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Voice of Russia – Russia

START Ratification Delayed

By Anatoli Kudriavtsev

November 3, 2010

The Republican takeover of the US House of Representatives in mid-term elections on Tuesday makes the Obama presidency a lame duck with little clout to pursue the ‘resetting’ of Russian-American relations and push through the ratification of the latest Russian-American strategic arms reduction agreement, signed at a Prague summit on April 8th.

With this in mind, the foreign affairs committee in the Russian Duma has ruled to indefinitely suspend the ratification motions on the Russian side. Its advice to the full Chamber to approve the treaty is now revoked.

We have an opinion from Professor Leonid Polyakov of the Higher School of Economics:

With Obama’s approval ratings dramatically down and with the House in the hands of the Republicans, the American ratification is now very far from certain. In these circumstances, any Russian commitment to deeper strategic arms cuts would not make sense.

The Duma committee says its decision is not carved in stone, and provided appropriate moves in the US Congress, it may revisit the ratification issue.

Chief Editor of Russia’s Natsionalnaya Oborona, or National Defence, journal Dr Igor Korotchenko explains the thinking behind this stance:

If put into force, the new START treaty would open a new era in relations in which Russia and the US save billions in expenditure, cooperate as predictable partners and no longer track each other through gunsights. This makes both sides fundamentally interested in the treaty. Russia still wants to have it enacted. The ball is now in the American court.

That was a Russian analyst in a report from Anatoli Kudriavtsev.

<http://english.ruvr.ru/2010/11/03/31536363.html>

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Russia Today – Russia

Russian Parliament Revokes START Treaty Ratification

04 November, 2010

Russia's State Duma Foreign Affairs Committee has repealed an earlier decision to ratify the latest Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty with the US after the American Senate made around 30 amendments to the original version.

Among them are clauses stipulating that the treaty does not cover deployment of a US missile defense system, or ballistic missiles with conventional warheads.

“The presidents of Russia and of the US have set the task of synchronizing all procedures concerning the new START treaty. Nevertheless, now we have to speak not only about synchronizing efforts to keep up with the deadlines, but of synchronizing the contents as well,” said Konstantin Kosachev, head of the State Duma Foreign Affairs Committee.

Presidents Obama and Medvedev signed the deal in Prague in April. The START deal would see both countries’ nuclear arsenals slashed by a third, and the US Secretary of State is calling for the Senate to vote quickly on the treaty.

Mikhail Margelov from the Russian Federation Council hopes the current “reset” in the two countries’ relations will not be affected by the latest developments.

“There's nothing wrong with our relations with the Republican Party,” he said. *“All the criticism of the Republicans against [the] START re-agreement, for example, was criticism not against Russian position or Russia’s views against START treaty, but against the position of the democratic government during the negotiations and against Obama. I think ‘reset’ is not in danger.”*

<http://rt.com/Politics/2010-11-04/start-treaty-ratification-duma.html/print>

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London Daily Telegraph – U.K.

Midterms 2010: Hillary Clinton Wants 'Lame-Duck' Congress to Pass Start Treaty

Hillary Clinton has said she hoped the "lame-duck" session of Congress would pass a new nuclear disarmament treaty with Russia, but could not guarantee it.

4 November 2010

Sweeping Republican gains in Congress mostly will not become a reality in Washington until winners from Tuesday's vote are sworn in come January, giving Democrats a narrow "lame-duck" session to wrap up unfinished business.

That includes passing the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (Start), which US President Barack Obama and his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev signed in April.

"We believe we have enough votes to pass it in the Senate. It's just a question of when it will be brought to the vote," Mrs Clinton, the Secretary of State said during a visit to Wellington, New Zealand, during a tour of Asia.

Sixty-seven votes are required for ratification in the 100-member Senate.

"It certainly would be my preference that it be brought in any lame-duck session in the next several weeks and that is what I am working toward seeing happen," she said.

"But we will have to wait and work with the Senate and the leadership when they come back for that session," Clinton added.

"Both the United States and Russia are committed to ratifying it," she said.

In Moscow, following the US elections, the Russian parliament's foreign affairs committee withdrew its recommendation to ratify the treaty in the Duma, or parliament, an official said Wednesday.

"If the 'lame duck' senators from the old make-up cannot do this in the next weeks then the chances of ratification in the new Senate will be radically lower than they were until now," said the chairman of the Duma's foreign affairs committee Konstantin Kosachev.

Republicans failed to capture the Senate but cut deeply into the Democratic majority by picking up at least six seats in the upper chamber after bitterly fought mid-term elections.

Republicans were set to control 42 of 100 Senate seats, up from 41, in the lame-duck session after Representative Mark Kirk won a special election for Mr Obama's old spot.

The Start treaty restricts each nation to a maximum of 1,550 deployed warheads, a cut of about 30 percent from a limit set in 2002.

Mrs Clinton took the time in New Zealand to formalise a thaw in US-New Zealand relations after a row over nuclear weapons dating back a quarter of a century.

The deal signed by Mr Clinton and Murray McCully, New Zealand foreign minister, calls on both sides to deepen cooperation in fighting climate change, the spread of atomic weapons and extremism.

It also commits Washington and Wellington to promoting renewable energy and boosting capacities to fight natural disasters.

In 1986 New Zealand banned nuclear-powered warships and those carrying atomic weapons from its waters, prompting the the United States to suspend the three-way ANZUS defence treaty - which also involved Australia.

Washington put strict controls on military cooperation with Wellington as the relationship between the two soured badly.

But ties have warmed in the past few years as New Zealand contributed troops to the US-led mission to Afghanistan.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/us-politics/8109516/Midterms-2010-Hillary-Clinton-wants-lame-duck-Congress-to-pass-Start-treaty.html>

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Dallas Morning News

Arms Negotiator to make Case for U.S.-Russia Nuclear Weapons Treaty in Dallas

Thursday, November 4, 2010

By JIM LANDERS, the Dallas Morning News

WASHINGTON – Facing Republican skepticism, a top Obama administration arms negotiator is headed to Dallas to make the case for Senate ratification of the new START nuclear weapons accord with Russia.

Rose Gottemoeller, assistant secretary of state for arms control, is scheduled to address the Dallas Committee on Foreign Relations today.

"The United States and Russia still have 90 percent of the world's nuclear weapons," Gottemoeller said in an interview. "It is true the ash and trash of the Cold War are still with us. That is a core reason to deal with this hangover."

Many Republicans have either opposed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty or remain uncommitted. Republican Sen. John Cornyn of Texas said in a statement that he opposes the treaty "in its current form" because of uncertainties about U.S. missile defense and the modernization of the U.S. nuclear arsenal.

Republican Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison of Texas expressed reservations about the treaty's verification and missile defense effects.

"My major concern is the limitation on verification procedures in the new START treaty," she said in an e-mail. "It is essential that the U.S. not be restricted from verifying compliance with the treaty. I am concerned that proposals under the new START treaty may restrict U.S. missile defense capabilities, which could threaten our national security."

Sixty-seven votes are needed in the Senate to approve the treaty, which was signed in April by Presidents Barack Obama and Dmitry Medvedev. The treaty would reduce U.S. and Russian nuclear warheads to 1,550 each – a reduction of about 30 percent.

The pact would replace the first START treaty with Russia, which lasted from 2001 until last December.

Gottemoeller said the treaty would enhance U.S. inspections of Russian nuclear weapons. She said it would not compromise U.S. anti-missile defenses, even though Russian officials have suggested as much.

