

**NONE DARE CALL IT TREASON:  
Biden Bans Nuclear Weapons Critical To U.S. National Security**

*“Treason doth never prosper.  
What’s the reason?  
Why, when treason doth prosper,  
None dare call it treason.”  
--Sir John Harington (1561-1612)*

***The Sea-Launched Cruise Missile-Nuclear (SLCM-N)***

President Biden’s defense budget “zeros out” funding for the U.S. Navy’s SLCM-N, ignoring protests from the Pentagon, including the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, that the new cruise missile is necessary for nuclear deterrence.

President Obama eliminated all the U.S. Navy’s nuclear-armed SLCMs, called the Tomahawk, which was decades old and far beyond its design life, but also as a step toward President Obama’s goal of “a world without nuclear weapons.”

President Trump authorized the Navy to design and develop the new SLCM-N to replace the Tomahawk, now canceled.

The SLCM-N would restore tactical nuclear capabilities to U.S. Navy attack submarines and surface ships, helping offset the vast imbalance of firepower that now exists with the Russian Navy, that is heavily armed for winning a nuclear war at sea.

SLCM-N would also help deter tactical nuclear use by Russia’s land and air forces, and help offset Russia’s enormous preponderance in tactical nuclear weapons overall. Today, the U.S. has about 180 tactical nuclear gravity bombs bunkered in NATO Europe versus an estimated 2,000-8,000 Russian tactical nuclear weapons—an at least 10-to-1 advantage favoring Moscow.

SLCM-N would also help deter China, North Korea, and Iran by providing tactical nuclear firepower in theater when necessary to deter aggression, without having to permanently base nuclear warheads on allied territory.

President Biden’s cancellation of SLCM-N is rationalized in his new, still classified, Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), that is heavily influenced by anti-nuclear activists in the White House “kitchen cabinet” and in the Democrat Party.

Ideological reasons for canceling SLCM-N are claims by anti-nuclear activists that the SLCM-N would be “destabilizing” as it would “lower the threshold” for U.S. nuclear use and could tempt the U.S. into “nuclear warfighting.”

Yet the original SLCM-N, the Tomahawk, helped deter the USSR from starting World War III, and contributed to winning the Cold War—peacefully. Far more “destabilizing” than SLCM-N

are Russia's enormous advantages in tactical nuclear firepower that may well tempt Moscow into "nuclear warfighting."

The now canceled SLCM-N would have been armed with the Tomahawk's retired nuclear warhead, the W80. The W80 had selectable yield for tactical or strategic use, either 5 kilotons or 150 kilotons.

Like all warheads in the U.S. nuclear stockpile, the W80 is an antique, designed in 1976, deployed in 1981, decades beyond its original design life. But supposedly the W80 could be patched-up and given life-extension by the national labs stockpile stewardship program.

However, another reason President Biden's NPR recommended against SLCM-N may not be ideological, but technological. Maybe the Biden Administration does not want to admit that the stockpile stewardship program is failing, that after 30 years of no nuclear testing, the safety and reliability of all U.S. nuclear weapons is increasingly doubtful.

### ***The B83 Nuclear "Bunker Buster"***

According to recent press reports, a classified version of the Biden Administration's Nuclear Posture Review, provided to Congress, plans to eliminate the B83 nuclear bomb—the most powerful weapon in the U.S. nuclear deterrent.

Biden Administration plans to eliminate the B83 overrules STRATCOM Commander, Admiral Charles Richard, the top officer in charge of the U.S. nuclear deterrent, who specifically requested retention of the B83.

The B83 is a thermonuclear "dial-a-yield" gravity bomb that can be set to produce an explosion of 80 kilotons (and perhaps lower) or as high as 1.2 megatons (equivalent to 1.2 million tons of TNT).

The B-2 Stealth Bomber would deliver the B83, which is designed with a lifting parachute to permit delivery at low-altitudes and supersonic speeds, necessary to penetrate increasingly formidable air defenses.

The B83 is the only U.S. nuclear weapon, when detonated at highest yield 1.2 megatons, capable of generating a sufficiently powerful shockwave to have any realistic chance of threatening deep underground military command posts, bunkers for political-military elites, missile tunnels, and other deep underground targets in Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran.

