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Articles & Other Documents:

- | | |
|---|--|
| Senators Seek Data on Secret U.S.-Russia Missile Talks | Limited Nuclear War Possible, Says Shivshankar Menon |
| New Talks for Further Nuke Reduction Likely to Begin as Early as Jan. | Russia to Produce 150 Bulava Missiles before 2020 - Expert |
| START Contains No Secret Deals – Russian Foreign Minister | Man Arrested for Holding Arms, Nuclear Material |
| Russia 'Would Welcome' Iranian Decision to Restart Nuclear Talks | Sarkozy: France to Hold Onto Nukes |
| Iran Cites Expectations Ahead of N-Talks | Britain Keeps Nuclear Weapons amid Cuts |
| Ahmadinejad and Chavez say United to Change World Order | Message by Commander in Chief Fidel Castro Ruz against the Nuclear War |
| South Korea Calls on North to Honour Nuclear Deal | Colombia Tries to Stop Rebels from Getting Nuclear Arms |
| N. Korea could have Developed Nuke Warheads Mounted on Missiles: Expert | Obama: 'Venezuela has Nuclear Rights but also Obligations' |
| North Korea Ready for Third Nuclear Test, say Reports | Bill Clinton Lost Nuclear Launch Codes While President |
| U.S. Warns Against 3rd Nuke Test by N. Korea amid Hereditary Power Transition | EDITORIAL: U.S. Subcritical Nuke Test |
| Possibility of DPRK's Nuclear Test cannot be Ruled Out: S Korean Official | Russian Navy Desperate for New Planes |
| N.Korea Nuclear Arms 'Most Serious Threat' to Asia-Pacific | There's No Need to Kowtow to the US |
| | China Must Stop Any N.Korean Nuclear Test |

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Washington Times

Senators Seek Data on Secret U.S.-Russia Missile Talks

Tuesday, October 19, 2010

By Bill Gertz, the Washington Times

Six Republican senators have asked Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton to provide documents on secret talks between U.S. and Russian officials on missile defenses, amid conflicting reports that a deal with Moscow is close to completion.

"We are writing to request information pertaining to press reports suggesting the imminent conclusion of a missile defense agreement between Russia and the United States," the senators stated in the letter sent Monday.

The senators asked Mrs. Clinton to turn over for review documents and transcripts of talks at the Arms Control and International Security Working Group headed by Undersecretary of State Ellen Tauscher and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov.

The group of senators, led by Sen. Jeff Sessions, Alabama Republican, suggested in the letter that a failure to provide the documents could affect the upcoming Senate debate on the ratification of the New START, the strategic arms treaty with Russia signed in April.

"Senators must be assured that these talks and potential missile defense agreements will not limit U.S. and allied missile defense development and deployment in any fashion whatsoever," they stated.

The senators also stated that, under Section 33 of the 1961 Arms Control and Disarmament Act, the administration cannot limit missile defenses with the Russians without following rules for treaties outlined in the law.

State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley said in response to the letter that "we are not pursuing a missile defense agreement with Russia."

A classified U.S.-Russia joint assessment of ballistic missile "challenges" should be completed by the end of the year that will "analyze the ballistic missile challenges of the 21st century," Mr. Crowley said, noting that it "will not affect our ballistic missile defense policy, which is a response to the evolving threat we see from the Middle East and Northeast Asia."

"The purpose of the joint assessment is to increase our mutual understanding of the ballistic missile threat," Mr. Crowley said. "There is nothing in these discussions that contemplates limits on missile defense, but rather cooperation between the U.S. and Russia."

A Senate aide said many senators fear the administration is secretly working with Moscow on a deal that will constrain U.S. defenses at a time when missile threats are growing.

"The concern is that the administration is not being honest and forthcoming about the discussions that are going on," the aide said.

Missile defense limits in New START are a major point of debate between treaty opponents and advocates. The new treaty contains a limit on using existing intercontinental ballistic missile silos for future missile defense interceptors.

The Obama administration has said the treaty will impose no limits on U.S. missile defenses.

Russia has said that strategic missile limits cannot be addressed apart from strategic defenses and that Moscow will withdraw from the treaty if the United States expands its current system. The limited missile defense system includes long-range interceptors in Alaska and California, radar and tracking systems around the world, and plans for future shorter-range defenses in Europe.

State Department officials have denied the Tauscher-Ryabkov talks are secret but have shared few details of the talks either in public or with members of Congress. The officials also have denied there were "backroom deals" on the matter with the Russians as part of the START negotiations.

The Washington Times reported June 17 that the U.S. officials had presented a draft agreement on missile defenses to the Russians in the Tauscher-Ryabkov talks.

Days later, Mrs. Clinton told a Senate hearing that "there is no secret deal" on missile defenses and no "plan to limit U.S. missile defenses, either in this treaty or in any other way."

However, she did not address whether a draft agreement was presented in the Tauscher-Ryabkov talks.

The Russians added to the confusion. On July 8, Lt. Gen. Alexander Burutin, deputy chief of the general staff, said work on an agreement "is in progress." Hours later, he issued a contradictory statement, saying "no drafting of a new document [on missile defense] is being conducted."

Then on Oct. 1, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told the official government newspaper Rossiiskaya Gazeta that the United States and Russia were close to reaching an agreement on the risks of missile proliferation. "The document should be ready soon," he said.

The foreign minister said that, based on the risk assessment, "we will be able to talk about taking the next step and finding a common way ... to parry such risks" through diplomatic, political, economic and perhaps military means.

In addition to Mr. Sessions, the letter was signed by Republican Sens. James M. Inhofe of Oklahoma, David Vitter of Louisiana, John Cornyn of Texas, Roger Wicker of Mississippi and John Thune of South Dakota.

Asked by Mr. Inhofe this past summer about a missile defense pact, Mrs. Clinton did not answer directly in her written answers to questions posed to the Senate Armed Services Committee.

"Within the Arms Control and International Security Working Group, the Obama Administration has provided briefings to, and discussed U.S. missile defense (BMD) policy, plans, and programs with the Russian government," Mrs. Clinton said in a June 17 response.

According to Mrs. Clinton, the Tauscher-Ryabkov talks included discussions of missile defense cooperation, confidence-building and transparency measures, along with data exchange proposals on ballistic missile and space launches tracked by U.S. and Russian early warning systems.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/oct/19/senators-seek-data-secret-us-russia-missile-talks/>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Kyodo News – Japan

New Talks for Further Nuke Reduction Likely to Begin as Early as Jan.

By Masakatsu Ota, Kyodo News
WASHINGTON, October 20, 2010

The United States expects a new U.S.-Russia accord on nuclear arms reduction signed in April to be ratified by the end of this year and a new bilateral consultation for further nuclear disarmament to start as early as the beginning of next year, a chief U.S. negotiator said Monday.

"I'm very optimistic about this treaty being ratified, and the (U.S.) President has always been clear that he would like for it to be ratified by the end of the year," said Rose Gottemoeller, Assistant Secretary of State in charge of arms control, verification and compliance, in an exclusive interview with Kyodo News.

Gottemoeller said the United States and Russia both agreed that getting the new accord ratified and entered into force was their first priority.

"But, we are already thinking about how to work with (Russia) immediately, after that ratification process is completed, to consult very seriously on the next stage of reductions," she said, adding that the process of consultation would start as early as the beginning of next year, assuming that the accord will be ratified and enter into force at the end of this year.

U.S. President Barack Obama and his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev signed the new treaty in early April to implement significant cuts to their deployed nuclear warheads, replacing the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, or START 1. Gottemoeller is one of the key architects of the New START Treaty.

The U.S. government has submitted proposals to its legislature but the treaty ratification process has been delayed due to strong concerns over its possible impact on future operation of the U.S. Missile Defense system.

Several Republican senators have expressed such concerns as Russia has made a unilateral statement saying that any substantial expansion of Washington's missile shield could trigger Moscow's withdrawal from the accord.

Noting that there were three Republicans joining the Democratic majority to vote in favor of the treaty in a vote in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Sept. 16, Gottemoeller said she expected that the ratification process would take place during the so-called "lame-duck session" after the mid-term elections for the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives in November.

Ratification of the treaty requires a two-thirds majority in the 100-seat Senate, where Democrats have 59 seats including Democrat-leaning independents. After receiving the Senate's "advice and consent," the U.S. President can ratify the treaty.

"We are planning to work very intensively with the Senate when they return from the election period...get their 'advice and consent' so that the President can ratify the treaty by the end of the year," she added.

As for the next arms reduction process, the U.S. chief negotiator emphasized that the two countries were ready to proceed with a "step- by-step" approach and extend the process to "a multilateral approach" to include other nuclear powers, as stated in the preamble to the treaty.

Specific priorities for the next process will include "tactical nuclear weapons or, as we say, 'non-strategic nuclear weapons,' and non-deployed nuclear weapons, weapons that are in storage facilities," Gottemoeller said.

Short-ranged tactical nuclear weapons and non-deployed weapons have been outside the scope of bilateral treaties signed by the two nuclear powers in the past.

According to nuclear experts, verification measures for non-deployed nukes in storage would be a key challenge for a new treaty.

Gottemoeller admitted that implementing verification procedures and technologies is "a difficult job" at this point, but her country has "some experience" in this field as it has been "thinking about it for many years with some technologies and procedures in mind," and she thinks that such experience would help the two countries to form the new negotiations.

Once the new treaty comes into effect after ratification, both sides will have to reduce within seven years their nuclear warheads on deployed missiles and bombers to 1,550 each, down from 6,000 under START 1, which expired in December, and between 1,700 and 2,200 under the 2002 strategic offensive reductions treaty, commonly known as the Moscow Treaty.

Aside from limiting the number of warheads, the new treaty sets the ceiling on the number of launchers to 800, half of the 1,600 allowed under START 1, and also restricts the number of deployed nuclear delivery systems to 700.

According to a U.S. think-tank, the Federation of American Scientists, as of May 2010, the number of operational nuclear warheads was estimated at 2,468 from a total stock of 9,600 for the United States, while Russia possessed 4,650 operational warheads from a total stock of 12,000.

<http://english.kyodonews.jp/news/2010/10/49862.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Russia Today – Russia

START Contains No Secret Deals – Russian Foreign Minister

21 October, 2010

There are no secret deals made on the sidelines of the Strategic arms reduction treaty between Russia and the US, said Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, responding to allegations by a group of US Senators.

"Everything that we have come to terms with is in the text of the document and the additions," the foreign minister said. *"These are open documents – both Senate and State Duma deputies have them. There are no agreements apart from those that are stated in those documents."*

Several republicans have written a letter to US secretary of State Hillary Clinton demanding details of the negotiations to find out if there are any covert agreements on missile defense.

US Senators were especially interested in whether there were some secret obligations taken by the US party that could harm the US administration's plans for building the Global Anti Missile Defense System, Sergey Lavrov said.

The treaty is having a hard time in the US Senate as Republicans cast doubts over the agreement.

It was signed in April in Prague, slashing the countries' nuclear stockpiles by third.

It includes link between strategic defensive and offensive missiles and interconnection of the anti-missile defense system and START, which was the long-insisted point of the Russian side.

http://rt.com/Top_News/2010-10-21/start-contains-no-secret.html?fullstory

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia 'Would Welcome' Iranian Decision to Restart Nuclear Talks

20 October 2010

Russia would welcome an Iranian decision to resume talks with the group of six international mediators over its nuclear program, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry said on Wednesday.

"We would welcome it if Tehran handed over to the office of the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs [Catherine Ashton] an official agreement to restart dialogue with the [Iran] Six," Andrei Nesterenko told a press conference.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on October 17 Tehran was ready for a new round of talks but only on a number of conditions, including a comment by the Iran Six (the United States, Britain, China, France, Russia and Germany) on Israel's nuclear capability.

Talks between Tehran and the Iran Six came to a halt in 2009, after an IAEA resolution condemned the Islamic Republic over the construction of a second uranium enrichment facility.

The UN Security Council imposed a fourth set of sanctions on Iran over its nuclear program in June.

MOSCOW, October 20 (RIA Novosti)

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20101020/161024948.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

The Hindu – India

Dubai, October 20, 2010

Iran Cites Expectations Ahead of N-Talks

By Atul Aneja

Iran has said dates for fresh talks with six global powers have not yet been set and has cited some of its expectations from the proposed nuclear dialogue, which could take place next month.

Iran's top representative for nuclear negotiations Saeed Jalili said on Tuesday that Tehran had accepted in principle, talks with the five permanent members of the Security Council and Germany (P5+1). However, he added that specific dates for a fresh round of talks were yet to be fixed. Mr. Jalili and European Union (EU) foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton have been communicating regarding possible renewal of talks that stalled a year ago. "What we have always announced is that we welcome talks... In the letter I wrote to Ms. Ashton, I explained the atmosphere, the bases, and the topics of the talks," said Mr. Jalili.

The Iranians have said Ms. Ashton's letter regarding prospects of resuming talks fell short of Tehran's expectations. Deputy head of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Abolfazl Zohrevand said "the letter only addresses issues such as where, when and how long the talks should be and does not deal with more important issues such as the framework, aim and direction of the talks".

On Monday, Iran's atomic chief Ali Akbar Salehi said Tehran was ready to discuss exchanging atomic fuel and its overall nuclear programme in upcoming talks. "We are ready to hold simultaneous talks with the 5+1 and the Vienna group about the fuel swap," Iran's ISNA news agency quoted Mr. Salehi as saying. The United States, Russia, France and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) comprise the Vienna group, which had last year held talks on fuel supplies with Iran for its medical reactor based in Tehran.

On Tuesday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast said future negotiations could yield "fruitful" results if they were held in an atmosphere of "cooperation" rather than confrontation.

Earlier on Sunday, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad stressed the six world powers needed to decide whether they wanted to show enmity or seek cooperation with Iran. He also urged the global powers to announce their views on the Israeli nuclear arsenal.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article839870.ece>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Ha'aretz Daily – Israel

October 20, 2010

Ahmadinejad and Chavez say United to Change World Order

Chavez condemns military threats against Iran which the U.S. and Israel have said they could strike to prevent it getting a nuclear bomb.

By Reuters

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad told his Venezuelan counterpart on Wednesday they would defeat their common foes, the latest defiant salvo against Western countries that he says are failing in their attempts to isolate Iran.

At the end of a two-day visit, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez condemned military threats against Iran which the United States and Israel have said they could strike to prevent it getting a nuclear bomb.

The visit by Iran's long time ally comes a week after Ahmadinejad received a warm reception in Lebanon -- home to the militant Shi'ite group Hezbollah. Both diplomatic events are partly aimed to show Washington that Iran still has friends around the world who are willing to confront U.S. interests.

"I should use the opportunity to condemn those military threats that are being made against Iran," Chavez told a news conference in which the two leaders called each other "brother".

"We know that they will never be able to restrict the Islamic revolution in whatever way ... We will always stand together, we will not only resist we will also stand victorious beside one another."

The countries have more than their dislike of the United States in common; they are also OPEC members whose valuable oil exports allow them a certain diplomatic muscle despite being viewed with suspicion in the West.

Chavez said they signed several new agreements aimed at boosting industrial cooperation.

Revolutionary Front

In words which showed his ambition to represent developing countries that feel oppressed by the West, Ahmadinejad said Iran and Venezuela was part of a revolutionary front from Latin America "stretching all the way to East Asia".

"If one day, my brother Mr Chavez and I and a few other people were once alone in the world, today we have a long line of revolutionary officials and people standing alongside each other," he said.

"The enemies of our nations will go one day. This is the promise of God and the promise of God will definitely be fulfilled," said Ahmadinejad in a comment likely to be seen by Israel as a threat from someone who has often said the Jewish state will one day cease to exist.

Washington led a push for tougher sanctions against Iran to pressure it the over nuclear activities it fears are aimed at making a bomb. Iran says it merely seeks peaceful nuclear technology and accuses its foes of trying to stop it progress.

Following in Iran's footsteps, before coming to Tehran, Chavez secured a deal with Russia to help build Venezuela's first nuclear power plant, a move which has rattled some people in Washington.

Iran hopes its own Russian-built nuclear power station will start adding power to the grid early next year.

Many countries view Iran's nuclear activities with suspicion, particularly as it is enriching uranium to much higher purity than is needed for power generation.

Iran says it needs the more potent fuel for a medical reactor in Tehran and confirmed earlier on Wednesday that it was pushing ahead with enrichment.

<http://www.haaretz.com/news/international/ahmadinejad-and-chavez-say-united-to-change-world-order-1.320309?localLinksEnabled=false>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Himalayan Times – Nepal
October 20, 2010

South Korea Calls on North to Honour Nuclear Deal

By Reuters Africa

SEOUL:South Korea called on North Korea on Wednesday to honour its part of a 2005 nuclear disarmament deal for which it had received energy aid and said it was up to Pyongyang to show it was serious about the troubled process.

North Korea has expressed renewed willingness to rejoin the six-party nuclear talks after a two-year boycott, which analysts said was an indication it was hurting badly under harsh U.N. sanctions imposed last year in response to its nuclear test.

South Korea and the United States have rejected the idea of resuming the negotiations for now, saying the North must first admit responsibility for sinking a South Korean navy ship in March that killed 46 sailors.

The North denies it was involved in the incident and has threatened to attack the South if it is punished for it.

"North Korea must show sincerity that it would implement nuclear disarmament steps equivalent to the 750,000 tonnes of heavy fuel oil it received from the international community and ... allow the return of International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors or declare a moratorium on its nuclear facilities," a senior South Korean foreign ministry official said.

The ministry denied a Yonhap news agency report that said those were the preconditions for the South's return to the stalled six-way nuclear negotiations, saying the North must still accept responsibility for the sinking of the navy ship Cheonan.

North Korea had been given the fuel oil as initial compensation for steps it had taken through 2008 to freeze its nuclear activities, which it has since called irrelevant.

Under a landmark 2005 deal with the two Koreas, the United States, Japan, Russia and China, the North agreed to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes and return to the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

In a subsequent accord on implementing that deal, the North agreed to shut down and seal its nuclear facilities and invite international inspectors to oversee disarmament steps.

The North was offered economic aid in return for those steps, including an initial shipment of 1 million tonnes of heavy fuel oil. The shipment stopped at 750,000 tonnes when Pyongyang refused to agree to intrusive inspections.

The North then walked away from the six-way process which had begun in 2003, saying it would not deal with the United States because Washington was intent on undermining its leadership.

But in an about-turn, the North said in July that it was willing to return to dialogue, and China, which hosted the forum, has been working behind the scenes for a resumption.

Analysts said the North was squeezed hard under sanctions imposed after its defiant nuclear and missile tests last year that deepened its economic woes, and may be trying to return to talks to secure more aid.

<http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=South+Korea+calls+on+North+to+honour+nuclear+deal+&NewsID=262295>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Gold Star Daily – Philippines

N. Korea could have Developed Nuke Warheads Mounted on Missiles: Expert

Wednesday, 20 October 2010

By Hwang Doo-hyong

North Korea could have developed nuclear warheads small enough to be mounted on ballistic missiles with the help of China or Pakistan, a U.S. expert on nuclear weapons said Tuesday.

"(It) could have transferred from Khan to North Korea, and it could have been China," David Albright, president of the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS), said at a forum.

Albright was discussing the seizure of a computer in Switzerland in 2007 that contained a modern nuclear bomb design from the network of A.Q. Khan, a Pakistani nuclear scientist who is suspected of having provided uranium-based nuclear technology to North Korea in exchange for missile technology.

Khan provided the nuclear weapons design information which China gave Pakistan in the early 1980s, Albright said at the forum hosted by the Institute for Corean-American Studies.

"Khan also put into its network more advanced designs," Albright said. "We don't know how complete they were. But there were two more sophisticated designs that were in the Khan network. They were found in computers in Switzerland when the Khan network people were busted."

The U.S. assumes that North Korea has extracted enough plutonium to make several nuclear warheads, but not the actual weapons or the small sophisticated warheads that can be loaded on missiles.

"The bottom line is North Korea would think about making it deliverable because in the end, you always want to have credible deterrent," said Albright, a physicist and founder of a Washington-based independent research institute specializing in nuclear technology. "It's not enough to have something that can only be delivered by a truck. I think North Korea is well on its way to be able to develop reliable warheads for its ballistic missiles."

Albright did not preclude the possibility of North Korea having produced nuclear warheads, saying Pyongyang might have obtained the advanced technology to make a warhead with a couple of kilograms of plutonium.

The 36 kilograms of plutonium the North has reported to the International Atomic Energy Agency as its entire stockpile could also have been underreported, he said.

"You cannot dismiss the two kilograms per weapons because they could have learned how to do it," he said. "Russian scientists could have provided nuclear weapons assistance to North Korea."

Talks have abounded about the possible influx of nuclear materials and scientists from the former Soviet Union to North Korea after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990.

The reported 36 kilograms means up to 18 warheads could be created if the North actually has acquired the technology to make a warhead with two kilograms as was insisted by its scientists, Albright said. The North has been widely believed to have the technology to produce a warhead with up to four kilograms.

On the North's uranium-based nuclear program, Albright said that Pyongyang has not yet produced highly-enriched uranium for nuclear weapons but could do so within years if not stopped.

North Korea late last year said it has "entered the final stage" of enriching uranium to fuel light-water reactors.

"If they are going to make enough fuel for a light-water reactor, they probably need 25,000 centrifuges," Albright said. "For a weapons program, 3,000 is enough. So they say we are going to enrich uranium for a nuclear power reactor. That implies a pretty large enrichment program. And the way we interpret that is they are planning to build centrifuges this decade that will be large enough to contribute to a nuclear weapons program."

The scientist said there is a need to contain the North's uranium program as well as the plutonium extracted from the Yongbyon nuclear facilities, which are being targeted by a six-party deal signed in 2005 for the North's nuclear dismantlement.

Multilateral talks, stalled since late 2008, have been idled by the North's nuclear and missile tests early last year and most recently the sinking of a South Korean warship in March blamed on North Korea.

"In the future, it can be more threatening because it can build more weapons and improve their weapons and also sell to other countries," Albright said of North Korea. "So I think it's a growing threat that has to be addressed more openly and directly in the negotiations. Sanctions and interruptions will make it harder for them to succeed."

Satellite images suggest the North recently began construction activity in the area of its plutonium-producing nuclear facilities in Yongbyon, north of its capital Pyongyang, where a cooling tower was demolished in 2008 as part of the six-party process for its denuclearization.

"North Korea may want to increase the capacity or the ability for the reactor to produce plutonium, and a more sophisticated cooling system is necessary if they wanted to do that," Albright said. "The old model has limitations on the power. You see a pretty large construction area. It's larger than you would think they would need to build a simple cooling tower."

<http://www.goldstardailynews.com/world/n-korea-could-have-developed-nuke-warheads-mounted-on-missiles-expert>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

London Guardian – U.K.

North Korea Ready for Third Nuclear Test, say Reports

South denies North is ready to detonate nuclear device despite increased activity detected at atomic test site

Associated Press

Thursday, 21 October 2010

South Korean officials said today there have been continual movements of personnel and vehicles at North Korea's main nuclear test site, but ruled out the possibility that the country is preparing its third atomic bomb test soon.

The assessment came shortly after the Chosun Ilbo newspaper reported today that Pyongyang may be preparing another nuclear test, citing "brisk" activities at its atomic test site in the north-eastern county of Kilju.

The paper, citing an unidentified South Korean government source, said a US spy satellite had detected increased activity and that North Korea could detonate a nuclear device within three months.

The North may have intentionally let movements be detected by the US and South Korean authorities to force them to soften hardline policies and to wrest concessions and aid, the paper said. North Korea may also be preparing a bomb test to bolster its military capability amid moves to transfer power from leader Kim Jong-il to his third and youngest son, Kim Jong-un, it said.

However, South Korean officials denied the North was preparing a nuclear test soon, saying continual personnel and vehicle movements have been detected for more than a year at the site, where the North has conducted two bomb tests in recent years.

One official, speaking anonymously, said the movements at the site could be seen as maintenance. Another, from the defence ministry, noted that South Korean and US authorities have been keeping a close watch on North Korean nuclear facilities.

The US military command in Seoul said today it could not comment on the Chosun Ilbo report.

North Korea carried out its first nuclear test in 2006 and a second, more powerful test blast last year, inviting widespread international sanctions.

The country last year walked out of six-nation disarmament talks on its nuclear programme to protest against international condemnation of its prohibited long-range rocket launch. The country has recently expressed its willingness to rejoin the talks – involving the two Koreas, the US, China, Russia and Japan.

"Chances for North Korea doing a third nuclear test aren't high," said Kim Yong-hyun, an expert on North Korea at Seoul's Dongguk University.

Such a provocation "would be too much of a burden" for the impoverished country, which urgently needs outside aid as it tries to maintain stability while it undergoes its succession process, Kim said.

Tension on the peninsula increased following March's sinking of a South Korean warship that was blamed on Pyongyang. North Korea flatly denies attacking the vessel and killing 46 sailors and has warned that any punishment would trigger war.

Recently, however, North Korea has made a series of conciliatory gestures including the release of South Korean and American detainees and proposing the resumption of stalled joint projects with South Korea. In return Seoul has offered to send relief aid to flood victims in the North.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/oct/21/north-korea-ready-nuclear-test>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Yonhap News – South Korea
October 22, 2010

U.S. Warns Against 3rd Nuke Test by N. Korea amid Hereditary Power Transition

By Hwang Doo-hyong

WASHINGTON, Oct. 21 (Yonhap) -- The United States Thursday warned against North Korea conducting another nuclear test to rally support from the military amid a unprecedented third-generation power transition in a communist state.

"Our message to North Korea has been clear and consistent," State Department spokesman Philip Crowley told reporters at the Foreign Press Club. "It needs to cease its provocative actions. I can think of nothing more provocative than the possibility of another nuclear test or another series of missile firings."

Crowley was responding to reports that North Korea has been preparing for another nuclear test at a site where two nuclear bombs were detonated, one in 2006 and another last year.

South Korean officials said earlier in the day the movements of people and equipment at the site are not abnormal, and should be seen as part of maintenance activities.

Talk of another nuclear test comes as ailing North Korean leader Kim Jong-il's youngest son and heir, Jong-un, seeks support from the military, a possible motive for the torpedoing of the South Korean warship Cheonan.

The 27-year-old heir, believed to be behind the attack that killed 36 sailors, last month was given the rank of four-star general and named vice chairman of the Central Military Commission of the ruling Workers' Party.

The party post to control the 1.2 million-strong military is seen as a sure road to leadership of the communist North, just as in China, where Vice President Xi Jinping was appointed last week to the same position of the Chinese Communist Party to replace Chinese President Hu Jintao in 2012.

Crowley urged North Korea to "take steps to reduce tensions and cease its provocative behavior" and "fulfill the responsibilities under the 2005 joint statement."

The 2005 six-party deal calls for the North's nuclear dismantlement in return for massive economic aid, diplomatic recognition by Washington and Tokyo and the establishment of a peace regime to replace the armistice that ended the 1950-53 Korean War.

The talks have been deadlocked since early last year, when Pyongyang walked out over U.N. sanctions for its nuclear and missile tests.

Conditions worsened in recent months with the sinking of the warship, although Pyongyang denies any role.

Seoul and Washington want the North to apologize for the sinking of the Cheonan and show a commitment to denuclearization before returning to the nuclear talks.

"We all want to see talks resume," Crowley said. "We don't want to talk for just talks. There are things North Korea has to do that would convince us further dialogue with North Korea will be constructive. On that score, we all have our own views. We share those views. We have had very close and cooperative discussions, particularly in the aftermath of the sinking of the Cheonan."

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2010/10/22/26/0301000000AEN20101022000200315F.HTML>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

People's Daily – China

Possibility of DPRK's Nuclear Test cannot be Ruled Out: S Korean Official

October 22, 2010

A possibility of a third nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) cannot be ruled out but is still low, local media quoted South Korea's unification minister as saying on Friday.

South Korea is "keeping a close eye on" the possibility of another nuclear experiment in the DPRK because chances "cannot be completely ruled out," minister Hyun In-taek said during a parliamentary audit, according to Seoul's Yonhap News Agency.

Chances for an imminent nuclear test are low at the moment, Hyun reportedly said, adding that he believes the DPRK is seeking to operate a uranium enrichment program.

His remarks came after local reports said movements of people and vehicles have been observed in Punggye-ri in the DPRK's North Hamgyong Province, the site of the country's first nuclear experiment in 2006.

Reports earlier this month also said a newly released satellite image suggests increased activity around the DPRK's Yongbyon nuclear complex, possibly indicating a third nuclear test by Pyongyang. The South Korean government has yet to confirm the reports.

Source: Xinhua

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90777/90851/7174811.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Hindustan Times – India
Indo-Asian News Service
Seoul, October 22, 2010

N.Korea Nuclear Arms 'Most Serious Threat' to Asia-Pacific

Military leaders from across the globe believe North Korea's nuclear programme poses "the most serious threat" to the Asia Pacific region, officials said at a high-level meeting that wrapped up on Friday.

They also agreed on the need to enhance cooperation in maritime security operations against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, said General Han Min-Koo, chairman of South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS).

"Participating countries reached a consensus on the fact that the North Korean nuclear programme presents the most serious threat to regional security," Han said at a press conference after the Chiefs of Defence gathering which involved 26 countries.

US Admiral Robert Willard, commander of the US Pacific Command, also said the threat from North Korea's nuclear capabilities was "widely recognised as significant not just to South Korea but region as a whole".

"The next (nuclear) test (by North Korea) would be a very serious matter for the international community and the Republic of Korea (South Korea)," he warned.

Chosun Ilbo, South Korea's biggest-selling newspaper, said Thursday that North Korea appeared to be preparing for a third nuclear test, citing an unidentified government source.

US satellites had detected movements of personnel and vehicles at the site where the North carried out its first two nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009, it said.

But South Korean government officials said there was no concrete evidence that the communist state was readying such a test, saying Seoul and its allies are closely watching developments related to the North's nuclear facilities.

Another atomic weapons test by North Korea would be provocative, US State department spokesman Mark Toner said Thursday, but added that he could not confirm reports that Pyongyang was preparing for such a test.

The countries represented at the five-day defence meeting included the United States, Russia, Britain, France, Japan, India, Australia, New Zealand and Southeast Asian nations.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/N-Korea-nuclear-arms-most-serious-threat-to-Asia-Pacific/Article1-616326.aspx>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Daily News & Analysis – India

Limited Nuclear War Possible, Says Shivshankar Menon

October 22, 2010

By Suman Sharma

National security adviser Shivshankar Menon said on Thursday a limited war in nuclear conditions to deter adversaries was a possibility, and called for creating a new security architecture for the country. "What India needs is an open, balanced and inclusive architecture to correspond to the new situation that is emerging," he said while delivering the keynote address at the golden jubilee celebrations of National Defence College, New Delhi.

NSA reiterated that terrorism was a derivative of nuclear deterrence. "Nuclear confrontation or war between major powers is not as likely as the threat from derivatives of nuclear deterrence, namely, terrorism and nuclear proliferation, which are being used to subvert the emergence of a plural, secular and democratic international order in the twenty-first century," he averred.

Prominent strategic affairs analyst K Subrahmanyam said Pakistan had been exploring the role of terror in war. He said while Winston Churchill had called "deterrence the child of terror", Pakistan had made "terror the child of deterrence".

Chinese professor of international relations Shen Dingli began speaking by saying his views were a combination of his personal views and the Chinese government's position. Shen spoke about global zero, or the total elimination of nuclear weapons, to which, he said, China was committed.

He blamed the US for making China a nuclear state, saying Beijing reluctantly acquired nuclear weapons after the Korean War.

Shen claimed missiles deployed in Tibet were not nuclear-capable and that China's "no first-use" (of nuclear weapons) was applicable to Taiwan also.

Earlier, president Pratibha Patil said in her inaugural speech that terrorism was the "foremost threat" the civilised world was facing and it had to be confronted with force and in close cooperation with the international community.

Bhutan king Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk said there was a bright future ahead for both India and Bhutan.

http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report_limited-nuclear-war-possible-says-shivshankar-menon_1456264

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia to Produce 150 Bulava Missiles before 2020 - Expert

22 October 2010

Russia will need to build more than 150 Bulava ballistic missiles in the next decade, an expert on the Russian arms industry said on Friday.

Igor Korotchenko, editor-in-chief of the National Defense magazine, told RIA Novosti that at least 124 missiles would be required for the eight Borey class nuclear-powered submarines that will enter service over the next decade, and a further 30 or 40 will have to be set aside for test launches.

In order to reach that goal, the capacities of the only plant producing Bulava missiles, near the town of Votkinsk in the Urals, will have to be increased, he said.

The development of the Bulava has been beset by problems, but the latest test launch was successful.

The missile, which was fired from the Dmitry Donskoy submarine in the White Sea on October 7, hit its designated target in the Kura test range in Russia's Far Eastern Kamchatka region.

The Bulava (SS-NX-30), a three-stage liquid and solid-propellant submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM), has officially suffered seven failures in 13 tests.

Test launches were put on hold after a failed launch on December 9, 2009, which was caused by a defective engine nozzle.

Two more test launches are planned before the end of the year: one from the Dmitry Donskoy sub, and the other from Russia's newest strategic nuclear-powered submarine, the Borey class Yury Dolgoruky.

MOSCOW, October 22 (RIA Novosti)

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20101022/161051761.html

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Prague Post – Czech Republic

Man Arrested for Holding Arms, Nuclear Material

German in ČR hoarded items in both countries

October 20, 2010

By Sarah Borufka - Staff Writer

In a joint investigation, Czech and German police have confiscated an array of arms, chemicals, military weapons and ammunition allegedly belonging to a German man, including a supply of uranium.

The 45-year-old German citizen with a Slovak background was arrested by police in the Czech village of Bělá nad Svitavou, near Pardubice, Oct. 7 for suspicious activities involving the sale of chemicals.

"We searched his house Oct. 8 and found a large amount of highly explosive substances, machine guns, various military arms and ammunition, along with nuclear material, uranium 238 and 235," said Markéta Janovská, spokeswoman for regional police. "Because of the nature of the chemicals, we had to call in firefighters as well as the State Office for Nuclear Safety to help with the confiscation."

Both uranium isotopes are naturally occurring and often used in scientific testing and for medical purposes but are not readily accessible to the general public. The atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima utilized uranium 235, albeit the highly enriched variety, which the minerals found in Bělá nad Svitavou were not.

During interrogation in Bělá nad Svitavou, where the man lived with his 81-year-old mother, police learned that he also owned an apartment in the German city of Koblenz. Authorities in Rhineland-Palatinate were alerted, and a search warrant for the apartment was quickly issued.

"Some 50 police officers from our unit worked from Oct. 9 in the morning to late Oct. 10, searching the house and confiscating the find," said Helmut Zirfas, spokesman for the Koblenz police.

According to a press release issued by Koblenz Deputy State Prosecutor Hans-Peter Gandner, police found "a number of obscure chemicals, various types of ammunition, a detonator as well as parts of machine guns." Authorities emphasized the man has no discernable connections with far-right extremist groups.

The suspect, who is trained in pyrotechnics, told Czech police that "chemistry has always been a hobby" for him.

He is now being prosecuted in the Czech Republic for unauthorized possession of arms and ammunition and unauthorized production and possession of nuclear materials.

"At the moment, all we can say is that a number of different chemicals, military weapons and ammunition were found in his family home in the village of Bělá nad Svítavou, and that we are currently investigating the case," said Svítavy District State Attorney Jiří Horníček.

On the German side of the border, the man is charged with breach of the War Weapons Control Act and the Explosives Act.

"We collaborated with the German authorities from the beginning, and at the moment, the case is being investigated in both countries," Janovská said. "The man is currently under arrest in the Czech Republic, and the case will be prosecuted under Czech law."

If convicted, the suspect faces up to five years in prison.

<http://www.praguepost.com/news/6065-man-arrested-for-holding-arms-nuclear-material.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Global Security Newswire

Sarkozy: France to Hold Onto Nukes

Wednesday, October 20, 2010

French President Nicolas Sarkozy said his government favors disarmament but intends to hold onto its nuclear weapons for the foreseeable future, Interfax reported yesterday (see *GSN*, Oct. 12).

The European state is believed to hold around 300 nuclear weapons.

"France is not going to give up on its nuclear deterrent, whether or not this will disappoint you," Sarkozy said following a meeting with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Paris and Moscow are both recognized by the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty as formal nuclear powers. Germany does not have its own arsenal but is one of several NATO countries in which U.S. tactical nuclear weapons are fielded (see *GSN*, Oct. 7).

Sarkozy's comments arrived during a period of uncertainty over the issue of nuclear deterrence on the continent. Berlin and several other governments have pressed for withdrawing the U.S. nuclear weapons from Europe. Meanwhile, British Prime Minister David Cameron this week announced that he had delayed a final decision on moving ahead with modernization of the United Kingdom's submarine-based deterrent (see *GSN*, Oct. 19).

NATO leaders are also expected at their November summit in Lisbon, Portugal, to consider an updated strategic document that could call for eventual nuclear disarmament (see *GSN*, Oct. 12).

The French government supports "transparency and disarmament," Sarkozy said.

"I talked with the NATO secretary general a few days ago. I think we will negotiate an agreement which will suit all," he said.

However, NATO should not be "the only alliance that will fully give up its nuclear weapons, the more so since many countries are not going to take up such a position," Sarkozy added (Interfax, Oct. 19).

http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20101020_1180.php

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Sydney Morning Herald – Australia

Britain Keeps Nuclear Weapons amid Cuts

October 20, 2010

Agence France-Presse (AFP)

Britain has committed to retaining its nuclear deterrent but says it will cut the number of warheads it has and delay a politically-sensitive decision on building new submarines until 2016.

Unveiling the country's first defence review in 12 years on Tuesday, Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron said the Trident nuclear program was "the ultimate insurance policy" and was key to maintaining national security.

But amid opposition from the Liberal Democrats, the junior partner in the coalition government which took power in May, Cameron said no decision would be taken on a replacement until after the next election in 2015.

In what could be seen as a further concession to the Lib Dems, the defence review also pledges to reduce the number of nuclear warheads carried by the existing nuclear submarines from 48 to 40 per vessel.

This will reduce Britain's requirement for operationally available warheads from 160 to 120 and cut its overall nuclear weapon stockpile from 225 to no more than 180 by the mid 2020s.

"We will retain and renew the ultimate insurance policy - our independent nuclear deterrent, which guards this country round the clock, every day of the year," Cameron told the House of Commons.

He added: "But as a result of the changes to the program, the decision to start construction of new submarines need not be now taken until around 2016."

Defence chiefs estimate that the existing Vanguard class submarines can be safely operated until the late 2020s, which means any replacement need not be introduced until 2028.

As a result, the government can defer a decision on the new subs until after the five-year period covered by the defence review, saving both the costs of the replacement program and avoiding a potential fall-out with the Lib Dems.

The agreement which underpins cooperation between Cameron's Conservatives and the Lib Dems only lasts until the next election which must be held by 2015.

The defence review set out Britain's security strategy and also outlined cuts of eight per cent to the Ministry of Defence's budget, as part of sweeping savings across in government to pay off a record budget deficit.

<http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-world/britain-keeps-nuclear-weapons-amid-cuts-20101020-16sq0.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Escambray – Cuba

Message by Commander in Chief Fidel Castro Ruz against the Nuclear War

21 October 2010

New anti-war message by Cuban Revolution leader Fidel Castro in which he calls to preserve peace and humankind reproduced by Cuban website Cubadebate.

The use of nuclear weapons in a new war would mean the end of humanity. This was candidly foreseen by scientist Albert Einstein who was able to measure their destructive capability to generate millions of degrees of heat, which would vaporize everything within a wide radius of action. This brilliant researcher had promoted the development of this weapon so that it would not become available to the genocidal Nazi regime.

Each and every government in the world has the obligation to respect the right to life of each and every nation and of the totality of all the peoples on the planet.

Today there is an imminent risk of war with the use of that kind of weapon and I don't harbour the least doubt that an attack by the United States and Israel against the Islamic Republic of Iran would inevitably evolve towards a global nuclear conflict.

The World's peoples have an obligation to demand that their political leaders uphold their right to live. When the life of humankind, of your people and your most beloved human beings run such a risk, nobody can afford to be indifferent; not one minute can be lost in demanding respect for that right; tomorrow will be too late.

Albert Einstein himself stated unmistakably: "I do not know with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones". We fully comprehend what he wanted to convey, and he was absolutely right, yet in the wake of a global nuclear war, there wouldn't be anybody around to make use of those sticks and stones.

There would be "collateral damage", as the American political and military leaders always affirm, to justify the deaths of innocent people.

In a nuclear war the "collateral damage" would be the life of all humanity.

Let us have the courage to proclaim that all nuclear or conventional weapons, everything that is used to make war, must disappear!

Fidel Castro Ruz
October 15, 2010

<http://www.escambray.cu/Eng/Special/Fidel100921916>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

BBC News – U.K.
19 October 2010

Colombia Tries to Stop Rebels from Getting Nuclear Arms

Colombian police have created the first counter-nuclear arms unit in the region dealing with leftist rebels.

The new Centre for Nuclear Security will try to prevent members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Farc) from obtaining nuclear material to make a "dirty bomb".

Intelligence officials say computers belonging to the Farc proved they had been trying to obtain nuclear material.

They believe the rebels intend to use the material to cause maximum damage.

Since 2008, when the Colombian army found several computers belonging to the slain Farc commander known as "Raul Reyes", the authorities have been working on a theory that the guerrillas have ambitions involving nuclear arms.

At a news conference in Bogota, the new head of the unit, Gen Rafael Parra, said emails found on the computers proved that since 2005 the Farc had been trying to buy nuclear material in Ukraine.

Venezuelan nuclear ambitions

"It's clearly the intention of the Farc to obtain uranium in Europe. It's obvious that if it tries to do this, then it's for the sole purpose of using it against the people it has been terrorising for years," Gen Parra told reporters.

The inauguration of the centre comes just days after Colombia's neighbour Venezuela signed a contract with Moscow for a new nuclear reactor.

The BBC's Jeremy McDermott in Colombia says the Colombian authorities have long accused President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela of arming the Farc.

However, at the launch of the counter-nuclear arms centre one of its senior officials, Anitta Nilson, insisted there was no link between the new unit and developments in Venezuela.

She said the work of her unit was "in no way political".

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-11580759?utm_source=BBC+News+UK&utm_medium=twitter

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Buenos Aires Herald – Argentina
October 20, 2010

During an interview with Latin American media

Obama: 'Venezuela has Nuclear Rights but also Obligations'

US President Barack Obama urged Venezuela to act "responsibly" in nuclear matters and assured he is interested in "improving" his relationship with the South American country.

During an interview with Latin American media, Obama assured Venezuela "has the right of counting with pacific nuclear energy, but they must be sure that the system won't be used for a weapon purpose. This is the standard we use with everybody."

The US State Department announced last week that they are "closely" following the nuclear cooperation accord between Venezuela and Russia, which will give Venezuela the first nuclear base in Latin America.

Obama assured that "we are not interested in increasing the friction between Venezuela and the US, or between its neighbouring countries, but Venezuela must act responsibly."

He reminded that the country has had "worrying" attitudes for their neighbouring countries, especially Colombia, with whom the tension has eased.

The US President met Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos last month in New York, and congratulated him for the measures taken in order to improve their relation with Venezuela.

<http://www.buenosairesherald.com/BreakingNews/View/48644>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Herald Sun – Australia

Bill Clinton Lost Nuclear Launch Codes While President

- General claims Clinton lost launch codes
- President hadn't seen them for months
- "That's a big deal - gargantuan deal"

October 22, 2010

NewsCore

BILL Clinton managed to do the one thing US presidents should never do - lose the nuclear launch codes.

A general who served under Mr Clinton as the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff claims in a new book that the card bearing the top secret codes were missing for several months during 2000.

"At one point during the Clinton administration the codes were actually missing for months. That's a big deal - a gargantuan deal," General Hugh Shelton says in his memoir, *Without Hesitation: The Odyssey of an American Warrior*.

Another senior military figure linked to the Clinton administration, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Patterson, claims in another book that the President's memory lapse caused a huge panic in the White House.

"He thought he just placed them upstairs," Lieutenant Colonel Patterson said.

"We called upstairs, we started a search around the White House for the codes, and he finally confessed that he in fact misplaced them. He couldn't recall when he had last seen them."

It is unclear if the codes were ever found.

The card containing the launch codes is supposed to be kept close at hand at all times.

Before a president can launch a nuclear attack, he has to input the codes to arm the warheads.

White House spokesman Joe Lockhart confessed in 1999 that Mr Clinton had once left a NATO summit in such haste that he left behind his briefcase that contained the codes.

There have long been rumors that former President Jimmy Carter left the card in a suit which was sent to the drycleaners. That story has never been confirmed or denied.

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/world/bill-clinton-lost-nuclear-launch-codes-while-president/story-e6frf7lf-1225942008402>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Asahi Shimbun – Japan

OPINION

EDITORIAL: U.S. Subcritical Nuke Test

October 21, 2010

We learned last week that the United States conducted a subcritical nuclear test at an underground site in Nevada in mid-September. It was the first such test since August 2006, and the 24th time since the initial experiment in 1997.

It was also the first subcritical test under the administration of President Barack Obama, who in April last year in Prague announced his quest for a world free of nuclear weapons.

Familiar with the stated goals of Obama, expressions of regret and dismay at the news have poured in from Japan. There are also concerns about the impact on Russia, which conducted a similar test in 2004.

We fear the test may be viewed as selfishness on the part of a major power, giving countries aspiring for nuclear development a pretense to push ahead.

To prevent such a scenario from unfolding, the United States needs to enter a nuclear arms reduction treaty with Russia while mobilizing multilateral diplomacy and other means to get serious about shrinking the specific role played by nuclear weapons in global affairs.

Obama also says he wants to pursue the goal of zero nuclear weapons while maintaining nuclear capabilities, as long as such arms exist, for the security of America and its allies. Most of the nuclear warheads produced in large volume during the Cold War are deteriorating.

Obama's thinking is that subcritical testing is necessary to monitor major declines in explosive power, weakened safety system functions and other concerns.

Under the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), for which the Obama administration is seeking early ratification and enforcement, testing accompanied by nuclear detonation is banned. No clear ban is stipulated, however, for subcritical tests.

Washington explains that because last month's test used a quantity of plutonium incapable of causing a nuclear fission chain reaction, no atomic explosion occurred.

Facing opposition from Congress and other quarters, the CTBT has yet to be approved in the United States. In a statement made in April, however, Obama vowed that no nuclear testing would occur on his watch.

Regarding subcritical testing, there is also deep-rooted criticism that the real purpose is to collect data for developing new types of nuclear warheads.

Again, however, Obama has stressed that no new warheads will be developed. Taking that pledge at face value, there are two areas that we wish to see realized.

The first is the effectuation of the new nuclear arms reduction treaty agreed upon by Washington and Moscow this April. Under those terms, the number of deployed strategic nuclear warheads would be cut by about 30 percent within seven years of the treaty's start. Although the Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved the pact, there are no current prospects for it being ratified by a full session of the Senate.

Efforts to pass this proposal should be accelerated, setting aside concerns about the outcome of next month's midterm elections.

Secondly, the Los Alamos National Laboratory, which has continued nuclear weapons research, reports that data from subcritical tests is useful in creating simulation systems to investigate nuclear warhead firing power without actual nuclear testing. The Obama administration should support moves to elevate the reliability of such systems as a top priority, and use that progress to win congressional endorsement of the CTBT.

Although subcritical tests are being conducted, the work to promote nuclear disarmament is making little headway. If such conditions persist, suspicions will emerge about Obama's leadership in striving to eliminate nuclear arms. We look forward to the resolve for a nuclear weapons-free world he voiced last year being steadily put into action.

The Asahi Shimbun, Oct. 17

<http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201010200337.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency
OPINION & ANALYSIS

Russian Navy Desperate for New Planes

21 October 2010

RIA Novosti military commentator Ilya Kramnik

Russian naval aviation is in critical condition, particularly the aviation units of the Black Sea Fleet, which may lose most of their fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters in the next five to six years.

This problem demands a rapid solution. Otherwise the new warships ordered under the 2011-2020 state rearmament program will be useless.

So far there are no official plans for equipping the navy with new fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters. There have been no public reports or official statements regarding the purchase of new aircraft for the navy citing specific figures or parameters, except for the announcement of the purchase of 26 Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-29 Fulcrum carrier-borne fighters.

Off-the-record comments and articles by experts indicate that Soviet-era Ilyushin Il-38 May and Tupolev Tu-142 Bear F/J maritime patrol and anti-submarine warfare (ASW) aircraft are currently being modernized, and that the navy will receive new helicopters under a program to provide a thousand new helicopters for the Russian Armed Forces between 2011 and 2020.

The navy has endured across-the-board cuts for the past 20 years, with naval aviation being the hardest hit. Long-range bomber units essentially no longer exist, and the number of combat-ready ASW planes has dwindled.

The air wing of Russia's sole aircraft carrier, the Admiral Kuznetsov, and helicopters deployed on cruisers, ASW ships and frigates also face major problems.

The Black Sea Fleet is in a particularly bad state, as this was the only Soviet fleet that did not receive next-generation warships and aircraft in the 1980s before the collapse of the Soviet Union. As a result, its aviation units still operate four Beriev Be-12 Mail flying boats, which were decommissioned elsewhere long ago. The fleet operates rapidly aging Kamov Ka-27 Helix and Mil Mi-14 Haze, which are the main helicopter models in use in other fleets.

Russia can replace these obsolete helicopters. Each year, Russia manufactures 100 helicopters for export and for its own needs. Considering the ambitious helicopter procurement plans under the above-mentioned federal rearmament program, the navy is entitled to its fair share.

Replacing ASW aircraft is even more critical. Russia now has an estimated 40 long-range aircraft, including 26-28 Il-38s and 15 Tu-142s in use in the Pacific and Northern fleets, while the Baltic fleet lacks any long-range aircraft.

Ground-based ASW planes have come a long way in the past few years. Owing to recent advances in airborne radio-electronic equipment, most industrialized countries have started converting these planes into multi-role maritime patrol aircraft.

The U.S. Navy's upgraded Lockheed Martin P-3 Orion anti-submarine and surveillance aircraft, the peer of the Soviet Il-38 plane, is a classic example.

Over the past 30 years, these planes have gained a number of new capabilities. They can attack ships with the help of new anti-ship missiles; they can function as AWACS-type early-warning aircraft; and they can patrol exclusive economic zones and territorial waters in search of smugglers and poachers.

The Russian Navy also plans to overhaul its 40 ASW aircraft. But 40 aircraft are clearly not enough to police Russia's coast. Russia has the longest maritime border in the world, a problem compounded by the melting polar icecaps. Although the United States has 130 planes of this class, many U.S. analysts also believe their number should be increased.

Russia cannot compete with the United States in terms of the number of naval aircraft, but it can certainly afford to make more of this class of aircraft, particularly the A-42, an advanced version of the Beriev A-40 Albatros/Mermaid flying boat, developed in the 1980s, which can fly patrol and rescue missions.

The Russian Defense Ministry has already announced plans to purchase these aircraft. However, a 2008 plan to purchase four A-42 search-and-rescue planes, as well as their multi-role versions later on, never materialized.

Lieutenant General Valery Uvarov, former commander of the Russian Navy's air-force and air-defense units, said the navy needs 15-20 new flying boats to meet the demand for search-and-rescue aircraft and to significantly enlarge the ASW plane fleet.

It is impossible to replace all obsolete aircraft with A-42 flying boats because it would take about 20 years for the Taganrog plant that manufactures them, as well as the smaller Beriev Be-200 planes for the Emergencies Ministry, to fulfill the contract for at least 40 such aircraft.

A good replacement would be the Tupolev Tu-204-P multi-mission maritime aircraft, which was developed on the basis of the Tu-204 medium-haul airliner. It resembles the state-of-the-art Boeing P-8 Poseidon, a converted B-737.

This aircraft could be mass-produced if the Russian Navy were to order a sufficient quantity, unlike the A-42 flying boats. This would provide much-needed support to the Tu-204 program, which has essentially no commercial orders.

It would be possible to assemble 50-60 such aircraft in the next ten years, along with a small number of A-42 search-and-rescue planes. This would alleviate the problem and form the foundation for the subsequent development of Russian naval aviation.

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

<http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20101021/161043453.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Daily News & Analysis
OPINION/Editorial

There's No Need to Kowtow to the US

October 22, 2010

US president Barack Obama's three-day visit to India starting November 6 is giving rise to feverish anxieties and expectations.

The anxiety is centred around two issues: Obama's Af-Pak policy and his approach to the US's economic problems. After nearly a decade of fruitless war, the US is now planning to exit Afghanistan without defeating the Taliban or reining in the Pakistan-based Islamic extremist groups. Policymakers in Washington are keen to buy their way out through thoughtless economic and military aid to Pakistan. It should surprise no one if president Obama raises the Kashmir question just to mollify Islamabad.

The second issue of concern is Obama's approach to protecting American jobs. He is likely to air his concerns over the loss of American jobs to outsourcing and may want India to make amends for it. This could mean India providing access to American companies in defence and other high technology sectors like civilian nuclear power, apart from allowing American companies to raise stakes in sectors like insurance.

On India's part, strong concerns will be expressed about military aid to Pakistan on the pretext of fighting Islamic extremists. New Delhi will also stand its ground on the issue of outsourcing and will demand better access to Indian companies in the services sector.

The third American presidential visit in a decade — after Bill Clinton in 2000 and George Bush in 2006 — will be a tough one to negotiate. While there will be a tendency on the part of the US to sweet-talk India into making concessions on issues important to them, India will have to be willing to play hardball without ruffling feathers. In earlier engagements with the US, India has willingly played second fiddle, but this time it has to be different because of changed circumstances: the US, despite being the world's only superpower, has a weaker hand, and it needs us as much as we need it. Behind the bonhomie in public, India will have to dig in its heels in to fight for its interests. We are not on a weak wicket this time.

http://www.dnaindia.com/opinion/editorial_there-s-no-need-to-kowtow-to-the-us_1456234

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Chosun Ilbo – South Korea

OPINION/Editorial

October 22, 2010

China Must Stop Any N.Korean Nuclear Test

South Korean and U.S. authorities have detected signs of unusual activity at North Korea's nuclear test site, leading to fears that it is preparing for another test. These include a lot of traffic and apparent repairs to a tunnel that collapsed after the two earlier nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009. Judging from the latest signs, experts project it would take around three months before a test can be conducted.

The magnitude of North Korea's first nuclear test was 0.8 kt (1 kt equals 1,000 tons of TNT), while the strength of the second test was 4-5 kt. The magnitude of the atomic bomb that fell on Hiroshima in 1945 was 15 kt. The relative ineffectiveness of the devices tested could have been due to technical problems or a limited amount of plutonium. But now that may have changed and North Korea may even be in a position to use highly enriched uranium instead of plutonium.

The North knows that the Punggye-ri area, where the test site is located, is under intense satellite surveillance and could be intent on drawing the attention of South Korean and U.S. authorities. That is why Seoul and Washington believe the latest activity is a political gesture aimed at pushing them back to the six-party talks. But if North Korea does not get what it wants, it could actually conduct another nuclear test.

South Korea and the U.S. must not repeat the mistake of being dragged to the negotiating table by signs of a looming North Korean nuclear test. If that happens, North Korea will believe it can pressure them merely by appearing to conduct another test. Instead, they must make it clear that China shoulders the primary responsibility. Over the past few months, China and North Korea have been urging resumption of the six-party talks, but if Beijing allows the North to carry out another test, it would make nonsense of these efforts.

As the host of the six-party talks, China bears the responsibility of explaining to South Korea, the U.S. and other participants of the six-party talks just what is going on in Punggye-ri. China is the only country with the political, diplomatic and economic clout to get North Korea to halt the test. China must finally demonstrate real resolve to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula. If North Korea seeks to continue its futile efforts to shift the nuclear balance of power, then South Korea and the U.S. must firmly warn Pyongyang and Beijing that they will take extraordinary measures.

http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2010/10/22/2010102200959.html

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)