

Conventional Prompt Global Strike

Bureau of Verification, Compliance, and Implementation

Fact Sheet

April 8, 2010

Key Point: The New START Treaty does not contain any constraints on current or planned U.S. conventional prompt global strike capability.

The growth of unrivaled U.S. conventional military capabilities has contributed to our ability to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in deterring non-nuclear attacks, assuring allies and partners of our security commitments, and reinforcing regional security. The Department of Defense (DoD) is currently exploring the full range of technologies and systems for a Conventional Prompt Global Strike (CPGS) capability that could provide the President more credible and technically suitable options for dealing with new and evolving threats.

Current CPGS projects focus on the development and demonstration of technologies that could support an eventual U.S.-based operationally deployed system. Current efforts are examining three concepts: Hypersonic Technology Vehicle, Conventional Strike Missile, and Advanced Hypersonic Weapon. These projects are managed by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), the U.S. Air Force Space and Missile Center, and Army Space and Missile Defense Command respectively.

New START protects the U.S. ability to develop and deploy a CPGS capability. The Treaty in no way prohibits the United States from building or deploying conventionally-armed ballistic missiles. Long-range conventional ballistic missiles would count under the Treaty's limit of 700 delivery vehicles, and their conventional warheads would count against the limit of 1550 warheads, because the treaty does not make a distinction between missiles that are armed with conventional weapons and those that are armed with nuclear weapons. (The prior START treaty also made no such distinction). This warhead ceiling would accommodate any plans the United States might develop during the life of this Treaty to deploy conventional warheads on ballistic missiles.

DoD is studying CPGS within the context of its portfolio of all non-nuclear long-range strike capabilities including land-based and sea-based systems, as well as standoff and/or penetrating bombers. This analysis will be concluded in summer 2010, with investment recommendations reflected in the Fiscal Year 2012 budget submission.