



SHOW *of* FORCE

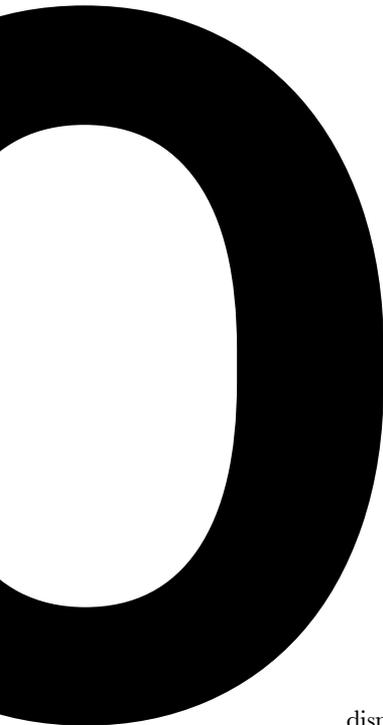
U.S. bombers enhance security cooperation in Europe

————— U. S. S T R A T E G I C C O M M A N D —————

Russia's use of information warfare to influence other nations and its aggressive actions, including invasions and annexations, are a looming global security concern. Russia continually attempts to destabilize other countries and interfere in their politics because it wants to be more than a regional power. To attain that goal, the Kremlin wants a weak NATO; however, NATO remains strong and committed to mutual defense. And so does the United States, as demonstrated by the military's participation in European and NATO exercises and events. Strategic bomber deployments and the participation in military exercises play a large role in reassuring allies of the U.S. commitment to extended deterrence.



A U.S. Air Force B-1B Lancer receives fuel from a KC-135 Stratotanker. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



One way U.S. bombers build relationships in Europe is through participation in air shows. The annual Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT), which takes place each July at the Royal Air Force (RAF) base Fairford in Gloucestershire, England, is the largest military air show in the world. The 2017 RIAT recognized the 70th anniversary of the U.S. Air Force with an impressive array of strategic U.S. bomber assets. The air show also celebrated the 21st century partnerships that exist throughout the defense and aviation communities.

All three U.S. bombers were on display at the show: The B-1B Lancer and the B-52H Stratofortress were on static display, and the low-observable B-2 Spirit conducted a flyover with two F-15 fighters.

The incorporation of these mighty bombers was a remarkable addition to the air show. Their size and engine power is as impressive as the substantial weapons payload they can carry. All three aircraft can deliver conventional munitions such as precision-guided bombs and missiles. The B-52H and B-2 are nuclear capable as well, cementing their status as powerful arms of nuclear deterrence.

Though the bombers were supporting the air show for the enjoyment of aircraft enthusiasts and curious spectators, their presence was also important for a broader purpose: assuring allies and partners and deterring adversaries. The bomber deployment emphasized that the U.S. remains committed to security partnerships, especially with NATO. As adversaries try to undermine this solidarity, U.S. bombers are a message of strength and unity.

During a separate deployment to RAF Fairford, the B-52H and B-1B integrated with ally and partner nations in exercises Arctic Challenge, BALTOPS and Saber Strike. The goal was to support stability and security in Europe. With continued Russian attempts to create instability, the timing for this U.S.

show of commitment to NATO could not have been better.

During the multinational Arctic Challenge exercise, held in late May 2017, B-52H Stratofortresses and other U.S. aircraft participated with partner nations, including Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom to improve capabilities in conducting combined air operations. The exercise is hosted in alternating years by Finland, Norway and Sweden. While not a NATO exercise, all but Finland, Sweden and Switzerland are NATO members. Over 100 aircraft of different types from these 11 nations trained in large-scale planning and air operations. The goal is to build relationships and increase interoperability among forces.

The B-52Hs and B-1Bs, operating out of RAF Fairford, also participated in BALTOPS, an annual joint and multinational maritime-centered exercise meant to provide training, increased interoperability, improved flexibility and demonstrate resolve in defending the Baltic Sea region. As part of the exercise, U.S. bombers deployed inert maritime mines, which were located and recovered by NATO forces. Coordination and integration among nations are paramount for both deployment and recovery. BALTOPS demonstrates NATO's ability to combine forces and effectively communicate to accomplish missions in a maritime environment.

Exercise Saber Strike promotes integration, communication and security cooperation among NATO allies as well. B-52Hs and B-1Bs participated in the exercise in June, led by U.S. Army Europe at locations in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. Twenty NATO nations trained together in convoy operations, maritime supply offloads, river crossings, and amphibious and air assaults. U.S. bombers dropped BDU-50 inert concrete bombs to simulate unguided conventional munitions. At the same time, the bombers trained with the land, air and naval forces of NATO allies. Whether stationed at RAF Fairford or in the U.S., these bombers are prepared to respond to crises and contingencies.

A third B-52H deployment to RAF Fairford demonstrated the bombers' ability to strike anywhere in the world at any time in support of the U.S. and its allies. With air refueling, long-duration sorties are capable of rapidly delivering bombs on target to distant locations. The B-52Hs at RAF Fairford recently accomplished such a mission, flying through the Arctic and back. The ability of these aircraft to carry either conventional bombs or nuclear cruise missiles across the globe makes



A U.S. B-52 bomber flies during the final day of NATO Saber Strike exercises in Orzysz, Poland, in June 2017. REUTERS

them a significant strategic deterrent. They can operate from their home station or abroad, allowing for flexibility in amplitude and timing of operations. That flexibility acts as a deterrent to strategic attacks, creating better security and stability for NATO and other partner nations in Europe.

U.S. bombers also supported exercise Ample Strike, a Czech Republic exercise in August 2017 that included more than 1,000 troops from 19 militaries. The bombers focused on the integration of aircrews and forward air controllers, coordinating with multinational Joint Terminal Attack Controllers, who are the air liaisons on the ground. This exercise allowed U.S. forces to integrate with a number of partner nations and strengthen security commitments.

As long as nuclear threats remain in the world, the U.S. will maintain its nuclear triad. As one part of that triad, U.S. bombers are ready to respond to nuclear threats and other acts of aggression by integrating with NATO and its partners.

For each partner and ally exercise that U.S. bombers support, force integration among participating countries improves. The exercises demonstrate bomber readiness and capability to respond to a wide range of problems in a variety of locations, working with partners and allies. Bomber payload, range and persistence provide an invaluable contribution to the joint and combined force, which enhances stability throughout Europe. The B-52H and B-2 nuclear capability makes them strong contributors to strategic deterrence, both for the U. S. and NATO.

Russia is likely to continue conducting destabilizing activities across the globe, using subversion and disinformation to seed confusion and dissent. The U.S., with NATO, will continue to use all available assets to counter these activities wherever they surface. Despite Russian attempts to disrupt NATO unity, the Alliance remains strong and committed to international security. □