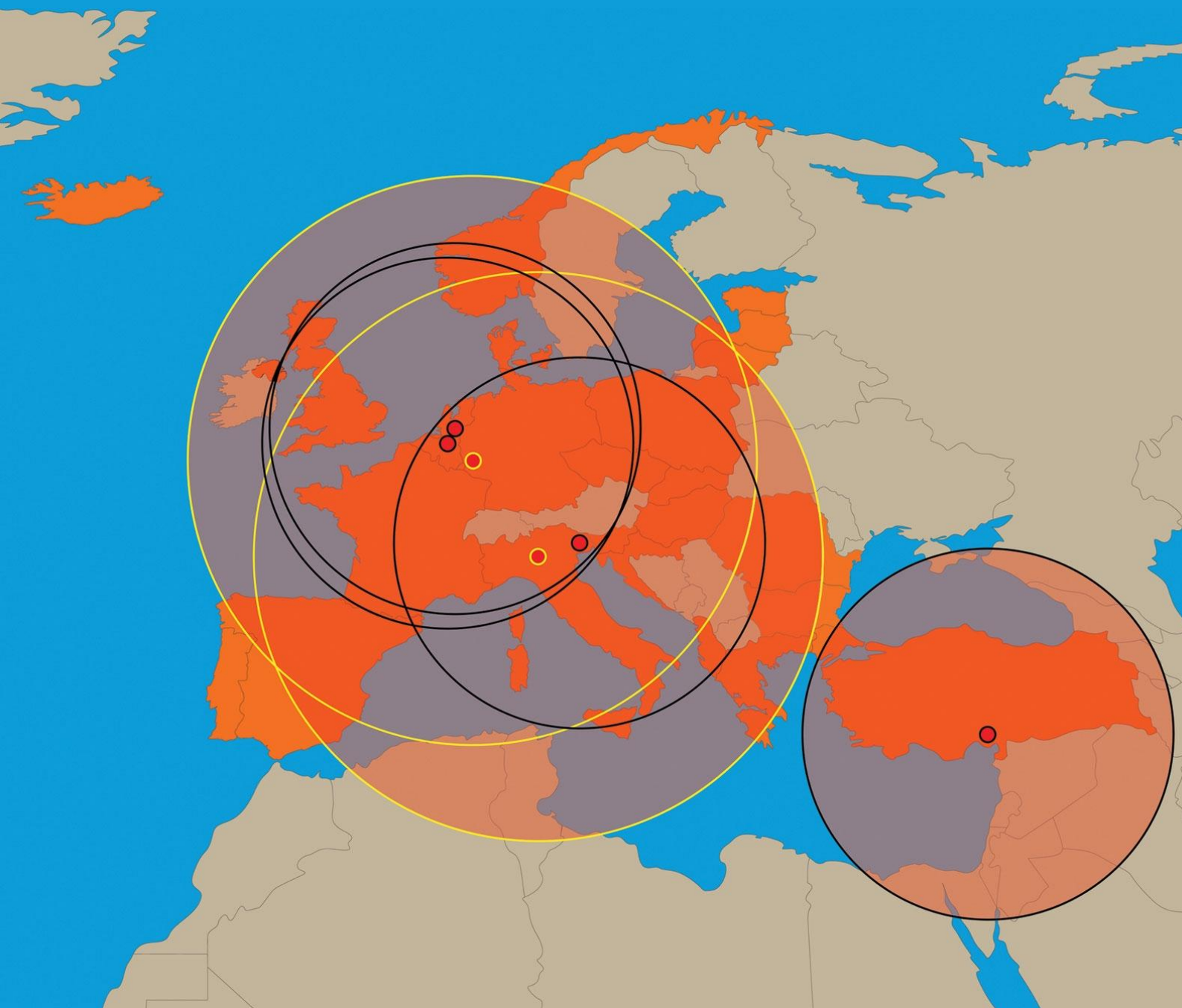


Exit Strategies

The case for redefining NATO consensus on U.S. TNW



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Acronyms used in this report

DCA- Dual Capable Aircraft
DDPR- Defence and Deterrence Posture Review
HLG- High Level Group
MFA- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOD- Ministry of Defence
NAC- North Atlantic Council
NATO- North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NPG- Nuclear Planning Group
NPT- nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty
TNW- Tactical Nuclear Weapons (also known as sub-strategic nuclear weapons, Theatre nuclear weapons, non-strategic nuclear weapons)
WCDC- Weapons of Mass Destruction Control and Disarmament Committee
WMD- Weapons of Mass Destruction

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Introduction

Imagine this:

It is 2015 and Vice President Hillary Clinton shakes the hand of the mayor of Kleine Brogel as she hands him the keys to the nuclear vaults where until recently, 20 U.S. nuclear bombs were deployed.

Looking back, it wasn't all that hard to decide on their removal. Prior to the 2012 NATO Summit, parliaments of countries hosting the nuclear weapons adopted resolutions calling on their governments to represent within NATO the majority view that U.S. nuclear deployments in their countries are no longer needed or appreciated.

