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Press TV – Iran

Iran MP: Attacking Buser Plant Unwise

Saturday, August 21, 2010

An Iranian lawmaker says according to international conventions, attacking a power plant once it has been injected with nuclear fuel is a crime against global security.

"Currently there are 2,500 Russian technicians at Bushehr plant, and naturally no one will accept the risks of an attack because of them," member of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Commission Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh said Saturday.

"Only an idiotic move can result an attack on the Bushehr plant, otherwise an attack on this power plant will never take place."

Falahatpisheh added that as the Bushehr plant does not have a military nature therefore the fuel used in it has no military use, Fars News Agency reported.

"Nothing was mentioned about the [Bushehr] power plant in the resolutions issued against Iran," Falahatpisheh said, adding that the enemy is trying to create a negative atmosphere against Tehran to pursue their accusatory policies against the country.

Iran started injecting fuel into the Bushehr power plant on Saturday. The completion of the plant was originally planned for 1999. However, extensive political and economic pressures by the US and other Israeli allies delayed its construction.

The transfer of 163 fuel rods into the reactor at the plant is to be completed by September 5. Iranian officials say they expect to use nuclear-generated electricity two or three months following the fuel launch of the plant.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/139560.html>

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Tehran Times – Iran

Saturday, August 21, 2010

No Talks Until U.S. Drops Aggressive Rhetoric: Leader

Tehran Times Political Desk

TEHRAN - Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has stated that Iran will not negotiate with the United States under pressure and threats.

"For obvious reasons, we have refused to negotiate with the United States because we do not regard negotiation under the shadow of threats and pressure as negotiation," Ayatollah Khamenei told a large gathering of senior state officials in Tehran on Wednesday.

As the respected officials of the country have said, Iran is interested in negotiations, but not with the United States, which seeks dialogue using threats and pressure, he added.

The Leader said if the West drops its sanctions and threats, Iran will be ready to sit down for dialogue.

And if the U.S. unwisely follows through on its military threats against Iran, the repercussions of that attack will not be restricted to the region, he stated.

Ayatollah Khamenei dismissed the claim that the international community is opposed to the Islamic Republic of Iran, saying the Zionist regime and the United States regard themselves as the international community.

In fact, the international community's hostility toward the U.S. and Israel is increasing since the foreign policies of these two countries have failed in the Middle East region, he said.

On Iran's uranium enrichment program, he said that Iran will not relinquish its legitimate right to enrich uranium to 20 percent to power the Tehran nuclear research reactor.

"We purchased the fuel required for this reactor nearly two decades ago. Now that they know we need 20 percent fuel again, they have started a bad game and they will lose in the end," he stated.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Ayatollah Khamenei advised the Iranian people and state officials to maintain unity and solidarity.

http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=225229

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The Moscow Times – Russian Federation

Iran Begins Fueling Bushehr Reactor

22 August 2010

By Associated Press

BUSHEHR, Iran — Trucks rumbled into Iran's first nuclear plant Saturday to begin loading tons of uranium fuel, a development that came more than a decade after the Russian government signed a contract to construct the plant for Iran.

The Russian-built Bushehr nuclear power plant will be internationally supervised and involves a pledge by Russia to safeguard it from the diversion of materials for nuclear weapon use.

Tehran's agreement to allow the oversight was a rare compromise by the Islamic state over its atomic program.

Western powers have cautiously accepted the deal as a way to keep spent nuclear fuel from crossing over to military use.

Iran has long declared that it has a right to produce nuclear energy. The country's nuclear chief described Saturday's startup as a "symbol of Iranian resistance and patience."

"Despite all pressure, sanctions and hardships imposed by Western nations, we are now witnessing the startup of the largest symbol of Iran's peaceful nuclear activities," Ali Akbar Salehi told reporters inside the plant, topped by a cream-colored dome overlooking the Persian Gulf in southern Iran.

Bushehr's operations aren't covered by United Nations sanctions imposed after Iran refused to stop uranium enrichment.

"Today is a historic day and will be remembered in history," Salehi said at a news conference alongside Sergei Kiriyenko, the chief of the Russian state-run nuclear corporation, [Rosatom](#).

"The countdown to the Bushehr nuclear power plant has started," Kiriyenko said. "Congratulations."

Russia signed a \$1 billion contract to build the Bushehr plant in the 1990s but dragged its feet on completing the work. Moscow cited technical reasons for the delays, but analysts say Russia used the project to try to press Iran to ease its defiance over uranium enrichment.

The Russian agreement to control the supply of nuclear fuel at Bushehr eased opposition by Washington and its allies. Last week, U.S. State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley said the Russian oversight at Bushehr was the "very model" offered Tehran under a UN-drafted plan unveiled last year.

That proposal called for Iran to halt uranium enrichment and obtain its supplies of reactor-ready material from abroad. It has been rejected by Iran so far.

Western leaders fear Iran's enrichment labs could churn out weapons-grade material. Iran claims that it has no interest in nuclear arms, but it refuses to give up the right to make its own fuel.

After years of delays in completing the plant, Moscow now says the project is essential to persuading Tehran to cooperate with international efforts to guard against Iran's development of atomic bombs.

Iran has said monitors from the International Atomic Energy Agency, the UN's nuclear watchdog, will have access to the fuel shipments at Bushehr, some 1,200 kilometers south of Tehran. Spent fuel contains plutonium, which can be used to make atomic weapons.

UN nuclear inspectors were on hand Saturday as the first truckloads of fuel were taken from a storage site to a "pool" inside the reactor. Over the next two weeks, more than 150 fuel assemblies will be moved inside the building and then into the reactor core.

It will be another two months before the 1,000-megawatt light-water reactor — heavily guarded by soldiers and anti-aircraft batteries — is pumping electricity to Iranian cities.

Iran raised more alarm in the West with its recent declaration of plans to build 10 new uranium enrichment sites inside protected mountain strongholds. It said it will begin construction on the first one in March in defiance of the UN sanctions.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/business/article/iran-begins-fueling-bushehr-reactor/413394.html>

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Press TV – Iran

'Bushehr Fueling, New US Failure'

Sunday, August 22, 2010

Iran's Ambassador to Moscow Mahmoud Reza Sajjadi says the startup of the country's first nuclear power plant was another defeat for US diplomacy.

"The West thought that Russia would yield to its pressure... but fuel injection into the Bushehr power plant was another big defeat for US diplomacy," Sajjadi was quoted by Fars News Agency on Sunday.

He added that the US and its allies were upset by the inauguration of the power plant because their conspiracies and efforts were failed by it.

He pointed to the West's misinformation about Russia during recent years and said, "We have always emphasized that it is Western propaganda that seeks to cause difference (between Iran and Russia) and prevent the two countries from making achievements in different sectors."

The envoy expressed hope Iran's positive outlook on cooperation with Russia would lead to further interaction between Tehran and Moscow in the oil, gas and petrochemical sectors.

"Iran and Russia are two independent and strong countries. The West is concerned about close cooperation between the two countries," Sajjadi said.

"Western and Zionist media are constantly using propaganda against Iran in Russia to mislead public opinion in Russia against the Iranian nation," he added.

Iran on Saturday began loading fuel to its first nuclear power plant in the southern city of Bushehr with the presence of the International Atomic Energy Agency's inspectors and senior Iranian and Russian officials.

The completion of the plant was originally planned for 1999. However, extensive political and economic pressures by the US, Israel and their allies delayed its construction.

