire Pacific. .

Sixth, through much of this period, the US and Russia negotiated about such deployments, including an offer by Russia to link the missile defense with a radar in Azerbaijan to help deal with Iranian missile threats.

Seventh, the Aegis ashore interceptors cannot intercept against Russian nuclear armed ICBMs and have no offensive capability to attack any sites in Russia. The Aegis is designed to deal with Iranian missile threats which Russia actually acknowledged was serious.

Eighth, developing a nuclear-capable Tomahawk missile, assuming modifications to an existing Tomahawk design rather than starting from scratch, would likely take several years to complete, with estimates ranging from 5 to 10 years depending on the complexity of the modifications and the available resources. Invading Ukraine doesn't deal with any current or planned deployments of Tomahawk cruise missiles, whether land or sea based, nuclear or conventionally armed.

Ninth, while the US has deployed the Aegis Ashore missile defense system in Poland and Romania it is bizarre to describe a purely defensive system as provocative or threatening. This system is part of NATO's Ballistic Missile Defense and is designed to protect Europe from ballistic missile threats.

Missile Defense In Europe

- The Aegis Ashore system uses satellite systems to detect missile launches.
- If a missile is detected, Standard Missile-3 interceptors are launched from land or sea to destroy it in space.

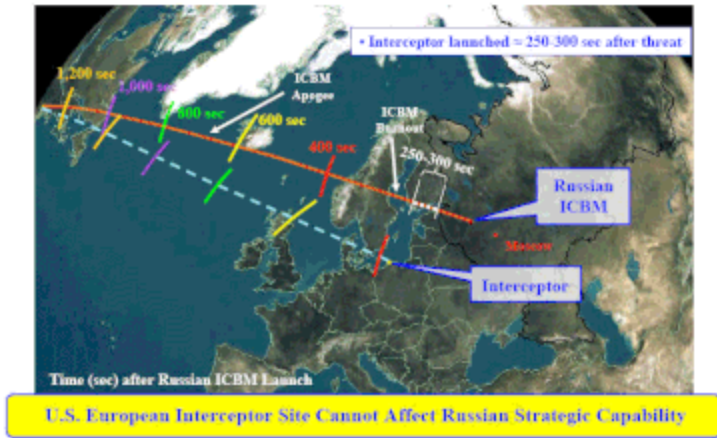
Locations

- Redzikowo Air Base, Poland: The Aegis Ashore system in Poland is located at this air base in the north of the country.
- Deveselu, Romania: The Aegis Ashore system in Romania has been operational since 2016.

The United States missile defense complex in Poland, replaced a planned site in [Redzikowo, Poland](#) with a phased plan—the [Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense System](#), including [SM-3](#) Block IIA interceptors to be positioned in Poland from 2018; Naval Support Facility-Redzikowo was to transition from [Missile Defense Agency](#) control to the [US Navy](#) on Friday, 15 December 2023, according to the [Prime Minister of Poland, Donald Tusk](#),^[1] and [Sixth Fleet](#).^[2] The official transfer to [NATO](#) was announced on 10 July 2024, at the same time, the missile defense site was declared operational.^[3] The base was officially opened on 13 November 2024;^[4] eight days later, Russia warned that the base "is a priority target for potential neutralization."^[5]



Interceptors Cannot Catch Russian Missiles



Approved for Public Release
31 APR 2005 (13 JUN 07)

ms-1000730 / 001407

27 A [Missile Defense Agency](#) diagram

depicting projected flight paths of interceptors compared to Russian ICBMs

Since 2002, the U.S. had been in talks with Poland and other European countries over the possibility of setting up a European base to intercept long-range missiles. According to U.S. officials, a site similar to the American base in Alaska would help protect the US and Europe from missiles fired from the Middle East or North Africa. The [Ustka-Wicko](#) base of the Polish Army (at [54.554°N 16.620°E](#)) was initially mentioned as a possible site of US missile interceptors. Poland's Prime Minister [Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz](#) said in November 2005 he wanted to open up the public debate on whether Poland should host such a base.^[12]