The call made it clear to NATO that the old consensus on nuclear deployments in Europe was no longer supported by the host countries and that a new consensus needed to be found. At the 2012 Chicago summit, the Allies adopted a carefully worded document in which NATO accepted the reality that the forward deployment was no longer in the best interest of the Alliance. The member states decided on a time bound plan for the withdrawal of the remaining TNW.

The date that NATO decides on the future of the U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe is fast approaching. On May 20 and 21 of this year, NATO heads of state will decide on a Defence and Deterrence Posture Review (DDPR) in which NATO presents the 'appropriate mix' of conventional, nuclear and missile defence capabilities it needs in the future. One of the main headache dossiers that needs to be resolved before the summit is the deployment of U.S B61 nuclear weapons in five countries in Europe. Most states hosting them want them out. But France and some of the states close to Russia want to keep them.

There is no consensus on change, NATO says, and all countries have subscribed to the political reality that consensus is needed to make change. This means that the bombs will stay. But that doesn't solve the problem of growing dissent in the host countries and it doesn't change the reality that according to most experts, diplomats, politicians and citizens, the B61 is a militarily redundant weapon, of little political use. This report therefore looks at opportunities the host countries have to end the deployment of the U.S. nuclear weapons in their countries.

It is late but not too late to reset the debate and demand a changed consensus on nuclear deployment. It is important that the host countries reconsider their formal decision making powers, for if they don't the future will be something much more like this:

It is 2016, and internal divisions are forcing NATO to prepare a new Strategic Concept. The 2012 choice to make withdrawal part of negotiations with the Russians has led to nothing. Russia refused to discuss TNW prior to the removal of U.S. TNW from Europe. Meanwhile, the inability of NATO to solve this divisive issue has severely undermined alliance solidarity. Germany has refused to financially support its nuclear task as it does not believe the weapons serve

any military or political purpose. By relying on these nuclear weapons to magically enhance alliance solidarity, the Alliance has failed to take a proper look at what would be actual, practical, useful and affordable ways to share the burden of collective defence. Meanwhile, the economic crisis has led to a political shift in the Netherlands in favour of a no-nonsense coalition government that is openly saying that if NATO does not withdraw the U.S. weapons, the Netherlands will use its formal decision making powers and negotiate withdrawal of the B61s from Volkel Airbase directly with the U.S.. The inability of the Alliance to deal maturely with this situation severely strains its credibility, especially towards the citizens of the Alliance, who are openly wondering what NATO actually does for them.

Executive Summary

NATO does not have the authority to enforce continued nuclear deployments. Deployment, upkeep, security measures, the training of pilots, procurement of delivery platforms - formally, none of these decisions involve NATO.

In the past when non-strategic nuclear weapons were removed or nuclear support tasks were ended, NATO consensus was not a notable factor in the decision making. In fact, these were essentially bilateral decisions involving the U.S. and the host nation.

The U.S. can decide to end any deployment unilaterally. The host countries can decide to end their support for the infrastructure needed for deployment. Together, the U.S. and the host can decide to end deployment.

Past practice has led the alliance to strive for consensus- where all members do not block agreement. However, there is no known formal requirement for NATO to make decisions only by consensus. This is a political choice.

There is no consensus in NATO on continued deployment of U.S. B61 bombs in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey. A majority of states, experts, NGO's and populations regard the weapons as redundant militarily and of little significance politically. They want the weapons removed.

Ergo, host governments cannot hide behind NATO when they need to answer to their populations. If there are still U.S. nuclear weapons in these countries in the future, it is not because NATO prohibits removal. Like all things nuclear, in the end it all comes down to political will.

Recommendations

Host states that want to end the deployment of foreign nuclear weapons on their soil should make it clear to their NATO allies that there is no longer consensus support for the deployment of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe, forcing NATO allies to work towards a new consensus.

Host states should make clear to the Alliance that if NATO again fails to address their concerns appropriately, host states retain the right to negotiate a plan for withdrawal outside of NATO. Decisions could be made shortly after the finalization of the DDRP and could be bilateral, or multilateral between the U.S. and any number of host states.

Parliaments in host countries should make sure that their ministers and heads of state are fully aware of their formal decision making powers. Understanding this complexity cannot be taken for granted, even among government officials and MFA/MOD staff.

The U.S. should reconsider the role of TNW as a bargaining chip vis-à-vis Russia. Withdrawal to central locations in the U.S. would be a good start of negotiations, not a good outcome.

NATO should use the opportunity offered by the DDRP process to negotiate a consensus agreement on a time bound withdrawal of the B61s, reflecting the absence of full agreement to maintain a U.S. nuclear presence in Europe.

Who decides on the U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe?

In getting to the bottom of the question of who decides on U.S. nuclear deployments in Europe, it is important to separate the different decisions involved. There are decisions on policy and on posture; decisions on deployment, numbers, locations, and on use; and there are decisions on bombs, aircraft and the bases where they are deployed.