"At the negotiations, the Russians told us they would make a statement, unilaterally, that they believe should U.S. missile defenses develop to the point where they undermine their nuclear force, then they have the right to withdraw," Gottemoeller said. "Well, both parties have the right to withdraw if they feel their supreme national interests are at stake. ... Withdrawal clauses are very normal."

Several Republicans, including Cornyn, say they want the administration to update the U.S. nuclear arsenal. The last new U.S. nuclear weapon was assembled at the U.S. Department of Energy's Pantex Plant outside Amarillo in 1991.

"I am concerned that the administration lacks the necessary commitment to modernization of the remaining nuclear stockpile, which should be a precursor to any serious discussion of strategic arms reduction," Cornyn said.

Gottemoeller said that these critics raise "a valid point" and that the administration intends to seek more funding for nuclear facilities like the Pantex Plant and the Y-12 uranium enrichment facility in Tennessee.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved the treaty in September with the support of three Republicans, and the White House hopes to get a full Senate vote during a lame-duck session of Congress starting this month.

If the treaty fails, Gottemoeller said it would leave the United States with no inspectors on the ground in Russia to verify the size of its nuclear arsenal and would set back efforts to persuade nations such as North Korea and Iran to halt their nuclear programs.

<http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/news/washington/jlanders/stories/110410dnintarms.20dccc0a.html>

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Reuters.com

Obama: Hopes Russia Arms Pact Ratified this Year

Thursday, November 4, 2010

Washington (Reuters) - President Barack Obama said on Thursday he hoped the Senate would ratify a new nuclear arms treaty with Russia before the end of this year's congressional term.

Obama, speaking at the end of a cabinet meeting, listed the new START pact, which he and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev signed in April, among unfinished business he wants handled in the aftermath of congressional elections in which his Democrats suffered heavy losses.

Obama's party saw its majority in the 100-seat Senate, which must ratify the treaty with at least 67 votes, trimmed in Tuesday's midterm elections, meaning it will be harder for the White House to secure ratification next year.

Obama wants the Senate to approve the treaty, which commits the former Cold War foes to reduce deployed nuclear warheads by about 30 percent, during a post-election special work period called a "lame-duck session" that begins on November 15.

But it is unclear that Republicans, who already have enough votes to block ratification, will allow that.

A lame-duck period is the time between a congressional election in November and the start of the new Congress in January. During that time, Congress operates but with many lawmakers who have just been voted out of office and with none of the newly-elected members, except victorious incumbents.

The Obama administration sees the treaty as a centerpiece of its effort to "reset" relations with Russia.

"This is not a traditionally Democratic or Republican issue but rather a issue of American national security and I am hopeful that we can get that done ... and send a strong signal to Russia that we are serious about reducing nuclear arsenals," Obama told reporters.

Reporting by Jeff Mason and Matt Spetalnick; Editing by Vicki Allen

<http://in.reuters.com/article/idINTRE6A33IM20101104>

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Voice of Russia – Russia

Will START Resist “Political Tsunami” Pressure in US?

November 5, 2010

The Moscow-Washington START treaty is standing the test of time amid a “political tsunami” in the United States. On Thursday Barack Obama voiced hope that the Senate would ratify the treaty before the end of the year.

The statement was made following the President’s meeting with his Cabinet, the first one after the midterm election, which deprived the Democrats of their majority in the House, and of a number of seats in the Senate.

The election has made the political situation in the United States unpredictable, although the returns came as no surprise, including to Barack Obama. Anyway, he outlined a ratification of the treaty as a priority issue. He feels that the issue is due to be settled during the Senate’s so-called “lame duck” session, or before January, when the term of office of the Senators who lost the midterm election is due to expire.

The President relies precisely on lame ducks’ support, so as to say “yes” to the START treaty with Moscow. But this may prove unrealistic, says an expert with the Russian Foreign and Defence Policy Council Fyodor Lukyanov, and elaborates.

The ratification of the Treaty, Fyodor Lukyanov says, cannot be seen as guaranteed because the session is brief. In a situation like this Senators normally concentrate on issues that they see as more important, like budget-related problems, but certainly not international agreements.

What’s more, some point out that the treaty is important; therefore it would be wrong to push it through the Senate in a somewhat questionable situation. In other words, they should wait until the Senate meets in the new lineup. It is more likely that START will be ratified by the new Senate.

But then, it is not impossible that the Republicans, who invariably vote against all of Obama’s initiatives, will try to further consolidate their negative stand, including on START, despite the President’s statement that the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty is not about the Democrats or Republicans, but about the US national security in general.

Alexander Shumilin of the Moscow-based Institute for the US and Canada Studies feels that the overall chance that the treaty will be ratified is decreasing. Here’s more from Alexander Shumilin.

It is not necessarily that START will soon be rejected and de-facto denounced, Alexander Shumilin says, but the discussion of the document will slow down. All signs are the Republicans will use the treaty as a bargaining chip. They might agree to a ratification in exchange for some moves on the part of Obama.

When signing the treaty in Prague on April 8th this year, the Russian and US Presidents agreed that all START adoption procedures would be synchronized. Three months later to the day the Russian Duma International Affairs

Committee advised ratifying the document, which provides for reducing by Russia and the US the number of their strategic warheads by a third, down to 1,550.

But this past Wednesday the Committee was compelled to point out that it is resuming the debates about the treaty following a number of amendments by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

The amendments take the future US national missile defence system and some non-nuclear weapon systems from under the treaty jurisdiction, while ignoring Russia's security interests. Therefore this country remains focused not only on a simultaneous ratification, but also on adherence to the content of the treaty.

<http://english.ruvr.ru/2010/11/05/31867986.html>

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Ha'aretz Daily – Israel

3 November 2010

Outgoing Intel Chief: Iran Can Already Produce Nuclear Bomb

In final security briefing, Amos Yadlin says Israel will face two or more fronts in next conflict, reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah unlikely.

By Jonathan Lis

Iran is busy setting up two new nuclear installations, according to the head of Military Intelligence, Major General Amos Yadlin. Speaking before the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, Yadlin said that MI has indications that work has began on the installations, but did not comment on the sources.

Yadlin also told the MKs that Iran has sufficient enriched uranium to manufacture a single nuclear device and may soon have enough for making another bomb.

Tuesday was Yadlin's last appearance before the Knesset panel as head of Military Intelligence. He is due to step down after five years in the post.

Yadlin's briefing covered the entire spectrum of the security situation facing Israel and the region. "The recent security calm is unprecedented but there should be no mistake that there are efforts [by elements] in the area to grow stronger. The next military confrontation will not be between Israel and another country, but between Israel and two or three different fronts at the same time. It will not be similar to anything we have grown accustomed to during the Second Lebanon War or Operation Cast Lead," he warned.

Yadlin also said that Syria has undertaken an intensive procurement program of advanced military hardware from Russia, and that nearly everything that comes off the manufacturing line is being delivered to the Syrians.

"The systems in question are advanced, mostly mobile, and are capable of hitting air force aircraft. The effective, deadly missiles will make it more difficult for the air force to have freedom of operations," he said.

Syria's acquisition of anti-aircraft weapons will substantially hinder the ability of Israel Air Force to gain command of the air over Syria in time of war.

"In the past we estimated that within 48-72 hours we would command the sky over Syria. Currently the assessment is that it will take more time and we will have more losses," Yadlin said.

Referring to Iran, Yadlin said that there are an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 centrifuges busy enriching uranium to levels of 20 percent. "It is only a matter of time and continuously running the centrifuges until they reach 90 percent enrichment and could make military use of the material," sources who participated in the briefing said.

The Iranian nuclear installation at Qom, which was uncovered by western intelligence a year ago, is still being built under the supervision of inspectors. Iran has declared that it intends to construct 10 more installations, and information is emerging that currently two are underway.

