

American Submariners Inc.  
4370 Twain Ave.  
San Diego, CA 92120-3404



## *The Silent Sentinel* *February 2018*



### *Our Creed and Purpose*

To perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in the pursuit of their duties while serving their country. That their dedication, deeds, and supreme sacrifice be a constant source of motivation toward greater accomplishments. Pledge loyalty and patriotism to the United States of America and its Constitution.

In addition to perpetuating the memory of departed shipmates, we shall provide a way for all Submariners to gather for the mutual benefit and enjoyment. Our common heritage as Submariners shall be Strengthened by camaraderie. We support a strong U.S. Submarine Force.

The organization will engage in various projects and deeds that will bring about the perpetual remembrance of those shipmates who have given the supreme sacrifice. The organization will also endeavor to educate all third parties it comes in contact with about the services our submarine brothers performed and how their sacrifices made possible the freedom and lifestyle we enjoy today.



*SWIM CALL*

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### The Silent Sentinel via Email

To all of my Shipmates and families who currently receive our Great newsletter via the mail who would like it sent via email or continue to receive it via mail, please fill out the form and mail it to the base or myself. We are trying to cut the cost of the newsletter down from \$3700 to about \$1900 a year. By receiving the Silent Sentinel via email will cut down the printing and mailing cost. The other plus to receiving it via email is you can save it on your computer and not have the paper lying around the house.

*A subscription to the Silent Sentinel newsletter will be available to surviving family members via internet email, at no charge, upon notification of the Membership Chairman. If a printed hard-copy is preferred, via US Post Office delivery, an annual donation of \$5.00 will be requested to cover costs.*

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*DUE TO LOGISTICS CONSTRAINTS, ALL INPUTS FOR THE SILENT SENTINEL MUST BE IN MY HAND NO LATER THAN **ONE WEEK** AFTER THE MONTHLY MEETING. IF I DO NOT RECEIVE IT BY THIS TIME, THE ITEM WILL NOT GET IN. NO EXCEPTIONS! MIKE*

## *February Meeting*

Our monthly meeting is held on the second Tuesday of the month at VFW Post 3787, 4370 Twain Ave., San Diego. Our next meeting will be on *February 13th*. The post is located one-half block West of Mission Gorge Road, just north of I-8. The meeting begins at 7 p.m. The E-Board meets one hour earlier at 6 p.m.

*Check us out on the World Wide Web  
www.ussvisandiego.org*

## *Binnacle List*

*Harry Humpreville, Joel Eikam and Glen Gerbrand*

## *Submarine Losses in February*

Originally Compiled by C J Glassford



USS Barbel (SS-316) Lost on Feb 4, 1945 with the loss of 81 officers and men on her 4th war patrol. Based on Japanese records, she was bombed near the southern entrance to the Palawan Passage. The day before, she reported she survived 3 depth charge attacks.

USS Shark I (SS-174) Lost on Feb 11, 1942 with the loss of 59 officers and men on her 1st war patrol. Shark was the 1st US submarine sunk by enemy surface craft in the Pacific. She was most likely sunk by depth charges.

USS Amberjack (SS-219) Lost on Feb 16, 1943 with the loss of 72 officers and men on her 3rd war patrol. Off Rabaul, she was attacked by a Japanese patrol plane, attacked by a torpedo boat and then depth charged by a subchaser. One additional man was killed earlier on the last patrol.

USS Grayback (SS-208) Lost on Feb 26, 1944 with the loss of 80 officers and men on her 10th war patrol. She appears to have been caught on the surface in the East China Sea by a Japanese carrier plane whose bombs made a direct hit. During this patrol she sank 4 ships totaling 21,594 tons and was tied for 11th in the number of ships sunk.

USS Trout (SS-202) Lost on Feb 29, 1944 with the loss of 81 officers and men on her 11th war patrol. She was sunk by escorts in the middle of the Philippines Basin after sinking a passenger-cargoman and damaging another in a convoy. She carried out several notable special missions, including carrying over two tons of gold bullion out of Corregidor in February 1942.



