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Seattle Times
October 13, 2010

5 Arrested in Iran for Spying for 'Enemies'

Tehran's chief prosecutor says authorities have arrested five people on suspicion of spying for the country's "enemies" - a common reference in Iran for the United States and Israel.

The Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Tehran's chief prosecutor says authorities have arrested five people on suspicion of spying for the country's "enemies" - a common reference in Iran for the United States and Israel.

Abbas Jafari Dowlatabadi says the suspects had passed on information to the enemies, including data about Iran's space program, economy and defense.

The prosecutor, whose comments were carried Wednesday by the state IRNA news agency, didn't identify those arrested.

Dowlatabadi accused the U.S. of seeking to gather information on "all fields" in Iran through espionage.

However, he didn't link the arrests to Iran's controversial nuclear program nor to the recent arrest of several people described by Iran's intelligence officials as "nuclear spies."

http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/nationworld/2013143809_apmliranarrests.html

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Reuters.com

UN Nuclear Agency Faces Dilemma over Syria

Wednesday, 13 October 2010

By Fredrik Dahl

(Reuters) - The U.N. nuclear agency says Syria is stonewalling its investigation into suspected atomic activity, but it may hold back from escalating the dispute to avoid opening a new front at a time of rising tension with Iran.

It has been more than two years since Syria allowed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to inspect the Dair Alzour desert site, where secret nuclear work may have taken place before it was bombed to rubble by Israel in 2007.

U.S. intelligence reports said it was a nascent North Korean-designed nuclear reactor intended to produce bomb fuel. Syria, like its ally Iran, denies having an atomic weapons programme.

Washington has suggested the Vienna-based U.N. agency could invoke its "special inspection" mechanism to give it the authority to look anywhere in Syria at short notice.

Damascus would probably refuse such a demand and IAEA Director-General Yukiya Amano would then have to choose between raising the stakes further or, in effect, accepting his office can do little more to make an unwilling member state cooperate.

Mark Hibbs of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace referred in a report to inspections and other means used by the agency to make sure countries do not acquire atom bombs.

"Syria is winning its battle with the IAEA over safeguards compliance," he said.

"Fearing a confrontation, Amano is not willing to request from Damascus a special inspection to probe allegations raised by Western states and Israel that Syria built a clandestine reactor."

URANIUM TRACES

In its latest report on Syria in September, the IAEA said the country's refusal to allow U.N. inspectors access to the area was endangering potential evidence in the investigation.

Earlier this year, it gave some weight to suspicions of illicit atomic activity by saying uranium traces found in a visit by inspectors in 2008 pointed to nuclear-related activity.

In a debate in the IAEA's 35-nation board last month, U.S. ambassador Glyn Davies said Washington would back the agency's use of all tools at its disposal to advance the investigation.

Syrian envoy Mohammed Badi Khattab said the IAEA did not need to go back to Dair Alzour because it already had ample proof it was a non-nuclear military site.

Syria has previously suggested uranium particles found at the site came from Israeli weapons used in the strike or were dropped from the air, an assertion dismissed by the West.

The Syrian case has been overshadowed by a more high-profile dispute over Iran's nuclear programme, which the West fears is aimed at making bombs and Tehran says is for producing electricity.

One important difference between the two, diplomats say, is that Iran's work is still going on while the Syrian site was destroyed.

The IAEA last resorted to special inspection powers in 1993 in North Korea, which still withheld access and later developed nuclear bomb capability in secret.

SPECIAL INSPECTION

Shannon Kile of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) said the evidence raised questions about whether Syria was breaking legally-binding commitments.

"It seems to me that this is a case which really calls out for a special inspection," he said.

Any such move may anger Damascus, whose relations with Washington improved after Barack Obama took office in 2009.

If Syria were to reject a possible special inspection request, the IAEA board could vote to refer the issue to the U.N. Security Council, as it did with Iran four years ago.

This seems unlikely in the near future and Syria may be backed by board members from developing countries, but Western states are expected to keep up the pressure.

"We're likely to see a continued stalemate, with associated low-level tension at the (IAEA) board, for some time to come," said Andreas Persbo, Executive Director of the Verification Research, Training and Information Center (VERTIC) in London.

Syria has allowed inspectors to visit an old research reactor in Damascus where they have been checking whether there is a link with Dair Alzour after discovering unexplained particles of processed uranium at both.

Hibbs said that, as time passed, it would be easier to hide any non-declared nuclear activities. "The U.S. and other Western states are getting increasingly concerned that time is running out on the IAEA in Syria."

Kile said it would be troubling if North Korea was supplying nuclear weapon-relevant technology to a country without such arms. "I think that for many...is really a red line," he said.

Editing by Andrew Dobbie

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE69C1QL20101013>

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The Star – Malaysia

Friday October 15, 2010

Iran Welcomes Nuclear Talks Offer, Seeks Dates

By Justyna Pawlak

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - Iran welcomed on Friday a proposal to restart talks with six major powers on its nuclear programme next month and called for a date to be agreed for the first such meeting in a year.

European Union foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton suggested Vienna on Thursday as the venue for three-day talks involving the United States, Germany, Russia, France, Britain and China.

"As you are fully aware, recently I announced that October or November from our point of view is a good time to restart talks between Iran and the 5+1 (major powers)," Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki told reporters in Brussels.

"It is good news that authorities here are following the matter. This is the way to coordinate some specific, fixed date for starting talks," he said before international talks on the economic development of Pakistan and fighting terrorism.

The United States and its European allies fear Iran's civilian nuclear energy programme is a cover to develop the capability for producing nuclear weapons.

Iran, a major oil producer, says it needs nuclear fuel-making technology to generate electricity and denies it is developing atomic arms.

Talks between Iran and the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and Germany stalled in October last year, leading to a toughening of international sanctions on Tehran.

AHMEDINEJAD'S CONDITIONS

Ashton and Iranian chief nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili have exchanged letters about resuming talks, but no date has been agreed for a meeting and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has set conditions for further talks.

He says a greater variety of countries should be involved, the parties must say whether they seek friendship or hostility with Iran, and must express a view on Israel's alleged nuclear arsenal.

Western officials are wary of what they see as Iranian efforts to dodge the main issue in talks, possibly buying time for advances in nuclear enrichment.

There was no indication that Mottaki and Ashton would discuss the resumption of talks during his stay in Brussels but the Briton confirmed she had not received a formal response to her proposal to resume talks next month.

"I've always said we want to see negotiations. We do believe a solution can be found and we'd like to get on with it," Ashton told reporters before the international talks on Pakistan.

She said the major powers would press on with a twin-track approach of keeping pressure on Tehran while pursuing dialogue.

"It's the dialogue that will resolve it," she said.

Writing by Timothy Heritage, editing by Rex Merrifield and Charles Dick

http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2010/10/15/worldupdates/2010-10-15T185447Z_01_NOOTR_RTRMDNC_0_-522175-2&sec=Worldupdates

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Times of India – India

North Korea could Make 12,000 Tonnes of Chemical Weapons: Expert

Agence France-Presse (AFP)
October 13, 2010

SEOUL: North Korea is capable of producing up to 12,000 tonnes of chemical weapons, which could cause massive civilian casualties in South Korea, a state think-tank said on Wednesday.

Along with the North's nuclear capabilities, its chemical weapons stockpile is South Korea's most urgent security issue, Kwon Yang-Joo of the Korea Institute for Defense Analyses said in a report.

"The international community must show its strong will in seeking disarmament of North Korea's chemical weapons along with its denuclearisation," he said.

The South's defence ministry estimates that North Korea has some 2,500-5,000 tonnes of nerve gas, blood agents, mustard gas and other chemical agents.

Kwon said the North could produce up to 12,000 tonnes of chemical weapons deliverable by artillery, missile or aircraft.

He said that 5,000 tonnes of chemical agents could contaminate about 2,500 square kilometres (950 square miles), four times the area of Seoul.

The North would be capable of producing 625,000-1.25 million chemical bombs if it used all of its chemical stockpile at once, he said.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/rest-of-world/North-Korea-could-make-12000-tonnes-of-chemical-weapons-Expert/articleshow/6741844.cms>

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Global Security Newswire

North Korea Rolls Out Ballistic Missiles

Wednesday, October 13, 2010

North Korea was reported to have unveiled three previously unseen ballistic missiles and launching apparatus during a major armed forces parade Sunday, according to the Associated Press (see *GSN*, March 17).

One new missile was believed to be a Musudan intermediate-range ballistic missile, which can travel 1,860 miles to 3,100 miles and could reach Guam and Japan, according to Japanese television channel NHK.

Missiles were prominently displayed at the parade with the words "Defeat the U.S. Military. U.S. soldiers are the Korean People's Army's enemy" written on them.

"If the U.S. imperialists and their followers infringe on our sovereignty and dignity even slightly, we will blow up the stronghold of their aggression with a merciless and righteous retaliatory strike by mobilizing all physical means, including self-defensive nuclear deterrent force," North Korean army General Staff chief Ri Yong Ho said at the parade.

South Korean defense and intelligence officials did not offer comments on the report (Jean Lee, Associated Press/Google News, Oct. 10).

The Musudan is not known to have yet been launched in a test flight, proliferation analyst Joshua Pollack said on the website Arms Control Wonk. He cited the weapon's flight range at roughly 1,550 miles to 1,860 miles. The missile is said to be based on the Soviet submarine-launched R-27, which is notably shorter in length than the Musudan.

The North Korean missile was initially unveiled in a 2007 armed forces parade; however, that event was closed to international media, the *Chosun Ilbo* reported. The South Korean newspaper reported the Musudan had a range of about 1,860 to 2,490 miles.

Evidently, some 12 Musudan missiles are fielded at missile installations in the North Hamgyong and South Pyongan provinces. The system can reportedly travel further than any other weapon in the North's arsenal, including the Rodong missile with an 810-mile range, the newspaper reported.

"We're looking at a new missile," Pollack stated. "The lack of a known testing record prior to deployment raises all sorts of questions. Was it tested in another country, for example?" (Joshua Pollack, Arms Control Wonk I, Oct. 10).

The outside world also saw for the first time Sunday a new version of the medium-range Nodong ballistic missile, which was outfitted with what appeared to be a "separating re-entry vehicle," Pollack noted.

"The question naturally arises: how long have the North Koreans had weapons of this type?" he wrote.

South Korean and U.S. news organizations initially began reporting on the Musudan missile in 2003, "so it's certainly possible for Pyongyang to sit on these developments for years, if they wish," he wrote.

The targeting precision of North Korean theater-range missiles such as the Nodong has been reported to have increased since July 2006 missile tests. The separating re-entry vehicle on the Nodong could explain some of that improved accuracy, Pollack stated.

Pollack indicated that details remain unclear regarding the third weapons system cited in the AP article (Joshua Pollack, Arms Control Wonk II, Oct. 10).

http://gsn.nti.org/gsn/nw_20101013_1452.php

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Yonhap News – South Korea
October 13, 2010

Ex-U.S. Nuclear Envoy Pessimistic about Denuclearization of N. Korea

By Lee Haye-ah

SEOUL, Oct. 13 (Yonhap) -- A former U.S. diplomat credited with forging a multilateral deal to denuclearize North Korea said Wednesday that the prospects of a nuke-free Korean Peninsula are dimmer than ever before, drawing on his past experiences of working with the communist nation.

Christopher Hill, who served as the chief U.S. delegate to the six-party nuclear talks from 2005 to 2009, was a key figure in negotiating a series of agreements that committed Pyongyang to dismantle its nuclear program in exchange for various economic and political benefits. Implementation of the agreements, also signed by the two Koreas, host

China, Japan and Russia, has been stalled since North Korea left the forum in 2008 in protest over U.N. sanctions imposed on the regime for its nuclear and missile tests.

"I think it's very clear at this point that it is a more difficult proposition than ever before," Hill said, referring to the idea of North Korea's denuclearization. "They have continued to work on their systems for delivering nuclear weapons."

Resumption of the talks has been complicated further by the deadly sinking of a South Korean warship in March, for which Seoul continues to demand an apology from the North. Pyongyang denies any role in the sinking that claimed the lives of 46 South Korean sailors.

Speaking at the 11th World Knowledge Forum hosted by local economic daily Maeil Business Newspaper, the former diplomat said his hopes for denuclearization were dampened by the North's unwillingness to change.

"I changed my view because I tried to get them to denuclearize. I spent four years on it," Hill said. "We put forward a proposal. We laid out a number of tracks for them. We laid out, frankly, a clear road to normalization with the U.S., to enormous economic benefits ... We were prepared to lay out an entire peace treaty with them. We put everything out there on the table and the North Koreans chose not to pick it up."

He added, however, that he did not believe denuclearization to be impossible, stressing China's role in making it happen.

"I think China has enormous interests for China itself to achieve denuclearization of North Korea. China knows that Asia will not end up with a nuclear China and a nuclear North Korea -- that is, two nuclear nations. It will end up with many more nuclear weapons. China, once they understand this clearly and once they develop the consensus to move forward, I think, can put pressure on North Korea."

As North Korea's last remaining ally, China has been reluctant to criticize the regime for threatening peace and stability in the region despite repeated calls from mainly Seoul and Washington to wield its influence.

Hill served as U.S. ambassador to South Korea in 2004-2005 and is currently dean of the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2010/10/13/5/0401000000AEN20101013008500315F.HTML>

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Sunday Times – Sri Lanka

N.Korea's New Leadership to Steer Same Path

By Jeremy Laurence

Thursday, 14 October 2010

SEOUL, Oct 14 (Reuters) - By anointing his son leader-in-waiting, Kim Jong-il has kept North Korea on course as a reclusive and destitute state defiantly pursuing nuclear weapons but not removed the longer-term threat of instability.

The North Korean leader has rushed to surround his youngest son Kim Jong-un with family and friends to prepare for the handover and ensure dynastic rule carries into a third generation.

A big concern, analysts say, is that the iron ruler could die before his heir has a chance to win the backing of the military and political elite.

