

What are these modern weapons? These are cruise missiles that we did not have at one time—we did not have land-based cruise missiles. We removed them; we scrapped them. Meanwhile, the Americans were smarter at that time when they were holding talks with the Soviet Union. They scrapped land-based missiles but retained air- and sea-based missiles that were not covered by the treaty, and we became defenseless. But now we have them, and they are more modern and even more efficient.

There were plans to deliver a preventive disarming strike with hypersonic weapons. The United States does not have these weapons, but we do. Regarding a disarming strike, perhaps we should think about using the achievements of our U.S. partners and their ideas about how to ensure their own security. We are just thinking about this. No one was shy about discussing it out loud in the past. This is the first point.

The United States has a theory and even practice. They have the concept of a preventive strike in their strategy and other policy documents. We do not. Our strategy talks about a retaliatory strike. There are no secrets whatsoever. What is a retaliatory strike? That is a response strike. It is when our early warning system,

the missile attack warning system, detects missiles launched towards Russian Federation territory. First, it detects the launches, and then response actions begin.

We hold regular exercises of our nuclear forces. You can see them all, we are not hiding anything. We provide information under our agreements with all nuclear countries, including the United States. We inform our partners that we are conducting these exercises. Rest assured they do the exact same thing.

After the early warning system receives a signal indicating a missile attack, hundreds of our missiles are launched and they cannot be stopped. But it is still a retaliatory strike. What does that mean? It means that enemy missile warheads will fall on the territory of the Russian Federation. This cannot be avoided. They will fall anyway. True, nothing will remain of the enemy, because it is impossible to intercept hundreds of missiles. And this is, without a doubt, a potent deterrent.

But if a potential adversary believes it is possible to use the preventive strike theory, while we do not, this still makes us think about the threat that such ideas in the sphere of other countries' defence pose to us. That is all I have to say about that.

Nuclear Doctrine: A U.S. First Strike Nuclear Weapons Policy?

by Carl Osgood

Dec. 15—In his careful remarks during a Dec. 9 [press conference](#) in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, Russian President Vladimir Putin made a number of points about U.S. nuclear weapons policy and doctrine. In particular, he noted that the U.S. has a theory of *preventive* strike and has developed a system for a *disarming* strike aimed at taking out an opponent's ability to respond to a first strike from the U.S.

Russian nuclear weapons doctrine, on the other hand, is that of a *retaliatory* strike in response to a strategic attack on Russia. Putin on Dec. 9, 2022 in Bishkek, said of this:

But if a potential adversary believes it is possible to use the preventive strike theory, while we do not, this still makes us think about the threat that

such ideas in the sphere of other countries' defence pose to us.

A review of materials gathered by EIR News Service over the past two decades, shows that the policies that Putin pointed to, began with the G.W. Bush Administration in 2001–2002, including the preventive war policy and the development of the system for a first strike capability. Over the succeeding administrations the policies were revised from being aimed at terrorism and alleged rogue nations, to now aimed at “detering” two “near peer” powers, that is, Russia and China.

What follows is a review of the evolution of U.S. nuclear weapons policy, in four categories: preventive strikes, Prompt Global Strike, the absence of a no-first-

use policy, and the development of a first-strike capability.

The Preventive Strike

The 2002 *National Security Strategy* (2002 NSS) of the G.W. Bush Administration, following on the heels of the 9/11 attacks in 2001, first articulated the policy of *preemption*. At that time, it was focussed on preventing terrorist attacks, particularly those intended to generate mass casualties:

The greater the threat, the greater the risk of inaction—and the more compelling the case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves, even if uncer-



USACE-Europe

The U.S. has an estimated 100 B61 nuclear gravity bombs across Europe and in Türkiye. The 2001 NPR began the process of integrating nuclear forces with non-nuclear forces. Here, Ramstein Air Base in Germany, where there are storage vaults for nuclear weapons.

U.S. Nuclear Weapons in Europe and Türkiye

During his Dec.7 discussion with human rights experts in Moscow, Russian President Vladimir Putin referred to “large amounts of nuclear weapons” stationed in Europe by the United States. He made the point that Russia does not have any nuclear weapons deployed outside of its own territory, while the U.S. does.

