

Nuclear Warfare in the “New Cold War”

By [James Corbett](#), [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#), and [Yuki Tanaka](#)

Region: [Asia](#), [Europe](#), [Russia and FSU](#), [USA](#)
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As the world's attention turns to events in eastern Europe, rising tensions between the world's nuclear superpowers is once again raising the specter of the cold war.

The Obama administration has simply reaffirmed and even extended the existing US nuclear policy allowing for a first-strike, offensive nuclear war against its enemies.

And just as in the cold war, this conflict, too, brings with it the prospect of nuclear warfare.

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TRANSCRIPT

This is James Corbett of [corbettreport.com](#) reporting for [Global Research TV](#) in downtown Hiroshima, Japan in the Peace Memorial Park in front of the A-bomb dome that marks the hypocenter of the blast that tore through this city 69 years ago, claiming tens of thousands of lives in the blink of an eye and tens of thousands more through the ravages of radiation poisoning in the days, weeks, months and years that followed.

The Peace Park is a place of prayer and vigil, a place for quiet contemplation of the horrors of nuclear warfare, the silence punctuated only by the peals of the Peace Bell rung by those wishing for the abolition of nuclear warfare. But now, despite the best wishes of those here in the Peace Park and countless others around the world, the specter of nuclear warfare once again hangs over the globe.

Last month's nuclear security summit at the Hague saw the usual politicians spouting the [usual platitudes](#) about the need to reduce the threat of nuclear warfare.

But this was far from your average nuclear security summit. Tensions in Ukraine between Russia and the NATO powers provided a dramatic subtext to the meeting, with the G7 powers meeting behind the scenes to [suspend Russia from the G8](#) and make the boldest steps yet in what is already being dubbed the “New Cold War.” And just as in the original cold war, the threat of nuclear warfare between the great powers is the unspoken fear raised by the conflict.

In line with the rising geopolitical friction, stories have begun to emerge that both sides have heightened their levels of nuclear readiness. NATO, for its part, has continued build-up of its European “missile shield.” In February, the USS Donald Cook [arrived at port](#) in Rota, Spain to begin its deployment as part of the so-called Ballistic Missile Defense plan. It is the first of four advanced destroyers that the US is deploying as part of the shield, which they say is aimed at defending the continent from the theoretical future threat from a

theoretically nuclear-armed Iran.

That these destroyers, and NATO's missile shield in general, is being deployed to counter a threat from Iran is [not believed](#) outside of narrow America-centric propagandistic circles, however.

In truth, the term "missile defense" is a misnomer, as it is a universally acknowledged tenet of nuclear warfare doctrine that advanced missile defense systems are integral to "escalation dominance," or the ability to engage in warfare at any level of violence, including nuclear warfare. And the threat that NATO envisions does not come from Iran, a nation that has never been shown to be pursuing nuclear weapons, let alone actually possessing them, but Russia, still the world's second nuclear superpower.

This was made explicit in the last round of Russia-NATO missile shield consultations, started in Lisbon in 2010 and now [officially suspended](#) by the Pentagon in the wake of recent developments in Ukraine. The consultations, launched on the premise that the two sides could work together on countering any supposed threat from outside Europe, had been deadlocked for years after Washington stonewalled Moscow's demands for a legal guarantee that their strike forces would not target Russia's deterrence capabilities.

Meanwhile, Russia, for its part, is also ramping up the nuclear posturing. According to a [new study](#) by the Federation of American Scientists, Moscow deployed 25 new strategic nuclear launchers in the past six months, bringing its total of deployed launchers to 498 with 1512 associated nuclear warheads. And just last Thursday, the Russian military held a massive three-day nuclear exercise involving 10,000 soldiers in its Strategic Missile Forces.

These developments seem light years removed from the [feelgood rhetoric](#) about nuclear disarmament that the UN Security Council was spouting at the beginning of the Obama presidency.

This rhetoric, of course, was always just that: rhetoric. The US government has never seriously considered giving up its nuclear stockpile, or even renouncing a first-use nuclear doctrine.

As [Dr. Yuki Tanaka](#) of Hiroshima University explains, the Obama administration has not simply continued the aggressive Bush-era stance on America's nuclear arsenal, but actually extended it.

In reality, the Obama administration has simply reaffirmed and even extended the existing US nuclear policy allowing for a first-strike, offensive nuclear war against its enemies.

In its 2010 Nuclear Posture Review, the US government admitted that it reserves the right to wage a first-strike offensive nuclear war, although it hoped to work toward the goal of one day setting policies to restrict nuclear deployment to defensive situations. The Obama administration's [2013 Nuclear Employment Strategy](#) document only reaffirms this:

"The 2010 Nuclear Posture Review established the Administration's goal to set conditions that would allow the United States to safely adopt a policy of making deterrence of nuclear attack the sole purpose of U.S. nuclear weapons. Although we cannot adopt such a policy today, the new guidance re-iterates the intention to work towards that goal over time."

Increasing the risk is the development and deployment in recent years of a greater number of so-called “tactical nuclear weapons,” supposedly designed for battlefield use to focus a nuclear attack on a pinpoint target. The B61-11 nuclear bunker buster, for example, has been envisioned as one weapon that could be deployed in a future attack on Iran’s underground nuclear facilities. As the Union of Concerned Scientists pointed out in 2005, however, such a strike would invariably cause an uncontrollable radioactive fallout that could lead to [millions of deaths](#) throughout the region.

The threat of nuclear warfare is not limited to the Middle Eastern or Eastern European theatres. The situation in East Asia, with nuclear-armed North Korea backed by nuclear-armed China increasingly coming into conflict with South Korea and its nuclear-armed US military backers. As Professor Michel Chossudovsky of the Centre for Research on Globalization [explained last year](#) in a speech in Korea commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Korean armistice, the situation is exacerbated by the nuclear posture of the world global superpower, the United States.

As tensions continue to rise, and as the policies allowing for the use of so-called “tactical” nuclear weapons continue to be hardwired into place, the goal of the abolition of nuclear warfare seems as far away today as it ever has. And for the citizens of Hiroshima, Japan, the dream of a nuclear-free world remains just that: a dream, unrealized, in a fitful and restless sleep, punctuated only by the solemn admonition of the Peace Bell, “Never again! Never again!”

For Global Research TV, this is James Corbett.

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