Lethal Legacy: NATO Nuclear Weapons

By “Coach Vance” Trefethen

***Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially reform its policy towards one or more countries in Europe***

Case Summary: This plan cancels the US military commitment to stationing tactical nuclear weapons in North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries. Tactical nuclear weapons are small nuclear bombs that are intended to be used to defeat a mass of enemy forces in a battlefield situation. They are in contrast to “strategic” nuclear weapons, which are launched from the homeland against the enemy’s homeland and would take out major cities (this plan does not affect “strategic” nuclear weapons at all). Tactical nukes were a key part of the defense of Western Europe during the Cold War, because of fears about the numerical superiority of Warsaw Pact (communist alliance) forces and their potential to overrun NATO. Most of them were removed after the Cold War ended, but 150-200 still remain and the Status Quo is committed to keeping them there. In fact, the US has announced a policy of upgrading them in ways that make them easier to use and therefore more dangerous because they are more likely to be used and start a nuclear war. They’re also stored at insecure facilities and sometimes in insecure places (like Turkey). NATO and world security would be enhanced by removing this lethal legacy and its associated risks, and bringing these weapons back home to the U.S.

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Lethal Legacy: NATO Nuclear Weapons

US nuclear weapons in NATO countries are still there, long after their Cold War purpose expired, and today they cause more harm than good. That’s why my partner and I are affirming that The United States Federal Government should substantially reform its policy towards one or more countries in Europe.

OBSERVATION 1. DEFINITIONS

Substantial

Merriam Webster Online Dictionary copyright 2022. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/substantial> (accessed 5 Aug 2022)

**:**[IMPORTANT](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/important), [ESSENTIAL](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/essential)

Policy

Merriam Webster Online Dictionary copyright 2022. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policy> (accessed 10 May 2022)

a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body

OBSERVATION 2. INHERENCY, the structure of the Status Quo. One simple FACT:

US nuclear bombs in Europe

Dan Zack 2022 (journalist) WASHINGTON POST 25 Mar 2022 " Meet the nuke the U.S. keeps in Europe, waiting to not be used" <https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2022/03/25/nuclear-weapon-b61-russia/> (accessed 19 June 2022)

Near steep vineyards of riesling grapes, in an underground vault at an air force base in western Germany, sits an American nuclear bomb. More than one of them, actually. Eachbomb is about the length of two refrigerators laid down end to end and as heavy as the average adult male musk ox. The bombs are slender and pointy anda little more than a foot wide. Experts estimate that there are about 100 suchbombs stored among five NATO countries, ready to be loaded on jets and dropped by the United States and its allies — old-school style, parachute and all — toward an enemy target. One version of this bomb can carry the explosive equivalent of 11 Hiroshimas. The bomb’s family name is B61. Over the past half-century, in various modifications, B61s have been sent to Europe to deter Russia and reassure the NATO alliance, and they remain there for those reasons.

OBSERVATION 3. HARMS. NATO nuclear weapons have serious Harms that justify their removal

HARM 1. Unstable Turkey

A. The Link: Turkey is unstable and we should have removed our nukes years ago

Hans Kristensen 2019 (Director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists) “Urgent: Move US Nuclear Weapons Out Of Turkey” <https://fas.org/blogs/security/2019/10/nukes-out-of-turkey/> (brackets in original; “Erdogan” is the president of Turkey) (accessed 28 May 2022)

Should the U.S. Air Force withdraw the roughly 50 B61 nuclear bombs it stores at the Incirlik Air Base in Turkey? The question has come to a head after Turkey’s invasion of Syria, Erdogan’s increasingly authoritarian leadership and deepening discord with NATO, Trump’s inability to manage U.S. security interests in Europe and the Middle East, and war-torn Syria only a few hundred miles from the largest U.S. nuclear weapons storage site in Europe. **[END QUOTE**]According to [The New York Times](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/14/world/middleeast/trump-turkey-syria.html), State and Energy Department (?) officials last weekend quietly reviewed plans for evacuating the weapons from Incirlik. **[HE GOES ON LATER TO SAY QUOTE**] “Those weapons, one senior official said, were now essentially Erdogan’s hostages. To fly them out of Incirlik would be to mark the de facto end of the Turkish-American alliance. To keep them there, though, is to perpetuate a nuclear vulnerability that should have been eliminated years ago.” That review is long overdue! [Actually, I’ve heard there have been several reviews and a lively internal debate since the 2016 coup attempt.] Some of us have been calling for withdrawal for years (see [here](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/jul/17/turkey-coup-attempt-raises-fears-over-safety-of-us-nuclear-stockpile) and [here](https://www.latimes.com/world/asia/la-na-turkey-nukes-20160721-snap-story.html)), but officials have resisted saying it wasn’t as bad as it looked and that the deployment still served a purpose. They were wrong. [**END QUOTE**] And by waiting so long to act, the United States has painted itself into a corner where the choice between nuclear security and abandoning Turkey has become unnecessarily stark and urgent. The situation is even more untenable because Incirlik in just a few years is scheduled to receive a large shipment of the new [B61-12 guided nuclear bomb](https://fas.org/blogs/security/2016/01/b61-12_earth-penetration/), which would be a recommitment to nuclear deployment in Turkey. This year is the 60th anniversary of the [first deployment of nuclear weapons to Turkey.](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00963402.1999.11460395?needAccess=true) [**HE CONCLUDES LATER BY SAYING QUOTE**] It is time to bring them home. [**END QUOTE**]

B. The Impact: Deadly radiation disaster

[Miles A. Pomper](https://theconversation.com/profiles/miles-a-pomper-275913) 2019 (Senior Fellow, James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Middlebury College) 23 Oct 2019 “**Why the US has nuclear weapons in Turkey – and may try to put the bombs away”** <https://theconversation.com/why-the-us-has-nuclear-weapons-in-turkey-and-may-try-to-put-the-bombs-away-125477> (accessed 28 May 2022)

The bombs themselves also require 12-digit codes to activate them, However, those protections are [only strong enough to delay unauthorized use](https://twitter.com/b_radzinsky/status/1186654541917413376), rather than actually prevent it. [**END QUOTE**] If those barriers were overcome, U.S forces could disable the weapons by destroying electrical components or detonating their chemical high explosive without causing a nuclear release. In the worst case, they could blow up the weapons or the facilities at Incirlik. Still the U.S. procedures are not designed to prevent skilled attacks or sabotage, especially from an ally. [**HE CONCLUDES LATER IN THE CONTEXT QUOTE**] With enough time, Turkey could make use of the nuclear material – if not to detonate in an actual nuclear explosion, then to “[release disastrous and deadly radiation](https://newrepublic.com/article/155381/us-nuclear-bombs-still-turkey7).” [**END QUOTE**]

HARM 2. Terrorism Target

A. Link: NATO nukes are vulnerable

Steve Andreasen and Isabelle Williams 2016. (Andreasen - national security consultant to the Nuclear Threat Initiative and its Global Nuclear Policy Program in Washington, DC, and teaches courses on National Security Policy and Crisis Management in Foreign Affairs at Humphrey School of Public Affairs, Univ of Minnesota. Williams is the senior adviser to the Global Nuclear Policy Program at the Nuclear Threat Initiative) Bring Home U.S. Tactical Nuclear Weapons from Europe (ethical disclosure: article is undated but contains internal references about events dated in 2016 and referring to future events in 2017) (accessed 28 May 2022) <https://media.nti.org/documents/Bring_Home_U.S._Tactical_Nuclear_Weapons_from_Europe.pdf>

Another new and increasingly alarming consideration in continuing to base U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe is the risk of a terrorist attack against a European NATO base. The U.S. Air Force cited deficiencies in the security of U.S. nuclear weapons stored in Europe in a study a few years ago, and former senior NATO officials have also raised concerns. U.S. Air Force General Robertus C.N. Remkes, who commanded the 39th Air Base Wing at Incirlik Air Base and later J5 EUCOM, wrote in 2011 of the severity of the political and security consequences of any infiltration of a site for the alliance, whether or not the attackers gained access to the weapons themselves.

B. Impact: Radiation leakage disaster.

**In fact, there already has been an attempted terrorist attack on a NATO nuclear weapons site. Listen to US Air Force Major General Robertus Remkes in 2011…**

Major General Robertus Remkes 2011. (former commander of the 39th Air Base Wing at Incirlik, Turkey, where some NATO tactical nuclear weapons are located ) “The Security of NATO Nuclear Weapons” (ethical disclosure: the article is undated, but references within the entire book refer to events in 2011 having occurred and future events in 2012) <https://media.nti.org/pdfs/NTI_Framework_Chpt3.pdf> (accessed 28 May 2022)

FOILED OR THWARTED ATTACK. Finally, this scenario has already occurred: the attack planned by Nizar Trabelsi that was thwarted by his arrest in September 2001. [**END QUOTE**]
The Consequences of an Attack
 It should be assumed that any attempt to attack a nuclear site in Europe storing U.S. B-61 bombs will have operational and political consequences, whether or not terrorists were to gain access to a nuclear bomb. For example, the operational consequences of an event involving the actual theft of a nuclear weapon would likely include the immediate withdrawal of all B-61s stored in Europe. One could also surmise that the political consequences might go so far as the outright rejection of U.S. military forces— not just nuclear weapons—in some or all NATO countries. **[HE CONCLUDES LATER IN THE SAME CONTEXT QUOTE**] The consequences of an event involving the destruction of or damage to a nuclear weapon most immediately would be cordoning a nuclear radiation leak and consequence management by local authorities; most countries in Europe are not equipped to address this type of disaster and it would take hours, or perhaps days, to handle such an event.

 HARM 3. Increased risk of nuclear war

A. The Link: Tactical nuclear weapons are the greatest danger of nuclear war

WASHINGTON POST 2022. (journalist Dan Zak) 25 Mar 2022 “Meet the nuke the U.S. keeps in Europe, waiting to not be used” <https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2022/03/25/nuclear-weapon-b61-russia/> (accessed 28 May 2022)

“The greatest danger of nuclear war are these so-called smaller, tactical weapons on ambiguous delivery vehicles,” Weber says. “Somehow using vanilla terms like ‘low yield’ makes it seem like they’re acceptable.” As Jim Mattis told the House Armed Services Committee in 2018 when he was defense secretary: “I don’t think there is any such thing as a ‘tactical nuclear weapon.’ Any nuclear weapon used any time is a strategic game-changer.”

B. The Impact is 91 million casualties

[Ellen Ioanes](https://www.businessinsider.com/author/ellen-ioanes) and [Dave Mosher](https://www.businessinsider.com/author/dave-mosher) 2020. (journalists) updated 23 Jan 2020 "A terrifying new animation shows how 1 'tactical' nuclear weapon could trigger a US-Russia war that kills 34 million people in 5 hours” <https://www.businessinsider.com/tactical-nuclear-weapons-escalation-us-russia-war-animated-strike-map-2019-9> (accessed 28 May 2022)

More than 91 million people in Russia, the US, and NATO-allied countries might be killed or injured within three hours following a single "nuclear warning shot," according to a terrifying new simulation.  **[END QUOTE**] The simulation is called ["Plan A,"](https://sgs.princeton.edu/the-lab/plan-a) and it's an audio-visual piece that was first posted to [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2jy3JU-ORpo) on September 6. (You can watch the full video at the end of this story.) [**THEY CONTINUE IN THE SAME CONTEXT QUOTE:]** Researchers at the Science and Global Security lab at Princeton University created the animation, which shows how a battle between Russia and NATO allies that uses so-called low-yield or "tactical" [nuclear weapons](https://www.businessinsider.com/nuclear-weapons-stockpiles-world-map-2017-8) — which can pack a blast equivalent to those the US used to destroy [Hiroshima](https://www.businessinsider.com/atomic-bomb-dropped-on-hiroshima-2017-8) or Nagasaki in World War II — might feasibly and quickly snowball into a global nuclear war. "This project is motivated by the need to highlight the potentially catastrophic consequences of current US and Russian nuclear war plans. The risk of nuclear war has increased dramatically in the past two years," the project states on its website.

OBSERVATION 4. We offer the following PLAN

1. The President orders the US military to remove all US nuclear weapons and associated support personnel deployed in NATO countries and return them to U.S. soil.

2. Funding through money saved by eliminating the upgrade program and maintenance costs in Europe, plus general federal revenues.