According to the most recent available information published by Hans Kristensen, the Director of the Nuclear Information Project of the Federation of American Scientists, the U.S. has an estimated 100 B61 nuclear gravity bombs located at the Kleine-Brogel Air Base in Belgium, Büchel Air Base in Germany, Aviano and Ghedi Air Bases in Italy, Volkel Air Base in the Netherlands, and at Incirlik Air Base in Türkiye. In addition, there are nuclear storage vaults at the Ramstein Air Base in Germany and at RAF Lakenheath in the UK, although no bombs are thought to be stored at those locations. The vaults at RAF Lakenheath were recently added to the list of U.S. nuclear modernization projects, and modernization projects are underway at four of the other six bases.

Kristensen’s estimate of 100 bombs is based not on any official information but on analyses of publicly available information, such as satellite imagery. The B61-3/4 bombs currently stored in Europe are set to be replaced with the B61-12 version beginning in 2023. The main feature of the B61-12 is a GPS guidance kit that vastly improves the accuracy of the bomb. The F-16 and Tornado jets that have heretofore been deployed to deliver the B61 bombs are themselves being replaced by F-35A stealth fighters.

Steadfast Noon is NATO’s annual nuclear-sharing training exercise, usually held in the Autumn during which aircraft crews from non-nuclear Belgium, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands train on how to deliver U.S.-supplied nuclear bombs. Several other NATO members, most notably Poland, are also involved in Steadfast Noon exercises in non-nuclear support roles. Nuclear use policies and decisions are made by NATO’s Nuclear Planning Group, which involves all NATO members except France, which has its own independent nuclear force.



USAF/Senior Airman Marissa Tucker

B61 thermonuclear gravity bombs are stockpiled at Incirlik Air Base, Turkey.

tainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy's attack. To forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act preemptively.

The 2002 NSS did not elaborate on what role nuclear weapons would play in the preemption policy. The role of nuclear weapons in U.S. strategic policy had already been laid out in the 2001 Nuclear Posture Review (2001 NPR), submitted to Congress a few months earlier. The 2001 NPR began the process of integrating nuclear forces with non-nuclear forces into a broader notion of deterrence, a process that has today produced what Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin calls "integrated deterrence," a nuclear strike being one option among several in response to a contingency, even if that contingency, such as a Peoples' Liberation Army assault on Taiwan, doesn't itself involve nuclear weapons or the threat of a strategic attack on the United States.

The nuclear triad (air, land, and sea) was embedded in what the Rumsfeld Pentagon (1975–1977) called a "new triad" that included non-nuclear forces and

missile defense forces as well as nuclear forces. According to excerpts of the document that were leaked a few years later:

Advances in defensive technologies will allow U.S. non-nuclear and nuclear capabilities to be coupled with active and passive defenses to help provide deterrence and protection against attack, preserve U.S. freedom of action, and strengthen the credibility of U.S. alliance commitments. Missile defenses are beginning to emerge as

systems that can have an effect on the strategic and operational calculations of potential adversaries. They are now capable of providing active defense against short- to medium-range threats.

[U.S. military forces themselves, including nuclear forces, will now be used to] dissuade ad-



USAF/Giancarlo Casem

Mounted under the wing of this B-52 bomber is a long-range hypersonic missile, ready for testing. Edwards Air Force Base, California, Aug. 8, 2020.

versaries from undertaking military programs or operations that could threaten U.S. interests or those of allies and friends.

This was the context in which the G.W. Bush Administration (2001–2009) withdrew the U.S. from

the 1972 ABM Treaty over Russian protests.

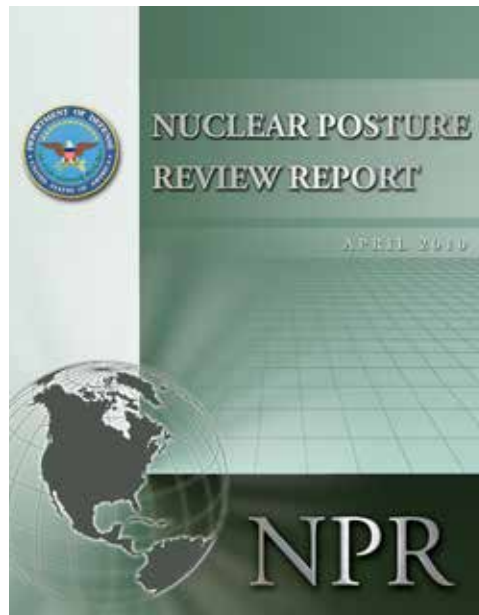
The 2001 NPR also named seven countries against which U.S. nuclear weapons could be used: China, Iran, Iraq, North Korea, Libya, Russia, and Syria. Only China and Russia had nuclear weapons at that time. Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Libya, and Syria were all described as countries “that could be involved in immediate, potential, or unexpected contingencies.... All sponsor or harbor terrorists, and all have active WMD and missile programs.”

