

MIT Professor Shames US for ‘Fictitious and Bizarre’ Idea that New Nuclear B61-12 Bomb Could Win War

By [Sputnik](#)

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US plans to deploy the B61-12 nuclear gravity bomb are “fictitious” and “bizarre,” Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Professor Emeritus of Science, Technology and National Security Policy Theodore Postol told Sputnik.

WASHINGTON (Sputnik) — The US Air Force and the National Nuclear Security Administration have successfully completed the first development flight test of a B61-12 nuclear gravity bomb with no warhead in Nevada.

“The military capabilities of this weapon stem from a totally fictitious and bizarre idea that the United States can fight and win nuclear wars,” Postol said on Friday.

Postol, 69, is one of the leading US experts on ballistic missile defense technologies and ballistic missiles.

“This weapon could never be used in a real-world situation against any nuclear-armed state, as it would likely provoke an uncontrolled nuclear escalation,” he said.



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The projected \$11 billion upgrade program for the B61 has been described as the most expensive nuclear warhead refurbishment in history. However, the upgraded B61-12 is designed to have far greater accuracy and generate less radioactive fallout than earlier versions of the bomb.

Nevertheless, Postol charged that the new moves to modernize and upgrade the gravity bomb were likely to backfire on US policymakers with unintended consequences.

“This is yet another example of how the US nuclear modernization program continues to undermine the security of the United States and its allies,” the scientist said.

He warned that even “against states not armed with nuclear weapons, its use could have global political consequences with very far ranging and unpredictable results.”

Far from advancing US strategic security, Postol argued, developing the B61 was likely to undermine it by alarming Russia and China, and provoke them to respond by developing new strategic weapons of their own.

"It is the wrong signal to send to countries like Russia, which is already on edge over continuous advances in US nuclear strike capabilities, and to China, which is trying in spite of constant provocation to maintain a sensible posture of minimum deterrence," Postol continued.

Pushing ahead with gravity bomb development also threatened to undermine already fragile prospects for arms control and for preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, Postol warned.

"It is the wrong message to send to the non-weapon state signatories of the Nonproliferation Treaty," he stated.

Postol suggested that the Obama administration did not appear to have thought through the potential diplomatic and strategic consequences of modernizing the gravity bomb weapon. "It is hard to understand what the Obama White House thinks it is accomplishing by pushing such a counterproductive program," he concluded.

Before joining MIT, Postol worked as an analyst at the US Office of Technology Assessment and as a science and policy adviser to the Chief of Naval Operations, the operational head of the US Navy.

In 2001, Postol received the Norbert Wiener Prize from Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility for uncovering numerous false claims about missile defenses.

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