



NATO Nuclear Weapons Policy: Mission and Forces at the Crossroads

Hans M. Kristensen
(hkristensen@fas.org)
Federation of American Scientists
[http: www.fas.org](http://www.fas.org)

Presented to the IGCC Public Policy and Nuclear Threats Program
University of California, San Diego

August 4, 2010

Overview

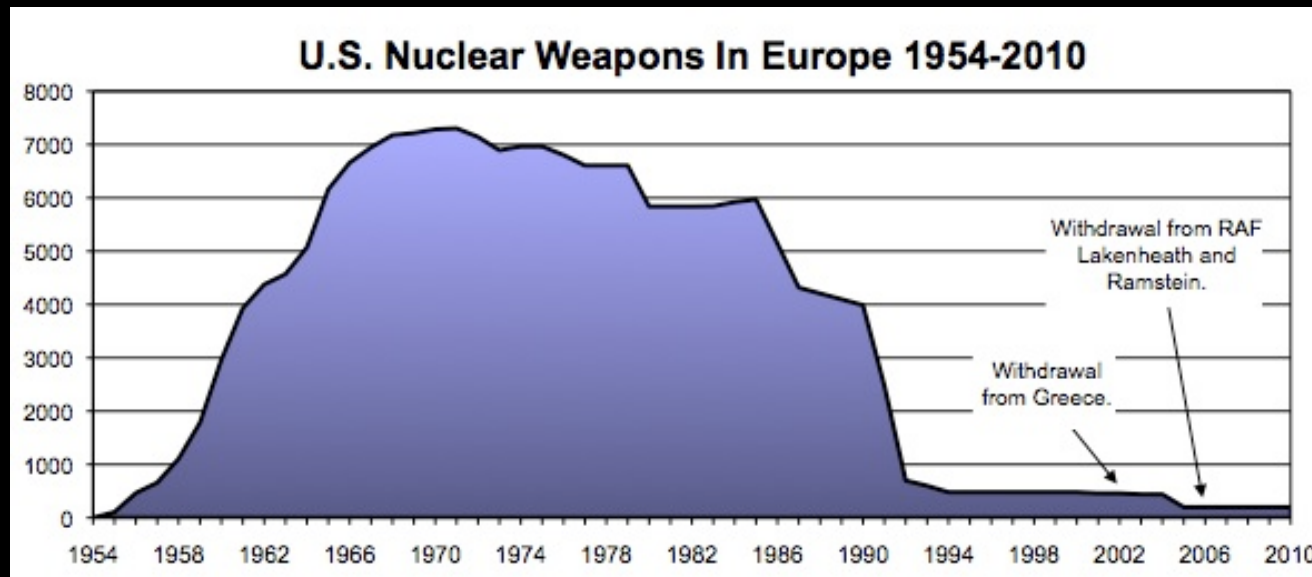
Twenty years after the end of the Cold War, NATO has embarked on a review of its nuclear weapons policy

- Current nuclear posture
- The Mission
- Internal and external drivers
- The Obama administration
- Issues and suggestions



Image right: B61-4 Type 3E Trainer

NATO Nuclear Posture



Short-range weapons in Europe reduced by more than 95% since 1971, more than 50% unilaterally since 1994

Nuclear allies have changed strategic force structure, but US has not:

- Since 1991, France and the United Kingdom have transitioned from Triads to a Dyad and Monad, respectively, and reduced alert levels
- US 2010 NPR, in contrast, decided to retain Triad and “maintain the current alert posture”

