

Martha Raddatz on the USS Maine: ABC News glorifies submarine capable of annihilating hundreds of millions

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ABC News correspondent Martha Raddatz, co-host of the network's Sunday morning interview program "This Week" and chief global affairs correspondent, is one of the most enthusiastic media cheerleaders for the American military machine.

She has demonstrated this sentiment for nearly 30 years, first as the Pentagon correspondent for National Public Radio, before switching to ABC as its State Department correspondent. She was ABC's top national security reporter from 2003, spending much of her time in Iraq, where she frequently could be seen on the front lines of US military operations, traveling with soldiers and helmeted like one of them.

Sunday's performance on "This Week" touched new depths in terms of prostration before American imperialism, however, as Raddatz showed segments shot during a 24-hour stay on the US nuclear-armed submarine USS Maine, where she was the guest of Vice Admiral Bill Houston, commander of US submarine forces.

The clear purpose of the visit was to provide a demonstration of the lethal striking power of the US nuclear arsenal to Russia, China and North Korea, all in the sights of the Pentagon. As well, undoubtedly, there was the need for some flattering media coverage of the US Navy after the public relations disaster of nearly a dozen suicides by Navy sailors.

But it was the saber-rattling which was most important, and Raddatz certainly delivered. She began her broadcast with these words:

President Biden has called recent nuclear threats from Russian officials irresponsible and

this morning with North Korea poised to test a nuclear weapon for the first time in five years, the administration says it is prepared for any contingency. The U.S. still has thousands of strategic nuclear weapons in its arsenal, 70 percent of them on submarines.

We spent 24 hours in the Pacific with exclusive access inside one of America's nuclear-armed ballistic missile submarines.

It is a mesmerizing sight, the USS Maine normally unseen and undetectable, briefly surfacing off the coast of Hawaii. Stretching the length of two football fields, it is the most destructive warship ever built, bristling with nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles.

She went on to have Admiral Houston detail the submarine's missile capability, with 12 missile hatches on each side. He noted that while during the Cold War, the ship's nuclear warheads would have been exclusively targeted at the Soviet Union, now both Russia and China were on the list for destruction.

Houston boasted of the Trident missile's accuracy, saying, "We can put it inside a baseball stadium and with the destructive power that you can carry on one of those missiles, it's very, very capable."

Raddatz interviewed a handful of young sailors, then thanked the crew and closed with this assurance: "We should note the Navy did screen our video before we left the submarine to ensure no images contain classified material."

In other words, no journalism was involved. This was a puff piece for the US Navy.

But let us return to the ABC correspondent's gushing tribute to the Maine as "the most destructive warship ever built." Raddatz is not wrong.

According to published estimates, the 24 Trident missiles which are the maximum complement for a submarine of the "Ohio" class, like the Maine, are each capable of carrying 8 large W88 warheads, 14 middle-sized W76-1 warheads or 14 of the smaller W76-2 warheads. The exact inventory of the warheads on board the Maine is classified.

The US atomic bomb that destroyed Hiroshima in 1945 had a blast yield equivalent to 15 kilotons (15,000 tons) of TNT. It killed 70,000 Japanese and injured another 70,000, in some cases with horrible burns or blast radiation that led to cancers.

If all 24 missiles on board the Maine were equipped with W88 warheads, each with a payload of 475 kilotons, the total payload would be 91,200 kilotons, or 91.2 megatons, the equivalent of 6,080 Hiroshima bombs.

If all 24 missiles were equipped with W76-1 warheads, each with a payload of 90 kilotons, the total payload would be 30,240 kilotons, or 30.2 megatons, the equivalent of 2,016 Hiroshima bombs.

If the 24 missiles carried "only" W76-2 warheads (highly unlikely), each with a payload of 7 kilotons, the total payload would be 2,352 kilotons, or 2.4 megatons, the equivalent of 157 Hiroshima bombs.

If the missiles and their warheads caused casualties at the same rate as Hiroshima (which was a mid-sized city, not a huge population center like Tokyo or Nagoya), the payload of W88 bombs, the equivalent of more than 6,000 Hiroshima bombs, could potentially kill 425 million and wound another 425 million people—one tenth of the human race.

And there are 16 such nuclear-armed submarines of the Ohio class.

What "mesmerized" Raddatz is an imperialist arsenal that could destroy the human race.



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