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Russia to Spend Billions on New ICBMs

By Jason Ditz

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Between the Obama Administration's 'rebuilding' plans and Britain's notorious Trident, the lesson of nuclear weapons is that no matter how much money has been wasted on them, nations can always think of excuses to waste billions more building newer versions of weapons whose use is unthinkable.



Russia's decided to get in on that, announcing its own plans to replace the Voyevoda ICBMs with a new type of long-range nuke-capable missile called the Sarmat.

The Voyevodas, R-36M2, were deployed by the Soviet Union during the late 1970s. NATO designated them the SS-18 Satan, because apparently that was the only way they could make nuclear war sound even scarier.

Once again, the official “end of life” date is approaching for weapons never used and the military wants billions to replace it with a newer model they can likewise never use.

The concern about some such weapons not working past their shelf life is being used to justify the expenses, but as a practical matter the US and Russia both have nuclear arsenals capable of wiping out the entire human race several times over, so the prospect that a few might not work seems a pointless worry.