## San Diego Base, United States Submarine Veterans Inc. Minutes of Meeting – To be published in a future edition

### Current News

"Plataginet, I will; and like thee, Nero,  
Play on the lute, beholding the towns burn" (*Henry VI*, Shakespeare)

#### U.S. Plans New Nuclear Weapons

#### Pentagon Weighs 'Low Yield' And Sea- Launched Cruise Missile, Igniting Strategy Debate

Michael R. Gordon, Wall Street Journal, January 16

WASHINGTON – The Pentagon is planning to develop two new sea-based nuclear weapons to respond to Russia and China's growing military capabilities, according to a sweeping Defense Department review of nuclear strategy.

The planned move has ignited a broad debate over future U.S. nuclear strategy at a time when the nation also faces the threat of proliferation, in particular from North Korea's efforts to expand its arsenal of nuclear weapons and develop long-range missiles capable of delivering them.

Supporters of the Pentagon's plan say it is time for the U.S. to update its nuclear forces to deal with changing threats some three decades after the end of the Cold War. Critics worry that the Pentagon's search for more flexible nuclear options could lower the threshold for their use.

One weapon, which experts say could be deployed in about two years, is a "low yield" warhead for the Trident missile, which currently is deployed with more powerful warheads on the Navy's submarines that carry ballistic missiles.

The U.S. also would pursue the development of a new nuclear-tipped sea-launched cruise missile, reintroducing a system that was retired from the American arsenal in 2010.

The development of the two weapons is among a broad range of recommendations in the Pentagon's Nuclear Posture Review, a major reassessment of the U.S. nuclear strategy and programs that was commissioned about a year ago by President Donald Trump.

That strategy, which is expected to be formally unveiled later this month, has yet to be approved by the president. The Pentagon has dismissed an unclassified draft of the strategy, which was published last week by HuffPost, as "pre-decisional," while more updated drafts are also circulating. But the plans to field the new nuclear systems have strong support in the Pentagon and are expected to go forward, according to people familiar with the review.

A major question at the heart of the Pentagon review is how to respond to military strategy and programs in Russia and China, which American officials say provide a more prominent role for nuclear weapons. In effect, the Pentagon argues that since adversaries have failed to follow the U.S. in de-emphasizing the role of nuclear weapons, Washington needs a greater range of nuclear options to counter its potential foes, especially for carrying out limited strikes.

"While the United States has continued to reduce the number and salience of nuclear weapons, others, including Russia and China, have moved in the opposite direction," said a draft of the plan. "The United States must be capable of developing and deploying new capabilities, if necessary, to deter, assure, achieve U.S. objectives if deterrence fails, and hedge against uncertainty."

A major concern for the Pentagon is a new Russian ground-launched cruise missile that American officials say violates the treaty banning intermediate-range missiles based on land, which was signed in 1987 by President Ronald Reagan and Mikhail S. Gorbachev, leader of the then-Soviet Union. Russia's decision to develop and deploy that system is described by the review as part of a Russian doctrine that calls for threatening the limited use of nuclear weapons, or perhaps even carrying out a limited nuclear strike, to end a conventional war on terms favorable to the Kremlin.

By developing a new American "low yield" system, the Pentagon review argues the U.S. will have more credible options to respond to Russian threats without using more powerful strategic nuclear weapons, which the Kremlin may calculate Washington would be reluctant to use for fear of unleashing an all-out nuclear war. Because the new weapons it is proposing would be based at sea, the U.S. wouldn't need the permission of other nations to deploy them and their deployment wouldn't violate existing arms-control agreements.

The draft doesn't precisely define what "low yield" nuclear weapons might be, but the new Trident system might have a warhead of one or two kilotons, compared with the current system which has an explosive yield that ranges from 100 kilotons to 455 kilotons, depending on the warhead it carries. By comparison, the U.S. nuclear bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, at the end of World War II was about 15 kilotons.

Critics have assailed the Pentagon's review, arguing that it may bring about the very situation the Defense Department says it wants to avoid: a world in which the threshold for employing nuclear weapons is lowered.

"We should be doing everything to reduce the risk that nuclear weapons are going to be used, not expanding the ambiguity of when we might use nuclear weapons," said Jon Wolfsthal, who served as a senior official for arms control on President Barack Obama's National Security Council.