Few expect the young Kim to change the ideologies of military first and self-reliance that have underpinned his father's rule.

Nor is he likely to lighten the government's grip on the destitute economy or end attempts, that so worry the outside world, to build nuclear weapons.

If anything, some analysts say, he may try to burnish his hardline credentials by carrying out an act of brinkmanship.

"His legitimacy will be based largely on maintaining the legacy of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il by continuing their nationalist and military-based policies," said Bruce Klingner of the Heritage Foundation in Washington.

"Jong-un will maintain a hardline policy to reassure other members of the senior leadership who would perceive any reforms as risking regime instability." For the short-term, at least, 'more of the same' brings a comforting sense of stability to a region which accounts for one-sixth of the world's economy.

Powerful neighbour China, the impoverished North's main benefactor and vital source of fuel and food, worries that a collapse could result in massive refugee flows, unsettling its own northern provinces.

Beijing also worries a collapse would breach the buffer that keeps the U.S. military in South Korea's side of the peninsula.

For South Korea, a collapsing North would be a huge drain on its own economy.

Longer-term, though, analysts say the North must change or face collapse. The best-case scenario is a managed transition to a more flexible economic and political style, they say.

THE RISING SON

Kim Jong-il, believed to have suffered a stroke in 2008 and looking frailer with each appearance, last month set in stone the transition process.

If the 68-year-old leader dies soon, this could spark conflicts between new and old forces, and policy struggles between the ruling party and the powerful military, as well as between conservatives and reformers, says Yoo Ho-yeol of Korea University.

The dauphin's rise has been extraordinary for its speed. In a matter of a fortnight, Jong-un was promoted from obscurity to the post of high-ranking ruling party official, made a 4-star general, and put on the dais beside his father to review the country's biggest military parade in decades.

That contrasts with the 16 years of training before Kim Jong-il was officially named in 1980 as successor to his father and North Korea's founding leader. He was given his first party post in 1964.

The Heritage Foundation's Klingner says that because Jong-un has less of a power base than his father, he will have to woo senior party and military leaders who are overwhelmingly nationalist and resistant to change.

Leader Kim also elevated his sister and her husband to top positions to create a powerful triumvirate to run the family dynasty.

PROVOCATIONS

In the past four years, the North has ratcheted up provocations, testing nuclear devices and long range-missiles to the anger of the outside world.

There have also been skirmishes off the peninsula between the two Koreas, still technically at war after signing only an armistice in 1953. In March, relations sank to their lowest level in a decade with the sinking of South Korean warship the Cheonan. Despite international sanctions being imposed as a result of its perceived misbehaviour, aid continues to flow to North Korea from China.

Andrei Lankov of Kookmin University in Seoul says it is feasible that the North will continue with its strategy of leveraging nuclear threats to win aid to prop up its economy.

“If it has worked so far, why not do it again? And it has worked perfectly,” he says.

“In other words, nuclear blackmail will pay for caviar and BMWs of the tiny elite, and will also provide another few ten thousand people with a lifestyle of Western middle class families while keeping their bodyguards and camp guards and ideological indoctrinators sufficiently well fed,” Lankov said.

Experts worry the young Kim may now seek to boost his standing within the military with an overt show of violence.

With Seoul hosting a G20 Summit next month, security is being tightened in the South Korean capital.

At the time of Kim Jong-il's succession, the North grabbed the headlines in 1983 with a bomb attack in Myanmar that killed South Korean officials and journalists, and then in 1987 a North Korean agent bombed a Korean Air flight.

Editing by Jonathan Thatcher

<http://www.sundaytimes.lk/analysis/885-nkoreas-new-leadership-to-steer-same-path>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

China Reiterates Call for Resumption of N. Korea Nuclear Talks

14 October 2010

China urged again on Thursday the resumption of six-party talks on dismantling North Korea's nuclear program to ensure peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula.

Pyongyang pulled out of the talks, which involve the two Koreas, China, Russia, the United States and Japan, in April 2009 in protest against the United Nations' condemnation of its missile tests. The reclusive communist regime conducted its second nuclear test a month later.

"We believe that in the current situation the sides must continue the dialogue through consultations to ease tensions and create conditions for the resumption of [six-nation] talks," the Chinese Foreign Ministry said.

The statement follows meetings in Beijing on Tuesday between Kim Kye-Gwan, North Korea's envoy to six-party talks, and China's Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi and nuclear envoy Wu Dawei.

"Our position on the Korean peninsula is clear and consistent - we stand for maintaining the goal of the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and safeguarding peace and stability on the peninsula," the ministry's spokesman Ma Zhaoxu told reporters.

North Korean leader Kim Jong-il reportedly expressed hope for an early resumption of the six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear program during his visit to China in August.

BEIJING, October 14 (RIA Novosti)

<http://en.rian.ru/world/20101014/160953182.html>

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Mainichi Daily News – Japan

Japan Submits Nuclear Abolition Resolution for 17th Straight Year

October 15, 2010

NEW YORK (Kyodo) -- Japan on Thursday submitted a draft resolution calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons to a disarmament committee of the ongoing U.N. General Assembly, Japanese diplomats said.

It is the 17th straight year that Japan has submitted a nuclear disarmament resolution to the United Nations.

Compared with past resolutions, this year's resolution is "much more comprehensive with calls for united action," Japanese Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament Akio Suda said at a news conference after submitting the document by the noon deadline.

Including the United States, a record of more than 50 countries joined in Japan's initiative as co-sponsors of the resolution, compared with 42 countries last year, according to Suda.

He said he expects that even France, which abstained from voting on last year's resolution, may support this year's document.

Following the successful conclusion of a U.N. conference reviewing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in May, Japan has rewritten the content of the resolution this year, using new and stronger wording, Suda said.

Specifically, the draft "reaffirms the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon states to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament."

It also "calls upon nuclear-weapon states to undertake further efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminate all types of nuclear weapons, deployed and non-deployed, including through unilateral, bilateral, regional and multilateral measures."

The resolution is expected to be put to a vote before the committee between Oct. 26 and Nov. 1. Japan is aiming to garner more support than last year's record 170 countries, according to U.N. diplomatic sources.

Referring to the "successful outcome" of the NPT review conference, the draft stresses the need to fully implement the action plan the conference adopted.

It mentioned U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki Moon's historic visits to Hiroshima and Nagasaki to mark the 65th anniversary of the atomic bombings, as well as the April 8 signing of a new nuclear disarmament treaty between Russia and the United States and a high-level conference on disarmament convened by Ban in September.

The draft recognizes the "importance of the objective of nuclear security along with our shared goals of nuclear disarmament, nuclear nonproliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy." It also welcomes the Nuclear Security Summit that U.S. President Barack Obama called in April to strengthen nuclear security and reduce nuclear terrorism.

It says North Korea "cannot have the status of a nuclear-weapon state" under the NPT "under any circumstances."

The draft also calls upon nuclear-weapon states to "promptly engage with a view to further diminishing the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies."

In 2009, a Japan-proposed nuclear disarmament resolution was adopted at the assembly's Disarmament and International Security Committee, with the United States supporting it for the first time in nine years.

The United States also co-sponsored last year's resolution, which specifically supported moves instigated by Obama with the aim of eventually achieving a nuclear-free world, for the first time ever.

(Mainichi Japan) October 15, 2010

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/international/news/20101015p2g00m0in099000c.html>

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Pakistan Defence – Pakistan

Treaty Banning only Future Production of Fissile Material 'Unacceptable': Pakistan

UNITED NATIONS, October 13, 2010

Pakistan told the world community Tuesday that its opposition to the start of talks on a treaty to ban production of fissile material used as fuel for nuclear weapons stemmed from the actions of "some powerful states" that have changed the strategic environment of South Asian region.

"Over the past few years, some powerful countries, in pursuit of their commercial interests as well as dubious notions of balance of power, have embarked upon an unfettered and discriminatory nuclear cooperation arrangement in gross violation of their international commitments," Ambassador Zamir Akram told the General Assembly's Disarmament and International Security Committee.

"This has accentuated our security concerns as such nuclear cooperation shall further widen the asymmetry in stockpiles in our region," he added.

Ambassador Akram, who is Pakistan's permanent representative to the UN's European offices in Geneva, did not name any country in his speech, but he obviously had in mind mainly the U.S.-India nuclear deals.

Also, it is well known that India has a larger stock of fissile material than Pakistan does, and a greater capacity to build warheads.

"Thus, an FMCT (Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty) that purports only to ban future production of fissile material, will permanently freeze a strategic disadvantage for Pakistan, and is therefore unacceptable to us," the senior Pakistani diplomat said.

"Clearly it is not through choice but necessity that Pakistan is opposed to negotiations on an FMCT," he added.

Since January, Pakistan's has been blocking the launching of negotiations on the proposed treaty at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva on the ground that it prejudicial to its national security interests.

With the introduction of the treaty into the agenda of the Conference in 1994, Ambassador Akram said Pakistan had called attention to the fact that a treaty to cut off future production of fissile material would freeze the existing asymmetries in fissile material stockpiles, which would be detrimental for its national security.

Accordingly, Pakistan had been advocating a treaty that not only banned future production, but also aimed at reducing existing stockpiles of fissile material.

A growing asymmetry in military capabilities between major Powers and medium and small States had further increased insecurity among States, and in crucial regions, the pursuit of great power politics had destabilized tenuous regional balance, Zamir Akram told delegates from around the world.

The Pakistani delegate asserted, as the committee's general debate came to a close, that some States had been denied the right to peaceful nuclear cooperation, while others were helped in promoting unsafeguarded nuclear programmes and building and upgrading strategic weapon systems, including anti-ballistic ones, thereby accelerating vertical nuclear proliferation.

He pointed out that the current hiatus in the Conference on Disarmament was not unprecedented. That body had not undertaken negotiations for any multilateral instrument since it last concluded the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1995.

Yet, Akram pointed out it was only now, after more than a decade, that certain countries had questioned its relevance, seeking ways to revitalize its functioning and even proposing to seek alternative venues. By undermining it in that way, those countries would open the Conference up to the possibilities of negotiating other of its agenda items in alternative venues as well.

That grim situation undermined the efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, he said. Instead of nuclear disarmament, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons had become the only goal, and even that goal was pursued selectively.

Attempts to forge a new consensus on arms control and disarmament required the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. That alone could ensure genuine and complete ownership of the outcome by all States.

In discussing that issue, Pakistan had been puzzled when some powerful nations argued that such a session had been overtaken by events, yet they opposed its convening.

Pakistan, he added, was also dismayed by arguments from some States that the United Nations disarmament machinery, in particular the Conference on Disarmament, had become dysfunctional, owing to its rule of procedure, he said.

In reality, the decade-old stalemate in that Conference and the overall international disarmament machinery had nothing to do with rules of procedure; it was the lack of political will on the part of some major Powers to pursue disarmament negotiations on the basis of equal security of all States, as accepted in the first special session devoted to disarmament.

The United Nations disarmament machinery and the Conference on Disarmament, in particular were not handmaidens to the whims of the major Powers or a device to confer legitimacy on their pursuit of discriminatory policies, the Pakistan delegate said.

<http://www.defence.pk/forums/wmd-missiles/76497-pakistan-rejects-fmct-again.html>

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Hindustan Times – India

'Continued Instability in Pak Poses Threat to its N-Weapons'

Press Trust of India

Washington, October 14, 2010

A US Congressional report has warned that despite assurances given by Pakistan, the continued instability in that country poses a threat to its nuclear weapons which could fall into the hands of radicals. "While US and Pakistani officials continue to express confidence in controls over Pakistan's nuclear weapons, continued instability in the country could impact these safeguards," the bipartisan and independent Congressional Research Service has told US lawmakers in its latest report.

Instability in Pakistan has called the extent and durability of these reforms into question, the CRS said. It said some observers fear radical takeover of a government that possesses a nuclear bomb, or proliferation by radical sympathisers within Pakistan's nuclear complex in case of a breakdown of controls.

Pakistan's nuclear arsenal consists of approximately 60 nuclear warheads, although it could be larger, said the 24-page report.

Islamabad is producing fissile material, adding to related production facilities and deploying additional delivery vehicles.

These steps will enable Pakistan to undertake both quantitative and qualitative improvements to its nuclear arsenal. Although separate storage may provide a layer of protection against accidental launch or prevent theft of an assembled weapon, it may be easier for unauthorised people to remove a weapon's fissile material core if it is not assembled, the CRS said.

Dispersal of the assets may also create more potential access points for acquisition and may increase the risk of diversion, it noted.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/Continued-instability-in-Pak-poses-threat-to-its-N-weapons/Article1-612727.aspx>

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Wall Street Journal

October 15, 2010

Pakistan to Push for Nuclear Deal with U.S.

By TOM WRIGHT

ISLAMABAD—Pakistan's renewed push to clinch a civilian nuclear deal with Washington threatens to further strain relations that are already tense over Islamabad's refusal to attack Taliban havens on its soil.

Pakistan officials say they will again raise their demand for a deal—similar to one the U.S. concluded with India—during a meeting Oct. 22 in Washington headed by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi.

Islamabad views a civilian nuclear deal with the U.S. as a key compromise to show Pakistan is on a level with its rival India in the eyes of the U.S. Such a deal would assuage fears here that Washington has any intention of dismantling Pakistan's nuclear program.

The U.S. is unlikely to give in to the demands, Pakistan officials acknowledge, adding a further level of mistrust to a relationship already bedeviled by frustration in Washington over Pakistan's failure to crack down on Taliban militants that attack U.S. troops over the border in Afghanistan.

Washington is concerned about Pakistan's previous history of proliferation and continued ramping up of its military nuclear arsenal, which it is developing as a deterrent to India, possibly with Chinese aid. It has turned down Pakistan's requests for a civilian nuclear deal in the past.

The U.S. views next week's "strategic dialogue" as key to getting Pakistan to move against militancy in return for billions of dollars in civilian and military aid. Help with civilian nuclear power, a role China currently fulfills, could help improve ties, some analysts say.

It will be the third such meeting since March, underscoring the pivotal role relations with Pakistan plays in U.S. foreign policy.

A U.S. official said the issue wasn't on the official agenda for the meeting but could easily be raised.

New satellite images, taken in September and published last week by the Institute for Science and International Security, a nongovernmental U.S.-based nuclear research body, show Pakistan is racing to complete its Khushab military nuclear facility in Punjab province despite this summer's flooding, which caused billions of dollars in economic losses.

"Pakistan will always spend whatever it takes to build up as many nuclear weapons as possible" due to animosity toward India, said George Perkovich, director of the nuclear policy program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a U.S.-based think tank.

U.S. President Barack Obama will travel to India in early November on his first official visit to South Asia and any signs of engagement with Pakistan on nuclear issues ahead of that trip would likely ensure him a frosty reception in New Delhi.

Pakistan's blocking of the Obama administration's push this year at the United Nations for a treaty to ban the production of weapons-grade fissile material also has angered U.S. officials. Last week, Rose Gottemoeller, the U.S. assistant secretary of state in charge of arms control, told the U.N. that Washington's patience was running out over the slow pace of talks toward nuclear arms control.

Pakistan argues it should be allowed to build up its nuclear arsenal to counter India's larger conventional armed forces. It also says India's civilian-nuclear deal has given it an unfair advantage.

The pact allows U.S. and other suppliers of nuclear fuel for power plants to export to India. Pakistan fears that could free up domestic sources of fissile material to be turned into bombs. India, which has no history of nuclear proliferation, denies it plans to use the civilian nuclear deal to bolster its nuclear warheads.

"If we sign up to a treaty now, we would be at a permanent disadvantage to India," says Abdul Basit, a spokesman for Pakistan's foreign ministry.

Another Pakistani official said the delegation will raise the issue of a U.S. civilian nuclear deal next week but that "expectations are very low." The U.S., the Pakistani official said, "considers India its biggest ally. That's why our demand is rejected."

India and Pakistan, along with Israel, have refused to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and their stockpiles are among the fastest growing in the world.

Pakistan currently has about 70 to 90 nuclear warheads, and India has between 60 and 80, according to estimates published by the Federation of American Scientists, a nongovernmental group. The U.S. has 1,968 warheads but is reducing its stockpile while Pakistan and India are expanding theirs.

The ISIS, which published photos of the Khushab facility, said a third and final reactor at the site is nearing completion and could be operational by 2011. The second reactor came online in spring, the institute said.

When complete, the facility would produce enough fuel for 10 missiles a year, or about half of Pakistan's total annual nuclear-weapon production capacity, said David Albright, president of ISIS.

While these developments are newly public, the U.S. government has long been keeping tabs on the reactor's progress. "These issues have been known for years," said a U.S. counterproliferation official. "This isn't news to the U.S. government."

Pakistan's increased ability to produce plutonium—which is more potent than uranium and can be packed into smaller bombs—could boost its ability to develop longer-range cruise missiles with nuclear warheads, he added. Mr. Basit declined to comment on Pakistan's nuclear capabilities.

China has stepped up civilian nuclear cooperation with Pakistan in an effort to balance the U.S. support for India. In February, Beijing signed an agreement with Pakistan to build two 300-megawatt nuclear power plants and last month unveiled plans for a one-gigawatt plant.

The U.S. has opposed these deals, saying they are against Nuclear Suppliers Group rules, which ban the selling of nuclear technology to nations that haven't signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The U.S. persuaded others in the 46-member group, which China joined in 2004, to give a waiver to India for its civilian nuclear deal. The U.S. State Department in July told lawmakers it would vote against such an exemption for Pakistan.

Some analysts argue a U.S.-Pakistan civilian nuclear deal with adequate safeguards would reward the country for improved security of its nuclear weapons and could help foster better relations with Washington. With U.S. help, Pakistan has in recent years increased safeguards to make sure its nuclear weapons don't end up in the hand of Islamist militants.

But concerns remain. A report in April by Harvard University's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs found Pakistan's stockpiles faced "immense" threats of theft "from nuclear insiders with extremist sympathies, al Qaeda or Taliban outsider attacks, and a weak state."

In India, Pakistan's weapons buildup is widely viewed as a security risk. "How do you ensure the weapons don't fall into the wrong hands?" asks Brahma Chellaney, a professor at the Center for Policy Research, a New Delhi-based think tank.

The father of Pakistan's nuclear program, A.Q. Khan, admitted in 2004 to selling weapons technology to Libya, Iran and North Korea. He later recanted his confession, saying it was given under duress.

Siobhan Gorman in Washington contributed to this article.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704164004575548103701743836.html>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia to Deploy Iskander Missiles in All Military Districts

14 October 2010

The Russian military plans to deploy Iskander-M tactical missiles in all four of its future military districts, the chief of Russia's Armed Forces General Staff said on Thursday.

In line with Russia's ongoing military reform, the number of military districts will be cut from six to four by December 1, 2010. In the future, the military districts will be replaced by unified strategic commands.

"We will have brigades equipped with Iskander missiles in every military district," Gen. Nikolai Makarov told reporters in Moscow.

The general said the supply of the Iskander-M missiles is a priority in the development and rearmament of the Russian army.

The Iskander-M system (NATO reporting name SS-26 Stone) is equipped with two solid-propellant single-stage 9M723K1 guided missiles with "quasi-ballistic" capability. The missiles have a range of 400 km (250 miles) and can reportedly carry conventional and nuclear warheads.

Russia is planning to equip at least five missile brigades with Iskander-M systems by 2016.

MOSCOW, October 14 (RIA Novosti)

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20101014/160955507.html

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London Guardian – U.K.

Military Research should Bear Brunt of Science Cuts, say Leading Scientists

Senior academics say science cuts should focus on military research projects, including finding a replacement for Trident

Ian Sample, science correspondent

Wednesday 13 October 2010

Military research projects, including plans to replace the Trident nuclear weapons system, must bear the brunt of science funding cuts if Britain is to stay at the forefront of scientific research, academics have told the prime minister.

Thirty-six scientists and engineers, including seven Royal Society fellows and one Nobel laureate, have today written to David Cameron raising concerns over the future of British science if civilian research is cut while defence research is spared.

The government spends £8bn on scientific research, of which more than £2bn is earmarked for Ministry of Defence projects at facilities such as the Atomic Weapons Establishment in Aldermaston. The nuclear weapons lab will play a central role in developing a successor to Trident if ministers decide to go ahead with a replacement.

"Of particular concern is the fact that world class research into health and global environmental problems is under threat, while the government continues to fund the multi-billion pound research programme at the Atomic Weapons Establishment," the authors write in the letter, which is published today in the Guardian.

"Our view is that current MoD funding is not only disproportionate, it also includes expenditure on programmes which are of minimal benefit or counterproductive to the UK's security," the letter adds. The authors call for Britain's nuclear warheads to be placed in secure storage and the successor to Trident scrapped to free up funds for civilian science research.

The letter, signed by Professor Alastair Hay, an expert in chemical and biological weapons at Leeds University, Sir Harry Kroto, who won the Nobel prize for chemistry in 1996, and the mathematician Sir Michael Atiyah, continues: "We believe that any cuts to public science spending should predominantly come from cuts to the Ministry of Defence's research and development."

The letter comes a week after the prime minister told the Conservative party conference in Birmingham that he would take "no risks with British security" and stressed his commitment to renewing the Trident nuclear missile system. In the letter, the scientists urge ministers to "shift their priorities so that science and technology can contribute to tackling the real threats to the UK's present and future security."

The scientists concede a need for extra funding on some defence-related issues, including research into ways of monitoring arms control agreements, non-violent conflict resolution and strategies for "tackling the roots of conflict and insecurity".

Sir Michael, a former president of the Royal Society, said: "This isn't scientists being self-interested and telling the government not to give money to someone else because they want it for themselves. We strongly believe that current use of government money, that is strongly backing military research, is misguided. This is not the right way to spend government money regardless of the economic situation."

On Saturday, 2,000 scientists and their supporters demonstrated outside the Treasury against funding cuts that are expected to reach £1bn.

Professor Hay said funding for military projects has benefited from the powerful defence lobby in Britain, but called on ministers to reconsider how public funds are spent on science.

"We're not calling for a slash in defence funding, but we do need to get the proportions right. There's been a disproportionate emphasis on military research and development and it is clear why with Britain's armaments industry," Hay told the Guardian. "I seriously question the need for Trident and the need for a nuclear deterrent generally. The question really is whether the country can afford it when a lot of people are going to be out of work."

He added: "It takes a long time to train researchers and I fear that the cuts that are being mooted will so wreck our science base that it will take such a long time to recover. In Germany and the US they are investing hugely in science. They see research as the seed corn for future prosperity in every sense, whether it's combating global warming or developing new medicines."

Stuart Parkinson at Scientists for Global Responsibility, a group that promotes ethical science, design and technology that was involved in organising the letter, said: "There are far better ways in which both the money and science skills can be used to reduce threats in terms of improving our energy and food security and tackling global issues such as poverty and environmental problems, which can drive instability and conflict."

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2010/oct/13/military-research-science-cuts-scientists>

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NewsDaily.com

Russia to Build Nuclear Power Plant in Venezuela

October 15, 2010

By Alexei Anishchuk

MOSCOW (Reuters) — Russia agreed on Friday to help build Venezuela's first nuclear power plant and buy \$1.6 billion of oil assets, reinforcing ties with President Hugo Chavez, who shares Moscow's opposition to U.S. global dominance.

Chavez presided over the deals at a Kremlin ceremony with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, who said the countries shared a "strategic partnership" and a vision of a world free of overwhelming U.S. influence.

"Both Russia and Venezuela favor the development of a modern and just world order -- a world order in which our future does not depend on the will or desire of any one country, its well-being or its mood," Medvedev said.

After the presidents' talks, Russian nuclear agency chief Sergei Kiriyenko and Venezuelan Foreign Minister Nicolas Maduro signed a deal on "the construction and use of an atomic power station on the territory of Venezuela."

Russia, which recently finished Iran's first nuclear power plant, has pushed to expand its presence on the global atomic energy market, and stresses other nations' right to peaceful nuclear energy.

Medvedev hinted that Chavez's foe, the United States, might not like the deal, but said it was peaceful.

"A deal in the atomic sphere has just been signed. I already know that it will make someone shudder. The president (of Venezuela) told me that there will be states that will have different types of emotions about this," Medvedev said.

"I would like to underline that our intentions are clean and open: we want our partner the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to have a full range of energy choices, to have energy independence," he said.

Chavez says Venezuela, South America's biggest oil producer, needs nuclear power to reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

But he has also cast its efforts as a defiance of U.S. concerns. He said on Thursday in Moscow that "nothing will stop us" from developing nuclear power.

OIL DEALS

Chavez was on his ninth visit to Russia since taking office in 1999, making Moscow the first stop on a 10-day tour that will also take him to Ukraine and Libya as well as Iran and Belarus, whose ties with the United States are badly strained.

Russia has cultivated close relations with Chavez since Vladimir Putin, now prime minister, came to power in 2000.

Leveraging its ties with Venezuela into an energy foothold in Western Europe, Russia also secured a deal for its biggest oil company, Rosneft, to buy Venezuelan state oil company PDVSA's stake in four German refineries.

State-controlled Rosneft said it would pay \$1.6 billion for a 50-percent stake in the Ruhr Oel refineries, which PDVSA owns jointly with Britain's BP.

With a total capacity of 1.04 million barrels per day, the refineries are Venezuela's biggest refining assets in Europe.

Under another deal signed in the Kremlin, Russia's TNK-BP, half-owned by BP, will buy three of BP's assets in Venezuela, one of TNK-BP's billionaire shareholders, German Khan, told journalists.

The assets include stakes in two exploration and production joint ventures with PDVSA. BP's Venezuelan assets are estimated to be worth \$850 million to \$1 billion.

There was no indication that Chavez's visit had brought any new agreements to buy Russian weapons on top of at least \$5 billion in arms deals concluded in the past five years.

Medvedev said Russia's military cooperation with Venezuela was not slowing, but that their ties had broadened beyond the arms trade. He and Chavez signed a broad five-year plan for cooperation through 2014.

Medvedev called his meeting with Chavez "a meeting of friends" and thanked him for recognizing the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states after Moscow's 2008 war with pro-Western Georgia.

Additional reporting by Guy Faulconbridge, Jessica Bachman, Lidia Kelly and Al Kueppers; Writing by Steve Gutterman; Editing by Kevin Liffey

<http://www.newsdaily.com/stories/tre69e2fv-us-russia-venezuela/>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia May Sell S-300 Missiles to Venezuela, Instead of Iran - Analyst

15 October 2010

Russia's S-300 air defense systems, which Moscow refused to deliver to Iran following a new round of UN sanctions against the Islamic Republic, could be sold to Venezuela instead, a Russian arms trade expert said on Friday.

Russia signed a deal to deliver five battalions of S-300PMU-1 air defense systems to Iran in 2007 but banned the sale in September, saying the systems, along with a number of other weapons, were covered by the fourth round of sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council against Iran over its nuclear program in June.

"Russia is looking for a buyer of five battalions of S-300PMU-1 air defense systems ordered by Iran, which are worth \$800 million, and Venezuela could become such a buyer," said Igor Korotchenko, head of a Moscow-based think tank on the international arms trade.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, who is currently on a visit to Russia, earlier said his country was interested in buying different types of Russian-made air defense systems to create a multilayered air defense network.

Venezuela has already purchased 12 Tor-M1 air defense systems, a number of ZU-23-2 anti-aircraft guns and Igla-S portable short-range air defense systems from Russia.

The S-300PMU-1 (SA-20 Gargoyle) is an extended range version of S-300PMU with a limited anti-ballistic missile capability.

Korotchenko said that if the S-300 deal with Venezuela goes through, Caracas should pay cash for the missiles, rather than take another loan from Russia.

"The S-300 is a very good product and Venezuela should pay the full amount in cash, as the country's budget has enough funds to cover the deal," Korotchenko said.

Moscow has already provided Caracas with several loans to buy Russian-made weaponry, including a recent \$2.2-mln loan on the purchase of 92 T-72M1M tanks, the Smerch multiple-launch rocket systems and other military equipment.

MOSCOW, October 15 (RIA Novosti)

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20101015/160963585.html

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National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) News

NNSA Authorizes Pantex to Begin Dismantlement of B53

Thursday, October 14, 2010

The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) today announced that it has authorized its Pantex Plant in Amarillo, Texas, to begin dismantlement of the B53 weapons system.

The NNSA completed an extensive safety review that included approval of a Documented Safety Analysis and completion of a Nuclear Explosive Safety Study. This authorization means NNSA can now perform work on all weapons.

“Gaining authorization to begin dismantlement of the B53 is a significant step forward for NNSA and the nation,” said NNSA Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs Don Cook. “It confirms NNSA’s commitment to support President Obama’s goal of reducing the number of nuclear weapons and their role in the U.S. national security strategy. Completion of the SS-21 project for the B53 marks the first time in over a decade that NNSA has the required authorizations in place to work on all nuclear weapon types in our nation’s inventory.”

The B53 weapons system, which was introduced into the stockpile in 1962, served a key role in the United States’ nuclear deterrent until its final retirement in 1997. The B53 was built at Iowa Army Ammunition Plant in Burlington, Iowa. The B53 is one of the longest lived weapons ever fielded. This megaton-class weapon is about the size of a mini-van and weighs approximately 10,000 pounds. Its sheer size and weight provided many challenges for the project team responsible for developing a dismantlement process that meets the requirements of NNSA’s Seamless Safety for the 21st Century (SS-21) process.

The dismantlement of the B53 weapon system is consistent with President Obama’s goal of reducing the number of nuclear weapons. In a speech last April in Prague, the President said “we will reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy and urge others to do the same.”

As a key part of its national security mission, NNSA is responsible for safely dismantling weapons that are no longer needed and disposing of the excess material and components. The dismantlement process includes four steps: retiring a weapon from service; returning it to NNSA’s Pantex Plant; taking it apart by physically separating the high explosives from the special nuclear material; and processing the material and components, reuse, demilitarization, sanitization, recycling, and ultimate disposal.

http://www.yournuclearnews.com/nnsa+authorizes+pantex+to+begin+dismantlement+of+b53_55243.html

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Center for Infectious Disease Research & Policy (CIDRAP) News

HHS Guidance Aims to Prevent Misuse of Synthetic DNA

Robert Roos, News Editor
October 13, 2010

(CIDRAP News) – Federal health officials today released guidance on how companies that supply synthetic DNA should screen orders to guard against attempts by groups or individuals to use the materials to create dangerous organisms.

The guidance, titled "Screening Framework Guidance for Providers of Synthetic Double-Stranded DNA," aims to limit the risk that synthetic DNA will be deliberately misused without unduly hampering beneficial uses, the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) said in announcing it.

The document calls on suppliers to screen both customers and the DNA sequences they order, and to investigate further if those steps raise any concerns.

Synthetic biology "is poised to become the next great transforming technology for the life sciences and beyond," the guidance states. "Synthetic biology is not constrained by the requirement of using existing genetic material and thus has great potential to be used to generate organisms, both currently existing and novel, including pathogens that could threaten public health, agriculture, plants, animals, the environment, or materiel."

In a press release, HHS officials said synthetic DNA is becoming a key material used in the life sciences and biotechnology for various purposes, including fighting disease.

"While there are significant potential benefits, synthetic DNA could potentially be used to recreate dangerous organisms that are covered under existing regulations," HHS stated. "As such, development of technologies utilizing synthetic DNA must be encouraged in a safe and secure manner."

The guidance calls on providers to screen customers to establish the legitimacy of groups, confirm the identity of individuals, spot any "red flags," and conform with US trade restrictions and export control regulations.

Providers are also advised to screen the sequences ordered to determine if they are "sequences of concern." If they are, providers are encouraged to take follow-up steps to determine whether filling the order would raise concern.

If follow-up screening doesn't resolve concerns about a customer or an order, providers should contact the federal government for information and assistance, the guidance says.

The guidance was developed by an interagency working group, which consulted with representatives of industry, academia, and federal agencies involved in synthetic DNA policy, and also gathered public input, HHS said. The working group will review the guidance regularly and revise it as needed.

"This guidance is an important step in ensuring that synthetic DNA is used to promote, not threaten, public health," said Dr. Nicole Lurie, HHS assistant secretary for preparedness and response, in the HHS release. "The guidance also recognizes the steps industry has taken proactively to address potential biosecurity risks and seeks to minimize negative impacts on research and business."

<http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/cidrap/content/bt/bioprep/news/oct1310screening.html>

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Global Security Newswire

Mathematic Formula May Offer Insight to States' Nuclear Intentions

Thursday, October 14, 2010

By Rachel Oswald

WASHINGTON -- A mathematical model that addresses factors such as a nation's technological capabilities, economic resources and geopolitical standing could eventually help determine whether that state would pursue a nuclear weapons capability, according to one U.S. academic (see *GSN*, June 3).

Man-Sung Yim, an associate nuclear engineering professor at North Carolina State University, briefed a Washington audience last week on the progress he and colleagues have made in devising a mathematical formula that could one day aid negotiations on atomic trade agreements or international monitoring of nations' nuclear programs.

The North Carolina research team is the latest group in recent years to use quantitative formulas in hopes of forecasting the likelihood of nuclear proliferation, according to an overview paper by Yim and his colleagues. The system prepared in Raleigh employs 46 variables grouped within five datasets, all of which the model uses to issue a number indicating the likelihood of proliferation within a specific time frame.

After four years of work, the formula remains a work in progress, Yim said at an event sponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

"I don't claim that this model has reached a level of robustness that is ready for policy-making. I would be very careful of that," he said.

Researchers devised a common scenario in which a country would weigh producing nuclear weapons through the covert application of some civilian atomic sites to military purposes.

The model has been applied to more than 114 nations including Egypt, Libya, Turkey and Syria. Its ability to predict a nation's propensity for nuclear proliferation had varying levels of accuracy when compared to that state's actual atomic track record, according to Yim.

Due to diplomatic sensitivities and concerns the model was not yet strong enough to make definitive assertions, Yim declined to say whether the formula indicated that particular nations were disposed toward seeking a strategic weapons capability.

Five open-source sets of data on nations were used in developing the formula: economic development; security environment and international standing; political development; nuclear technological capacity; and compliance with international nuclear nonproliferation norms.

Economic development, technological capacity and security environment were all relatively equal in importance under the model in determining a state's propensity to seek nuclear weapons. Compliance with the nonproliferation regime and political development respectively fell a distant second and third.