Yadlin said that Israel continues to deter its enemies on three levels: air power, technological edge and intelligence. He said that in order to overcome these Israel's enemies have invested in offensive missiles and improvement of their air defenses.

He said that Hezbollah is continuing to grow stronger in Lebanon and has acquired advanced weaponry. Assessments in Israel are that the advanced weapons being transferred to Syria may make their way to Hezbollah in due time.

Yadlin also revealed that a great deal of data collected by the investigators of the murder of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri was stolen by Hezbollah when its men attacked investigators who came to question a doctor who had been at the scene of the killing.

He also hinted at the strike on the purported Syrian nuclear installation, when he said that during his tenure he had faced two nuclear programs.

"I changed three defense ministers, two chiefs of staff and two prime ministers, I had two wars and confronted two nuclear programs in enemy countries. I headed a team of thousands who work 24 hours a day to collect information that the enemy is not handing out freely, information that must be taken out of difficult places and that needs to be processed, questioned and prepared in the form of insights that can be passed on to be used by my clients," Yadlin said.

With regards to the Palestinians, Yadlin said that reconciliation between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority is unlikely, and that tensions between the two groups are only getting worse. Also, he does not believe that the PA has a real chance of returning to power in the Gaza Strip. He said that the breakout of a new intifada is also not expected to occur any moment. However, he warned that in view of the armaments available to Hamas, "an Operation Cast Lead II will be much more complicated."

"The crisis between Israel and the U.S. is a given, but the Palestinians took it out of all proportion - in an effort to bypass the direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians and achieve international recognition of a Palestinian state," Yadlin said.

He said that the Palestinian Authority security forces are operating against Hamas in the West Bank because they want to avoid a repetition of what took place in the Gaza Strip. Yadlin estimates that PA President Mahmoud Abbas does not intend to resign, at least not in the foreseeable future, and remains steadfastly opposed to the use of terrorism.

Yadlin believes it is possible to reach an agreement with Abbas on the refugees issue based on quotas of refugees that Israel will allow into its territory.

<http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/outgoing-intel-chief-iran-can-already-produce-nuclear-bomb-1.322544>

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Miami Herald
November 3, 2010

Iran Says West's 'Arrogance' could Doom Nuke Talks

By ALI AKBAR DAREINI, Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran -- Iran's president said Wednesday that upcoming talks with six world powers about its disputed nuclear program will fail if those nations continue along what he called a "path of arrogance."

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's comments, made in an address to a crowd of thousands in northeastern Iran, cast doubt on any possible progress in talks that Tehran has said it is ready to hold with the six powers - the U.S., Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany - sometime after Nov. 10.

The U.S. and some of its allies suspect Iran's civil nuclear energy program is a cover for a secret effort to develop weapons and are pushing the Tehran to fully open all facilities to international inspection and to give up uranium enrichment, a key element of its nuclear work that could give it a pathway to the bomb.

Iran denies having nuclear weapons ambitions and says it only wants to enrich uranium to the lower levels used in producing fuel for power plants and nuclear medical radioisotopes used to treat patients.

The standoff is the central issue of dispute between Iran and the West, and Ahmadinejad often accuses the U.S. in particular of using the confrontation to thwart Iran's technological progress and of wanting to dominate the nations of the Middle East.

"You have only one option: That's recognizing the right and greatness of the Iranian nation," Ahmadinejad said in a speech broadcast live on state television. "Should you choose this path, nations may forgive you ... but if you want to continue the previous path of arrogance ... these people (the Iranian nation) will pursue you until you end up in hell."

The crowd, in the city of Bojnord, responded with chants of "death to the U.S."

The U.N. Security Council imposed a fourth round of tough sanctions against Iran in June over its refusal to halt uranium enrichment, which at higher levels of processing, can be used to make the fissile core of warheads.

At the time, Ahmadinejad dismissed the U.N. sanctions as "annoying flies" and as useless as "used tissues" and said that Iran would not hold talks with the West for at least two months to "punish" world powers.

Iran's Supreme National Security Council, which handles the country's nuclear negotiations, and the European Union's foreign policy chief, Catherine Ashton, are now exchanging letters on the date and place of a new meeting.

Negotiations foundered a year ago over a U.N.-drafted proposal for Iran to ship most of its stockpile of enriched uranium abroad for further processing and to be returned in the form of fuel rods for a Tehran research reactor that makes isotopes used in cancer treatment.

Fuel rods cannot be used to make weapons material. Iran balked at that deal. It accepted a similar proposal from allies Brazil and Turkey, but the other six nations said that offer fell short of their demands.

On Wednesday, Ahmadinejad warned that the new talks will fail if the West seeks to impose tougher conditions than those Tehran rejected last year.

But the Iranian president said a compromise could be reached if Iran is respected.

"The best path for them (world powers) is to respect nations, stop being obstinate, get out of glass palaces and sit down like a polite boy and talk on the basis of justice and respect. If they come like this, they may get results," Ahmadinejad said.

"But if they come with arrogance and deception, the response of the Iranian nation is the same it has already given."

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2010/11/03/1906106/iran-says-vests-arrogance-could.html>

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Sunday Times – Sri Lanka

Iran Nuclear Program on “Explosive” Path -Saudi

Friday, November 5, 2010

By Reuters

WASHINGTON, Nov 4 (Reuters) - Iran is on an “explosive” course in the Middle East with its pursuit of nuclear enrichment and needs to clear up questions surrounding its program, Saudi Prince Turki al-Faisal said on Thursday.

Prince Turki, a former Saudi intelligence chief and former ambassador to the United States, said Washington should not take military steps against Iran's nuclear program to reassure Israelis over the peace process with Palestinians.

“No one denies that a nuclear Iran is a major international danger, but claiming that the U.S. must take military action against Iran to push forward the Israeli-Palestine peace process is to attempt to harvest apples by cutting down the tree,” he said.

Prince Turki, discussing the Middle East peace process in a speech at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said a war over Iran's nuclear program would be “calamitous and not just catastrophic.” It would turn back the clock on peacemaking across the Middle East, from Iraq to Israel, he said.

“The Iranians have to be aware of the explosive nature of pursuing their present course of enrichment,” he said.

The United States last month announced plans to sell Saudi Arabia up to \$60 billion in military aircraft, a deal designed to shore up Arab allies increasingly jittery over Iran's nuclear ambitions.

The United States and other countries are concerned that Iran's nuclear enrichment program is aimed at developing atomic weapons, but Tehran denies that. It says the enrichment program is to produce fuel for atomic power.

While the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty allows Iran to enrich uranium, “everybody recognizes that they have not lived up to the requirements” of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

“They have to come clean on whatever it is that remains as question marks to the world community, and not just the United States and the West,” he added.

Iran has indicated it is willing to meet world powers involved in talks over the nuclear dispute -- the United States, Germany, France, China, Britain and Russia -- later this month at a time and place to be determined.

It would be the first meeting of the group in more than a year and the first since the United Nations, the United States and the European Union imposed tougher sanctions on Iran earlier this year.

The world powers are hoping Iran will agree to a swap of low-enriched uranium in exchange for nuclear fuel to power the Tehran Research Reactor.

"We do believe that the Tehran Research Reactor offer can create some confidence building," U.S. State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley said on Thursday.

He said the deal needed to be updated to account for additional uranium Iran has enriched over the past year, but Iran's envoy to the IAEA in Vienna dismissed that proposal earlier this week.

