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Moscow Times – Russian Federation

Obama Urges Senate to Ratify New START

20 September 2010

WASHINGTON — U.S. President Barack Obama urged the full Senate to move quickly to ratify the New START arms reduction treaty after three Republican senators joined Democrats in backing it in a Senate committee.

"I encourage members on both sides of the aisle to give this agreement the fair hearing and bipartisan support that it deserves and that has been given to past agreements of its kind," Obama said in a statement.

The New START still faces hurdles in gaining ratification by the full Senate, but the 14-4 vote Thursday in favor of the treaty in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee demonstrated that cooperation from Republicans on a top Obama priority was possible despite the charged political atmosphere ahead of November's congressional elections.

It remained unclear whether the full Senate will consider the treaty this year. Democrats will need at least eight Republican votes on the Senate floor to have the two-thirds majority needed for ratification.

Progress on the treaty has been slow since Obama and President Dmitry Medvedev signed it in April. It would reduce the limit on strategic warheads to 1,550 for each country from the current ceiling of 2,200. It also would set new procedures that allow both countries to inspect each other's arsenals to verify compliance.

Some Republicans say the pact does not set adequate procedures to ensure that Russia honors its provisions. They also have expressed fear that Moscow could use the treaty to limit U.S. missile defense plans.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/obama-urges-senate-to-ratify-new-start/416574.html>

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The Star – Malaysia

Sunday, September 19, 2010

Diplomats See Little Hope in Reviving Arms Talks

By Stephanie Nebehay

GENEVA (Reuters) - Nuclear powers and non-nuclear nations are unlikely to ease the deadlock in global disarmament talks next week at a U.N. forum that has failed to achieve any breakthrough for over a decade, diplomats said on Sunday.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called the ministerial session in New York on Sept. 24 to give political impetus to the Conference on Disarmament, the world's sole multilateral negotiating body which is known as the "CD".

But few people expect the 65-member Geneva forum to move forward on nuclear disarmament, despite endorsements from U.S. President Barack Obama and others for a move toward a nuclear-free world.

"We must not discount the possibility that, without a concerted dose of political will, this institution will atrophy into irrelevance," Laura Kennedy, the U.S. disarmament ambassador, warned in a speech last week.

After its launch in 1978, the CD clinched treaties banning biological and chemical weapons, as well as underground nuclear test blasts, but has been unable to reach the consensus it needs on substantive work for the past 12 years.

Its members include all five official nuclear powers -- Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States -- plus Israel, which is widely assumed to have atomic weapons, and Iran and North Korea whose nuclear programmes are under scrutiny.

Since January Pakistan has blocked a CD consensus to launch negotiations on halting production of nuclear bomb-making fissile material such as highly-enriched uranium and plutonium, citing a need to keep up with its nuclear-armed rival India.

Canadian Ambassador Marius Grinius, who has said the forum is "sleepwalking", bluntly proposed last week that a one-year deadline be imposed for it to produce tangible results.

Others expressed surprise that the successor START treaty reached in April between Russia and the United States to slash their atomic arsenals had not revived momentum in Geneva.

"There is a dynamic surrounding disarmament and non-proliferation, but the CD hasn't taken off. The CD is stuck in the middle of nowhere. It's a real problem," said a Western diplomat who declined to be named. "Nobody sees a way out."

PATIENCE RUNNING OUT

Friday's half-day session in New York is unlikely to yield an agreement to launch the so-called fissile material "cut-off" (FMCT) negotiations, widely seen as the next step in multilateral arms control, according to senior envoys in Geneva.

Instead, support seems to be growing to find another way to tackle the fissile material question, possibly in small-group talks in parallel to the CD sessions.

A precedent was set when Canada and Norway moved talks on a landmine ban out of the forum due to an impasse, eventually clinching the landmark 1997 Ottawa treaty.

"I don't expect there to be a magic bullet that will produce immediate results," one envoy said. "There is no plan to walk away from the CD, but one could consider discussions in tandem."

Washington has previously shown little enthusiasm for ad hoc negotiations on disarmament.

"But after well over a decade of inaction in Geneva, new approaches may be called for," Kennedy said. "Patience is running out for many states, including the United States."

Zamir Akram, Pakistan's ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, said his country would continue to hold the line, arguing that India now has an unfair advantage with bigger fissile material stockpiles and "discriminatory" nuclear cooperation deals with the United States.

"Pakistan's security concerns can be addressed only once we have developed sufficient capacity to ensure our deterrent is credible in the face of growing asymmetry," he told Reuters. "My instructions are: 'We continue to maintain our position.'"

Editing by Laura MacInnis/David Stamp

http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2010/9/19/worldupdates/2010-09-19T150918Z_01_NOOTR_RTRMDNC_0_-515956-1&sec=Worldupdates

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New York Times
September 20, 2010

US to Keep Pressuring Iran Over Nuclear Program

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

VIENNA (AP) -- The United States will continue to pressure Iran to meet its international commitments and come clean about its nuclear program, a senior U.S. official said Monday as diplomats gathered for the U.N. nuclear agency's annual meeting.

Iran is under four sets of U.N. Security Council sanctions for refusing to stop its uranium enrichment and ignoring other U.N. demands meant to ease global concerns that it is seeking to make atomic weapons.

Last week, Yukiya Amano, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said he cannot confirm that all of Iran's nuclear activities are peaceful, as Tehran claims, because the country has only selectively cooperated with the U.N. watchdog and has rejected several nuclear inspectors.

"Iran must do what it has thus far failed to do -- meet its obligations and ensure the rest of the world of the peaceful nature of its intentions," U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu told delegates in Vienna for the IAEA'S General Conference.

While Washington remains committed to pursuing a diplomatic solution, Chu said it was clear there was a "broad and growing international consensus that will hold Iran accountable if it continues its defiance.

"We will continue to pressure the Iranian government to fulfill its international commitments," Chu said.

Washington's strong words followed similar comments by the European Union.

Paul Mignette of Belgium, whose country currently holds the bloc's rotating presidency, said the EU has urged Iran to address the IAEA's concerns and to meet with members of the international community "with the ultimate goal of establishing a comprehensive relationship."

Meanwhile, the head of Iran's nuclear program, Ali Akbar Salehi, said the IAEA was suffering from a "moral authority and credibility crisis."

"Certainly, the uncivilized double-track approach of threat and dialogue ... cannot be conducive and fruitful," he added, calling the latest round of Security Council sanctions "unjustified and illegal."

IAEA chief Amano also said North Korea's nuclear program remains "a matter of serious concern" and efforts should be made to resume talks on it.

The autocratic Asian state has not permitted the Vienna-based watchdog to implement safeguards in the country since December 2002 and no inspectors have been allowed in since April, making it impossible for inspectors to report about its atomic activities, Amano said.

North Korea walked out of international talks on restarting negotiations on its nuclear disarmament last year to protest international criticism of a long-range rocket launch.

"I again call on all parties concerned to make concerted efforts for a resumption of the six-party talks," Amano said.

Amano also mentioned the failure of Iran and Syria to fully comply with his agency.

"My basic approach has been that all safeguards agreements between member states and the agency and other relevant obligations should be implemented fully," he said.

<http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2010/09/20/world/AP-Nuclear-Agency.html?partner=rss&emc=rss>

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Al-Masry Al-Youm - Egypt

Arabs Prepare to Take on Israel at IAEA

Author: Agencies

Monday, 20 September 2010

The Arab League's delegation at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will propose a draft resolution on the Israeli nuclear program under the title "Israeli Nuclear Capabilities," according to Mikhael Wahba, the league's ambassador to the UN watchdog.

