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Welcome to the CPC Outreach Journal. As part of USAF Counterproliferation Center's mission to counter weapons of mass destruction through education and research, we're providing our government and civilian community a source for timely counterproliferation information. This information includes articles, papers and other documents addressing issues pertinent to US military response options for dealing with chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) threats and countermeasures. It's our hope this information resource will help enhance your counterproliferation issue awareness.

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russian-U.S. Arms Reduction Treaty Should be Ratified by End of Year - Army Chief

22 September 2010

A strategic arms reduction treaty between Russia and the United States should be ratified by the end of the year, the Russian Armed Forces General Staff chief said on Wednesday.

"Ratification should occur by the end of the year," Gen. Nikolai Makarov said. "There are no stumbling blocks now."

Ratification should occur simultaneously, he added.

The U.S. Senate foreign affairs committee approved the treaty for ratification last week, but fears are that it will face opposition when it goes to a vote in the full house. Several senior U.S. officials have said this may happen before the November 2 mid-term elections.

The presidents of Russia and the United States, Dmitry Medvedev and Barack Obama, signed the treaty in Prague in April.

RAMENSKOYE (Moscow region), September 22 (RIA Novosti)

<http://en.rian.ru/world/20100922/160681038.html>

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BusinessWeek

Nuclear Impasse May Prompt Renewed Diplomatic Offer to Iran

September 21, 2010

By Bill Varner and Flavia Krause-Jackson

Sept. 22 (Bloomberg) -- The U.S. and other world powers will assess the impact of sanctions on Iran over its nuclear pursuits at a meeting today at the United Nations, while holding out the prospect of diplomacy to resolve the dispute.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and her counterparts from Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia will "speak in one voice" to Iran, Susan Rice, the U.S. ambassador to the UN, told reporters.

Rice cautioned last week not to "expect anything dramatic" from today's meeting and said the governments would examine where they stand on "the pressure side, as well as engagement" in their strategy to shift Iran's position. Iran has rejected demands that it slow its nuclear program, amid international concerns the effort is designed to create a weapons capability.

"Iran has to demonstrate that it is prepared to engage constructively," State Department spokesman Philip J. Crowley told reporters in New York late yesterday. "If it is, we'll respond."

China and Russia voted with the U.S., Britain and France on June 9 as the UN Security Council adopted its fourth set of sanctions on Iran, intended to prevent development of nuclear weapons or ballistic missiles. All of the UN resolutions demand that Iran stop enriching uranium, the key ingredient for producing nuclear power or bombs.

The only meeting announced so far in New York among Iran and the six countries will involve Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki and U.K. Foreign Secretary William Hague.

Iranian Signals

So far, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has sent mixed signals about his stance. He told ABC's "This Week" program on Sept. 19 that Iran was "ready to discuss" its nuclear program with a group of countries that includes the U.S. Yesterday he said that a U.S. attack on Iran to destroy its nuclear facilities would start a war unlike any America has ever experienced.

"What we do is legal," Ahmadinejad said at a meeting with invited reporters yesterday in New York, according to the New York Times. "The United States has never entered a real war, not in Vietnam, nor in Afghanistan, nor even World War II. War is just not bombing someplace. When it starts it has no limits."

Financial Pressure

In July, the U.S. blocked access to the American financial system for banks doing business in Iran. The European Union followed, banning investment and sales of equipment to Iran's oil and natural-gas industries.

Stuart Levey, the U.S. Treasury Department official who is an architect of the financial pressure, said Sept. 20 in Washington that Iran is “struggling to mitigate the effects of sanctions.”

Iran, home to the world’s No. 2 oil and gas reserves, insists it wants to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Its nuclear program has been under UN investigation since 2003, and inspectors say Iran hasn’t given them sufficient access or evidence to prove the program is civilian in nature.

“The effort must be concentrated outside the UN now,” Sami Alfaraj, head of the Kuwait Center for Strategic Studies, said in a telephone interview from Washington. “There is not much to be done there. We are in a stage where we need to fine tune what already exists and put Iran on notice that it may risk further sanctions in the future if and only if it does this or that.”

Limits on Pressure

Though Rice and U.K. Ambassador Mark Lyall Grant said on Sept. 15 that the Security Council should “consider an appropriate response” to Iran’s launch in August of a missile that could be adapted to carry nuclear weapons, that is unlikely, according to Ilan Berman, vice president of the Washington-based American Foreign Policy Council.

The six nations “move along at the pace of its most grudging members,” Berman said. He said China’s energy demands are driving promises of investment in oil development in Iran.

For the moment, Berman said, the sanctions track is a “dead process.”

Robert J. Einhorn, the U.S. State Department’s special adviser on enforcement of Iran and North Korea sanctions, will visit China next week.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, speaking yesterday at the UN, appeared to criticize sanctions imposed by the U.S., EU and other nations such as South Korea following the Security Council action in June.

“We cannot help but express our serious concern with the persisting practice of unilateral coercive measures,” Lavrov said, without naming any countries. He said such measures exceed the authority given by the Security Council and “must be brought to an end.”

Obama Message

One of President Barack Obama’s main messages on Iran during his three days in New York will be that the engagement track isn’t dead, according to Ben Rhodes, the U.S. deputy national security adviser for strategic communications.

“I think he intends to make very clear what he has always said, which is that the door is open to the Iranian government,” Rhodes said. “The door is open to them having a better relationship with the United States. The president again will want to underscore and continue to underscore that his is a dual-track approach. Sanctions are not an end in themselves.”

With assistance from Nicole Gaouette in Washington. Editors: Edward DeMarco, Bob Drummond.

<http://www.businessweek.com/news/2010-09-21/nuclear-impasse-may-prompt-renewed-diplomatic-offer-to-iran.html>

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Atlanta Journal- Constitution

Iran Displays Advanced Missile at Military Parade

By the Associated Press

Wednesday, September 22, 2010

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran has displayed an advanced missile capable of reaching Israel at a military parade on the 30th anniversary of the start of the Iran-Iraq war.

The solid-fuel Sajjil has the longest range of any missile in Iran's arsenal, more than 1,250 miles (2,000 kilometers).

Iran has dramatically accelerated its missile program in recent years, raising international concern that it could pose a threat to Israel and U.S.-allied Arab nations, including some that are home to American military bases.

Iran test fired an upgraded version of the Sajjil in December in part to demonstrate it could deter any military strike on its nuclear facilities.

Wednesday's display included a domestic unmanned bomber aircraft that Iran's president has nicknamed the "ambassador of death."

<http://www.ajc.com/news/nation-world/iran-displays-advanced-missile-618679.html>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia Not to Deliver S-300 Missiles to Iran - Russian Top General

22 September 2010

Russia will not deliver S-300 air defense missiles to Iran as planned because such transfers are prohibited under UN sanctions, the chief of the Russian general staff said Wednesday.

"The decision has been made not to deliver S-300s to Iran," General Nikolai Makarov told journalists at an aircraft equipment production plant in the Moscow Region's town of Ramenskoye.

"They are of course covered by the sanctions," he said, adding: "The leadership decided to suspend the delivery process. We are carrying this decision out."

Answering the question whether a relevant contract with Iran will be cancelled, Makarov said "we will see - it will depend on Iran's behavior."

Western powers suspect that Iran's nuclear enrichment program is aimed at producing weapons, but Tehran claims it needs high-enriched uranium to fuel a reactor producing medical isotopes.

In late August, Russian Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov said a decision on the delivery of S-300 missiles to Iran had not yet been taken.

Russia signed a contract on delivery to Iran of S-300 systems to equip at least five battalions in December 2005. The contract's implementation had so far been delayed as experts considered whether the missiles fall under the sanctions imposed on Iran by the UN Security Council in June.

The sanctions include a ban on supplies on conventional arms to the Islamic Republic. According to the document, "states are prohibited from selling or in any way transferring to Iran eight broad categories of heavy weapons (battle tanks, armored combat vehicles, large caliber artillery systems, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warships, missiles or missile systems).

However, the S-300 air defense systems are not included in the UN Register of Conventional Arms.

RAMENSKOYE (MOSCOW REGION), September 22 (RIA Novosti)

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20100922/160683069.html

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London Daily Telegraph – U.K.

Iran Leader Warns US of War with 'No Limits'

Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad denied that his country had broken international rules on nuclear weapons and warned that an attack on his country's nuclear facilities could spark a war with "no limits".

22 September 2010

Mr Ahmadinejad also raised new questions about the Holocaust on his visit to New York for the annual UN General Assembly meeting.

"The United States has never entered a real war, not in Vietnam, nor in Afghanistan, nor even World War II," the Iranian leader told American editors and reporters when asked about how Iran would react to any US supported strike by Israel on Iran's nuclear facilities.

"War is just not bombing someplace. When it starts it has no limits," the New York Times reported.

"Do you think anyone will attack Iran to begin with?" he said, according to Atlantic magazine's website. "I really don't think so. The Zionist regime is a very small entity on the map, even to the point that it doesn't really factor into our equation."

The UN Security Council has imposed four rounds of sanctions against Iran over its nuclear programme. The US and its allies have called for stringent application of the measures and Washington-Tehran relations have become increasingly fraught.

The Western powers accuse Iran of trying to develop a nuclear bomb. Mr Ahmadinejad denies the charge.

The Iranian leader said he was ready for nuclear talks with US President Barack Obama's administration, but said "the whole outlook has to shift," ABC News reported.

The UN sanctions had damaged the chances for an improvement in US-Iranian relations, he added.

Mr Ahmadinejad blamed international politics for the growing tensions over the nuclear programme.

He also rejected allegations that his regime had committed human rights abuses, turning the spotlight instead on the US. He accused Washington of hypocrisy, citing the case of the woman who is due to be executed in Virginia on Thursday. He criticised the US for condemning Iran over the sentencing of Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani to death by stoning when it was preparing to kill Teresa Lewis.

Mr Ahmadinejad was again questioned about the killing of millions of Jews in Nazi death camps during the Second World War.

He described it as "a historical event used to create a pretext for war."

"The question is, why don't we allow this subject to be examined further.... It is incorrect to force only one view on the rest of the world," he was quoted as saying.

"We need to ask, where did this event occur, and why should the Palestinian people continue to suffer for it? I am not an anti-Semite. I am anti-Zionism," he said.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/8017371/Iran-leader-warns-US-of-war-with-no-limits.html>

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Vancouver Sun – Canada

Iran and the Strangelove Ayatollahs

Despite all the international gesticulating to halt nuclear development, the push is driven by wealth and power

By Jonathan Manthorpe, Vancouver Sun

September 22, 2010

As the international community continues to wring its hands over how to halt Iran's nuclear program, it's worth remembering why the ayatollahs in Tehran want the bomb and what they are likely to do with it once they've got it.

These are not easy judgments because while the ruling ayatollahs are that most dangerous and unpredictable combination of men who believe they are divinely inspired and assigned a messianic purpose to liberate and enlighten the oppressed, they are often pragmatic.

The bluster and blather against the United States and Israel for which the regime is famous comes mostly from the designated frontman, president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

But when it comes to actions the ruling Guardians Council, led by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, is careful not to provoke either Israel or the U.S. to the point where retaliation might topple the regime.

The ayatollahs may believe they are divinely chosen, but they are also a corrupt bunch of self-seekers now wedded to their wealth and power.

So their desire to acquire nuclear weapons, or at least the skills and equipment to enable them to manufacture A-bombs quickly, is driven by the belief this would make them immune from attack by the United States or Israel.

Probably only regime change can stop Iran's drive for nuclear weapons. Israel's air force, as competent as it is, does not have the capacity to destroy all of Iran's nuclear sites.

And even the best a U.S. air strike could do is set back the Iranian nuclear program several years -- and in the process reinforce the ayatollahs' justification for wanting the bomb.

So Tehran's strategy is to thrust and parry, dodge and dive to buy time to complete the nuclear program while the United Nations and international community try to apply sanctions to stop the process.

And the thrusts are not delivered directly. That might invite immediate retaliation. Instead Tehran supplies weapons and other support to Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon, and various insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan.

And the ayatollahs don't give these groups weapons that could cause serious damage. But that support accompanied by Ahmadinejad's rhetoric is enough to enhance the Tehran regime's credibility in the Middle East.

That's the second main reason why Tehran wants the bomb. It sees itself as the champion of the Shiite faction of Islam in contest with the Sunni Muslim states, especially Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

Having nuclear weapons would, the ayatollahs think, greatly enhance their stature throughout the region and at home, where they are having to employ all the violence and oppression of the police state to keep their opposition in check.

So what will the Iranian bomb be used for? Will it be a passive object whose presence is to deter foreign attackers?

Or will it be an offensive weapon used to fulfil Ahmadinejad's prophesy that Israel will cease to exist, or to wrench leadership of the Islamic world from Saudi Arabia?

That is unlikely because any nuclear strike against those U.S. allies -- even if accomplished, say, with the help of one of Tehran's client terrorist groups -- would undoubtedly bring reprisals from Washington that would drive the regime from power.

But with a regime composed of men convinced of their own righteousness and backed by the Republican Guards, whose ranks are filled with men like Ahmadinejad, one can never be quite sure.

Most certainly, though, Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons would lead to a triumphant sense of immunity. This is likely to lead Tehran to act more aggressively in dealing with its regional rivals, probably by ratcheting up the activities of its client terrorist groups and stirring up emotions among fellow Shiites in the Persian Gulf States.

The disaster scenario is that countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Turkey, which live with nuclear-armed Israel without feeling the need for similar weapons themselves, would have no confidence that Tehran would make rational judgments.

If Ankara, Cairo and Riyadh scrambled to join the nuclear club, it would probably knock the stuffing out of what remains of the nuclear nonproliferation structure and set off a global rush for atomic deterrents.

And that, of course, will only hasten the day when someone will use these weapons.

<http://www.vancouversun.com/news/Iran+Strangelove+ayatollahs/3559898/story.html>

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London Guardian – U.K.

Ahmadinejad Softening His Stance on Nuclear Development

A combination of international sanctions and domestic unrest is pushing Iran towards greater co-operation with western powers

By Simon Tisdall

Thursday, 23 September 2010

Intensifying economic difficulties at home, bitter factional infighting, and a regional power balance that is shifting to Iran's disadvantage are among the factors currently pushing Tehran towards resumed nuclear negotiations with the western powers. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is an oddball among international leaders. But Iran's president is still a politician at heart – and after a fairly disastrous 12 months following last year's disputed elections, he badly needs a win.

Inducing the US and its allies to resume talks on a fuel swap involving a Tehran research reactor, without broadening the talks to encompass the entirety of Iran's suspect nuclear programme, would enable Ahmadinejad to present a victory of sorts to an increasingly jaded domestic audience. This limited outcome is exactly what Washington and London wants to avoid.

"Our objective continues to be a comprehensive long-term negotiated solution which restores international confidence," said a joint statement issued by the western powers plus China and Russia in New York this week. "Now is the time for Iran to engage in real negotiation ... about its whole nuclear programme," said William Hague, the foreign secretary.

Briefing American journalists recently, Barack Obama expressed optimism that a combination of tougher international sanctions and technical problems affecting Iran's uranium enrichment programme was pushing Tehran towards a more flexible stance. This analysis appeared borne out this week when Ahmadinejad eschewed his usual anti-American rhetoric when addressing the UN general assembly – and indicated willingness to start talking again after a year-long stand-off.

US officials believe the latest UN and EU sanctions, backed by China and Russia, and specifically those aimed at Iran's banking and energy sectors, are causing real pain. "We believe Iran's leadership was caught off-guard by the speed, intensity and scope of the new measures," Stuart Levey, Obama's undersecretary for terrorism and financial intelligence, said this week.

Sanctions aside, Ahmadinejad's austerity plan to cut up to \$100bn (£64bn) in government subsidies on basic commodities, electricity and petrol – deemed essential as his underfunded government struggles to cut waste and corruption – presents his leadership with a potentially even more destabilising challenge.

Iranians are said to have been stunned by steep price rises implemented without warning this week, with some people reportedly facing a 1,000% month-on-month rise in electricity bills. Even the staunch Ahmadinejad ally, hardline Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, is now worried about a public backlash. "We have a semi-abstemious period ahead of us. The government should be careful to minimise the tensions and negative effects on poor people," he told a gathering at Friday prayers in Tehran.

"In the end, Iran's breaking point might not be broad international sanctions or the country's opposition movement. Instead, it might be Ahmadinejad's own plan to slash long-standing, and enormous, government subsidies," wrote Becky Katz for Global Post, reporting from Tehran.

Backstabbing and squabbling among rival factions within the hardline camp may give Ahmadinejad further cause for concern about his position ahead of parliamentary elections due next year. So far his key alliance with Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has held up – though not without some public arguments about the merits of re-engaging the US (to which Khamenei is adamantly opposed).

The supra-nationalist Ahmadinejad, with his close links to the Revolutionary Guards and their vast business empire, is accused in some quarters of undermining the clergy's leading role in the Islamic republic. His long-running feud with Ali Larijani, the parliamentary speaker who he fired as national security chief, resurfaced recently when Larijani's brother, who happens to be head of the judiciary, temporarily blocked the president's conciliatory move, pre-New York, to free one of three Americans detained in Iran on spying charges.

Wednesday's murderous bomb attack on a parade in Mahabad, in largely Kurdish north-west Iran, was a reminder, meanwhile, that Ahmadinejad's united Iranian "nation" is a slightly deceptive concept. Comprising numerous ethnic and religious minorities, Iran is far from being a homogeneous society. Beneath the surface, unresolved and potentially exploitable tensions lurk, compounded in turn by last year's brutal suppression of the legitimate, moderate political opposition.

Ahmadinejad's quasi-delusional vision of Iran as a regional or even global superpower has also suffered some instructive collisions with reality of late. Tehran's attempt to engineer a malleable, Shia-only coalition government in Iraq, for example, has foundered, exposing the limits of its influence there. This week, Russia suspended all heavy weapons and missile sales to Iran. And a US-fuelled \$123bn arms spending spree by the Arab states of the Gulf, in direct response to the perceived "Persian threat", is perceptibly shifting the regional balance of power.

For all its martial bluster, ostentatious missile testing and anti-Israeli rhetoric, it's plain even to the most militant of Tehran's true believers that Iran is outgunned on the ground and in the air. Much the same process is under way on the diplomatic and economic fronts. Which may be why Ahmadinejad now appears ready to talk.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/sep/23/ahmadinejad-nuclear-talks>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

No Proof Iran Building Nuclear Weapons - Lavrov

23 September 2010

There is no proof that Iran is working toward the creation of nuclear weapons, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Thursday.

However in order for UN sanctions imposed on the Islamic Republic to be lifted, Iran must prove its nuclear program has a 100% peaceful character, Lavrov told the U.S. PBS TV channel.

Any attack on Iran would have "negative" consequences for the region, he warned.

Russia had voted in favor of the UN sanctions against Iran in order to demonstrate that it would not stand for any violation of the nonproliferation regime, he went on.

Lavrov also urged Iran to comply fully with the demands of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

International pressure on Iran increased in early February when Tehran announced it had begun enriching uranium to 20 percent in lieu of an agreement on an exchange that would provide it with fuel for a research reactor.

In June, the UN Security Council passed a resolution imposing a fourth set of sanctions on Iran over its nuclear program.

MOSCOW, September 23 (RIA Novosti)

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20100923/160702976.html

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Yonhap News – South Korea
September 22, 2010

N. Korea Will Continue to Face Sanctions Unless it Denuclearizes: White House

By Hwang Doo-hyong

WASHINGTON, Sept. 21 (Yonhap) -- The United States said Tuesday that North Korea will continue to face strong punitive sanctions unless it abides by its commitment to denuclearize.

"I think there are a whole host of things that they can do," White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said. "The easiest thing to do would be to simply live up to the obligations that they agreed to, understanding that not living up to those obligations has seen a tightening of sanctions by the international community."

Earlier in the day, the State Department announced that Robert Einhorn, its special adviser in charge of sanctions on North Korea and Iran, will travel to Beijing on Sept. 28-30 to seek China's cooperation in implementing sanctions on North Korea and Iran.

Einhorn's Beijing tour coincides with the opening on Sept. 28 of the much-anticipated meeting of the representatives of the North's ruling Workers Party possibly to anoint the ailing North Korean leader Kim Jong-il's youngest son, Jong-un, as an heir.

Einhorn toured Seoul and Tokyo early last month on a similar mission. His trip to Beijing, originally scheduled for late last month, has been postponed at China's request, according to U.S. officials.

On Monday, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton met with Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, her spokesman Philip Crowley said.

Crowley said China is in agreement with "our two-track strategy" of both engaging with and imposing sanctions on North Korea and Iran to dissuade them from their nuclear weapons ambitions.

"These are not either/or propositions," Crowley said. "It is both Chinese ideas on how to successfully engage both countries, at the same time reaffirming that we will continue to fully implement both resolutions."

During her stay in New York, Clinton will also meet with her counterparts from other members of the six-party talks, Crowley said. Other countries involved in the six-party forum include the two Koreas, China, Japan and Russia.

North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Pak Gil-yon is also visiting New York this week, but Crowley said U.S. officials have no plan to hold bilateral contact with him and other North Korean officials.

U.S. President Barack Obama will also travel to New York later this week to meet with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao and other leaders to discuss North Korea and other issues, White House officials said.

White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said the ball is in North Korea's court.

"It is within the power of the North Koreans to come back to the table and fulfill the obligations that they agreed to in giving up their nuclear program and in ensuring a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula," he said. "It is well within their own power to make significant progress on that issue."

A key six-party deal, signed in 2005, calls for North Korea to dismantle its nuclear programs in return for massive economic aid, diplomatic recognition by Washington and Tokyo. It also calls for the adoption of a permanent peace treaty to replace the fragile armistice that ended the 1950-53 Korean War.

The North exited the deal early last year in anger at U.N. sanctions imposed over its nuclear and missile tests. Then came the sinking of the South Korean warship Cheonan, which Seoul blames on Pyongyang. The North denies responsibility Seoul and Washington demand Pyongyang apologize for the sinking and confirm in action its commitment to fulfill the 2005 denuclearization deal before resuming the six-party talks.

China, meanwhile, has called on the relevant parties to turn the page on the Cheonan for an early resumption of the nuclear talks, which Beijing has hosted since 2003.