Yim and his colleagues developed four classification categories for nations. Zeros were given to countries that showed "no noticeable interest in nuclear weapons"; governments that were found likely to "explore" building a strategic capacity were placed on Level 1; states that were disposed to actively "pursue" nuclear arms were classified under Level 2; and nations determined likely to take the final step of "acquiring" a strategic arsenal were listed under Level 3.

Each dataset contained a number of variables -- from four for adherence to nuclear nonproliferation guidelines to 24 for nuclear capabilities -- that further helped determine which proliferation level the nation landed in and its propensity to move up or down on the spectrum.

Strong promoters of nuclear proliferation at the “pursue” and “acquire” levels included the number of historic rivalries a country had with other nations and the frequency with which foreign states were called on to intervene and resolve disputes. However, enduring rivalries acted as a notable inhibitor against a nation entering the “explore” phase -- possibly because a government would not want to introduce such a high-voltage development into an already tense situation.

Membership in the International Atomic Energy Agency acted as a promoter of a state’s decision to seek nuclear weapons at all three of the development stages -- presumably due to the access to advanced nuclear technology that IAEA members receive. Ratification of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, on the other hand, acted as a very slight inhibitor of proliferation at all levels.

The presence of uranium deposits in a nation acted as a very heavy promoter of nuclear proliferation at all levels. Possession of heavy-water research reactors also acted as a strong encourager.

Some factors that tended to discourage nuclear proliferation in the “explore” stage switched to promoters when a country reached the later phases of “pursue” or “acquire.” An economic policy that was open to foreign trade tended to inhibit nations from researching and developing nuclear weapons but then encouraged countries to go the last step of acquiring a deterrent.

Gross Domestic Product “is an inhibitor at the beginning but as the size of the economy grows it could provide a promoting effect,” Yim told *Global Security Newswire*. Likewise, “economic openness is an inhibitor [initially] as a society aspires to be a good citizen that wants access to the global economy.”

A very low national GDP was determined to generally discourage governments from entering Level 1. As they experienced some economic development, though, an increase in industrial capacity contributed to the newfound ability to “explore” nuclear weapons. Rising individual GDP, however, tended to more powerfully counteract proliferation at Levels 2 and 3 than a nation’s overall GDP -- seemingly because as a population becomes more economically empowered, they are more prone to look askance on practices that could imperil their wealth.

“As the people become wealthy and become accustomed to a certain quality of life, you don’t want nuclear weapons,” Yim explained.

He noted that the current formula does not yet include potentially important variables such as export controls established on a country, its access to dual-use technology or foreign assistance on sensitive technology. Those factors could be added later, Yim said.

Failures of the model to accurately predict whether a country would pursue nuclear weapons were attributed to the absence of key variables, such as political psychology -- the study of how a populace’s unique psychology influences its political decisions, Yim said.

For example, under the model Turkey at one time displayed many of the indicators of a country inclined toward nuclear weapons development. However, the nation’s internal politics and aspirations to European Union membership -- among other factors -- lead Ankara to make the strategic decision not to pursue nuclear arms, according to Yim.

To strengthen the formula, Yim said he and his colleagues are seeking help from political scientists who could help them appropriately factor in such variants as corruption, political psychology and human resources.

The lack of up-to-date data on some nations also undermined the formula’s accuracy. Outdated information for both Syria and Myanmar contributed to inaccurate readings on the two countries which failed to predict recent reported proliferation events in both countries.

In 2007, an Israeli airstrike destroyed a suspected partially completed military nuclear reactor in Syria and this year a dissident Burmese group released a report that used smuggled documents and photographs to assert the Southeast Asian state was building a nuclear weapons program.

Yim speculated that when the model is sufficiently robust it could be used as a tool by the United Nation’s nuclear watchdog in identifying nations that might require heightened monitoring to ensure civilian atomic programs are not turned toward military purposes,

The formula could also aid governments in deciding whether to permit the export of advanced fuel enrichment and reprocessing technologies to certain foreign nations (see *GSN*, Oct. 8). He emphasized that the formula is seen as a potential aid for decision-makers but not something to be used as the explicit basis for foreign policy.

Yim did not say when the formula might be ready for use by policy-makers.

U.S. State Department spokesman Andy Laine said by e-mail that quantitative models do not play a role in the diplomatic branch's decisions on civilian atomic trade pacts.

http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20101014_4754.php

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New York Times

OPINION

International Herald Tribune Op-Ed Contributor

October 12, 2010

NATO Needs a Missile Defense

By ANDERS FOGH RASMUSSEN

To most people in Europe, the threat of missile attack is rarely on their radar. Of those who do think about it, some wonder about the cost; or about whether there really is a threat; or about whether missile defense actually works.

But next month, NATO's leaders will meet in Lisbon and decide whether the alliance should build a missile defense for Europe. They will make that important decision based on the answers to some fundamental questions.

•Is there a threat?

In a word: yes. Missiles pose an increasing threat to our populations, territory and deployed forces. Over 30 countries have or are acquiring missiles that could be used to carry not just conventional warheads, but also weapons of mass destruction. Some of those missiles can already reach European cities, and the problem will only get worse.

The proliferation of these capabilities does not necessarily mean there is an immediate intent to attack us. It does mean, however, that we have a responsibility to be able to protect our populations. We cannot afford to have even one of our cities hit. Nor can we afford to be held hostage by the threat of an attack.

•Will missile defense work?

Building effective missile defense is challenging, but it can be done. We are now able to field mature systems that have been successfully tested. More-over, NATO has long experience in the development and operation of integrated air defense systems. We are already working to provide missile defense for the protection of our troops deployed on operations. By expanding this program and connecting it with the United States' missile defenses, NATO would be able to defend European populations and territory from missile attack as well.

•How much will it cost?

Missile defense won't be cheap, but neither will it break the bank. The current NATO program to provide a NATO missile defense system for troops deployed on operations is costing €800 million spread over 14 years, and shared by all allies. For less than €200 million more from our common budget, over 10 years, this program could be expanded to enable NATO to defend European populations and territory.

At a time of budgetary constraint, this is a lot of defense at an affordable price. With a relatively small investment, all the allies could plug into the multi-billion-dollar United States system, share the benefits of increased security, and demonstrate a shared commitment to our mutual defense. That is an attractive return on investment.

•What are the benefits?

In military terms, an integrated missile defense system would offer far greater overall capability than that offered by the individual national systems. By sharing data across the whole system, we would have a common picture of what is happening in our airspace. By linking together the systems, we would get multiple, coordinated opportunities to stop an incoming missile, rather than individual nations going it alone.

The political benefits are equally significant. It would be a clear demonstration of allied solidarity and burden-sharing in the face of a common threat. And it would offer opportunities for genuine cooperation with Russia. NATO-Russia cooperation on missile defense would finally, and firmly, herald a genuinely new era of cooperation under a common Euro-Atlantic security roof.

My conclusion is clear. We need to protect our populations and territories from the threat posed by the proliferation of missiles. NATO can do it, and at an affordable cost. The Lisbon summit should be the occasion for NATO to make the decision to expand the capability to protect our populations and territories — and, at the same time, reach out to Russia to cooperate with us and share the benefits.

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http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/13/opinion/13iht-edrasmussen.html?_r=4

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