In a press conference on the margin of the opening session of the IAEA 45th conference, Wahba voiced his conviction that Arab states will succeed in passing the resolution as they did last year, with the goal of eliminating a serious security defect in the Middle East.

Wahba said Western efforts to avert the Arab plan have failed, emboldening the league's delegation.

Bassam al-Sabbagh, Syria's permanent ambassador at the agency, meanwhile said that Syria is actively contributing to Arab efforts on the Israel resolution. He stressed the need for elimination of regional nuclear weapons as well as supervision of Israel's nuclear facilities by the agency.

Yukiya Amano, IAEA chief, said in his speech to the agency's general conference that the IAEA's primary goal is to prevent the spread of nuclear arms and provide technical assistance to member states in peaceful use of the energy. He stressed that the agency is anxious to give advice to states eager to install facilities for nuclear power generation, to enable them to start their projects on a sound scientific basis.

Amano said the agency is encouraging world financial entities to approve requests by states who wish to receive funding for their nuclear undertakings. He asked major nuclear countries to reduce their energy impact on the climate in addition to countering the problem of nuclear waste resulting from over-consumption.

<http://www.almasryalyoum.com/en/news/arabs-prepare-take-israel-iaea>

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Miami Herald

US Urges Iran to Return to Nuclear Talks

By the Associated Press

September 21, 2010

VIENNA—U.S. officials urged Iran on Tuesday to return to negotiations over its nuclear program.

Talks reached a stalemate months ago, after Iran tried to re-negotiate an agreement for it to ship out most of its low enriched uranium to be turned into fuel for a research reactor.

Iran says it's enriching to produce energy, but the U.S. and other countries fear the country could use the process to make weapons.

Washington is "always interested in re-engaging Iran" on the fuel swap but wants to make sure Iran is sincere, U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu said.

U.S. Deputy Energy Secretary Daniel Poneman, speaking to reporters alongside Chu, said it was important to focus on larger talks between Iran and the five U.N. Security Council members plus Germany, not just on the narrower talks on the proposed fuel swap.

"Much has happened since that time to alter the facts on the ground ... and so we believe it is very important that they should engage on the wider suite of issues" Poneman said.

Chu and Poneman spoke to reporters while attending an annual conference held by the International Atomic Energy Agency that has drawn delegates from countries around the world to discuss global nuclear issues.

At Monday's opening session, Iran's top representative at the meeting, Ali Akbar Salehi, called on Washington, France, Russia and the International Atomic Energy Agency -- known collectively as the Vienna group -- to resume the so-called fuel swap talks with Iran "without further delay."

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2010/09/21/1834734/us-urges-iran-to-return-to-nuclear.html>

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Yahoo! News.com

Iran Says Ready for Nuclear Talks with World Powers

Tuesday, September 21, 2010

By Agence France-Presse (AFP)

TEHRAN (AFP) – Iran is ready for talks with world powers "in the near future" on its nuclear drive, foreign ministry spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast told reporters on Tuesday.

"Regarding the talks with 5+1, the president (Mahmoud Ahmadinejad) has given frank views, and in principle we are ready for it," he said, in reference to talks between Iran and the group composed of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (the US, Britain, France, Russia and China) plus Germany.

"We hope that, with a right approach towards acknowledging the Islamic republic's rights in engaging in peaceful (nuclear) activities, we will have talks in the near future," Mehmanparast added.

The six powers met with Iran in Geneva in October 2009 and agreed on a nuclear fuel swap deal.

But the agreement has since stalled and in June the UN Security Council approved a fourth round of sanctions against the Islamic republic, which in turn said it would suspend talks until September.

Tehran says it is pursuing a civilian energy program, but Western powers widely suspect it is seeking nuclear weapons.

During a meeting with Ahmadinejad on Sunday, UN chief Ban Ki-moon expressed "hope that Iran will engage constructively in negotiations" with international powers on the nuclear showdown.

Ahmadinejad, who is in New York to attend the UN General Assembly meeting, told media there that his country was ready to resume talks with world powers over its nuclear programme.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20100921/wl_mideast_afp/unirannuclearrightsopolitics

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Palm Beach Post

AP Interview: Gul Backs Mideast Nuclear-Free Zone

By ANITA SNOW, the Associated Press

September 21, 2010

UNITED NATIONS — Turkish President Abdullah Gul said he will call for a Middle East totally free of nuclear weapons when he addresses the U.N. General Assembly later this week.

"We would like to see our region free of nuclear weapons," Gul told The Associated Press in an interview on Monday. "The region should not be under such a threat."

Gul said he intends to raise the issue when he addresses the world body on Thursday.

Gul has called in the past for a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East, but his latest comments come amid deteriorating relations with Israel following the May 31 Israeli commando raid on a Turkish ferry that was part of an aid flotilla attempting to break the blockade of the Gaza Strip. Eight Turks and a Turkish-American were killed.

Israel is generally assumed to have assembled a sizable arsenal of nuclear warheads since the 1960s, but declines to discuss its status as a nuclear power.

Gul's remarks will likely antagonize the United States, because Washington sees any move to raise the issue of Israel's nuclear arsenal as potentially destabilizing at a time of renewed Israel-Palestinian peace talks.

Last week, the Obama administration warned Arab nations that they risk contributing to a failure of the Mideast talks if they continue to pressure Israel over its nuclear program. U.S. officials have asserted that it would be possible to have a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East even if Israel's arsenal remains intact.

Gul said Turkey, which currently holds the rotating presidency of the U.N. Security Council, only wants to ensure stability and security in the region.

The U.S. has been more concerned about the nuclear program in Iran, which is under four sets of Security Council sanctions for refusing to stop its uranium enrichment and ignoring other U.N. demands meant to ease global concerns that it is seeking to make atomic weapons.

Tehran maintains that all of its nuclear activities are for peaceful purposes. But the International Atomic Energy Agency says it cannot confirm that because Iran has only selectively cooperated with the U.N. watchdog agency and has rejected several nuclear inspectors.

"Iran must do what it has thus far failed to do — meet its obligations and ensure the rest of the world of the peaceful nature of its intentions," U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu told delegates in Vienna Monday for the IAEA'S General Conference.

Gul said Turkish officials do not assume that Iran has a fully peaceful nuclear program, but "of course we cannot accuse Iran" of pursuing nuclear weapons without evidence.

"We want Iran to be transparent" with the IAEA officials, he said. "We in Turkey would like to see a peaceful, a diplomatic solution to this problem."

Turkey has opposed sanctions against Iran as ineffective and damaging to its interests with an important neighbor. Instead, Turkey and Brazil, to Washington's annoyance, have tried to broker a deal under which Iran would send much of its low enriched uranium to Turkey in exchange for the higher enriched uranium it needs for a research reactor. However, the deal did not mandate a halt to Iran's enrichment process and fell short of U.N. demands.

Turkey, a member of the NATO alliance, has been governed by an Islamic-rooted party since 2002 that has tried to improve relations with Iran.

Gul said Israel's deadly attack on the flotilla attempting to breach the Israeli blockade of Gaza would be best handled under international law, but also suggested that Israel still needs to take public responsibility for the attack.

"It is not possible to act as though this incident did not take place," he said. "In the old world, in the old times, if such an incident were to take place, wars would follow. But in our world today, it is international law that has to be taken into consideration.

"It is up to Israel. They have to do what is necessary since they are the ones that created the incident," he said.

Earlier news reports had said that Gul and Israeli President Shimon Peres planned to meet in New York this week on the sidelines of the Clinton Global Initiative being held alongside the gathering of world leaders.

Gul told the AP that no such meeting had ever been scheduled. Peres said Monday that the planned meeting was scrapped because Turkey had set unacceptable conditions.

Turkey has repeatedly demanded that Israel apologize for the flotilla raid, and senior Israeli officials on Monday confirmed that Gul had made such an apology a condition for the meeting.

"I got some conditions which made this meeting in my judgment not a positive one," Peres told reporters as the U.N. General Assembly's Millennium Development Goals summit was getting under way.

Two international panels are looking into the flotilla attack: the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva, and a separate U.N. panel formed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

Israeli commandos said they opened fire in self-defense after encountering what they called unexpected resistance when they boarded the ferry carrying aid supplies to Gaza.

<http://www.palmbeachpost.com/news/nation/ap-interview-gul-backs-mideast-nuclear-free-zone-927773.html>

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Yonhap News Agency – South Korea

Succession Snag may be Behind Delay of Key Political Meeting in N. Korea

September 18, 2010

SEOUL, Sept. 18 (Yonhap) -- North Korea appears to have delayed the start of its key political meeting as publicly scheduled because of a possibility that Pyongyang's leaders may have failed to sort out issues surrounding power succession, a government source in Seoul said Saturday.

North Korea for months has said that the meeting of top Workers' Party delegates, the first of its kind in decades, would be held "in early September," which in North Korea usually covers days as late as the 15th.

With no explanation, the North appears to have postponed the rare political gathering, keeping the outside world guessing the reason for the apparent delay.

Analysts and officials here have said the meeting could be used as an opportunity for North Korea's 68-year-old leader Kim Jong-il to take steps to officially anoint his third son, Jong-un, as his successor.

"There is the possibility that the issues of publicly anointing Kim Jong-un as the heir and personnel appointment for the son's patrons could not be sorted out," the source said on the condition of anonymity.

When asked about a local media report that said the North may start the Workers' Party meeting around Oct. 10, the party's founding anniversary, the source reacted cautiously, calling the report a "speculation."

The source also said the South Korean government detected signs that some party delegates were returning home.

On Wednesday, the South's Unification Minister Hyun In-taek told reporters the apparent postponement of the party gathering was due to floods that hit the communist state in the past two months.

In a 1980 congress, the Workers' Party made public Kim Jong-il's succession to his father and North Korean founder Kim Il-sung, bestowing a top party post on him.

Kim Jong-il took over when his father died of a heart attack in 1994. Little is known about Kim Jong-il's third son, Jong-un, who is known to be around 27 and to have spent some of his teenage years in Switzerland.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2010/09/18/30/0401000000AEN20100918001000315F.HTML>

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Straits Times – Singapore

Kim's Son Named Heir

Announcement in North Korea ruling party document, says Japan report

September 20, 2010

TOKYO - North Korea's ruling party has named the youngest son of leader Kim Jong Il as his heir apparent in an official document, a Japanese daily said yesterday.

The ruling Workers' Party used the document to educate rank-and-file members last month, the Tokyo Shimbun newspaper reported, quoting North Korean sources.

The daily said it had seen photographs showing parts of the document, which it added was circulated by senior officials in the party's central Pyongyang chapter.

North Korea is reportedly preparing to hold a rare party meeting to pave the way for an eventual succession from Mr Kim, 68, to his third son Jong Un, who is in his late 20s.

But the meeting, originally set for the first half of this month, has been delayed following devastating floods, according to South Korean media reports.

The text said Jong Un had 'received a revolutionary education and influence from the beloved supreme commander (Kim Jong Il) and his respected mother to equip himself with the dignity and qualities necessary for a great successor to the Songun (military-first) revolution', reported the daily.

http://www.straitstimes.com/BreakingNews/Asia/Story/STISStory_580703.html

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Seattle Times

Tuesday, September 21, 2010

NKorea to Hold Key Party Convention Next Week

By HYUNG-JIN KIM, Associated Press Writer

North Korea confirmed Tuesday that a major communist party convention will be held next week as observers speculated that the secretive regime's aging leader was ready to give his son an important position to pave the way for his succession.

Kim Jong Il took control of North Korea in 1994 when his father died of heart failure in what was communism's first hereditary transfer of power. Now 68, and reportedly in poor health two years after suffering a stroke, Kim is believed to be prepping his third and youngest son, Kim Jong Un, for a similar transition by appointing him to top party posts at the Workers' Party convention.

Delegates will meet Sept. 28 to elect new party leaders, the official Korean Central News Agency reported Tuesday in a dispatch from Pyongyang.

The report did not explain why the meeting, initially set for "early September," had been postponed. North Korea has been struggling to cope with devastating flooding and a typhoon that killed dozens of people and destroyed roads, railways and homes earlier this month, according to state media.

Delegates across the country were appointed "against the background of a high-pitched drive for effecting a new great revolutionary surge now under way on all fronts for building a thriving nation with the historic conference," the KCNA report said.

The rhetoric has been building ahead of the conference, the first major Workers' Party gathering since the landmark 1980 congress where Kim Jong Il, then 38, made his political debut in an appearance seen as confirmation that he would eventually succeed his father, North Korea founder Kim Il Sung.

Tuesday's announcement could mean that the internal debate is over and that the regime has "reached a final conclusion" on the succession process, said Yang Moo-jin, a professor at the Seoul-based University of North Korean Studies. "I believe North Korea has decided to give the successor an official title but not to make it public to the outside world."

Succession speculation has intensified since Kim reportedly suffered a stroke in 2008, sparking concerns about instability in the nuclear-armed country if he were to die without anointing a successor. Kim is also said to be suffering from diabetes and a kidney ailment.

Little is known about the son widely believed to be his father's favorite. Kim Jong Un, said to be in his late 20s and schooled in Switzerland, has never been mentioned in state media, and there are no confirmed photos of him as an adult.

He has two older brothers, Jong Nam and Jong Chol. But Kenji Fujimoto, who says he was Kim Jong Il's sushi chef for more than 10 years, wrote in a memoir that it is the youngest who is most like his father, ruthless and competitive even as a child.

South Korean intelligence officers believe Pyongyang has launched a propaganda campaign promoting the son, including songs poems praising the junior Kim. He's already reportedly being hailed as the "Young General" and "Our Commander," with soldiers and workers pledging allegiance to the son on his birthday in January.

The process, however, is shrouded in secrecy, evidenced by the fact that South Korean officials didn't even know how to spell the son's name until last year.

Earlier this week, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter said Chinese Premier Wen Jiaobao told him that Kim disputed the prospective promotion of his youngest son as a "false rumor" - underscoring the difficulty of reading the isolated regime.

"I was amazed when he made that statement," Carter told The Associated Press in a phone interview Monday. "He said that Kim Jong Il made a flat statement that his succession story was a false Western rumor."

Carter made a rare trip to Pyongyang last month to secure the release of an imprisoned American but didn't meet Kim, who was in China at the time.

Next week, delegates are expected to elect new party leaders to fill spots left vacant for years. It's not clear which party position Kim Jong Un might take in what would be his first known official job.

Keen attention is also focused on Kim Jong Il's only sister, Kim Kyong Hui, who in the past two years has been a frequent companion to the leader on field trips to army bases and factories. She currently serves as the political party's department chief for light industry.

Her husband, Jang Song Thaek, has also been rising in stature. Jang was promoted in June to a vice chairman of the powerful National Defense Commission, making him the No. 2 official to Kim Jong Il on the regime's top state organ.

The conference is being held amid preparations for the milestone 65th anniversary of the founding of the Workers' Party on Oct. 10, improving relations with Seoul, and attempts by diplomats from neighboring nations to revive dormant six-nation disarmament negotiations on North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

North Korea walked away from the talks last year in protest over U.N. Security Council condemnation for launching a long-range rocket, widely seen as a test of its missile technology.

Associated Press writer Jean H. Lee in Seoul and Greg Bluestein in Atlanta contributed to this report.

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/nationworld/2012951690_apasnkoreasuccession.html?syndication=rss

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Mainichi Daily News – Japan

Fallout From Nuclear Tests at Bikini Atoll Reached Mainland U.S.

September 21, 2010

TOKYO (Kyodo) -- Radioactive fallout from Operation Castle, a series of thermonuclear tests the United States conducted at Bikini Atoll in the South Pacific in 1954, reached an extensive area, including the mainland United States and Latin America, Japanese researchers said Monday.

The extent of the fallout, which also reached Japan, was confirmed in a declassified document downloaded from the U.S. Energy Department in March and gives credence to a claim that radioactivity found in rainfall in Japan at the time came from the nuclear tests.

"Because there is a possibility that agricultural products may have been contaminated, investigations should swiftly be conducted on the (fallout's) impact on residents," Masatoshi Yamashita, one of the researchers, said of the finding.

A Japanese tuna fishing boat, the Fukuryu Maru No. 5 from Shizuoka Prefecture, was hit by radiation from a U.S. hydrogen bomb test at the atoll in March 1954, but a total of 856 Japanese fishing boats had fish confirmed contaminated with radiation by the end of 1954.

Yamashita, who heads the secretariat of an organization in Kochi Prefecture that helps survivors of the U.S. nuclear tests, said that while many fishing boats other than the Fukuryu Maru were apparently exposed to radiation, "The true extent (of the exposure) has yet to be revealed."

According to the document -- excerpts of a report made by the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission in conjunction with the U.S. Weather Bureau in 1955 and declassified in 1984 -- the total amount of radioactive fallout from Operation Castle between March and May of 1954 was estimated at 22.73 mega-curies based on the readings of radioactivity at 122 locations over roughly four months from the end of February 1954.

The document said that the fallout tended to remain in the tropical region but streamed into the temperate region when seasons changed, with the largest amount of fallout in the southwestern region of the United States, outside the tropical region, or about five times that which fell over Japan.

"The U.S. government has underrated the effects (of the radiation) and hidden detailed information," said Hiroko Takahashi, a history lecturer at the Hiroshima Peace Institute of Hiroshima City University.

"We need to examine developments, including responses taken by the Japanese government, which terminated its investigation after a political settlement" in which compensation was paid to the Fukuryu Maru crew, she said.

The March 1, 1954, blast from the U.S. "Bravo" hydrogen bomb exposed 23 crew members of the Fukuryu Maru, also known as Lucky Dragon, to radiation. Aikichi Kuboyama, one of the crew members, died in September that year.

(Mainichi Japan)

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2010/09/21/20100921p2g00m0in008000c.html>

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Times of India – India

Security in Place to Thwart Terror Strike in CWG: Book

Press Trust of India (PTI)

September 19, 2010

NEW DELHI: The Indian government has drawn up an elaborate security plan at the cost of hundreds of crores to thwart any terrorist strike during next month's Commonwealth Games, by installing systems to detect chemical, biological weapons and "nuclear signature", according to a book on the security aspect of the Games.

The book 'Road to Commonwealth Games 2010', written by Sunil Yash Kalra and to be released on Tuesday, said the government has procured high technology state-of-the-art equipments to ensure that there was no terror strike.

"As protective measures against a terror strike involving chemical and biological weapons, the security arrangements at the Games venues will include high-tech detection and countering systems to identify the chemical and biological weapons, along with Gamma sensors to pick up any nuclear signature," the book which provides a comparative analysis of the security arrangements of 2006 Melbourne Commonwealth Games, 2008 Beijing Olympics and Delhi Games.

"The Games security arrangement will be a costly affair with the equipment alone costing Rs 300 crore. Apart from CCTV cameras, metal detectors, smart cards and X-ray baggage machines, some of the high-class gadgets that will be used to ensure foolproof security are Bar Code Readers; 'Bomb-proof' Dustbins; Tyre-killers; Intrusion Detection System; CRP Camera; OB Vans; C4i; and Under Vehicle CCTV Surveillance," it said.

"In December 2009, the home ministry had approved the installation of an integrated security system for all the competition, training and non-competition venues, to be executed at a cost of Rs 370 crore," the book said.

It said at least one dedicated medical facility will be set up at each venue to treat victims in case of an emergency. Moreover, expert response teams on chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and improvised explosive devices, will be deployed at all venues.

The book said the security outlay for the Games will comprise a four-layer plan coupled with an extensive aerial survey. Each venue will have an 'outer', 'middle', 'inner' and 'exclusive' level of security.

Various civic, medical, security and intelligence agencies will coordinate with each other to implement the plan that covers competition and training venues, the Games village, hotels and parking sites. And all these agencies are to work under the 'Command, Control, Communication, Coordination and Integration Centre' that has been set up at the Delhi police headquarters.

"The outer cordon will comprise park and ride facility monitoring, access control measures like ticket checks, and surveillance through close-circuit television cameras. In the middle cordon, the spectators and visitors will be channelised to their designated seats at the venues," the book said.

It said electronic surveillance apart, snipers will be deployed on the building roofs and emulating the security model used in the 2002 Manchester Commonwealth Games, there would be construction of a 2.8-metre high boundary wall around the venues.

The book also said that there would be elaborate arrangements to check entry of spectators in the venues.

"At the inner layer, tickets will be rechecked through barcode screening and verification of the photographs of the spectators. The vehicles of VIPs, visiting dignitaries and the participants will be checked via the pre-allotted radio frequency identification mechanism, and with the help of scanners. To prevent forcible entry, boom barriers followed by tyre-killers and road-blockers will be in place," it said.

"The entry to the exclusive zone, which is the 30-metre radius of any competition venue, will be allowed only after screening through doorframe and hand-held metal detectors, and X-ray baggage scanners, apart from manual frisking. A total of 239 X-ray baggage inspection machines will be installed across the training venues, with each venue equipped with more than 300 CCTV cameras."

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/sports/events-tournaments/commonwealth-games/top-stories/Security-in-place-to-thwart-terror-strike-in-CWG-Book/articleshow/6586254.cms>

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Global Security Newswire

U.S. Missile Defenses Aimed at Russia, Minister Asserts

Friday, September 17, 2010

Russian Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov said yesterday that regardless of Washington's assertions to the contrary, U.S. missile defenses are targeting his country, ITAR-Tass reported (see *GSN*, Sept. 15).

"They tell us their missile shield is not aimed against us, but we tell them our calculations show it is aimed against us," Serdyukov said following a meeting in Washington with his U.S. counterpart, Robert Gates.

Moscow has maintained criticisms over U.S. plans to build a missile shield in Europe employing land- and sea-based versions of the Standard Missile 3 system as a safeguard against Iranian short- and medium-range missiles. Russia has questioned whether the proposed missile shield -- already scaled down from a Bush-era plan -- would undercut its own nuclear deterrent.

The Russian defense minister proposed undertaking bilateral assessments with Washington on missile threats.

"Only after that it is possible to decide how to counter the threats and whether it is necessary to deploy missile shield elements in the planned regions or [if] other options may be found," he said.

Serdyukov said he had reached agreement with Gates on a three-level set of talks that would begin with expert-level meetings, followed by chiefs-of-staff discussions and ending with ministerial-level talks. If all three stages cannot come to agreement, "the presidents will make a political decision."

He said the Kremlin would like to collaborate on European missile defense: "In reality we want to actively participate in it. As missile shield objects are deployed on the European territory it shall not happen without our participation. We shall directly participate in missile shield construction" (ITAR-Tass, Sept. 17).

Serdyukov said today that Moscow had no plans to reverse its 2007 decision to suspend participation in the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty. The accord placed limits on the deployment of heavy arms and aircraft in Europe and obligated signatory nations to destroy surplus weapons, RIA Novosti reported (see *GSN*, July 21).

"Russia's stance remains unchanged. That's why the moratorium will remain in place until suitable alternatives are proposed to us," the defense minister said.

Then-President Vladimir Putin ordered the treaty moratorium partly to object to NATO expansion into former Soviet territory and as a response to U.S. antimissile plans for Europe, according to RIA Novosti.

While the treaty impasse was discussed with Gates, no breakthroughs were achieved, Serdyukov said (RIA Novosti, Sept. 17).

Meanwhile, talks on having Romania host elements of the planned missile shield are progressing, a Romanian official said yesterday (see *GSN*, June 18).

Romanian Foreign Ministry negotiator Bogdan Aurescu said a third round of meetings would be held today in Bucharest, the Xinhua News Agency reported.

Progress has been achieved in working out legal issues and figuring out where to locate the U.S.-manufactured missile interceptors.

"On the other hand, at NATO level, we back the idea of a common NATO system and all the technical and economic issues involved are to be certainly discussed within the alliance," Aurescu said.

Bulgaria has been mentioned as another possible host country, while Poland and the Czech Republic could be involved even though the Bush administration plan in which they had crucial roles has been eliminated (Xinhua News Agency, Sept. 16).

http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20100917_6316.php

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London Daily Telegraph

Chris Huhne Widens Coalition Split Over Trident Nuclear Deterrent

The coalition split over replacing Britain's Trident nuclear deterrent widens dramatically today as a Liberal Democrat cabinet minister insists the party will "go on" demanding a cheaper cruise missile-based alternative.

By Patrick Hennessy and Sean Rayment

The defiant comments by Chris Huhne, the Energy Secretary, in an interview with *The Sunday Telegraph*, will enrage the Tory right who are demanding a "like for like" £20 billion Trident replacement based on four stealth submarines.

Mr Huhne, one of three Lib Dems on the National Security Committee (NSC), goes further than any other senior minister in his party by saying there will be "more and more public sympathy" for the Lib Dem view as "difficult decisions" have to be made on harsh public spending cuts across the board.

In a separate interview, General Sir Mike Jackson, the former chief of the general staff (CGS), warns that Britain will be unable to deal with a "future strategic shock" if the strength of the Army falls below 100,000 troops.

The Sunday Telegraph revealed last week that the entire future of the Trident replacement was under threat – with government sources confirming later that the "main gate" decision on pressing ahead was likely to be delayed until 2015 – after the next general election.

Mr Huhne, the Energy and Climate Change Secretary, leaves it in no doubt as his party's annual conference gets under way in Liverpool that the future shape of the deterrent is still very much open for negotiation.

He said: "The whole issue of value for money has to be applied to every single part of the defence programme – including Trident. There's no guarantee for anything.

"I believe you can see alternatives, such as, for example, putting cruise missiles on to our attack submarines, that is a much cheaper alternative to the development of a whole new generation of Trident missiles.

"I have certainly made that point at the NSC and I think we will go on making that point. I suspect as we get more and more difficult decisions having to be taken on budgets, there will be more and more sympathy for that point of view."

Ministers are currently carrying out a strategic defence and security review (SDR), the first for 12 years, which is meant to set out the response to Britain's defence needs for the next few years.

Although it is not part of the Whitehall-wide Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) it is taking place at a time of savage spending cuts across Whitehall.

Some military figures have argued that the £20 billion costs of a like-for-like Trident replacement would be better spent elsewhere.

Liam Fox, the Defence Secretary, is said to be insisting that Britain sticks with its plan to build two new aircraft carriers at a cost of more than £5 billion, while buying 70 Joint Strike Fighters, half the number originally proposed.

His proposal is thought to rule out an extended delay in replacing the four Trident nuclear submarines.

The outgoing head of the armed forces, Sir Jock Stirrup, has said Britain's nuclear deterrent might as well be scrapped if the coalition downgrades a replacement for Trident.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock said that without having a nuclear submarine continuously at sea, "you are better off having zero".

His predecessor, Sir Mike, told *The Sunday Telegraph* that the government risked not being able to deal with the unexpected if the Army was cut too deeply in the SDR.

Sir Mike, who served as CGS from 2003 to 2006, said that it was vital that the SDR was "underpinned by intellectual rigour" and did not develop into an "unseemly squabble".

He described as "a nonsense and a complete red herring" the idea being driven by some quarters within the military that the RAF could be disbanded.

He said: "No one predicted the Falklands War, the first Iraq War or Afghanistan, and no one knows what the next strategic shock will be or when it will happen. That is why we have to have a balanced capability so that we can respond.

"The Army is about the right size for a country the size of Britain, reducing it further could be damaging."

The general said that before the cutting starts, Britain would need to establish its foreign policy objectives and decide where it wants to position itself on the world stage.

"Only when you have done that will you have some sort of benchmark as to the shape of the armed forces," he said.

The General said that he shared the concerns of the Defence Select Committee, which last week published a report stating that the SDR had been rushed through Whitehall and had ended up as a cost-cutting exercise.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/politics/defence/8010847/Chris-Huhne-widens-coalition-split-over-Trident-nuclear-deterrent.html>

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London Daily Telegraph – U.K.

Britain Vulnerable to Space Nuclear Attack or 'Solar Flare' Storm, Conference Told

Rogue states such as North Korea and Iran could use nuclear weapons to attack Britain's vital communications and electricity networks from space, a security conference heard.

By Andrew Hough
20 September 2010

In a stark warning, Dr Liam Fox warned countries that sought nuclear capabilities could attack Britain from the upper atmosphere instead of through more traditional “nuclear strikes”.

The Defence Secretary disclosed that British officials believe such an attack involving a nuclear detonation would destroy vital electronic systems by producing an electromagnetic pulse.

Dr Fox also told the international conference on the vulnerability of electricity grids around the world to natural disaster and hostile attack, that an impending “solar flare” space storm could produce just as much damage to communication networks.

He highlighted warnings from scientists that essential infrastructure could be paralysed by a once-in-a-century solar flare.

But Dr Fox warned that terrorists might seek to employ such methods. He urged the public to take greater heed of the threat.

"I think it's a subject that we need to give a good deal more attention to, not least because we are in an era where there are those who seem to believe that we can choose to enter or not enter certain conflicts, and also because we live in a war where proliferation is becoming more not less the case," he said.

"And when we are discussing North Korea or Iran, for example, people need to understand there are other risks than just what we would consider the sort of nuclear strike we saw in Nagasaki or Hiroshima.

"The range of risks out there are many fold and I think we need to make that extremely apparent to the public."

Dr Fox's comments on Monday came at the summit of scientists and security advisers who believe the infrastructure that underpins modern life in Western economies is potentially vulnerable to electromagnetic disruption.

The Daily Telegraph disclosed on Saturday that that one “nightmare scenario” being privately discussed by senior defence figures involves Iran successfully detonating a nuclear device high over Europe.

The Coalition's Strategic Defence and Security Review is considering potential weaknesses in Britain's defences against hi-tech attack or disruption.

Conventional military units, cyberwarfare and other technology-driven capabilities are likely to get more money when the review is concluded.

Much of the Ministry of Defence's planning focuses on the risk of a hostile state exploding a nuclear weapon in space, creating a sudden, intense burst of electromagnetic energy called a high altitude electromagnetic pulse, Dr Fox said.

But planning was also for the "solar flare" storm that scientists, including those from Nasa, believe could hit the Earth within a few years.

The Daily Telegraph disclosed earlier this year that Nasa scientists believe Britain could face widespread power blackouts and be left without critical communication signals for long periods of time, after the earth is hit by a once-in-a-generation “space storm”.

Dr Fox insisted the threat of such a nuclear attack was "low", but that the Government was working internationally with telecoms, energy and transport companies to increase resilience.

"With reliance, for instance on technology, comes vulnerability, and vulnerability can invite attack," he said.

"Our wider reliance on digital technologies will not have gone unnoticed among those who would mean us harm.

"We will need to ensure that those same technological innovations that provide advantage do not become our Achilles' heel."

The Westminster meeting was jointly hosted by the Electric Infrastructure Security Council and the Henry Jackson Society, a think-tank.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/space/8014444/Britain-vulnerable-to-space-nuclear-attack-or-solar-flare-storm-conference-told.html>

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Washington Post

NM Physicist, Alleged Spy Sent to Halfway House

By TIM KORTE

The Associated Press

Monday, September 20, 2010

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. -- A physicist accused of trying to help Venezuela develop a nuclear weapon was released to a halfway house Monday after a defense attorney argued that he has posed no national security risk since his investigation by the FBI was publicized last fall.

Pedro Leonardo Mascheroni appeared before U.S. Magistrate Don Svet, who imposed several conditions on Mascheroni's release, including that contact with his sisters and nieces, who live in Argentina, is subject to government monitoring.

Svet noted Mascheroni "has the skill and science to build a bomb" and asked defense attorney Amy Sirignano why that wouldn't be considered a danger to the community.

She replied that since a search warrant was served at his Los Alamos home in October, Mascheroni has cooperated with prosecutors, surrendered his passport and rarely left the northern New Mexico town. Even when his wife went to Idaho to see their grandchildren, Mascheroni stayed behind, she said.

"If he was out there selling national security secrets, the government should not have let him stay out for the last 11 months," Sirignano said.

Mascheroni's wife, Marjorie Roxby Mascheroni, also appeared before Svet, who ordered her to house arrest.

In a 22-count indictment issued Friday, the couple were accused of offering to help develop a nuclear weapon for Venezuela through dealings with an undercover FBI agent who was posing as a representative of the Venezuelan government.

The indictment says Mascheroni told the undercover agent he could help Venezuela develop a nuclear bomb within 10 years and that Venezuela would use a secret, underground nuclear reactor to produce and enrich plutonium, and an open, aboveground reactor to produce nuclear energy.

The U.S. government is not alleging Venezuela or anyone working for it sought U.S. secrets.

The couple pleaded not guilty Monday. If convicted, they face up to life in prison.

Mascheroni, 75, was shackled at the hands and feet for his court appearance. Seated next to other defendants in orange, red and blue jail jumpsuits, Mascheroni wore a black polo shirt, white slacks and sandals.

Sirignano told Svet that Mascheroni has made no effort to flee Los Alamos over the past year. She said the former Los Alamos National Laboratory scientist spends most of his time working in his basement, continuing a 20-year effort to develop his theories of fusion.

Svet noted that the government's pretrial services had recommended Mascheroni remain in custody. Prosecutor Fred Federici said he had met with Sirignano and agreed to place Mascheroni in the halfway house, subject to conditions the judge imposed.

Mascheroni, a naturalized U.S. citizen from Argentina, can have no contact with foreigners other than his sister and nieces, cannot try to secure another passport from any country and cannot leave the halfway house except to meet with his legal team or go to court.

Svet questioned Marjorie Mascheroni's claim that she needs a public defender. The judge said a financial statement showed the couple has \$3,800 in monthly income and noted the couple owns a \$275,000 home and two vehicles, including a late model Lexus.

"I'm not one who believes the nature and seriousness of the offense requires citizens to finance the defense," said Svet, who ordered a detailed financial affidavit.

Marjorie Mascheroni's court-appointed lawyer, Erlinda Ocampo Johnson, told the judge the couple cannot afford to hire a private attorney.

"This case will be very costly," she said.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/09/20/AR2010092003752.html>

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Minot Daily News

Missile Wing Passes Nuclear Surety Inspection

By ELOISE OGDEN, Regional Editor

September 20, 2010

MINOT AIR FORCE BASE The 91st Missile Wing at Minot Air Force Base received a satisfactory, the highest nuclear surety inspection rating, in its recent inspection, said Capt. Genieve N. David, chief of Public Affairs at the Minot base.

The Air Force Global Strike Command Inspector General team visited the base Sept. 12-18 to evaluate the missile wing's ability to manage nuclear deterrence and global strike operations while complying with all nuclear surety standards, David said.

"The IG team evaluated numerous scenarios, special interest items and conducted a formal critique across the 91st Missile Wing for the inspection. Nuclear surety inspections are extremely detailed and demand the highest standards of compliance and accountability," David said.

Brig. Gen. Sandy Finan, inspector general for Global Strike Command with headquarters at Barksdale AFB, La., announced the results of the inspection Saturday to the wing. Maj. Gen. Donald Alston, commander of 20th Air Force from F.E. Warren AFB, Wyo., was at the base for the announcement.

The 5th Bomb Wing and 17th Munitions Squadron received satisfactory in their nuclear surety inspection held last month.

The Minot base is the only dual wing nuclear-capable base. The missile wing, led by Col. Fred Stoss, has 150 Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missiles in underground facilities in the Minot missile field. The 5th Bomb Wing, led by Col. Douglas Cox, is home to B-52 bombers.

The missile wing became part of Air Force Global Strike Command Dec. 1, 2009, and the bomb wing became a unit of the command Feb. 1, 2010. Lt. Gen. Frank G. Klotz is the commander of Global Strike Command.

Klotz is a former commander of the 91st Missile Wing. Finan is a former vice commander of the Minot missile wing.

The 17th Munitions Squadron is a unit of the 798th Munitions Maintenance Group at Minot AFB. The group is a unit of Air Force Material Command at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio.

<http://www.minotdailynews.com/page/content.detail/id/543082.html?nav=5010>

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Times Leader - Wilkes-Barre, PA

OPINION

September 19, 2010

Nuclear Disarmament Not Realistic in Today's World

COMMENTARY THOMAS SOWELL

ONE OF THE many words that sound so attractive, to people who do not think beyond the word, is "disarmament."

Wouldn't it be better to live in a world where countries were not armed to the teeth, especially when they are armed with nuclear weapons? Of course it would.

But the only country we can disarm is our own. The only countries we might be able to persuade to disarm are countries that intend no harm in the first place. Those countries that do intend to harm others – and we know all too well that they exist – would be delighted to have all their victims disarmed.

What if we can just get nuclear disarmament?

Again, we need to think beyond the word to the realities of the world, so that we do not simply accept words as what Thomas Hobbes called the money of fools.

Had there been no nuclear weapons created during World War II, that would have given an overwhelming military advantage in the postwar world to countries with large and well equipped armies. Especially after the U.S. Army withdrew from Europe, following the end of World War II, there was nothing to stop Stalin's army from marching right across the continent to the Atlantic Ocean.

The American troops that remained in Western Europe were not enough to stop the Soviet army. But they were enough that their slaughter by the Russians would have risked nuclear war with the United States.

Western Europe has had one of its longest periods of peace under the protection of the American nuclear umbrella. Japan, one of the biggest and most cruel conquerors of the 20th century, has become a peaceful nation after Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In the real world, the question of whether nuclear disarmament is desirable or undesirable is utterly irrelevant because it is simply not possible, except in words – and we would truly be fools to accept such words at the risk of our lives.

Even if every nuclear weapon on the planet were destroyed – and how could we be sure that that had happened? – this would still not destroy the knowledge of how to make nuclear weapons.

Those countries with aggressive intentions toward other countries need only choose the time when they would put their knowledge of nuclear weapons to use, and have the world at their mercy.

Once they had nuclear weapons, they could threaten annihilation to any other nation that started to produce offsetting nuclear weapons.

Why then is President Barack Obama pursuing an international nuclear disarmament agreement? It cannot be because he thinks it will work. Even if he were foolish enough to believe that, virtually anybody in the Pentagon can tell him why it won't.

His political advisers, however, can tell him how great that can be for him personally – if he doesn't already know that. It would be "historic" and an "achievement," just like ObamaCare.

His political base – the young, the left and the thoughtless – would be thrilled and energized. That can translate into money donated to his campaign coffers and people willing to walk the precincts to get out the vote for him in the 2012 elections.

It is by no means an irrational thing to do, from Obama's self-centered perspective.

But what does it say about those who take his words literally, who accept those words as, in Thomas Hobbes' words, the money of fools?

First of all, there may be more of such people today than in the past, as a result of the dumbing down of education and the politicizing of education at all levels with anti-nuclear propaganda, along with other propaganda of the left.

International disarmament has long been a favorite crusade of the left, before as well as after the age of nuclear weapons. The period between the two World Wars were full of popular disarmament agreements and renunciations of war.

In fact, such pious agreements contributed to the outbreak of war. Because some nations adhered to these agreements and others did not, the military advantage swung to the latter, who started the war – in which tens of millions of human beings died.

Thomas Sowell is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305.

http://www.timesleader.com/opinion/Nuclear_disarmament_not_realistic_in_today_rsquo_s_world_COMMENTARY_THOMAS_SOWELL_09-19-2010.html

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency
OPINION/ANALYSIS

Bulava Missile: Is There any Alternative?

20 September 2010

Tests of the RSM-56 (SS-NX-30) Bulava solid-propellant, submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM), now under development in Russia, are to resume in late September 2010. Of 12 test launches, only three were a complete success, and another two can be called partially successful.

Russian Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov, now in the United States, said Moscow would be forced to revise the entire Bulava SLBM production and quality-control system with another abortive launch.

An unsuccessful Bulava launch, the latest to date, was conducted on December 9, 2009. Subsequent launch deadlines were repeatedly put off. Media reports say the Bulava's manufacturer, Votkinsk, has continued to identify and eliminate various production defects.

The defense minister's statement raises the following questions:

1. What action can be taken to rectify the situation with the Bulava program with another abortive launch?
2. Does Russia have an alternative missile today?

Analysts have explained the Bulava's development problems by production defects and inadequate quality control. This situation is the result of the deplorable state of the national defense industry after the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the termination of numerous promising military programs.

After Russia resumed such programs, it faced a substantial decline in management and production ethics.

Moreover, the Moscow Institute of Thermal Technology developed the Bulava missile virtually from scratch, utilizing only a few engineering solutions embodied in the Topol-M intercontinental ballistic missile (SS-27 Sickle B).

It will take a lot of time and effort to get back on track. This can be accomplished by improving production and the quality-control system, better coordinating cooperation between suppliers and contractors and making a far greater effort to solve the human-resource problems.

The entire Russian defense industry and Votkinsk in particular are hard pressed for young, skilled specialists.

As far as an alternative missile is concerned, the situation deteriorated in 2007. At that time, only one Project 955 Borei (Dolgoruky) class strategic ballistic missile submarine, the Yury Dolgoruky, was built and launched. Borei class submarines will be equipped with Bulava missiles.

Two other Borei class submarines, the Alexander Nevsky and the Vladimir Monomakh, were in the initial construction stages. During the same period, analysts discussed the possibility of equipping Project 955 submarines with liquid-propellant Sineva missiles, currently being installed on the upgraded Project 667 BDRM (Delta Class IV) submarines.

This was an attractive option, all the more so as Sineva missiles have virtually the same impressive specifications as the Trident-II (D5) SLBMs wielded by the U.S. Navy and the Royal Navy. However, the required modifications were seen as a rather costly undertaking because the somewhat larger and heavier Sineva missile requires different storage, servicing and launch conditions.

The Yury Dolgoruky, the lead Borei class submarine, has been undergoing tests for a long time. The Alexander Nevsky will be launched soon. Construction of the Vladimir Monomakh has made considerable headway. And the keel of the fourth Borei class submarine has already been laid. It would be more difficult and more expensive to refit these submarines for the Sineva.

There is only one alternative: The Bulava design should be upgraded, so as to facilitate sustained production runs and sufficient reliability. This is what Serdyukov probably had in mind while noting the possibility of overhauling the Bulava production and quality-control systems.

It is still unclear what organizational measures will be implemented if, God forbid, the upcoming launch ends in failure. Quite possibly, the main developer, namely, the Moscow Institute of Thermal Technology, would be replaced in favor of the State Rocket Center "Academician Makeyev Design Bureau" which has developed the overwhelming majority of Soviet and Russian SLBMs, including the Bark solid-propellant missile. The latter program was terminated by government decision in favor of the Bulava.

Although it is now impossible to install Bark missiles aboard Project 955 submarines and to resume production of such missiles, the Makeyev Design Bureau's rich SLBM-development experience should prove useful.

Specific deadlines for commissioning the Bulava missile remain unclear. As a result, the Russian Navy is forced to extend the service life of Soviet-era missiles. On August 23, 2010, the K-51 Verkhoturys nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine, the lead submarine of the Project 667 BDRM program, arrived at the Zvyozdochka Ship Repair Center in Severodvinsk, northern Russia, for a thorough refitting.

Launched in 1984 and upgraded in the late 1990s, the Verkhoturys and her sister submarine, the Yekaterinburg, were to have been scrapped within the next three-four years. However, they will now be fitted with Sineva missiles and other modern equipment on a par with four other Project 667 submarines.

RIA Novosti military commentator Ilya Kramnik

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

<http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20100920/160652696.html>

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New York Post

OPINION

New START Treaty's China Challenge

By PETER BROOKES

September 20, 2010

Discussion of the US-Russia Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty -- aka New START -- has so far pretty much skipped one very important consideration: China.

In the run-up to last week's committee vote to send the treaty to the floor for ratification this fall, senators quite rightly debated whether New START overly restrains US missile-defense options, has weak verification procedures, cuts too many US missiles or warheads (relative to Russian reductions) or might affect nuclear North Korea and near-nuclear Iran.

But lawmakers haven't yet fully faced the problem that, as we build *down* our strategic nuclear forces (by some 20 percent under New START) in the White House's hopes that others will disarm, China is involved in a strategic *buildup*.

So, before there's any final vote on an arms-control pact that would endure for the next 10 years, it'd be wise to give some thought to Beijing's burgeoning bevy of bombs.

While the exact shape of China's grand ambitions may not be clear, there's little question they exist. Few would dispute that Beijing wouldn't mind taking the head seat at the table of global powers, now occupied by Washington.

As such, China has been growing all aspects of its national power: political, economic *and* military. Nor is the last limited to a break-neck conventional buildup; its strategic forces are booming, too.

China long relied on a small, land-based nuclear force of ICBMs in fixed silos and on a limited number of road-mobile missiles, providing for a "sufficient and effective" deterrence in Beijing's eyes.

But the force has started getting bigger, better and badder. For instance, while the US strategic arsenal desperately needs updating, Chinese nuclear forces are being modernized across the board.

And China's warhead numbers are up, by some estimates even doubling in recent years. The Pentagon says Beijing may now be able to put multiple nukes on a single, newly developed, road-mobile missile.

Indeed, if any country can undertake a so-called "rush to [nuclear] parity" with the United States and Russia, it's China, especially considering its aspirations, wealth and willingness to lavish largesse on its armed forces.

Basically, Beijing could become a nuclear peer competitor of Washington and Moscow in the not too distant future, in light of the expected arms cuts under New START.

It doesn't end there.

China's 2nd Artillery (nuclear forces) is reportedly building 3,000-plus miles of tunnels in central China, known as "the Underground Great Wall" -- likely providing Beijing with an enhanced, land-based, second-strike capability. Naturally, China's ICBMs are thought to be targeted at us.

But Beijing is also diversifying its nuclear capabilities by broadening its force structure into the traditional triad -- missiles based not just on land but also on bombers and subs.

China's new class of strategic submarine may already carry its first sea-based ICBMs. And Beijing's building another "boomer" sub class, too, significantly raising its nuclear-strike mobility and survivability -- while lowering detectability.

It's also adding advanced strategic bombers to the mix. Analysts believe China is developing long-range cruise missiles for these aircraft, which may have both conventional and nuclear warheads.

Making matters more complex is China's highly secretive, indeed opaque, stance on its nuclear forces. The People's Liberation Army (the collective name for China's military) has a penchant for strategic denial and deception -- and an unwillingness to talk about the issue officially.

That's a real challenge to our intelligence and policy community, leaving lots of unanswered questions about China's strategic doctrine, capabilities and intent as Beijing bolsters its armed forces -- while avoiding arms-control agreements.

As such, in considering New START, senators need to take time not only to consider the other salient questions about the deal -- but also to figure China into their deliberations on a new strategic treaty with Russia.

Heritage Foundation senior fellow Peter Brookes is a former deputy assistant secretary of Defense.
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http://www.nypost.com/p/news/opinion/opedcolumnists/new_start_treaty_china_challenge_5niHZQbbup6tknXsyjN2II

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Gulf News – U.A.E.
OPINION

Iran is Not a Nuclear Threat

Forget the neoconservative hype — Tehran is a danger neither to the United States nor Israel

By Scott Horton, Christian Science Monitor

September 21, 2010

Politicians, lobbyists, and propagandists have spent nearly two decades pushing the lie that Iran poses a nuclear weapons threat to the United States and Israel. After a brief respite in the intensity of the wolf cries over the past two years, the neoconservative movement has decided to relaunch the "Must Bomb Iran" brand.

The fact that Iran is not and has not been a nuclear threat to either nation is rendered irrelevant by a narrative of universal "concern" about its nuclear programme.

In mid-August, for example, after The New York Times quite uncharacteristically ran a piece diminishing the supposed danger of Iranian nukes, the story was misrepresented in newspapers and on TV stations across the country in the most frightening terms. As MSNBC's news reader put it that afternoon: "Intelligence sources say Iran is only one year away from a nuclear bomb!"

On August 13, on Fox News, former US ambassador to the UN John Bolton implicitly urged Israel to attack Iran's new light-water reactor at Bushehr before it began "functioning", the implication being that the reactor represented some sort of dire threat. But the facts are not on Bolton's side. The Bushehr reactor is not useful for producing weapons-grade plutonium, and the Russians have a deal to keep all the waste themselves.

On September 6, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) released a new paper on the implementation of Iran's Safeguards Agreement which reported that the agency has "continued to verify the non-diversion of declared nuclear material in Iran to any military or other special purpose".

Yet despite the IAEA report and clear assertions to the contrary, news articles that followed were dishonest to the extreme, interpreting this clean bill of health as just another wisp of smoke indicating nuclear fire in a horrifying near-future.

US media distortions

A Washington Post article published the very same day led the way with the aggressive and misleading headline "UN Report: Iran stockpiling nuclear materials", "shorthand" the facts right out of the narrative. The facts are that Iran's terrifying nuclear "stockpile" is a small amount of uranium enriched to industrial grade levels for use in its domestic energy and medical isotope programmes, all of it "safeguarded" by the IAEA.

If the smokescreen wasn't thick enough, late last week a group of Marxist holy warrior exiles called the Mujahideen-e-Khalq, working with the very same neoconservatives who sponsored Ahmad Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress — which manufactured so much of the propaganda that convinced the American people to support the invasion of that country — accused the Iranian government of building a secret nuclear enrichment facility buried deep in tunnels near Qazvin.

Headlines once again blared in total negligence and without verification that here indeed was, an official told Fox News, proof that Iran has a "hidden, secret nuclear weapons programme". TV news anchors on every channel furiously mopped sweat from their brows, hearts-a-tremor. When will the forces of good rise to stop this evil?

Yet even US officials quickly admitted that they've known about these tunnels for years. "[T]here's no reason at this point to think it's nuclear," one US official said — a quote that appeared in Fox's article, but only after five paragraphs of breathless allegations. All day long, top-of-the-hour news updates on TV and radio let the false impression stand.

IAEA inspectors have had open access to the gas conversion facility at Isfahan, the enrichment facility at Natanz, and the new lightwater reactor at Bushehr, as well as the secondary enrichment facility under construction at Qom.

The September 6 IAEA report confirming for the zillionth time the non-diversion of nuclear material should be the last word on the subject until the next time they say the same thing: Iran, a long-time signatory of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), is not in violation of its Safeguards Agreement.

Meanwhile, Washington continues to apply to Iran the outrageous standard it used in the run-up to the Iraq war: an unfriendly nation must "prove" it doesn't have dangerous weapons or a secret programme to make them — or potentially face military action.

"Proving a negative" is, to say the least, a difficult obligation to meet: You say you haven't read Webster's Dictionary cover to cover? Prove it!

The bottom line is that Iran is still within its unalienable rights to peaceful nuclear technology under the NPT and the Safeguards Agreement — a point even Teh-ran's fiercest critics (grudgingly) acknowledge. The only issues it is defying are the illegitimate sanctions and demands of the US and UN, which themselves defy logic and sense.

Journalists' ethical obligation

It is far past time for the members of the American media to get their act together and begin asking serious follow-up questions of the politicians, "experts", and lobbyists they interview on the subject of Iran's nuclear programme.

Many of these same journalists still have the blood of hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqis on their hands from the months they spent continuously and uncritically parroting the lies, half-truths, and distortions of agenda-driven Iraqi dissidents and their neocon champions who pushed the US into the Iraq war.

Perhaps this is their shot at redemption.

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<http://gulfnews.com/opinions/columnists/iran-is-not-a-nuclear-threat-1.684771>

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