China has proposed that Washington hold a bilateral meeting with North Korea before reopening the six party talks. The first such contact under the Obama administration was held in December, when Stephen Bosworth, special representative for North Korea policy, visited Pyongyang.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2010/09/22/91/0301000000AEN20100922000700315F.HTML>

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The West Australian – Australia

North Korea's Top Nuclear Diplomat Promoted to Vice Premier

By Reuters

September 23, 2010

SEOUL (Reuters) - The architect of North Korea's nuclear arms programme has been promoted to vice premier, the country's state media said on Thursday, as it gears up for a rare ruling party meeting to pick a new leadership.

Kang Sok-ju as First Vice Foreign Minister and a close confidant of leader Kim Jong-il has engineered the development of the North's nuclear programme that for nearly two decades has been the key source of regional security tensions.

"Kang Sok-ju was appointed as Vice-premier of the Cabinet of the DPRK, according to the decree of the Presidium of the DPRK Supreme People's Assembly dated September 23," KCNA news agency said, giving no other details.

The leadership body of the assembly makes formal decisions on personnel and budget issues when the rubberstamp assembly is not in regular session. DPRK is the North's formal state name.

The North's top arms negotiator, Kim Kye-gwan, has been promoted to First Vice Minister, taking over Kang's job, KCNA said.

Six-party nuclear disarmament talks aimed at compensating the North with economic and energy aid in return for the pledge to scrap its nuclear programme have been suspended since late 2008, but Pyongyang has indicated it wants to return to dialogue with the United States, South Korea, Japan, Russia and China.

Kim represented the North at those talks that began in 2003.

Pyongyang conducted its second nuclear test in 2009, sharply rising tensions and triggering U.N. sanctions that analysts said deepened its economic woes.

The country's ruling Workers' Party is scheduled to hold the biggest meeting in decades next week to pick a new leadership and possibly anoint leader Kim's son as heir to the dynastic state. Kim is believed to be in failing health.

Reporting by Jack Kim; Editing by Sugita Katyal

<http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/-/world/7999367/north-koreas-top-nuclear-diplomat-promoted-to-vice-premier/>

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The Star – Malaysia

Thursday, September 23, 2010

Myanmar Tells U.N. Body it Will Never Seek Atom Bombs

By Fredrik Dahl

VIENNA (Reuters) - Myanmar told the U.N. nuclear watchdog on Thursday that allegations it was trying to develop atomic bombs were unfounded and that its nuclear activities had solely peaceful ends.

A Norwegian-based exile group said in June that Myanmar had a secret programme dedicated to acquiring nuclear weapons capability, following up on similar allegations by defectors from the reclusive, military-ruled country.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said at the time it was looking into the report. Myanmar is a member of both the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Vienna-based U.N. agency, now holding its annual 151-nation assembly.

"There have been unfounded allegations reported by international media...that Myanmar is attempting to develop a nuclear weapon programme," the head of the country's delegation, U Tin Win, said in a speech to the IAEA General Conference.

"We would like to reiterate that the applications of nuclear science and technology in Myanmar are only for peaceful developmental purposes and Myanmar will never engage in activities related to the production and proliferation of nuclear weapons," the Myanmar chief delegate said.

EXILES ACCUSE JUNTA

In June, an exiled anti-government group said it had carried out an investigation indicating that Myanmar's military junta is pursuing a clandestine nuclear weapons programme.

The five-year inquiry by the Norway-based Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) concluded that Myanmar, formerly Burma, was a long way from producing a nuclear weapon but had gone to great lengths to acquire the technology and expertise to do so.

If true, it would be the first Southeast Asian country with nuclear arms aspirations and alter the strategic landscape of a fast-growing region whose big countries -- from Indonesia to the Philippines and Thailand -- are closely allied with Washington.

The DVB report cited a U.S. nuclear scientist assessing evidence provided by Sai Thein Win, a Burmese defence engineer.

He said he had defected after working in factories built to develop weapons of mass destruction.

Last year, Washington offered Myanmar a fresh start towards improving long-strained relations. But U.S. officials have been disappointed by the junta's refusal to budge on key sticking points involving democratic reforms, as well as growing disquiet over its nuclear stance.

Last October, Myanmar's foreign minister told his Japanese counterpart that his country was seeking Russian nuclear expertise, but only for civilian atomic energy for its people.

The isolated, impoverished country has been under Western sanctions for two decades and analysts say a nuclearised Myanmar could trigger an arms race in the region.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said at a security forum in Thailand last year she was concerned about the possible transfer of nuclear technology to Myanmar from North Korea, which has left the NPT and tested two nuclear devices.

Reporting by Fredrik Dahl; Editing by Mark Heinrich

http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2010/9/23/worldupdates/2010-09-23T163517Z_01_NOOTR_RTRMDNC_0_-516903-1&sec=Worldupdates

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Hindustan Times – India

Prithvi-II Fails to Take Off in User's Trial

Press Trust of India

Balasore, September 24, 2010

India's indigenously developed nuclear capable Prithvi-II ballistic missile failed to take off during a user trial from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur off the Orissa coast today apparently due to a technical problem, defence sources said. Though the ITR authorities were not immediately available for comment, defence sources said the sophisticated missile could not take off during the planned trial from the launch complex-III of the test range due to some "technical snag."

"The failure to lift Prithvi-II was due to a snag either in the main missile or the sub-system, including the launcher," they said, adding the test-fire was slated to be held as part of user's trial by the armed forces.

During today's planned trial, a noise could be heard as smoke billowed from the launch site around the time of the blasting.

Efforts were on to ascertain the exact reason behind the failure on the part of the missile to take off and defence scientists were examining the matter thoroughly, they said.

The last four user's trials of the surface-to-surface missile were successfully conducted during the about one year period, from the same site in the ITR.

The last trial was conducted on June 18, this year. The test firing of the state-of-the-art missile, which has already been inducted into armed forces, was planned as user's trial by the specially formed "Strategic Force Command" (SFC), the sources said.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/Prithvi-II-fails-to-take-off-in-user-s-trial/H1-Article1-604040.aspx>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Test-Launches of Russia's Troubled Bulava Missile Delayed Again

22 September 2010

Test launches of Russia's ill-fated Bulava ballistic missile will resume "soon," but not in September as previously announced, General Staff Chief Nikolai Makarov said on Wednesday.

Defense Minister Sergei Serdyukov said two weeks ago that the test launches would resume in the second half of September.

The Bulava test launches were put on hold after a failed launch, from the Dmitry Donskoy nuclear submarine in the White Sea on December 9, 2009, which was caused by a defective engine nozzle.

The Bulava (SS-NX-30), a three-stage liquid and solid-propellant submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM), has officially suffered seven failures in 12 tests.

But some analysts suggest that in reality the number of failures is considerably larger, with Russian military expert Pavel Felgenhauer suggesting that of the Bulava's 12 test launches, only one was entirely successful.

RAMENSKOYE (Moscow Region), September 22 (RIA Novosti)

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20100922/160680596.html

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia Developing Laser Weapons - Military Chief

22 September 2010

Russia is working on a military laser system, the chief of Russia's Armed Forces General Staff said on Wednesday.

"Work on laser weapons is underway across the world, and that includes us," Gen. Nikolai Makarov said.

It is "too soon yet" to speak about the specifications of the Russian laser system, he added.

According to some media reports, Russia has been developing an airborne laser - the so-called flying laser - to disable enemy reconnaissance and data processing systems, as well as shoot down missiles in flight.

