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FARS News Agency – Iran
October 23, 2010

Iran Develops New Missile System with Longer Range

TEHRAN (FNA) - The Iranian Defense Ministry announced on Saturday that it has succeeded in improving the range of its mid-range missile defense system named as 'Mersad'.

"The Mersad missile system is a highly important system and the range of its new generation will be more than the range of its current generation possessed by the Iranian Armed Forces," Defense Minister Brigadier General Ahmad Vahidi told FNA today.

Elaborating on the features of the missile system which is capable of destroying advanced airplanes in low and mid altitudes, Vahidi reiterated, "The new generation of Mersad system covers higher altitudes and hits more targets simultaneously."

Iran first announced in April that it had built its first home-made mid-range missile defense system named as 'Mersad'.

"The Mersad air defense system that is ready for delivery to the Air Defense Base is a mid-range defense system capable of destroying advanced airplanes in low and mid altitudes," Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Ahmad Vahidi told reporters in April.

Noting that the Mersad defense system enjoys superior and more capabilities than its western rivals like the Hag mid-range defense system, Vahidi reiterated at the time that Mersad is resistant to electronic warfare and can be used as part of a network of radar and air defense systems.

"The Mersad missile defense system is comprised of different target tracing and tracking radars, soft and hardware networks, launch pads for Shahin missiles and a command and control center," he added.

Iran has recently taken giant strides in building missile defense systems. Vahidi in May inaugurated the production line of a powerful missile defense shield to destroy incoming cruise missiles.

"Mesbah (Lantern) 1 air-defense system is designed and built to counter air attacks, different kinds of airplanes, cruise missiles, choppers and other air threats in low altitudes," he said at the time.

Iran also boosted its efforts to improve its missile defense system after Moscow's decision to annul the contract for the delivery of the sophisticated anti-aircraft S-300 missile to Iran.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev earlier in September issued a decree on the ban, which also prohibited exports of tanks, aircraft and sea vessels to Iran.

An Iranian top military commander had announced several months ago that Tehran is able to replace the Russian-made anti-aircraft S-300 missiles with other air defense systems.

"If they do not deliver S-300 defensive system to us, we have replacements and we can supply our operational requirements through innovative techniques and different designs," Deputy Commander of Khatam ol-Anbia Air Defense Base for Coordination General Hassan Mansourian said in November.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=8908011328>

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Wired Magazine.com

WikiLeaks Show WMD Hunt Continued in Iraq – With Surprising Results

By Noah Shachtman
October 23, 2010

By late 2003, even the Bush White House's staunchest defenders were starting to give up on the idea that there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

But for years afterward, WikiLeaks' newly-released Iraq war documents reveal, U.S. troops continued to find chemical weapons labs, encounter insurgent specialists in toxins, and uncover weapons of mass destruction.

An initial glance at the WikiLeaks war logs doesn't reveal evidence of some massive WMD program by the Saddam Hussein regime — the Bush administration's most (in)famous rationale for invading Iraq. But chemical weapons, especially, did not vanish from the Iraqi battlefield. Remnants of Saddam's toxic arsenal, largely destroyed after the

Gulf War, remained. Jihadists, insurgents and foreign (possibly Iranian) agitators turned to these stockpiles during the Iraq conflict — and may have brewed up their own deadly agents.

In August 2004, for instance, American forces surreptitiously purchased what they believed to be containers of liquid sulfur mustard, a toxic “blister agent” used as a chemical weapon since World War I. The troops tested the liquid, and “reported two positive results for blister.” The chemical was then “triple-sealed and transported to a secure site” outside their base.

Three months later, in northern Iraq, U.S. scouts went to look in on a “chemical weapons” complex. “One of the bunkers has been tampered with,” they write. “The integrity of the seal [around the complex] appears intact, but it seems someone is interesting in trying to get into the bunkers.”

Meanwhile, the second battle of Fallujah was raging in Anbar province. In the southeastern corner of the city, American forces came across a “house with a chemical lab . . . substances found are similar to ones (in lesser quantities located a previous chemical lab.” The following day, there’s a call in another part of the city for explosive experts to dispose of a “chemical cache.”

Nearly three years later, American troops were still finding WMD in the region. An armored Buffalo vehicle unearthed a cache of artillery shells “that was covered by sacks and leaves under an Iraqi Community Watch checkpoint. “The 155mm rounds are filled with an unknown liquid, and several of which are leaking a black tar-like substance.” Initial tests were inconclusive. But later, “the rounds tested positive for mustard.”

In WikiLeaks’ massive trove of nearly 392,000 Iraq war logs, there are hundreds of references to chemical and biological weapons. Most of those are intelligence reports or initial suspicions of WMD that don’t pan out. In July 2004, for example, U.S. forces come across a Baghdad building with gas masks, gas filters, and containers with “unknown contents” inside. Later investigation revealed those contents to be vitamins.

But even late in the war, WMDs were still being unearthed. In the summer of 2008, according to one WikiLeaks report, American troops found at least 10 rounds that tested positive for chemical agents. “These rounds were most likely left over from the [Saddam]-era regime. Based on location, these rounds may be an AQI [Al Qaeda in Iraq] cache. However, the rounds were all total disrepair and did not appear to have been moved for a long time.”

A small group — mostly of the political right — has long maintained that there was more evidence of a major and modern WMD program than the American people were lead to believe. A few Congressmen and Senators gravitated to the idea, but it was largely dismissed as conspiratorial hooley.

The WMD diehards will likely find some comfort in these newly-WikiLeaked documents. Skeptics will note that these relatively small WMD stockpiles were hardly the kind of grave danger that the Bush administration presented in the run-up to the war.

But the more salient issue may be how insurgents and Islamic extremists (possibly with the help of Iran) attempted to use these lethal and exotic arms. As Spencer noted earlier, a January 2006 war log claims that “neuroparalytic” chemical weapons were smuggled in from Iran.

That same month, then “chemical weapons specialists” were apprehended in Balad. These “foreigners” were there specifically “to support the chemical weapons operations.” The following month, an intelligence report refers to a “chemical weapons expert” that “provided assistance with the gas weapons.” What happened to that specialist, the WikiLeaks document doesn’t say.

<http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2010/10/wikileaks-show-wmd-hunt-continued-in-iraq-with-surprising-results/>

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Ha’aretz Daily – Israel
24 October 2010

Iran Parliament Rejects Talks on Uranium Enrichment Suspension

Iran likely to meet with major Western powers in Vienna next month, but sides differ on what meeting’s agenda should include.

By Deutsche Presse-Agentur (DPA)

Iran’s parliament said Sunday that the government should not enter any nuclear negotiations aimed at coercing Tehran to suspend uranium enrichment, Iran’s official news agency IRNA reported.

The deputy head of the parliament’s national security commission said the West should not think that sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council would force Iran to relinquish its rights.

Mohammad-Esmail Kowsari said that instead of focusing on Iran's legitimate right to pursue peaceful nuclear projects, the parties should prove their commitment to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and explore ways to enable global nuclear disarmament.