<http://www.sundaytimes.lk/world-news/1600-iran-nuclear-program-on-explosive-path-saudi>

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Yonhap News – South Korea
November 4, 2010

Obama Not to Change N. Korea Policy despite Republican Control of House: White House

By Hwang Doo-hyong

WASHINGTON, Nov. 3 (Yonhap) -- The Obama administration sees no reason to change its policy of pursuing North Korea's denuclearization through six-party talks even after the Republicans take control of the House in January, a senior White House official said Wednesday.

"There is a long history of bipartisan consensus on North Korea policy," the official told reporters, asking for anonymity. "I don't see a reason why change in the leadership in the House of Representatives will lead to an alteration of America's basic commitment, which has been consistent through both our Republican and Democratic administrations, that North Korea needs to completely and verifiably denuclearize, end its belligerent and provocative behavior, especially towards South Korea."

The remarks come one day after the U.S. midterm elections, which saw the Republican Party regain control of the House and greatly reduce the Democrats' majority in the Senate due to the prolonged economic slump and near double-digit unemployment.

The U.S. stands by South Korea in demanding North Korea apologize for the sinking of a South Korean warship and show its commitment to denuclearization before returning to the six-party talks, which have already been in limbo since early last year due to Pyongyang's nuclear and missile tests.

North Korea denies responsibility in the Cheonan's sinking, which killed 46 sailors in the Yellow Sea in March.

Some believe the sinking was masterminded by North Korean leader Kim Jong-il's youngest son and heir, Jong-un, amidst an unprecedented third-generation power transition in a communist state.

The leader-in-waiting was promoted to a military general and the vice chairman of the Central Military Commission of the ruling Workers' Party in September.

Jack Pritchard, president of the Washington-based Korea Economic Institute, flew into Pyongyang Tuesday amid speculation that the former U.S. coordinator on North Korea policy will act as a middleman to help revive U.S. bilateral dialogue with North Korea for the resumption of the six-party talks.

State Department spokesman Philip Crowley said Tuesday Pritchard's trip is a private one which does not involve any message from the Obama administration, but added the former envoy will meet with U.S. officials upon returning from Pyongyang for debriefing.

The Obama administration's "strategic patience" with North Korea, based on a two-track approach of sanctions and dialogue, has often come under fire for allowing North Korea time to bolster its nuclear arsenal after two nuclear detonations, one each in 2006 and 2009.

"Since the Obama administration now realizes there is little likelihood that North Korea would ever abandon its nuclear weapons, Washington sees little incentive for returning to the six-party talks," Bruce Klingner, senior fellow at the Heritage Foundation, said.

Klingner expected Congressional Republicans will pressure the Obama administration to get tougher on North Korea.

"If anything, the Republican-led Congress will call on the Obama administration to strengthen measures against North Korea," the scholar said. "The Obama administration has developed a good strategy, but it has been weakly implemented with no efforts against the suppliers and customers of North Korean illicit activities and violations" of U.N. resolutions.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2010/11/04/21/0301000000AEN20101104001700315F.HTML>

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San Francisco Chronicle

NATO Seeks Russian Cooperation on Missile Defense

Tuesday, November 2, 2010

Nov. 3 (Bloomberg) -- NATO sees Russia as a strategic partner and seeks to cooperate on missile defense as leaders of the former Cold War foes prepare to meet in Lisbon later this month, Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said.

"I think we can agree on a way forward at this summit," Rasmussen told reporters today in Moscow. "We do not want to impose a specific missile defense architecture on Russia."

Rasmussen was in Moscow to prepare for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization summit and meet with President Dmitry Medvedev, who will attend the meetings in Lisbon. NATO will choose a missile defense system during the summit, Rasmussen said today.

NATO doesn't view Russia as an enemy, and there is an opportunity "to turn a page" in relations, Rasmussen said. The secretary general also visited Moscow in December to improve ties that were strained by the alliance's expansion toward Russia's borders and the 2008 war between Russia and Georgia.

U.S. President Barack Obama last year said he was scrapping former President George W. Bush's plan to deploy a missile shield in Poland and the Czech Republic in the face of Russian opposition. He promised a more flexible system to protect against threats to the U.S. and its European allies, providing an opportunity to revisit Russian proposals.

"We could restart collaboration on so-called theater missile defense, which is missile defense to protect troops," Rasmussen said today. "We would like to cooperate with Russia also when it comes to territorial missile defense," Rasmussen said, adding that he doesn't expect an immediate response from Russia on the proposals.

Developing Cooperation

Medvedev said relations between Russia and NATO have improved recently.

"We are pleased because it gives an opportunity to more attentively develop cooperation and create a more sustainable system of security in Europe and in the world," he said after meeting with Rasmussen.

Rasmussen said he expects to reach an agreement with Russia on broadening cooperation with NATO in Afghanistan. Russia has allowed the U.S. military to ship cargo across its territory to Afghanistan. Both sides are in talks for Russia to deliver about 20 transport and military Mi-17 helicopters to Afghanistan.

"In concrete terms, expansion of our transit arrangement, expansion of our counter-narcotics activities as well as the helicopter package" are possible, Rasmussen said. "The main elements will be agreed at the summit and then afterwards we will have to work out the details."

Rasmussen said NATO will confirm its decision that former Soviet republics Georgia and Ukraine can join the alliance once they fulfill necessary criteria. He also moved to placate concern in Moscow that the move is directed against Russia.

"It's essential that the well-known disagreements and disputes between NATO and Russia don't overshadow the fact that there are other areas where we share interests because we are faced with the same security challenges," Rasmussen said.

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/g/a/2010/11/02/bloomberg1376-LBB13P6S972A01-2TP128SN7VJRCAUUBLD1N7BOLV.DTL>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

NATO Submits Missile-Defense Cooperation Plan to Russia

3 November 2010

Russia has received NATO's proposals for joint participation in the European missile-defense program, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Wednesday.

Moscow will analyze the proposals, he said, adding that it was in both parties' interests to neutralize common threats.

During a meeting with NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen in Moscow, President Dmitry Medvedev said Russia "will be ready to participate in building such a system...on an equitable basis," Lavrov said.

Any cooperation between Russia and NATO in the missile-defense sphere will not be directed against any third party, Lavrov stressed.

Russian and NATO missile-defense systems are unlikely to be integrated into a single system, however, Rasmussen said.

These two systems should interact so that we have a common "security roof" through information exchange, he said - separate systems but within a common architecture of cooperation.

The NATO chief also proposed conducting joint missile-defense exercises with Russia.

Rasmussen previously proposed the creation of a missile shield from Vancouver to Vladivostok that would integrate the U.S. and NATO missile-defense systems with a role for Russia.

Russia has retained staunch opposition to the deployment of missile-defense systems near its borders, claiming they would be a security threat. NATO and the United States insist that the shield would defend NATO territories against missiles from North Korea and Iran and would not be directed at Russia.

President Dmitry Medvedev has campaigned for a pan-European security pact instead of the shield, although Western nations and NATO have dismissed the plan as irrelevant and unnecessary.

MOSCOW, November 3 (RIA Novosti)

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20101103/161202001.html>

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National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA)
Press Release

U.S., Europe Expand Nuclear Security Cooperation

Tuesday, November 2, 2010

WASHINGTON, DC – The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) today announced that it has signed a new agreement with the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) to promote greater cooperation in nuclear security and nonproliferation. NNSA Assistant Deputy Administrator for Nonproliferation and International Security, Mark Whitney, and Dr. Roland Schenkel, Director General of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC), signed the agreement at a nuclear safeguards symposium at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna, Austria.

The agreement provides a framework for greater technical cooperation between the United States and Europe in areas such as nuclear safeguards, border monitoring, nuclear forensics, export controls, and physical protection of nuclear materials facilities. It also calls for closer collaboration on research and development of nuclear security and nonproliferation technologies, and for enhanced coordination of outreach to third countries.