3. Enforcement through normal discipline in the military chain of command. Congress cancels funding for any actions inconsistent with the Plan.
4. Timeline: Plan begins 10 days after an affirmative ballot and phased in over 1 year.
5. All Affirmative speeches may clarify

OBSERVATION 5. SOLVENCY

Removing US tactical nuclear weapons from NATO solves the harms and creates net benefits

Ernie Regehr 2018 (Senior Fellow in Arctic Security & Defense at the Simons Foundation) “NATO and Nuclear Disarmament – II: It’s Time to End NATO Nuclear Sharing” 9 Nov 2018 <http://www.thesimonsfoundation.ca/sites/default/files/NATO%20and%20Nuclear%20Disarmament%20%E2%80%93%20II-It%E2%80%99s%20Time%20to%20End%20NATO%20Nuclear%20Sharing%2C%20CDP%20-%20November%209%202018.pdf>- (accessed 28 May 2022)

Besides alienating national populations, critics see other major risks in forward-deployed nuclear weapons – risks of accidents and basic handling blunders, and susceptibility to terrorist attacks. Forward deployment also invites pre-emptive attacks, inasmuch as any move in a crisis to get the B61 bombs ready for use would be readily visible to an adversary, making the demonstrably alerted aircraft tempting targets for pre-emptive attack. Furthermore, the European based nuclear bombs have really proven to be of questionable deterrent value among those NATO allies most anxious about Russian intentions toward them. Baltic and other East European NATO member states tend to support forward basing, but the presence of those forward-deployed systems seems to give them little comfort, as they demand instead the presence, close at hand, of NATO conventional forces (like the trip-wire force Canada is leading in Latvia). So, the case for removing B61 bombs from Europe remains strong.

2A Evidence: NATO Nuclear Weapons

DEFINITIONS / TOPICALITY

Yes, Turkey is a European country

Ozan Ceyhun 2018 (Turkish journalist) Turkey is a European country 6 Sept 2018 (accessed 28 May 2022) https://www.dailysabah.com/columns/ozan-ceyhun/2018/09/06/turkey-is-a-european-country

Turkey is a unique country that has territories in both Asia and Europe. No matter what is said about it, Turkey is a European country.

MINOR REPAIR RESPONSES

A/T “Just increase security on the military bases” – Even with enhanced security, NATO nukes aren’t justified

Major General Robertus Remkes 2011. (former commander of the 39th Air Base Wing at Incirlik, Turkey, where some NATO tactical nuclear weapons are located ) “The Security of NATO Nuclear Weapons” (ethical disclosure: the article is undated, but references within the entire book refer to events in 2011 having occurred and future events in 2012) <https://media.nti.org/pdfs/NTI_Framework_Chpt3.pdf> (accessed 28 May 2022)

Indeed, if security at NATO nuclear storage sites has not been or cannot be corrected quickly and completely, consideration should be given to immediately removing all remaining B-61s from Europe as an urgent measure to improve NATO security. ▶ Even with enhanced site security, the continuing terrorist threat, the inherent security risks in storing B-61s in Europe, and the questionable military utility of the B-61 in a NATO context demands that alternatives to NATO’s current nuclear posture should be given high priority— alternatives that are more credible and secure as a deterrent and consistent with NATO remaining a nuclear alliance.

INHERENCY

US nuclear weapons in Europe: 6 airbases in 5 European countries

Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation 2021. (national nonpartisan nonprofit research and advocacy group) 18 Aug 2021 “Fact Sheet: U.S. Nuclear Weapons in Europe” <https://armscontrolcenter.org/fact-sheet-u-s-nuclear-weapons-in-europe/#:~:text=In%202021%2C%20it%20is%20estimated,Netherlands%2C%20and%20Incirlik%20in%20Turkey>. (accessed 28 May 2022)

Nuclear weapons owned by the United States have been deployed in Europe since the mid-1950s, when President Dwight D. Eisenhower authorized their storage at allied North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) bases on the continent for use against the Soviet Union. Though NATO officially declares itself a “[nuclear alliance](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2020/2/pdf/200224-factsheet-nuclear-en.pdf),” it does not own any nuclear weapons. Instead, a small number of bombs are reportedly kept under U.S. Air Force guard at six airbases in five European countries, ready to be delivered by respective national fighter planes.

Official NATO policy declares reliance on nukes

Monica Montgomery 2018 (policy research intern at Arms Control Association) Sept 2018 “NATO Presses Stand on Nuclear Weapons” <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2018-09/news/nato-presses-stand-nuclear-weapons> (accessed 28 May 2022)

Leaders of the 29 NATO member nations approved changes to the alliance’s policies on nuclear deterrence and nonproliferation during their July 11–12 summit in Brussels. The 2018 Brussels summit declaration states that “NATO’s nuclear deterrence posture also relies on United States’ nuclear weapons forward-deployed in Europe,” a shift from the alliance’s 2016 Warsaw declaration stating that the posture relied “in part” on U.S. forward-deployed nuclear weapons.

Commitment to NATO nukes is increasing, not decreasing in Status Quo

Hans Kristensen & Matt Korda 2019. (Kristensen - is the director of the Nuclear Information Project with the Federation of American Scientists in Washington, DC. Korda  - is a research associate for the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists. MA in International Peace and Security from the Department of War Studies at King’s College London) “Tactical nuclear weapons, 2019” 30 Aug 2019 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2019.1654273?src=recsys> (accessed 28 May 2022)

Although many have questioned the continued need to forward-deploy US nuclear weapons, the United States and NATO have retained the mission as a symbol of US protection of NATO. This role has deepened in recent years as relations with Russia have soured, and the United States and NATO have reemphasized the role of nuclear weapons in support of the alliance.

US nukes in Europe are being upgraded, not removed

Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation 2021. (national nonpartisan nonprofit research and advocacy group) 18 Aug 2021 “Fact Sheet: U.S. Nuclear Weapons in Europe” <https://armscontrolcenter.org/fact-sheet-u-s-nuclear-weapons-in-europe/#:~:text=In%202021%2C%20it%20is%20estimated,Netherlands%2C%20and%20Incirlik%20in%20Turkey>. (accessed 28 May 2022) (brackets added; a "kiloton" is the explosive equivalent of 1000 tons (2 million pounds) of TNT)

U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe consist entirely of B61-3 and -4 gravity bombs deployed by dual-capable aircraft. Now undergoing modernization under the NNSA’s B61-12 Life Extension Plan, updated warheads are scheduled for deployment by [2024](https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/nato-nuclear-disarmament/) alongside delivery vehicle modernization programs of host nations. This B61-12 variant will include a new tail kit to improve both efficiency and accuracy. It will also allow variable yield capability, with a yield ranging from 0.3 KT [kilotons] to 170 KT and allow for both strategic and tactical use.

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE

US nuclear weapons are stored at foreign air bases using their security standards, which aren’t sufficient

Congressional Research Service 2022 (non-partisan research agency of Congress) updated 7 Mar 2022 “Nonstrategic Nuclear Weapons“ <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/RL32572.pdf> (accessed 28 May 2022)

An Air Force review of nuclear surety and security practices, released in early 2008, identified potential security concerns for U.S. weapons stored at some bases in Europe. The problems were evident at some of the national bases, where the United States stores nuclear weapons for use by the host nation’s own aircraft, but not at U.S. air bases in Europe. The review noted that “host nation security at nuclear-capable units varies from country to country” and that most bases do not meet DOD’s security requirements.

Theft or sabotage risk in Turkey

Prof. Matthew Fuhrmann and Prof. Todd Sechser 2019 (Fuhrmann – prof. of political science, Texas A&M Univ. Sechser – Prof. of Politics & Public policy at Univ. of Virginia) WASHINGTON POST 18 Oct 2019 “Can the U.S. protect its nuclear weapons in Turkey?” <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/10/18/can-us-protect-its-nuclear-weapons-turkey/> (accessed 28 May 2022)

While the benefits of these deployments are modest, the risks are significant. Nuclear weapons on foreign soil could be [vulnerable to theft or sabotage](https://www.nytimes.com/2000/05/31/opinion/IHT-nuclear-weapons-that-people-forget.html).[**END QUOTE**] When Greece and Turkey, two NATO allies, were on the brink of war in 1974 the United States had nuclear forces stationed in both countries. Worried about the safety and security of these weapons, Washington [secretly removed its nuclear forces from Greece](https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-h-bombs-in-turkey) and disabled all of the weapons in Turkey. [**THEY GO ON LATER TO SAY QUOTE**] The 2016 coup attempt against Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan reignited [concerns](https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/07/18/americas-nukes-arent-safe-in-turkey-anymore/) about U.S. nuclear weapons at Incirlik. As tensions escalate today, some analysts and U.S. officials [continue to worry](https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2019/10/14/with-turkeys-invasion-of-syria-concerns-mount-over-nukes-at-incirlik/) about the safety and security of the B61s in Turkey. [**END QUOTE**]

NATO nukes (in Turkey and elsewhere) are vulnerable to security threats that can pop up literally in minutes

Steve Andreasen and Isabelle Williams 2016. (Andreasen is a national security consultant to the Nuclear Threat Initiative and its Global Nuclear Policy Program in Washington, DC, and teaches courses on National Security Policy and Crisis Management in Foreign Affairs at School of Public Affairs, Univ of Minnesota. Williams - senior adviser to the Global Nuclear Policy Program at the Nuclear Threat Initiative) Bring Home U.S. Tactical Nuclear Weapons from Europe (ethical disclosure: article is undated but we know it was written in 2016 due to internal references about events dated in 2016 and referring to future events in 2017) (accessed 28 May 2022) <https://media.nti.org/documents/Bring_Home_U.S._Tactical_Nuclear_Weapons_from_Europe.pdf>

More recently, in March 2016, the Pentagon reportedly ordered military families out of southern Turkey, primarily from Incirlik Air Base, due to ISIS-related security concerns. This report came shortly after the Brussels terrorist attacks and what appears to have been a credible threat to Belgian nuclear power plants. In July, we saw the Turkish commanding officer at Incirlik arrested for his alleged role in the Turkish coup plot. If reports are accurate — that Incirlik is a major NATO installation hosting U.S. forces that control one of the largest stockpiles of nuclear weapons in Europe — this shows just how quickly assumptions about the safety and security of U.S. nuclear weapons stored abroad can change literally within minutes, adding another layer of security concern.

Current weapons modification trends make it more likely to start a nuclear war

Ernie Regehr 2018 (Senior Fellow in Arctic Security & Defense at the Simons Foundation) “NATO and Nuclear Disarmament – II: It’s Time to End NATO Nuclear Sharing” 9 Nov 2018 <http://www.thesimonsfoundation.ca/sites/default/files/NATO%20and%20Nuclear%20Disarmament%20%E2%80%93%20II-It%E2%80%99s%20Time%20to%20End%20NATO%20Nuclear%20Sharing%2C%20CDP%20-%20November%209%202018.pdf>- (accessed 28 May 2022)

Hans Kristensen, director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists and a pre-eminent chronicler of global nuclear weapons and trends, notes that this modernization program “will result in a reduction of the total inventory of nuclear gravity bombs by nearly 50 percent” and keep kiloton ratings to 50 or lower, eliminating 400 kiloton variants of the B61 and the 1,200 kiloton B83-1.
 A more useable B61?
While fewer bombs are obviously a step in the right direction, more accurate/lower yield replacements will inevitably lead some military and political leaders to regard them as more useable – that the use of a “small” and carefully targeted nuclear bomb could accomplish a particular military objective without triggering a nuclear response. But that would be a dangerous gamble. The Obama-era Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work does not mince words: “Anyone who thinks they can control escalation through the use of nuclear weapons is literally playing with fire. Escalation is escalation, and nuclear use would be the ultimate escalation.”

Tactical nukes in Europe make nuclear war more likely. Impact: Millions die.

[Ellen Ioanes](https://www.businessinsider.com/author/ellen-ioanes) and [Dave Mosher](https://www.businessinsider.com/author/dave-mosher) 2020. (journalists) updated 23 Jan 2020 "A terrifying new animation shows how 1 'tactical' nuclear weapon could trigger a US-Russia war that kills 34 million people in 5 hours” <https://www.businessinsider.com/tactical-nuclear-weapons-escalation-us-russia-war-animated-strike-map-2019-9> (accessed 28 May 2022)

If the nuclear threshold is crossed, the simulation finds, then both the US and Russia would respond with tactical nuclear weapons. Russia would send 300 warheads to NATO targets, including advancing troops, in both aircraft and short-range missiles — overwhelming force that would obliterate tanks, fortified positions and soldiers unlike anything ever seen in battle before. Supporting forces and civilians not immediately killed would be susceptible to painful and even fatal radiation exposure. NATO would respond by sending about 180 tactical nuclear weapons to Russia via aircraft in equally devastating retaliation.  The simulation was constructed using independent analysis of nuclear force postures in NATO countries and Russia, including the availability of nuclear weapons, their yields, and possible targets, according to the [Science and Global Security lab.](https://sgs.princeton.edu/the-lab/plan-a) The tactical phase of the simulation shows about 2.6 million casualties over three hours. Instead of the tactical weapons de-escalating the conflict, as proponents claim they would, the simulation shows conflict spiraling out of control after the use of tactical weapons.

SOLVENCY / ADVOCACY

Risks outweigh the benefits: We should move NATO nuclear weapons back to the US

Steve Andreasen and Isabelle Williams 2016. (Andreasen is a national security consultant to the Nuclear Threat Initiative and its Global Nuclear Policy Program in Washington, DC, and teaches courses on National Security Policy and Crisis Management in Foreign Affairs at the School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota. Williams is the senior adviser to the Global Nuclear Policy Program at the Nuclear Threat Initiative) Bring Home U.S. Tactical Nuclear Weapons from Europe (ethical disclosure: article is undated but references events dated in 2016 and referring to future events in 2017) (accessed 28 May 2022) <https://media.nti.org/documents/Bring_Home_U.S._Tactical_Nuclear_Weapons_from_Europe.pdf>

Today, there is a compelling case for NATO to move to a safer, more secure and more credible nuclear deterrent — without basing U.S. tactical nuclear weapons in Europe. That case begins with a recognition that sustaining NATO’s current nuclear posture is an expense that (a) NATO members need not incur to maintain a credible nuclear deterrent; and (b) will increasingly undercut efforts to sustain credible conventional capabilities across NATO. Furthermore, the security risk of basing U.S. nuclear bombs in Europe — highlighted by the recent terrorist attacks in Belgium and political developments in Turkey — clearly demonstrate the case for consolidating U.S. nuclear weapons in the United States.

