

# NATO: Alliance for Global Intervention

By Jürgen Wagner

**NOTE: This report is excerpted from an article in *360°-NATO: Mobilization on All Fronts*, edited by Sabine Lösing, Member of the European Parliament, April 2017.**

[I]n March 1999, without a UN Security Council mandate and thus in clear violation of international law, NATO began an offensive air war against the independent state of Yugoslavia. The Alliance had emphasized its readiness to intervene “out of area,” by acting independently of the UN Security Council and therefore avoiding the veto power of Russia and China. ...

On April 24, 1999, just one month after the first air strikes on Yugoslavia, NATO adopted a new strategy that interpreted similar interventions as its core task... [and] included the telling statement: “NATO will seek, in cooperation with other organisations, to prevent conflict, or, should a crisis arise, to contribute to its effective management, consistent with international law, including through the possibility of conducting non-Article 5 crisis response operations... In this context, NATO recalls its subsequent decisions with respect to crisis response operations in the Balkans.” [NATO *Strategic Concept*, April 24, 1999, Item 31] ...

The reference “consistent with international law,” while the line of action in the Balkans was addressed as being a model for future operations, was quite disturbing. The entire statement, in fact, runs contrary to the NATO [Charter] itself, as *there is no provision in the treaty for military interventions outside the territory of the Alliance*. [emphasis added] The member states make a mockery of their own treaty, which had remained unmodified since 1949, by inventing so-called “non-Article 5 operations.” ...

Article 5 of the NATO [Charter] does not include an *obligation* for military assistance by the member states; the NATO states are held to exhibit solidarity in case of an attack against another NATO member state. [emphasis added] Individual states are allowed to determine their own course of action in following this provision. Nevertheless, a case for extra-territorial operations was made following the attacks on the US on September 11, 2001. The invasion of Afghanistan by NATO began less than a month later. ...

Offers by the Taliban, Afghanistan’s *de facto* ruling party, to extradite Osama bin Laden were ignored. In August 2003, NATO took over the governance of Afghanistan with its International Security Assistance Force. With... more than 130,000 troops, Afghanistan became the central setting for NATO to prove that it was capable of permanently seizing control of a conflict area. ...

[T]he NATO summit in Warsaw in July 2016 ... gave the go-ahead for NATO’s AWACS warplanes equipped with radar and communication technology to control the airspace above Syria (and Iraq) and, thus, to join the fight against the so-called Islamic State group. ...

A study in March 2006 funded by the German Marshall Fund [NATO in a World of Disorder] ... puts special emphasis on the revitalization of the role of nuclear weapons. ...

**On April 4, 2019, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization will celebrate its 70th anniversary in Washington, D.C. In view of NATO’s post-Cold War crime spree in Yugoslavia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, peace activists are organizing “Unwelcome” events between March 30 and April 4. For info on scheduled events in D.C., see:**

**<no2nato2019.org>  
<no-to-nato.org/en/> &  
<worldbeyondwar.org/notonato/>  
<Email: contact@No2NATO2019.org>**



**A US B61 nuclear gravity bomb at the ready inside a Protected Aircraft Shelter with a German Tornado PA200 fighter jet. German bunkers like these hold at least 20 of the bombs, and German pilots train to use the weapons under a controversial and classified “nuclear sharing” agreement. Similar “sharing” agreements have been made between the US and Belgium, The Netherlands, Italy and Turkey.**

## *Atomic Saber Rattling: NATO’s Nuclear First-Strike Offensive*

By Jürgen Wagner

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The 2010 *Strategic Concept* of the Alliance\* clearly addresses “the hierarchy of NATO’s nuclear powers”: “The supreme guarantee of the security of the Allies is provided by the strategic nuclear forces of the Alliance, particularly those of the United States...”

Neither NATO nor its non-nuclear member countries hold any competence over the nuclear weapons of the United States—not even over the nuclear weapon stockpile deployed in Europe within the scope of nuclear sharing... [Hans Kristensen of the Federation of American Scientists reported in 2015:] “NATO itself has no authority over the nuclear weapons use decision. The decision to employ nuclear weapons in support of NATO can only be made in Washington, London and Paris by the state leaders of those nuclear-weapon states. NATO ... cannot block use.” ...

