

NATO Doctrine of “Nuclear Sharing” Putting Europe and the World at Grave Risk

By [Shane Quinn](#)

Global Research, May 14, 2019

Region: [Europe, USA](#)

Theme: [Militarization and WMD, US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [Nuclear War](#)

Among European populations, it is little known that there are today scores of US nuclear weapons still stationed on the continent. Much of the reason for this broad lack of awareness regarding the sinister presence of nuclear bombs, is that the subject is barely discussed in establishment and mainstream dialogue.

The ongoing political and media silence regarding nuclear weapons almost defies belief, as humanity has enjoyed large slices of luck in escaping a nuclear holocaust.

In Germany, the powerhouse of Europe, twenty American B61 nuclear bombs continue to be stationed in idyllic wooded surroundings at Büchel Air Base, in the country’s far-western reaches. This military complex hosts personnel belonging to the US Air Force, and the critical orders relayed at Büchel surely emanate from Washington.



B61-12 Tactical Nuclear Bomb

A B61 nuclear bomb, at its highest yield (400 kilotons), is over 25 times more powerful than the atomic weapon dropped on Hiroshima (15 kilotons) in August 1945. Up to 100,000 people in Hiroshima were killed within seconds of the blast and resulting firestorm, after a US Superfortress bomber dumped its load in the morning of 6 August. The final death toll soared above 120,000, the majority of whom were civilians.

Half of the B61’s maximum explosive force, 200 kilotons, would be capable still of annihilating a sizeable city containing one million people. Such an attack would inevitably be

followed by the unleashing of further nuclear bombs, some in retaliation, precipitating the doomsday phenomenon of nuclear winter.

Worryingly, Büchel Air Base and its nuclear cache is positioned less than 75 miles from Cologne, Germany's fourth most populous city comprising one million people.

Just over 100 miles from Büchel is Frankfurt, the fifth largest city in Germany home to 730,000 citizens - while less than 200 miles to the south lies Stuttgart, the Germans' sixth biggest urban zone with more than 600,000 people.

Büchel's location is of great significance, as this region of western Germany most likely constitutes high priority scope for Russian nuclear war planning. Moscow has no other alternative but to hold contingencies in place relating to potential nuclear conflict; as the Soviet Union, and later Russia, have been the principal priority of wide-scale US nuclear attack programs dating to World War II.

In September 1945, a few weeks after Hiroshima and Nagasaki were desolated, the Pentagon outlined schemes [to destroy](#) 66 Soviet cities with over 200 atomic bombs - for example 18 bombs were categorized, six each, to obliterate Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev, while five atomic weapons were listed to wipe out Stalingrad. These diabolical plans would have taken many months to devise, and so were being formulated long before the assaults on Japan.

Into the 21st century, the presence of American nuclear bombs on German soil is solely with Moscow in mind, something that the Kremlin is no doubt aware of. Chancellor Angela Merkel - an elite and media darling for 13 years who supported the Iraq invasion as opposition leader - has publicly backed the placement of American nuclear warheads in Germany, saying in 2009 that it [grants Berlin](#) "influence in the defence alliance [NATO], including in this highly sensitive area".

Merkel has for years been an advocate of NATO's "nuclear sharing policy"; which is a key component binding the US-led military organization, strategies increasing the possibility of nuclear war, allied to other policies like NATO enlargement to Russia's boundaries. As a consequence of Merkel's decision to accept US nuclear weapons, which represent a huge violation of German statehood, some of that nation's biggest cities have been put in stark and unnecessary danger.

Germany is a de facto nuclear power. The Büchel Air Base jointly hosts squadrons of the German and US air forces, while pilots of German nationality come into contact with B61 warheads, even carrying the weapons in their Tornado fighter jets. One can but imagine what would unfold, if an aircraft carrying a nuclear device malfunctioned or suffered an accident. Over recent years Tornado jets have been involved in different incidents, including two RAF Tornado GR4s that collided in Scotland during summer 2012, resulting in the deaths of three airmen.

Nor are the nuclear weapons at Büchel endangering German citizens alone; neighbouring states like France and Luxembourg are also at risk. The ancient French city of Strasbourg is 170 miles from Büchel Air Base, while the capital Paris with its two million inhabitants is surprisingly close at 300 miles away. Luxembourg City is a mere 75 miles from Büchel. Many millions would be in harm's way from fallout as a result of a nuclear exchange, or an unanticipated catastrophe with a nuclear weapon.

Germany also borders the Netherlands and Belgium to the west and north-west, two further countries stationing American B61 nuclear weapons on their territories. It is almost surreal that the Netherlands and Belgium, nations with a history of neutrality in both world wars, would agree to acceptance of nuclear bombs. Such are the decisions their governments have implemented; which puts the unsuspecting Dutch and Belgian peoples in undoubted danger. It is the price these countries have paid, in effect nuclear states, for acceding to NATO upon its formulation in 1949.

The American-born historian **Gabriel Kolko**, who lived out his final days in the Netherlands, [wrote that](#) organizations like NATO “have been a major cause of wars throughout modern history... The dissolution of all alliances is a crucial precondition of a world without wars”.

In the south of Netherlands, there are about twenty US B61 nuclear bombs located at the American-controlled Volkel Air Base. A mere village itself, Volkel and its warheads are situated less than 70 miles from the Netherlands’ two largest cities, capital Amsterdam (820,000 people) and Rotterdam (620,000 people). Consequently, vast urban areas are again placed at risk.

The danger that nuclear weapons pose to Dutch cities is far from a recent reality, as US nuclear weapons have been stored at Volkel for over half a century, dating to the Cuban Missile Crisis. Reflecting on developments, **Harry van Bommel**, a Dutch Socialist Party member for almost 20 years, said that

“The nuclear strategy of NATO has not changed since the Cold War”.

