US Nuclear Weapons in Europe: a made in New Mexico Problem

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This talk will cover

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• Italy Must Face Nuclear Danger
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Everything Starts in New Mexico

- Europe hosts US B61 (3-4-7 and 10)
- 1$ trillion modernization programme → upgrade them to B61-12 (strategic nuclear warheads)
  - is triggering Russian reaction, escalating tension with US and Europe
  - Putin: «The world is being pulled into a completely new dimension, while [Washington] pretends that nothing’s happening»
- Designed, tested and partially built in New Mexico (Sandia and Los Alamos Labs)
- UNM is bidding to manage Sandia Labs as member of a team (Battelle, Boeing, Texas A&M University System and University of Texas System)
- Whither UNM and New Mexico?
The Origins

- NATO Nuclear Sharing Programme:
  - Non-Strategic B-61 weapons (gravity bombs between 0.3 and 170 kt)
  - Weapons under US full control - some responsibility for the host country (equipment, storage, transport, delivery)

- Purpose: Guarantee US umbrella on Europe
- In the 70s NATO umbrella could count on 7300 US nuclear weapons
Some Figures...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Air Base</th>
<th>WS3 Vaults</th>
<th>Weapons (B61)</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Kleine Brogel AB</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>For Belgian F-16s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Büchel AB</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>For German Tornados</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Aviano AB</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>50*</td>
<td>For U.S. F-16s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ghedi AB</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>For Italian Tornados</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Volkel AB</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>For Dutch F-16s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Incirlik AB</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>For US rotational aircraft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6 bases</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The security upgrade at Aviano AB indicates that the number of operational nuclear weapons storage vaults at the base might have been reduced and the B61 bombs reduced from 50 to 25-35.

Belgium, Germany, Italy and Netherlands host the weapons but are also responsible for delivering them. Turkey only hosts them, leaving delivery to US aircraft.

Source: Federation of American Scientists website (FAS)
Security remains inadequate at some bases, according to Congressional sources questioned by Greg Mello.

Source: Federation of American Scientists website (FAS)
Modernization Programme

2010 US Nuclear Doctrine contains programme to modernize nuclear weapons in Europe (B61-12) by 2021-2024

B61-12 features:
- more precise and usable (“victims reduction”);
- former U.S. Under Secretary of Defense for Policy James Miller defined them “reliable and ethical”
B61-12 @ US Senate
Modernization also envisages aircraft replacement (with F35)

According to Hans Kristensen:
“Over the next decade, the United States plans to spend roughly $10 billion to modernize the B61 bomb, over $1 billion more to make the new guided B61-12 compatible with four existing aircraft, another $350 million to make the new stealthy F-35 fighter-bomber nuclear-capable, and another $1 billion to sustain the deployment in Europe. This adds up to roughly $12.5 billion for sustaining, securing, and modernizing U.S. nuclear bombs in Europe over the next decade.”

Source: Italy’s Nuclear Anniversary: Fake Reassurance For a King’s Ransom (FAS) Jun.30, 2014
Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT - 1970)

- Entered into force in 1970 divides states into:
  - **Nuclear Weapons State** (NWS - legitimately possess NWs pending disarmament);
  - **Non Nuclear Weapons State** (NNWS) – the hosting countries all belong to this category

- Came after the Nuclear Sharing agreements but countries freely decide to sign and ratify this **legally binding measure**
NPT What?

- Art. 1: “Each nuclear-weapon State Party to the Treaty undertakes not to transfer to any recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or control over such weapons or explosive devices directly, or indirectly”
  
  Infringed by the US

- Art II: “Each non-nuclear-weapon State Party to the Treaty undertakes not to receive the transfer from any transferor whatsoever of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or of control over such weapons or explosive devices directly, or indirectly”
  
  Infringed by Hosting Countries
“NWs Guarantee Security”

- Feb 2008 - US Air Force Blue Ribbon Review: most nuclear sites in Europe didn’t meet US security requirements

- Hans Kristensen: “Security upgrades at US Air Force bases in Europe (Incirlik and Aviano) indicate that nuclear weapons deployed in Europe have been stored under unsafe conditions for more than two decades”
Men at Work (1): Incirlik Base - Turkey

- 110 kilometers (68 miles) from Syrian border
- Turkey is actively involved in a conflict with Kurdish militants
- Only AB in Europe without nuclear capable aircrafts but used by US as base for strikes in Syria
- Safety gap needed renovation. Estimated expenditure → more than 26€ millions
Italian Air Bases hosting US NWs

Ghedi is 60 miles (100 km) away from Milan

Aviano is 56 miles (90 km) away from Venice
## Men at Work (2): Italy - Aviano and Ghedi

### U.S. Nuclear Weapons In Italy, 1956-2014*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weapon</th>
<th>Deployment Start</th>
<th>Deployment End or Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporal SSM</td>
<td>August 1956</td>
<td>September 1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honest John SSM</td>
<td>August 1956</td>
<td>June 1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bomb**</td>
<td>April 1957</td>
<td>Currently deployed at Aviano AB (50) and Ghedi Torre AB (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADM</td>
<td>January-March 1959</td>
<td>1985?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jupiter IRBM</td>
<td>June 1960</td>
<td>June 1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nike-Hercules SAM</td>
<td>October-December 1960</td>
<td>1988?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-inch Howitzer</td>
<td>January-March 1964</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sergeant SSM</td>
<td>January-March 1964</td>
<td>June 1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth bomb</td>
<td>January-March 1972</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: ADM = Atomic Demolition Munitions; IRBM: Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missile; SAM = Surface-to-Air Missile; SSM = Surface-to-Surface Missile.


** Various designs. The current designs include the B61-3 and B61-4 tactical bombs.

Kristensen/FAS 2014
Men at Work (2): Italy - Aviano and Ghedi

- Only country with 2 hosting facilities (both with permanent nuclear capable aircraft);
- Hosts the highest number of US weapons in Europe (39%)
- Ghedi - Munitions Support Squadron (MUNSS): “responsible for receipt, storage, maintenance, and control of United States (US) nuclear weapons in support of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and its strike mission”
- Increasing Physical Protection – cost sharing between US and Italy (economic crisis-priorities?)
Aviano Air Base

Source: www.fas.org
Ghedi Torre Air Base

Source: www.fas.org
Men at Work (2): Italy - Aviano and Ghedi

- Only draft of the project costed more than 215,000€.
- Estimated expense of project is 15 million€.
- Two motions (local and National) to question the Minister of Defense on possible expenses and programmes. The Minister has never answered.
- March 2016 – 300 new US personnel to Aviano AB.
Italy Must Face Nuclear Danger

- Lassaad Briki (36) and Muhammad Waqas (28) alleged jihadists connected to IS were arrested in July 2015 because planned to attack Italy, in particular Ghedi AB.
- May 2016 - charged with 6 years in jail and expulsion from Italy after this term
Italian International Political Posture on NWs

- Italy denies hosting US nuclear weapons;
- As *weasel state* Italy aligns to NATO claims: work for disarmament but until we have NWs we will rely on them (!)
- Hasn’t signed the **Humanitarian Pledge**;
- Doesn’t acknowledge existence of the **legal gap**;
- Fear to lose NATO umbrella, US friendship
- NWs hosting used as **bargaining chip** to increase negotiating power
Public Opinion

- **Italy** – unaware of NWs presence, not interested in nuclear issue
  - Only exception Ghedi and Aviano population
  - January 2016 “Motion 174” to investigate risks connected to the presence of nuclear warheads on the territory

- **Belgium** – fear of nuclear terrorism

- **Turkey** – (personal meeting with ICAN Turkey) people are more concentrated on war, refugee crisis and linked social problems
Public Opinion

- **Germany** – 2010 Bundestag urged the Government “to work vigorously within the Alliance and with our US allies for the withdrawal of US nuclear weapons from Germany”
  - IPPNW poll: 93% of population want NWs banned
- **Netherlands** - PAX’ citizen’s proposal to ban NWs in the country was adopted by a large majority of the Parliament (May 17, 2016) MPs issued several motion to pressure the Government
Thank you for your attention