The Bombs

The nuclear weapons now deployed five European NATO member states are B61 gravity bombs with a yield of between 0.3 and 170 kilotons. Regardless of the precise location, the bombs remain under the authority of the U.S., who manufactures and maintains them. In total, the U.S. currently retains about 500 B61 nuclear bombs.ⁱ Between 140 and 200 of these are currently deployed in Europe. As the host states maintain a ‘policy of ambiguity’, neither confirming nor denying the presence of nuclear weapons on their territories, and as NATO has no transparent method of reporting back to national democratic institutions on its nuclear sharing policies, it is impossible to know the exact number of B61s currently deployed. Estimates are based on historical data and talks with (former) NATO international staff.

Decisions on deployment of nuclear weapons beyond national borders are first and foremost a U.S. unilateral decision. No one can force the U.S. to maintain a nuclear presence in Europe.

Decisions on deployment in specific countries are taken by the U.S. and the host states bilaterally. Deployment arrangements are explicated in so-called Status Of Forces Agreements. The bilateral agreements include provisions determining who is responsible for maintenance of the bombs, maintenance of buildings and equipment, security of facilities et cetera. In the Netherlands, the U.S. picks up the bill on anything that has to do with the maintenance, transport and operations on the bombs. All other expenses are covered by the Dutch.

Many believe that in case of the use of a bomb in a nuclear strike, NATO members are part of the decision making process. In other words, formally, even when the U.S. should want to bomb a target with B61’s deployed in Belgium, the Norwegian government could block such a decision. The German government in September 2011 however stated clearly that “NATO as an organization does not make decisions on the use of nuclear weapons. This remains the preserve of nuclear weapon states”ⁱⁱ. The host states are unable to use the nuclear bombs without consent of the U.S.

The Aircraft

B61 bombs need to be flown by and then dropped from an airplane. Currently, only F-16 and Tornado aircraft are modified to carry B61 nuclear bombs. The Netherlands, Belgium and Germany provide aircraft and pilots for nuclear missions. In Italy, both U.S. F-16s and Italian Tornados are used. There is no squadron of aircraft dedicated to the nuclear weapons deployed on Incirlik Base in Turkey.ⁱⁱⁱ

The cost of training pilots is covered by the defence budgets of the host states. In the annual defence budgets, these costs do not appear as a separate item, because pilots and their aircraft are also engaged in conventional missions. Procurement decisions are also the purview of the host states. Theoretically, there is parliamentary oversight on defence budget spending, although how much influence the parliament has differs across the Alliance.

Decisions on dedicating aircraft to nuclear tasks is done in consultation with NATO allies as part of NATO's nuclear sharing arrangements, in which at least 17 countries have taken up one or more 'nuclear tasks'. Besides flying nuclear missions and hosting nuclear weapons, countries offer early warning capabilities, mid-air-refuelling, air support etc. NATO's Nuclear Planning Group is where these consultations take place. But as the name says, the competencies of the NPG are limited to planning – planning of how to implement deployment and sharing decisions of host states and the U.S..

The facilities

The B61s are currently deployed on six military bases in Europe. The host nations are responsible for all costs relating to the construction and maintenance of infrastructure including runways, bunkers, and air traffic control. Next to that, the host states are responsible for the security of the site. The U.S. does periodically inspect the safety and security of the base. Maintenance of the deployed bombs is done by U.S. Munitions Support Squadrons which usually consist of about 100 personnel. Effectively, the responsibility of work done on the base is shared by the U.S. and the host country.^{iv}



The absence of transparent information on these issues makes it hard to ensure total accuracy in many cases. Often, the authority here described to any actor is only assumed based on statements by officials, or by officials 'not denying' stated assumptions. We of course invite anyone – NATO especially – to provide more accurate information where necessary.

Formal options for removing U.S. nuclear weapons from Europe

The Greek case

“We were lucky”, a Greek diplomat relates. “About 10 years ago, the U.S. needed to upgrade the bombs.” That made the bombs incompatible with the Greek dual capable Corsair aircraft. Greece set out to purchase F-16s at the time, but made it known to the U.S. that it wasn’t particularly enthusiastic about the prospect of having to invest in modifying the new F-16s for flying nuclear missions. According to one diplomat, “it would have undermined the performance of the aircraft in missions that we actually need them for”. The U.S. and Greece agreed that the the deployment of B61s had become redundant. Their original targets, Bulgaria and Romania were about to become NATO members at the time. So the B61 were removed from Greece. The Greeks did keep the infrastructure in place, so that – theoretically – B61s and aircraft carrying them can be supported in the south of Greece.