Bruce G. Blair, a scholar at Princeton University who has argued for the abolition of nuclear weapons, said the Pentagon should be looking for ways to strengthen its cyber and conventional military capabilities instead of searching for new nuclear options, especially since the Russian may opt to use its new ground-launched cruise missile with a nonnuclear warhead.

The review has also drawn support, particularly from conservative quarters. "This is not about making weapons more usable; this is about strengthening deterrence so that nuclear weapons are not used in the first place," said Robert Joseph, a senior national security official in the George W. Bush administration. "We have to think what would be credible in Russian eyes."

While the review calls for "pursuing" a new sea-launched cruise missile, it notes there are some circumstances in which the Trump administration might shelve the program: a decision by Russia to fix its alleged violation of the 1987 treaty banning U.S. and Russian land-based intermediate-range missiles and also reduce its formidable arsenal of tactical nuclear weapons.

Russia and China aren't the only threats cited in the nuclear review. It also asserts that upgrading the U.S. nuclear arsenal will add to the country's ability to deter North Korean aggression.

"North Korea relies on hardened and deeply buried facilities to secure the Kim regime and its key military and command and control capabilities," the review says. "Consequently, the United States will continue to field a range of conventional and nuclear capabilities able to hold such targets at risk."

Despite the debate over the proposed "low yield" Trident missile and sea-launched cruise missile, many of the other weapons recommended by the review also were advocated by the Obama administration, including the development of a new strategic bomber and an air-launched cruise missile.

Paying for all of the missile and bomber programs may be a challenge. The review says carrying out the nuclear modernization and operating the systems will require, at most, 6.4% of the Defense Department budget, up from 2% to 3%. If the Pentagon doesn't secure the increases it anticipates, this could heighten the competition between nuclear and nonnuclear programs for resources. The development of nuclear warheads is funded by the Energy Department.

### **New Data Shows Detail About Final Phase of US New START Treaty Reductions Hans M. Kristensen, Federation of American Scientists, January 12**

The full unclassified New START treaty data set released by State Department yesterday shows that the US reduction of its nuclear forces to meet the treaty limit had been completed by September 1, 2017, more than four months early before the deadline next month on February 5, 2018.

The data set reveals details about how the final reduction was achieved (see below).

Unfortunately, no official detailed data is released about the Russian force adjustments under New START. Our previous analysis of the overall September 1, 2017 New START data is available [here](#).

#### **Submarines**

During that six-month period last year, 20 ballistic missile submarine launch tubes were deactivated, corresponding to four tubes on five Ohio-class submarines. Two of those submarines were in drydock for refueling and not part of the operational force.

In total, the United States has deactivated 56 strategic missile submarine launch tubes since the New START treaty went into effect in 2011, although the first reduction didn't begin until after September 2016 – more than five years into the treaty.

Of the 280 submarine launch tubes, only 212 were counted as deployed with as many Trident II missiles loaded. The treaty counts a missile as deployed if it is in a launch tube regardless of whether the submarine is deployed at sea. The United States has declared that it will not deploy more than 240 missiles at any time. Assuming each deployed submarine carries a full missile load, the 212 deployed missiles correspond to 10 submarines fully loaded with a total of 200 missiles. The remaining 12 deployed missiles were onboard one or two submarines loading or offloading missiles at the time the count was made.

The data shows that the 212 deployed missiles carried a total of 945 warheads, or an average of 4 to 5 warheads per missile, corresponding to 70 percent of the 1,344 deployed warheads as of September 1, 2017 (the New START count was 1,393 deployed warheads, but 49 bombers counted as 49 weapons don't actually carry warheads, leaving 1,344 actual warheads deployed). If fully loaded, the 240 deployable SLBMs could carry nearly 2,000 warheads.

The Navy has begun replacing the original Trident II D5 missile with an upgraded version known as Trident II D5LE (LE for life-extension). The upgraded version carries the new Mk6 guidance system and the enhanced W76-1/Mk4A warhead (or the high-yield W88-0/Mk5). In the near future, according to the Trump administration's Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), some of the missiles would be equipped with a low-yield version of the W76-1.