RAMENSKOYE (Moscow Region), September 22 (RIA Novosti)

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20100922/160685196.html

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Albuquerque Journal

Wednesday, September 22, 2010

Dems Want Nukes Gone

By Dan McKay, Journal Staff Writer

Albuquerque city councilors found time this week to discuss more than just the usual array of zoning regulations, budget matters and road projects.

Monday's meeting took a turn for the global when the council took up whether to ask the federal government to remove and dismantle nuclear weapons stored at Kirtland Air Force Base. The resolution was rejected on a 5-4 vote along partisan lines.

The U.S. Department of Defense won't confirm or deny that nuclear weapons are at Kirtland or any other particular location, but it's widely believed that Kirtland maintains an estimated 2,000 nuclear warheads at an underground weapons storage complex.

New Mexico also is home to two national laboratories that do nuclear weapons work.

Councilor Rey Garduño sponsored the measure and said that while the city can't force the Air Force to do

anything, seeking removal of the weapons is worthwhile.

"I hope (the munitions) will never explode or have anything disastrous happen," he said, "but I don't understand why people are so reluctant to discuss the issue and deal with it. We need to. It's a public safety issue, the dismantlement and disarming of those nuclear weapons."

Others weren't convinced.

"I don't believe it's within the City Council's purview to give direction to the federal government," said Trudy Jones, vice president of the council. "We are not the elected body to do that."

Garduño's resolution called on the U.S. House and Senate to seek funding to expand the capacity of the Pantex Plant in West Texas and accelerate the dismantlement of nuclear weapons. It further called on Congress to "take action to have the nuclear weapons at Kirtland removed and dismantled at the earliest possible time for the safety and welfare of the people of Albuquerque and the region."

Garduño said the request simply matches what the United States already agreed to in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which calls for, among other things, negotiations toward the eventual disarmament of nuclear weapons.

Garduño said Albuquerque's emergency teams aren't prepared "to handle a mass evacuation" if one is ever needed. Accidents can happen, he said, and the military is not infallible.

He added that seeking funding for nuclear disarmament isn't much different from tapping federal funds for local road projects.

Jones, meanwhile, said the public already has elected federal representatives who can push for policy changes, if that's what constituents want.

In any case, she said, "I believe that nuclear weapons have had, and probably do still have, a place in the defense of our country," she said.

Voting against the resolution were five Republicans: Jones, Dan Lewis, Michael Cook, Brad Winter and Don Harris. In support were the council's four Democrats: Garduño, Isaac Benton, Debbie O'Malley and Ken Sanchez.

<http://www.abqjournal.com/news/metro/222346384390newsmetro09-22-10.htm>

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UN News Centre – New York

Secretary-General Calls for Early End to Nuclear Testing Worldwide

23 September 2010

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today called on all countries to work together to rid the world of the nuclear threat and to bring about the early entry into force of the United Nations-backed treaty banning nuclear testing.

"Until we have universal adherence to a legally-binding global norm against nuclear testing, there is no guarantee that nuclear tests will not recur," Mr. Ban said in remarks to the Fifth Biennial Ministerial Meeting in support of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

He told the gathering, held at UN Headquarters on the margins of the annual high-level General Debate of the General Assembly, that nuclear testing has left a legacy of devastated and inhabitable landscapes and lasting health and economic effects on local and downwind populations.

"More troubling, nuclear testing has still not been consigned to history," he said, noting that two tests have been conducted in the past five years.

Mr. Ban urged all governments that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the CTBT without further delay, and to work together to bring the treaty into force by 2012. He also urged Governments to maintain existing moratoriums on nuclear weapon test explosions.

Of the 182 countries that have signed the CTBT, 153 have ratified it. There are 44 countries that have to ratify the treaty for it to enter into force, of which 35 have already done so.

The remaining nine are China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Pakistan and the United States. Indonesia announced in May that it had initiated the CTBT ratification process.

In addition, Guatemala, Iraq, Papua New Guinea and Thailand have indicated that they intend to ratify the treaty, which opened for signature in 1996.

He told participants that developing new nuclear weapons and modernizing existing weapons are incompatible with the world's collective non-proliferation and disarmament efforts.

“We can no longer wait for the perfect international environment before taking advantage of existing – and potentially short-lived – opportunities,” he stated. “Be courageous. Take the initiative. Be the first mover.”

Traditionally, there are three types of nuclear tests: underground tests, atmospheric tests and underwater tests. With each possessing a tremendous potential for destruction, the CTBT bans them all.

“The time has come to end such tests and to sustain the current momentum towards a world without nuclear weapons,” Mr. Ban told reporters after the meeting.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=36101&Cr=nuclear&Cr1=#>

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Boston Globe

UN Session Seeks to Kick-Start Stalled Nuke Talks

By Charles J. Hanley, Associated Press Special Correspondent

September 24, 2010

UNITED NATIONS --U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged world governments on Friday to end the "long inertia" at the Geneva disarmament talks and free up much of the money spent on arms for use alleviating hunger, disease and other ills in impoverished nations.

A new coalition of nuclear-activist nations, meanwhile, said that moving quickly in Geneva on a treaty to shut down all production of uranium and plutonium for atomic bombs is an "essential step" toward global nuclear disarmament.

Negotiations for the long-proposed Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty, currently blocked by Pakistan at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, should instead "be pursued with vigor and determination," said the 10-nation group, led by Japan and Australia and including Germany, Canada and Mexico.

Ban addressed foreign ministers at an unusual high-level meeting he convened in an effort to build political momentum for action at the Geneva talks, which Japanese Foreign Ministry spokesman Satoru Satoh dubbed "the sleeping conference."

The U.N. chief noted that in the past decade world military spending had risen by 50 percent to more than \$1.5 trillion. "Imagine what we could do if we devoted these resources to poverty reduction, climate change mitigation, food security, global health and other global development challenges," he said.

"Disarmament and nonproliferation are essential across the board, not simply for international peace and security."

The 65-nation, 31-year-old Conference on Disarmament, the world's only multilateral forum for nuclear arms diplomacy, has not produced anything substantial since the 1996 nuclear test-ban treaty, a pact now on hold because key nations, including the U.S., have not ratified it.

A fissile-material treaty has been proposed since the 1990s, after decades in which nuclear-weapons powers accumulated hundreds of tons of plutonium and highly enriched uranium -- sitting today in deployed or disused weapon warheads, in storage, in fuel stores for nuclear-powered Russian icebreakers and U.S. missile submarines, in research reactors, and elsewhere.

Experts believe there's enough material in the world for 160,000 bombs, increasingly worrying global authorities at a time when international terrorists talk of "going nuclear."

The U.S. administration of President George W. Bush had opposed negotiating a cutoff pact, arguing that it would not be verifiable, since that would require an objectionably intrusive regime.

President Barack Obama reversed that stand after taking office last year, and the Geneva conference finally agreed on an agenda. Pakistan at first allowed the process to move forward, but this year it blocked further work, its privilege under conference rules requiring a consensus of all members.

Archrival India has a larger stock of fissile material than Pakistan does, and a greater capacity to build warheads. The Islamabad government consequently wants a treaty that doesn't only cut off future production, but reduces current stocks of bomb material.

"It presents us with a clear and present danger," Pakistan's Geneva negotiator, Zamir Akram, said last January of the cutoff idea.

At the moment, only Pakistan and India -- and possibly Israel and North Korea -- produce fissile material for weapons. The U.S., Russia and other major nuclear powers have declared unilateral moratoriums on production.

As the year dragged on, some in Geneva, including the Americans and French, suggested that a negotiating process might have to be established outside the disarmament conference to work on a fissile material treaty. Anyone rejecting such talks would become more internationally isolated.

http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2010/09/24/un_session_seeks_to_kick_start_stalled_nuke_talks_1285308030/

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PC World

September 21, 2010

Was Stuxnet Built to Attack Iran's Nuclear Program?

By Robert McMillan, IDG News

A highly sophisticated computer worm that has spread through Iran, Indonesia and India was built to destroy operations at one target: possibly Iran's Bushehr nuclear reactor.

That's the emerging consensus of security experts who have examined the Stuxnet worm. In recent weeks, they've broken the cryptographic code behind the software and taken a look at how the worm operates in test environments. Researchers studying the worm all agree that Stuxnet was built by a very sophisticated and capable attacker -- possibly a nation state -- and it was designed to destroy something big.

Though it was first developed more than a year ago, Stuxnet was discovered in July 2010, when a Belarus-based security company discovered the worm on computers belonging to an Iranian client. Since then it has been the subject of ongoing study by security researchers who say they've never seen anything like it before. Now, after months of private speculation, some of the researchers who know Stuxnet best say that it may have been built to sabotage Iran's nukes.

Last week Ralph Langner, a well-respected expert on industrial systems security, published an analysis of the worm, which targets Siemens software systems, and suggested that it may have been used to sabotage Iran's Bushehr nuclear reactor. A Siemens expert, Langner simulated a Siemens industrial network and then analyzed the worm's attack.

Experts had first thought that Stuxnet was written to steal industrial secrets -- factory formulas that could be used to build counterfeit products. But Langner found something quite different. The worm actually looks for very specific Siemens settings -- a kind of fingerprint that tells it that it has been installed on a very specific Programmable Logic Controller (PLC) device -- and then it injects its own code into that system.

Because of the complexity of the attack, the target "must be of extremely high value to the attacker," Langner wrote in his analysis.

Langner is set to present his findings at a closed-door security conference in Maryland this week, which will also feature a technical discussion from Siemens engineers. Langner said he wasn't yet ready to speak to a reporter at length ("the fact of the matter is this stuff is so bizarre that I have to make up my mind how to explain this to the public," he said via e-mail) but others who have examined his data say that it shows that whoever wrote Stuxnet clearly had a specific target in mind. "It's looking for specific things in specific places in these PLC devices. And that would really mean that it's designed to look for a specific plant," said Dale Peterson, CEO of Digital Bond.

This specific target may well have been Iran's Bushehr reactor, now under construction, Langner said in a blog posting. Bushehr reportedly experienced delays last year, several months after Stuxnet is thought to have been created, and according to screen shots of the plant posted by UPI, it uses the Windows-based Siemens PLC software targeted by Stuxnet.

Peterson believes that Bushehr was possibly the target. "If I had to guess what it was, yes that's a logical target," he said. "But that's just speculation."

Langner thinks that it's possible that Bushehr may have been infected through the Russian contractor that is now building the facility, JSC AtomStroyExport. Recently AtomStroyExport had its Web site hacked, and some of its Web pages are still blocked by security vendors because they are known to host malware. This is not an auspicious sign for a company contracted with handling nuclear secrets.

Tofino Security Chief Technology Officer Eric Byres is an industrial systems security expert who has tracked Stuxnet since it was discovered. Initially he thought it was designed for espionage, but after reading Langner's analysis, he's changed his mind. "I guessed wrong, I really did," he said. "After looking at the code that Ralph hauled out of this thing, he's right on."

One of the things that Langner discovered is that when Stuxnet finally identifies its target, it makes changes to a piece of Siemens code called Organizational Block 35. This Siemens component monitors critical factory operations -- things that need a response within 100 milliseconds. By messing with Operational Block 35, Stuxnet could easily cause a refinery's centrifuge to malfunction, but it could be used to hit other targets too, Byres said. "The only thing I can say is that it is something designed to go bang," he said.

Whoever created Stuxnet developed four previously unknown zero-day attacks and a peer-to-peer communications system, compromised digital certificates belonging to Realtek Semiconductor and JMicron Technology, and displayed extensive knowledge of industrial systems. This is not something that your run-of-the-mill hacker can pull off. Many security researchers think that it would take the resources of a nation state to accomplish.

Last year, rumors began surfacing that Israel might be contemplating a cyber attack on Iran's nuclear facilities.

Bushehr is a plausible target, but there could easily be other facilities -- refineries, chemical plants or factories that could also make valuable targets, said Scott Borg, CEO of the U.S. Cyber Consequences Unit, a security advisory group. "It's not obvious that it has to be the nuclear program," he said. "Iran has other control systems that could be targeted."

Iranian government representatives did not return messages seeking comment for this story, but sources within the country say that Iran has been hit hard by the worm. When it was first discovered, 60 percent of the infected Stuxnet computers were located in Iran, according to Symantec.

Now that the Stuxnet attack is public, the industrial control systems industry has come of age in an uncomfortable way. And clearly it will have more things to worry about

"The problem is not Stuxnet. Stuxnet is history," said Langner in an e-mail message. "The problem is the next generation of malware that will follow."

Robert McMillan covers computer security and general technology breaking news for The IDG News Service.

http://www.pcworld.com/businesscenter/article/205827/was_stuxnet_built_to_attack_irans_nuclear_program.html

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London Guardian – U.K.

Stuxnet Worm is the 'Work of a National Government Agency'

Malware believed to be targeting Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant may have been created by Israeli hackers

By Josh Halliday

Friday, 24 September 2010

A computer worm which targets industrial and factory systems is almost certainly the work of a national government agency, security experts told the Guardian – but warn that it will be near-impossible to identify the culprit.

The "Stuxnet" computer worm, which has been described as one of the "most refined pieces of malware ever discovered", has been most active in Iran, says the security company Symantec – leading some experts to conjecture that the likely target of the virus is the controversial Bushehr nuclear power plant, and that it was created by Israeli hackers.

Speaking to the Guardian, security experts confirmed that Stuxnet is a targeted attack on industrial locations in specific countries, the sophistication of which takes it above and beyond previous attacks of a similar nature.

Latest figures, from August, show 60% of computers infected by Stuxnet are located in Iran – dramatically up from July, when it accounted for less than 25% of infections, research by Symantec shows, with the graph below (from 4 August) showing the prevalence in other countries by comparison. The company estimates that the group building Stuxnet would have been well-funded, comprising between five and 10 people, and that it would have taken six months to prepare.

Alan Bentley, senior international vice president at security firm Lumension, said Stuxnet is "the most refined piece of malware ever discovered", and that the worm was significant because "mischief or financial reward wasn't its purpose, it was aimed right at the heart of a critical infrastructure".

However Graham Cluley, senior consultant with the online security company Sophos, warned against jumping to conclusions about the target of the attack, saying "sensationalist" headlines were "a worry". Cluley is wary of reports linking Stuxnet with Israel: "It's very hard to prove 100% who created a piece of malware, unless you are able to gather evidence from the computer they created it on – or if someone admits it, of course."

But he said that its characteristics did not suggest a lone group. "I think we need to be careful about pointing fingers without proof, and I think it's more appropriate – if true – to call this a state-sponsored cyber attack rather than cyber terrorism."

Stuxnet works by exploiting previously unknown security holes in Microsoft's Windows operating system. It then seeks out a component called Simatic WinCC, manufactured by Siemens, which controls critical factory operations. The malware even uses a stolen cryptographic key belonging to the Taiwanese semiconductor manufacturer RealTek to validate itself in high-security factory systems.