In February 2007, the United States started formal negotiations with Poland and the Czech Republic concerning construction of missile shield installations in those countries for a Ground-Based Midcourse Defense System.^[13] In April 2007 the *Washington Post* reported that 57% of [Poles](#) opposed the plan.^[14]

Russia threatened to place short-range [nuclear missiles](#) on its borders with [NATO](#), if the United States went ahead with plans to deploy 10 interceptor missiles in Poland and a radar in the Czech Republic.^{[15][16]} In April 2007, then-President Putin warned of a [new Cold War](#) if the Americans deployed the shield in Central Europe.^[17] Putin said that Russia was prepared to abandon its obligations under the [Nuclear Forces Treaty](#) of 1987 with the United States.^{[18][19]}

In July 2008, Poland did not agree on the conditions set forth by the United States regarding the installation of anti-ballistic missiles on its territory.^[20]

In July 2008, the Russian Foreign Ministry stated that if the missile defense system was approved, "we will be forced to react not with diplomatic, but with military-technical methods."^[21]

On August 14, 2008, shortly after the [2008 South Ossetia war](#), the United States and Poland announced a deal to implement the missile defense system on Polish territory, with a tracking system placed in the Czech Republic. The Russians responded by saying such action "cannot go unpunished."^[22] Dmitry Rogozin, Russia's [NATO](#) envoy, said, "The fact that this was signed in a period of a very difficult crisis in the relations between Russia and the United States over the [situation](#) in [Georgia](#) shows that, of course, the missile defense system will be deployed not against [Iran](#) but against the strategic potential of Russia."^[23]

A high-ranking Russian military officer warned Poland that it was exposing itself to attack by accepting a U.S. missile interceptor base on its soil. The deputy chief of staff of Russia's armed forces Gen. [Anatoly Nogovitsyn](#) warned that, "by deploying (the system), it is exposing itself to a strike—100 percent".^[24]

On August 20, 2008, the "Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Poland Concerning the Deployment of Ground-Based Ballistic Missile Defense Interceptors in the Territory of the Republic of Poland" was signed in Warsaw by US Secretary of State [Condoleezza Rice](#) and Poland's Foreign Minister [Radoslaw Sikorski](#).^{[25][26]}

On November 5, 2008, in his first [State of the Nation](#) speech, [Russian President Dmitry Medvedev](#) stated, "From what we have seen in recent years—the creation of a missile defense system, the encirclement of Russia with military bases, the relentless expansion of NATO—we have gotten the clear impression that they are testing our strength." Russia would deploy short-range [Iskander](#) missiles to Russia's western enclave of [Kaliningrad](#), sandwiched between Poland and [Lithuania](#) "to neutralize, if necessary, a missile defense system."^[27]

On November 8, an aide to U.S. [President-Elect Barack Obama](#) denied a claim made by [Polish President Lech Kaczyński](#)'s office, that a pledge had been made to go ahead with the EIS missile defense system during a phone conversation between the two men. "His [Obama's] position is as it was throughout the campaign, that he supports deploying a missile defence system when the technology is proved to be workable," the aide said, but "no commitment" has been made.^[28]

On November 14, [French President Nicolas Sarkozy](#) stated that plans for a U.S. missile shield in Central Europe were misguided, and wouldn't make the continent a safer place. "Deployment of a missile defense system would bring nothing to security ... it would complicate things, and would make them move backward," he said at a summit. He also warned Russian President Medvedev against upping tensions by deploying missiles in Kaliningrad in response to the planned U.S. missile defense system.^[29]

On April 5, 2009, President Obama, during a speech in Prague, declared: "As long as the threat from Iran persists, we will go forward with a missile defense system that is cost-effective and proven."^[30] President Obama continued to express conditional support for the program and sought to isolate it from U.S.-Russian nuclear arms control talks.^[31]

On September 17, 2009, The [White House](#) issued a statement saying that the US "no longer planned to move forward" with the EIS project. According to President Obama, new intelligence had shown Iran was pursuing short-range and medium-range missile development, rather than long-range, necessitating a shift in strategy.^{[32][33]} The outlines of a reformulated, scaled-down project began to emerge in October, 2009.^[11]

After the project cancellation, Vice President [Joe Biden](#) visited Poland in 2009 to "mend relations" by announcing the SM-3 deployment plan (see below for details of the new plan). Polish sources complained that the new plan no longer gave Poland an exclusive role (because an SM-3 site was also planned for [Romania](#)).^[34]

In 2010 [leaked diplomatic cables](#) showed that Polish diplomats felt more threatened by Russia than by Iran.^[35] The (leaked) responses from the Pentagon show that [Alexander Vershbow](#) sought to assure that the missile shield, including the SM-3 alternative, was adaptable to "hypothetical" threats.^[36]

On March 26, 2012, there occurred a [microphone gaffe](#) between President Obama and [President Medvedev](#). Obama said that he would have "more flexibility" to deal with controversial issues such as missile defense. He was heard telling Medvedev, "On all these issues, but particularly missile defense, this, this can be solved but it's important for him to give me space." Medvedev told the president in English, "Yeah, I understand. I understand your message about space. Space for you..." and President Obama continued his statement, "This is my last election. After my election I have more flexibility." Medvedev responded saying, again in English, "I understand. I will transmit this information to [Vladimir](#)."^[37]

In March 2013, Polish Deputy Minister of Defense [Robert Kupiecki](#) announced that Poland intended to build its own [missile defense within NATO](#), complementing the US deployment. Poland's tentative budget for the next decade is "\$10 billion for the modernization of air defense, where half of this sum is dedicated to lower-tier missile defense."^[38]

International reactions to discontinuation of the project

[\[edit\]](#)

Polish response

[\[edit\]](#)

The Polish government responded nervously to the 2009 discontinuation. Some politicians voiced concern that the country would lose its special status in Washington, and that the move by Obama was to appease Moscow. [Jarosław Gowin](#), a member of Poland's governing [Civic Platform](#) party, said Obama's decision had been made independently of Polish sensitivities. Former Polish President [Lech Wałęsa](#) said he was deeply disappointed by the new US administration's plans. He stated: "The Americans have always only taken care of their own interests and they have used everyone else."^[39]

In a September 2009, poll, 56 percent of Poles supported Obama's decision and only 30 percent were against it.^{[33][40]} [Jarosław Kaczyński](#), the leader of the main Polish opposition party, claimed that the decision of abandoning the shield being announced on September 17 was not an accident.^[41] (The date is of great symbolic value to Poland, as on September 17, 1939, Poland was [invaded](#) by the Soviet Union). Polish newspapers showed mixed responses to the discontinuation, with some seeing it as a positive action,^[42] and some seeing it having very negative connotations.^{[42][43]}

However, [Sławomir Nowak](#), a senior adviser to Polish Prime Minister [Tusk](#), responded positively to the proposed short- and medium-range missile systems replacing the long-range systems: "If this system becomes reality in the shape Washington is now suggesting, it would actually be better for us than the original missile shield programme," he stated. "We were never really threatened by a long-range missile attack from Iran," he told [TVP Info](#).^{[44][45]}

Polish non-governmental response

[\[edit\]](#)

The Polish daily newspaper [Rzeczpospolita](#) conducted a survey which showed that 48 percent of Poles believed the decision was good for Poland, while 31 percent had the opposite view.^[42] In contrast, the Polish tabloid newspaper [Fakt](#), ran a front-page headline "Ale byliśmy naiwni ZDRADA! USA sprzedały nas Rosji i wbiły nam nóż w plecy" which translates to "We were so naive. Betrayal! The U.S. sold us to Russia and stabbed us in the back".^{[42][43]} This was also reported by other news organizations.^[46]