"Technical cooperation between the United States and Europe in nuclear security and nonproliferation reflects our shared commitment to preventing the proliferation of nuclear materials and technologies," said Mark Whitney. "This agreement is an important step in achieving President Obama's goal of securing vulnerable nuclear material, preventing nuclear smuggling, and strengthening the international nuclear nonproliferation regime."

The United States and Euratom have a long and productive history of cooperation on nuclear security and nonproliferation that dates back more than 30 years. The cooperative work under this agreement will be managed by NNSA's Next Generation Safeguards Initiative (NGSI). NGSI is a robust, multi-year program to develop the policies, concepts, technologies, expertise, and international infrastructure necessary to strengthen and sustain the international safeguards system.

Euratom was created in 1957 to establish the conditions for the development of nuclear energy in Europe by sharing resources, protecting the general public, and associating other countries and international organizations with this work.

<http://nnsa.energy.gov/mediaroom/pressreleases/euratom110210>

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Global Security Newswire

Terrorists Unlikely to Use WMD in Mail Bomb Plots, Experts Say

Wednesday, November 3, 2010

By Martin Matishak

WASHINGTON -- Al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations are unlikely to incorporate elements of a weapon of mass destruction into devices similar to those recovered in last week's unsuccessful mail bomb plot, according to national security experts (see *GSN*, Oct. 28).

While it could prove easiest to employ a biological agent, such pathogens are often difficult to control and could ultimately fail to inflict the mass casualties extremist groups typically aim for, said Rick Nelson, director of the Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"When it comes to biological, I'm more concerned about the infected passenger than I am the virus being put into a container and then shipped to the United States," Nelson told *Global Security Newswire* on Monday.

He and other experts said nuclear, radiological and chemical weapons each pose unique challenges that make them unappealing to terrorists for use in a potential parcel or cargo bomb strike. The groups could also face technological difficulties attempting to include WMD materials into a conventional explosive device, they argued.

"These groups are making the same risk-reward decisions that anyone would make," Nelson said. "I have so much capability and so much capacity to plan an attack; I need to be successful because that capacity is limited. How am I going to get the best return on my investment?"

U.S. law enforcement officials believe extremists operating in Yemen placed bombs in parcels sent to Chicago-based Jewish synagogues last week, though the devices might have been designed to detonate in midflight.

Authorities nabbed the explosives, which were hidden inside printer cartridges, in the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom, but U.S. officials are concerned there may be more such parcels in the freight system.

One of the parcels discovered last week was sent to London through a United Parcel Service hub in Cologne, Germany, though it is unclear whether a company plane carried the package at any point during its trip.

FedEx contacted the FBI and the local authorities in Dubai after it learned that a suspicious package might be in its facility there.

Al-Qaeda and other extremist groups have long expressed an impulse to acquire unconventional weapons, according to Brian Katulis, senior fellow for national security at the Center for American Progress.

"I think there's enough evidence out there to cause concern," he told *GSN* on Monday. He cited the recent example of one man's alleged effort to obtain radiological "dirty bomb" materials in Canada for use against the New York City subway system (see *GSN*, July 8).

Katulis said he is "surprised" the United States has not sustained a successful terrorist strike that included a radiological, biological or chemical element. He credited the "aggressive posture" Washington and its allies have adopted against the globe's terror networks as the main reason why such an event has not occurred.

Terrorists are likely to find biological agents unappealing to use for an effort similar to the one thwarted last week because "if they want to do it they're going to go to the most populated area with the deadliest disease they can get their hands on to execute an attack," according to Nelson.

Likewise, a dirty bomb, which would use conventional explosives to disperse radioactive materials, would not have the same impact if employed in midflight or at sea as it would if detonated in a densely populated urban area, he told *GSN*.

A chemical weapon would require large amounts of material in order to be effective, according to Randall Larsen, chief executive officer of the WMD Center in Washington.

"I just don't see how that's a real thing," he said yesterday during a telephone interview, adding that terrorists could instead exploit vulnerable U.S. stores of chemical materials rather than smuggle them into the country.

Nelson said the devices recovered last week technically could be considered chemical weapons because they would have employed small amounts of pentaerythritol trinitrate. However, extremists would not be expected to use deadlier agents such as a mustard blister gas in a scenario similar to the Yemen-based operation.

"I would probably disperse it in a different way that putting it in an airplane and hoping it gets into an office space or somewhere," Nelson said.

The security experts agreed that if a terrorist organization acquired a nuclear warhead it would not resort to using the freight system.

"If a group like al-Qaeda finally gets its hands on a nuclear weapon, it's the crown jewel. It's not going to stick it in a cargo container and hope that it gets to its intended destination," Nelson said.

"Would you take \$20 million, put it in a shipping container, put a really good padlock on it and turn it loose in a global transportation system where five or six companies are going to control that container? No, you're never going to take your hands off it," Larsen added.

In addition to those challenges, terrorists could also face significant technological difficulties constructing a weapon that would successfully integrate an unconventional weapon, said Brian Finlay, a senior associate at the Henry L. Stimson Center in Washington.

"The challenge is less fashioning it into something that you can stick into a printer and stick into a piece of cargo; the challenge is actually building a device to begin with that is actually going to work," he told *GSN*.

Emphasis on Cargo Screening

There has been an increased emphasis on screening people and luggage on passenger planes since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. The issue has become a focus for some members of Congress and was addressed in a recent analysis by the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

Given the combination of public and private dollars, it is impossible to know how much has been spent on the nation's screening efforts, experts contend.

Last week's U.S.-bound planes would not have been subject to the government's Certified Cargo Screening Program. The program is intended to help meet the congressionally mandated 100 percent screening of cargo on passenger aircraft by August 2010.

The effort certifies cargo screening facilities located in the United States but it only examines freight on passenger flights. The packages involved in last week's incident may not have been scrutinized because they were not likely to be stowed on a passenger airplane.

The program, managed by the Transportation Security Administration, came under fire in June when government auditors issued a report that found the procedures mandated under the initiative were performed on about 75 percent of shipments flown on passenger flights.

Yesterday, House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.) and technology subcommittee Chairwoman Yvette Clark (D-N.Y.) sent a letter asking the accountability office to conduct an "assessment of the progress and challenges" associated with screening U.S.-bound freight.

In a statement made last week, TSA chief John Pistole said the agency had procedures in place before last week's incident to screen 100 percent of "high-risk" cargo on inbound passenger planes.

He noted that the agency and Customs and Border Protection had immediately deployed a team of inspectors to Yemen to help the government there with its freight screening efforts.

The TSA administrator is in Yemen today to meet with government officials there and receive a briefing from investigators, according to an agency press release. Pistole spoke at an aviation conference yesterday in Germany where he called for more advanced screening technology and more flexible search procedures, the *L.A. Times* reported.

United Parcel Service spokesman Dan McMackin declined to provide details about the company's screening practices but said it takes a "multilayered approach to ensure security" that involves routinely working with law enforcement agencies around the globe.

A spokesman for FedEx did not return repeated messages seeking comment.

"The whole idea of using technology to scan for nuclear weapons is a gross waste of money, particularly when you say let's do 100 percent of it," according to Larsen.

Instead, the government should devote funds to locating and securing loose nuclear material around the world, he said. Washington should also invest in additional research and pursue new, more "active" nuclear and radiological detection devices, he added.

Other experts also played down the importance of existing cargo screening efforts.