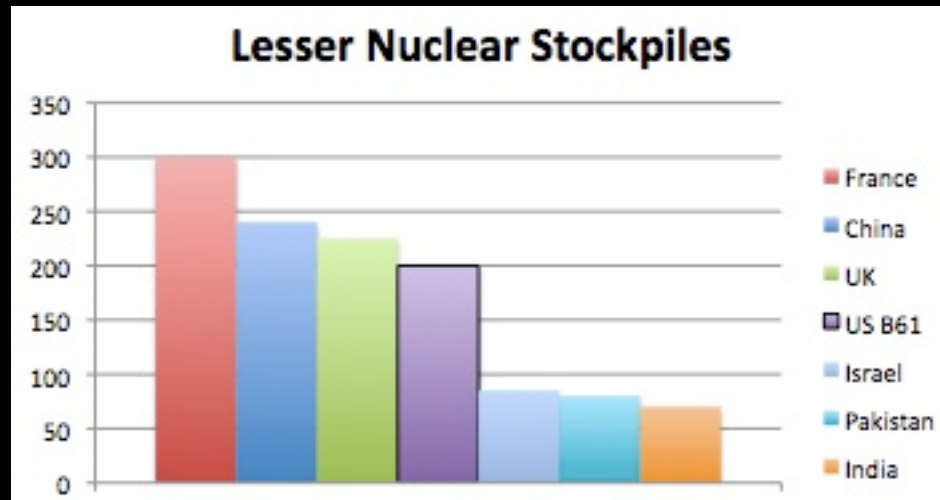
NATO Nuclear Force Posture

Comparison with Cold War is getting less interesting

How does US deployment in Europe compare with force levels of lesser nuclear weapons states?

Comparable with entire Chinese arsenal

How does NATO's current nuclear posture fit current and foreseeable threats, European and US arms control and nonproliferation goals?



NATO Nuclear Posture

Currently three categories

- Short-range: US nuclear bombs in Europe. Fully integrated and available for defense of alliance: Total stockpile ~200
- Long-range: US and British strategic forces available. Total stockpiles ~5,000 weapons (not all assigned to NATO)
- French nuclear forces: Not integrated into NATO military command structure, but potentially available in defense of alliance: Total stockpile ~300 weapons



Total extended deterrence is much broader than nuclear: conventional forces, ballistic missile defense; counter-WMD; political/economic ties

NATO Nuclear Force Posture

Smaller portion of extended deterrence: US nuclear bombs in Europe



- ~200 B61-3/4
- At six bases in five countries
- Four “host” country and two US bases
- Alert replaced by adaptive contingency planning
- Alleged “political” role; “not aimed at any country”

The Mission

NATO's new Strategic Concept will likely reaffirm that nuclear weapons continue to contribute to the security of the alliance, but short of that, how will it define (or refine) the mission? Examples of current doctrine:

- “While [NATO's nuclear forces] are maintained as part of the Alliance's policy of deterrence, their role is fundamentally political and they are no longer directed towards a specific threat.”
- “Nuclear forces based in Europe and committed to NATO provide an essential political and military link between the European and the North American members of the Alliance.”
- “The participation of non-nuclear countries in the Alliance nuclear posture demonstrates Alliance solidarity, the common commitment of its member countries to maintaining their security, and the widespread sharing among them of burdens and risks.”
- “The Allies have judged that the Alliance's requirements can be met, for the foreseeable future, by this "sub-strategic" force posture.”
- “NATO countries have no intention, no plan, and no reason to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of new members, nor any need to change any aspect of NATO's nuclear posture or nuclear policy, and they do not foresee any future need to do so.”

The Mission: Burden Sharing

NATO nuclear burden-sharing actually not *that* widespread...

<u>Member Country</u>	<u>Nuclear Planning Group</u>	<u>Nuclear Burden Sharing</u>	<u>Nuclear Weapon States</u>
Albania	Albania		
Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	
Bulgaria	Bulgaria		
Canada	Canada		
Croatia	Croatia		
Czech Republic	Czech Republic		
Denmark	Denmark		
Estonia	Estonia		
France		France	France
Germany	Germany	Germany	
Greece	Greece		
Hungary	Hungary		
Iceland	Iceland		
Italy	Italy	Italy	
Latvia	Latvia		
Lithuania	Lithuania		
Luxembourg	Luxembourg		
Netherlands	Netherlands	Netherlands	
Norway	Norway		
Poland	Poland		
Portugal	Portugal		
Romania	Romania		
Slovakia	Slovakia		
Slovenia	Slovenia		
Spain	Spain		
Turkey	Turkey	Turkey	
United Kingdom	United Kingdom	United Kingdom	United Kingdom
United States	United States	United States	United States
Total: 28	27	8	3

The Mission: Burden Sharing

Five non-nuclear NPT countries in NATO have nuclear strike mission: Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Turkey

“The Alliance's arrangements for basing U.S. nuclear gravity bombs in Europe are in compliance with the NPT. When the Treaty was negotiated, these arrangements were already in place. Their nature was made clear to key delegations and subsequently made public. They were not challenged.”

NATO, NATO's Position Regarding Nuclear Non-Proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament and Related Issues, October 22, 2009, p. 3.



German Luftwaffe personnel practice loading U.S. B61 nuclear weapon onto German Tornado aircraft.

Legal Cold War history aside, is the assignment of nuclear strike missions to non-nuclear NPT countries in NATO in sync with the non-proliferation standards Europe and the United States are promoting in the post-Cold War era?