The B83 is also symbolically important to the credibility of U.S. deterrence, to friends and foes alike, as the only remaining U.S. nuclear weapon that is megaton-class.

Powerful as is the B83, it is something like America's only "David" deterring Russia's "Goliath" nuclear superweapons, like Moscow's Poseidon autonomous warhead, a drone submarine or

intercontinental torpedo, having a reported yield (probably variable depending on target) of 2-200 megatons. (See *POSEIDON: Russia's New Doomsday Machine* 2018.)

The B83 may also be planet Earth's best defense against a catastrophic asteroid impact. NASA planned an anti-asteroid role for the B83 using 6 bombs delivered by a special spacecraft to blast any threatening asteroid. (See "NASA Plans 'Armageddon' Spacecraft To Blast Asteroids" Flightglobal.com 8 March 2007.)

Rep. Doug Lamborn, Ranking Member of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee, other members of Congress and strategic experts are protesting the Biden Administration's planned termination of the B83. Rep. Lamborn said Republicans will try to reverse the decision and save the B83 in the National Defense Authorization Act.

However, saving the B83 may not be possible, for technological reasons.

The B83 may be symptomatic of technological obsolescence eroding the safety and reliability of all U.S. nuclear weapons as a consequence of uncorrectable aging of all U.S. warheads—none of which have been tested in 30 years.

#### ***"Science-Based" Nuclear Stockpile Stewardship***

The Biden Administration's rationale for eliminating the B83, according to an anonymous senior Defense Department official, is that the bomb "is costly to maintain and of increasingly limited value."

*Translation: Even the "whiz kids" at the national labs cannot patch-up the B83 one more time so it can continue as a safe reliable weapon. But we in the Biden Administration and Defense Department don't want to say so explicitly, as it would discredit the stockpile stewardship program, cast doubt on the safety and reliability of all U.S. nuclear weapons, and damage the credibility of the U.S. nuclear deterrent.*

The U.S. has not tested a nuclear weapon since 1992 or designed and developed any new nuclear weapons in unilateral compliance with the unratified Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

The CTBT was the bright idea of President Bill Clinton and anti-nuclear ideologues, now dominant in a radicalized Democrat Party, that would have the U.S. lead the way toward a "world without nuclear weapons." Unfortunately, Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran are not following.

Instead of underground nuclear testing, the CTBT requires the U.S. to use computer models, inspections, and engineering judgment to endlessly repair its aging nuclear weapons. The work is being done by scientists who have never designed or tested a nuclear weapon. The generation that designed, tested, and deployed America's existing inventory of nuclear weapons is dead or long retired.

Since so-called “science-based” stockpile stewardship supposedly eliminates the need for building new nuclear weapons, the U.S. scientific and defense industrial base for making new nuclear weapons has withered away. The U.S. can no longer make new essential components for nuclear weapons, like plutonium pits that “trigger” thermonuclear explosions.

Consequently, the national labs have jerry-rigged and made makeshift repairs to all U.S. nuclear weapons, using parts and materials that were never in the original design. Because U.S. unilateral compliance with the CTBT forbids underground testing, life-extended warheads are “certified” by national lab scientists—who are inexperienced in nuclear warhead design and testing.

The process is akin to having scientists who understand the theory of aircraft design continually inspecting and repairing a fleet of Boeing 747 airliners for 30 years, without ever firing the engines, hoping everything will work and the fleet will fly in an emergency.

“Science-based” stockpile stewardship is an oxymoron, since real science requires empirical facts that can only be established by testing.

Twenty-six years ago, the late great Rep. Floyd Spence, then Chairman of the House National Security Committee (HNSC), warned cessation of nuclear testing would eventually result in U.S. unilateral nuclear disarmament—and that this was the intent of anti-nuclear activists in the Clinton Administration. (See *The Clinton Administration and Nuclear Stockpile Stewardship: Erosion By Design* HNSC 30 October 1996.)

Time has proven Chairman Spence was right.

### ***“Science-Based” Nuclear Stockpile Stewardship Failing***

The Clinton Administration essentially bribed the national labs with increased budgets to go along with the dangerous farce that is “science-based” nuclear stockpile stewardship. Now addicted to budgetary largess and politically “woke” the national labs are content to pretend all is well with U.S. nuclear weapons, so they can refocus scientific attention on combatting real threats like “climate change.”