The worm then takes over the computer running the factory process – which for WinCC would be "mission-critical" systems which have to keep functioning under any circumstance – and "blocks" it for up to a tenth of a second. For high-speed systems, such as the centrifuges used for nuclear fuel processing being done by Iran, that could be disastrous, experts suggested.

US army forces are aware of the threat posed by Stuxnet, general Keith Alexander confirmed this week, saying early indications showed that the worm was "very sophisticated".

Clulely told the Guardian that Siemens has "astonishingly" advised power plants and manufacturing facilities not to change the default password that allows access to functions, despite it being exploited by Stuxnet and being "public knowledge on the web for years".

He told the Guardian: "There is a lot of circumstantial evidence to suggest that Iran was the target of Stuxnet. We know that the worm was designed with a specific target in mind – its makeup and the way it executes render the tell-tale signs.

"Combine this with the fact that the worm was identified by a Belarusian security firm working for an Iranian client and the fact that the nuclear power plant was not working properly for months, it is understandable that speculation points towards Iran as the target. But, without being inside the walls of the Bushehr nuclear power plant, we can't be certain."

Rik Ferguson, senior security adviser at Trend Micro, said: "Initially, it looks like a targeted attack. It saw a high percentage of infections concentrated in the Middle East. Iran being one. There's every possibility that the [other countries affected] may have been collateral damage."

Asked whether a nation state was behind the attack, Ferguson said: "The truth is we don't know. But we can look at the concentration [of the attacks]. I don't think we can call this cyberwarfare, I would call it modern espionage. Countries have been spying on their neighbours for years – as the technology has improved, espionage has always improved, and this is step in that direction.

"It's significant because it's not just the malware but the vulnerability to infect machines – if this had been in more traditional, criminal hands it could have been more widely used, like Conficker was. This was a powerful vulnerability it exploited and usually either you sell it for a lot of money or use it for mass criminality."

David Emm, a senior security researcher at Kaspersky Lab, told the Guardian: "We think that Stuxnet's sophistication, purpose and the intelligence behind it suggest the involvement of a state.

"This is a very sophisticated attack – the first of its kind – and has clearly been developed by a highly skilled group of people intent on gaining access to SCADA [supervisory control and data acquisition] systems – industrial control systems for monitoring and managing industrial infrastructure or facility-based processes. In contrast to the bulk of indiscriminate cybercrime threats on the internet, this has been aimed at very specific targets. It's different also because there's no obvious financial motivation behind the attack – rather the aim seems to be to sabotage systems."

However, John Pescatore, vice president for internet security at Gartner, said it was "definitely not the case" that Stuxnet would have required state sponsorship. "We've seen similarly targeted software going after credit card readers for financial gain in the past," he said. "Governments have no monopoly on the talent. We've seen attacks that looked like they were state-sponsored in the past launched by hackers for attention or citizens' groups. You cannot tell just by looking at where it landed."

The experts agree that Stuxnet marks a shift away from malware deployed for financial gain to controlling critical machinery. We are now moving into a "third age" of cyber crime, Clulely said, where the intention of making money from technical exploits is replaced by an intention to bring down critical infrastructure. "We're entering this third age as well, where there are political, economic and military ways in which the internet can be exploited – and malware can be used – to gain advantage by foreign states.

"I think we will see more and more attacks which will be blamed on state-sponsored cyber attacks. There have been numerous attacks in the past which could be said to have possible military, political or economic motives, but it is very difficult to prove that a hack was ordered by Mossad or instead dreamt up by a Macclesfield student."

RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency
OPINION & ANALYSIS

The Soviet Fleet's White Elephant: The Dmitry Donskoy Turns Thirty

21 September 2010

On September 23 1980, a cutting edge Soviet nuclear ballistic missile submarine set out from the Severodvinsk shipyards. The lead vessel of the Soviet third generation Project 941 Akula class (NATO reporting name Typhoon) of ballistic missile submarines, better known to readers by its nickname, the Dmitry Donskoy, was unique in many ways. It was designed as the world's largest submarine, and its displacement of nearly 50,000 metric tons put it in the same class as battleships and aircraft carriers, the largest warships ever.

This Dmitry Donskoy and her five sister submarines were unique to be sure, but they were also bona fide white elephants - a common name for vessels that are more trouble than they're worth.

Offspring of the arms race

The new missile carrier was designed amid yet another escalation of the arms race. Work began in 1972, when the United States announced the creation of its next-generation Ohio class submarines, equipped with Trident I C4 missiles and launching systems.

The Soviet missile carrier was expected to outmatch the new U.S. submarine in all key features. However, this was easier said than done. The missile was the main problem. The Soviet Navy, which already had experience with liquid fuel ballistic missiles, insisted that the new missile had to be powered by solid fuel like American missiles launched from submarines, as they were easier to make and safer to store and use.

However, building the new missile proved challenging for the Soviets, who lagged far behind the United States in solid fuel technology. The new Soviet missile, R-39, was much larger than the Trident I and three times as heavy, 90 tons against 32.3 tons.

That was the first step on the path to building the world's largest ballistic missile submarine. The second step was made after a study was made of the vessel's stationing and service role. The Rubin design bureau, which designed the submarine, was asked to increase its buoyancy to achieve minimal draft, so that the new submarine could use the existing piers and docks; additional buoyancy would also help it operate better in ice-covered waters.

The lead ship vessel was laid on March 16, 1976 and completed in a very short period of time, considering its size. However, its weapons, the R-39 missiles were not ready by its launch in September 1980 or even by its commissioning date in December 1981.

Testing of the R-39 began in 1977, and work was progressing unusually slowly. Half of the 17 launches from a submerged test stand or a submarine failed. As a result, the D-19 system and its new missiles were not ready until 1984, when it was finally incorporated into the Navy.

Strengths and weaknesses

A total of six ballistic missile submarines were laid between 1976 and 1985 under the new project. They were commissioned from 1981 through 1989. A seventh submarine was planned but never built. The project's strengths and weaknesses were apparent by that time. The submarine's high endurance was certainly an advantage, and so was the comfort afforded to the crew by the vessel's massive size.

However, its size was also a weakness. First of all, propelling the massive vessel required a very powerful engine, which made the submarine noisier. The project also exacted a heavy toll on the Soviet economy. These unique submarines, unmatched in the world, were also several times more expensive than the 667BDRM Delfin submarines built in the early 1980s. While they had less fire power - 16 missiles and 64 warheads against 20 and 200 - the Delfins proved more economically efficient per warhead delivery.

The short-lived giants

Akula submarines did not have a long career. This entire class submarines were decommissioned in 1995-2005 after the service lives of their R-39 missiles expired and could not be extended. The submarines could have been given a new lease on life if they had been equipped with newer weapons. However, the new missile, the R-39UTTH Bark

(NATO reporting name SS-N-28), was designed for the Project 935 submarines and later for the Project 955 fourth-generation submarines, the Borei.

The Russian Navy lacked the funds to modernize the Akulas, and it focused on preserving active 667BDRM and 667BDR submarines instead.

The Bark project was abandoned soon after and replaced by the Bulava, a far smaller and lighter missile.

However, the lead vessel of Project 941, named Dmitry Donskoy after the Grand Duke of Moscow (1359-1389), was upgraded to launch Bulava missiles, and all 12 Bulava launches were made from that submarine. In addition to the Dmitry Donskoy, two more submarines are kept as back up in Severodvinsk, TK-17 Arkhangelsk and TK-20 Severstal. These can also be upgraded to launch Bulavas, if their final tests are successful.