"At the end of the day, screening is not the solution. As we saw even with this incident, it wasn't screening techniques that stopped this, it was pinpoint, accurate intelligence," according to Nelson, referring to reports that the explosives were snared thanks to a tip from a Saudi Arabia intelligence official.

He predicted that a possible solution would involve a layered approach that featured partnerships between the federal government and the shipping industry.

Finlay said the government could be close to reaching the limit of what it can mandate industry to do to scrutinize its shipments. He added that most of the domestic screening undertaken to comply with the mandate has been done voluntarily by the air cargo companies and freight handlers.

"If you sit down with the president of ... UPS and ask is there any more you can do to screen your cargo, the answer will be, 'No, we're doing absolutely everything we can and profit margins are so slim right that anything more they would vanish,'" he said.

"If we institute screening to a level that makes it more cumbersome for things to be shipped, or if we put a price tag on technology to screen cargo that makes air travel or air transportation cost prohibitive, then the terrorists have achieved their goals and we have now become unsuccessful," Nelson told *GSN*.

Katulis agreed that the United States and its allies would have to accept some level of risk when it comes to worldwide travel and shipping.

"There's no fool-proof system we can design to completely eradicate all the threats if we want to maintain a system of open, global commerce," he said. "We're going to have to assume some sort of risk and this plot indicates that there are dangerous networks that continue to probe vulnerabilities in the global system."

"It's a cat and mouse game that I foresee continuing forever," Katulis added.

http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20101103_8254.php

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency
OPINION & ANALYSIS

Iran Says It's Ready to Talk: But What About?

3 November 2010

By RIA Novosti political commentator Dmitry Kosyrev

For those who follow foreign policy, the Washington Post story of October 29th was astounding news, coming as it did, on the Friday, in apparent culmination to the week's events.

Iran offered to return to the negotiating table to discuss its controversial nuclear program with the six world powers (five permanent members of the UN Security Council - plus Germany).

Iranian leaders are this week in correspondence with Catherine Ashton, the European Union's new foreign policy chief, about the talks' venue and deadline. The sides will reportedly meet November 10-18 in Vienna, home to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

However this seems less sensational when one recalls that UN General Assembly sources said off the record in late September that Iran wanted to resume talks in November after its 12-month hiatus. The subject of such talks, rather than their resumption, is the most interesting issue.

Last month Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad delighted his voters by listing four conditions for resuming talks with the West.

For example, the West must clarify the nature of its intentions in negotiating with Iran. Are they friendly or hostile? This is quite understandable. But then there's the final clause, stipulating that the six powers explicitly state their position on Israel's nuclear arsenal.

This point has been made so often, in similar Iranian propagandistic statements that Tehran's negotiating partners do what they can to ignore it. That is a mistake: it is an extremely difficult issue. Just consider the upcoming talks through the eyes of the parties concerned.

Europe's position is more or less clear. It always takes on the organization, because in reality its role is primarily passive: a less-than-enthusiastic U.S. assistant. The EU's feeling is that neither the problem of Iran's nuclear program, nor that of Israel's nuclear arsenal, are its battles to fight.

Russia and China are sick and tired of Tehran and its seemingly endless ability to get itself caught up in conflicts. Nevertheless, rumors circulated hinting that neither Moscow nor Beijing would approve any further anti-Iranian sanctions beyond June 2010.

Russia and China had warned the United States and the EU against adopting even tougher sanctions, making it clear that, after the UN sanctions, the measure would never again obtain both countries' support.

Although the West did exactly that, Russian sources remained optimistic, advising everyone to wait until talks resumed in November.

That leaves Washington. The United States is not keen to comment on the upcoming Vienna talks because the Democratic Party expects a crushing defeat in the fast-approaching midterm elections for the House of Representatives and Senate.

Unlike the other negotiators, the United States perceives both a nuclear Israel and a nuclear Iran as domestic policy issues. Any slip of the tongue regarding these issues risks depriving local politicians of much-needed votes.

But this is not to say that U.S. diplomats are bone idle in the run-up to the talks. They are trying to keep a low profile. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton recently held talks with Chinese leaders at the 17th ASEAN Summit in Hanoi and, with the same goal in mind, also paid a visit to the southern Chinese city of Sanya.

Clinton was keen to discover how ready Chinese companies were to replace Western companies on the Iranian market, should Western companies withdraw entirely.

The same talks are underway with Moscow, with each side clear on their "red lines." Everybody is trying to agree; everyone is waiting for the results of the upcoming U.S. election. Will conservative forces be able to exert any serious influence on U.S. foreign policy? Or will they fail to block the necessary changes?

The Republicans remain optimistic because the sanctions in place against Iran are yielding results. It is difficult to use credit cards in Tehran, the country is being starved of financial resources and Japanese and European companies are taking their leave (although Korean and Chinese businessmen are proving quick to step in).

There needs to be some meaningful traction on the Iranian issue. How this movement could be effected is outlined in a couple of articles in the leading U.S. periodical *Foreign Affairs*.

The September/October 2010 edition (of *Foreign Affairs*) boasts an article entitled *Bringing Israel's Bomb Out of the Basement: Has Nuclear Ambiguity Outlived its Shelf Life?* by Avner Cohen and Marvin Miller.

In it, the authors suggest that the United States should recognize Israel, officially, as a nuclear power, just as it recognized India. Why? The surprising benefits to be gained from such a course are detailed in another article in the same publication, entitled *An Unlikely Trio: Can Iran, Turkey and the United States Become Allies?* Here the author Mustafa Akyol explains that Turkey and Iran are the only two regional powers that are in a position to become Washington's main allies in the struggle against wild and aggressive fundamentalism across the Middle East.

The most logical conclusion is that although Iran can be portrayed as a rogue state for a long time, it is impossible to avoid serious dialogue with Tehran forever.

Of course nobody wants to see Mahmoud Ahmadinejad triumph after forcing the six world powers into a discussion of this extremely grave issue, rather than of how he is in the wrong to pursue his (clearly not civilian) nuclear development program. This is a discussion of the balance of power and vested interests in the greater Middle East. The Israeli nuclear arsenal, whose official existence is neither confirmed nor denied, comprising an estimated 80-500 warheads has a definite role to play here. It clearly influences Iran's behavior, behavior often called outrageous, scandalous and worse.

Sooner or later (and sooner would be better) the United States will have to reset its relations with Israel and the entire region. The greater Middle East is simply becoming too large for America to continue unequivocally supporting Israel and basing its entire regional policy on this fixed axis. As for talking to Iran about this: that remains an issue that will inevitably rear its head, whether under Obama or another reformist president.

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

<http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20101103/161194812.html>

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Wall Street Journal
OPINION
November 3, 2010

The World with a Nuclear Iran

Time is running out to prevent a global regime where radicals, terrorists and serial human-rights abusers hold the balance of power.

By MOSHE KANTOR

Only days ago, Iran began loading uranium fuel rods into the core of its first nuclear power plant at Bushehr. While many in the international community played down the significance of Bushehr, it is emblematic of an illegal nuclear policy that could spell the end of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)—perhaps the most important pillar of global security.

An Iranian bomb must be stopped not only for what it could physically wreak on its neighbors and the world at large, but for the paradigm-breaking order that could result if Iran is able to achieve nuclear weaponization.

Many neighboring governments have already said that they will fast-track their own nascent nuclear programs toward weapons capability if Iran acquires the bomb. This domino effect could spread further around the globe, thus tearing the NPT to shreds. Nuclear weapons would become so commonplace that any of the more than 100 current conflicts around the world could come to a devastating conclusion with the flick of a switch.