The Mission: Military Need

No apparent military need to deploy nuclear weapons in Europe:

“We pay a king’s ransom for these things and... they have no military value.”

Senior leader at US European Command, quoted in Report of the Secretary of Defense Task Force on DOD Nuclear Weapons Management, Phase II: Review of the DOD Nuclear Mission, December 2008, p. 59.



...and the bombs are militarily redundant:



“No”

General James Cartwright, former STRATCOM Commander and currently the Vice Chairman of The Joint Chiefs of Staff, when asked in April 2010 if there is a military mission performed by the tactical nuclear bombs in Europe that cannot be performed by either US strategic nuclear forces or conventional forces.

The Mission: Potential Targets

Standing peacetime nuclear contingency plans have been terminated, and “NATO's nuclear forces no longer target any country.”

“Standing” contingency planning has been replaced by “adaptive” contingency and crisis planning

Base locations and aircraft range suggest potential targets are:

- Russian bases and storage facilities
- Iran’s nuclear-related facilities and missile bases
- Syrian WMD facilities



Posture Drivers: Russia

Russian non-strategic nuclear forces

- Estimated 2,000+ operational
(perhaps 5,300 total remaining, down from 15,000 in 1991)
- Diverse weapons and platforms
 - Cruise missiles, bombs, ASM, SAM, ABM, torpedoes, depth charges
 - Aircraft, submarines, surface ships, ABM
- Reduction since 1992:
 - Removed 100 percent from ground forces (some doubts remain)
 - Reduced by 50 percent in Air Force
 - Reduced by 60 percent in missile defense troops
 - Reduced by 30 percent on submarines (weapons have been removed from ships and submarines but could be deployed if necessary)
- Non-strategic nuclear weapons compensate for inferior conventional capability; no-first-use reversed



Posture Drivers: Proliferators

Iran

- Suspected nuclear weapons program
- Chem/bio program
- Extensive ballistic missile program
- In US strategic war plan (OPLAN 8010)



Syria

- Chem/bio program
- Alleged “non-peaceful” plutonium production reactor at Al Kibar bombed by Israel in 2007
- Ballistic missiles
- In US strategic war plan (OPLAN 8010)



Posture Drivers: Institutional

Other than external threats, internal bureaucracy can also determine postures and resist change

- Lack of analysis: With other issues being much more important for post-Cold War NATO, the nuclear mission has not received equal attention
- Tradition: NATO has “always” had nuclear weapons and thinking about reducing or even eliminating posture can be hard
- Careers: Officials have invested decades in the nuclear mission and might want to protect their turf. “Nuclear” gives special privileges and status
- Inertia: Making consensus decisions with 28 member countries is extremely difficult



The Obama Administration

Barack Obama elected with strong arms control agenda and pledge to pursue nuclear disarmament

April 2009 Prague speech promised to “take concrete steps towards a world without nuclear weapons,” including:

- “negotiate a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty with the Russians this year” that “will set the stage for further cuts, and we will seek to include all nuclear weapons states in this endeavor.”
- “To put an end to Cold War thinking, we will reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy, and urge others to do the same.”



The Obama Administration

But the Prague speech also pledge to maintain nuclear forces for the foreseeable future:

“Make no mistake: As long as these weapons exist, the United States will maintain a safe, secure and effective arsenal to deter any adversary, and guarantee that defense to our allies....”

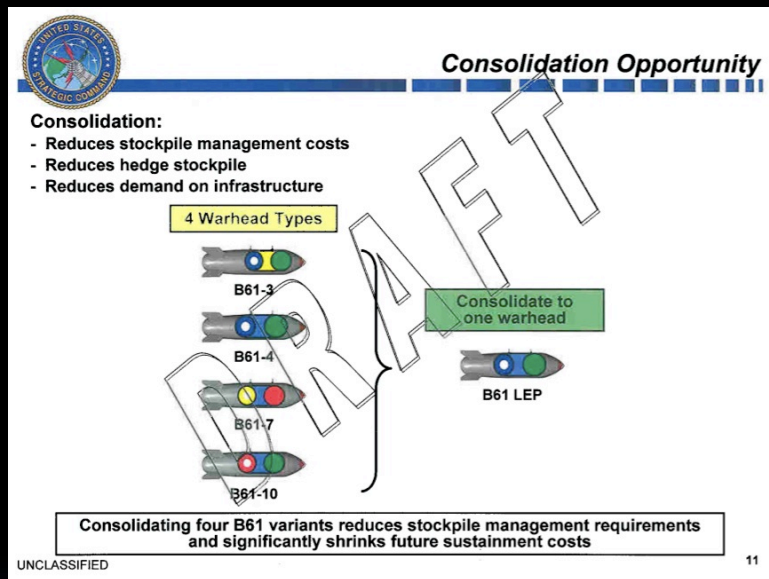
Significant nuclear investments planned, including:

- Nine percent weapons funding increase for the National Nuclear Security Administration in FY2011 (13 percent if counting nonproliferation work)
- More than \$175 billion through 2030 for building new nuclear weapons factories, testing and simulation facilities, and modernizing and extending the life of the nuclear weapons in the stockpile
- Well over \$100 billion through 2020 for modernization of the nuclear forces



The Obama Administration

Partially related to NATO is plan to modify the B61 nuclear bomb and equip the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter with nuclear weapons capability:



The cut-and-paste bomb: B61-12

Mix and match components from four B61-types into one and add new capabilities; first delivery in 2017

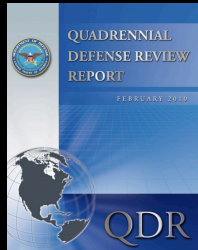
Cost: over \$4 billion

The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter (Block IV)

Replace nuclear F-15E, F-16, and PA-200 Tornado of US, Dutch, Italian, and Turkish air forces; delivery in 2017

Cost: at least \$339 million

The Obama Administration: Hints?



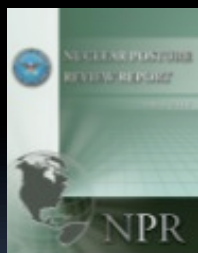
Feb 2010: Quadrennial Defense Review

“To reinforce U.S. commitments to our allies and partners, we will consult closely with them on new, tailored, regional deterrence architectures that combine our forward presence, relevant conventional capabilities (including missile defenses), and continued commitment to extend our nuclear deterrent. These regional architectures and new capabilities, as detailed in the Ballistic Missile Defense Review and the forthcoming Nuclear Posture Review, *make possible a reduced role for nuclear weapons in our national security strategy.*” (Emphasis added)



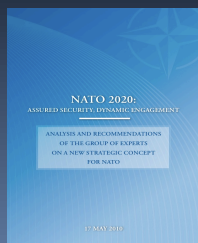
Feb 2010: Ballistic Missile Defense Review

“the role of U.S. nuclear weapons in these regional deterrence architectures *can be reduced by increasing the role of missile defenses and other capabilities.*” (Emphasis added)



Apr 2010: Nuclear Posture Review

“*Retain the capability to forward-deploy* U.S. nuclear weapons on tactical fighter-bombers (in the future, the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter) and heavy bombers (the B-2 and B-52H), and will proceed with full scope life extension, including surety – safety, security, and use control – enhancements, for the B-61 nuclear bomb, which will be able to be carried by the F-35 and B-2. *These decisions do not presume what NATO will decide about future deterrence requirements, but are intended to keep the Alliance’s options open and provide capabilities to support other U.S. commitments.*” (Emphasis added)



May 2010: NATO 2020 (Albright Expert Group)

“Under current security conditions, the retention of some U.S. forward-deployed *systems* on European soil reinforces the principle of extended nuclear deterrence and collective defense.” Non-nuclear allies can contribute can show solidarity and risk sharing “in the form of nuclear deployments on their territory or by non-nuclear support measures.” Conventional NATO Reaction Force should undertake Article 5 missions and “should be a central participant when when Article 5 exercises are conducted.” (Emphasis added)

Issues and Suggestions

- New start necessary in Strategic Concept update
 - Assess nuclear requirement as if no previous deployment ever occurred
 - Don't "recycle" old concepts; revisit assumptions; challenge claims
 - Review future need rather than mirror/leftovers from past posture
- Don't simplify "deterrence" and "extended deterrence"
 - Be clear if talking about *nuclear* and *conventional* deterrence
 - Be clear whether "extended deterrence" refers to overall nuclear capacity or the small portion of it currently left in Europe
 - Be honest about what else provides deterrence/reassurance
- Cost-benefit analysis. Does deployment in Europe:
 - create unnecessary security risks to nuclear weapons
 - advance or obstruct relations with Russia
 - support or contradict non-proliferation goals (sharing/signals)
 - empower or burden military in day-to-day tasking (cost/labor)

QUESTIONS?

Additional resources available at
FAS Strategic Security Blog
<http://www.fas.org/blog/ssp/category/nato>