Senior scientists leading the stockpile stewardship program, once retired from the “politically correct” environment of the national labs, warn that the program is failing, and that there is no substitute for nuclear testing.

For example, Drs. John Hopkins and David Sharp, former senior scientists in the Los Alamos National Laboratory stockpile stewardship program, call for resumption of nuclear testing in “The Scientific Foundation for Assessing the Performance of Nuclear Weapons in the U.S. Stockpile is Eroding” (*Issues in Science and Technology*, Winter 2019):

--"Nuclear tests gave decisive, direct evidence about the behavior of new weapons destined for the stockpile...Virtually no comparable data exist on the nuclear performance of stockpiled weapons in their current state."

--"Nuclear testing provided a solid foundation for the development and evaluation of scientific judgment because it unequivocally tested performance predictions."

--"Confidence that today's nuclear weapons will perform properly is predicated on the assumption that there will be no surprises . . . The history of testing complex systems, nuclear and nonnuclear, is punctuated by unpleasant surprises."

--"The above arguments are not ones that proponents of a continuing test moratorium or a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty wish to hear."

Dr. Mark Schneider, former senior Pentagon nuclear strategist, observes: "Today, we do not have 'science-based stockpile stewardship,' but more like 'political science-based stockpile stewardship' while, conversely, Russia has science-based development of new and improved nuclear weapons" ("Yes, the Russians Are Testing Nuclear Weapons and it is Very Important" RealClearDefense.com 14 August 2019).

### ***Warning From Former Director U.S. Defense Nuclear Agency***

The U.S. Defense Nuclear Agency (DNA) was the Defense Department's chief steward for overseeing the national labs to ensure U.S. nuclear weapons were safe, reliable, and effective for their military missions. The Clinton Administration abolished the Defense Nuclear Agency.

Abolition of the DNA combined with the CTBT and inauguration of "science-based" stockpile stewardship began the long spiral downward of the U.S. nuclear deterrent, toward where it may no longer be credible to adversaries like Russia, China, and North Korea—who are all nuclear testing advanced nuclear weapons.

Former Director of the U.S. Defense Nuclear Agency, Vice Admiral Robert Monroe, has written extensively and warned for years that U.S. failure to test and develop new nuclear weapons is an existential threat. For example, in "It's Time For America To Resume Nuclear Testing" (The Hill 15 November 2017) VADM Monroe is worth quoting at length:

--"America must resume underground nuclear testing, and we must do it immediately. Our lives depend upon it. The very existence of the United States may well depend upon it."

--"During the half-century of Cold War we tested nuclear weapons as needed. We won that war because the testing enabled us to gain and hold a supremacy in nuclear technology and weapons that the Soviet Union could not match."

--"But in 1992, our president unwisely declared — voluntarily and unilaterally — a U.S. moratorium on nuclear testing. Today...we are risking everything by mindlessly continuing to observe this moratorium. We don't question it. We don't debate it. We don't think about it."

--"Here's how we stand today. No U.S. nuke has been tested...we cannot be sure they will work. Every weapon is years beyond the end of its design life. Designed for massive destruction, our arsenal is unable to deter most of today's nuclear threats. We have no capability to produce plutonium pits (the heart of nuclear weapons); recovery will take a decade."

--"We've done no research whatsoever in advanced nuclear technologies; our adversaries are decades ahead of us. Our scientists, designers, engineers, and production managers have no

experience in their professions. Our testing facilities, and knowledge, are virtually non-existent; recovery will take years.”

--“All of these capabilities must be recovered in full — as rapidly as possible — and the key to everything is nuclear testing. We must resume underground nuclear testing as soon as possible.”

--“For the Energy Department, the highest priority (existential) need is testing the principal deployed warheads of our strategic deterrent (W76, W78, B61 and so on) to ensure their reliability. Almost as urgent is the need to conduct exploratory testing of advanced, low-yield (10-100 ton) warheads. Russia is decades ahead. Exploratory work maximizing fusion rather than fission output is vital, possibly leading to pure fusion warheads. Other exploratory testing is essential if we are to avoid technological surprise.”