The nations soon to acquire nuclear weapons will not be decent democracies. As recent history has shown, it's countries like North Korea, Saddam's Iraq, Iran, and Libya that have attempted to build the atom bomb. Repressive regimes are seeking to provide the impetus for a new global regime where radicals, terrorists and serial human-rights abusers will hold the balance of power.

The greater the number of nuclear powers, the more likely that terrorist organizations will be able to acquire atomic weapons. The possibility of "dirty bombs" exploding in a major metropolitan area would become more real. Al Qaeda and other Islamic extremists make no secret that they hold such intentions. The explosion of just one "dirty bomb" in a major city would have devastating effects, which would be measured not just in human casualties but in the long-term health of the world's economies and political institutions. Such an act would turn inhabitants of the Western world into fearful hostages of terrorists, resulting in the moral and psychological collapse of our civilization.

Forceful action by all democratic nations is needed to counter Iran in particular and the threats of nuclear weapons in general. While the recent sanctions against Tehran by the United Nations, the European Union, the U.S., Canada and others are vital, their importance lies in their implementation, and in their ability to bring other countries on board. It is imperative that nations forego their short-term financial considerations to safeguard a future free of the threat of nuclear weapons proliferation.

Seventy years ago considerations of "economic expediency" spurred the Soviet Union, Britain, France and the United States to cooperate with Nazi Germany. Far from the path to realism and pragmatism, this proved to be the biggest mistake of the 20th century. It seems that some in the international community are ready to repeat that mistake.

The 2010 Prague Summit and the signing of the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty between the U.S. and Russia demonstrated the obvious benefits of close cooperation between Russia and the U.S.—and potentially all democratic nations—in countering new global challenges and threats.

But while the battle against environmental damage, for example, has produced international action, the most immediate danger facing the world today—the proliferation of nuclear weapons—has not attracted similar attention. If we want to reverse this looming threat to our security and civilization, we can't afford to lose any more time.

Mr. Kantor is president of the European Jewish Congress and founder and president of The International Luxembourg Forum on Preventing Nuclear Catastrophe.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704141104575588220900969594.html>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

OPINION

Russia and the Future of the CTBT

3 November 2010

By Alexei Fenenko

Fifteen years have passed since Russia and the United States approved the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), but experts have shown little interest in the anniversary. Banning nuclear explosions is seen by analysts as a set of technical issues, beyond the reach of politics. But the CTBT is a political issue.

The Russian Federation is the only nuclear power that is fully engaged in test ban regime. Britain and France have ratified the CTBT but have not declared a moratorium on nuclear testing. By contrast, the United States and China have declared moratoria on nuclear testing but have not ratified the treaty. India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea – who are operating outside the international non-proliferation regime – have neither declared moratoria on nuclear testing nor signed the CTBT.

Fifteen years after it was adopted, the treaty's future remains uncertain, as does Russia's participation in the test ban regime. Russia's successful test of the Bulava sea-based ballistic missile on October 29 made it clear that Moscow intends to continue modernizing its strategic nuclear forces.

Why ban nuclear testing?

The history of the nuclear test ban stretches back to the mid-1950s, when the idea was proposed by India and the USSR. Later, the Soviet Union, Britain and the United States signed the Partial Test Ban Treaty (1963), Threshold Test Ban Treaty (1974), and Peaceful Nuclear Explosion Treaty (1976). From 1977 to 1980, these three powers held trilateral talks on a comprehensive test ban. However, these talks did not yield an agreement. Soviet experts had concerns about U.S. supremacy in the electronic simulation of nuclear explosions and the behavior of fissile material in nuclear warheads, while American analysts worried about the Soviet supremacy in conventional armed forces.

But as testing technology changed in the 1980s, so too did the political landscape. This decade saw rapid development in the field of electronic simulation of nuclear explosions, progress on hydronuclear and subcritical tests, and improvements in “zero-yield” experiment technology. Experts spoke about the possibility of developing nuclear weapons without nuclear testing. But skeptics argued that electronic testing dealt only with caliber and weight, not the technical design of nuclear warhead.

The logic of the non-proliferation regime also paved the way for a test ban treaty. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) made it compulsory for legal nuclear powers “to focus on limiting the arms race and complete nuclear disarmament.” But the NPT (1968) was restricted to only 30 years. Non-nuclear states agreed to extend the treaty only if the “nuclear five” fulfilled their disarmament obligations.

International groups of scientists have been advocating for a nuclear test ban since the early 1980s. In 1985, the idea was supported by Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Kornienko and General Secretary Assistant on Foreign Affairs Anatoly Chernyaev. In the U.S., Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and his assistant Richard Perle opposed it. But President Ronald Reagan and Secretary of State George Shultz supported the idea of cutting nuclear arsenals, because the small strategic nuclear forces theoretically could be more vulnerable for a space-based missile defense system (the Strategic Defense Initiative). In the summer of 1986, the USSR and the United States began the Geneva talks on nuclear testing.

The Geneva talks were quite complicated. Joint Soviet-U.S. experiments at Nevada nuclear test sites and Semipalatinsk (1988-89) proved that it was possible to monitor nuclear tests. Both the USSR and the United States declared a moratorium on nuclear tests several times, only to renege. Only in 1990 did the United States ratify the Threshold Test Ban Treaty and Peaceful Nuclear Explosion Treaty.

In 1980s, Soviet and American experts talked about the declining psychological impact of nuclear deterrence and the possibility of replacing nuclear weapons with something that can actually be used. The idea was that by banning nuclear tests, nuclear powers would lose their technological base to build nuclear weapons. But were nuclear powers motivated by humanistic considerations or a desire to revive the possibility of wars using conventional weapons (just as the ban on the use of chemical weapons in 1925 led to the rise of tank warfare in the Second World War)?

Basic compromise

The end of the Cold War standoff accelerated the search for compromise. In Vancouver (April 1993), presidents Boris Yeltsin and Bill Clinton agreed to start negotiations on signing the CTBT in a multilateral format. The negotiation of this treaty was to be a package with the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT). In January 1994, negotiations on both documents began in Geneva.

The Russian-U.S. compromise was not easy. The Clinton administration insisted on banning subcritical and hydronuclear tests, which rankled the Russian Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Atomic Energy. It was only at the New York summit (October 23, 1995) that Bill Clinton and Boris Yeltsin finally agreed that the core of the treaty would be the “zero yield concept.” The text of the treaty was ready to be signed in Geneva on September 24, 1996.

Russia and the United States without nuclear testing

However, Russia ratified the CTBT under certain conditions. These were: (1) the possibility of implementing a federal program to support nuclear weapons without nuclear testing; (2) the option of withdrawal in the event of a

threat to national interests; (3) the separation of national and international mechanisms for IAEA monitoring over fissile materials; and (4) the non-deployment of nuclear weapons on the territory of new NATO members. The latter condition was recorded in the Russian-NATO Founding Act (1997).

These conditions soured Republicans in the U.S. Congress on the CTBT. They viewed the New York agreement as an unjustified concession to Russia. (If nuclear testing had been completely banned, Washington would have had an advantage given its superiority in electronic nuclear testing). Russian conditions for ratifying the CTBT were considered excessive by Republicans, who portrayed the New York agreement in the media as Clinton's "nuclear Munich." In October 1999, the Republican Congress predictably voted against ratification.

Resource or weakness?

Russia's participation in the CTBT was largely criticized by military experts. However, ratification of the CTBT benefitted the Russian Federation in many ways. For example, many non-nuclear states supported Moscow's position. It gave Russia leverage to persuade the United States to continue negotiations on START and ABM. When the United States criticized Russia for its diplomatic position on the nuclear programs of Iran, India and North Korea, Russia responded that Americans had not yet ratified one of the pillars of the non-proliferation regime. This approach has paid dividends. Public opinion surveys around have revealed that Washington, not Moscow, started a new arms race.

