

Nuclear «Green Pass»: the Bomb for Italy comes out in May

by Manlio Dinucci,* Italy



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(Photo ma)

In May 2022, the new nuclear bomb B61-12 large-scale production will begin in the USA: this announcement was made by the *National Nuclear Security Administration* (NNSA), an agency of the U.S. *Department of Energy*. As they leave the factory, the new nuclear

bombs will be delivered to the US Air Force, which will install them in US bases in Italy and other European countries replacing the B61s.

The B61-12 is a new nuclear weapon replacing three of the current B61 variants (3, 4, and 7). It has a nuclear warhead with four selectable power options according to the target to destroy. It does not drop vertically like the B61, but at distance from the target to which it is directed, and guided by a satellite system. It can penetrate underground, exploding deep to destroy command center bunkers to “behead” the enemy nation in a nuclear first strike. For this attack the US Air Force also has the fourth variant of the B61 bomb, the penetrating B61-11 was modernized in 2001.

The B61-12, NNSA confirmed, can be launched from both B-2A stealth bomber and future B-21 aircraft, both conventional and nuclear dual-capable fighters. These aircrafts include the US F-16C/Ds deployed in Aviano and the Italian PA-200 Tornados deployed in Ghedi. The F-35A fighters, already operational in the Italian Air Force, are even more suitable for a nuclear attack with the B61-12.

NNSA announced that “all the needed production of B61-12s” will be completed in the fiscal year 2026. The program foresees the construction of 500 bombs at a cost of about 10 billion dollars (each bomb costing twice as much if it were built entirely of gold). Their actual number, however, remains secret as their geographical location is largely secret. It is the determining factor in the offensive capacity of the B61-12 nuclear bombs.

If they were all located in US territory, ready to be transported with strategic bombers, this would not constitute a substantial modification of the current strategic assets. The B61-12 will instead be located in other countries, especially close to Russia, ready to be transported and launched with F-35s and other fighters.

Aviano and Ghedi bases have been restructured to accommodate the F-35A fighters armed with the new nuclear bombs. Thirty Italian F-35A fighters can be deployed in Ghedi, ready to attack under US command with 60 B61-12 nuclear bombs. It is not excluded that they will also be located in other bases on the Italian territory.

In addition to being located in Germany, Belgium, and Holland, they could be also deployed in Poland, whose air forces have been participating for years in NATO nuclear warfare exercises. It is not excluded that they could be located in other Eastern countries. The NATO fighters located in the Baltic republics, close to Russia, can also be armed with the B61-12s.

It is not excluded that the new nuclear bombs can also be deployed in Asia and the Middle East against China and Iran. Despite being classified as “non-strategic nuclear weapons”, close to target, the B61-12 bombs have offensive capabilities similar to those of strategic weapons (such as the nuclear warheads of intercontinental ballistic missiles). They are therefore destabilizing weapons, which will cause a chain reaction and accelerate the nuclear arms race.

The five nuclear powers permanent members of the *United Nations Security Council* – the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United King-

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dom – affirmed in a joint declaration (January 3, 2022), that “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought” and that “we remain committed to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to early cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament”.

The US should therefore commit not to deploy the new B61-12 nuclear bombs outside their national territory, even better not to produce them at all.

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