The office of European Union's foreign policy chief, Catherine Ashton, has proposed resuming nuclear talks with Iran on November 15-17 in Vienna. The proposed talks would include the 5+1 major powers - the United States, Britain, China, France, Russia and Germany.

Iran welcomed the initiative, but chief nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili said the agenda would need to be clarified first.

Analysts say that there are gaps that need to be bridged, with Tehran preferring to discuss global issues such as disarmament, Israel's nuclear arsenal and the financial crisis in the Middle East and around the world, while the Western powers insist that Iran suspend its uranium enrichment activities. Tehran views this demand as unacceptable.

Parliament member Vali Esmaeili said Iran should not allow world powers to impose any preconditions for the talks.

"The West should understand that Iran will never give up its nuclear rights and suspension of uranium enrichment," he said.

Iran's Atomic Energy Organization chief, Ali-Akbar Salehi, proposed a uranium-swap deal as a basis for talks with the 5+1 group, to compromise on demands from both sides.

The swap deal - storing Iranian low-enriched uranium in Turkey and exchanging it with nuclear fuel from Russia and France for a medical reactor in Tehran - was raised during the previous round of negotiations a year ago in Geneva.

<http://www.haaretz.com/news/international/iran-parliament-rejects-talks-on-uranium-enrichment-suspension-1.320865>

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London Daily Telegraph – U.K.

Iran Increases Enriched Uranium Ahead of Global Meeting over Nuclear Programme

Iran has announced it has substantially increased its enriched uranium stockpile, only a month ahead of scheduled negotiations with global powers on its controversial nuclear programme.

By Praveen Swami, Diplomatic Editor

24 October 2010

Ali Akbar Salehi, the director of **Iran's** atomic energy authority, has said that Iran now holds 30kg (66.13lb) of 20 per cent enriched uranium – a level of enrichment that has legitimate civilian uses but is also adequate to manufacture crude nuclear weapons. The Vienna-based International Atomic Regulatory Authority (IAEA) reported last month that Iran had 22kg (48.5lb) of 20 per cent enriched uranium.

Mr Salehi also said Iran has stepped up extraction from the Gechin uranium mine, near the southern port of Bandar Abbas, and begun work at two new mines in the central Yazd province.

The five permanent members of the UNSC—the US, Britain, France, Russia and China—along with Germany, are scheduled to hold negotiations with Iran next month, in a renewed diplomatic effort to address global concerns over the country's nuclear ambitions.

A senior diplomat involved in the negotiations told The Daily Telegraph Iran would likely bring some concessions to the table, such as allowing more stringent inspections by the IAEA operating its uranium enrichment plant at Natanz under international supervision. It is, however, unlikely to accede to UNSC demands to terminate its uranium enrichment programme altogether, the diplomat said.

Should the negotiations fail, the UNSC may consider tightening sanctions it originally imposed in June. It is unclear, though, if its members will be able to develop a consensus on the issue. Russia's government came under intense criticism after it cancelled a contract for the sale of S-300 PMU-1 air-defence missiles to Iran. China has supported the sanctions, but there have been reports that firms in the country have continued to sell sensitive technologies to Iran.

Iran insists it has no intention of manufacturing nuclear weapons, but there is mounting evidence which suggests otherwise. In February, the IAEA criticised Iran for failing to disclose secret tests of precision detonators and the

modification of missile cones to accommodate heavy payloads—experiments typically associated with the use of nuclear warheads.

Experts concur that Iran is still some way away from mastering the complex steps needed to produce a nuclear weapon. Its actions, however, have caused concern because Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea all successfully developed nuclear weapons under cover of civilian programmes.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/8083935/Iran-increases-enriched-uranium-ahead-of-global-meeting-over-nuclear-programme.html>

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Moscow Times – Russia

Iran Urged to Hold Nuke Talks

25 October 2010

By Reuters

A senior Russian diplomat urged Iran to take up an offer to hold talks on its nuclear program next month even as European Union foreign affairs chief Catherine Ashton reissued the invitation.

In a letter Friday to Iran's ambassador to the European Union, Ashton urged Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, Saeed Jalili, to take up the offer of talks in Vienna from Nov. 15 to 17, with the discussions to cover the nuclear program and "any other items pertinent to the discussion."

"The meeting could start with a dinner on Nov. 15, followed by two days of consultations to enable substantial discussions," reads a copy of the letter seen by Reuters. "Given the proximity of the suggested dates and the diary constraints of the parties involved, I do hope for your early and positive response."

Ashton has the backing of the six major powers involved in nuclear negotiations — the United States, Russia, France, Britain, China and Germany — to make contact with Tehran.

She last issued an invitation to talks, which would be the first high-profile contact in a year, on Oct. 14 but has yet to receive a formal reply, although Iran has intimated through its media that it welcomes the invitation.

Also Friday, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov called on Tehran to agree to the negotiations chaired by Ashton.

"We urge our Iranian friends and colleagues to officially respond in a positive manner to the invitation," Ryabkov, Russia's representative to negotiations between Iran and the six powers, said in an interview with Interfax in Brussels.

A senior Iranian official said earlier in the week that Iran was ready to meet any time but said the subject must be made clear in advance, among other conditions.

Iran has long insisted on a right to peaceful nuclear technology, and that it is not seeking nuclear weapons. But its past concealment of sensitive nuclear activity and continued curbs on UN inspections has raised suspicion abroad.

Iran's first, Russian-built nuclear power plant is to go on line soon and the government says it plans to build up to 20 reactors over the next two decades.

Talks with the six powers stalled in October 2009, and governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency passed a resolution two months later rebuking Iran for having hidden a second uranium enrichment project for more than two years.

Russia has expressed increasing frustration with Iran's refusal to suspend enrichment in exchange for trade and diplomatic incentives on offer from the six powers since 2006.

Moscow, which long sought to temper Western efforts to isolate Iran, endorsed harsher UN sanctions against Tehran in June and later announced it would not fulfill a contract to sell S-300 air defense missile systems to the Islamic Republic.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/iran-urged-to-hold-nuke-talks/420883.html>

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Arab Times – Kuwait

Kuwait Calls on Israel to Join NPT

Clear ME of nukes: Envoy to UN

October 25, 2010

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 23, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait called on the international community to squeeze Israel to join the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Speaking at a UN disarmament and international security meeting late Friday, Kuwait's permanent UN delegation member Ghazi Al-Fadhli said: "Kuwait calls on the international community to exert pressure on Israel to join the NPT as a non-nuclear party and to agree to subject its nuclear facilities to all-out IAEA safeguards."

He urged all NPT member states not to cooperate with Israel in the nuclear domain and to stop supplying it with scientific and technological means that could contribute to boosting its nuclear weaponry, or even with any other country seeking to produce or develop nuclear weapons.

He stressed that the Middle East region, which is a key flashpoint in the world, should be cleared of nuclear weapons, noting that all countries of the region, save Israel, are NPT member states.

Concerning Iran's controversial nuclear dossier, Al-Fadhli said it is the right of Kuwait and other countries to conduct studies, research and tests targeting for the peaceful usage of nuclear energy, provided that IAEA criteria and requirements are fulfilled.

But, he hoped that negotiations to be re-launched between Iran and UN Security Council member states soon could lead to a peaceful settlement that would spare the already volatile region further tensions.

Nuclear weapons not only pose a threat to international security and peace, but threaten humanity as well, he argued.

<http://www.arabtimesonline.com/NewsDetails/tabid/96/smId/414/ArticleID/161083/t/Kuwait-calls-on-Israel-to-join-NPT/Default.aspx>

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Khaleej Times – U.A.E.

Hawkish Israeli Minister Drafts Nuclear Iran Plan

Monday, October 25, 2010

By Dan Williams (Reuters)

Hardline Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman has commissioned a report on how to prepare for a nuclear-armed Iran as doubt mounts about the efficacy of preventive action, an Israeli source said on Monday.

Publicly, Israel has pledged to deny the Iranians the means to make a bomb but its previous, centrist government also discreetly drew up "day after" contingency plans should Tehran's uranium enrichment pass the military threshold.

At the time, rightist opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu called for Israel to consider preemptive strikes against its arch-foe's nuclear sites. Now prime minister, Netanyahu has reined in such rhetoric while not ruling out the use of force.

In a sign the government is examining a full range of options, Lieberman, the most hawkish member of Netanyahu's coalition, has ordered ministry strategists to draft a paper on "what to do if we wake up and discover the Iranians have a nuclear weapon," said the senior Israeli political source, who declined to be named due to the sensitivity of the matter.

Foreign Ministry planners are also preparing a report on possible responses should the Palestinians unilaterally declare a state taking in all of the occupied West Bank, where continued Israeli settlement has bogged down U.S.-sponsored peace efforts.

Israel is widely assumed to have the Middle East's only nuclear arsenal. Its aircraft bombed Iraq's atomic reactor in 1981 and launched a similar sortie against Syria in 2007.

But many independent experts believe Israeli forces could not take on Iran alone. The Iranians have dug in, dispersed and prepared to defend many of their nuclear facilities.

Even were its warplanes to manage a successful sneak attack, Israel would almost certainly suffer retaliatory Iranian missile salvos worse than the short-range rocket attacks of Lebanese and Palestinian guerrillas in the 2006 and 2009 border wars.

There would be a wider diplomatic reckoning: World powers are in no rush to see another regional conflagration, especially while sanctions are still being pursued against an Iranian nuclear programme which Tehran says is peaceful.

The planning department of Israel's Foreign Ministry is one of several units guiding government strategy. Chief among these are the National Security Council and an inner cabinet made up of Netanyahu and six other top ministers, including Lieberman. Netanyahu's office declined comment on the Lieberman initiative. A senior Israeli official said: "The government's position is that all attempts have to be made to prevent Iran from going nuclear."

The Israelis have voiced cautious confidence in sanctions. But they also believe Tehran could have a nuclear warhead as soon as 2012-2014, an assessment shared by some in the West.

Israeli defence officials have placed a priority on improving the national missile shield and bolstering a network of civilian bomb shelters -- a posture that may herald resilience in the face of an eventual nuclear-armed Iran or a bracing for reprisals should Israel strike Iran first.

http://www.khaleejtimes.com/darticlen.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/October/middleeast_October401.xml§ion=middleeast

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China Post – Taiwan
Tuesday, October 26, 2010
By Reuters

Iran Inserts Fuel into Nuclear Plant Core: Report

TEHRAN -- Iran has started loading fuel into the core of its first nuclear power plant, bringing it a step closer to realizing its stated goal of becoming a peaceful nuclear power, state-run Press TV reported on Tuesday.

"Iran has started injecting fuel into the core of the Bushehr nuclear power plant in the southern port city of Bushehr which is the country's first nuclear reactor," the English-language television channel said on its website.

Amid great media fanfare, fuel rods were transported into the reactor building in August, but they were not inserted into its core.

The development comes as the United States and Europe seek to coax Tehran back into stalled talks about its nuclear enrichment activities which some countries fear is aimed at developing nuclear weapons.

Iran says the Russian-built 1,000-mw plant will start producing energy in early 2011 after decades of delays and that the launch shows its nuclear ambitions are peaceful and not aimed at making an atomic bomb.

Iran insists it needs to enrich uranium -- material which can also be used to make weapons if refined much further -- to fuel future power stations and a medical research reactor.

Skepticism about Iran's real aims led to a new round of sanctions from the U.N. Security Council in June and tighter measures from Washington and the European Union.

EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton, who represents the "P5+1" powers -- U.N. Security Council permanent members Russia, the United States, China, France and Britain, plus Germany -- has invited Iran for talks in Vienna from November 15 to 17.

Iran has welcomed the offer of talks, but has not yet formally replied to the invitation. Officials have said they require clarification on what exactly the talks aim to achieve.

Tehran is showing no sign of backing down in the dispute, pressing ahead with enrichment activity despite the sanctions.

Officials have said the reactor will begin generating energy early next year, a delay of several months. Iranian officials denied speculation the global spread of the "Stuxnet" computer virus affected the start-up, although it did infect some computers.

Experts say that firing up the US\$1billion plant will not take Iran any closer to building a nuclear bomb since Russia will supply the enriched uranium for the reactor and take away spent fuel which could be used to make weapons-grade plutonium.

<http://www.chinapost.com.tw/news/2010/10/26/277502/Iran-inserts.htm>

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Press TV – Iran
Tuesday, October 26, 2010

'Fuelling Bushehr Gives Iran Edge'

A top Iranian parliamentarian says fuelling the Bushehr nuclear power plant will give Iran an edge in its forthcoming negotiations with the West.

"Injecting fuel into the Bushehr nuclear power will tip the balance of upcoming talks between Iran and the P5+1 -- China, France, Russia, the US, the UK and Germany --in favor of Tehran," deputy head of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Commission Hossein Ebrahimi told IRNA on Tuesday.

Referring to the loading of nuclear fuel assemblies into the core of the Bushehr reactor, which started earlier in the day, the senior lawmaker said the launch of this power plant comes at a time when Iran is under the toughest sanctions.

Ebrahimi said the P5+1 should accept the conditions set by Iran if they want to hold fruitful talks with the country.

He said Iran will not suspend its uranium enrichment work, which is part of its peaceful nuclear drive.

"Peaceful nuclear energy for all, nuclear weapons for none, is the motto of Iran and it will continue its civilian nuclear activities based on this very policy," Ebrahimi added.

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran Ali Akbar Salehi said on Tuesday that around 163 fuel assemblies will be injected into the core of the plant's reactor over a two-month period.

The Bushehr Power Plant is scheduled to join the national grid by early 2011.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/148360.html>

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Tehran Times – Iran

Tuesday, October 26, 2010

Tehran, Russia at Odds over Iran's Nuclear Program: Ambassador

Tehran Times Political Desk

TEHRAN – Tehran's ambassador to Moscow Reza Sajjadi has said Tehran and Moscow have serious disagreements over Iran's nuclear issue.

"Our approach and Russia's toward this issue are completely two different approaches," Sajjadi told ISNA news agency in an interview published on Monday.

Unfortunately, Russia has made a big mistake concerning Iran's nuclear issue because it was influenced by West's propaganda, he noted.

Russia was made to believe that there is no peaceful purpose behind Iran's nuclear program and that is why it has distanced itself from the Islamic Republic, Iran's top diplomat in Moscow stated.

Sajjadi went on to say that Iran and Russia have many commonalities and it is not prudent for Russia to distance itself from Iran.

Today Iran is helping to prevent the spread of terrorism in the Caucasus region as well as smuggling drugs to Russia, the diplomat added.

Asked about the Russian president's recent remarks that Moscow is interested to expand ties with Europe and the U.S., he said Russia is concerned about the future of its economy.

Moscow believes that if it cannot improve its economy, it will face serious security problems to the extent that Russia will disintegrate into more separate republics, Sajjadi added.

The ambassador said Russia has been infused with the idea that it has no choice to develop its economy other than reinforcing its relationship with the West.

http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=229271

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Taipei Times – Taiwan

Monday, October 25, 2010

N Korea Justifies Nuclear 'Sword'

TROUBLE IN STORE? South Korea's biggest-selling newspaper has reported that Pyongyang appears to be preparing for another nuclear test

Agence France-Presse (AFP), SEOUL

North Korea said its nuclear arsenal “serves as a treasured sword,” amid reports the secretive state could be preparing for a third nuclear test.

Pyongyang was “entirely right when it opted for having access to nukes,” the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said in a commentary, adding the country needed to protect itself.

The North has long justified having the weapons saying they are to counter a similar nuclear threat from the US.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), a global nuclear safeguard accord, was not doing its job properly, the commentary late on Saturday said.

“This compelled [North Korea] to pull out of the NPT and have access to nuclear deterrent legitimately in order to protect the sovereignty and security of the country,” it said.

The North withdrew from the NPT in 2003.

Chosun Ilbo, South Korea’s biggest-selling newspaper, reported on Thursday that the North appeared to be preparing for another nuclear test, citing an unidentified government source.

US satellites had detected movements of personnel and vehicles at the site where Pyongyang carried out its first two nuclear tests in 2006 and last year, the report said.

US State Department spokesman Mark Toner said on Thursday that another atomic weapons test would be “provocative” but said he did not have any evidence to support the South Korean report.

The situation in North Korea is being keenly monitored as Pyongyang has begun laying the ground work for the future succession of ruler Kim Jong-il’s youngest son, Kim Jong-un.

Pyongyang said on Saturday it was willing to resume stalled six-nation nuclear disarmament talks but would not be “hasty” because the US and some other parties were “not ready.”

China, the North’s sole major ally and economic lifeline, is pressing to restart the six-party forum, which groups the two Koreas, the US, China, Japan and Russia, and began in 2003. However, prospects for renewed negotiations have been clouded by accusations that the North torpedoed one of Seoul’s warships in March, a charge Pyongyang denies.

At a recent meeting in Seoul, military leaders from 26 nations warned that the North’s nuclear program poses “the most serious threat” to the Asia-Pacific region.

US Admiral Robert Willard, commander of the US Pacific Command, said the threat from the North’s nuclear capabilities was “widely recognized as significant not just to South Korea but the region as a whole.”

“The next [nuclear] test would be a very serious matter for the international community and [South Korea],” he said.

<http://www.taipetimes.com/News/world/archives/2010/10/25/2003486868>

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Yonhap News – South Korea

October 26, 010

S. Korea, U.S. Agree to Begin Joint Study of Pyroprocessing Spent Nuke Fuel

By Hwang Doo-hyong

WASHINGTON, Oct. 25 (Yonhap) -- South Korea and the United States agreed Monday to conduct a joint study on pyroprocessing and other ways of handling spent nuclear fuel, a senior South Korean official said.

The agreement was made at the first formal talks here on rewriting a bilateral nuclear pact that expires in 2014, Cho Hyun, deputy foreign minister for multilateral and global affairs, told reporters.

"We've concurred that we will soon convene a meeting of technical experts to determine the scope and schedules for the joint study," Cho said after the one-day talks with the U.S. delegation headed by Robert Einhorn, the State Department's special adviser for nonproliferation and arms control.

The South Korea-U.S. nuclear agreement, signed in 1974, bans Seoul from enriching uranium or reprocessing spent nuclear fuel.

Facing a lack of storage facilities, South Korea hopes to adopt pyroprocessing technology, considered to be less conducive to proliferation because it leaves separated plutonium, the main ingredient in making atomic bombs, mixed with other elements.

It will take at least several years, however, to introduce the fledgling pyroprocessing technology, Cho said.

"Therefore, we've agreed to pursue a two-track strategy in rewriting the nuclear accord," he said, adding that the sides will try to conclude talks on other issues on renewing the nuclear agreement at least a year before its expiration, or by March 2013, to give time for parliamentary approval.

In case the joint study does not produce a satisfactory outcome by then, the new accord will have a clause to the effect that pyroprocessing technology may be considered after completion of the joint study, Cho said.

The Bush administration had not opposed South Korea building facilities to research pyroprocessing technology, but the Obama administration is said to be less favorable to pyroprocessing, seeing little difference with traditional reprocessing in terms of proliferation, and favors interim storage of spent nuclear fuel.

Washington fears South Korea's reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel might undermine global nonproliferation efforts and provoke North Korea and Japan.

South Korea, which produces 36 percent of its energy at 20 nuclear power plants, has to deal with more than 10,000 tons of nuclear waste at storage facilities that are expected to reach capacity in 2016.

Also, South Korea, which won a US\$20 billion contract in December to build four nuclear reactors for the United Arab Emirates, has complained that the constraint on reprocessing has blocked its nuclear exports.

Another obstacle is South Korea's own history of nuclear weapons development.

Late President Park Chung-hee sought a clandestine project for the development of nuclear weapons in the 1970s to cope with military threats from the North after the U.S. took steps to reduce U.S. troops in Korea.

Park's ambitions were thwarted by the U.S., which successfully pressured France and Canada to refrain from helping South Korea build nuclear reactors capable of producing weapons-grade material.

The aborted South Korean program was described in a report by the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies in March.

"This initial effort was halted, however, after the 1974 Indian 'peaceful' nuclear test prompted the United States to turn against the spread of reprocessing technologies and after revelations that the then-military government of Korea was planning to develop nuclear weapons or, at least, acquire the technology and capability to do so on short notice," the report said.