The US President can and should comprehensively remove all US nukes from Europe

Steve Andreasen and Isabelle Williams 2016. (Andreasen is a national security consultant to the Nuclear Threat Initiative and its Global Nuclear Policy Program in Washington, DC, and teaches courses on National Security Policy and Crisis Management in Foreign Affairs at the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota. Williams is the senior adviser to the Global Nuclear Policy Program at the Nuclear Threat Initiative) Bring Home U.S. Tactical Nuclear Weapons from Europe (ethical disclosure: article is undated but we know it was written in 2016 due to internal references about events dated in 2016 and referring to future events in 2017) (accessed 28 May 2022) <https://media.nti.org/documents/Bring_Home_U.S._Tactical_Nuclear_Weapons_from_Europe.pdf>

Second, the first step taken by the administration should be comprehensive, and not incremental. The president needs to lay out a vision and rationale for moving towards a safer, more secure, and more credible nuclear deterrent — and explain in broad terms why and how this can be done to improve the security of all NATO members. In brief, the president would say something along these lines: I am committed to maintaining a safe, secure and credible NATO nuclear deterrent for as long as one is needed; and I am committed to sustaining conventional reassurance initiatives to meet any challenge to NATO’s security. Both of these crucial objectives can be better achieved without the expense, opportunity cost and risk of basing U.S. tactical nuclear weapons in Europe. I will therefore consolidate all U.S. tactical nuclear weapons now stored in Europe in the United States.

US should remove nukes from Turkey because they’re risky and Turkey is not much of an ally

Kingston Reif 2017 (director for nonproliferation policy at the Arms Control Association ) Nov 2017 “U.S. Nuclear Weapons in Turkey Raise Alarm” <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2017-11/news/us-nuclear-weapons-turkey-raise-alarm> (accessed 28 May 2022)

Those arguing for the removal from Incirlik note that although the bombs do not appear to be in imminent danger of theft or unauthorized use, the risks of storing the weapons in Turkey have nevertheless increased significantly. They also note that maintaining the status quo is unacceptable in light of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s anti-U.S. rhetoric and actions. In an Oct. 14 tweet, Richard Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations and former State Department official in the George W. Bush administration, said the United States “should remove nukes from Turkey” and “reduce dependence on use of its bases.” Turkey under Erdogan is an “ally in name only,” he added.

Former senior NATO official says: Nukes in Turkey should be removed

Kingston Reif 2017 (director for nonproliferation policy at the Arms Control Association ) Nov 2017 “U.S. Nuclear Weapons in Turkey Raise Alarm” <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2017-11/news/us-nuclear-weapons-turkey-raise-alarm> (accessed 28 May 2022)

A former senior NATO official told Stars and Stripes in July that “if there are nuclear weapons stored in Turkey, they should be removed given the instability, both in the country and across the border in Syria and Iraq.” If removed, the weapons could be sent back to the United States or to another country in Europe that has the requisite facilities to store B61s and aircraft capable of delivering them.

Most citizens of 4 of the 5 nuclear-deployed countries think US nukes should be removed [Turkey wasn’t studied]

Ernie Regehr 2018 (Senior Fellow in Arctic Security & Defense at the Simons Foundation) “NATO and Nuclear Disarmament – II: It’s Time to End NATO Nuclear Sharing” 9 Nov 2018 <http://www.thesimonsfoundation.ca/sites/default/files/NATO%20and%20Nuclear%20Disarmament%20%E2%80%93%20II-It%E2%80%99s%20Time%20to%20End%20NATO%20Nuclear%20Sharing%2C%20CDP%20-%20November%209%202018.pdf>- (accessed 28 May 2022)

There is strong majority support for the removal of the US nuclear weapons from four of the countries hosting them, according to a June 2018 survey, 17 (there was no survey in Turkey, the fifth hosting country). The following figures represent percentages of support-for-removal/opposition-to-removal/no-response: Belgium 57/21/22%; Netherlands 56/25/19%; Germany 70/16/14%; Italy 65/18/18%. On the question of acquiring fighter aircraft capable of carrying the US B61 nuclear bomb, most were also opposed, but the results were not as strong or clear (oppose-making-them-dual-capable/support-dual-capable/no-response): Belgium 44/33/23%; Netherlands 43/39/17%; Germany 55/26/19%; Italy 59/23/19%.

Funding: NATO nukes upgrade program will exceed $10 billion, on top of what we spend every year on maintenance

Kingston Reif 2017 (director for nonproliferation policy at the Arms Control Association ) Nov 2017 “U.S. Nuclear Weapons in Turkey Raise Alarm” <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2017-11/news/us-nuclear-weapons-turkey-raise-alarm> (accessed 28 May 2022)

The original rationale for deploying U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe was to deter and, if necessary, defeat a large-scale attack by the Soviet Union. [**END QUOTE**] Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has drastically reduced the number of weapons on the continent, but still deploys a smaller number to extend deterrence to NATO allies and as a political signal of the U.S. commitment to the security of alliance members. **[HE CONTINUES LATER IN THE CONTEXT QUOTE**:] The Defense and Energy departments are in the process of an extensive rebuilding of the B61, at a cost that may exceed $10 billion. [**END QUOTE**] Unlike the other bases in Europe that host U.S. B61s, Incirlik does not have dedicated nuclear-capable fighter aircraft that can deliver the weapons. Moreover, Turkey does not train its pilots to fly nuclear missions. In the event NATO were to make a decision to use the weapons now stored in Turkey, the United States or another NATO member would fly its own aircraft to pick them up. ([See ACT, November 2016](https://www.armscontrol.org/aca/519).) As a matter of policy, the Defense Department does not comment on the presence of nuclear weapons in Turkey or anywhere else in Europe. The Air Force, in its fiscal year 2015 budget request, noted the presence of “special weapons” at “storage sites in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Turkey.” [**HE CONTINUES LATER IN THE CONTEXT QUOTE:**] Since 2000, NATO has invested $80 million in “infrastructure improvements” and as of 2014 planned to invest an additional $154 million “for security improvements.”

