"WE'VE NEVER LOST COMPLETE COMMAND AND CONTROL AND FUNCTIONALITY OF 50 ICBMS"

 Only, as of this weekend, we *have* completely lost command and control of a whole bunch of ICBMs.

> President Obama was briefed this morning on a power failure at F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Wyoming that took 50 nuclear intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), one-ninth of the U.S. missile stockpile, temporarily offline on Saturday.
>
> [snip]
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> On Saturday morning, according to people briefed on what happened, a squadron of ICBMs suddenly dropped down into what's known as "LF Down" status, meaning that the missileers in their bunkers could no longer communicate with the missiles themselves. LF Down status also means that various security protocols built into the missile delivery system, like intrusion alarms and warhead separation alarms, were offline.
>
> [snip]
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> "We've never had something as big as this happen," a military officer who was briefed on the incident said. Occasionally, one or two might blink out, the officer said, and several warheads are routinely out of service for maintenance. At an extreme, "[w]e can deal with maybe 5, 6, or 7 at a time, but we've never lost complete command and control and functionality of

> 50 ICBMs."

Now, Ambinder quotes a number of sources effectively saying "nothing to see here, there was never a risk."

But the fact that they appear to have no fucking clue how they lost control of one ninth of our nuclear arsenal leaves me a little skeptical of their reassurances.

> The cause of the failure remains unknown, although it is suspected to be a breach of underground cables deep beneath the base, according to a senior military official.
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> It is next to impossible for these systems to be hacked, so the military does not believe the incident was caused by malicious actors. A half dozen individual silos were affected by Saturday's failure.

After StuxNet, are we so sure the hackers to pull this off aren't out there? And the failure of a bunch of cables … well, that reminds me of the failure of a bunch of other cables.

Alternately, given the accelerating speed with which we're turning into a banana republic, maybe it's just possible that we can't keep our critical infrastructure safe from our own increasing incompetence anymore.

I can sympathize. For about a year I've been debating getting a chest freezer, but thus far have not, because I suspect I would lose power so often so as to make the freezer a collection of inedible meat. Perhaps now the government is considering whether it has the infrastructure to keep 450 ICBMs lying around?

Update: Danger Room has more.