A report of the U.S. Joint Forces Command said in February, "Several friends or allies of the United States, such as Japan and South Korea, are highly advanced technological states and could quickly build nuclear devices if they chose to do so."

Complicating the situation, however, are the agreements the U.S. maintains with India, Japan and some European countries for the provision of technological assistance for the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2010/10/26/46/0301000000AEN20101026004200315F.HTML>

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Global Security Newswire

South Korea to Take Lead Role in Counterproliferation Program

Tuesday, October 26, 2010

South Korea is expected to take a more prominent role in a U.S.-led international effort that seeks to prevent the trafficking of weapons of mass destruction, a decision that is likely to ratchet up tensions with North Korea, the *Korea Herald* reported yesterday (see *GSN*, Oct. 14).

Leading nations in the Proliferation Security Initiative have agreed to include Seoul as an Operational Experts Group member. The move is expected to be formalized in early November at the next OEG conference in Japan, an unidentified diplomatic source in South Korea said.

The 20-state Operational Experts Group serves as the leadership body for the counterproliferation program, which has more than 90 member nations.

South Korea joined the initiative in May 2009 after Pyongyang carried out its second nuclear test. Earlier this month, the South hosted a large-scale multinational maritime exercise that focused on the interdiction of ships suspected of carrying WMD materials. The sea drill was the first time South Korea participated in a PSI exercise; Seoul previously had abstained from active participation out of concern it would aggravate Pyongyang.

By joining the OEG body, South Korea will have an enhanced ability to "monitor illegal weapons trade and related activities in North Korea," the source said.

Washington established the program in 2003 after a cargo of 15 Scud missiles discovered on a North Korean ship could not be confiscated because of an absence of international laws that would have allowed their seizure, the *Herald* reported. Program members agree that third-party vessels can be boarded in international waters if they are suspected of carrying unconventional weapons materials.

Opponents of the initiative, including China, Iran and North Korea, assert the mission of interdicting ships could constitute a breach of a vessel's globally recognized right to sail unmolested in international waters. North Korea also asserts the initiative is part of a planned war campaign by the United States (Shin Hae-in, *Korea Herald*, Oct. 25).

http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20101026_2807.php

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The News International – **Pakistan**

Pak Nukes Are Safe, Says India Army Chief

Sunday, October 24, 2010

NEW DELHI: India's Army Chief Gen VK Singh said concerns do exist about the nuclear arsenals of Pakistan but he feels these weapons are secure.

"Probably Pakistan also has (such concerns) and they are taking extra measures...I don't think, there is any reason to say things are not secure. Things are secure," the army chief said while talking to a local news agency in an interview.

He, however, added that this will remain a concern given "the way internal dynamics (of Pakistan) are".

Gen Singh recently raised hackles in Pakistan which had criticised him for his comments that Pakistan and China are "major irritants" and India was ready to fight a conventional warfare in a nuclear scenario.

Rejecting Pakistan's contention that his recent comments were "jingoistic", he said such views were not only his, but of the entire world.

"I only said what the whole world is saying. If the whole world is jingoistic...," Gen Singh said.

The army chief noted that both Pakistan and China were nuclear armed countries and "who uses (such weapons), we don't know. As armed forces, we should always keep this in mind that there is somebody who can use it."

Elaborating on his contention, he pointed out that Pakistan has done "sabre-rattling" on behalf of nuclear weapons and "we, as a force, are prepared to fight anytime."

Turning to China, he said the borders are calm and confidence building measures are in place and "things are not as bad as we look at the western side (Pakistan)."

He, however, said no one knows "when its intention will change" and "it remains a cause of worry".

Commenting on China's capability building, Gen Singh said it is engaging a lot of India's neighbours and it impacts "our overall security scenario".

Assuring the nation, he asserted that the armed forces will cater to any kind of threat. "We have built capabilities and we are building capabilities. We should be able to meet threat from wherever it emanates."

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/latest-news/3604.htm>

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The Hindu – **India**

New Delhi, October 25, 2010

Army Chief: Pakistan's Nuclear Arsenal Secure

Press Trust of India (PTI)

Amid global fears that Pakistan's nuclear arsenal may fall into the hands of terrorists, Army Chief Gen. V.K. Singh says concern remains over this aspect but feels these weapons are secure.

“Probably Pakistan also has [such concerns] and they are taking extra measures....I don't think, there is any reason to say things are not secure. Things are secure,” the Army Chief told PTI in an interview.

Internal dynamics

He, however, noted that this would remain a concern given “the way internal dynamics [of Pakistan] are.”

Gen. Singh recently raised hackles in Pakistan for his comments that Pakistan and China are “major irritants” and India was ready to fight a conventional warfare in a nuclear scenario.

Rejecting Pakistan's contention that his recent comments were “jingoistic,” he said such views were not only his, but of the entire world.

“I only said what the whole world is saying. If the whole world is jingoistic...,” Gen. Singh said.

The Army Chief noted that both Pakistan and China were nuclear armed countries and “who uses [such weapons], we don't know. As armed forces, we should always keep this in mind that there is somebody who can use it.”

“Sabre-rattling”

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Turning to China, he said the borders were calm and confidence-building measures were in place and “things are not as bad as we look at the western side [Pakistan].”

Gen. Singh said China was engaging a lot of India's neighbours and it “impacts our overall security scenario.”

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article847340.ece>

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Hindustan Times – India

Pak will Maintain Minimum Credible Nuclear Deterrence: Gilani

Press Trust of India

Islamabad, October 25, 2010

Pakistan will take every possible step to maintain a minimum credible nuclear deterrence despite economic constraints being faced by the country, Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani said on Monday. Gilani made the remarks during a meeting with Gen Khalid Shamim Wyne, who recently assumed charge as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee. "Despite economic constraints, the government would not ignore the defence requirements of the country and every possible step would be taken to maintain the level of minimum credible deterrence," the premier said.

He lauded the professional preparedness of the armed forces. Wyne briefed Gilani about his recent visit to South Korea to participate in a Chiefs of Defence Staff conference.

He apprised the premier of his meetings with the military leadership of participating countries.

Gilani and Wyne also discussed professional matters related to the three services and the overall security situation of Pakistan.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/Pak-will-maintain-minimum-credible-nuclear-deterrence-Gilani/Article1-617670.aspx>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia's Ballistic Missile to Enter Service after Clean Sheet

26 October 2010

Russia's Bulava ballistic missile will enter service when it is 98-99% efficient, Deputy Defense Minister Vladimir Popovkin said on Tuesday.

Over half of the test launches of the submarine-based missile have failed. The last test launch on October 7 was deemed successful when it hit the designated target in the country's Far East.

The next launch is scheduled for October 29, a military source revealed earlier on Tuesday.

The Bulava is capable of carrying six individually targeted nuclear warheads.

LE BOURGET, October 26 (RIA Novosti)

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20101026/161092786.html

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China Daily - China

Next Bulava Missile Test Scheduled October 29

Xinhua

26 October 2010

MOSCOW, October 26 (Xinhua) -- The 14th test-launch of the Bulava intercontinental ballistic missile is scheduled for October 29, official from test flight commission said on Tuesday.

The Bulava missile, a three-stage, liquid and solid-propellant, submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM), was designated for the fourth generation submarines of Project 955 Borei. However, it has officially suffered seven failures in 13 test launches.

"Three Bulava tests were planned for late 2010. The three missiles were manufactured under strict technological control which yielded positive results," the Itar-tass news agency quoted the source as saying.

The first test launch of these three submarine-launched ballistic missiles was successfully conducted on October 7. The warhead hit its target in Russia's Far East Kamchatka region.

A further launch of the missile is also scheduled to take place before the end of the year, the local reports said.

The missile with the range of 8,000 km was designed by the Moscow Institute of Thermal Engineering and is capable of carrying up to ten supersonic maneuvering re-entry vehicles.

The Russian military hoped the Bulava program would reach the designated objective to make this intercontinental ballistic missile the backbone of the country's strategic forces.

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/xinhua/2010-10-26/content_1082529.html

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San Francisco Chronicle

Swiss Official to Submit Nuke Smuggling Probe Soon

By the Associated Press

Friday, October 22, 21010

GENEVA, Switzerland (AP) -- A Swiss investigating magistrate says he will submit the findings of his probe into an alleged nuclear smuggling ring to prosecutors before the end of the year.

Andreas Mueller says federal prosecutors will examine his report before deciding whether to bring charges against three Swiss engineers suspected of supplying a Pakistan-based black market network with nuclear weapons technology.

The six-year probe was slowed down by the fact that the Swiss government repeatedly ordered evidence destroyed, claiming it contained material sensitive to national security.

Zurich daily Blick reported Friday that copies of some of the shredded files have resurfaced and could form part of the case against Urs Tinner, his brother Marco and their father Friedrich.

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/n/a/2010/10/22/international/i094748D99.DTL>

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Wall Street Journal

October 25, 2010

Argentina to Produce Enriched Uranium in 2011 - President

By Ken Parks of DOW JONES NEWSWIRES

BUENOS AIRES (Dow Jones)--Argentina will produce the first batch of enriched uranium for civilian purposes next year as part of the resurrection of its atomic power industry, President Cristina Fernandez said Monday.

"We are returning to Argentina a right that we should never have renounced such as managing strategic nuclear resources that had been abandoned during the 1990s," Fernandez said in a televised speech at the Pilcaniyeu uranium enrichment plant in the southern province of Rio Negro.

The enriched uranium produced at the 30,000 square meter Pilcaniyeu plant will be used as reactor fuel, the Planning Ministry said in a press release.

"Next year we will obtain the first examples of enriched uranium from this plant that we are recommissioning today," she said on C5N news station.

Argentina relaunched its civilian nuclear-power program in 2006 amid worsening shortages of natural gas used to heat homes, power industry and fuel conventional electricity generation plants. Those shortages persist, with winter time rationing of gas to industry a seasonal fixture in the country's economic calendar.

Argentina currently operates two nuclear power plants--Atucha I, built with Siemens AG (SI, SIE.XE), and Embalse, built with AECL, in the province of Cordoba. The 360MW Atucha I came online in 1974, followed by the 650MW Embalse a decade later.

Argentina has already started a \$1 billion life-extension upgrade of Embalse, which supplies power to the country's northeast, including the Cuyo and Centro regions and greater Buenos Aires.

Fernandez said a third nuclear plant, Atucha II, should commence start up next year. Atucha II, which will generate about 750 megawatts and provide about 3% of Argentina's total power output, was originally supposed to come online in 1987, but was stalled for 14 years amid political and economic obstacles.

Although Argentina's atomic-power program was largely put on ice in the 1990s during the government of former President Carlos Menem, nuclear research remained active. State-run advanced technology firm INVAP has designed and built small reactors for research and medical purposes at home as well as in Australia, Egypt, Peru and Algeria, according to its website.

Argentina's other nuclear assets include inactive uranium mines and the capacity to process fuel rods and produce the heavy water used in reactors.

"We are going to be able to manage the entire [nuclear] cycle from the production of uranium to the recycling of waste" said Fernandez, adding that her government is committed to the peaceful use of atomic energy.

By Ken Parks and Taos Turner, Dow Jones News

<http://online.wsj.com/article/BT-CO-20101025-711745.html>

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Press Release of Senator Lugar

Nunn-Lugar Update

Friday, October 22, 2010

U.S. Sen. Dick Lugar announced the following progress in the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program since August.

- 48 Strategic nuclear warheads deactivated,
- 4 Intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) destroyed,
- 16 submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) destroyed,
- 3 nuclear weapons transport train shipments secured and
- 68.88 metric tons of chemical weapons agent neutralized.

In November 1991, Lugar (R-IN) and Sen. Sam Nunn (D-GA) authored the Nunn-Lugar Act, which established the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program. This program has provided U.S. funding and expertise to help the former Soviet Union safeguard and dismantle its enormous stockpiles of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, related materials, and delivery systems. In 2003, Congress adopted the Nunn-Lugar Expansion Act, which authorized the Nunn-Lugar program to operate outside the former Soviet Union to address proliferation threats. In 2004, Nunn-Lugar funds were committed for the first time outside of the former Soviet Union to destroy chemical weapons in Albania, under a Lugar-led expansion of the program. In 2007, Lugar announced the complete destruction of Albania's chemical weapons.

The Nunn-Lugar scorecard now totals 7,599 strategic nuclear warheads deactivated, 791 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) destroyed, 498 ICBM silos eliminated, 180 ICBM mobile launchers destroyed, 651 submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) eliminated, 492 SLBM launchers eliminated, 32 nuclear submarines capable of launching ballistic missiles destroyed, 155 bomber eliminated, 906 nuclear air-to-surface missiles (ASMs) destroyed, 194 nuclear test tunnels eliminated, 493 nuclear weapons transport train shipments secured, upgraded security at 24 nuclear weapons storage sites, built and equipped 20 biological monitoring stations, and neutralized 1569.5 metric tons of Russian and Albanian chemical weapons agent. Perhaps most importantly, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus are nuclear weapons free as a result of cooperative efforts under the Nunn-Lugar program. Those countries were the third, fourth and eighth largest nuclear weapons powers in the world.

<http://www.lugar.senate.gov/news/record.cfm?id=328372&&>

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Discover Magazine.com

Numbers: Nuclear Weapons, From Making a Bomb to Making a Stockpile to Making Peace

From the July-August special issue; published online October 23, 2010

By Jeremy Jacquot

5113 Number of operational warheads in the U.S. nuclear stockpile, according to the Pentagon. That figure is down from a peak of 31,225 weapons in 1967. *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* estimated in 2009 that Russia has 4,830 operational warheads; the Soviet arsenal topped out at around 45,000 weapons in 1986. The new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty would limit both countries to 1,550 operational warheads each.

111 Estimated number of nuclear weapon storage sites worldwide, according to the International Panel on Fissile Materials. Russia has the most, with 48; the United States is second, with 15 domestic and 6 foreign sites. The total number of nuclear weapons worldwide is approximately 20,350, with about half of those operational.

0.1 Approximate percentage of the mass of a uranium atom converted to energy during nuclear fission. The amount of matter converted to energy in the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima was about 700 milligrams, less than one-third the mass of a U.S. dime.

6.3×10^{13} Estimated energy, in joules, released from the Hiroshima bomb, the equivalent of 15,000 tons of TNT. At low altitudes, about half the energy of such a bomb is released in the air blast, 35 percent as heat and 15 percent as nuclear radiation. The fireball resulting from the Hiroshima explosion was 50 percent hotter than the surface of the sun.

55 Pounds of weapons-grade uranium required to build a nuclear weapon. The global stockpile of highly enriched uranium stands at around 1,600 tons, enough for more than 60,000 nuclear weapons. Another 60,000 could be constructed from the 500 tons of separated plutonium estimated to exist in stockpiles around the world.

<http://discovermagazine.com/2010/jul-aug/24-numbers-nuclear-weapons-bomb-stockpile-peace>

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Denver Post

Air Force Manual Describes Shadowy Cyberwar World

By DAN ELLIOTT, Associated Press Writer

Monday, October 25, 2010

DENVER -- A new Air Force manual for cyberwarfare describes a shadowy, fast-changing world where anonymous enemies can carry out devastating attacks in seconds and where conventional ideas about time and space don't apply.

Much of the 62-page manual is a dry compendium of definitions, acronyms and explanations of who reports to whom. But it occasionally veers into scenarios that sound more like computer games than flesh-and-blood warfare.

Enemies can cloak their identities and hide their attacks amid the cascade of data flowing across international computer networks, it warns.

Relentless attackers are trying to hack into home and office networks in the U.S. "millions of times a day, 24/7."

And operating in cyberspace "may require abandoning common assumptions concerning time and space" because attacks can come from anywhere and take only seconds, the manual says.

The manual - officially, "Cyberspace Operations: Air Force Doctrine Document 3-12" - is dated July 15 but wasn't made public until this month. It is unclassified and available on the Internet.

It dwells mostly on protecting U.S. military computer networks and makes little mention of attacking others. That could signal the Pentagon wants to keep its offensive plans secret, or that its chief goal is fending off cyberattacks to keep its networks up and running, analysts said.

"Their primary mission is in some ways defensive," said James Lewis, a cybersecurity expert and a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Lewis said the government still hasn't decided whether offensive cyberwarfare is the province of the military or intelligence agencies.

"Who gets to do it? Is it a military operation?... An intel operation?" Lewis said. "They've made a lot of progress in the last year but they're still sorting out the doctrine."

Noah Shachtman, a contributing editor to Wired magazine and a fellow at the Brookings Institute think tank, said even the limited mention of offensive operations in the manual surprised him.

The manual cites one example of a cyberwar objective as "shutting down electrical power to key power grids of enemy leadership."

"That's usually not the kind of thing we talk about doing to others," Shachtman said. "The offensive stuff is supersecret."

Much of the manual is entry-level material, Shachtman said, citing an appendix listing 10 things Air Force personnel should know, including a warning not to open attachments in e-mails from unknown senders.

"The equivalent appendix would be like, 'This is a gun. Guns are unsafe. Please do not point them at your face,'" Shachtman said.

The manual explains how dependent the military and civil society have become on computer networks for communication, banking, manufacturing controls and the distribution of utilities.

It also outlines the vulnerabilities of the Internet, including the relatively low cost of computers that could give an adversary a way to block, manipulate, damage or destroy a network.

It describes a 2005 incident when a hacker or hackers got access to personal information of more than 37,000 Air Force personnel.

The manual points out that much of the Internet's hardware and software are produced and distributed by private vendors in other countries who "can be influenced by adversaries to provide altered products that have built-in vulnerabilities, such as modified chips."

Defending the entire U.S. military network is unnecessary and probably impossible, the manual says. Just as the Air Force doesn't try to defend every square mile of airspace around the globe, it won't try to defend the whole of cyberspace.

"Whether used offensively or defensively ... conducting particular cyberspace operations may require access to only a very small 'slice' of the domain," the manual says.

Overall U.S. military cyberwarfare operations will be the job of the U.S. Cyber Command, which began limited operations in May. It will have components from the Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines.

The Air Force component - the 24th Air Force at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas - is part of the Air Force Space Command at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo.

Lewis said the Cyber Command had a hand in the content of the Air Force manual.

"I see it as the first step in assigning special missions to the services. It's a division of labor among the services," he said.

The Marine Corps' cyberspace operation document is still in development, a spokeswoman said. Army and Navy officials didn't immediately respond to Associated Press questions about their planning.

Responsibility for civilian and government cybersecurity is less clear. Congress is debating between giving more power to the Homeland Security Department or the White House and the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

Homeland Security and the National Security Agency announced this month they would cooperate to strengthen the nation's cybersecurity.

http://www.denverpost.com/breakingnews/ci_16426692?source=rss

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China Post – Taiwan

OPINION

Saturday, October 23, 2010

By Peter Brookes

N. Korea's Nuclear Family Business

Over the weekend, North Korea promised a “1,000-fold” rise in its military strength, The Associated Press reported. And Pyongyang may be keeping its word.

For example, the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS), a U.S.-based research group, says that North Korea is busy as a beaver, building its bomb-making capabilities. Based on commercial-satellite images, U.S. and foreign-government info and news reports, it says Pyongyang is up to something suspicious at the home of its plutonium-based nuclear-weapons program at Yongbyon — not even trying to conceal the work from prying eyes in the sky.

And that's not all. According to ISIS, Pyongyang is also making progress on producing nukes by enriching uranium to high levels.

The immediate cause of the “1,000-fold” threat seems to be the U.S. refusal to ease sanctions against Pyongyang before a new round of talks on North Korea's nukes. But that's just part of the story. There is to be an heir to the Kim-dom — Dictator Kim Jong-il is preparing his youngest son, Kim Jong-un, to take over the family business.

The kid is shy of 30, but daddy is ailing — hence Junior's recent appointment as a four-star general, despite his lack of military service. Papa Kim (who inherited the job from his pop, Kim Il Sung) surely wants the world, especially the United States, South Korea and Japan, to know that, despite the transition, North Korea will remain a force to be reckoned with.

This spring, Pyongyang sank a South Korean naval corvette without provocation. Will the new Gen. Kim try to top that to prove his mettle?

The North's policy seems to be: Feed us or we'll kill you. Due to its hardline-communist economic policies, North Korea has been in a state of self-induced privation since it came off the Soviet dole at the end of the Cold War.

The reclusive, Stalinist state has flirted with economic reform, but pulled back every time — afraid of losing control if it unleashes even Chinese-style market forces.