[Otfried Nassauer reports that] “In its 1999 Strategic Concept ... NATO went without depicting the use of nuclear weapons as a ‘last resort’ as it had ... the no-first-use policy was not issued either, because the US reserve[s] a right to nuclear first use...”

Thus, Claudia Major of the German Institute for International & Security Affairs writes: “Nuclear deterrence offers protection, too—but only if Russia believes that NATO would actually apply nuclear weapons.”...

[Wikipedia reports,] “In peacetime, the nuclear weapons stored in non-nuclear countries are guarded by US Air Force personnel... codes required for arming them remain under [USAF] control. In case of war, the weapons are to be mounted on the participating countries’ warplanes. The weapons are under custody and control of USAF Munitions Support Squadrons.”...

The B61-12 [bomb] is now expected to replace older types 3, 4, 7, and 10 as well as the bunker busting B61-11 and B83 strategic nuclear bombs. ...

[German] Tornados [fighter jets] are not compatible with the B61-12 without modifications. For this reason, they are candidates for “modernization” as is the associated airport at Büchel... [According to N-TV, Sept. 22, 2015:] “German Tornados should be able to attack with the newest US nuclear weapons within the scope of nuclear sharing... Not only American, but also German sources plow money into the modernization of the airbase in Büchel.

While the US pays for the weapons’ integration into German Tornados, the German Ministry of Defense invests [\$127 million] into the modernization of the runway and the instrumental approach system in Büchel. Other US nuclear bases

in Europe, like Incerlik, Turkey, or Aviano, Italy, are candidates for modernization, too.” ...

The fact that they are focusing on more accuracy and penetrating power suggests that they are really aspiring to a first-strike capability. In 2006, a much-discussed report in *Foreign Affairs* revealingly entitled “The Rise of US Nuclear Primacy,” arrived at the same result: “...The current and future US nuclear force, in other words, seems designed to carry out a preemptive disarming strike against Russia or China.”...

An analysis by the US Congressional Research Service reads: “A prompt strike against an adversary’s ballistic missiles or caches of weapons of mass destruction might allow the US to destroy these weapons before an adversary could use them.” ...

Until now they have been too inaccurate and without enough penetrating power to be used as strategic weapons.... Thus they could become integral parts of US first-strike plans... The German television program *Frontal 21* reported in September 2015: “Armament experts confirm that the new B61-12 tactical nuclear weapons are much more accurate than the nuclear bombs that have been stored in Büchel so far. In case of war, German Tornado pilots are supposed to fly attacks with US bombs within the scope of nuclear sharing.”...

Hans Kristensen ... in Washington, DC criticizes: “The differences between tactical and strategic nuclear weapons are obliterated with the new [B61] bombs.”...

[The Associated Press reported in 2015] “that the Obama administration was weighing options to deploy new land-based missiles in Europe to be able to pre-emptively destroy Russian nuclear weapons under certain conditions.”

[As *Foreign Affairs* reported]: “[T]he sort of missile defenses that the US might plausibly deploy would be valuable primarily in an offensive context, not a defensive one—as an adjunct to a US first-strike capability, not as a stand-alone shield. If the US launched a nuclear attack against Russia (or China), the targeted country would be left with a tiny surviving arsenal—if any at all... Washington’s continued refusal to eschew a first strike and the country’s development of a limited missile defense capability take on a new, and possibly more menacing look.”...

In a footnote, Mr. Wagner writes, “In January 2008, several high-ranking NATO strategists published the report ‘Towards a Grand Strategy for an Uncertain World’... [and] explicitly emphasized their readiness for first use once again: ‘Regrettably, nuclear weapons—and with them the option of first use—are indispensable, since there is simply no prospect of a nuclear free world.’”

\*The *Strategic Concept* is NATO’s official periodic document that outlines its purpose, nature and tasks.