

Pentagon chief outlines plans for space war versus China and Russia

Thomas Gaist
8 July 2015

The US Defense Department is implementing plans for aggressive modernization of America's space warfare capabilities and nuclear forces, including the creation of new space warfare facilities and hundreds of billions in additional spending for nuclear weapons upgrades.

Pentagon second-in-command Robert Work, the deputy defense secretary, spelled this out in public appearances at congressional hearings and think tank symposia during the last week of June.

The US will spend some \$5 billion, an initial sum predicted to rise substantially, to develop military-related space systems, including communications and spy satellites, as part of joint efforts with the intelligence agencies and private firms. Further details about the new space ops centers have not been made public, though Work vowed that they would be up and running within six months.

Air Force Secretary Deborah James has been tentatively selected to spearhead the space war initiatives, which will build on existing US space war capabilities overseen by the Joint Space Operations Center at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

The new high-tech military buildup is part of preparations for confrontation and war with Russia and China, Work made terrifyingly clear in remarks to a symposium in Washington, DC.

Work warned that new Russian and Chinese missile systems, designed to strike against US satellite-based reconnaissance, missile-guidance, and communications networks, are undermining the unchallenged military and technological superiority enjoyed by Washington since the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

"The margin of technological superiority to which we have become so accustomed over the past 25 years is steadily eroding," he told attendees.

New generations of space weapons systems and weaponized satellites are necessary if the US is to maintain its position of global primacy, Work said. Without the new hardware, Washington will no longer be able to "win the guided missile salvos competition" and "project decisive power across transoceanic distances," Work said.

"We must be prepared now to prevail in conflicts that extend into space," he added.

Both Russia and China view US space systems as a "vulnerable center of gravity for US military power," Work claimed. "Under any circumstances, both of these countries present us with an enduring and very difficult military challenge."

In this new nuclear arms race, the US plans to spend an additional sum of at least \$250 billion between 2021 and 2035 on programs to modernize its arsenal, Work said during subsequent congressional testimony, where he appeared alongside the top US naval officer, Admiral James Winnefeld.

The nuclear weapons upgrades will begin with the replacement of the US Navy Trident submarine fleet. New Trident subs, designed to launch strategic nuclear weapons capable of destroying entire metropolitan areas, will be purchased by the government for some \$6.5 billion apiece, Work said.

Then, during the 2020s, the US will focus on acquiring a new fleet of strategic nuclear bombers, purchased at more than \$500 million each. That decade will see efforts to upgrade and replace US ground-based nuclear forces, Work said, at an unspecified price tag.

"While we continue to seek to create the conditions under which we could declare that the sole purpose of our nuclear forces is to deter nuclear attack on the United States, today's security environment does not

meet those conditions,” he said. “We face the harsh reality that Russia and China are rapidly modernizing their already capable nuclear arsenals.”

The \$250 billion in upgrades outlined by Work will come as part of an estimated \$1 trillion in total spending on nuclear force modernization approved by the Obama administration. Federal spending on nuclear weapons upgrades will surpass \$350 billion in the next decade alone, according to recent estimates from the Congressional Budget Office.

The Obama White House has already overseen the completion of a new nuclear weapons research facility, the National Security Campus in Kansas, where initial efforts will focus on upgrading and replacing US submarine-launched W-76 nuclear warheads.

The White House and Pentagon continue to view nuclear weapons as usable instruments of US political and military aims, Work emphasized, and not merely as a deterrent force to be held in reserve. “Our nuclear forces provide the President the means to achieve his or her objectives should deterrence fail,” he said.

The Obama administration and military-intelligence establishment are presiding over war preparations of a vast and terrifying scale, including plans for a futuristic, decades-long arms race aimed at securing complete military dominance over China.

In addition to the new space warfare and nuclear modernization facilities, the US is building a massive new joint operations center for US Cyber Command (CYBERCOM). The CYBERCOM HQ, based around a new 600,000 square-foot server farm currently under construction near the NSA headquarters at Fort Meade, Maryland, is planned to include subcommands from all four branches of the military.



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact