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Moscow Times – Russia

Kosachev Says START Pact at Risk

18 October 2010

Reuters

MARRAKESH, Morocco — The New START nuclear arms treaty between Russia and the United States could collapse unless Washington ratifies it before next month's elections change the Senate's composition, a senior State Duma deputy said.

Konstantin Kosachev, head of the Duma's International Affairs Committee, said he remained hopeful that the Senate could ratify the treaty in the so-called lame duck session, when it reconvenes after the Nov. 2 congressional elections but before newly elected senators take up their seats.

"If for whatever reason — political, technical — that does not happen ... then I think the agreement will have problems from the point of view of ratification, very big problems," Kosachev said late Saturday on the sidelines of the World Policy Conference in Morocco.

Kosachev said if Republicans made big gains in the Senate in next month's election, as many opinion polls suggest, it would not be possible to garner the two-thirds vote needed to ratify the new treaty.

"Many will be in principle against agreeing on anything with Russia. In that case we will have to start from scratch. That is the worst-case scenario — completely awful. For now, I do not want to believe in it," he said.

Some Republican senators say they worry that the new treaty may limit U.S. missile defenses, and some want U.S. President Barack Obama to promise to spend more money modernizing the nuclear weapons that remain.

President Dmitry Medvedev has submitted the treaty to the Duma, but he told deputies not to ratify the agreement before the full U.S. Senate has approved it.

"For now, I am disappointed with how all this is going, but I am optimistic because there are very good chances that it will be ratified in the lame duck session," Kosachev said.

But he said, "If it collapses just because of internal political considerations of the United States, that would be very bad."

The signing of the new START treaty in April was a step toward Obama's goal of "resetting" relations with the Kremlin, so its derailment would be a big setback for the White House's foreign policy agenda.

The agreement will cut strategic nuclear arsenals deployed by the former Cold War foes by 30 percent within seven years but leave each with enough to destroy the other. Its predecessor treaty expired in December last year.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/kosachev-says-start-pact-at-risk/420399.html>

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Press TV – Iran

Ahmadinejad Stresses N-Talk Conditions

Sunday, October 17, 2010

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad stresses the importance of observing the Islamic Republic's previous preconditions for holding talks with the P5+1.

"They should determine whether they are committed to regulations of the (International Atomic Energy) Agency (IAEA)," said Ahmadinejad in an address to the people of the northwestern Iranian province of Ardebil on Sunday.

The Iranian chief executive added that the P5+1 countries should announce whether their objectives of talks are friendship and cooperation with Iran or enmity towards the Islamic Republic.

"You should say whether you are following rational and regulations in talks or intend to issue sanctions," he said.

President Ahmadinejad also urged the P5+1 countries to announce their views about Israel's nuclear bombs.

He said the group's silence on the issue means it is not committed to IAEA regulations and supports Israel's nuclear missiles, while it does not follow wisdom and friendship in talks.

"Iran will hold talks in another way with those who spoke to the country with hostility," the chief executive reiterated.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/147064.html>

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Press TV – Iran
Sunday, October 17, 2010

Ahmadinejad Urges Fair Nuclear Talks

After the EU announced the date for a new round of nuclear talks between Iran and the P5+1, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad says the talks should be based on justice.

President Ahmadinejad in an address to the people of the northwestern Iranian province of Ardebil on Sunday said the Islamic Republic had previously expressed readiness to hold talks over its nuclear energy program.

"Holding talks with Iran is the best choice for you. You have no other option. All the other ways are closed. You know the fact very well," he added.

The Iranian chief executive, however, stressed that the talks should be held based on justice and respect.

"They thought they can weaken the Iranian nation through imposing sanctions and posing threats, but Iranians have showed integrity, convergence and strength," he emphasized.

"The Iranian nation will not give up an iota of its international rights," he went on to say.

President Ahmadinejad's remarks came after European Union foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton announced that the new round of nuclear talks between Iran and the P5+1 group will take place from November 15 to 18.

Ashton's spokesman, Darren Ennis, said on Saturday that the talks will most probably take place in the Austrian capital, Vienna.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/147053.html>

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Reuters.com

Crisis over Iran atom Work may Peak in 2011: Expert

Monday, October 18, 2010
By Simon Cameron-Moore

ISTANBUL (Reuters) - The dispute over Iran's nuclear programme risks turning into an all-out crisis next year unless Tehran shows seriousness in negotiations expected to resume next month with world powers, an expert on nuclear diplomacy said.

Iran could face further U.N. sanctions and its mounting uranium stockpile could prompt a military strike by arch-foe Israel, Mark Fitzpatrick, an Iran watcher at the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies, told Reuters in an interview in Istanbul.

"I think we could be in an out and out crisis in a year's time," Fitzpatrick said.

Though no firm dates have been given, Iran's negotiators are expected to meet with representatives of the five members of the Security Council and Germany -- the so-called P5+1 -- in Vienna next month, Fitzpatrick said.

The former U.S. diplomat said he believed more foot-dragging by Iran on discussing curbs on its nuclear programme will lead to fresh moves to impose additional U.N. economic sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

Israel could launch a military strike even before Tehran makes a decisive step toward enriching uranium to weapons grade. Military action by Israel or the United States would raise the specter of wider conflict in the Middle East.

SPOOKING ISRAEL

"My worry is that Iran won't overtly cross the line, but that it will miscalculate how close it can get before it crosses an Israeli tripwire," said Fitzpatrick.

"And I'm not sure Iran knows where Israel's tripwires are. I'm not sure Israel knows where its tripwires are," he said.

Iran has dived with those risks for years, but the margins for error are becoming dangerously fine, he said.

Iran's successful tests of the Sajjil, a solid-fueled ballistic missile with a range of more than 2,000 km, that can be fired from deep inside Iranian territory at targets in Israel, or potentially regional rival Saudi Arabia, have heightened a sense of growing unease.

Picking his words carefully to avoid assuming that Iran had already made up its mind to arm the Sajjil with a nuclear payload, Fitzpatrick said such missiles were regarded as only strategically important for delivering nuclear weapons.

"Iran's the only country that has developed these kind of missiles with a range of 2,000 km or more that hasn't developed nuclear weapons at the same time. So that's another reason why there's concern about Iran's intention."

Israel has not declared itself a nuclear weapons state but is assumed to be one.

Fitzpatrick reckons the Jewish state has around 200 nuclear weapons, and should eventually submit to limits in order to secure peace in the wider Middle East. But he said Israel's arsenal shouldn't be used to argue for Iran's right to violate international accords by building nuclear weapons capability.

Iran has enough low enriched uranium (LEU) to make two nuclear weapons, if it decided to enrich to weapons grade, according to western nuclear analysts. By next year it could make as many as five.

Fitzpatrick expected Iran to want to try to make world powers revive an already rejected offer, brokered with Turkey and Brazil in May, to swap some 1,200 kg of its stockpile of LEU for fuel rods for use in Tehran's Medical Research Reactor.

When it was first proposed a year ago that would have represented 75 percent of Iran's stockpile, but now it amounts to about 40 percent devaluing the suggested swap as a confidence building measure.

Editing by Charles Dick

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE69H4UG20101018>

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Xinhua News – China

October 19, 2010

China Calls for Restarting Iran Nuclear Talks

BEIJING, Oct. 19 (Xinhua) -- China on Tuesday called for parties to restart talks over the Iran nuclear issue after the Iranian president welcomed such a move.

"Under the current circumstances, all relevant parties should increase diplomatic efforts and restart the Iran nuclear talks for a comprehensive, long-term and proper solution," Foreign Ministry spokesman Ma Zhaoxu told a regular news briefing.

"China has always advocated a peaceful resolution of the issue through dialogue and negotiations," said Ma.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on Sunday Iran was ready to talk with the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany (G5+1) over its nuclear energy program if preconditions were met.

Talks between Iran and the six countries were halted last October.

On Friday, Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki welcomed EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton's offer for the resumption of talks over Iran's nuclear energy program, according to Press TV.

Ashton on Thursday suggested a new round of talks with Iran in November in Vienna, capital of Austria.

Western countries have called on Tehran to halt its sensitive nuclear program but the country has continued with it insisting that its nuclear activities are for civilian purposes only.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-10/19/c_13565281.htm

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Press TV – Iran

Iran Steps up Uranium Exploration

Monday, October 19, 2010

Amid efforts aimed at nuclear self-sufficiency, Iran's top nuclear official has announced the inauguration of uranium exploration projects in the country.

"Since launching the Bushehr nuclear power plant, we have prioritized uranium exploration to be able to completely meet our [fuel] demands," Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Ali Akbar Salehi said on Monday.

"Technical and executive operations have been launched and with the help of President [Mahmoud Ahmadinejad], we now have financial and technical support," Mehr News Agency quoted Salehi as saying.

The AEOI chief said the new financial backing has helped speed up the operations, adding that most of exploration efforts focused on central and southern parts of Iran.

"The country has been divided into four parts and while we are exploring all areas, most of the exploration efforts concentrate on central and southern regions," Salehi noted.

The official said he could not elaborate more on the projects until the assessment phase was complete.

Iran blames the West, especially the six world powers involved in nuclear negotiations -- Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the US -- for snubbing diplomacy efforts to end the nuclear fuel row.

On May 17, Iran, Brazil, and Turkey signed a nuclear fuel swap declaration, under which Tehran announced readiness to swap 1,200 kg of its low-enriched uranium on Turkish soil for fuel for a medical research reactor.

The UN Security Council cold-shouldered the declaration, imposing a fourth round of sanctions against Iranian financial and military sectors -- followed by US and EU unilateral measures.

Iranian officials have stepped up efforts to domestically provide nuclear fuel for the country's facilities.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/147223.html>

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Detroit News

North Korea Threatens '1,000-Fold' Increase in Weapons

By Kwang-Tae Kim, Associated Press

Saturday, October 16, 2010

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korean media on Saturday threatened a "1,000-fold" military buildup as the United States ruled out lifting sanctions to try to coax the North into resuming talks aimed at its nuclear weapons programs.

Last year, North Korea quit the nuclear disarmament talks and later tested an atomic device that drew tightened U.N. sanctions.

But North Korea said Saturday it is willing to rejoin the negotiations and remains committed to implementing a September 2005 accord on abandoning its nuclear program in exchange for aid and security guarantees. Instead, it accused the United States and other participants of holding back the six-nation talks.

North Korea "is ready for the resumption of the ... talks but decided not to go hasty but to make ceaseless patient efforts now that the U.S. and some other participating countries are not ready for them," the country's Foreign Ministry said late Saturday in a statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency.

The talks involve the two Koreas, the U.S., China, Japan and Russia.

The statement came after North Korea's first vice foreign minister, Kim Kye Gwan, returned home from a five-day trip to China, the North's key ally.

Kim said after meeting with Chinese nuclear envoy Wu Dawei on Friday that his country would not return to the disarmament talks unless sanctions are lifted, according to South Korea's Yonhap news agency.

U.S. State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley responded Friday that the sanctions exist because North Korea consistently has failed to live up to its international obligations. "We have no intention of removing those sanctions as an enticement for dialogue," he told reporters.

Saturday's Minju Joson newspaper, part of North Korea's state-controlled media, said in a commentary that the country's war deterrent force will be strengthened "100- or 1,000-fold" as long as U.S. military threats persist, according to KCNA.

The North has often made similar threats. The latest one came two days after South Korea wrapped up naval drills with the U.S., Australia and Japan aimed at intercepting illicit weapon shipments in a U.S.-led program targeting nations such as North Korea.

Despite repeated assurances from Washington, the North believes any military drills involving the U.S. are aimed at an eventual invasion. The naval drills were "an undisguised military provocation and declaration of a war" against North Korea, the North's main Rodong Sinmun newspaper said in a commentary carried by KCNA.

This week's one-day maneuvers were Seoul's first active participation in the Proliferation Security Initiative, aimed at deterring trade in weapons of mass destruction and missiles by states including North Korea and Iran.

Separately, the South Korean and the U.S. air forces kicked off annual drills Friday, which they say are aimed at improving their combined combat capabilities. The drills will last for a week, according to Seoul's Defense Ministry.

North Korea's latest threats continue a trend of mixed messages. The North has recently reached out to South Korea and called for talks on the resumption of stalled tours to a resort inside North Korea. The two sides have also agreed to hold the first reunions in a year later this month for families divided by the Korean War.

<http://www.detroitnews.com/article/20101016/NATION/10160383/1361/North-Korea-threatens--1-000-fold--increase-in-weapons>

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Yonhap News – South Korea

October 16, 2010

U.S. Not to Lift Sanctions on N. Korea for 6-Ways Talks Reopening: State Dept.

By Hwang Doo-hyong

WASHINGTON, Oct. 15 (Yonhap) -- The United States said Friday it will not lift sanctions on North Korea to lure the North back to the six-party talks on its nuclear dismantlement.

"We have no intention of removing those sanctions as an enticement for dialogue," State Department spokesman Philip Crowley said. "There are sanctions against North Korea. Those sanctions exist for very good reason -- because North Korea consistently has failed to live up to its international obligations."

Crowley was responding to remarks by North Korea's chief nuclear envoy, Kim Kye-gwan, that Pyongyang will not return to the six-party talks unless Washington removes the sanctions imposed under U.N. resolutions adopted early last year when the North detonated its second nuclear device and tested a suspected long-range missile.

Kim made his remarks after meeting with his Chinese counterpart, Wu Dawei, and other officials in Beijing earlier in the day.

He flew to China as North Korea launched a massive propaganda campaign for Kim Jong-un, the youngest son of leader Kim Jong-il and heir in an unprecedented third-generation power transition in a communist state.

Select foreign media were allowed to broadcast live the massive military parade and other events attended by Kim Jong-il and his son last week.

The 27-year-old heir was given the rank of four-star general and named vice chairman of the Central Military Commission of the North's ruling Workers' Party last month, and North Korea's state media have since then released video footage and photos of him attending major public events.

The media blitz comes as North Korea has made conflicting gestures on the foreign policy front.

Among the conciliatory moves are the North's invitation to foreign media, the proposal of a military dialogue with South Korea and talks on a new round of family reunions for those separated by the division of the Korean Peninsula. Pyongyang also returned seven crew members of a South Korean fishing boat caught along the sea border last month and requested aid to recover from recent floods.

On the other hand, North Korea recently began new construction at Yongbyon, north of its capital, Pyongyang, where a nuclear cooling tower was demolished in 2008 as part of the six-party process, apparently to resume extracting plutonium for nuclear bombs. The North is believed to have produced several nuclear warheads.

Kim Jong-un is said to be behind the effort to reopen the nuclear facilities and the torpedoing of a South Korean warship to rally support from the military.

Seoul and Washington have called on the North to apologize for the sinking of the Cheonan and show a commitment to denuclearization before returning to the nuclear talks. Pyongyang denies involvement in the sinking, which killed 46 sailors.

Meanwhile, the ailing North Korean leader visited China twice this year, in May and August, to rally Chinese support for the power transition.

Photos and TV footage of Kim Jong-il released in recent months show him limping on his left leg and hardly using his left arm. He apparently suffered a stroke in 2008.

Kim Kyong-hui, Kim Jong-il's sister, and her husband, Jang Song-thaek, and several other confidants to the North Korean leader have recently been promoted to key party and military posts amid suspicion they intend to help groom Jong-un.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2010/10/16/13/0301000000AEN20101016000100315F.HTML>

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Korea Times – South Korea
October 17, 2010

NK Reaffirms Plan to Return to 6-Party Talks

By Kim Se-jeong

North Korea reaffirmed its determination to return to the six-party talks to end the communist state's nuclear programs.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) announced Saturday that "there's no change in our position that we want to proceed with the Sept. 19 agreement to reach the goal of denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula."

The agreement was reached in 2005, when North Korea agreed to abandon nuclear programs and return to the Non-Proliferation Treaty in exchange for economic and political rewards.

"The issue of the light water reactors will be discussed at an appropriate time," as well, according to the agreement.

Saturday's statement came on the same day that North Korean First Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan returned home from China.

He met the Chinese vice foreign minister and chief negotiator of the six-party talks, Wu Dawei, and told him Pyongyang was willing to restart the meetings. He also met with Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi.

The KCNA also said, "We are ready to resume the negotiation, whereas some countries including the United States don't seem to be so. We will be patiently working toward the resumption."

The six-party talks were halted in April last year when North Korea began a boycott of them to protests U.N. sanctions.

The North's recent turnaround is believed to be a result of intensified international sanctions against the regime.

The sense of isolation has grown more apparent following the sinking of the South Korean Navy ship Cheonan in March.

The joint investigation into the cause of the sinking concluded that it was a torpedo from a North Korean submarine that sank the ship.

Demanding a formal apology from Pyongyang, which only denies the claim as groundless, the South not only protested restarting the nuclear talks but discontinued bilateral trade.

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2010/10/116_74679.html

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The West Australian – Australia

S.Korea Says N.Korea's Peace Gestures Not Sincere

Agence France-Presse (AFP)
October 18, 2010

SEOUL (AFP) - South Korea expressed scepticism Monday about North Korea's recent peace overtures as police said they are on high alert for any attempts by the communist state to disrupt the upcoming G20 summit.

A record 50,000 police will be deployed to guard the November 11-12 Group of 20 gathering against possible threats from the North, international terrorists or violent protesters, National Police Agency chief Cho Hyun-Oh told reporters.

"Recently international terrorism is on the rise and risks related to North Korea still remain," Cho said.

His agency said in a statement Seoul is concerned about "unpredictable situations" during the start of the North's power transfer from leader Kim Jong-Il to his youngest son Jong-Un.

Unification Minister Hyun In-Taek, in an interview with Monday's JoongAng Daily, said Pyongyang has made "incredibly speedy" moves to put the succession process in place.

But he cautioned that this may not bring political stability in the nuclear-armed nation.

Relations have been icy since Seoul accused Pyongyang of a deadly torpedo attack in March on a South Korean warship, a charge it denies.

The North in recent weeks has made some conciliatory gestures, including agreeing a new round of temporary reunions for separated families late this month.

But Hyun, in remarks confirmed by his ministry, said the North "cannot succeed in changing this state of affairs through insincere warm gestures".

The minister said possible summit talks could be an important means of securing peace and stability but the North must prove its sincerity.

Media reports say the two sides held secret talks last year about another summit, following the 2000 and 2007 events, but discussions broke down.

"The questions we have now are when might they (summit talks) be held and what can be accomplished at a summit," Hyun said.

"Another big question is whether North Korea is approaching the goal with sincerity, which could affect our decision on whether to hold the talks.

"However, we have not noticed that sincerity yet."

He cited the North's bid to link family reunions to the restarting of commercial cross-border tours to the Mount Kumgang resort in the North.

The South halted the tours after a North Korean soldier shot dead a South Korean visitor there in July 2008.

It has demanded an investigation and safety guarantees before resuming them and says the issue is not linked to family reunions.

The lucrative tours are unlikely to resume soon, Hyun said, because of what he called the North's intransigence on safety measures.

Hyun said the South would watch carefully to see whether the eventual succession was a success or not.

Jong-Un was last month appointed a four-star general and given powerful ruling party posts, confirming his status.

"How quickly political stability may come about in the next regime has yet to be seen, as well as the stabilisation of North Korea's economy and society," Hyun said, describing the process at last month's ruling party meeting as "incredibly speedy and unexpected".

In another apparent reconciliatory move, airport officials from South and North re-established a hotline Monday following a proposal from the North.

The North disconnected the line between the two countries' main airports after the South announced reprisals in May following the sinking of the warship.

On Saturday Pyongyang expressed willingness in principle to rejoin stalled six-nation nuclear disarmament talks.

But foreign ministry spokesman Kim Young-Sun said tangible actions were needed. "It is important for the North to prove its genuine intention for denuclearisation," he said.

<http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/-/world/8153412/s-korea-says-n-koreas-peace-gestures-not-sincere/>

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Korea Times – South Korea
19 October 19, 2010

Did NK Conduct 3rd Nuclear Test in May?

By Lee Tae-hoon

A lawmaker of the governing Grand National Party (GNP) claimed Tuesday that North Korea conducted its third nuclear test this year, noting that an unusually high level of a rare gas's radioactive isotope was detected in an eastern coastal town near the inter-Korean border on May 15.

"Xenon-135 is a radioactive element produced only by nuclear fission. And what is also certain is that the gas came from North, considering the direction of the wind and air currents at the time," Rep. Kim Seon-dong said.

Kim said the Korea Institute of Nuclear Safety (KINS) detected 2.45 mBq/m³ of xenon-133 and 10.01 mBq/m³ of xenon-135, the highest level recorded since the state-run nuclear regulatory body began operating Swedish Unattended Noble Gas Analyzers (SAUNA).

"The concentration ratio of the noble gas at its monitoring station in Geojin, Gangwon Province had remained below 0.55 since 2007, but suddenly jumped to 4.085 at 2:07 a.m. on May 15," he said.

The Korea Institute of Nuclear Safety (KINS) confirmed that it detected a high concentration of xenon-135, but declined to comment further on the possibility of a nuclear test.

"Our job is analyzing data, not drawing a conclusion to such a complicated matter," an official of the KINS said, complaining that lawmaker Kim compromised classified information to back his claim.

Many believed only the U.S. forces have the ability and means to detect the radioactive fission products on the Korean Peninsula.

The official, asking for anonymity, said that the military ruled out the possibility of a nuclear test in the North in late May as no major seismic activity was spotted at the time.

However, Lee Chun-ho, an aide to Rep. Kim, told The Korea Times that the government is believed to have detected an earthquake with magnitude 3 or lower three times on May 12.

On May 12, the North's state-run newspaper the Rodong Sinmun reported that Pyongyang successfully carried out a nuclear fusion reaction to help develop clean energy.

Lee suspects that the Korean and U.S. intelligence agencies may have intentionally covered up the truth as they do not want to acknowledge the North's technological breakthrough.

Kim Tae-woo, a senior researcher at the Korea Institute for Defense Analyses, also told the paper that such a high level of xenon-135 and 133 could have only been produced as a result of a nuclear test.

However, professor Hwang Il-soon, a nuclear materials scientist at Seoul National University, raised the possibility that the North could have intentionally leaked the noble gas that it stored from past nuclear tests or reprocessing.

"Given that only xenon was detected and no major seismic activity was spotted, the North may have released xenon it had kept to make others believe it had conducted a nuclear test," Hwang said.

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2010/10/116_74808.html

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Times of India – India

Osama in Northwest Pakistan under ISI Protection: Report

Press Trust of India

Washington, October 18, 2010

World's most wanted terrorists Osama bin Laden and his deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri may be hiding close to each other in houses in northwest Pakistan, protected by some members of ISI, a media report said today. The two top al-Qaeda commanders may not be together and are not living in caves as foreseen by American experts to evade detection, the CNN reported quoting a top NATO officer based in Afghanistan.

"Nobody in al-Qaeda is living in a cave," said the official, who declined to be named because of the sensitivity of the intelligence matters involved, CNN said.

Rather, al-Qaeda's top leadership is believed to be living in relative comfort, protected by locals and some members of the Pakistani intelligence services ISI, the official said.

Pakistan has repeatedly denied protecting members of the al-Qaeda leadership.

The official said the general region where Osama is likely to have moved around in recent years ranges from the mountainous Chitral area in the far northwest near the Chinese border, to the Kurram Valley which neighbors Afghanistan's Tora Bora, one of the Taliban strongholds during the US invasion in 2001.

Tora Bora is also the region from which Osama is believed to have escaped during a US bombing raid in late 2001. US officials have long said there have been no confirmed sightings of Osama or Zawahiri for several years.

The area that the official described covers hundreds of square miles of some of the most rugged terrain in Pakistan inhabited by fiercely independent tribes.

The official also confirmed the US assessment that Mullah Omar, the leader of the Taliban, has moved between the cities of Quetta and Karachi in Pakistan over the last several months.

The official would not discuss how the coalition has come to know any of this information, but he has access to some of the most sensitive information in the NATO alliance.

Pakistan's Interior Minister Rehman Malik today said that similar reports of bin Laden and Mullah Omar's whereabouts have proven false in the past.

Malik denied the two men are on Pakistani soil, but said that any information to the contrary should be shared with Pakistani officials so that they can take "immediate action" to arrest the pair, CNN reported.

The NATO official said hard core Taliban groups such as the Quetta Shura run by Mullah Omar, the Haqqanis, the HiG (Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin) and the Pakistani Taliban still could potentially muster as many as 30,000 fighters.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/pakistan/Osama-in-northwest-Pakistan-under-ISI-protection-Report/articleshow/6768868.cms>

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Global Security Newswire

White House Official Puts Pakistan at Top of Proliferation Threats

Tuesday, October 19, 2010

By Martin Matishak

WASHINGTON -- A senior White House adviser yesterday gave a sobering assessment of the nuclear nonproliferation challenges that face the Obama administration as it works toward a world free of atomic weapons (see *GSN*, Oct. 6).

"The thing that keeps me up at night? Pakistan," White House Coordinator for WMD Counterterrorism and Arms Control Gary Samore. "This is a country that is facing very serious internal and external security threats, has a dysfunctional political system [and] is seeking to expand its nuclear weapons program."

Recent satellite images show Pakistan has made significant progress toward completing its third heavy-water reactor at Khushab, even while the country is racked with insurgency and recovering from devastating floods. The nation is estimated to have as many as 80 nuclear warheads in its arsenal.

Samore said the United States has been "lucky" that nuclear war has not erupted between Pakistan and its atomically armed rival India, or that the civilian government in Islamabad has not lost control of its stockpile. However, "things could go very badly in South Asia very quickly," he said during a panel discussion at the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

"We have extremely limited policy tools to affect that," he told the audience. "We can't occupy countries and hope to secure all of their nuclear material. That's really beyond our capacity."

Samore later admitted his nightmare scenario is a "toss-up" between Pakistan falling into political chaos and North Korea selling its nuclear material and expertise to other countries.

The United States already suspects Pyongyang of helping Syria to construct a nuclear reactor for producing weapon-grade uranium, a charge Damascus has refuted (see *GSN*, Oct. 14). The site was bombed by Israel in 2007. Pyongyang is also alleged to be helping Myanmar develop a potential nuclear weapons program (see *GSN*, July 22).

North Korea and Pakistan are among only a "handful" of nations that hold nuclear materials and face the threat of government collapse, Samore said. The challenges such states pose to the international nonproliferation regime, though, are "very, very dramatic," he argued.

Samore said the United States would continue to work with Islamabad to improve the country's nuclear security by providing additional training or equipment.

"Obviously in the case of North Korea we can't do that," Samore said. "We are at the mercy of forces we have very little control over."

The isolated Stalinist state has conducted two nuclear test blasts to date and is believed to hold sufficient plutonium for about six weapons. It withdrew from six-nation talks on its nuclear program in April 2009 and is a widely recognized proliferator.

Samore noted that North Korea and Iran have a documented history of cooperation on ballistic missile systems. Tehran could easily request assistance for its nascent nuclear reactor program, which has experienced a string of setbacks, he said.

Claims by the Middle Eastern state that its nuclear activities have no military component are "a lie," he told the audience.

Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons "would have an utterly catastrophic effect" on the region, possibly triggering war if Israel attempted to bomb any facilities and potentially driving neighboring countries to seek their own atomic arsenals, according to Samore.

In addition, it would make President Obama's vision of a nuclear weapon-free world "almost impossible" because existing nuclear powers would not want to give up or reduce their stockpiles, the WMD coordinator said.

A nuclear Iran would also "undercut" the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and other "international instruments" for managing the use of atomic materials, according to Samore.

"Trying to stop Iran is my No. 1 job," he added, touting the administration's work obtaining additional economic sanctions against the Middle East nation (see related *GSN* story, today).

Iran, thus far, has shrugged off four U.N. Security Council sanctions resolutions aimed at curbing its uranium enrichment effort, along with unilateral actions by the United States and other nations.

For his part, Samore said he did not know if the latest economic punishment would quell Tehran's nuclear ambitions but that such efforts, as well as U.S. import and export controls, have slowed Iran's program by years.

The Inside Threat

Alongside proliferation concerns posed by nations, a potentially greater risk is the "insider threat" posed by professionals who decide to steal, sell or use nuclear or radiological substances they work with, Samore said. He acknowledged that there are certain countries the United States is concerned about but refrained from offering names.

"You need to have good personnel reliability programs and the challenge for us internationally is to convince other governments that that's the threat they really need to put resources against," he told the audience. "Once you establish a sort of baseline for physical security, it becomes much more about the people."

However, Samore stopped short of saying there should be universal standard for physical security and personnel reliability efforts for nuclear facilities around the globe.

"In a perfect world we would like to have universal standards, we would like to have an international organization that had the authority and the competence" to check and make sure governments had put in place adequate physical protection and personnel reliability programs, he said. "But that's not possible in this world."

He said countries often regard protecting their nuclear materials as a sovereign right and would be hesitant to join an international regime that would legally bind them to certain standards akin to International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards requirements for its member nations.

Rather than creating new treaties or institutions, the United States and other nuclear powers must work toward a more "consensual" system to provide security assistance to other countries, according to Samore.

"I wish it were otherwise, but that's the reality we're dealing with," he added.

To better address the threat, Obama this spring convened a two-day summit in Washington with 47 heads of state and dignitaries to discuss ways to improve nuclear security. Participants agreed to lock down the world's loose nuclear material within four years (see *GSN*, April 14).

Samore described the nuclear summit as "the best thing to happen" to him in the last year.

A second summit is scheduled for 2012 in South Korea. The administration expects to have four rounds of experts meetings before then, including one by the end of the calendar year in Buenos Aires.

Samore said that over the next four years he would like to see additional countries join existing international regimes that focus on atomic materials, such as the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. The 1980 compact establishes measures on the prevention, detection and punishment of offenses relating to nuclear material, according to an IAEA fact sheet.

He would also like to see the U.N.'s atomic watchdog strengthened in order to more actively provide security assistance and training to countries.

There is also more work that could be done to increase cooperation among the law enforcement and intelligence communities to better prevent cross-border nuclear smuggling, according to Samore. He did not elaborate or cite specific instances in which better cooperation would have helped.

Samore gave thanks that nuclear security is a far less contentious issue than others in his portfolio.

"Every government agrees that nuclear weapons and nuclear materials should be adequately protected so that terrorists or criminals can't get their hands on them," he said.

"Almost everything else I work on, whether it's nuclear disarmament or nonproliferation ... are highly contentious and there is no international consensus," Samore added.

While there might be disputes between countries over the likelihood of a nuclear security breach "everybody agrees that it's worth investing resources to make sure that nuclear weapons and materials don't fall out of government control."

http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20101019_7641.php

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Global Security Newswire

Russia Demands Details on NATO Antimissile Plan

Monday, Oct. 18, 2010

Russia asked NATO on Friday for additional details on an invitation for Moscow to collaborate with the military alliance on missile defense operations, Interfax reported (see *GSN*, Oct. 15).

NATO nations are expected to determine at a summit next month in Lisbon, Portugal, whether to formally include missile defense among alliance objectives, paving the way for a \$279 million effort to integrate and augment the antimissile systems of member countries. NATO has sought Russian collaboration on the project, which is intended to increase protection from ballistic missiles held by countries including Iran and North Korea (see *GSN*, Oct. 4).

"(The invitation to cooperate on missile defense) was a political invitation, formulated by the NATO secretary general in relation to Russia. But when we ask, time and again, what the technical parameters of this system are, what the zone of its deployment is, who the enemy will be and why missile threats have not been assessed before deploying anything, we never get an answer," Russian Ambassador to NATO Dmitry Rogozin said Friday in a communication with Brussels, Belgium, where high-level NATO officials held talks last week (Interfax I, Oct. 15).

Differences have persisted between NATO and Moscow over the relative significance of various nuclear and missile threats, Rogozin added.

"We have big problems in finishing off the review of common threats precisely on the issue of nonproliferation dossier and discussion of missile risks," he said.

"Unfortunately, we do have problems with our NATO colleagues already having branded Iran 'a bad guy.' We think that one must be more objective and look at all the countries that have weapons of mass destruction, conceal their possession and have vehicles for missile delivery of weapons of mass destruction," Rogozin said.

The ambassador denied the existence of the threats to Europe serving as the rationale for the proposed missile shield's creation.

"I want to say that for now it is enough to hold consultations and analyze missile challenges rather than panic and build something immediately," Rogozin said.

The official also questioned how alliance members would coordinate control of the system.

"Do you really think that you will be called, that you will be asked for advice, that you will manage to hold a NATO meeting and vote on the use of this system? Nothing of the kind. You have one button and 28 fingers. I even know which finger will press the button," he said.

"Therefore, missile defense is a strategic and purely individual thing, and this is a U.S. system on the European soil, and Europeans will not have the right to use and manage this system after a retaliatory strike," he said (Interfax II, Oct. 15).

Turkey last week joined Moscow in questioning the purpose of the planned antimissile system, the Xinhua News Agency reported.

"During the meeting in Brussels, we told the U.S. officials that Iran and Syria should not be cited as 'threats' for the NATO's planned missile shield," one Turkish Foreign Ministry official said.

Ankara has not finished analyzing the missile defense plan, Turkish Defense Minister Vecdi Gonul said Friday, adding his country was not under U.S. pressure related to the project.

Although talks on the matter were still taking place, "it should not be viewed as (Turkey's) reservation," Turkey's Anatolia News Agency quoted Gonul as saying.

Ankara was considering the compatibility of its military hardware with the proposed NATO missile shield, he said, adding that participating in the system could save his country money (Xinhua News Agency, Oct. 16).

http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20101018_7180.php

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Herald Scotland – U.K.

MoD Papers Reveal Catalogue of Nuclear Safety Failures

By Rob Edwards

17 October 2010

Potentially catastrophic lapses in nuclear weapons safety at the Clyde naval base have been exposed by secret Ministry of Defence reports released after a three-year freedom of information battle.

The handling of up to 200 nuclear warheads on Trident missiles at Faslane and Coulport near Helensburgh has been plagued by confusion, shortcomings and non-compliance with regulations, according to the MoD's internal safety watchdogs.

The MoD's nuclear weapon regulator Andy Moore warned: "The fragmentation of approaches to safety management issues does not engender confidence. This is a resource issue for a naval base that is heavily loaded and subject to funding constraints."

The ministry released a series of reports on the eve of an appeal to the UK Information Tribunal that threatened to expose multiple breaches of freedom of information law.

The MoD has been trying since 2007 to keep the reports, which give a unique insight into the managing of Britain's bomb, secret. Written in 2005 and 2006, they reveal dozens of problems ensuring the safety of the weapons programme.

The worst problems were centred at Faslane and Coulport. As well as a shortage of resources, there was "an apparent lack of understanding of the needs of regulators," said a report by Moore.

He said there were difficulties with the replacement of key warhead components and with the use of the controversial shiplift – which can lift a 16,000 tonne submarine out of the water. Moore added the issues had an "impact on Clyde's demonstrability of safety of nuclear weapons programme activities".

There was also a risk of "confusion of responsibilities" between the Clyde base and the commanders of submarines armed with Trident missiles.

While there had been improvements in some areas, he concluded that there was work to be done to bring the regulation of nuclear weapons up to scratch.

According to the independent nuclear consultant, John Large, the report showed military nuclear safety was weaker and less accountable than safety at nuclear power stations. "Let's hope that the coalition government's long-awaited spending review doesn't cut back further on critical nuclear safety funding," he said.

The MoD reports also reveal a litany of problems elsewhere in Britain's nuclear weapons programme. They include:

- Hazards from the nuclear bomb road convoys due to crew fatigue.
- Dangers that a warhead could leak radioactive tritium in an accident.
- An "uncertain" commitment to nuclear safety regulation by submarine commanders.
- Poor practice at the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston in Berkshire.
- The risk of people becoming contaminated in an accident with a nuclear submarine at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.

John Ainslie, the co-ordinator of the Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, said: "If the Nuclear Weapon Regulator lacks confidence in this system then the general public should be concerned. This is the most dangerous work undertaken anywhere in Britain, yet it appears to be regulated in a haphazard manner."

An MoD spokesman insisted its safety record was "as robust as possible".

Dangers revealed

A bullet fired by a Ministry of Defence (MoD) guard could detonate the high explosives in a nuclear bomb and spread plutonium across Scotland.

Documents from 1978 reveal a small arms attack on a nuclear warhead could result in an explosion "and a consequent spread of radioactive debris".

So when the MoD police decided to upgrade from pistols to a more powerful MP7 firearm made by the German arms company Heckler and Koch, the accidental explosion of a nuclear warhead had to be considered.

<http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/transport-environment/mod-papers-reveal-catalogue-of-nuclear-safety-failures-1.1061975>

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London Guardian – U.K.

MoD's Own Experts Reveal Nuclear Arms Safety Flaws

Row with US over arming system put Trident warheads at risk, papers reveal

By Rob Edwards

The Observer, Sunday, 17 October 2010

Dozens of potentially disastrous flaws in the safety regime for nuclear weapons have been exposed by secret Ministry of Defence reports seen by the *Observer*.

Safety procedures at the bomb factory at Aldermaston in Berkshire have been "poor", nuclear weapons convoys have suffered from "crew fatigue" and safety regulations have been ignored by nuclear submarine commanders, according to the MoD's internal safety watchdogs.

The reports, released after a three-year freedom of information battle, also show that the "intrinsic safety" of Trident nuclear warheads was put at risk by an argument between Britain and the United States. A new US-made "arming, fusing and firing" system being fitted on to warheads worried the MoD's nuclear weapon regulator, Andy Moore. There was a "medium risk that safety justifications will lack key information" and a need for "engagement with US on information supply", he warned.

A major fire in August in a high-explosive building at the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston had raised concerns about safety. Fire brigade logs showed that 20 fire engines and 95 crew had fought the blaze for almost nine hours.

Concerns have now been heightened by a series of damning reports from the MoD's nuclear safety regulators. The ministry has been trying to keep the reports secret since 2007, but last week it was forced to release them on the eve of an appeal to the UK Information Tribunal. The reports provide an unprecedented insight into the intensely secretive world of Britain's bomb. They reveal a series of problems with safety across the whole nuclear weapons programme.

The most critical is a 2005 report from Moore listing eight "issues and regulatory risks". There has been "slow progress in implementing the regulation framework for the nuclear weapons programme", he said. There was a problem with his authority at Aldermaston being "constrained" while a new contract for managing the site was being negotiated.

Moore had even greater problems with the Royal Naval commanders of the four Vanguard-class submarines armed with Trident nuclear missiles. There was confusion over their safety responsibilities, he said. The commitment of the commanders to respond to regulation was uncertain, he warned. "A recent reissue of a safety management plan fails to acknowledge the introduction of regulation or the existence of the regulator."

There were "inconsistent arrangements for managing transport activities", Moore's report said. This meant there was a risk that safety arrangements for moving nuclear materials such as plutonium "does not meet departmental standards".

The report highlighted the danger that radioactive tritium could leak from warheads if there were an accident. This had a "potential impact on workforce and public protection", Moore said.

Another report for the MoD's Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator in 2006 by Commodore Andrew McFarlane cautioned that "crew fatigue" could cause hazards during the transport of nuclear weapons by road. Convoys carrying warheads travel between Aldermaston and the naval nuclear bases on the Clyde near Glasgow up to six times a year.

Moore's report also warned that funding restrictions at the Clyde bases could endanger safety. The absence of proper guidance meant nuclear accidents could be "inappropriately notified" to ministers, he added. "There remains concern that arrangements for responding to events are in need of overhaul."

John Large, an independent nuclear consultant, said it was astonishing that there was uncertainty over the regulation of warheads at sea. "This is particularly worrisome from a public safety point of view," he warned.

The argument with the US over the arming, fusing and firing system highlighted the UK's "over-dependence" on the US, Large argued. He claimed this could breach the UN's Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The prolonged battle to force the MoD to release the reports was backed by Fred Dawson, who worked for the MoD for 31 years and was head of its radiation protection policy team before he retired in 2009. "People may conclude that the culture of secrecy is due in part for the presentational need to hide poor safety and environmental performance," he said.

The MoD said concern was raised in 2005 about the process for obtaining information from the US on the arming, fusing and firing system. "This was resolved, reflecting the close working relationship that exists between the UK and US on nuclear matters," said an MoD spokesman. "We take any issues raised by the Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator seriously."

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/oct/17/nuclear-weapons-trident>

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Bloomberg News

U.K. Delays Decision on Trident Deterrent as It Cuts Defense Spending 8%

By Kitty Donaldson

October 19, 2010

Prime Minister David Cameron said the U.K. will delay renewal of the Trident nuclear-missile system until after the next election as defense spending is cut by 8 percent in real terms.

"The decision to start construction of the new submarines might not be taken until 2016," Cameron told lawmakers in the House of Commons today announcing the results of the first defense review since 1998. "We can extend the life of the Vanguard-class submarines so the first replacement submarine isn't needed until 2028."

Cameron said the size of Britain's armed forces will be reduced by 17,000 personnel and 25,000 civilian staff will be axed in the defense ministry. Military expenditure will be reduced by 8 percent, adjusted for inflation, over four years.

Cameron's announcement set out details of cuts to weapons programs, including planes and warships, to help tackle the record budget deficit and redefine military needs for the post- Cold War era. The U.S. has expressed concern about the effect of the cuts on NATO. Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne will outline reductions in other ministries' spending tomorrow.

"Our national security depends on our economic strength and vice versa," Cameron told lawmakers. The money saved will help to tackle the deficit, he said. "This is not a cost-saving exercise."

Nuclear Stockpile

The number of nuclear warheads at sea will be cut to 40 from 48 and the total stockpile will be reduced to "fewer than 120" from "less than 160," Cameron said.

The prime minister said the government will scrap orders for nine BAE Systems Plc's Nimrod surveillance planes.

"It's over eight years late," Cameron told lawmakers. "Today, we're announcing its cancellation."

The Tornado aircraft fleet will be maintained, though Harrier jump jets will be retired early. The Royal Air Force will lose 5,000 personnel, as will the navy.

The total number of navy-operated frigates and destroyers will be cut to 19 from 23, while the nation will complete the purchase of six Type 46 destroyers from London-based BAE. The navy will also continue the procurement of Astute-class submarines built by the same company.