The Greek case shows that – formally – the decision about ending B61 deployments is taken by the host nation and the U.S. bilaterally.

close Volkel Base. Belgium could stop assigning pilots to nuclear tasks. Germany could simply refuse to buy new dual capable aircraft (DCA). While the first two examples are hypothetical at this point, the Germans did indeed decide not to replace their DCA. This shift in Germany’s nuclear task is reinforced by the modernization

plans for the B61 which will make it impossible to fly nuclear missions with the ageing German Tornado DCA. Germany may refuse to modify the Tornado’s that have to be retired in a few years from conventional missions anyway.^{vi}

Relocations

Decisions as described here could lead to the U.S. relocating the bombs within Europe. Scenario’s discussed in the growing stack of reports on this issue primarily focus on the option of relocating all

B61s

The deployment of B61 bombs can be ended through a bilateral decision between the U.S. and the host state to change the Status of Forces Agreement. There are precedents. The most recent examples include a bilateral agreement between the UK and the U.S. to end the deployment of U.S. weapons at Lakenheath, and a similar agreement between the U.S. and Greece to end the deployment of B61 non-strategic nuclear weapons on Araxos Base in Greece.^v

Theoretically, for a host country, ending nuclear deployment is little more than a phone call away. The U.S. could not refuse a serious request for withdrawal by a host nation, simply because it has no legal basis to do so.

Aircraft and bases

Besides a bilateral deal with the U.S. on the removal of the nuclear bombs, host states have other options to end or change their nuclear tasks. They can stop providing infrastructure, aircraft or personnel. The Netherlands for example, retains the right to

the bombs to Italy or perhaps to Italy and Turkey. Aviano Airbase in the North of Italy is a favourite location in such scenarios. But it is clearly not an option favoured by many Italians. In 2011, the government of the province where Aviano base is located made statements^{vii} vigorously opposing any relocation of nuclear weapons from other European countries to Aviano Base.

Another relocation possibility often mentioned is a temporary relocation of the bombs to the U.S.. That way, the U.S. can show to Russia that it too has finally moved all of its nuclear weapons to its own territory, as Russia did in the 1990's. The NATO countries could – for the time being – keep the current nuclear infrastructure in place and maintain a dormant form of nuclear sharing, awaiting the final settlement between the U.S. and Russia of mutual concerns about non-strategic nuclear disarmament.

Treaty trouble

The Non-proliferation Treaty expressly prohibits “*transfer to any recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or control over such weapons*”^{viii}. Formally, one would assume, this provides states that want to end the deployment of nuclear weapons of others on their soil with a strong argument. Within NATO however, this argument is not part of the discourse.

Proponents of nuclear sharing have always maintained that the NPT provides an implicit exception for the U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe because the nuclear sharing arrangement was already in place at the time of the signing of the Treaty. In addition, they say, Russia and other nuclear weapon states were aware at the time that nuclear sharing arrangements in NATO existed and they signed the Treaty regardless. While this may be true, the *informal* and *implicit* exception was never made public, never reviewed and never renewed while the Treaty itself was extended and re-affirmed several times since. During those occasions, NATO members refused to make the nuclear sharing practice part of the discussions on the Treaty.

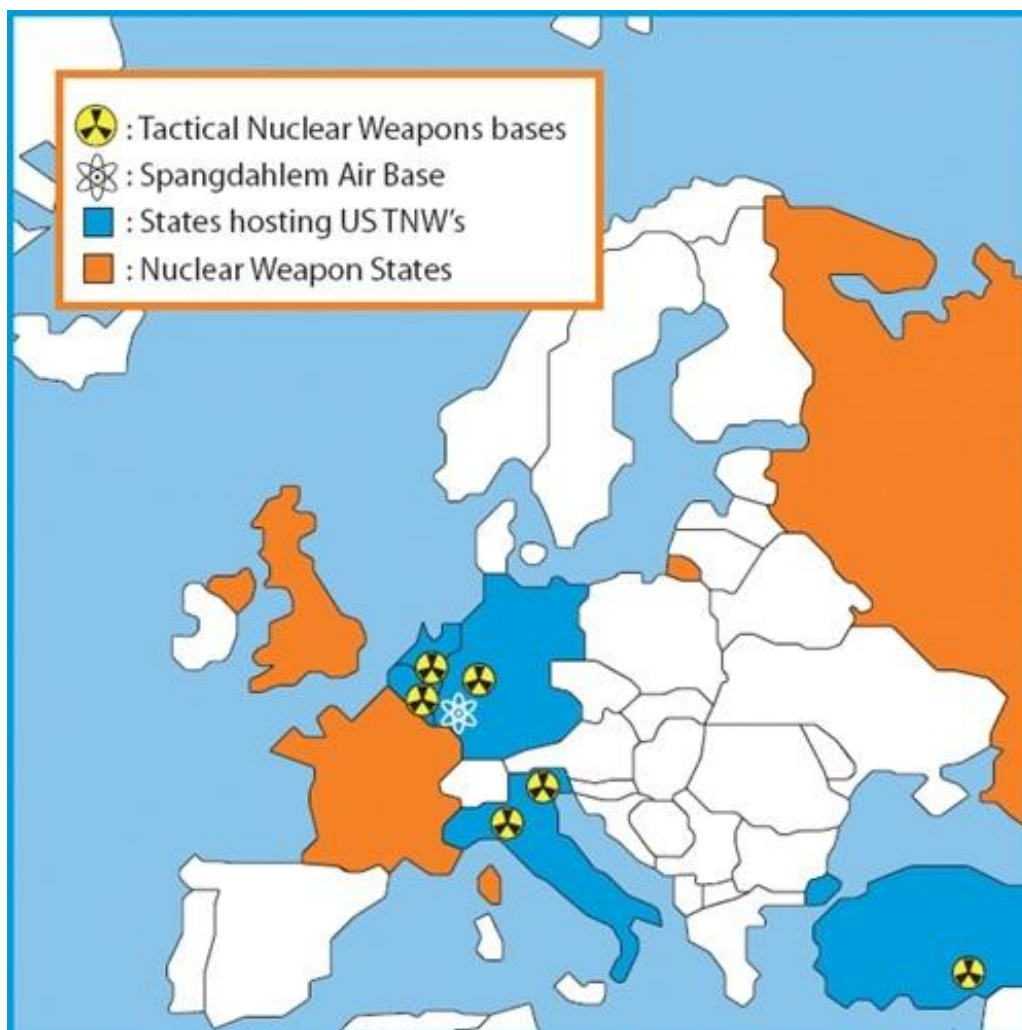
The inconsistency caused by NATO nuclear sharing is regularly pointed out by non-nuclear weapon states, most notably by the group of over 100 countries known as the Non-Aligned Movement who at the 2010 NPT Review Conference stressed that nuclear weapons states should “*refrain from nuclear weapon sharing, with any other states under any kind of security arrangements, including in the framework of military alliances*”.^{ix} As such, the continued deployment of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe visibly undermines the credibility of NATO and its members in disarmament and non-proliferation discussions. In comparison, the former Warsaw Pact countries were applauded by the international community when in the 1990's they ended similar arrangements with Russia. It was then stressed as a significant contribution both to disarmament and to non-proliferation.

Concluding

There is no technical or legal reason preventing any of the five countries in Europe hosting American nuclear weapons from removing them. If, for example, Italy should decide that in these times of austerity and overwhelming NATO battlefield superiority the deployment of battlefield nuclear weapons is no longer a wise course of action, it could simply tell the U.S. to take them home. The U.S. could not refuse, simply because it has no formal grounds to do so. No one can force the U.S. to put nuclear weapons in Europe, and the U.S. cannot force European countries to host them against their will. History shows that NATO as an entity in itself does not have a formal role to play in such deployment decisions.

Political realities of removing U.S. nuclear weapons from Europe

While formally the U.S. and the host states have every right to decide on withdrawal of nuclear weapons bilaterally – or even unilaterally – the host states have taken the position that *politically*, it is important to try and find consensus within the Alliance for solving what is clearly a divisive problem. The default reflex of NATO if no agreement is found on a change in policy or posture, is to continue the existing one. And consensus on any new nuclear policy seems farther away than ever. That leads to the question of what states that want to end the B61 deployments can do. What political tools, venues and opportunities do they have?



The U.S.

Contrary to what many people believe, the U.S. is not pushing to keep B61s deployed in Europe. Off the record, most U.S. diplomats are quite outspoken, they would prefer to see the bombs removed. They regard the weapons as militarily redundant or even obsolete. Most see the symbolic function of the B61s as a factor contributing to a sense of Alliance cohesion but they believe that the same symbolic effects could be achieved more economically and efficiently through other forms of sharing responsibilities and tasks within the alliance that are militarily more relevant, more visible to the public and not at odds with international non-proliferation rules.

The U.S. basically puts the ball in the European court. If the Europeans really want to continue the deployment of nuclear weapons, the U.S. will accept that. It is after all easier to continue with a militarily obsolete system than to invest in other ways to 'show commitment' to the security of the European continent. If Europe decided to let the B61s go, the U.S. would surely come and get them.

The opportunity to force a European decision is limited, as President Obama stated in early 2011 that he would *"seek to initiate, following consultations with NATO Allies but no later than one year after [the entry-into-force of the new START agreement], negotiations with the Russian Federation to address the disparity between non-strategical (tactical) nuclear weapons stockpiles."*^{xx}

The deadline given by Obama ends with the DDP. After that, if Europe fails to come up with a clear consensus proposal, the decision to withdraw B61s could become a U.S. decision, part of resumed U.S. – Russian arms control negotiations. That would take the decision out of the NATO context, but it would also mean that any change in current deployment is made dependent on Russian cooperation. And there is little reason to assume that the Russians have any interest in accepting obsolete nuclear weapons, that shouldn't be in Europe in the first place, as legitimate bargaining chips. If withdrawal of these weapons is tied to a negotiated outcome with Russia, the bombs may never go.

