

Nuclear Shorts

Pentagon Scrubs Climate Change References from Report

A revised Pentagon report on the effects of climate change on US defense infrastructure removed all but one reference to climate change. The January 2018 report, “Department of Defense Climate-Related Risk to DoD Infrastructure: Initial Screening Level Vulnerability Assessment Survey” (SLVAS), was supposed to outline the threats posed by climate change to military bases, ports and outposts. But the revised report kept only one reference to climate change out of the original report’s 23. The revision also removed a critical map showing military sites that are vulnerable to sea level rise. Rising seas are especially threatening to Naval Station Norfolk, in Virginia, which floods frequently, and to a multi-billion dollar anti-ballistic missile test site in the Marshall Islands. The report also deleted its prior admission that high heat days will have an effect on training. —Sources: Weather.com, May 11, 2018; and DoD Office of Economic Adjustment’s SLVAS, Feb. 23, 2018

“Wasting billions in federal taxes just the pits”

An angry editorial a recent edition of the *Albuquerque Journal* is worth quoting at length. “How many billions-with-a-‘b’ of your tax dollars is the federal government willing to waste on bad nuclear decisions? It’s in the tens of billions already, with the meter in overdrive....”

“[T]here are real questions about whether the US really needs 80 new [plutonium bomb] pits for an estimated \$1.4 trillion-with-a-‘t.’ The magic 80 number comes from an Obama-era vast weapons modernization make-work plan, and Trump is expected to up that ante. Yet, the United States already has 12,000 spare pits and, in storage, those ‘have credible minimum lifetimes in excess of 100 years,’ according to an independent advisory panel cited in *The Economist*. Making pits also produces a lot of waste, and as mentioned above, the nation can’t dispose of the metric tons it already has—more than 70,000 metric tons of used reactor fuel is in temporary facilities in 39 states and 55 metric tons of surplus weapons-grade plutonium is in bunkers at the Energy Department’s Pantex warhead assembly-disassembly plant outside Amarillo and in an old reactor building at the Savannah River Site....”

—*Albuquerque Journal*, Editorial, June 5, 2018

“We’re Not a Warlike People, We Just Like War” —George Carlin

Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein said in 2016 that the US was then “bombing seven countries.” *Politifact* rated the statement “True” on Dec. 31, 2016, identifying the target countries as Pakistan, Somalia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq and Libya. NBC News re-confirmed the claim on Jan. 9, 2017. A December 2015 report to Congress from the Obama Administration on presidential war powers named 14 countries with varying levels of ongoing

US military combat, including warfare in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Somalia, Yemen, Djibouti, Libya, Cuba, Niger, Cameroon, Egypt, Jordan, and Kosovo. Cuba was included because the military personnel operating the off-shore penal colony at Guantánamo Bay are combat troops. A legal analysis by lawfareblog.com which includes links to all of the Obama-era “War Power Letters to Congress 2009-2015” notes: “The most recent report, from December 2015, explicitly refers to ongoing operations of variable intensity in 14 countries.”



Newly appointed CIA director Gina Haspel (L), dubbed “Bloody Gina” by her colleagues, and Secretary of Defense James “Mad Dog” Mattis (R) will now be in charge of interrogating prisoners captured in 14 countries where the US has ongoing combat operations.

China Renews Nuclear No-First-Use Policy at Major Military Council

This past February, at the Munich Security Conference, an annual international forum for military policy decision-makers, veteran Chinese diplomat Fu Ying reaffirmed that China will never use nuclear weapons first, reminding the participants, “China maintains a very small nuclear arsenal, and China follows the policy of self-defense and minimum deterrence.” The phrase “minimum deterrence” is a reference to the original meaning of “deterrence” which is to prevent a nuclear attack by threatening nuclear retaliation. China deploys a total of 260 nuclear weapons. The US and Russia each have about 7,000 nuclear weapons and most of these are designed as first-strike weapons to be used in surprise, unprovoked attacks on other countries’ air bases and nuclear weapons—the opposite of deterrence. China’s Fu Ying added that under no circumstances will China use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states or nuclear-weapon-free zones. The only countries that have pledged “no first use” are China (1964), India (1998), and North Korea (2016). Nuclear-armed states that maintain first-strike policy and weapons include the United States, Russia, the UK, France, Israel, and Pakistan. —*The Diplomat*, and *The Straits Times*, Feb. 21, 2018; and Xinhua news service, Feb. 18, 2018

Trying to Kill a New Nuclear Missile

Several Democrats in Congress tried to cancel the Long Range Stand-Off missile (LRSO), a so-called “low-yield” nuclear weapon estimated by the Government Accounting Office to cost at least \$30 billion. “We are inalterably opposed to it,” Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., told reporters. “Talk of ‘low-yield’ H-bombs makes people start calculating: ‘... maybe we’ll have a small nuclear exchange and that will be OK,’” Smith said, “but our deterrence policy has to be: ‘No nukes under any circumstances.’” Former Sec. of Defense William Perry has rejected the LRSO earlier, writing in the *Washington Post*, “The US does not need to arm its bombers with a new generation of nuclear-armed cruise missiles,” and demanding, “Mr. President, kill the new cruise missile.” Rep. Smith has also sponsored a bill requiring a nuclear no-first-use policy which is stuck in committee (H.R.669 of 2017). Likewise, California Sen. Diane Feinstein, ranking Democrat on the Senate Sub-committee on Energy and Water Development, voiced opposition to a \$65 million appropriation for a new so-called “low-yield” sea-launched nuclear missile. “I cannot support a new nuclear weapon,” she said. “Quite frankly, I don’t believe there’s anything such as a limited nuclear war. I don’t see any reason to develop new low-yield weapons. Once a nuclear weapon is used, by any country against any target, I believe it’s Armageddon, and it’s the end of us.” —*Defense News* online, May 23 & 24, 2018; *New York Times*, Sept. 30, 2016; *Washington Post*, Oct. 15, 2015