Joint Strike Fighter

The U.K. will press ahead with the construction of two aircraft carriers. One of the carriers will be designed to operate with 12 of Lockheed Martin Corp's F-35 Joint Strike Fighter planes.

"The single carrier will routinely have 12 fast jets embarked for operations while retaining the capacity to deploy up to the 36 previously planned, providing combat and intelligence capability much greater than the existing Harriers," the review document said.

"We will ensure the U.K. has carrier strike capability for the future," Cameron said.

The carriers are being built by a group including BAE, Babcock International Group Plc and Thales SA at a cost of 4.9 billion pounds.

Tanks and artillery will be cut by 40 percent, while the army will be reduced to 95,500 personnel by 2015, a cut of 7,000 from today.

"There is no cut whatsoever in our support for our forces in Afghanistan," Cameron said, adding the money for that operation comes from the Treasury's special reserve.

Cameron reiterated a commitment by the previous government to order 22 Airbus SAS A400M military transport planes.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-10-19/u-k-delays-decision-on-trident-deterrent-as-it-cuts-defense-spending-8.html>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

U.S. 'Confident' in Russia over its Nuclear Cooperation with Venezuela

16 October 2010

The United States will "watch closely" cooperation between Russia and Venezuela in the nuclear sphere, but has confidence in Russia regarding the observance of international nuclear non-proliferation obligations, State Department spokesman Philip Crowley said.

Russia and Venezuela signed on Friday an agreement on the construction of a nuclear power station in the South American country as part of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's visit to Moscow.

The agreement was reached in April 2010 during Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's visit to Caracas.

When asked during a daily press briefing in Washington if the United States had any concerns regarding the deal - considering that Venezuela had "a little bit of ties with Iran" - Philip Crowley said "well, this is something that we will watch very closely."

"It is certainly a right of any country to pursue civilian nuclear energy, but with that right come responsibilities and we would expect Venezuela, Russia, or any other country pursuing this kind of technology to meet all international obligations," Crowley said, adding "the last thing we need to do is see technology migrate to countries or groups that should not have that technology."

"But we have confidence in Russia," he said.

Western powers fear that Iran, which is already under four sets of UN sanctions over its controversial nuclear program, may obtain advanced nuclear technologies, which would jeopardize security in the Middle East.

At Friday's signing ceremony in Moscow, President Dmitry Medvedev said cooperation with Venezuela in nuclear field does not constitute a threat for other countries.

WASHINGTON, October 16 (RIA Novosti)

<http://en.rian.ru/world/20101016/160976559.html>

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National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA)
Press Release

NNSA Office of Emergency Operations Develops Cutting-Edge Nuclear Terrorism Software

October 18, 2010

WASHINGTON – The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) today announced that its Office of Emergency Operations has developed and delivered a new X-ray image processing capability to the nation's emergency response community.

X-Ray Toolkit (XTK) is an application used by field responders and NNSA Laboratory experts to acquire, process and analyze X-ray images obtained during a potential nuclear terrorism incident. XTK development was sponsored by NNSA's Emergency Operations technology integration program and implemented by its stabilization program.

"We have received overwhelmingly positive feedback about the XTK software from our operational partners across the nation," said NNSA Associate Administrator for Emergency Operations Joseph Krol. "The application of state-of-the-art technical products to the nuclear counterterrorism mission is a central part of NNSA's mission and an important aspect of our vision for this program. It also showcases our ability to leverage six decades of nuclear security expertise into a product that can be used by first responders from coast to coast."

XTK was designed for joint use by Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) and NNSA Laboratory personnel during nuclear render safe operations, where specialized procedures, methods and tools prevent the detonation of a nuclear device. Previous software was converted for use from the medical diagnostic industry, not specifically designed for use by EOD experts.

Accordingly, XTK provides for the intuitive and efficient transfer of data from the site of a potential incident to NNSA Laboratories. This allows for critical information to seamlessly transfer from field responders to NNSA nuclear security experts during a crisis situation.

Sandia National Laboratories worked closely with NNSA Emergency Operations personnel during the development, testing, and training phases of this project. Additional information for XTK development was obtained from NNSA response team members, FBI Special Agent Bomb Technicians, Department of Defense EOD experts and numerous state and local responders.

<http://www.nnsa.energy.gov/mediaroom/pressreleases/software>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia, U.S. Propose UN General Assembly Resolution on Arms Cuts

16 October 2010

Russia and the United States have submitted to the UN General Assembly a draft resolution on strategic arms reduction based on the new Russian-U.S. arms cuts treaty.

The document was put forward at the General Assembly's current session on Friday.

Russia's envoy to the United Nations Vitaly Churkin previously expressed hope for the consensus adoption of the resolution by the General Assembly.

In order to come into force, the document has to be first supported by the General Assembly's committee responsible for arms reduction issues and then approved during a plenary session.

A new strategic arms reduction treaty was signed by the Russian and U.S. presidents, Dmitry Medvedev and Barack Obama, on April 8 in Prague, replacing the START 1 treaty that expired in December 2009.

The new pact, which is yet to be ratified by either state, obligates both nations to limit their fielded strategic nuclear weapons to 1,550 warheads, while the number of deployed and non-deployed delivery vehicles must not exceed 800 on either side.

Churkin said the Russian-U.S. arms cuts treaty was a "real contribution of our countries to the strengthening of international security and strategic stability."

"We expect that the important impetus for the nuclear disarmament process given by Moscow and Washington will be taken up by all states, primarily those possessing nuclear weapons," he said.

The draft resolution submitted to the General Assembly includes a call for a total ban of nuclear tests. This will only become possible after a relevant agreement is ratified by all 44 countries which had nuclear reactors when the treaty was signed in 1996. The United States, China, Indonesia, Egypt, Iran and Israel have not ratified the deal, while India, Pakistan and North Korea have not signed it.

UNITED NATIONS, October 16 (RIA Novosti)

<http://en.rian.ru/world/20101016/160976816.html>

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ZeeNews.com

N-Weapon Hasn't Enhanced India's Security: Aiyar

Press Trust of India

October 17, 2010

New York: Testing nuclear weapon has not enhanced India's national security, veteran diplomat and Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar has said, noting that Pakistan also acquired the atomic bomb within three weeks after the Pokhran II.

"We had a strong conventional military advantage over Pakistan....the minute we became a nuclear weapon power....it took Pakistan three weeks to become a nuclear weapons power themselves," Aiyar said, who is at the United Nations to speak on the issue of nuclear disarmament.

On the necessity of having nuclear bombs since Pakistan had them, Aiyar told PTI that that India's security hadn't been enhanced by acquiring these weapons.

He said India always remained in the vanguard of the movement for nuclear disarmament but lost its traditional position on the issue in the past 22 years as it had to conform to the voices of other nuclear powers, the Congress leader said.

"Even since we have become a nuclear weapon power ourselves ... there seems to be a certain ambiguity as to how pro-active we should be in regard to nuclear disarmament," Aiyar told agency.

"India always remained in the vanguard of the movement for the elimination of nuclear weapons?it is a position we have tended to lose the past 22 years," he continued.

"We should strive and pro-actively to our traditional position."

Aiyar further pointed out that India was being held back in pursuing its "traditional position" since now it had to conform to the voices of other nuclear powers, which was not the case in 1982 when Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi laid down the Action Plan for a Nuclear-Weapons- Free and Nonviolent World Order.