As U.S. security concerns are shifting away from Europe to East Asia and the Middle East, the U.S. is careful not to alienate European allies by pushing unilaterally for withdrawal of the B61s. At the same time, the U.S. realizes that continued deployment will lead to growing problems within the NATO alliance – which could in the near future undermine U.S. influence in the European region. The growing problem is caused largely by the factual lack of relevance of the weapons. But an additional concern for the U.S. is the growing discontent in the host countries. Removal of nuclear weapons will surely have short term costs. But in the long run, the price of keeping redundant nuclear weapons in Europe against the wish of countries that host them will be much higher.

Host countries

It was **Germany** that broke through long stalemated discussions on the B61 deployments in November 2009, when a new government included a reference to the weapons stored on German soil in their coalition agreement. In 2011 Germany reiterated its goal to change NATO nuclear policy through a consensus decision within the alliance. The government continues to *"create the conditions for a world free of nuclear weapons."* It will aim to do so beyond the Chicago Summit, through the new NATO WMD Control and Disarmament Committee (WCDC), by increasing transparency with the Russian Federation, and by supporting the inclusion of the TNW in the next round of negotiations between the U.S. and Russia. The German government has reaffirmed that the *"role and basic purpose of NATO's nuclear forces as a whole, including the systems stationed in Europe, are political in nature"*, and therefore *"The efforts of the Federal Government [is] to ensure inclusion of substrategic nuclear weapons, not hitherto subject to arms control regulations, on the*

international agenda for the further disarmament process, thereby creating the conditions to fulfil the Federal Government's aim to ensure the removal of nuclear weapons still remaining in Germany".^{xi}

The **Dutch** Parliament in April 2010 adopted a resolution urging Minister of Foreign Affairs Maxime Verhagen to *"inform the U.S. government that it is no longer attached to the protection of the European continent through the presence of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe and that it regards the withdrawal of these nuclear weapons as desirable"*^{xii}. The Minister responded that he regarded the resolution as "supporting existing policy". After the 2011 elections, new minister Uri Rosenthal confirmed that he continues the policy objectives of his predecessor in these matters. In addition, the Dutch government has been part of several initiatives within the Alliance aiming to push the debate away from maintaining the current deployment situation. At the same time, the Dutch government has made it repeatedly clear it will not decide on anything without a consensus decision from NATO.

In **Belgium**, since 2005, consecutive parliaments have called on the government to put forward, within NATO, initiatives for the withdrawal of the B61 bombs. Similar to the Dutch government though, the Belgian government seems reluctant to use its formal decision making authority in this matter. Government ministers have repeatedly made it clear that they do not anticipate a decision on B61s in Belgium other than one taken in consensus within NATO.

The **Italian** government has not been very outspoken about the issue. But the Italian parliament has on occasion spoken out in favour of removal.^{xiii} At the time of writing this report, the Italian parliament is planning to discuss a resolution that calls for withdrawal of the U.S. nuclear weapons from Italy after consultation with NATO allies, but no later than five years from now.^{xiv}

Turkey is the only host country where there is no clarity about governmental or parliamentary objectives with regard to this issue. Talks with Turkish diplomats have – in the past – shown a Turkish willingness to help forge a consensus regardless of the exact outcome of that consensus.

In NATO corridors

On the NATO Alliance level, the German coalition government agreement and subsequent discussions about the possibilities for early withdrawal of the B61s from Europe led to the issue being raised by a group of foreign ministers in advance of the NATO Foreign Ministers meeting in Tallinn in April 2010. This group requested that the TNW question be added to the discussion in Tallinn.^{xv} 28 foreign ministers discussed the nuclear question - officially for the first time. This moved the nuclear weapons debate out of the defence sphere, and into foreign policy discussions. Although the outcome was an agreement on five principles, as proposed by Hilary Clinton (U.S.)^{xvi}, including that NATO would remain a nuclear alliance as long as nuclear weapons exist, this move into the foreign policy sphere added significant weight to the oft raised argument that these weapons serve no military utility and are only a political device.

In the months before the final adoption of the Strategic Concept in November 2010 the discussion in Brussels, and in many capitals around the world continued about what to do with these forward deployed weapons. Delegations started to drift into two camps- the 'German' camp, which sought a change in the current deployment status of the weapons and the 'French' camp, which sought to keep things the way they are. Experts, academics, and former government officials around the world presented conjecture after conjecture about which country was in which camp, and which would win during the Lisbon Summit.

The 2010 Strategic Concept laid out a couple of key principles. NATO would remain a nuclear alliance as long as nuclear weapons exist, but at the same time NATO would seek to create the conditions for a world free of nuclear weapons. The Alliance would engage more actively in disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.^{xvii} On nuclear deployments in Europe however, the Alliance failed to deliver despite the call by Germany (and others) for a substantive review of NATO nuclear deployments and policies in advance of the new Strategic Concept. Instead, NATO delayed decision making by inventing something new: The Defence and Deterrence Review Process.