The Bushehr reactor will be fully fueled by September 22. It is expected to produce 500 megawatts of electricity in the initial stage, and its production capacity will increase to 1,000 megawatts in the near future.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/139656.html>

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Financial Times – U.K.

Iran Unveils Bomber Drone

By Monavar Khalaj in Tehran

August 22, 2010

Two days after it launched a new missile, Iran on Sunday unveiled its first domestically produced drone in a show of military strength to the country's "enemies".

Dubbed Karrar or Attacker, the drone can fly at speed of up to 900kmh with a range of 1,000km and can conduct strike and other missions, according to state television. In footage of the launch of the bomber, the television reported that it could carry four cruise missiles, two 250-pound or one 500-pound guided bomb.

Mahmoud Ahmadi-Nejad, the president, said at the unveiling ceremony that the drone was "a messenger of peace and friendship" rather than "an ambassador of death for enemies of humanity".

"Our defence industry should be reaching a point that cuts the hands of invaders before any action," Mr Ahmadi-Nejad said.

Although the drone cannot reach Israel, it is likely to raise worries in the west about the intentions and capabilities of Iran's military.

On Friday, Iran announced that it had test-fired a new surface-to-surface missile, Qiam 1, with "unique tactical capabilities". No details of the range of the weapon were given but Tehran has already developed Shahab and Sejil missiles, which have ranges sufficient to hit Israel.

On Saturday the Islamic regime said that it had begun fuelling its first nuclear power plant near Bushehr in the south of the country.

The United Nations has imposed four sets of sanctions on Tehran for its refusal to suspend uranium enrichment.

The Bushehr plant is exempted from the sanctions because Tehran has promised Russia to return the spent fuel.

However, Israel and the US say that the military option is not off the table because they believe the country has enough materials to make two nuclear weapons. The Islamic regime insists its nuclear programme is peaceful.

Iranian officials have recently reiterated warnings to the US and Israel against military action.

Mr Ahmadi-Nejad on Sunday again warned Israel against any possible attack, saying, "Iran's reaction [to such attack] would include the entire earth".

Ahmad Vahidi, the defence minister, also said this week that Iran can meet not only its own "defence needs" but can also export artillery to over 50 countries.

Referring to the Iran-Iraq war of 1980 to 1988, Mr Vahidi warned the US that the country was ready to fight another "eight years" and "have 200,000 martyrs" in order not to give its territory to "enemies".

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/a7a4a04c-ade2-11df-bb55-00144feabdc0.html?ftcamp=rss>

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Press TV – Iran

'Iran Favors Talks With All But US'

Sunday, August 22, 2010

Iranian Parliament (Majlis) Speaker Ali Larijani says the Islamic Republic is keen to hold negotiations with the world but the United States.

"US' fraudulent arrogance has led to its fake narcissism. The Americans falsely think that their overstatements about regional nations and the Iranians will bear fruits," he said on Sunday.

He added that however, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has recently revealed such policies of the US.

On Wednesday, Ayatollah Khamenei ruled out the possibility of negotiations with the US under the shadow of threats and pressure.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution said Iran could not engage in negotiations with the US, because "talks in an environment of pressure, threats and intimidation are not talks."

Ayatollah Khamenei noted that the main US policy and attitude towards Iran actively sought to negate the existence of the Islamic Republic.

He said, in contrast, Iran boldly rejected the self-acclaimed US superiority over other nations.

Larijani urged arrogant powers to pay attention to the results of the opinion polls which they, themselves, conducted recently in different regional countries about Iran's nuclear program.

He said surveys by the University of Maryland in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Morocco, Lebanon and the United Arab Emirates showed that 88 percent of the participants regard Israel as a danger to the region while 77 percent also believe that the US poses danger.

"According to your own polls, only 10 percent deem Iran as a danger," the speaker said.

Larijani said that although nuclear weapons have no place in Iran's security doctrine, but when the people of the region were asked about their perception of a nuclear-armed Iran by the Maryland poll, a definite majority of them had said that they thought that a nuclear armed Iran would be of positivity for the Middle East.

Larijani said that the people's response to such a question shows how much "your unilateral propaganda against Iran and what you call international consensus on Iran" has been effective in shaping public opinion in the region.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/139640.html>

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Asharq Al-Awsat – U.K.

Bahrain Will Not Allow Use Of Military Base To Attack Iran- Bahraini FM

22 August 2010

By Salman Aldossary

London, Asharq Al-Awsat- In a statement to Asharq Al-Awsat, Bahraini Foreign Minister Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmad Al Khalifah declared that his country will not permit the United States to use Bahraini territories to launch a military strike at "any country whatsoever," noting that the presence of a US military base in Bahraini territory does not mean that Manama will allow the use of this base to launch an offensive on "Iran or on any other country."

Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinejad said last week that "Iran's brothers and friends in the Gulf states will not allow the use of their territories to strike at Iran." He added: "The leaders of those states are more aware of the Israeli and US schemes in the region; and although we rule out the possibility of war, we are ready for all eventualities."

The Bahraini foreign minister explained his country's position regarding the presence of US military bases, noting that the agreements that Manama signed with Washington "are defensive agreements first and foremost." We will not accept the use of our territories for launching offensives on the territories of others." He added that the agreements that his country signed with a number of countries "many decades ago" were defensive and did not include provisions for the use of the Bahraini territories to attack other states. He added: "In fact, there are no offensive weapons in these military bases in the first place."

Western nations are extremely concerned over Iran's nuclear program, asserting that this program is intended for military use, whereas Iran maintains that its program is purely peaceful.

The Bahraini foreign minister, who spoke to Asharq Al-Awsat in a telephone interview, said that "what concerns Bahrain is not to see a new war in the region." He added: "We have been exhausted by the wars that the region faced in the past three decades. The directives of His Majesty the King (Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifah, the monarch of Bahrain) provide that Bahraini territories will only be used to defend Bahraini territories and in accordance with the mechanisms of joint action with our brothers in the Gulf Cooperation Council's states."

While the Bahraini foreign minister stressed his country's position rejecting the use of its territories for any possible strike at Tehran, he said that his country will not just look on in the case it comes under any attack. He said that the defense agreements signed with what he called friendly countries will be used to deter any offensive to which the Kingdom of Bahrain may be subjected.

Asharq Al-Awsat asked the Bahraini foreign minister whether his country gave assurances to Tehran that the US military base in Bahrain will not be used in any possible military strike against Iran. He said: "Yes, on all my visits to Tehran, I assured them of Bahrain's position, which basically rejects any military strike against Iran, and that Manama will not accept the use of its territories for attacks on other countries."

The GCC states have constantly affirmed that they reject any military strike against Iran, and that they prefer a diplomatic solution to Iran's nuclear program. In statements by more than one official, Tehran repeatedly said that its rockets will reach all the [Arabian] Gulf cities if Iran comes under US military offensive. The Iranian Revolutionary Guard warned against any inspection of Iranian ships in the gulf, threatening a crushing retaliation."

The Bahraini foreign minister reasserted that the aim of the military agreements that his country signed with Western countries "was and still is safeguarding the security and safety of the Gulf as an important maritime route and a key artery of utmost importance to global economy and to oil-consuming nations, which want to be assured that oil will reach them without any difficulties." He added: "Were it not for the presence of international forces in the region, the situation in the Gulf would have become similar to that of the Gulf of Aden, which lacks the basic factors of security and stability."

Asked if the Gulf states's stand is consistent with that of Bahrain, the Bahraini foreign minister said: "The Gulf states' stand is clear; they are opposed to any tension in the region, and they do not want to see new wars that would bring us back to the past cycle of violence."

The US Fifth Fleet headquarters in Bahrain supervises operations in the Arabian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman, the Red Sea, and part of the Indian Ocean. Approximately 3,000 US personnel are stationed in Bahrain ranging from marines, infantry troops, and army based in the al-Jufayr Military Base near Manama. The base includes the US Fifth Fleet Command. The troops have access to the Salman Port, the Sheikh Isa Air Base, and Al-Muharraq Airport. Under normal circumstances, the Fifth Fleet has approximately 15 vessels, including an aircraft carrier. It should be recalled that the agreement on the use of this base was signed in 1948.

<http://aawsat.com/english/news.asp?section=1&id=22053>

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24 August 2010

Iran Ready To Resume Nuclear Talks But Waiting For World Powers

Iran Foreign Ministry spokesman says Iran is awaiting details of date and venue for technical and political talks with 5+1 group of world powers.

By German Press Agency (DPA)

Iran is ready to resume nuclear talks with the world powers but is waiting for their reply to fix a date and venue, Foreign Ministry spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast said on Tuesday.

The spokesman said in a press briefing in Tehran that Iran was ready for both technical talks and political talks with the 5+1 group in charge of political negotiations in the dispute over Iran's controversial nuclear programs.

The 5+1 group - Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States plus Germany - is represented by European Union foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton.

The technical talks concern a swap of Iranian low-enriched uranium for nuclear fuel via Russia and France to be used in the medical reactor in Tehran. The talks are supposed to be held with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Russia and the U.S. in Vienna.

The political talks with the 5+1 group are more focused on persuading Iran to suspend its enrichment programs in return for improving political and economic co-operation with the EU and even the U.S.

"We are ready for both talks and as soon as we receive the final details from the other side (IAEA and 5+1 group) such as the date and venue, we will start," Mehmanparast said.

The spokesman added that the political talks between Ashton and Iran's chief nuclear negotiator Saedi Jalili would probably be held in late September or at the beginning of October but the venue was still unclear.

Iran had earlier said that it was prepared to return to the negotiating table with the 5+1 group on condition that the EU first clarified its position on Israel's alleged nuclear arsenal, and on the Jewish state's rejection of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad also requested that Turkey and Brazil - the only UN Security Council members that opposed fresh sanctions against Iran, and who negotiated an alternative nuclear fuel swap deal for Tehran's medical reactor - were also involved.

Iran has repeatedly said that it would be ready to resume talks with the world powers but not meet their main demand which is suspension of its uranium enrichment programs.

Tehran rejects Western charges that the country is pursuing a secret military program, saying that as an NPT signatory and IAEA member it has the right to pursue peaceful nuclear projects, including uranium enrichment.

Iran opened on Sunday its first, Russian-built nuclear power plant in the southern Persian Gulf port of Bushehr, which is tolerated by the West as the plant is mainly run by Russian experts, the fuel is supplied by Russia and the waste is returned to that country.

<http://www.haaretz.com/news/international/iran-ready-to-resume-nuclear-talks-but-waiting-for-world-powers-1.309934>

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Yonhap News – South Korea

N. Korea Willing To Hold Preliminary Nuke Talks Before Formal Round: Report

21 August 2010

TOKYO, Aug. 21 (Yonhap) -- North Korea agreed to hold an informal meeting with its five dialogue partners at the long-stalled nuclear talks before the resumption of a formal round, a Japanese newspaper reported Saturday.

Pyongyang made the commitment during a trip by China's top nuclear envoy Wu Dawei there earlier this week, Wu was quoted as telling a group of Japanese opposition lawmakers traveling to Beijing.

Wu, China's special representative for Korean Peninsula affairs, made a three-day trip to the North through Wednesday during which he met Kim Yong-il, department director of the Central Committee of the North's powerful Workers' Party, and Foreign Minister Pak Ui-chun.

Briefing the Japanese delegation on the results of his trip, Wu said North Korea expressed willingness to hold preliminary talks with the U.S. and join an informal meeting of top representatives to the six-way talks also involving South Korea, Japan and Russia, according to the Mainich Shimbun newspaper.

The six-way talks, launched in 2003, have not been convened since December 2008 amid a series of North Korea's provocative acts and sanctions on it that have been imposed by the international community.

Host China and its communist ally, North Korea, have been seeking to restart the talks.

South Korea, however, demands the North first apologize for the sinking of one of its warships in March that killed 46 sailors. The South's probe assisted by foreign experts found the North's torpedo attack to be responsible for the sinking but the North has denied involvement.

The U.S. and Japan support Seoul's approach.

Meanwhile, Wu and North Korean officials had "in-depth discussions on the regional situation and the bilateral relations of friendship and matters of mutual concern, including the resumption of the six-party talks and the denuclearization of the whole Korean Peninsula," and reached full consensus, the North's official media reported.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2010/08/21/4/0301000000AEN20100821000800315F.HTML>

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People's Daily – China

DPRK Media Urges U.S. To Denuclearize Korean Peninsula

August 24, 2010

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) newspaper Minju Choson Tuesday urged the United States to realize peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula by withdrawing its nuclear weapons in South Korea.

The United States should make the right decision to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula, the paper said in an article in the newspaper.

The whole world is paying great attention to the position of the United States, which should withdraw all of its nuclear weapons deployed in South Korea and other places of the world, it said.

"Doing is more important than saying," the article said.

The United States has never abandoned its ambition to intimidate the DPRK with its nuclear presence, as it has intended to use nuclear weapons since the Korean War and has been regularly holding "nuclear war exercises against the DPRK" recently, it said.

The newspaper stressed that it was legitimate for the DPRK to strengthen its nuclear deterrent in order to deal with U.S. nuclear threats.

The newspaper said the DPRK proposed to replace the Armistice Agreement with a peace agreement, and would never change its firm position of building a stable peace.

The United States and South Korea are conducting joint military exercises coded Ulji Freedom Guardian scheduled for Aug.16 to 26, which involve more than 30,000 U.S. soldiers and 56,000 South Korean soldiers.

Source: Xinhua

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90777/90851/7115621.html>

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Georgian Daily – New York

United States To Give Georgia Radiation Detectors

24 August 2010

By N. Kirtskhalia

Tbilisi, August 24 - The U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi will provide Georgia with personal radiation detectors worth 382,000 lari. The equipment will be presented to the authorities today at the Tbilisi City Hall's Emergencies Situations Service, the embassy told Trend.

The equipment will be given to the government under the embassy's Export Control and Border Security Program.

The Emergencies Situations Service will receive 21 detectors. Seventy-one detectors will also be presented to the Georgian Interior Ministry's Patrol Department.

Employees will undergo special training on how to use the equipment. Personal radiation detectors are designed to ensure public safety and will help Georgia to better fulfill its obligations in maintaining control over radioactive substances.

The program launched in Georgia in 2006. Over \$6 million has been spent on its implementation.

http://georgiandaily.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=19778&Itemid=65

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Spacewar.com

India To Test Advanced Agni II Missile

By Staff Writers

August 20, 2010

New Delhi (UPI) - India will conduct another test launch of its intermediate-range nuclear-capable missile Agni II in September from the east coast Wheeler Island facility.

The surface-to-surface missile underwent a successful test launch in May after failed test launches last year.

The Defense Research and Development Organization, developers of the missiles, said the Agni II missile to be tested in September is an advanced version with an extended range of up to 1,800 miles over the normal 800 miles.

The short-range Agni I can hit targets up to 450 miles away.

While Agni II and Agni III are two-stage missiles, Agni I is a single-stage missile, the DRDO said.

Wheeler Island -- just over 1 mile long -- is a major test base 6 miles off the country's east coast in the Bay of Bengal and about 90 miles from Bhubaneswar, the capital city of Orissa state.

It was from Wheeler Island that Agni III, with a range of just over 2,000 miles, was successfully test-launched from a mobile launcher in February.

The longer range of Agni III was made possible by adding a special-purpose coating of chromium metal to the blunt nose cone of the missiles to reduce drag, G. Jagadeesh, an assistant professor at the Indian Institute of Science, said in 2008.

The first test of Agni III was an unsuccessful launch in July 2006.

The solid-propellant Agni series of ballistic missiles are manufactured by Bharat Dynamics, one of India's major manufacturers of munitions and missile systems founded in 1970 in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh. Bharat Dynamics also manufactures India's Konkurs anti-tank missile.

India also may begin flight trials of what it calls Agni V with a range of around 3,100 miles, a military scientist said in February.

"Agni-V is out of the drawing board. We are aiming for a flight trial within a year," V.K. Saraswat, India's chief military scientist, said.

Agni missiles are claimed to be a part of India's credible deterrence against China and Pakistan. A range of more than 3,000 miles would make most of China a target.

India also has developed a supersonic cruise-type missile, the BrahMos, for closer targets.

Defense Minister A.K. Antony recently said India would export the indigenously built BrahMos, but only after all Indian military needs have been met.

Foreign sales are allowed under the 1998 agreement signed by India and Russia that set up BrahMos Aerospace to manufacture the missile, he said in a written response to a question in the country's Parliament.

The missile will be inducted in the armed forces of India and Russia.

Although some countries have shown an interest, no decisions have been made about who the customers would be or when the BrahMos will be available for export.

http://www.spacewar.com/reports/India_to_test_advanced_Agni_II_missile_999.html

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Deccan Herald – India

India-Japan Nuke Talks Run Into Rough Weather

New Delhi: August 21, 2010

Deccan Herald News Service

Negotiations between India and Japan for a civil nuclear deal seem to have hit a roadblock with Tokyo insisting on a clause to be inserted in the agreement to keep its option open to suspend cooperation in case New Delhi conducts yet another nuke test in future.

Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada said Tokyo would have no other option except to withdraw itself from nuclear cooperation with India in case of another test by New Delhi.

He also said initiating nuke cooperation talks with India, which had not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), was the “toughest” of the decision he had taken as the foreign minister of Japan.

Addressing a joint news conference with his Indian counterpart S M Krishna after the fourth round of Strategic Dialogue between the two countries here on Saturday, Katsuya Okada also called upon New Delhi to consider signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

India and Japan had the first round of negotiations for a nuclear cooperation agreement on June 28-29 last. But Tokyo’s decision to enter into nuke talks with a non-NPT country like India sparked off strong reactions from the anti-nuclear activists in Japan. Being the only country in the world to have really experienced the devastations that atomic bombs could cause, Japan has strong public sentiments against proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Katsuya on Saturday said he had conveyed to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Krishna the strong public opinion in Japan about Tokyo-Delhi nuke talks.

He said Japan would seek to incorporate “the philosophy of non-proliferation” in the text of the agreement on civil nuclear cooperation with India. He also said Japan would make it sure that its deal with India for cooperation in use of nuclear power for peaceful purposes would not contradict its principled stand on non-proliferation and disarmament.

“We agreed that the negotiations will continue quickly and that we will jointly work towards a good agreement, which will result in a win-win situation for both India and Japan,” Krishna said, noting New Delhi’s appreciation for Tokyo’s decision to commence negotiations for a bilateral agreement for peaceful use of nuclear energy.

“We do not intend to set a timeline for the conclusion of such an agreement,” he added, apparently acknowledging that it might take longer than expected to wrinkle out differences and make Japan shun its inhibitions and sign the deal with India.

Krishna did not react to Katsuya Okada’s insistence on a guarantee by New Delhi against conducting another nuke test in future. But diplomatic sources told Deccan Herald that both Singh and Krishna told the Japanese minister that India had an impeccable non-proliferation record and had been observing a unilateral moratorium on nuclear tests.

India, however, would find it difficult to accept Japan’s proposal to include a clause that would enable Tokyo to suspend nuke cooperation in case of another test by New Delhi.

Krishna and Katsuya Okada, however, agreed to make efforts to expedite negotiations on the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), which might be inked during Singh’s visit to Tokyo later this year. The CEPA is expected to give a boost to the bilateral trade, which is now estimated to be at around \$ 12 billion.

Katsuya Okada also invited Krishna to have talks with other G-4 countries’ Foreign Ministers on United Nations Security Council reforms on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly next month.

<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/90551/india-japan-nuke-talks-run.html>

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ITAR-TASS – Russian Federation

Russia May Test Bulava Missile In First Half Of September

23 August 2010

MOSCOW, August 23 (Itar-Tass) - The first test of the sea-launched ballistic missile Bulava this year may take place in the first half of September, a defense sector official told reporters on Monday.

The state commission is due to meet on September 6. "The launch widow is expected to be open from September 9," the official said.

Russian initially planned to test the state-of-the-art missile in the period from August 11 to August 14.

Defense sector sources said two launches of Bulava would be performed from the Dmitry Donskoi submarine of Project 941 ("Akula") this year. Another launch is to be performed from the Yuri Dolgoruky submarine of Project 955 ("Borei").

The submarine launched ballistic missile R30 3M30 (Bulava-30), also called RSM-56 in international treaties, is Russia's newest three-stage solid fuel rocket designed for 4th generation submarines of Project 955 Borei.

It was designed by the Moscow Institute of Thermal Engineering. Its range is 8,500 kilometers. The missile is capable of carrying up to ten supersonic maneuvering re-entry vehicles with the capability to change the course and altitude of flight.

According to the official results of the 12 Bulava tests, only five were successful or partially successful.

The worst problem is that there is a latent flaw in the missile, which appears in a new place every time. During the previous test in December 2009, a fault was detected in the third stage of Bulava, the Navy headquarters said.

The Russian military are hoping the Bulava program will reach the designated objective to make this intercontinental ballistic missile the backbone of Russia's strategic nuclear forces in the period to 2040-2045.

<http://www.itar-tass.com/eng/level2.html?NewsID=15425847&PageNum=0>

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ITAR-TASS – Russian Federation

Most Russians Against Use Of Nuclear Weapons Even Against Aggressor

23 August 2010

MOSCOW, August 23 (Itar-Tass) --The majority of Russians believe that nuclear weapons should not be used even against an aggressor if it results in mass casualties among civilians, according to a poll conducted by the All-Russia Public Opinion Centre (VTsIOM).

Sixty-two percent of those polled spoke against the use of nuclear weapons. However more than a quarter (27 percent) think that their use is "quite acceptable" or "rather acceptable". The other respondents were undecided.

VTsIOM says the replies practically do not differ in different social and demographic groups.

The poll was conducted on July 24-25, 2010 and involved 1,600 people in 140 settlements in 42 regions across Russia. The margin of error did not exceed 3.4 percent.

<http://www.itar-tass.com/eng/level2.html?NewsID=15426949&PageNum=0>

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The Observer – U.K.

Nuclear Arsenals Under Scrutiny For Safety Lapses, Fires And Flood

Group calls for planners to think twice about a major new facility at Trident warhead base at Aldermaston in Berkshire

By Jamie Doward

Sunday, 22 August 2010

Health and safety practices at the UK's main nuclear weapons base are under intense scrutiny just weeks before it is expected to be granted permission for a multibillion-pound facility to conduct a new generation of radioactive tests.

The Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) at Aldermaston in Berkshire is where the UK's arsenal of nuclear warheads is manufactured and maintained for the Trident submarine fleet. A serious fire in the base's explosives area last month, which resulted in local residents having to be evacuated and left one member of staff injured, has focused attention on AWE's safety record at a critical time.

The *Observer* has established that the fire resulted in asbestos contamination at the base. A spokeswoman for AWE confirmed that "sampling of the site found small amounts of asbestos close to the building where the fire took place" but said neither staff nor the public had been affected. "The asbestos is being dealt with in accordance with established safety procedures," she added.

Peter Burt, director of the Nuclear Information Service (NIS), an independent group, claimed the fire could have caused a "domino effect" of explosives igniting each other. "It seems that we came within a hair's breadth of everyone's nightmare scenario," Burt said.

An analysis of monthly health and safety records, published by AWE, has prompted the NIS to call for planners to think twice before approving Project Hydrus, a major new research facility that will turn Aldermaston into a global leader in the production of thermonuclear weapons.

The documents show that:

- Last month's fire was one of several over the last five years. In July 2006, two fires were caused when specialist metals combusted, leading to "significant delays" in AWE's decommissioning programme.
- From April to June 2008, there was a risk of staff being exposed to the toxic metal beryllium, which can cause acute respiratory conditions and tumours.
- In February 2008, radioactive material taken to London to help the Metropolitan police's "radiological awareness training" was left in the capital overnight.
- In July 2007, flooding at Aldermaston's sister plant, AWE Burghfield, "came close to overwhelming" buildings where nuclear warheads were assembled, resulting in £5m damage, paid for by the taxpayer, and cessation of live nuclear work at the plant for nine months.
- In October 2009, a krytron, a trigger device used in nuclear weapons which contains minor radioactive sources, was left in a cupboard outside of its protected area.
- In January 2008, an AWE vehicle carrying high explosives was involved in a collision with another vehicle while outside the plant.

According to the NIS, management procedures were ignored and on several occasions there was a risk of a "criticality" incident that could have resulted in the release of radiation.

Poor record keeping also made tracking radioactive material and components problematic.

AWE's track record is likely to be heavily scrutinised next month when West Berkshire council confirms whether it will approve Hydrus. Radioactive plutonium will be used in some of the tests, which will mean contaminated wastes will have to be stored on site until the development of a national repository for such material, which is not expected to be completed until 2030.

The planning application is subject to a Defence Exempt Environmental Impact Assessment study that excludes key information about processes, risks and wastes generated by the new facility, leaving the local council to rely heavily on assessments from AWE and the government.

The application comes after the government has committed to building a new generation of Trident submarines at a cost of £20bn.

Critics including Greenpeace claim that, once the cost of maintenance and additional factors such as the construction of warheads and acquisition of missiles from the US is factored in, the true cost of Trident will total almost £100bn.

A Freedom of Information request has revealed that the Defence Environment and Safety Board believes budget cuts will make it "increasingly difficult to maintain that the defence nuclear programmes are being managed with due regard for the protection of the workforce, the public and the environment. The key areas of concern for the medium term are the sufficiency of resources, both money and staff complement, and the maintenance of a suitable cadre of suitably competent staff."

Records show that between 2008 and 2009 there were nearly 8,000 "abnormal events" at AWE sites. Of these, six were assessed as having the potential "to challenge a nuclear safety system" if appropriate action had not been taken.

Andrew Jupp, director of infrastructure at AWE, said: "Our commitment to be safe, secure and environmentally responsible underpins everything we do at AWE."

He said that in almost 60 years of operation there had never been a radiation emergency at AWE that had affected the public.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/aug/22/trident-nuclear-weapons-safety>

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US Ends Payments To Spain For 1966 Nuclear Accident

Monday, August 23, 2010

By Staff Writers

MADRID (AFP) – The United States has stopped annual payments it has made to Spain for a 1966 air accident in which two hydrogen bombs caused non-nuclear explosions, a Spanish government source said Monday.

They said a bilateral agreement in force since the accident "expired" last year, the source at the ministry of science and innovation said.

In January 1966, a US Air Force B-52 bomber collided with a KC-135 tanker during a midair refueling over southern Spain.

Two of the four hydrogen bombs broke up near the small town of Palomares in non-nuclear explosions, dispersing radioactive plutonium.

Since then Washington has provided an annual compensation to Spain to monitor pollution levels and perform blood tests on more than 1,000 residents.

The Spanish newspaper El Pais said Monday the amount was 403,000 dollars (314,00 euros) per year. It added that the issue was discussed during a visit to Spain in May by US Vice President Joe Biden.

The science ministry source said "both administrations are going to meet to see what will happen now."

El Pais said "traces of plutonium and americium remain in about 20 hectares" and in 2007 Washington and Madrid signed an agreement under which the United States agreed to pay for the cleanup of the area.

Now the Spanish government "wants Washington to agree to remove the plutonium" as Spain has no appropriate disposal site, the newspaper said.

The US Department of Energy said in a statement on its website Monday that its "cost-sharing arrangement with the Kingdom of Spain, begun in 1966, ended in" financial year 2008.

"The final radiological survey was completed in 2009 and received a positive review by the International Atomic Energy Agency. Plans for final remediation are in preparation in 2010."

http://www.spacewar.com/reports/US_ends_payments_to_Spain_for_1966_nuclear_accident_999.html

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The Independent – U.K.

Fired, But No Charges: Man Accused Of Being Nuclear Whistleblower

By Mark Hughes, Crime Correspondent

Tuesday, August 24, 2010

A British customs investigator who was accused of leaking classified information about an international nuclear smuggling ring to two US journalists has been dismissed from his job, despite being told that he will not face prosecution under the Official Secrets Act, it was announced yesterday.

Atif Amin, 41, claimed to have discovered evidence in 2000 that Abdul Qadeer Khan, a Pakistani scientist responsible for developing the country's nuclear arsenal, was involved in establishing Libya's nuclear programme. Mr Amin claimed that he told MI5 and the CIA of his concerns but, he said, they ignored his evidence and told him to drop his inquiries. The Libyan programme and its involvement with Mr Khan was not exposed and halted until 2003.

Mr Amin's claims were revealed in a 2007 book published in the US called *America and the Islamic Bomb: The Deadly Compromise*. Due to the confidential nature of the material in the book it was suspected Mr Amin had leaked the information to the book's authors, David Armstrong and Joseph Trento – something all three deny.

The book quoted from an official document which reported Mr Amin as telling colleagues: "They knew exactly what was going on all the time. If they'd wanted to, they could have blown the whistle on this long ago."

Shortly after the book was published, Mr Amin appeared on the US television news show NBC to discuss its contents. When he arrived back in Britain he mentioned the appearance to a colleague, who informed superiors and, in November that year, the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) was asked to investigate.

During the two-year investigation Mr Amin was arrested, his home was searched and he was interviewed four times. IPCC investigators found the book contained information which directly related to Mr Amin's role in the inquiry that had not been disclosed before, and passed a file to prosecutors. But in December last year, the Crown Prosecution Service decided there was not enough evidence to prosecute Mr Amin. With the criminal investigation unable to proceed, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), Mr Amin's employer, began disciplinary proceedings against him.

The allegation was that as an HMRC employee he was in breach of his position when he appeared on the television show and made "unauthorised disclosures of highly sensitive material". Last month he was dismissed from his £55,000-a-year job.

Mr Amin and the authors maintain he was not the source used, and that his name had merely been mentioned in other material. He maintains that his appearance on NBC did not break the rules of his employment.

Speaking to The Independent yesterday, Mr Amin said: "The only thing I have done is to give an impromptu interview on matters that were already in the public domain. Because of that I have been subjected to a lengthy investigation which was akin to using a sledgehammer to crack a nut. The investigation had no evidence against me, but yet I have now lost a 17-year career. I have been absolutely shafted. Yes my name was in the book, but I cannot stop people writing things about me."

Joseph Trento, the book's co-author, added: "It is absolutely outrageous that this man has been dismissed from his job for supposedly helping us to write a book. We never even met Atif Amin until after the book was published. He was not our source. But the even bigger outrage is that his evidence about the Khan network was ignored and therefore it was allowed to operate for a further three years."

Mr Trento claims he emailed the IPCC, informing them Mr Amin was not the source of the investigation but did not travel to meet investigators after taking legal advice. An HMRC spokesman said: "We can confirm that following disciplinary procedures Atif Amin was dismissed for gross misconduct by the department in July 2010."

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/fired-but-no-charges-man-accused-of-being-nuclear-whistleblower-2060135.html>

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Breibart.com

U.S. Seeking Strategic And Nuclear Dialogue With China

August 21, 2010

By Associated Press

WASHINGTON, Aug. 21 (AP) - (Kyodo) — The U.S. government is pursuing bilateral dialogue with China on strategic issues like nuclear forces and deterrent policy to create "strategic stability" between the two big powers, a senior U.S. Defense Department official said in a recent interview with Kyodo News.

Bilateral military exchanges have been suspended since January following the U.S. announcement of an arms sale to Taiwan. But the official, who declined to be named, said, "We hope that, when they resume, this will be a priority for China, as it is for the U.S."

The Nuclear Posture Review -- the new nuclear policy blueprint the administration of President Barack Obama unveiled in April, said, "With China, the purpose of a dialogue on strategic stability is to provide a venue and mechanism for each side to communicate its views about the other's strategies, policies and programs on nuclear weapons and other strategic capabilities."

"The goal of such a dialogue is to enhance confidence, improve transparency, and reduce mistrust," the NPR stated.

But the official said it is uncertain when the dialogue will start because "the interruption in military-to-military dialogue has gone on longer" than he expected.

The official said, "We can imagine many important topics that we would like to cover, over a decade of dialogue with China," adding, "We would like to explain our concepts of strategic stability and express our concerns about the things China is doing that are troubling from our perspective."

The official also said, "We do not understand the type of nuclear force that will result from the current buildup in China, and we find China's lack of transparency troubling."

A recent annual report presented to Congress by the Pentagon focusing on Chinese military capabilities called "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2010" shed light on its nuclear buildup and Washington's concerns.

"China is both qualitatively and quantitatively improving its strategic missile forces," the report said, referring to missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads to the U.S. homeland.

"China is also currently working on a range of technologies to attempt to counter U.S. and other militaries' ballistic missile defense systems," including maneuvering re-entry vehicles, multiple independently targeted re-entry vehicles, decoys, chaff and jamming, it stated.

The official said the United States has taken seriously several nuclear weapons systems. Among them is the DF-31A, an intercontinental-range ballistic missile which can hit the U.S. mainland. Another is the DF-41, a more sophisticated type of ICBM carrying MIRV that can attack multiple targets simultaneously. Details of the development process of the DF-41 are unknown.

The official also raised concern about the uncertain status of a newly deployed strategic submarine which may carry long-range nuclear warheads. "How many will they have? Will they be at sea all the time? Will they operate them the way other navies do, continuous at-sea deployment? Maybe not," he said.

The operational status of nuclear-weapon submarines has strategically significant implications because these submarines have more survivability due to their invisibility in waters.

Survivability of nuclear weapons gives more assured capability to hit enemy targets even after a nuclear first-strike attack, which is crucial to the credibility of a nuclear deterrent.

The U.S. Navy has 14 strategic submarines carrying nuclear warheads like the W76 and W88 that can extend deterrent effects to its allies including Japan and South Korea, which have been under the U.S. "nuclear umbrella" since the Cold War era.

The official also stressed the U.S. willingness to address Chinese concerns. "We understand that China has its own concerns about strategic stability and its own concepts of strategic stability...We have to be committed to understanding China's views and doing something more than just expressing our own concerns," he said.

But he added, "We are willing to discuss anything China would like to discuss. That does not mean we are willing to tell China everything China wants to hear."

The official noted that the U.S. missile defense system is "not intended to negate China's strategic nuclear deterrent." The Chinese authorities have a strong concern about the United States deploying missile defenses because they could deny Chinese second-strike capability, meaning that China would lose its nuclear retaliatory power to deter the United States from a first strike.

"We are not interested in having a Cold War-like relationship with China, but nor do we want a relationship where we're competing in terms of nuclear weapons and missiles for strategic advantage," he said, suggesting that Washington would reject application of the theory of mutual assured destruction, or MAD, to future U.S.-China relations.

MAD is a central strategic concept during the Cold War that was based on "balance of terror," under which the United States and the Soviet Union deterred each other's first strikes by mutual threat backed by tens of thousands of retaliatory nuclear weapons. MAD is said to have accelerated their nuclear arms race.

However, the official indicated the United States would hope to create a strategic circumstance in which Chinese deterrent capability has some credit, which could lead to a mutual deterrent structure and control future nuclear expansion.

He also emphasized the importance of consultation with Japan, a country which tends to think Chinese nuclear forces pose a real existent threat.

"This is a dialogue that will touch directly on Japanese interests...we seek to advance Japan's interests in this dialogue," he said.

http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9HNQOKO0&show_article=1

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Las Vegas Review-Journal
August 24, 2010

It's Official: Test Site Gets New Name

By KEITH ROGERS

Known for six decades as the Nevada Test Site, the Rhode Island-size tract of high desert where government scientists detonated nuclear bombs during the Cold War got a new name Monday: the Nevada National Security Site.

The scientists who work there will probably call it "N-squared, S-squared," or N2S2, short for NNSS, said Troy Wade, chairman of the Nevada Test Site Historical Foundation.

The name change was brought about by legislation from Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., and the state's congressional delegation. The branch of the Department of Energy that runs the site -- the National Nuclear Security Administration -- selected a name to reflect the site's expanded missions on counterterrorism, homeland security and treaty verification.

"I'll always think about it as the Nevada Test Site," Wade said. "But I think the point the senator (Reid) made and (NNSA Administrator Thomas) D'Agostino made is the world has changed and the needs have changed. And name recognition is an awful lot of the world we live in."

Wade worked at the test site during the heyday of nuclear weapons testing. He saw it go from above-ground detonations that sent mushroom clouds into the sky to below-ground explosions in tunnels and deep shafts that sent shock waves toward high-rise buildings on the Strip.

Reid said the site was "once a critical battlefield in the Cold War."

"We are no longer facing the Soviet Union," he said during a ceremony at the NNSA's North Las Vegas office. "As we establish a new name and a new mission, we're inaugurating a new way to keep Nevada and our nation safe."

Reid said the new objectives of the mission are to prevent terrorists from smuggling nuclear materials into the country and "to keep nuclear weapons out of the hands of those who want to do us harm."

"We'll use our skills, talent and resources to be a key piece of the nonproliferation puzzle," he said, adding that the site also will serve "efforts to respond rapidly to national emergencies."

D'Agostino said Monday was "an important day for Nevada" and the nation. For 60 years, the site played an important role in keeping the nation "safe and secure," he said.

"Really, what we want to do is reflect the fact that the nature of our national security threat has changed dramatically since the Cold War, and it will continue to evolve," D'Agostino said. "As it evolves, we have to make sure that we adapt and are ready to address those different changes."

The site will continue to be used to train first responders. Scientists at the site also will continue developing sensors and detectors that can identify nuclear materials that terrorists might try to smuggle through seaports, airports and border crossings.

The site will continue to be used by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, and treaty experts from the U.S. Department of State will converge on the site to chart work needed to verify future treaties.

A secure building at the site, the Device Assembly Facility, will be used to train International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors to detect nuclear material production.

Over the years, employment and funding at the site have gone from a peak of 12,000 employees and a \$1 billion budget in the late 1980s to 2,300 workers and a \$500 million budget this year.

On Dec. 18, 1950, President Harry Truman signed the top secret memorandum that made a 680-square-mile swath of Nevada the nation's continental site for testing nuclear weapons.

The first nuclear test at the site, originally called the Nevada Proving Grounds, was on Jan. 27, 1951. A 1,000-pound bomb was dropped from a B-50 airplane flying more than three miles above ground.

The proving ground was dubbed the Nevada Test Site on Dec. 31, 1954. Four years later, it was doubled in size to 1,350 square miles. A realignment of the site's boundary with the Department of Defense land that borders it on three sides expanded it to 1,360 square miles.

From 1951 through 1992, the test site's role focused on full-scale tests of nuclear weapons. During that time, 100 tests were conducted in the atmosphere until the Limited Test Ban Treaty took effect in 1963. That was followed by 828 below-ground tests that shook the desert. The last test, dubbed Divider, was on Sept. 23, 1992.

A moratorium that has been extended indefinitely is now in place.

The stockpile stewardship mission at the site now focuses on how plutonium ages in the decades after weapons were produced.

A key tool in that task is the underground subcritical experiments complex, known as U1a. In the array of chambers that extend off a deep shaft, tiny amounts of plutonium are detonated but don't erupt into nuclear chain reactions.

<http://www.lvrj.com/news/it-s-official--test-site-gets-new-name-101363079.html>

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Global Security Newswire

Airborne Laser Trial Pushed Back

Tuesday, August 24, 2010

Continued technical troubles have forced the U.S. Missile Defense Agency to again postpone a test of the Airborne Laser system's ability to destroy enemy missiles. Another test date has yet to be set (see *GSN*, Aug. 23).

The test was "delayed because of unsuccessful tracking beam calibration engagements by the [Airborne Laser Test Bed] against an airborne diagnostic aircraft (surrogate target). The calibrations must be successfully completed prior to firing the aircraft's main directed energy beam," the agency said in a press release.

The target missile was not fired. This is the fifth delay to the planned test. A Feb. 11 test of the missile defense technology successfully destroyed the target (U.S. Missile Defense Agency release, Aug. 24).

http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20100824_4249.php

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency
OPINION & ANALYSIS

Bushehr Power Plant: Russia Balances On The Edge Of A Sword

23 August 2010

Last Saturday, Iran saw the physical startup of the first power generating unit of the Bushehr nuclear power plant. This never-ending construction project has long become the talk of the town, brought up anytime the Iranian nuclear program is discussed. It is finally nearing completion in a highly complicated political environment.

Russian-Iranian cooperation began in the 1990s, when Iran was ruled by liberals led by Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, the country's richest tycoon and an implacable and vindictive rival of conservative leader Sayyed Ali Khamenei (the successor of Ayatollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic republic).

Hashemi-Rafsanjani was very pragmatic in most of his policies aimed at liquidating the "excesses" that remained from the Islamic Revolution as well as the gradual constructive consolidation of the country's role in the Middle East and Central Asia.

Despite a series of economic blunders and corruption scandals, his policy remained fairly attractive and was consistently implemented by the next president, Seyed Mohammad Khatami, who took over when his patron Hashemi-Rafsanjani took a backseat. It was during Khatami's tenure that the Bushehr nuclear project began, after the principal decision was made in 1995.

The fifteen years of Tehran's moderate policies generated a hope for an adequate and positive dialogue on the nuclear and other issues; therefore, Moscow unflinchingly shielded Iran from Washington's swipes in the UN Security Council and other organizations.

However, in 2005, Iranian conservatives put Tehran Mayor Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a young, ambitious reactionary, into the presidential office. The new leader added a hysterical note to Iran's foreign policy as he took office. Simultaneously, Iran began boosting its own nuclear program.

Moscow's pro-Iranian position then looked ambiguous. When it became clear that authoritarian populist Ahmadinejad was consistent in his policies and that the reform-minded wing of the local nobility was not strong enough to stand up to him, Russia began breaking Bushehr project deadlines against the back-drop of mutual accusations of mala fide abidance of the contract's financial terms.

The Bushehr power plant turned into the metaphoric white elephant - a valuable possession of which its owner cannot dispose. Russia, in turn, kept telling the world that the Bushehr plant would absolutely be commissioned.

The official U.S. position regarding Bushehr was formal and optimistic, with the Department of State cautiously approving Russia's attempts to "civilize" Iran's nuclear drive. However, along with that, U.S. authorities were gradually shaping a negative sentiment in the mass media and expert community, persistently creating a link between the potential startup of the Russian-built power plant and the possibility of Tehran making a nuclear bomb.

This rhetoric was absolutely untrue. Light water reactors like the Russian VVER-1000 cannot be used for production of weapon-grade materials. True, the spent nuclear fuel from a VVER reactor contains about 0.6% plutonium-239, which could possibly be utilized for nuclear warheads, but it is very difficult to separate from other isotopes, which essentially brings its combat value to naught.

The Bushehr plant operation envisaged tight technological control, including delivery of fuel from Russia and the return of the appropriate amount of spent fuel. Any attempt to take energy-grade plutonium from a spent fuel storage site or to unload fuel rods from the reactor beforehand would have been immediately exposed.

Strictly speaking, the Bushehr power plant and the Natanz fuel enrichment facility, which could potentially produce weapon-grade uranium, are two different aspects of the Iranian nuclear problem and therefore should be discussed separately. On the other hand, the assertion that the controlled turnover of fresh and spent uranium fuel for Bushehr would pacify Iran's voluntarism and make it drop further enrichment plans, naturally calls for some sound skepticism. The centrifuges in Natanz were not built so quickly to provide fuel for the country's would-be nuclear energy sector, for which the plans remain vague despite the monstrous state program to build 20 generating units or so.

Tehran's interest toward building its own heavy-water reactors must have similar roots. Although these reactors' use in power generation is questionable, they are extremely convenient for commercial production of weapon-grade plutonium. What's more, these reactors make it possible to manipulate fuel assemblies "on-the-go," which is also convenient when dealing with all sorts of international inspectors, who do not have to be shown everything that's going on at the plant.