According to a poll by SMG/KRC released by [TVP](#) 50 per cent of respondents rejected the deployment of the shield on Polish soil, while 36 per cent supported it.^[47]

The Associated Press reported, "The move has raised fears in the two nations they are being marginalized by Washington even as a resurgent Russia leaves them longing for added American protection."^[46]

American response

[\[edit\]](#)

Reactions in the US to Obama's decision were mixed. Some [Republican](#) critics saw the decision as a move to placate Moscow. Defeated presidential candidate [John McCain](#) called the decision "seriously misguided". Conversely, Democratic House Speaker [Nancy Pelosi](#) said the decision was "brilliant" and was clearly based on an accurate summary of the current threats. Obama rejected accusations that the decision was an appeasement of Moscow. He stated in an interview: "The Russians don't make determinations about what our defence posture is. If the by-product of it is that the Russians feel a little less paranoid... then that's a bonus."^[48]

Russian response

[\[edit\]](#)

President Medvedev welcomed the EIS news as "positive". "We value the US president's responsible approach towards implementing our agreements," he stated in an address shown on national television. Prime Minister Putin said it was a "correct and brave" move. The main reason for President Barack Obama's decision was "Russia's uncompromising position on the issue," according to Russian foreign policy expert [Mikhail Margelov](#), chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee [Federation Council of Russia](#).^[49]

Western European response

[\[edit\]](#)

Leaders in the [western European Union](#) reacted positively. [German Chancellor Angela Merkel](#) welcomed the move, calling it "a very hopeful signal" for relations with Russia.^[50] French President Nicolas Sarkozy said, "an excellent decision from every point of view and I hope that our Russian friends will attach importance to this decision,"^[51] while [British Prime Minister Gordon Brown](#) gave his full backing, stating that he strongly supported the decision taken by Obama.^[52]

Czech response

[\[edit\]](#)

[Czech President Vaclav Klaus](#) said the step by the U.S. government was "no big surprise for anybody who had been following the cues in the past days and months," but that he was "100 percent convinced" that the step was not an expression of a cooling in relations between the United States and the Czech Republic. However, [Mirek Topolánek](#), who was prime minister when Prague agreed to co-host the shield, said the U.S. decision to drop the plans "is not good news for the Czech state, for Czech freedom and independence."^[53]

Reformulated Obama administration project

[\[edit\]](#)

The reformulated project announced most prominently by Vice President Biden in October, 2009, would entail smaller, mobile SM-3 interceptors, to be placed by 2018. The whole of the Obama plan "envision[s] stationing existing [SM-3 interceptors](#) as part of the [Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense](#) on [Aegis-equipped](#) ships in the [Mediterranean Sea](#) and elsewhere by 2011, and on land in Central Europe by 2015, as part of a [European Phased Adaptive Approach](#) (EPAA). A more advanced system would be deployed by 2018, including to Poland as EPAA phase 3, and a more-advanced generation (EPAA phase 4), theoretically capable of shooting down intercontinental missiles, by 2020."^{[11][54]}

Phase 4 was cancelled in March 2013, triggering some speculation that it was a concession promised by Obama to President Medvedev before the [2012 United States presidential election](#). The allegations of Russian influence over this decision were denied by the Pentagon.^[55]

The Aegis land base will still be located near [Redzikowo](#).^{[56][57]} [Aegis Ashore](#) for Poland was scheduled to be operational by year-end 2022.^[58] However, in August 2022, Vice Admiral [Jon A. Hill](#), director for the [Missile Defense Agency](#), announced that the site is nearing completion and will be ready in 2023. Prior to this announcement, Hill said that US Navy sailors are already living in the facilities.^[59] NSF Redzikowo was to be declared operational on Friday, 15 December 2023, according to the Prime Minister of Poland, Donald Tusk.^[1]