However, many experts believe this project is inefficient. The old drawbacks of the Akula class have not been addressed, so it would be wiser to modernize the Delfins, which have been showing better results throughout. The Delfins are equipped with new liquid-fuel R-29RM Sineva missiles, considered the top in their class.

Akulas are not likely to be retooled as transport submarines for year-round use on the Northern Sea Route either, as there is no clear economic rationale for such a project.

At any rate, Akulas will be remembered as unique vessels born of the technological and operational limitations of the time. The attempt to overcome these limitations resulted in exorbitant costs and a fleet of white elephants.

Ilya Kramnik, RIA Novosti military commentator

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

<http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20100921/160673588.html>

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New York Times

OPINION

International Herald Tribune Op-Ed Contributor

September 22, 2010

Nuclear Phobia

By WILLIAM POTTER and GAUKHAR MUKHATZHANOVA

Judging by the comments of most political figures, scholars and media pundits, regardless of political orientation, the future of nuclear proliferation is bleak.

This time, the sky is surely falling. At the very least, the world is at a “tipping point” in the direction of a nuclear armed crowd with far more countries actively pursuing and acquiring nuclear weapons. On this point, Hillary Clinton, Benjamin Netanyahu, Ban Ki-moon and John McCain all agree.

This proliferation pessimism often finds expression in metaphors about nuclear dominoes, chains, cascades and waves. In most cases the gloomy scenario anticipates a reactive process in which Iran’s “going nuclear” leads to decisions by other states in the region and possibly elsewhere to follow suit in quick succession.

Such prognoses are often cited in support of arguments for urgent action to stop Iran’s nuclear program. And yet, as was the case with the “domino theory” of the spread of Communism, little evidence is marshaled to support assertions about reactive proliferation.

A review of declassified U.S. national intelligence estimates (NIEs), as well as scholarly prognoses, shows that nuclear alarmism has been a feature of U.S. threat assessments throughout most of the nuclear age.

The catalysts for projections of rapid proliferation and the characteristics of “threshold states” have changed over time, but past forecasts have routinely overestimated the pace of proliferation.

The most famous dire prognosis was President John F. Kennedy’s 1963 nightmare of a future world of 15, 20 or 25 nuclear powers. Although there has been little movement in that direction, the assumption persists that the birth of a new nuclear-armed state will beget many others.

Waves of proliferation were widely anticipated following India’s “peaceful” nuclear explosion in 1974; the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991; the Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests in 1998; and, most recently, North Korea’s defection from the Non-Proliferation Treaty. While these events produced no obvious diffusion effect, policy makers have identified the Middle East as the site of the next proliferation epidemic.

Do the facts on the ground support this prognosis? Our multiyear study of the dynamics of nuclear proliferation for a dozen “usual suspects” suggests otherwise. It indicates that the further spread of nuclear weapons is neither imminent nor likely to involve a “chain reaction.”

Although surprising in terms of its challenge to conventional wisdom about a proliferation pandemic, our conclusion is consistent with the historically slow pace of proliferation and the exceptional circumstances that must pertain for states to abandon nuclear restraint.

It also highlights the important role played by individual leaders and domestic political coalitions for whom pursuit of nuclear weapons poses major political, economic and security costs.

Egypt — the domino most often identified as likely to fall in the wake of an overt Iranian nuclear weapons program — is a case in point. As James Walsh demonstrates in his case study for our project, Egypt’s motivations to acquire nuclear weapons were more intense in past decades than they are today or are likely to be in the near future, while disincentives are as severe if not more so than in the past.

Why would Cairo decide to emulate an Iranian nuclear posture when it has so long tolerated a far more potent Israeli nuclear weapons capability? Why would it risk severe damage to its relations with the United States, not to mention the loss of huge amounts of economic and military aid, for the very uncertain benefits of an expensive weapons program?

One should also be skeptical that Turkey, another prospective link in an Iran-instigated chain reaction, would abandon its quest for membership in the European Union and jeopardize its NATO security guarantees to emulate Iran. And what about Saudi Arabia, another Middle Eastern kingpin? What problem, internal or otherwise, would the kingdom solve with nuclear weapons?

To suggest that the proverbial proliferation sky is not yet falling is not to dismiss the risk of weapons spread. Indeed, Iranian acquisition of nuclear weapons, or military action against Iran, could well shift the balance of incentives and disincentives in the proliferation calculus for a number of states.

If history is any guide, however, these factors will be country-specific, and even if one nation should decide to disavow its nonproliferation commitments, there is little reason to expect an epidemic.

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http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/23/opinion/23iht-edpotter.html?_r=1&ref=global

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The Economist – Great Britain

OPINION

Just Do It

The case for early ratification of the New START treaty

September 23rd 2010

FEW people were excited by the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) that was signed by America’s Barack Obama and Russia’s Dmitry Medvedev in Prague in April. It is a sensible, incremental treaty that will cut America’s and Russia’s deployed strategic nuclear warheads by about a third, from the current maximum of 2,200 to 1,550, and the number of deployed missiles and bombers to 700 apiece. Compared with Mr Obama’s rhetoric about seeking “the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons” and agonising over how to stop a nuclear Iran, New START looks, well, a bit dull. Yet failure to ratify it would be a serious setback.

That, sadly, is a possibility. The treaty needs to win the support of two-thirds of the Senate, so at least eight Republicans must vote for it. Given its support from the Foreign Relations Committee (on a 14-4 vote), a chorus of generals and senior Republicans from previous administrations, you might expect it to pass easily. The only big names to have spoken against it are John Bolton, an ultra-hawkish former UN ambassador, and Mitt Romney, a flip-flopping presidential candidate now desperately courting the right. But the tea-partiers seem to have got it into their heads that the treaty is a bad one, and Republicans are stalling. Time is running out before the mid-term elections on November 2nd. (The “lame duck” session before the end of the year might well not vote on such an important matter, and the Republicans in the next Senate will probably be even less inclined towards bipartisanship.)

The case against New START is a mixture of political opportunism, ignorance and perfectionism. Shamefully, some Republicans, disregarding the convention that you should not play politics with nuclear missiles, just can’t face giving Mr Obama a “win” before the mid-terms. They have also done too little to correct the myths on the right

about New START. It does not “betray” eastern Europe: most leaders there would rather Russia had fewer weapons. It does not stop America deploying anti-ballistic missile defences, developing strategic-range non-nuclear weapons systems or updating its nuclear weapons infrastructure (indeed, Mr Obama has promised to spend \$80 billion on this over the next decade).

What’s not to like?

It is true that New START does not include Russia’s huge stockpile of ageing tactical nuclear weapons. It was never intended to. But New START does explicitly open the door to further arms cuts, including those 2,000-3,000 warheads, which represent both a big proliferation risk and a tempting target for terrorists. The new treaty’s ratification could also embolden Mr Obama to revive the long-stalled Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, which would do more than anything to show that America was holding up its end of the fraying nuclear non-proliferation regime. And New START is a powerful symbol of the “reset” of relations with Russia, not least to boost America’s hopes of getting a helping hand in dealing with Iran.

And there is a more pressing reason. The inspection and verification regime of the old START was suspended when that treaty expired last December. On-site inspection of Russia’s nuclear facilities, which has been at the heart of all big arms-control agreements for over 20 years, is critical not just to ensure compliance but to gain knowledge of Russia’s forces, operating procedures and even, to some extent, intentions. The longer it takes to ratify the new treaty and resume boots-on-the-ground inspections, the more that knowledge erodes, increasing mistrust and the risk of misunderstandings.

Momentum is vital; delay potentially lethal. The Senate should approve New START now.

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