China, because of the ongoing modernization of its conventional and nuclear forces, was “a country that could be involved in an immediate or potential contingency.” Russia, despite the “changed relationship” with the U.S. that had followed the end of the Cold War, “faces many strategic problems around its periphery and its future course cannot be charted with certainty. U.S. planning must take this into account. In the event that U.S. relations with Russia significantly worsen in the future, the U.S. may need to revise its nuclear force levels and posture.”

Prompt Global Strike

The concept of Prompt Global Strike was also born during the G.W. Bush administration. The idea, initially, was to place a conventional warhead on an ICBM or a Trident submarine-launched missile in order to be able to strike a suddenly emerging target anywhere in the world within 60 minutes of the decision to do so, particularly if it was out of the reach of forward deployed U.S. forces. The obvious problem was that China or Russia, upon detecting such a launch on their early warning systems, would not be able to tell if the missile was carrying a conventional or nuclear warhead. The idea nonetheless has persisted through three presidencies and is now being developing on the basis of hypersonic vehicles.

As Putin pointed out in his Dec. 9 remarks, the U.S. today has no operational hypersonic capability. There are, however, Pentagon programs to develop hypersonic



The 2010 NPR does not rule out a first strike, without explicitly saying so: “The U.S. would only consider the use of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the U.S. or its allies and partners.”

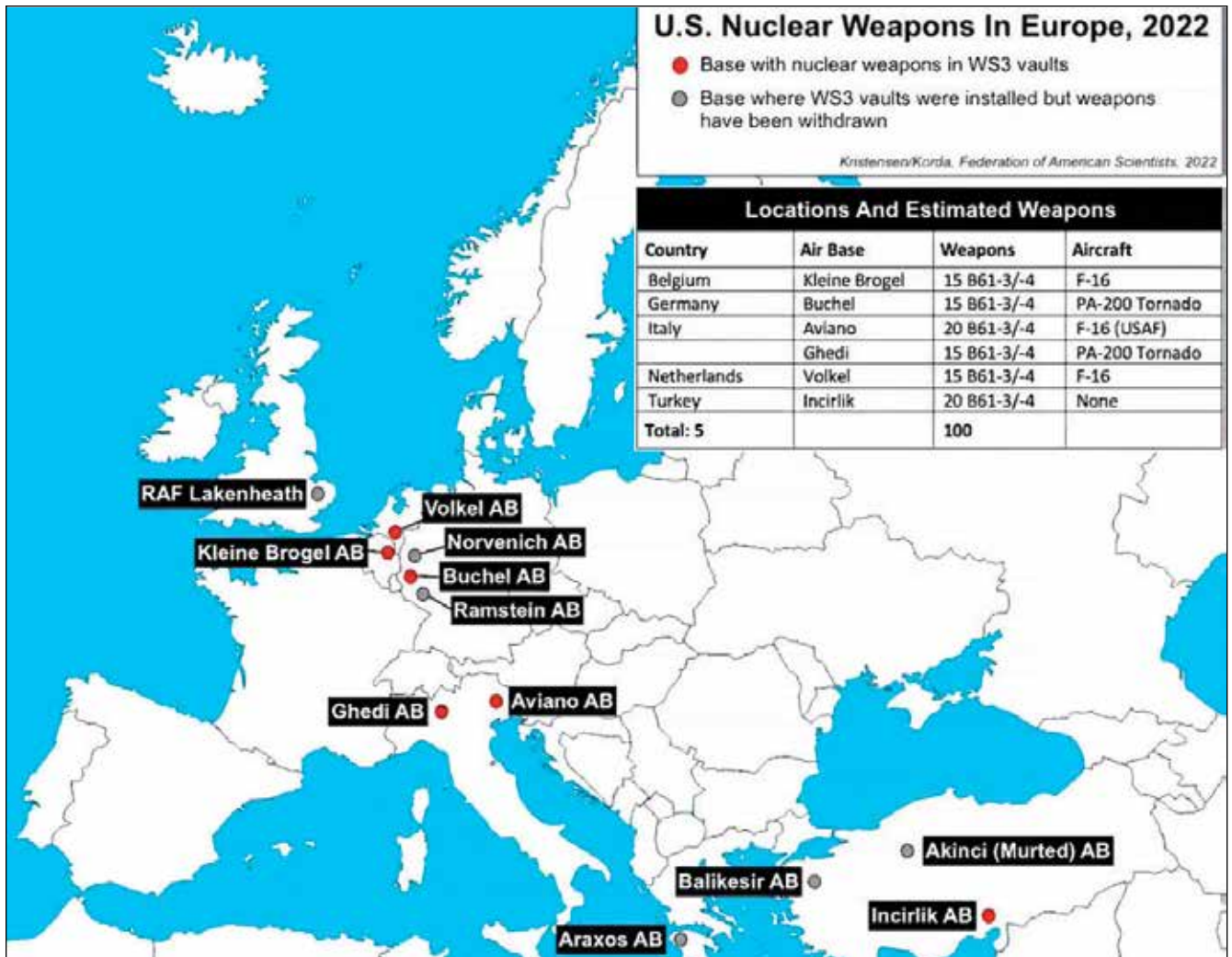
weapons for the U.S. Air Force, Navy, and Army. The Air Force announced Dec. 12 the first successful test flight of its AGM-183A Air-launched Rapid Response Weapon (ARRW), which took place Dec. 9. The prototype hypersonic missile was launched from a B-52H Stratofortress bomber, the 412th Test Wing, at Edwards Air Force Base, according to an Air Force statement, reported by *Defense News*. The prototype rapidly accelerated to greater than five times the speed of sound. The missile then completed its planned flight path and detonated, and the early results showed all the test’s objectives were met, read the statement. However, according to the *Defense News* report, the flight test program for the ARRW began with three consecutive failures, and as a result the Air Force still has not figured out yet how the program will go forward to an operational capability.