The DDPR: A non-consensical debate

It took the Belgians 18 months of intense negotiations to get a new government in 2010 and 2011. The new government, in writing, called for “*a ban on weapon systems that have a variable reach and/or cause disproportionate amounts of civilian casualties.*”^{xviii} Asked whether this position would logically lead to the removal of U.S. nuclear weapons from Belgian soil, the new minister of Foreign Affairs Reynders said that no, the sentence “*only applies to weapons that are actually used.*”^{xix} His remark is exemplary of the ludicrous state of the debate on NATO nuclear weapons. It is a debate in which consensus is determined by the few, in which parliaments and the public are kept in the dark, and in which everybody is either hiding behind back of the mighty Russian boogiemanager, or under the rug of a political commitment to consensus.

Consensus

Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany –all three hosting U.S. nuclear weapons - have acknowledged publicly that they would like to see the weapons of mass destruction removed from their territories. Aware that the issue is sensitive within NATO, they have said from the start that – of course – such a decision can only be made by consensus. Meaning: All 28 NATO allies have to agree that removing the U.S. nuclear weapons is a good idea. If not, the default is that the weapons stay. It all sounds very logical. And reasonable, until you look at it from another side: There is no consensus support any more for the current status quo. Norway, Slovenia, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Iceland, Luxemburg, Greece, Spain and Poland are only some of the countries that have already, in one way or the other, let it be known that as far as they are concerned, deployment of American weapons of mass destruction in Europe is no longer necessary, nor a good idea. A majority of experts, policy makers and populations are convinced that the tactical nuclear weapons are not necessary to deter Russia or anyone else. They do not believe that TNW help defend Europe and they long for better forms of ‘sharing the burden’ within the alliance. If NATO were going for consensus, the nuclear weapons would be out.



Transparency

The debate as it is going now lacks appropriate transparency. Two months before NATO heads of state will agree on a document on the future of nuclear weapons in Europe, we do not even know what the terms of reference actually are for the document. Worse: We do not even know precisely what the document will be! Accounts of NATO officials and national governments on the proceedings are – to put it mildly – raising questions on the status, the scope and both the formal and informal importance of the Defence and Deterrence Posture Review (DDPR) that is to be agreed on by May 21st. Will there even be a public document telling us what NATO has decided? According to sources in the Dutch MFA, there will be. But sources in NATO HQ refuse to corroborate this. As citizens of the

NATO territories, we are not allowed to know what is in the preparatory documents. Our governments simply do not want the citizens of NATO to have a say in policies that determine the deployment and possible use of nuclear weapons. If this were a transparent debate, the nuclear weapons would be out.

Accountability

The process is an affront to modern standards of accountability. Our governments do not report back adequately to our parliaments and our parliaments are refused a look into crucial NATO documents. When NATO was still purely a defence alliance, whose tasks were limited to preparing for and operating defence protocols for a Soviet invasion, this was, perhaps, understandable. But now that the Alliance has evolved into a political and military alliance that “*balances defensive and expeditionary tasks*”^{xxx}, it is a serious flaw in our constitutional parliamentary democratic structures. The DDPR process is no different. Parliament cannot see the preparatory documents nor the drafts of the DDPR. The direct consequences of this can be seen in 28 parliaments. Ministers brief parliaments in generalities and vagueness, ‘managing expectations’, ‘taking into account the full complexity’ of the issues. And after Chicago, no-one will be able to assess to what extent our government leaders have carried out the democratic direction provided by parliaments. There is no way to assess if they have held true to their national commitment in the negotiations and deliberations. In this ‘alliance of democracies’, we are simply not allowed to know.

With regards to the nuclear weapons in our countries, it isn’t all that hard for any government leader to determine a position. Large majorities of parliamentarians, policy makers and the public are very clear on the subject: American nuclear weapons are a dangerous anachronism from the Cold War, that serve no military and very little political purpose. Hence the Belgian minister’s remark that no ban is needed for weapons you “don’t actually use.” If NATO were accountable to the countries it represents and their citizens, the nuclear weapons would be out.

For NATO, the primary difficulty to overcome in relation to the B61 deployments is not the loss of security to Alliance territory if the bombs are removed. Any damage is measured in terms of intra-alliance stability, solidarity and burden sharing. All NATO needs –at the end of the day – is a proper sit-down focussing solely on the question what forms of burden sharing and alliance assurances will be needed, wanted and affordable in the future.

The host states had every right to expect from their allies and from NATO international staff that this militarily trivial issue be tackled in more than two years of discussions on the future of the Alliance.

The repeated failure of the Alliance to come up with a solution for a problem as straightforward as this one, is in itself reason enough for the hosts to take the discussion out of the NATO context.

NATO argument is that Russia has weapons that look a lot like the B61s deployed in Italy, Turkey, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands. Russia even has *more!* But the fact remains that the Russian nuclear weapons have no direct bearing on the military usability of the American weapons. And the American weapons, if they are solely symbolic, can be symbols located in any country- including the U.S.. As the Belgian minister stated, NATO will not actually use these nuclear weapons.