The situation changed after President Barack Obama called for the ratification of the CTBT in April 2009. The CTBT establishes an International Monitoring System for nuclear tests (IMS), which includes seismic stations, as well as radionuclide, infrasound and hydroacoustic monitoring. These stations are located in the states subject to the CTBT. But all the data is to be sent to the Provisional Technical Secretariat in Vienna, which is subordinate to the CTBT Organization. In this respect, the United States is in a better position than Russia for several reasons.

First, Washington has a network of these stations on the territory of its military allies: NATO, Japan and Middle Eastern countries. The Americans can use these stations to monitor Russian sites. Russia, by contrast, does not have similar stations near the U.S. border.

Second, the United States is currently working toward a global missile defense system. IMS stations, which are being built now, seem to be unfit for observing the launches of ballistic missiles. But in 1996, the CTBT participants discussed the draft of a satellite monitoring system for underground nuclear explosions. Space surveillance systems are easier to use than "dual use" technologies: they could be observing not only the nuclear tests, but the nuclear sites, too.

Third, Americans will be able to use the issue of subcritical and hydronuclear tests against Russia. In 2003, American experts claimed that under the cover of Russia's federal program to support nuclear weapons with testing, Moscow was pursuing a program of subcritical nuclear tests. If the United States decides to ratify the CTBT, similar charges (whether justified or not) could become official.

Fourth, the United States is conducting experiments to develop "small nuclear weapons." Future administrations (for example, if a Republican takes back the White House in 2012) could increase funding for these projects. Over the past 15 years, significant progress has been made in subcritical and hydronuclear testing. The question, then, is whether the Russian segment of the IMS will be able to give absolutely accurate information about the American experiments.

Post-November prospects

If the Republicans win control of the House of Representatives on November 2, they may solve these problems, as they are likely to postpone ratification of the CTBT once again. But Russia cannot remain the only nuclear power to have both ratified the CTBT and imposed a moratorium on nuclear testing. The United States and China have great latitude with respect to nuclear experiments. Like Britain and France, they have not imposed a moratorium on nuclear tests and, theoretically, are free to carry out a program of subcritical and hydronuclear testing. In fact, Britain could do this under a joint program with Washington.

There is another problem. In 2008, the Provisional Technical Secretariat in Vienna decided to start using the IMS facilities. It is expected that they will be fully operational after 2015. But unless the CTBT is ratified, the purpose of this system is unclear. Russia will have to amend the agreement with the Preparatory Commission (1997) and the Technical Secretariat of the CTBT (2000).

In the mid-2000s, Russian experts proposed some scenarios for a possible collapse of the CTBT:

- (1) large-scale modernization of the U.S., Russian, and Chinese nuclear arsenals;
- (2) China, France and, possibly, Britain may have concerns about their inability to maintain their nuclear arsenals at the level necessary to preserve the nuclear status quo;

- (3) Russia's withdrawal from the CTBT in order to support programs to modernize Russia's strategic nuclear forces;
- (4) one of the threshold states or non-legal nuclear states (India, Pakistan, North Korea) conducts nuclear tests.

A Republican victory, of course, would not spell immediate collapse. But if the treaty has not been in force for fifteen years, it is difficult for Russia to be the only nuclear power which complies with its terms and conditions in full. Russia's official position is to support the CTBT's entry into force. However, Russian experts tend to focus on the pessimistic scenarios of CTBT collapse. In the near future, Russia could face a difficult choice between the political dividends the CTBT affords and the military necessity to upgrade its nuclear capabilities.

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National Public Radio (NPR)

OPINION

National Review: Off to a Lamé START

By The Editors

November 5, 2010

President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton have both signaled their hope that the Senate will ratify New START during the lame-duck session, before a larger Republican minority can be sworn in. It is vital to our national security that the Senate disappoint them.

The president's priorities on nuclear arms should be the pursuit of comprehensive missile defense, the modernization of America's nuclear arsenal, and the prevention of rogue states from acquiring WMD. New START does nothing on the last two goals and is actively hostile to the first.

Instead, what the treaty does is limit the number of deployed "delivery vehicles" — missile silos, aircraft, submarines — to 700 per side, approximately the level the aging Russian nuclear infrastructure is already struggling to maintain. But it does nothing to limit the Russians' massive stockpile of undeployed warheads — by one estimate, some 8,000 of them — or to cut into their advantage in tactical nuclear weapons designed for use on the field of battle. Meanwhile, it encourages the Russians to "MIRV" their platforms, packing multiple warheads onto a single vehicle, at the same time the Obama administration has unilaterally discontinued that practice in an effort to "to increase stability."

Unlike the original START, New START leaves whole classes of delivery vehicles, from rail-launched ICBMs to nuclear-tipped cruise missiles, undefined and thus uncontrolled by the treaty. An "understanding" included in the U.S. ratification document presumes that rail-based missiles are covered under the treaty, but such presumptions lack the force of international law. Worse, the Russians are already threatening to back out if the rail-launched "understanding" is not matched by similar language that would prevent us from expanding anti-ballistic capabilities.

This on top of the treaty's explicit constraints on American missile defense, including a prohibition on the conversion of ICBM launchers into ABM launchers, and language in the preamble that implies the creation of new defensive capabilities is henceforth equivalent to the creation of new nuclear arms. Anyone who doubts the Russians will use this as pretext to withdraw from the treaty should the United States improve its defensive posture need only listen to Russian president Dmitry Medvedev, who said New START "can be viable only provided there are no quantitative or qualitative increases in ABM capabilities."

Even if New START's substantive provisions were worth endorsing, its verification regime would not be. It represents a significant step backward from its predecessor in areas such as on-site inspections and information sharing — and that's just what we know about. On the eve of the September committee vote that sent New START to the full Senate, Sen. Kit Bond (R-MO), vice chair of the Select Committee on Intelligence, sent a classified letter to the Foreign Relations Committee detailing yet further objections to the treaty's verification components, and Sen. James Risch (R-ID) warned that new intelligence prompted him to question Russian intentions.

Which leaves President Obama's admirable if naive commitment to non-proliferation and eventual disarmament as the sole virtue of ratification — in other words, it leaves precisely nothing. Proliferators such as Iran and North Korea will not find the moral force in the president's example, nor will their strategic imperatives be altered a bit by even a substantially smaller U.S. nuclear arsenal. The former will continue seek a deterrent to the massive conventional superiority of the Great Satan, and the latter will continue to reap the benefits of its plutonium-powered extortion racket.

It goes without saying that Senate Democrats are overwhelmingly behind the president's pet treaty. Unfortunately, some Senate Republicans, including Sen. Richard Lugar (IN), have also indicated their support. Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell (KY) has signaled he will follow Lugar's lead and that of Republican whip Jon Kyl (AZ), on the ultimate ratification vote. Kyl doesn't share Lugar's estimation of New START and has doggedly pressed the administration to commit to nuclear-force modernization and to open New START's negotiating record to Senate scrutiny in advance of a vote. While Senator Kyl's demands certainly would constitute improvements over the treaty as it stands, they would not be sufficient to salvage this fundamentally defective accord. And, in any case, ramming the treaty through a lame-duck Congress is reckless and unnecessary; the Russians will still be there in January. Senator McConnell should exercise restraint.

At the top of his Thursday cabinet meeting, President Obama said that the debate over the ratification of New START "is not a traditionally Democratic or Republican issue, but, rather, an issue of American national security." That's quite right. But it will take a unified Republican caucus to stop New START.

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