The Navy is developing a new fleet of 12 Columbia-class missile submarines to begin replacing the Ohio-class SSBNs in the late-2020s. The Trump NPR states that "at least" 12 will be built. Each Columbia-class SSBN, the first of which will deploy on deterrent patrol in 2031, will have 16 missile tubes for a total of 192, a reduction of one-third from the current number of SSBN tubes. Ten deployable boats will be able to carry 160 Trident II D5LE missiles with a maximum capacity of 1,280 warheads; normally they will likely carry about the same number of warheads as the current force, with an average of about 5 to 6 warheads per missile.

#### **ICBMs**

The New START data shows the United States now has just under 400 Minuteman III ICBMs in silos, down from 405 in March 2017. Normally the Air Force strides to have 400 deployed but one missile was undergoing maintenance.

Although the number of deployed ICBMs had declined from 450 to 400, the total numbers of missiles and silos have not. The data shows the Air Force has the same number of missiles and silos as in March 2017 because 50 empty silos are "kept warm" and

ready to load 50 non-deployed missiles if necessary. Reduction of deployed ICBMs started in 2016, five years after the New START was signed. And the actual ICBM force is the same size as when the treaty was signed.

The 399 deployed ICBMs carried 399 W78/Mk12A or W87/Mk21 warheads. Although normally loaded with only one warhead each, the Trump NPR confirms that “a portion of the ICBM force can be uploaded” if necessary. We estimate the ICBM force has the capacity to carry a maximum of 800 warheads.

An ICBM replacement program is underway to build a new ICBM (programmatically called Ground Based Strategic Deterrent) to begin replacing the Minuteman III from 2029. The new ICBM will have enhanced penetration and warhead fuzing capabilities.

**Heavy Bombers**

The New START data shows the US Air Force has completed the denuclearization of excess nuclear bombers to 66 aircraft. This includes 20 B-2A stealth bombers for gravity bombs and 46 B-52H bombers for cruise missiles. Only 49 of the 66 bombers were counted as deployed as of September 1, 2017. Another 41 B-52Hs have been converted to non-nuclear armament such as the conventional long-range JASSM-ER cruise missile.

The New START treaty counts each of the 66 bombers as one weapon even though each B-2A can carry up to 16 bombs and each B-52H can carry up to 20 cruise missiles. We estimate there are nearly 1,000 bombs and cruise missiles available for the bombers, of which about 300 are deployed at two of the three bomber bases.

The bomber force was the first leg of the Triad to begin reductions under New START, starting with denuclearization of the (non-operational) B52-Gs and later excess B-52Hs. The first B-52H was denuclearized in September 2015 and the last of 41 in early 2017. Despite the denuclearization of excess aircraft, however, the actual number of bombers assigned nuclear strike missions under the strategic war plans is about the same today as in 2011.

A new heavy bomber known as the B-21 Raider is under development and planned to begin replacing nuclear and conventional bombers in the mid-2020s. The B-21 will be capable of carrying both the new B61-12 guided nuclear bomb and the new LRSSO nuclear cruise missile. The Air Force wants at least 100 B-21s but can only make 66 nuclear-capable unless it plans to exceed the size of the current nuclear bomber force.

**Looking Ahead**

With the completion of the force reductions under New START in preparation for the treaty entering into effect on February 5, 2018, the attention now shifts to what Russia and the United States will do to extend the treaty or replace it with a follow-up treaty. With its on-site inspections and ceilings on deployed and non-deployed strategic forces, extending New START treaty for another five years ought to be a no-brainer for the two countries; anything else would increase risks to strategic stability and international security. If the treaty is allowed to expire in 2021, there will be no – none! – limits on the number of strategic nuclear forces. Unfortunately, right now neither side appears to be doing anything except to blame the other side for creating problems. It is time for Russia and the United States to get out of the sandbox and behave like responsible states by agreeing to extend the New START treaty. February 5 – when the treaty enters into effect just 23 days from now – would be a great occasion for the two countries to announce their decision to extend the treaty.



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