### ***Russia and China Testing Advanced Technology Nuclear Weapons***

In 2020, the State Department finally acknowledged Russia and China have been violating the 1996 Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The U.S. has faithfully observed the unratified CTBT unilaterally, conducting no nuclear tests since 1992. (See U.S. State Department, *Adherence to and Compliance with Arms Control, Nonproliferation, and Disarmament Agreements and Commitments* 2020.)

Moscow and Beijing have been conducting low-yield underground nuclear testing, while the U.S. has observed a moratorium on nuclear tests, for 30 years. By cheating on arms control, Russia and China have achieved a great leap forward in the design and sophistication of their nuclear weapons, while the U.S. lags far behind.

Russia’s nuclear arsenal includes a wide array of “Third Generation” advanced technology nuclear weapons: Ultra-low-yield (less than 1 kiloton) for tactical use by land, sea, and air forces; weapons that produce little or no radioactive fallout; warheads for specialized effects like neutrons, x-rays, and Super-EMP weapons that can blackout a continent. Even China and North Korea have Super-EMP warheads, while the U.S. deterrent has none of these advanced nuclear weapon technologies.

While Russia and China have modernized their nuclear forces, U.S. nuclear weapons and delivery systems are aging toward obsolescence. Indeed, U.S. nuclear weapons, life-extended and untested for decades, could prove to be duds.

Then Defense Intelligence Agency Director, Lt. General Robert Ashley, on May 29, 2019, warned: "Our understanding of nuclear weapon development leads us to believe Russia’s testing activities would help it to improve its nuclear weapon capabilities. The United States, by contrast, has forgone such benefits by upholding a 'zero-yield' standard."

The Arms Control Association, Federation of American Scientists, Union of Concerned Scientists, and Rebecca Hersman, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction under President Obama, criticize the State Department report and defend Russia and China.

*They believe the U.S. should continue no nuclear testing unilaterally.*

Washington prevailed in the Cold War by never allowing Moscow any militarily significant numerical or technological advantage in nuclear arms. U.S. nuclear strength permitted indulging our arms control delusion, concluding treaties of dubious verifiability with a dishonest adversary.

We can no longer afford arms control that fails to deliver "strategic stability" while shifting the balance of power against the United States.

### ***Conclusion***

President Biden's cancellation of SLCM-N and B83 weakens the U.S. nuclear deterrent at both ends of the deterrence spectrum (tactical low-yield weapons and strategic high-yield weapons) at the worst possible moment:

- Russia is probably weighing its nuclear options to win the Ukraine War;
- China is contemplating conquest of Taiwan;
- North Korea is poised to resume ICBM and nuclear testing;
- Iran is 8 weeks away, or already has, its "Islamic Bomb";
- All, including U.S. allies, are questioning Washington's nuclear fortitude.

Cancellation of SLCM-N and the B83, combined with delays in testing U.S. ICBMs and other strategic systems to avoid escalating the Ukraine War, looks like appeasement and surrender to Russian nuclear blackmail.

The U.S. should resume at least low-yield nuclear testing, like Russia and China, as part of a crash program to certify existing U.S. nuclear weapons and develop advanced technology nuclear weapons.

However, as President Biden's administration is the most anti-nuclear in U.S. history, resumption of testing and development of new nuclear weapons must await a future Republican administration or future reversal of the anti-nuclear views of the Democrat Party.

Bipartisan support for protecting U.S. electric grids and other life-sustaining critical infrastructures from nuclear electromagnetic pulse (EMP) and Cyber Warfare already exists, and should mobilize to make national EMP/Cyber preparedness a crash emergency program. If the world is closer to nuclear conflict, an EMP/Cyber World War is even more proximate.

Perhaps Democrats could be persuaded to support emergency revival of the Strategic Defense Initiative (the much mocked "Star Wars"), since it is the only realistic technological pathway to render nuclear missiles obsolete and possibly achieve "a world without nuclear weapons." The SDI project Brilliant Pebbles could be resurrected, and 1,000 space-based anti-missiles deployed in 5 years for \$20 billion.

Unfortunately, substantial bipartisan progress on most of the above solutions is unlikely.

More likely, anti-nuclear activist theories about the efficacy of Minimum Deterrence and their mantra—"Nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought"—may soon be put to the test.

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