No-First-Use

The United States does not now and never has had a no-first-use declaratory policy on nuclear weapons. The Biden Administration’s [2022 NPR](#), released in October, dispenses with no-first-use and sole-purpose policies by reporting that the reviewers “concluded that those approaches would result in an unacceptable level of risk in light of non-nuclear capabilities being developed and fielded by competitors that could inflict strategic-level damage” to the U.S. and its allies and partners.

The 2022 NPR claims that the U.S. retains the goal of moving toward a sole-purpose declaration “and we will work with our allies and partners to identify concrete steps that would allow us to do so.”

Daryl G. Kimball, Executive Director of the Arms Control Association, warned that in reality, policies that threaten the first use of nuclear weapons carry unacceptable risks. In a [commentary](#) written for the December 2022 issue of *Arms Control Today*, Kimball called the 2022 NPR “disappointing” because it and all previous NPRs “maintain a dangerous reliance on the threat to use nuclear weapons to deter and, if necessary, respond to hostile attacks, including non-nuclear



Federation of American Scientists/Hans Kristensen/Matt Korda

This 2022 map shows estimated nuclear weapons stockpiles at U.S. Air Bases in Europe and Türkiye.

attacks, ‘that have a strategic effect against the United States or its allies and partners.’”

Kimball noted that the Biden NPR “walks back” Biden’s own pledges prior to assuming office, to make no-first-use a part of U.S. nuclear policy. In 2020 Biden wrote:

[T]he sole purpose of our nuclear arsenal is to deter—and, if necessary, retaliate—for a nuclear attack against the United States and its allies. As President, I will work to put that belief into practice, in consultation with the U.S. military and U.S. allies.

As far back as 1990, Kimball says, Biden, then a U.S. Senator, argued that the “military rationale for ‘first use’ has disappeared.”

As Biden himself [declared](#) Oct. 6 at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee fundraiser, the risk of “Armageddon” was the highest since the Cuban missile crisis:

I don’t think there’s any such thing as an ability to easily use a tactical nuclear weapon and not end up with Armageddon. [Biden was talking about Russian use of tactical nuclear weapons, not U.S. use. —ed.]

Nevertheless, Kimball continues, Biden’s NPR, released two weeks after his “Armageddon” remark, leaves open exactly that possibility.