The Action Plan sets 2010 as the date by which the world would have been rid of nuclear weapons, and that is reason Aiyar decided to speak at the UN on that forgotten deadline set 22 years ago.

"Having become a nuclear weapon power there is a desire that our postures in regard to the international discussions on nuclear weapons should be more in conformity with the nuclear weapons powers than asymmetrical to that position," Aiyar said.

"I have continued to take an interest in this matter, which is disproportionate to the interest that the government of India is taking at the moment," he added.

Responding to whether the new US-Russia agreement to cut down their nuclear arsenal would move the world towards fuller disarmament, Aiyar said "It's good but it's not disarmament."

"It is the reduction of hostility between the two powers who share between them perhaps 90 per cent of the entire nuclear arsenal of the world," he added.

"It is a reflection of the reduction of the danger of nuclear war breaking out between these two major powers."

<http://www.zeenews.com/news662022.html>

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Chosun Ilbo – South Korea

OPINION/Editorial

October 19, 2010

Six-Party Talks Must Change for Any Hope of Success

China's Foreign Ministry said over the weekend that North Korea has agreed to implement the Sept. 19, 2005 statement of principles signed in the fourth round of six-party nuclear talks. The announcement came after the North's chief nuclear negotiator Kim Kye-gwan met his Chinese counterpart Wu Dawei in Beijing. The statement stipulates that the North is "committed to abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs" while the U.S., South Korea and China take steps to aid the communist country.

The first North Korean nuclear crisis in 1993 was tenuously contained with the signing of the Geneva accords, while the 2005 statement was to have offered a solution to the second nuclear crisis that erupted at the end of 2002.

Since July, China and North Korea have been pressing for the resumption of the six-party talks, but South Korea and the U.S. have insisted that North Korea first prove its determination for denuclearization by freezing operations at its nuclear plant in Yongbyon and allowing IAEA inspectors to return. China and North Korea have raised the resumption of the talks as a way out of the diplomatic impasse created by North Korea's sinking of the South Korean Navy corvette Cheonan.

There have also been calls from some politicians in South Korea and the U.S. to move on beyond the Cheonan sinking and resume the talks. But it would be unacceptable to simply brush aside an attack that took the lives of 46 South Korean sailors and resume the nuclear dialogue as if nothing had happened.

The U.S. and South Korea believe North Korea has come close to producing nuclear weapons using highly enriched uranium, in addition to the existing method of processing plutonium, since the end of 2008. No matter how much pressure it faces, the North will not abandon its nuclear weapons program as long as China continues to provide economic support. Because of this dilemma, there are calls from within the U.S. and South Korean governments to resume dialogue in any form with North Korea after the U.S. mid-term elections on Nov. 2. But the two allies need to change the present system if there is to be any hope of resolving the impasse.

The dynamics of the six-party talks has shifted from South Korea, the U.S., China, Japan and Russia pressuring and persuading North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons program to South Korea, the U.S. and Japan on one side facing off against North Korea and China, with Russia stuck in the middle. Looking at the history of the talks, whenever the North finds itself cornered, it returns to the six-party talks even though it has no intention of abandoning its nuclear program. As a result, skepticism about the talks has grown.

South Korea and the U.S. need to convince China to devise measures to hold North Korea accountable within the six-party framework if it commits another provocation, otherwise there is no way the talks can resume.

http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2010/10/19/2010101901252.html

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The Hindu – India

October 19, 2010

Book Review of:

India, Pakistan, and the Bomb - Debating Nuclear Stability in South Asia

Written by: Sumut Ganguly and S. Paul Kapur

(South Asian predicament over NPT)

Reviewed by Chitrapu Uday Bhaskar

The apocalyptic profile of the dreaded nuclear weapon was unambiguously demonstrated to the world in August 1945 when the first such bomb was dropped by the United States on Hiroshima in Japan. The world has never been the same after that event. The 'bomb', as the nuclear weapon is euphemistically referred to, has been the focus of the global strategic debate and related state policies. During the Cold War decades, these matters seemed to be relevant only to the U.S. and the erstwhile USSR and their military allies.

By 1964, the world had five declared nuclear weapon states (NWS), when China joined the bomb club as it were — and, at the time, the nth state exigency was avidly debated, meaning that with the passage of time and the spread of nuclear technology, the nuclear weapon would proliferate to the nth state. But was this a desirable exigency?

The high priest of the 'more-is-better school' Kenneth Waltz advanced this proposition in 1981 in his seminal paper "The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better," and this advocacy was stoutly rejected with ecclesiastical

fervour by the anti-proliferation school, which predicted all kinds of *dire* consequences, including the end of humanity, should the bomb spread as envisaged by Ken Waltz.

Complexities

In this techno-strategic turbulence was conceived the NPT (nuclear non-proliferation treaty) in the early 1970s, and by the end of the Cold War — in the early 1990s — France and China, the last of the five NWS, formally joined the NPT. Progressively, most of the global community joined this regime as non-NWS, since it served their national interests.

However, the two South Asian neighbours, India and Pakistan — as also Israel — stayed out for the same reasons: the perception and conviction about how their core national interest would be best served. And, in 1998, India and Pakistan exploded their own ‘bombs’ and became de-facto states with nuclear weapons, SNW — but not NWS — in the lexicon of the NPT. Has the ‘bomb’ made the South Asian region’s security environment more stable, or less? Are the post-May 1998 status of India and Pakistan and the deeply troubled bilateral relationship escalation resistant? These are the questions Ganguly and Kapur address in a commendable fashion in this slim volume.

They provide a lucid account of the bomb in relation to India and Pakistan and take contrasting positions. Ganguly subscribes to the stability argument among horizontal proliferators, while elucidating the specificity of the South Asian predicament — which is a nuanced variation of the Waltz formulation.

Kapur highlights the many complexities that abound in this Indo-Pak nuclear dyad and veers towards the strategic pessimism position. The texture of a robust debate, which is maintained throughout, accords the book a certain pace that is reader-friendly.

The theme is discussed in three periods of time: from the late 1980s, which is the region’s nuclear past (when Pakistan beat India to acquire the bomb with China’s active but covert support); from the 1999 Kargil war to the Mumbai tragedy of 2008; and the future, which is fraught with uncertainty. This provides an appropriate temporal context to interrogate the region’s many nuclear nettles.

Both Ganguly and Kapur are admirably cogent and, for all the seeming divergences, their positions are reconciled with predictable caveats in the final chapter. “Both of us agree that nuclear weapons proliferation will not lead to the deliberate outbreak of large-scale war in South Asia...we differ, however, on the importance that we assign to the possibility that catastrophic conflict could occur...”

WMD-terrorism

The book draws attention also to the WMD-terrorism linkage that Pakistan has exploited. But how was the regional security environment brought to this pass? Who aided and abetted the Pakistani bomb? When and where does ‘South’ morph into ‘Southern’ in the strategic grid of Asia? These are areas that could be usefully examined for a better comprehension of the dilemma of the sorcerer’s apprentice *a la* Goethe that the authors invoke and hope for a “happy ending”. But as Hiroshima so unambiguously demonstrated, even a single bomb is one too many and now the non-state entity appears determined to acquire such macro-lethality.

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