Plutonium Missing from University Lab

Idaho State University’s nuclear engineering program, which works with the Energy Department’s Idaho National Lab, can only account for 13 out of 14 single-gram units of weapons grade plutonium it was using to test containers for radiation leaks. The plutonium was supposed to have been returned to the national lab, but after a thorough search cannot be found. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission fined the university \$8,500. Plutonium is the most toxic material known to science and even a single atomic particle if inhaled or ingested can cause cancer.

Dr. Cornelis Van der Schyf, vice president for research at the university, sent a convoluted explanation for the malfeasance to the AP: “Unfortunately, because there was a lack of sufficient historical records to demonstrate the disposal pathway employed in 2003, the source in question had to be listed as missing,” he wrote. Plain translation: *The plutonium and the record keeping are both lost.*

Dr. van der Schyf went on to say, “The radioactive source in question poses no direct health issue or risk to public safety.” Of course, he is in a position to know this. The routine reassurance brings to mind the words of the great oceanographer Jacques Cousteau who said: “A common denominator, in every single nuclear accident ... is that before the specialists even know what has happened, they rush to the media saying, ‘There’s no danger to the public.’ They do this before they themselves know what has happened because they are terrified that the public might react violently, either by panic or by revolt.” —Associated Press; BBC News, May 4, 2018; bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-44007709

RESOURCES

- * **Beyond Nuclear**, 6930 Carroll Av., #400, Takoma Park, MD 20912; (301) 270-2209; Web: beyondnuclear.org; Email: info@beyondnuclear.org
- * **Don’t Bank on the Bomb**, PAX, PO Box 19318, 3501 DH Utrecht, The Netherlands; Email: info@nonukes.nl; Web: dontbankonthebomb.com
- * **Greenpeace**, Ottho Heldringstraat 5, 1066 AZ Amsterdam, The Netherlands; 31-20-718-2000; Email: info.int@greenpeace.org; Web: www.greenpeace.org/international/
- * **Hanford Challenge**, 2719 E Madison St., # 304, Seattle, WA 98112; (206)292-2850; Email: info@hanfordchallenge.org; Web: hanfordchallenge.org
- * **Institute for Energy and Environmental Research**, 6935 Laurel Av., # 201, Takoma Park, Maryland, 20912; (301) 270-5500; Email: info@ieer.org; Web: ieer.org
- * **Los Alamos Study Group**, 2901 Summit Pl NE, Albuquerque, NM 87106; (505) 265-1200; Web: lasg.org; Email: gmello@lasg.org
- * **Low-Level Radiation Campaign**, Times Building, S. Crescent, Llandrindod Wells, Powys, LD1 5DH, UK; Email: mail@llrc.org; Web: www.llrc.org
- * **Nevada Nuclear Waste Project Office**, 1761 College Plwy, #118; Carson City, NV 89706; (775) 687-3744; Email: nwpo@nuc.state.nv.us; Web: state.nv.us/nucwaste/
- * **No More Deaths**, UU Church of Tucson, 4831 E. 22nd St., Tucson, AZ; (520) 333-5699; Web: nomoredeaths.org
- * **Nuclear Energy Information Service**, 3411 W Diversey Avenue, #13, Chicago, IL 60647; (773) 342-7650; Email: neis@neis.org; Web: neis.org
- * **Nuclear Information & Resource Service**, 6930 Carroll Av. #340, Takoma Park, MD 20912; (301) 270-6477; Email: nirsnet@nirs.org; Web: nirs.org
- * **Nuclear Issues Study Group**, nuclearnewmexico.com/NISG; and protectnewmexico@gmail.com
- * **Nuclear Watch New Mexico**, 903 W. Alameda St. #325, Santa Fe, NM 87501; (505) 989-7342; Email: jay@nukewatch.org; Web: nukewatch.org/info [Not to be confused: NWNM uses our name.]
- * **Southwest Research & Information Center**, 105 Stanford SE, PO Box 4524, Albuquerque, NM 87196; (505) 262-1862; Email: Info@sric.org; Web: SRIC.org

* **Nuclear Heartland book talk available:** To watch a recorded book talk on *Nuclear Heartland, Revised A guide to the 450 land-based missiles of the United States* by co-editor and Nukewatch co-director John LaForge, see the film by videographer Vic Sadot (made for the Berkeley, Calif. Unitarian Social Justice Committee) at nukewatchinfo.org/videos. Ask your local public access TV station to broadcast the film; the station can download it in TV broadcast format from PEGMedia.org. Stations that use Telvue, DVDs or other media can contact 911TV1@gmail.com for detailed instructions.

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