Similarly, the 2010 *Nuclear Posture Review* (2010 NPR) of the Obama Administration also did not adopt a no-first-use policy or a sole-purpose policy. As with the

G.W. Bush Administration, the Obama policy was placed in the context of the terrorist threat and the “changing” international security environment. It announced that the U.S. was “now prepared to strengthen its long-standing ‘negative security assurance’ by declaring that the United States will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons states that are party to the NPT and in compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations.”

At the same time, the *2010 NPR* affirmed:

Any state eligible for the assurance that uses chemical or biological weapons against the United States or its allies and partners would face the prospect of a devastating conventional military response....

For countries not covered by the assurance, that is, countries not in compliance with the NPT or that possess nuclear weapons, the *2010 NPR* states:

There remains a narrow range of contingencies in which U.S. nuclear weapons may still play a role in deterring a conventional or CBW (chemical-biological weapons) attack against the United States or its allies and partners. The United States is therefore not prepared at the present time to adopt a universal policy that deterring nuclear attack is the sole purpose of nuclear weapons.

The *2010 NPR* does not rule out a first strike, though without explicitly saying so:

The United States would only consider the use of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States or its allies and partners.

The *2010 NPR* was followed June 19, 2013, by a [report](#) released by the Pentagon on behalf of President Obama, titled “Report on Nuclear Weapons Employment Strategy of the United States.” Citing Al Qaeda and like-thinking groups as seeking nuclear weapons, the report said: “The threat of global war has ... become remote, but the risk of nuclear attack has increased. Today’s most immediate and extreme danger remains nuclear terrorism.” The other pressing threat is proliferation, that is, to Iran and North Korea, which the

U.S. will continue to sanction and otherwise coerce, “to bring them into compliance with their obligations. Although differences remain between the U.S. and Russia, the prospects of a military confrontation between us have declined dramatically. [Yet] Russia remains the United States’ only peer in nuclear weapons capabilities.”

While the need for parity is not as compelling as it was during the Cold War, the 2013 report continues:

Large disparities in nuclear capabilities could raise concerns on both sides and among U.S. allies and partners, and may not be conducive to maintaining a stable, long-term relationship, especially as nuclear forces are significantly reduced. We therefore continue to place importance on Russia joining us as we move to lower levels of nuclear weapons.

The United States seeks to maintain strategic stability with Russia. Consistent with the objective of maintaining an effective deterrent posture, the United States seeks to improve strategic stability by demonstrating that it is not our intent to negate Russia’s strategic nuclear deterrent or to destabilize military relationship with Russia. Strategic stability would be strengthened through similar Russian steps toward the United States and U.S. Allies.

One theme that runs through the rest of the 2013 document is reducing reliance on nuclear weapons by eventually replacing them with conventional strike capabilities:

DoD [the Department of Defense] is directed to conduct deliberate planning for non-nuclear strike options to assess what objectives and effects could be achieved through integrated non-nuclear strike options and to propose possible means to make these objectives and effects achievable.... Planning for non-nuclear strike options is a central part of reducing the role of nuclear weapons.

Otherwise, Congress was informed that the U.S. will continue to maintain the current nuclear triad:

These forces should be operated on a day-to-day basis in a manner that maintains strategic stability with Russia and China, deters potential re-

gional adversaries and assures U.S. allies and partners.

The U.S. will also maintain forward-deployed weapons in Europe consistent with NATO's [2012 Deterrence and Defense Posture Review](#).

The Trump Administration (2017–2021) also did not have a no-first-use policy. The U.S. declaratory policy as announced in the [2018 NPR](#) was as follows:

The United States would only consider the employment of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States, its allies, and partners...

characteristics built into the nuclear forces that allow for nuclear warfighting, not just deterrence.

Hans Kristensen, Director of the Nuclear Information Project of the Federation of American Scientists; Ted Postol, MIT Professor Emeritus; and Matthew G. McKinsey, Director of the Nuclear Program of the Natural Resources Defense Council, posted an [article](#) in the March 1, 2017 issue of *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* reporting that the U.S. Navy had tripled the lethality of its Trident ballistic missiles with a new fusing system. In short, this new fusing system predicts the warhead's impact point ahead of time, and if the missile is going to overfly the target, and impact beyond it, it detonates the warhead as it passes over the



U.S. Navy/Aaron Abbott

U.S. ballistic missile submarines outnumber the Russian Navy's nuclear attack submarines, creating, according to Russian analyst Alexander Timokhin, "a technical opportunity for the U.S. to launch a successful disarming nuclear strike against Russia without receiving a significant blow in response." Shown: the USS Tennessee ballistic missile submarine.

Extreme circumstances could include significant non-nuclear strategic attacks....

The United States will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons states that are party to the NPT and in compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations.

Given the potential of significant non-nuclear strategic attacks, the United States reserves the right to make any adjustment in the assurance that may be warranted by the evolution and proliferation of non-nuclear strategic attack technologies and U.S. capabilities to counter that threat.

First Strike Capability?

If the U.S. does not have a no-first-use policy, then it follows that the U.S. must have a policy of using nuclear weapons first under certain circumstances. In order for that "option" to be available, there must be

target instead, increasing the chances that a hardened target, such as an ICBM silo, will be destroyed.

With the old fusing system, warheads would be detonated at a fixed altitude, regardless of trajectory, and on that basis, it was expected that a certain number of warheads would miss their targets. To compensate for that, more than one warhead would be aimed at a hardened target, in order to assure its destruction. Even if the trajectory of the warhead will take it beyond lethal range, the new fusing system will detonate it at whatever altitude it has reached as it passes over the target, within lethal range.

This feature vastly increases the probability that the target will be destroyed with only one hit. The three expert authors wrote:

This increase in capability is astonishing—boosting the overall killing power of existing U.S. ballistic missile forces by a factor of roughly three—

and it creates exactly what one would expect to see, if a nuclear-armed state were planning to have the capacity to fight and win a nuclear war by disarming enemies with a surprise first strike.

The implications of this are sobering. By tripling the lethality of the submarine-launched nuclear arsenal—a similar program was reported to be underway for land-based Minuteman ICBMs—the possibilities of nuclear warfighting become really tempting.

In all, the entire Russian silo-based forces could potentially be destroyed while leaving the U.S. with 79% of its ballistic missile warheads unused. Even after Russia's silo-based missiles were attacked, the U.S. nuclear firepower remaining would be staggering—and certainly of concern to Russia or any other country worried about a U.S. first strike.

Russia has a serious problem in the face of this threat. Even though it has approximately the same number of warheads as the U.S., as limited by the New START treaty, it does not have the capability to match the U.S. lethality with the new super fuses. Russia's entire land-based ICBM force is now at risk, including its mobile missiles, and its submarines are not a guaranteed retaliatory capability. And the U.S. still has plenty of warheads left over to attack government, command and control, and other military targets. The experts wrote,

The capability upgrade has happened outside the attention of most government officials, who have been preoccupied with reducing nuclear warhead numbers. The result is a nuclear arsenal that is being transformed into a force that has the unambiguous characteristics of being optimized for surprise attacks against Russia and for fighting and winning nuclear wars.

The situation is aggravated by the shortfalls in Russian space-based warning capability, which Postol developed in detail during a March 17, 2022, discussion hosted by the American Committee for U.S.-Russia Accord. Postol set out the theme of his presentation with the following text, as a slide:

Because of the ever-increasing firepower of U.S. nuclear forces, and the severe technical short-

falls in Russian space-based sensing technologies, Russia has been forced into a doomsday posture where under certain conditions its nuclear forces will be launched automatically.

The shortfalls in Russian space-based capabilities are such that if there is not enough time to assure a decision whether or not to launch a retaliatory strike, the Russian command authorities will have to pre-delegate launch authority to lower-level commanders. If the threat increases substantially, Russia will have made that pre-delegation decision.

Postol pointed to the January 25, 1995 false alert, when the Russian early warning system identified a Norwegian sounding rocket as a missile strike heading toward Russia. It just so happens that the Norwegian launch occurred in the same corridor as that which the Russians would expect an ICBM launch from the U.S. to come through. The Russian concern was that a U.S. missile barrage would be preceded by the high-altitude detonation of a single warhead from an ICBM, intended to blind their ground-based early warning radar with a layer of ionized air. With that layer in place, the U.S. could then launch Trident missiles from submarines. The Tridents, Postol said, are far more accurate than the U.S. Minuteman III land-based ICBMs. The “hope” behind this tactic was to delay Russian decision-making, so that Russian ICBMs could be hit before they could be launched from their silos.

With only ground-based radar, Russian warning time is only about 7–8 minutes. That's shortened by the 1–2 minutes that it takes for the radar systems to generate tracks on the incoming warheads. There is simply no time for a President to make decisions in such conditions. Fortunately, the crisis was averted.