DISAD RESPONSES

A/T “Ukraine…!”

Turn: Ukraine proves we’d have been better off spending more on conventional weapons rather than nukes

WASHINGTON POST 2022. (journalist Dan Zak) 25 Mar 2022 “Meet the nuke the U.S. keeps in Europe, waiting to not be used” <https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2022/03/25/nuclear-weapon-b61-russia/> (accessed 28 May 2022)

Jon Wolfsthal, senior director for arms control and nonproliferation on Obama’s National Security Council, says U.S. officials might wish that the billions spent on B61 modernization were instead invested in nonnuclear capabilities, American troop presence and support for Ukraine. “When I was in government, we argued the B61 and nuclear-sharing in NATO is essential for alliance unity, right? It turns out it’s not,” says Wolfsthal, a senior adviser to the anti-nuclear nonprofit Global Zero. “What’s essential for NATO unity is the threat of Russia.”

We absolutely do not need to be talking about using nuclear weapons in Ukraine

Darryl Kimball and Shannon Bugos 2022. (Kimball – Executive Director, Arms Control Association. Bugos – Senior Policy Analyst, ACA) 28 Feb 2022 “Russia’s War on Ukraine and the Risk of Nuclear Escalation: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions” <https://www.armscontrol.org/issue-briefs/2022-02/FAQ-russia-ukraine> (accessed 28 May 2022)

But clearly, inserting nuclear weapons into the Ukraine war equation at this point is extremely dangerous. It is essential that U.S. President Joe Biden along with NATO leaders act with extreme restraint and not respond in kind. This is a very dangerous moment in this crisis, and all leaders, particularly Putin, need to step back from the nuclear brink.

Nukes do not prevent nuclear-armed states from launching major wars. They reduce security by adding risk of miscalculation

Darryl Kimball and Shannon Bugos 2022. (Kimball – Executive Director, Arms Control Association. Bugos – Senior Policy Analyst, ACA) 28 Feb 2022 “Russia’s War on Ukraine and the Risk of Nuclear Escalation: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions” <https://www.armscontrol.org/issue-briefs/2022-02/FAQ-russia-ukraine> (accessed 28 May 2022)

What Putin’s threat to use nuclear weapons also underscores is that nuclear weapons cannot prevent nuclear-armed states from launching major wars and that they increase the risk of an armed conflict between nuclear-armed states and nuclear-armed alliances. Rather than increasing security, they increase the danger of war by way of fostering the possibility of miscalculation and advertent or inadvertent escalation.

There’s no scenario where it makes sense for Biden to use nukes in Ukraine

Stephanie Cooke 2022 (editor, Nuclear Intelligence Weekly) 17 Mar 2022 “Will Putin Use Nuclear Weapons in Ukraine?” <https://www.energyintel.com/0000017f-94cd-d81c-a9ff-9ecf7ccf0000> (accessed 28 May 2022)

Complicating the issue of Biden's possible response to any introduction of nuclear weapons is the fact that Ukraine is a non-Nato country. "Biden said he's not going to get involved militarily. Presumably he meant that to apply even if Putin uses nuclear weapons," said Kroenig. "My prediction is that if this happened, the Biden administration would fight through without retaliating with nuclear weapons." If he's wrong and Biden does retaliate, would he go nuclear and risk an all-out conflict? Unlikely, says Clark. "No one in America wants to confront the idea of a nuclear effort," he said, "It would mean immediately Biden would go to zero percent in the polls." Alternatively, if he used conventional weapons, either in Ukraine or, in an escalated conflict, a Nato country, there is a danger that Biden could encourage other states to launch nuclear attacks without fear of a US nuclear reprisal. But avoiding a tit-for-tat nuclear response could also gain him the moral high ground and — especially if the response proved successful — demonstrate that nuclear isn't the only way to go even in a situation involving nuclear weapons. Either way, if Putin introduces nuclear weapons on a “limited” basis he raises the risk factor, already very high, and increases the potential for miscalculation and a full-blown nuclear war.

There’s no good scenario for using nuclear weapons

Darryl Kimball and Shannon Bugos 2022. (Kimball – Executive Director, Arms Control Association. Bugos – Senior Policy Analyst, ACA) 28 Feb 2022 “Russia’s War on Ukraine and the Risk of Nuclear Escalation: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions” <https://www.armscontrol.org/issue-briefs/2022-02/FAQ-russia-ukraine> (accessed 28 May 2022)

Biden and Putin both seem to understand that “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought,” a statement originally endorsed in 1985 by Presidents Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev and [reiterated](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/01/03/p5-statement-on-preventing-nuclear-war-and-avoiding-arms-races/) by the five countries with the largest nuclear arsenals in January 2022. The former head of U.S. Strategic Command, Gen. John Hyten, [described](https://www.stratcom.mil/Media/Speeches/Article/1577239/the-mitchell-institute-triad-conference/) in 2018 how the command’s annual nuclear command and control and field training always ends. “It ends bad,” he said. “And the bad meaning it ends with global nuclear war.”

A/T “Russia would win a war by using their nukes”

Don’t need US nukes forward deployed in Europe to retaliate in that scenario

Kingston Reif 2019 (director for nonproliferation policy at the Arms Control Association) 29 July 2019 “A Critical Evaluation of the Trump Administration's Nuclear Weapons Policies” <https://www.armscontrol.org/events/2019-07/critical-evaluation-trump-administrations-nuclear-weapons-policies> (accessed 28 May 2022)

A low-yield SLBM also is not necessary to promptly strike time-perishable targets. If military action has already started in the European theater and Russia uses a low-yield nuclear weapon to seek to end a conflict it believes NATO would win conventionally, it is likely that the United States would have had sufficient time to forward deploy forces, including conventional and nuclear fighters and bombers, to provide a prompt response. Regardless, it’s far from clear why the United States would need or want to respond to Russian limited nuclear use in minutes, rather than hours or even days.