While the regime ekes out a living by hawking ballistic missiles, trafficking heroin and counterfeiting U.S. currency, jeans and cigarettes, it's always on the lookout for some “scraps” from the negotiating table.

As such, it won't show any willingness to come (back) to talks over its nuke program unless the invitation is adorned with enticing offers of food and energy aid. Atomic activity increases the incentive to be generous.

Another reason for the up-tick in bomb work is to start the new leader off well in another growing Kim family enterprise, designed for anti-U.S. fun as well as profit: nuclear-weapons proliferation.

As you'll recall, the North Koreans were building a Syrian reactor until the Israelis destroyed it in 2007. That cooperation may continue. The North may also be helping Burma (or Myanmar, as the ruling junta calls it) with nukes, eventually allowing it to fend off criticism over its internal repression and international drug trafficking.

There's also concern that, while Iran's only known nuclear-weapons program is uranium-based, Pyongyang may be helping Tehran develop a plutonium bomb now that Iran has a reactor online.

Even with a new king . . . er, Kim in charge in North Korea, nukes will stay front and center of Pyongyang's policies and priorities — which is unfortunate for not only the hungry North Korean people but also for the rest of the world.

Heritage Foundation Senior Fellow Peter Brookes is a former U.S. deputy assistant secretary of defense.

<http://www.chinapost.com.tw/commentary/the-china-post/peter-brookes/2010/10/23/277152/N-Koreas.htm>

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Washington Times

OPINION/Commentary

FEULNER: Off to a Bad START

Senators should re-examine the implications of new missile-defense treaty

By Ed Feulner, the Washington Times

Monday, October 25, 2010

The world is hardly becoming a safer place these days. Missile threats are proliferating at a disturbing rate in places such as North Korea. ("The danger from the North's nuclear program is now at an 'alarming' level," The Washington Post noted recently.) Now is hardly the right time to be tying our hands on missile defense.

Yet that seems to be exactly what the Obama administration is doing. Case in point: the New START arms-control agreement between the United States and Russia.

The treaty can't go into effect until the Senate consents to its ratification. There's a push now, spearheaded by Sen. John Kerry, Massachusetts Democrat, to get lawmakers to vote on New START during the lame-duck session of Congress that will occur after the Nov. 2 elections.

According to the Obama administration, senators have nothing to worry about when it comes to missile defense. New START, the White House insists, won't limit our options in this vital area of our defense, including the construction of any space-based components.

At least half a dozen senators, however, have serious doubts about this. They're concerned about a side agreement that the administration is on the verge of completing with Russia - an agreement that very well could compromise our ability to deploy an effective missile defense, regardless of what the treaty itself says.

Six Republican senators - Jeff Sessions of Alaska, James M. Inhofe of Oklahoma, David Vitter of Louisiana, John Cornyn of Texas, Roger Wicker of Missouri and John Thune of South Dakota - have sent a letter to Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton about the side agreement. Their request? Make available to the senators the documents and records regarding the negotiations of this agreement. They've made it clear that these details need be in their hands before the full Senate takes up New START.

It should be noted: There's nothing wrong with the administration negotiating a side agreement on the treaty. Indeed, it's to be expected; such agreements are common when treaties like this are being hammered out. It's the content of the side agreement - especially when it comes to the sensitive area of missile defense - that's at issue here.

If the administration has nothing to hide on that score, if the side agreement contains nothing that would jeopardize our ability to field an effective missile defense, making the details of the negotiations available to the senators shouldn't be a problem. Right?

Well, maybe not. After all, Russian leaders certainly have voiced their opposition to a U.S. missile defense. And the Obama administration, according to Heritage Foundation defense expert Baker Spring, "offered a unilateral statement to Russia at the time New START was signed that states in effect that the U.S. intends to limit its missile defense program so that it will not affect the strategic balance with Russia."

In short: We'll make sure U.S. missile defenses can't shield us from the type of long-range ballistic missiles Russia possesses - the same type of missiles that countries such as North Korea are working feverishly to acquire. To make Russian leaders happy, we'll make ourselves vulnerable to attack by others. What sense does that make?

But there's an easy way to settle the matter and ensure, as the White House claims, that New START does not "contain any constraints on testing, development or deployment of current or planned U.S. missile defense programs." That's to make the details of the side agreement available to the senators who wrote to Mrs. Clinton.

There are many areas of our government that would benefit from more transparency. Surely our national security - a matter of literal life and death - tops the list.

Ed Feulner is president of the Heritage Foundation.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/oct/25/off-to-a-bad-start/>

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Voice of Russia – Russia

OPINION/Commentary

US Security Will Weaken Unless START is Ratified

October 26, 2010

A group of US Generals have come out in favour of ratifying the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, or START, in an article in The Washington Times. The Generals warn of negative consequences for the US if the US Senate chooses not to ratify the treaty.

The US military argues that if the treaty fails to take effect, Russia will be in no way restricted in developing its strategic forces, with the United States unable to check up on Russia's progress in any way.

The START treaty was signed in Prague in April this year by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and his US counterpart Barack Obama. The treaty provides for a major reduction in the US and Russia nuclear arsenals.

Each of the two countries should as a result curtail its delivery vehicles to 700, whether intercontinental or ballistic missiles, submarines or heavy bombers. The overall number of warheads should not exceed 1,550, which is about half of the current number.

To translate this kind of reduction into life, the two countries' parliaments should naturally ratify START first. But it is at this stage that problems began to emerge. The opposition Republican Party is known for having a bone to pick with the ruling Democrats, so they have launched a bitter struggle over the forthcoming ratification.

The Republicans claim amid the ongoing Senate midterm election campaign that as regards START, Obama has allegedly taken cue from the Russians and has thus debilitated the US capacity to defend itself and its allies.

The speculation in question seeks to ensure the greatest possible number of Senate seats for GOP supporters. But there is a reverse side to this policy, says the Director of the Institute of Strategic Estimates and Analysis Alexander Konovalov in an interview with the Voice of Russia, and elaborates.

A refusal to ratify START, Alexander Konovalov says, would hit what I could describe as the spirit of partnership, a spirit that certainly dominates Russia-US relations today. It will prove quite difficult to restore it afterwards, since the more important thing in the world today is confidence, confidence and a wish to cooperate.

Today the world is facing a spate of cross-border and transnational risks and challenges. It is only through joint effort that these can be countered. With no ratified START, we'll be unable as partners to jointly repel some very real threats.

The US Generals, who are the authors of the article in The Washington Times, feel for their part that the START opponents' reasoning against the treaty lacks grounds.

They insist that the critics have no arguments whatsoever that would counter the military's comprehensive support for the treaty. Experts feel that when Senators resume work following the midterm elections, they should give heed to the views of the country's military leaders and ratify the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty.

This actually amounts to an appeal for placing national interests above party considerations.

<http://english.ruvr.ru/2010/10/26/28537726.html>

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