Russia

The magical formula, after two years *non-consensual* discussions in NATO, is that it’s up to the Russians to decide if we keep American nuclear weapons in Europe. It’s the nonsensical way out. The Cold War is over. NATO no longer plans for scenarios involving Russian aggression. Russia knows this. The

Russia is a perfect excuse for inaction. And an appreciative one at that. Russia does (erroneously) believe that it needs its ageing battlefield nuclear weapons to deter conventional NATO pressure or aggression. The fact that NATO keeps a bunch of useless nuclear weapons in Europe is militarily irrelevant but politically provides Russia with the perfect excuse not to engage in further arms reductions: Russia can – and does – point to these weapons and say “You see, you have them too, and on someone else’s soil”. While NATO continues to point to Russia and say “You have more than we do!” NATO and Russia are, ironically, keeping each other’s obsolete weapons. If NATO took a realistic approach on how to deal with Russian battlefield nuclear weapons, it would start by relocating the American ones back to the U.S..

Political will

In the end, it is about political will, and the lack thereof. Belgian, Dutch and German governments, parliaments, public and experts have been saying for a long time that the weapons need to go. There is no consensus supporting the continued deployment of nuclear weapons on their soil. If any of these countries would stand up and make removal a demand that is part of finding a new consensus, they would certainly be successful. The U.S. will not force its nuclear weapons on any country. Other Allies may show concern and they will certainly ask the question what, in exchange, our countries will do for NATO assurance and solidarity. There will surely be a price, but as the Greek and UK removals showed, it will by no means be unaffordable and could even prove beneficial in the long run. If our governments properly represented the interests of our populations, the nuclear weapons would be out.

Strategies for removal

So far, for host states, the removal of the American nuclear weapons on their soil has been synonymous with negotiating a new consensus within NATO. To this end, the discussion was elevated out of the confines of the Nuclear Planning Group where all states except France discuss nuclear deployments and missions. The discussion was tabled at the North Atlantic Council level instead, allowing France a role in the negotiations. The results have been very disappointing. Both the negotiation process leading up to the NATO Strategic Concept of 2010 and so far the process that will lead to the adoption of the DDPR have failed to properly address the issue. The DDPR should have started with the questions: What are the future threats the alliance anticipates? What are the resources available? What is needed to maintain internal cohesion within the Alliance? Instead, the discussion is dominated by Cold War style number games and a general shyness to address the issue of burden sharing in times of financial crisis.

The political context in which the discussions take place (or not) is of course not permanent. The search for a NATO-consensus solution is there because the host states and the U.S. do not want to offend others. But after the DDPR, if NATO has again failed to deal with the issue, the U.S. will take the discussion out of the NATO context and make it part of bilateral disarmament talks with Russia. For the host nations, this is not a good outcome, as it sidelines their interests in preventing investments in a weapon system they know is militarily redundant.

Therefore, the host nations too may choose to lift the debate out of the NATO context and arrange the end of their involvement in nuclear deployments through bilateral agreement with the U.S. or by 'defaulting' on investing in needed replacements of DCA or refusing to maintain the investments in basing.

The need for new forms of burden sharing is the only concern that NATO, and NATO alone can solve. Host states could propel the process of negotiating new burden sharing methods and practices by making clear prior to the Chicago Summit that the old consensus on nuclear burden sharing is no longer supported. NATO needs to change.

It is late but not too late for a positive outcome of this debate. From this report, we can suggest the following practical steps:

Parliaments in host states should adopt unequivocal resolutions pressing their governments to relay to NATO the majority view that U.S. nuclear deployments in their countries are no longer needed nor appreciated.

The host state governments relay in NATO that they no longer support the old consensus on U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe and therefore the DDPR needs to reflect a new consensus.

The new consensus should, at the minimum, include a time-bound plan for withdrawal. Consultations within the Alliance on new forms of burden sharing as well as U.S. – Russian talks on reciprocity can be part of that plan, but not as preconditions.

The aim should be to announce complete and irreversible removal of U.S. nuclear weapons from Europe prior to or during the NPT Review Conference in 2015.

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About IKV Pax Christi

NoNukes is IKV Pax Christi's campaign for a world free of nuclear weapons. IKV Pax Christi is the joint peace organization of the Dutch Interchurch Peace Council (IKV) and Pax Christi Netherlands. We work for peace, reconciliation and justice in the world. We join with people in conflict areas to work on a peaceful and democratic society. We enlist the aid of people in the Netherlands who, like IKV Pax Christi, want to work for political solutions to crises and armed conflicts. IKV Pax Christi combines knowledge, energy and people to attain one single objective: there must be peace!

The NoNukes campaign informs, mobilizes and speaks out for nuclear disarmament. We do so through research, publications, political and public advocacy. For more information, see our website www.NoNukes.nl

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