A/T “Increasing Russian tactical nuclear threat”

Phony numbers being used: Russian tactical nukes are decreasing, no need for panic

Hans Kristensen 2019 (Director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists) 7 May 2019 “Is The Pentagon Exaggerating Russian Tactical Nuclear Weapons?” <https://www.forbes.com/sites/hanskristensen/2019/05/07/russian-tactical-nuclear-weapons/#2b5ee91a2d79> (brackets added) (accessed 28 May 2022)

This discrepancy between the significant reduction of Russian tactical nuclear warheads over the past ten years and the NPR’s [Nuclear Posture Review] alarming portrayal of a dangerous increase is deeply disturbing. Not only does it apparently mischaracterize what Russia is actually doing ([some officials](https://www.stratcom.mil/Media/Speeches/Article/1800469/house-armed-services-subcommittee-on-strategic-forces-holds-hearing-on-fiscal-2/) even seem to try to nudge the number up a bit to “approximately 2,000” or privately suggesting they have “over 2,000” non-strategic nuclear warheads), it seems to distort what the US intelligence community knows, for the apparent purpose of creating political support in Congress to pay for new nuclear weapons. [**END QUOTE**] That said, there is no doubt that [Russia is modernizing](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00963402.2019.1580891?needAccess=true) its non-strategic nuclear weapons and introducing new or modified types; [so is the United States](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00963402.2019.1606503?needAccess=true). That is important to monitor carefully (nor is there anything benign about Russia’s general military aggression and meddling in other countries' elections). But Russia is also retiring old non-strategic nuclear weapons; it’s in a transition between old and new types that creates fluctuations in the estimate. And its military strategy relies more on such weapons to compensate for Russia’s inferior conventional capabilities – that has been the case for the past two decades – as well as to make up for what otherwise would be a sizeable deficit in the overall balance of Russian and US nuclear warheads (yes, the United States has more strategic weapons than Russia). [**HE CONCLUDES LATER IN THE SAME CONTEXT QUOTE**:] So, members of Congress, next time STRATCOM or DOD comes to brief you on Russian tactical nuclear weapons and claim they are increasing and the United States is at a disadvantage so you have to give them more money to buy new ones, don’t just take it at face value but ask them where they get their numbers from. Ask them which branch of the Intelligence Community provided the estimate and ask how that compares with the coordinated intelligence assessment. Oh, and don’t forget to ask them to explain why we need more new nuclear weapons to counter a Russian non-strategic nuclear arsenal that is significantly smaller today than a decade ago.

NATO can meet Russian threats better without tactical nukes

Steve Andreasen and Isabelle Williams 2016. (Andreasen is a national security consultant to the Nuclear Threat Initiative and its Global Nuclear Policy Program in Washington, DC, and teaches courses on National Security Policy and Crisis Management in Foreign Affairs at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs, Univ of Minnesota. Williams is the senior adviser to the Global Nuclear Policy Program at the Nuclear Threat Initiative) Bring Home U.S. Tactical Nuclear Weapons from Europe (ethical disclosure: article is undated but we know it was written in 2016 due to internal references about events dated in 2016 and referring to future events in 2017) (accessed 28 May 2022) <https://media.nti.org/documents/Bring_Home_U.S._Tactical_Nuclear_Weapons_from_Europe.pdf>

Finally, the next president will need to confidently make the case that it is important for NATO leaders to stop acting on the dangerous idea that mirror imaging Russian actions, in particular in the case of nuclear weapons, equates to sound security policy. Yes, Russia has retained and is now modernizing its inventory of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe. But with the United States, Britain and France, it is also true that NATO has a robust nuclear deterrent and does not need to invest in tactical nuclear weapons. In fact, NATO has a range of other defense priorities, including terrorism, migration and cybersecurity, that will demand greater attention and effort in the years ahead. That’s a message that NATO countries need to hear from our next president — and, for their own security, the sooner the better.

NATO nukes have ZERO military value. They’re only there for political reasons

WASHINGTON POST 2022. (journalist Dan Zak) 25 Mar 2022 “Meet the nuke the U.S. keeps in Europe, waiting to not be used” <https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2022/03/25/nuclear-weapon-b61-russia/> (accessed 28 May 2022)

“I remember a chief of staff of the Air Force who asked me if we could get rid of our nuclear weapons in Europe,” says Andy Weber, who was assistant defense secretary for nuclear, chemical and biological defense programs under President Barack Obama. “There’s no military value to our nuclear weapons in Europe. Zero. They’re there for purely political reasons.”

A/T “Sign of weakness”

NATO will have vast military superiority over Russia. There’s no “weakness”

Olivier Meier and Paul Ingram 2012 (Meier is a senior researcher at the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg and international representative of the Arms Control Association. Ingram is executive director of the British American Security Information Council) The NATO Summit: Recasting the Debate Over U.S. Nuclear Weapons in Europe<https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2012-05/nato-summit-recasting-debate-over-us-nuclear-weapons-europe> (accessed 28 May 2022)

Some believe that, in such an environment, cuts in arsenals would show weakness. From this perspective, nuclear sharing shows forthright unity of purpose and continuing faith in nuclear deterrence, thus reassuring NATO members. Removing U.S. nuclear weapons from Europe therefore would be a “concession” to Russia “that would put U.S. and allied interests in Europe and around the world at risk.” Yet, even without the 180 or so tactical nuclear weapons deployed in Europe, NATO will keep its vast military, political, and economic supremacy vis-à-vis Moscow. The military disparity will widen despite Russian intentions to increase defense spending and the implications of the financial crisis for NATO defense budgets. In 2010 the combined military spending of NATO countries was 20 times higher than Russia’s. Roughly the same ratio exists for procurement of military equipment and military research and development. Russia’s declared intention to close the gaps with the West will remain an illusion.

A/T “Losing deterrence”

US nukes stationed in Europe are obsolete and not needed for deterrence – they don’t deter anything

Prof. Matthew Fuhrmann and Prof. Todd Sechser 2019 (Fuhrmann – prof. of political science, Texas A&M Univ. Sechser – Prof. of Politics & Public policy at Univ. of Virginia) WASHINGTON POST 18 Oct 2019 “Can the U.S. protect its nuclear weapons in Turkey?” <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/10/18/can-us-protect-its-nuclear-weapons-turkey/> (accessed 28 May 2022)

U.S. nuclear forces in Europe may have served a function during the Cold War, but they are increasingly obsolete. A recent study we conducted shows that the critical factor for preventing aggression against U.S. allies is a formal alliance relationship with the United States — not the presence of U.S. nuclear weapons. Indeed, our research found that global deployments of nuclear weapons made very little difference for deterrence even during the Cold War.

Nukes didn’t deter Russia from invading Ukraine in Crimea several years ago (nor in 2022, for that matter). Turn: More likely to escalate and start a nuclear war

Hans Kristensen & Matt Korda 2019. (Kristensen - is the director of the Nuclear Information Project with the Federation of American Scientists in Washington, DC. Korda  - is a research associate for the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists. MA in International Peace and Security from the Department of War Studies at King’s College London) “Tactical nuclear weapons, 2019” 30 Aug 2019 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2019.1654273?src=recsys> (accessed 28 May 2022)

For the first two decades after the end of the Cold War, the role of and disparity of US and Russian tactical nuclear weapons didn’t matter much. But after relations soured, Russia invaded Ukraine and issued nuclear threats against NATO countries, and the Trump administration proclaimed the reemergence of great power competition, tactical nuclear weapons have made a worrisome comeback. Both sides are modernizing their tactical nuclear arsenals, adding new types to the inventory and increasing the role and salience of tactical nuclear weapons in their military strategies. Moreover, tactical nuclear weapons are being used to threaten existing arms control agreements, including the INF treaty, which was killed by a dispute over a new Russian intermediate-range missile and references to Chinese weapons, and the New START treaty, the extension of which is being threatened partly by demands that arms control must be expanded to include tactical nuclear weapons. This double-edged sword of undermining existing limits on nuclear arsenals and increasing tactical nuclear weapons threatens to recreate some of the dynamics that during the Cold War triggered an arms race and dangerous escalation strategies that increased the risk of nuclear war.