Iran's nuclear program is predominantly defense-oriented, and this cannot be changed. Although Ayatollah Khomeini's statement that "Islam does not allow us to use weapons of mass destruction" has not been officially abandoned, it is being creatively reworked now. Uncharacteristically, this is where the liberal and conservative wings of the Iranian nobility find common ground. It is hard to determine the extent to which this policy is the result of Tehran's ambitions to become South Asia's regional superpower. Some of this was certainly spurred by the United States' and Israel's hard-line position, which cannot be ignored by any Iranian government, moderate or not, in line with the realpolitik principle. All the parties involved have sunk too deeply into this confrontation to ever get out.

Under these circumstances, Russia had no choice but to dissociate itself publicly from Ahmadinejad's regime, which was accomplished in spring 2010 along with a breakthrough in U.S.-Russian nuclear reduction talks. After that, Russia refrained from blocking UN Security Council Resolution 1929, tightening sanctions against Iran. This decision in fact suspended several lucrative military equipment contracts with Tehran.

Yet, Russia had to coordinate the drastic condemnation of Iran's nuclear program with the justifiable desire to complete the Bushehr project. The Rosatom state corporation's commercial interests were not the only factor that determined Moscow's policy on the issue, although a number of commentators directly hinted at the opposite. By breaking Washington's resistance to Bushehr, Moscow in fact sends a very clear message: Russia advocates controlled cooperation of peaceful nuclear technology with emerging countries. To what extent will emerging economies be allowed to develop their own nuclear energy? This issue has in fact dominated the recent battling for the top post in the IAEA. By supporting Bushehr, Russia has indicated that it is willing to support the construction of peaceful light-water reactors in any interested countries.

This ambiguous position can significantly harm Moscow's international image, unless given special attention, as the public is largely reluctant to get too deeply into fine issues like the differences between the peaceful and military uses of nuclear energy. The same may happen if a media campaign is organized similar to the notorious search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

However, balancing on the edge of this sword probably has no alternative if Russia wants to extract any positive outcome from the Iranian nuclear deadlock, while at the same time consolidating its own foothold in the global nuclear energy market.

Konstantin Bogdanov for RIA Novosti

The opinions expressed in this article are the author's and do not necessarily represent those of RIA Novosti.

<http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20100823/160312619.html>

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Washington Post
BOOK REVIEW
The Unmaking of the Atomic Bomb

By George Perkovich
Sunday, August 22, 2010; B01

The Twilight Of The Bombs

Recent Challenges, New Dangers, and the Prospects for a World Without Nuclear Weapons

By Richard Rhodes

Knopf. 366 pp.

Once again, foreign policy circles are speculating that Israel will bomb Iran to stop, or at least slow, its march toward nuclear weapons. The political history of nuclear weapons is repeating itself: One country gets the ultimate weapon of mass destruction, feels smug and secure for a while, then tries desperately to keep its adversaries from joining the club.

That scenario predominated through the end of the 20th century. Israel bombed Iraq's Osiraq nuclear reactor in 1981. The United States secretly considered attacking the Soviet Union and China before those nations could deploy the bomb. Indian leaders contemplated bombing Pakistan's nuclear facilities when Pakistan was about at the stage Iran has reached now. But bombing provides no lasting solution.

As the nuclear threat shifts to terrorists and deranged dictatorships, a new phase in nuclear history may be emerging: a recognition by some leaders in nuclear-armed states that the world would be more secure if these weapons were eliminated. To Richard Rhodes, the most accomplished narrator of America's efforts to create and control atomic weapons, complete nuclear disarmament is a laudable ambition, and it forms the underpinning of his latest work, "The Twilight of the Bombs."

No one writes better about nuclear history than Rhodes does, ably combining a scholar's attention to detail with a novelist's devotion to character and pacing. He began his exploration in 1987 with "The Making of the Atomic Bomb," which won the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award. He also earned praise for "Dark Sun," the story of the hydrogen bomb's creation. "Arsenals of Folly" tackled the beginning of U.S. and Soviet cooperation to end the arms race.

In "The Twilight of the Bombs," Rhodes documents events from the end of the Cold War to 2003 that, he believes, point toward the feasibility of eradicating nuclear weapons. He chronicles the underpublicized drama of the era: the efforts to contain the spread of nuclear weapons after the Soviet Union's collapse, the nuclear disarmament of South Africa, the fallout from India's and Pakistan's nuclear tests, and the negotiations with North Korea over its nuclear ambitions. In Rhodes's telling, big personalities clash and cooperate, jokes and epiphanies punctuate the debate, and offbeat details energize the narrative.

For instance, Rhodes puts the reader on the ground in Iraq with U.N. weapons inspectors before the Persian Gulf War. Robert Gallucci, who was deputy executive chairman of the U.N. Special Commission inspectorate in Iraq in 1991, told the author: "I rented us a couple of cars from Avis. For medical support -- this was a dangerous mission -- we had first-aid kits. For secure communications, we used a book cipher. . . . It takes about three days to decode 'Hi, Mom,' but you can do it." With no glamour or gunfire, and initially little support from the U.S. government, the inspectors impelled Saddam Hussein to eliminate his nuclear weapons capabilities.

Disarmament proceeded on a different front elsewhere that year. As the Soviet Union crumbled, the United States sought to reduce its own nuclear arsenal in an effort to ease global tensions. Germany had been reunified, leaving NATO tactical nuclear missiles and artillery on its territory with no reasonable purpose. Nuclear weapons on U.S. surface ships were inspiring anti-nuclear passions in Japan and New Zealand. South Korea wanted the United States to remove tactical nuclear weapons from its territory, but Washington did not want to look weak to North Korea by doing so.

National security adviser Brent Scowcroft took a wide-angle view of the question and proposed to President George H.W. Bush that the United States unilaterally remove all of its tactical nuclear weapons from surface ships and land forces worldwide. Dick Cheney, then secretary of defense, rejected the dismantling of the weapons, so many were kept in reserve in the United States. Still, this was a rare moment in the U.S. history of nuclear arms -- when a top official asked, "Do we really need these things?" and the answer was not distorted by partisan politics or bureaucratic pressure.

On the Soviet side, leading figures sometimes had revelations that highlighted the barbarism of mutual destruction. Case in point: Viktor Mikhailov, the domineering director of a Soviet nuclear weapons research institute and a member of a committee that selected U.S. targets for annihilation. In 1988 Mikhailov came to the United States as part of a Reagan-Gorbachev effort to demonstrate the feasibility of banning nuclear testing. "When we walked around Washington, New York and Las Vegas," Mikhailov recalled in his memoir, "I could not imagine . . . those wondrous cities as 'military targets.' Sometimes those thoughts simply terrified me and made me shudder."

Rhodes's great strength is storytelling. He is less convincing when he tries to predict the future: "We find ourselves in the second decade of the twenty-first century well along the way to eliminating nuclear weapons once and for all." Though the ingenuity and progressive spirit he reveals inspire optimism, proponents of nuclear weapons persist in the United States, Russia, France, Pakistan, Israel and other states, and they provoke rising powers such as Iran, Brazil and Turkey to resist nonproliferation rules that favor countries that have nuclear weapons over those that don't.

Even if nuclear disarmament is technically feasible, some states will continue to find power and security in these weapons. In the United States, political leaders remain ambivalent. As Rhodes puts it, "We have feared [nuclear weapons] even as we have tried to convince ourselves that they protect us, and so we have found it possible neither to employ them or to break them and throw them away." Resolving this ambivalence requires cooperative action of both the old and new powers, North and South, East and West. We know how to do it; the question is whether we have the will.

George Perkovich is the director of the nuclear policy program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and a co-editor of "Abolishing Nuclear Weapons: A Debate."

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