

Reducing and Regulating Non Strategic Nuclear Weapons in Europe: The U.S. and NATO Dimensions

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December 11, 2009



Tochka-U short-range (120 km) missile

OVERVIEW



- I. Why Reduce NSNW in Europe?
- II. Why hasn't it happened?
- III. Status of NSNW in Europe
- IV. Military Utility and Politics of NSNW in U.S. and NATO

The Need for Reductions

- NSNW are among most dangerous nuclear weapons
 - Pose risk of lowering nuclear threshold and terrorist theft
 - Least transparent, regulated category of nuclear weapons
- Political and Diplomatic Problem for U.S., Some Allies
 - Obama Prague pledge; Senate Republicans will raise failure to include Russian NSNW during START follow-on debate
 - Problem for NATO allies, U.S. in NPT context
 - 2000 NPT Review Conference called for :
 - Further unilateral reductions
 - Making NSNW “ integral part of the nuclear arms reduction and disarmament process.”
 - Domestic political issue in Western Europe—Germany, etc.



Obstacles to Reductions

- No military necessity...
 - Almost No Military Utility for US- symbolic
 - Limited Military Utility for Russia
- ...But Politics
 - NATO internal politics in US, Europe
 - Domestic politics and inertia in Russia
- Stalemate: Who goes first?
 - Russia—wants U.S. to withdraw before it will talk
 - U.S. – wants to negotiate deal before withdrawal





The Story So Far

- 10s of 1000s of NSNW during Cold War
- Then came **Presidential Nuclear Initiatives** (PNIs): Non-binding unilateral declarations made by President George H.W. Bush and Soviet and Russian Presidents Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin in 1991/1992.
- PNIs aimed to reduce both true TNW (short-range nuclear-capable delivery vehicles and warheads for them) and other n-weapons not covered by START and INF.
- Called for ceasing deployment of vast majority of these weapons, eliminating many of them.
- Indications both countries have implemented the PNIs, if a little belatedly and with differences over definitions in pledges.

But no means of verifying these claims and still significant #s

Status of Russian NSNW

1991 – 21,700;

Official data – “three quarters eliminated”

Current – about 5,000 total

About 2,000 – air-launched (gravity bombs and short-range missiles)

About 2,000 or less – warheads for SLCMs. At least part are stored at naval bases and are available for deployment on ships and submarines. Crew train for handling.

Warheads for ground-launched missiles – none.

Remainder – probably a mix of artillery shells, warheads for air defense missiles, mines. Most are awaiting elimination

Reductions continue (due to expiration of warranty and limited refurbishing capability), but are not acknowledged.



Status of US NSNW

1980s—stationed at 125 bases in Europe

2000—stationed at 10 bases in 7 countries

**Since 2000, some add'l weapons withdrawn:
Greece, Ramstein AFB, Germany, UK**

1991--- 4000 weapons in Europe

Current:

**Up to 1100 total stockpile
(including reserves),**

~ 200 in five European NATO states

U.S. also stores SLCMs for defense of Japan.

Not likely to figure in US-Russian discussions



Michael Ammons, U.S. Air Force/Getty Images

US NSNW in Europe

B61 Gravity Bombs in Five European Countries:

- **Belgium**—Kleine Brogel—10-20
- **Germany**- Buchel- 10-20
Ramstein was largest base, withdrawn
Use Tornados, nearing end of service life
- **Netherlands**—Volkel— 10-20
- **Italy**—Aviano—50
? Ghedi Torre (20-40)— Rumored consolidated at Aviano
- **Turkey**—Incirlik—50-90
Rotational wing, no fighter wing permanent base
Turkish national nuclear mission may have expired



Limited Military Utility for NSNW in NATO

- Used to counter massive tank formations
Little conventional threat to NATO now



- Distance of weapons from new NATO borders
- In most cases, other nuclear assets can serve extended deterrence mission
- European concerns about lifetime of Dual-Capable Aircraft
- Militaries finds NSNW a problem
 - US EUCOM Report: not needed.
 - Questions about safety, operating procedures, etc., non-U.S. bases (Air Force Report)

Turkey may be the important exception



Politics of NSNW: United States

- Withdrawal conforms to Obama's vision of a world free of nuclear weapons
- Faces pressure from Congressional Republicans, Cong. Strategic Posture Commission vis-à-vis preserving NSNW for extended deterrence of allies and to address Russian NSNW.

- Administration has held off serious thinking until after:

Nuclear Posture Review (due Jan/Feb 2010)

Immediate START follow-on (ratification now expected Spring 2010)

And as part of NATO Strategic Concept (due by 2011)

Could affect START follow-on debate, politics of NPR

Politics of NSNW: NATO-Western Europe



- Face public pressure, calls at NPT to remove weapons.
- Most Western European Countries see little need for weapons
- But want to carry out withdrawals in NATO context, by consensus.
- Germany previously split; FM Westerwelle won endorsement of withdrawal as price for coalition:

“In the context of the talks on a new Strategic Concept for NATO we will advocate within NATO and towards our U.S. allies a withdrawal of remaining nuclear weapons from Germany.” – Coalition Agreement text

- Belgium, Netherlands likely to follow German example

Politics of NSNW: NATO-Central and Eastern Europe



- General concern about shift in attitude toward region from Bush to Obama, Russia's resurgence
 - Open letter from Havel, Walesa, etc.
 - Make Article V more credible and provide strategic reassurance
 - Contingency planning, prepositioning equipment, not NSNW
 - Change in missile defense posture reinforced concern
 - Concern about NATO's focus on out-of-area operations
 - Important contributors to Afghanistan
- Nuclear Deterrence
 - Little evidence states specifically demand NSNW per se
 - Still want involvement in Nuclear Planning Group

Politics of NSNW: NATO-Turkey

- A different and less mature threat: Iran
 - NSNW of greater military utility
 - Fears of developing independent arsenal
- Skepticism about Article V guarantee
 - Wavering response to previous requests for NATO conventional deployments under Article V run-up to 1991 and 2003 Iraq wars
- Reflects general problems with relations with Europe, particularly France (ie EU membership); also concerns about Turkish foreign policy shift Eastward. Turkey has dual approaches.
- U.S./Turkey relations still recovering from Bush—U.S. needs Turkey vis-à-vis Iran, in Afghanistan, and in Israel/Syria negotiations
- Changes in NATO Missile Defense plans may help some



Politics of NSNW: US/NATO-Bottom Line



Removing forward-deployed weapons from Europe as a result forthcoming NATO Strategic Concept may be possible but there are necessary preconditions:

1. Consultations are essential and must first address underlying concerns about NATO's direction and cohesion and ensuring Article V protection for new NATO members and Turkey.
2. Weapons are political symbol, insurance policy, not military instruments. Alternatives including strategic U.S. nuclear weapons and especially conventional U.S. force protection for Baltics can and should be found. Other political relationship, i.e., Turkey's quest for EU membership play important indirect role.



Politics of NSNW: US/NATO-Bottom Line (2)

3. If NPR limits roles and missions for nuclear weapons, i.e., only to deterring other nuclear weapons would make it easier to recommend NSNW cuts and assign U.S. strategic weapons to extended deterrence
4. Withdrawal would be best be taken in implicit or explicit bargain for consolidation of Russian NSNW and/or elimination of some of them.
- 5.2nd round of post-START negotiations has to address these weapons.

But success of these policies will depend on Russian internal politics and views