Indeed, the surfacing of the ballistic missile submarine *USS West Virginia* in the Arabian Sea Oct. 19, to take aboard Gen. Michael Kurilla, the commander of U.S. Central Command, was seen in Moscow as a message that the U.S. believes that it has the capability for a *disarming* first strike on Russia. This was highlighted in an article, by Alexander Timokhin, “The U.S. Signals Readiness To Launch Nuclear Strike Against Russia,” Oct. 25 in the Moscow security publication *Vzglyad*—published on line in [English translation](#) by Moscow-based Australian journalist John Helmer, which reported that there are two Russian Strategic Missile Forces (RVSF) bases only about 3,000 km from the Arabian Sea, well inside the range of the Trident missile.

This does not mean that the *West Virginia* was in the

Arabian Sea to target those bases; rather its appearance was a message that the U.S. now considers that it can take out Russia's nuclear arsenal without suffering a retaliatory strike in return. And, since the Russian navy does not have the capacity—that is, a sufficient number of nuclear attack submarines to patrol all the possible launch areas for U.S. missiles—to track and, if deemed necessary, destroy U.S. Navy ballistic missile submarines wherever they may be, this “creates a technical opportunity for the United States to launch a successful disarming nuclear strike against Russia without receiving a significant blow in response,” writes author Alexander Timokhin, adding:

At the same time, the intensity of anti-Russian propaganda is such that the Western man in the street will not have to justify anything from that perspective; everything is already prepared. And right now, there is the hint of the possibility of such a strike when the *West Virginia* surfaced in the Arabian Sea.

Timokhin goes into some detail as to how the U.S. could launch a first strike quickly enough to disarm Russia and prevent a Russian retaliation, for example by launching missiles on a flat trajectory rather than a ballistic trajectory. A flat trajectory reduces both range and accuracy but dramatically shortens the flight time to the target, to the point that launch orders from Moscow would not reach Russian Strategic Rocket Forces (RVSF) units in time before they were destroyed. Timokhin concludes:

It's all very complicated, and the risks of loss of surprise are very high. But their chances of success are not zero. With the visit of *West Virginia* to our “soft underbelly,” the Americans clearly show how far they are willing to go if they deem it necessary. The Americans are sending an extremely clear signal—for them, nuclear war is no longer unthinkable, and not impossible.

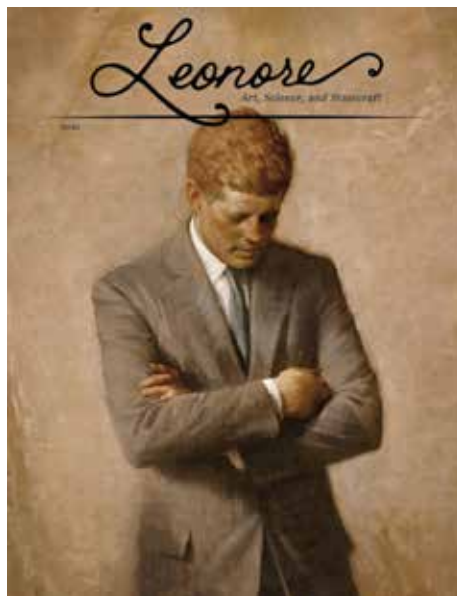
cjosgood@att.net

The Schiller Institute

has just released Volume 2, No. 1, of its new journal *Leonore*, which opens with the following from Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.'s October 20, 2002, article, “The Historical Individual”:

“The principal cause for the doom of any culture, is that mental disorder typical of popular opinion, which is to assume the validity of any assumptions currently adopted by a learned profession, or religious teaching, or more crudely adopted as ‘generally accepted popular opinion.’”

The 88-page issue, contains eleven articles, including the first English translation of one of the last letters by the 15th century scientific and political genius, Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa, which has been called his “religious last will,” and an original translation of Friedrich Schiller’s “On the Sublime,” described as “perhaps his most refined discussion of the process of the development of the soul.”



Preview

the issue [here](#) and see the full table of contents.

The preview includes the ground-breaking article by Jason Ross, “Vernadskian Time: Time for Humanity,” which addresses “the paradoxes posed by Vernadsky’s scientific work,” which open the way to an entirely new set of definitions of space, time and matter, taken from the standpoint of the human mind.

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