Turn: NATO nukes make it worse. They make Russia more dangerous and escalate the threats that need to be deterred

Olivier Meier and Paul Ingram 2012 (Oliver Meier is a senior researcher at the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg and international representative of the Arms Control Association. Paul Ingram is executive director of the British American Security Information Council) The NATO Summit: Recasting the Debate Over U.S. Nuclear Weapons in Europe<https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2012-05/nato-summit-recasting-debate-over-us-nuclear-weapons-europe> (accessed 28 May 2022)

NATO hedging against a resurgent Russia reinforces a confrontational NATO-Russian relationship and is self-fulfilling. At the most basic level, “tactical nuclear arms at military combat bases on both sides create uncertainty and concern about possible intentional use under unforeseen circumstances.” This will be intensified by the planned modernization of NATO forces in the coming years. The new B61-12 smart bombs delivered by stealthy F-35 Joint Strike Fighters represent a significant improvement in the alliance’s nuclear war-fighting capabilities that could be seen by the Russians as intentional or used as an excuse to modernize its own tactical nuclear weapons. The presence of Russian nuclear weapons near NATO borders makes it easier for central and eastern European states to veto a more cooperative NATO approach toward Russia. Conversely, the continued presence in Europe of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons on foreign soil—a unique situation today—hands Russia a diplomatic advantage when it demands U.S. nuclear withdrawal as a precondition for including tactical nuclear weapons in talks for a follow-on agreement to the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. The two sides are trapped in a deterrence relationship characterized by implicit threat.

A/T “Nukes deter use of nukes” – Removing nukes guarantees nukes won’t be used

Darryl Kimball and Shannon Bugos 2022. (Kimball – Executive Director, Arms Control Association. Bugos – Senior Policy Analyst, ACA) 28 Feb 2022 “Russia’s War on Ukraine and the Risk of Nuclear Escalation: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions” <https://www.armscontrol.org/issue-briefs/2022-02/FAQ-russia-ukraine> (accessed 28 May 2022)

In fact, during the 2020 presidential campaign, Biden wrote in [Foreign Affairs](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-01-23/why-america-must-lead-again): “As I [said](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2017/01/12/remarks-vice-president-nuclear-security) in 2017, I believe that the sole purpose of the U.S. nuclear arsenal should be deterring—and, if necessary, retaliating against—a nuclear attack. As president, I will work to put that belief into practice, in consultation with the U.S. military and U.S. allies.” Ultimately, even the best intentions of one side cannot ensure that the interests of all to prevent the use of nuclear weapons will win out. Therefore, the only action that can actually prevent the use of nuclear weapons is the removal of these weapons from the battlefield and their verifiable elimination.

A/T “Turkey gets its own nukes”

Could happen anyway in Status Quo, and there are better ways to prevent it than leaving US nukes there

Prof. Matthew Fuhrmann and Prof. Todd Sechser 2019 (Fuhrmann – prof. of political science, Texas A&M Univ. Sechser – Prof. of Politics & Public policy at Univ. of Virginia) WASHINGTON POST 18 Oct 2019 “Can the U.S. protect its nuclear weapons in Turkey?” <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/10/18/can-us-protect-its-nuclear-weapons-turkey/> (accessed 28 May 2022)

In the long term, the larger risk is that removing the weapons will prompt Turkey to try to acquire its own nuclear weapons. After all, Erdogan reportedly is [exploring this option](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-nuclear-erdogan/erdogan-says-its-unacceptable-that-turkey-cant-have-nuclear-weapons-idUSKCN1VP2QN). But as relations with Turkey deteriorate, it is by no means certain that the presence of a few U.S. weapons will prevent this outcome. And there are other political and diplomatic tools for dissuading Turkey from venturing down the nuclear path if the United States pulls out its nuclear forces.

A/T “Lose Turkey as an ally”

Risk is exaggerated and empirically denied based on experience with other allies and their nukes

Prof. Matthew Fuhrmann and Prof. Todd Sechser 2019 (Fuhrmann – prof. of political science, Texas A&M Univ. Sechser – Prof. of Politics & Public policy at Univ. of Virginia) WASHINGTON POST 18 Oct 2019 “Can the U.S. protect its nuclear weapons in Turkey?” <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/10/18/can-us-protect-its-nuclear-weapons-turkey/> (accessed 28 May 2022)

Would pulling out the nuclear weapons now mean the end of the U.S.-Turkish alliance? This concern is legitimate, but [recent research suggests](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09592296.2017.1420526) that it is overstated. The United States has withdrawn nuclear forces from many allied countries: Britain, South Korea and others. In none of these cases did the withdrawals damage the overall alliance relationship, nor embolden adversaries.

Not much of an ally: Turkey fires on US troops

Prof. Matthew Fuhrmann and Prof. Todd Sechser 2019 (Fuhrmann – prof. of political science, Texas A&M Univ. Sechser – Prof. of Politics & Public policy at Univ. of Virginia) WASHINGTON POST 18 Oct 2019 “Can the U.S. protect its nuclear weapons in Turkey?” <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/10/18/can-us-protect-its-nuclear-weapons-turkey/> (accessed 28 May 2022)

U.S. forces reportedly [came under artillery](https://www.cnn.com/2019/10/11/politics/turkey-artillery-fire-us-syria/index.html) fire from Turkish troops heading into northern Syria last week — another sign of the sudden plunge in U.S. relations with Turkey. On Monday, President Trump imposed [economic sanctions](https://twitter.com/SecPompeo/status/1183870172211437569) against Turkey and threatened to “[swiftly destroy Turkey’s economy](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2019/10/15/trumps-lose-lose-game-syria/?tid=lk_inline_manual_3&itid=lk_inline_manual_3).” Vice President Pence [announced a cease-fire agreement](https://www.cnn.com/2019/10/17/politics/syria-ceasefire-pence/index.html) with Turkey on Thursday, but this does not appear to fully address the underlying problems in the bilateral relationship.