Once more, Russian nuclear war planners have no choice but to take into account the ongoing presence of nuclear bombs at Volkel, which are in place solely with Moscow in mind.



Demonstration of a B61 nuclear bomb disarming procedure on a “dummy” in an underground Weapons Security and Storage System (WS3) vault at Volkel Air Base (Source: Public Domain)

Volkel Air Base is also perilously close to important metropolitan centres in nearby Germany: This military complex is 75 miles from Düsseldorf, while it is less than 100 miles distance from Dortmund and Cologne, three cities with a combined population of over two million.

In neighbouring Belgium to the south, there are a further twenty American B61 nuclear bombs present at Kleine Brogel Air Base – which takes crucial instructions from the Pentagon, and is home to members of the US Air Force.

Positioned just 64 miles from Kleine Brogel is the capital Brussels, with a population of 1.2 million; while Antwerp, Belgium's second largest city, is just 52 miles from the base. Were an unexpected accident to occur at Kleine Brogel, or worst case scenario a nuclear exchange, it would have devastating consequences for the Belgian state, and indeed others.

As with Volkel, Kleine Brogel Air Base is situated remarkably close to notable cities in western Germany, being 65 miles from Düsseldorf and less than 100 miles from both Cologne and Dortmund. These regions of western Europe are under a great degree of threat, which is all on account of NATO's enduring existence.

The range of US nuclear weapons stretches further southwards to NATO member Italy, a nation with a history dating thousands of years to pre-Roman times. In north-eastern Italy, there are dozens of B61 nuclear bombs placed at two US-controlled military compounds, in the Aviano and Ghedi air bases.

The Aviano Air Base, which is over a century old [and contains](#) a considerable fifty B61 warheads, is less than 60 miles from Venice, one of the world's most famous cities. It is likely there are not too many Venetians, or indeed among the millions of tourists visiting the city, who are privy to the hefty stash of US nuclear weapons comfortably within driving distance of Venice – a cache of warheads with the overall power to blow up the world. Aviano Air Base is also located just over five miles from the province of Pordenone, which contains over 300,000 people.

Ghedi Air Base, 160 miles west of Aviano in northern Italy, is estimated to hold at least twenty US B61 bombs. This base is situated just 65 miles from Milan and 160 miles from Turin, Italy's second and fourth largest urban populations, consisting of more than two million people in total. As with the others, Italy is taking a serious gamble for continuing membership of NATO.

Far eastwards of Italy, NATO state Turkey stores fifty US B61 bombs, despite current shambolic relations between the two countries. The fifty warheads are lying at Incirlik Air Base in southern Turkey, built by US engineers in the early 1950s, and which is today under the auspices of America's military. There are thousands of US personnel present at Incirlik Air Base throughout the year.

Incirlik is located just five miles from Adana, Turkey's fifth largest metropolis home to over 1.7 million people. Should an unplanned incident with a nuclear device occur at Incirlik, it would once more have terrible consequences.

Moreover, Incirlik's B61s are dangerously close to Syria's northern border. Incirlik is little more than 150 miles from the city of Idlib, which is riddled with hundreds of terrorists linked to ISIS, Al Qaeda and the likes. However remote, there has been a possibility for years of extremist groups placing their hands upon a nuclear weapon.

The US nuclear bombs in Turkey are, as is well known, pointed northwards in the direction of Russia. Incirlik itself is about 800 miles from Russia's south-western frontier, and within easy flying range.

Russia continues to be under massive threat, despite the fact that the Russian psychological makeup is largely that of a defensive nature. Though routinely overlooked in Western media, Russia has endured some of the biggest invasions in world history which have forged deep scars upon the national psyche. What's more, almost all of the Soviet and Russian interventions have been initiated against states it shared a direct border with (Korea, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Afghanistan, Georgia). There are no Russian incursions to be witnessed in the opposite hemisphere.

Briefly above-mentioned, over the past 75 years American nuclear strategies were compiled mainly with Russia in the cross hairs, as was known within the highest level of Kremlin circles. Due to Soviet intelligence operations, Stalin was himself likely aware [as early as](#) September 1941 relating to American proposals in constructing an atomic bomb. Critically, in April 1942 the Soviet dictator received a letter of warning from a young Russian physicist, Georgy Flyorov, regarding most unusual American and British behaviour on the nuclear subject.

Flyorov, who in 1940 unearthed spontaneous fission with Konstantin Petrzhak, urged Stalin that "we must build the uranium bomb without delay". Stalin - a brutal and cunning operator - would quite likely have placed great store in Flyorov's personal note to him, as he held an ingrained mistrust of the Western powers (not without reason). In 1942, Stalin did not designate as top priority Soviet creation of the atomic bomb, due to the struggle with Nazi Germany which was then undecided.

In March 1944 US General Leslie Groves, overseeing America's atomic weapon project, [confirmed that](#) "the real purpose in making the bomb was to subdue the Soviets". This was at a time when Soviet Russia was a vital wartime ally of the West. By late summer 1949, the Soviets would successfully detonate their own atomic device in reply, leading humankind on to its present course.

*

Note to readers: please click the share buttons below. Forward this article to your email lists. Crosspost on your blog site, internet forums. etc.

Shane Quinn obtained an honors journalism degree. He is interested in writing primarily on foreign affairs, having been inspired by authors like Noam Chomsky. He is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

Featured image is CC BY-SA 3.0

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [Shane Quinn](#), Global Research, 2019

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

Become a Member of Global Research

Articles by: **Shane Quinn**

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca