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San Francisco Chronicle

US Approval of Arms Pact with Russia Looking Shaky

By DESMOND BUTLER, Associated Press

Wednesday, November 10, 2010

WASHINGTON, (AP) -- Senate approval of President Barack Obama's nuclear arms treaty with Russia, which once looked close to a sure thing, is now in jeopardy.

The administration is scrambling to get enough Republican support in the Senate to ratify the New START treaty before the Democrats' majority shrinks by six in January. But Republicans have little incentive to give Obama a big political boost after leaving him reeling from their strong gains in last week's congressional elections.

A failure to win passage could trip up one of the administration's top foreign policy goals: improving relations with Russia. The treaty, signed in April by Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, has been the most tangible sign of success, and failure to get it ratified could be viewed as a rebuke in Moscow. It also would leave Obama's push for even greater restrictions on the world's nuclear arsenal in doubt.

Some Republicans have argued that the treaty would limit U.S. missile defense options and does not provide adequate procedures to verify that Russia is living up to its terms. Advocates dispute both charges.

The Obama administration is worried that ratification could slip out of reach if a vote were to be delayed. Ellen Tauscher, the undersecretary of state for arms control, said this week that the lame-duck session Congress will convene before most newly elected senators take their seats in January could be the administration's last shot.

"Our last opportunity to do it coming forward is in the lame duck," she said. "I think that, frankly, because of the way the numbers are working, it's the best opportunity to do it."

Republicans will gain one vote part of the way through the lame-duck session because they won a special election for Obama's former seat in Illinois. That will increase the GOP's Senate numbers temporarily to 42 in the 100-member chamber.

Since the election, senior administration officials, including Vice President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, have been pressing the case for ratification with Republican lawmakers. A long list of retired generals and senior statesmen from both parties have expressed support, arguing that that the treaty should be beyond politics.

But its best shot seems to lie in a political deal with one key Republican senator.

Republican Jon Kyl has wielded the most sway in his party on the issue. He has been negotiating with the administration for months and pinning support for the treaty to a boost in funding to modernize the U.S. stockpile of nuclear weapons. A number of his Republican colleagues have said they will follow his lead on the treaty. His approval could push support beyond the 67 votes the administration needs for ratification, although many Republicans still are likely to oppose it.

The administration has countered Kyl by warning that the lame-duck session also will be his last chance to get the money he is seeking for the nuclear stockpile because Democrats will not support him next year should the treaty fail.

The treaty would reduce the limit on strategic warheads to 1,550 for each country from the current ceiling of 2,200. It also would set up new procedures to allow both countries to inspect each other's arsenals to verify compliance.

Treaty advocates have been warning that the United States has not had nuclear inspectors in Russia since December, when a previous treaty expired. They say Republicans who have opposed the treaty are endangering national security by delaying the inspectors' return.

Arlen Jameson, a retired Air Force general and former deputy chief of the Strategic Air Command, says a long delay in returning U.S. inspectors could force the U.S. military and intelligence agencies to find other ways to monitor Russian nuclear forces. He said that would involve costly monitoring by satellites that would shift scarce intelligence resources from operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"The needs for overhead monitoring is already under great stress," he said. "The expense will not be transparent because it will be not made publicly available, but it will be enormous."

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/n/a/2010/11/10/national/w000557S91.DTL&type=politics>

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Top US Senator Hopeful of START Approval in 2010

By Staff Writers

Washington, Agence France-Presse (AFP)

November 10, 2010

Democratic US Senator John Kerry said Wednesday he was optimistic that the US Senate will ratify a landmark nuclear weapons deal with Russia before the end of the year.

"I'm very hopeful," Kerry, who chairs the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, told reporters on a conference call from Israel when asked about new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START).

"We're going to try to move to the START treaty and we're going to get the START treaty done," he said.

Kerry indicated it was "likely" that the Senate, which returns to Washington next week for a "lame-duck" session after key elections last week, would take up the accord in December.

He also said he had been in touch with the top Republican on his committee, Senator Richard Lugar, as well as Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Vice President Joe Biden, and a leading critic of the accord, Republican Senator John Kyl.

The START treaty -- signed by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and Obama at an elaborate ceremony in Prague in April -- restricts each nation to a maximum of 1,550 deployed warheads, a cut of about 30 percent from a limit set in 2002.

The agreement, a top Obama foreign policy initiative, replaces a previous accord that lapsed in December 2009 and also requires ratification by Russia's lower house, the Duma.

US Senate ratification requires 67 votes, meaning Obama's Democratic allies will need to pick up considerable Republican support.

Republicans, including Kyl, have said they need to be sure that the US nuclear arsenal will be modernized and that the treaty will not hamper US missile defense efforts.

http://www.spacewar.com/reports/Top_US_Senator_hopeful_of_START_approval_in_2010_999.html

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Financial Times – U.K.

White House Warns on Stockpile in Push for Treaty

By Daniel Dombey in Washington

November 10 2010

The Obama administration has warned Republicans an \$80bn plan to upgrade the US atomic weapons stockpile would be at risk if Congress did not approve a landmark nuclear arms treaty with Russia.

Barack Obama, president, is pushing to have the treaty approved before the new Congress takes office in January. He unveiled his 10-year plan to modernise the nuclear complex the day he sent the New Start treaty to the Senate for ratification, partly in a move to win Republican support.

His administration is now making clear the stockpile plans are also at stake, amid fears that failure to approve the treaty in the handful of legislative days left this year could leave the international arms control system in tatters.

"There is a risk that not moving ahead with Congress could shatter the fragile consensus on modernising the nuclear complex," said a senior administration official. "New Start puts nuclear modernisation in the right context for those who worry how it could send the wrong signal to the world and undermine our non-proliferation efforts."

Officials add that if the New Start deal – perhaps Mr Obama's biggest foreign policy achievement – was not ratified by the Senate, it would not only damage efforts to "reset" relations with Russia, but also destroy the arms inspection system that built bilateral confidence.

The administration fears that ratification prospects will recede if the issue is handed to the new Senate, with its reduced Democratic majority. But Republicans, who hold a trump card because of the need for a two-thirds majority, say they are reluctant to pass the deal in the lame-duck session of Congress.

The administration also recognises that a single senator could hold up the deal. "It is necessary to get unanimous consent to do a lot of things," said the administration official.

A separate civil nuclear deal with Moscow may also fall, because of a lack of legislative days, leaving Dmitry Medvedev, Russian president, with little to show for his co-operation with the Obama administration on issues such as Iran.

“Every day that we don’t have this verification regime in force is a day in which, unfortunately, miscalculation and distrust can develop,” Ellen Tauscher, undersecretary of state for arms control, told the Financial Times. She pointed out that the previous nuclear inspection regime, established by the original Start treaty, expired last December.

The new treaty imposes limits on the strategic nuclear forces held by the US and Russia, which together account for 90 per cent of the world’s nuclear weapons. But its advocates have abandoned earlier administration claims that Start dramatically cuts weapons, arguing instead that the key is the monitoring mechanisms.

The treaty has been resoundingly backed by the US military, including by Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, who has testified on its behalf, and by six former secretaries of state and five former defence secretaries.

Key Republicans are not yet convinced that the issue should be taken up in the lame-duck period, with Jon Kyl, an Arizona senator, leading a group holding out for more assurances about spending on nuclear laboratories as part of nuclear modernisation.

“The trade I’m looking for with the administration is that we’ll negotiate a treaty with good numbers as long as you promise to modernise the force that’s left,” said Lindsey Graham, a Republican senator from South Carolina. “I don’t know if there’s momentum for that in the lame-duck [session] or not.”

Former Republican administration officials are much more resounding in their support of the deal. “It is practically a no-brainer that it ought to be ratified,” George Shultz, President Ronald Reagan’s secretary of state, told the FT, describing the treaty as “all-round beneficial”.

The treaty’s failure would be a “terrible signal” and show US “indecisiveness” by refusing to ratify a treaty negotiated by the president himself.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/77b9a9e6-ed01-11df-9912-00144feab49a.html#axzz1557q9kuN>

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People’s Daily – China
Friday, November 12, 2010

Russia Hopes New START with U.S. to be ratified by 2010

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov voiced hope Friday that the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (new START) would be ratified before the end of this year.

He also said Russia-U.S. relations should not be dependent on American domestic politics.

"I hope that in the (U.S.) Congress, not short-term considerations in an attempt to outplay other political party, but realization of the United States' deep interests will prevail," Lavrov told reporters in Seoul.

Moscow and Washington signed the new START on April 8, 2010 in Prague. It calls for a big cut in nuclear weapons from both sides. The treaty has to be ratified by both countries' lawmakers before officially taking effect.

However, the victory of U.S. Republicans in congressional elections earlier this month might mean more difficulties for U.S. President Barack Obama to secure the ratification of the new treaty.

Source: Xinhua

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90777/90853/7198183.html>

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Miami Herald
Wednesday, November 10, 2010

Iran Won't Talk about Limiting Nuclear Program

By ALI AKBAR DAREINI, Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran -- Iran's president said Wednesday that his country wants to discuss cooperation to resolve global issues and to promote peace and security at nuclear talks with world powers, but won't talk about what it insists is its right to continue nuclear activities.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad spoke a day after Iran offered to resume nuclear talks this month with six nations - the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany. The talks collapsed last year and Ahmadinejad's comments raise further questions about whether Iran is willing to reopen the dialogue on its nuclear program.

The U.S. and its allies suspect Iran's nuclear program is aimed at producing weapons, though Iran denies this and says it only wants to generate power.

The president's remarks were among the many conflicting and ambiguous messages from Iran over the years about its willingness to enter into nuclear negotiations. It has also sent counterproposals and used delaying tactics that have brought talks to an impasse.

Addressing a group of people in Qazvin, in northern Iran, Ahmadinejad said Tehran is ready to discuss "global challenges" and help global peace based on mutual respect but won't discuss its right to continue nuclear activities.

"We've said repeatedly that the Iranian nation will never discuss its basic rights with anybody," Ahmadinejad said. "Iran is ready for talks on equal conditions to cooperate to resolve global issues, ease international concerns and help global peace and security."

Adding to the uncertainty of Iran's offer, different officials suggested different dates: Nov. 15 or 23 or Dec. 5. Iran wants the talks to take place in Istanbul, where it would have its Turkish allies on the sidelines.

Iran says it has a non-negotiable right under the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty to enrich uranium for producing nuclear fuel.

The international community has sought to persuade Iran to give up enrichment because the technology also offers a potential pathway to weapons development.

"The Iranian nation will welcome any hand extended to it with honesty but will cut the hand if it is with deception and conspiracy," Ahmadinejad said, prompting chants of "Death to the U.S." from the crowd.

Addressing the six nations, he said, "If some of you have the mentality of selfishness and arrogance, the response of the Iranian nation will be the same it has given until today and will disappoint you from the continuation of your life."

"We are ready for talks under these conditions," he added.

Iran has called on the U.S. and its European allies to explain in the talks their position on Israel's nuclear program, which is widely believed to include an undeclared arsenal of weapons. Iranian officials have also sought to discuss what they see as U.S. interference in the Middle East and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Ahmadinejad appeared to refer to these demands again on Wednesday.

"We in the past said you must declare your views about some global issues," he said. "If you do, we will discuss them with you on that basis. If not, we will determine the answers for you and will talk to you on the basis of your past behavior."

Iran has ruled out any discussion of a nuclear fuel exchange deal that it balked at last year and which was meant to ensure it could not divert material to nuclear weapons production.

That U.N.-drafted proposal would have at least delayed Iran's ability to potentially go down the weapons path by requiring it to ship nearly all of its stockpile of enriched uranium abroad to be returned as reactor-ready fuel.

Iran refused, but later accepted a similar fuel swap proposal from allies Brazil and Turkey. The six nations, however, said that offer fell short of their demands.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2010/11/10/1918219/iran-wont-talk-about-limiting.html>

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Arab News – Saudi Arabia

Iran Accuses IAEA of Leaking Data to US

By AGENCIES

November 12, 2010

TEHRAN: Iran's president has accused the UN nuclear watchdog of leaking information to the US and says that is the reason Tehran refuses to allow international inspectors unannounced access to the country's nuclear facilities.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's allegations against the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on Thursday come ahead of expected talks with world powers in the coming weeks over Iran's nuclear program.

Ahmadinejad has said major powers are against solving the controversy surrounding Iran's nuclear program, state television reported.

"In the next few days, the dialogue will commence but our experience shows that they are not seeking to solve the issue," Ahmadinejad said, referring to upcoming talks with six countries over Tehran's nuclear drive.

"From our side the issue has already been solved and we will continue our peaceful nuclear activities. The Western countries are arrogant and do not take others into account."

The talks are aimed at allaying Western concerns that Iran's nuclear program is masking a weapons drive under the guise of a civilian program, something Tehran denies.

Iran has proposed the talks be held in Istanbul on Nov. 23 or Dec. 5. Britain, China, France, Russia, the United States and Germany agree on Istanbul, but have proposed a date of Nov. 15. The final date is yet to be fixed.

Ahmadinejad questioned again the mandate of the six powers. "What is the basis of this group and based on which law it was formed," he asked. "If it consists of the five UN Security Council members, then what is Germany doing here? We welcome Germany's presence, but then we say that for the reason Germany is in the talks, others should also be in."

Iran has previously said that allies Brazil and Turkey be involved in these talks.

The Iranian leader said Tehran will not accept the so-called additional protocol because it would place its nuclear activities under IAEA supervision.

IAEA chief Yukiya Amano told the UN General Assembly this week that "Iran has not provided the necessary cooperation to permit the agency to confirm that all nuclear material in Iran is in peaceful activities."

The IAEA wants Iran to implement what it calls the additional protocol, which permits unfettered inspections beyond declared nuclear sites to ferret out any covert atomic activity.

"The acceptance of the additional protocol would be tantamount to placing all of our nuclear activities under the supervision of the IAEA which would in turn pass our information to America," Ahmadinejad said. "We said we would not accept this protocol."

Iran's relations with the IAEA have become more tense since Amano took office late last year. He has adopted a blunter approach than his predecessor Mohamed El-Baradei, including stating in a report that intelligence indicates Iran could be trying to develop a nuclear-armed missile.

At a meeting of the IAEA board in September, Amano accused Iran of hampering the agency's work by barring experienced inspectors. Iran said two inspectors it had banned from entering the country had provided false information about its work.

Ahmadinejad said on Wednesday that Iran's right to nuclear capabilities was non-negotiable. But European Union diplomats in Brussels said they believed he was not closing the door altogether on discussion of Iran's nuclear program.

<http://arabnews.com/middleeast/article187045.ece>

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Global Security Newswire

Egyptian Leader Asserted Iraq had Bioweapons, Bush Memoir Says

Friday, November 12, 2010

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak privately asserted prior to the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq that the regime of then-dictator Saddam Hussein held biological weapons, former President Bush said in his memoir published this week (see *GSN*, Nov. 4).

The Bush administration said intelligence demonstrated Iraq possessed of weapons of mass destruction in making its case for war against the Hussein regime. However, no operational WMD stockpiles or programs were discovered in the Middle Eastern country following the invasion.

"President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt had told [U.S. Gen.] Tommy Franks that Iraq had biological weapons and was certain to use them on our troops," Voice of America quoted Bush as saying in his book, titled "Decision Points."

The Egyptian leader "refused to make the allegation in public for fear of inciting the Arab street," Bush wrote.

"Intelligence from a Middle Eastern leader who knew (former Iraqi President) Saddam (Hussein) well had an impact on my thinking," he said. "Just as there were risks to actions, there were risks to inaction as well" (Diaa Bekheet, Voice of America, Nov. 11).

http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20101112_2250.php

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London Daily Telegraph – U.K.

North Korea's Nuclear Chief Arrested for 'Passing Secrets to a Foreign Power'

The head of North Korea's nuclear and missile development programmes has reportedly been arrested on charges of passing state secrets to a foreign intelligence agency.

By Julian Ryall in Tokyo

10 November 2010

Kim So-In, who was identified as a mathematical genius as a boy and taken under the wing of Kim Jong-Il, was arrested with his family in May and taken to the notorious Yodok concentration camp, according to South Korea's Chosun Ilbo newspaper.

Kim So-In is accused of assisting his father, Kim Song-Il, a researcher at the Yongbyon Nuclear Complex, to pass top secret documents detailing North Korea's progress in developing nuclear technology to a foreign power.

The round-up is likely to have included Kim's mother and younger brother, who are also respected nuclear scientists.

Identified as a special talent at the age of 7, Kim was fast-tracked into the Bungang High School and, after the intervention of Kim Jong-Il, was sent abroad to study nuclear physics at the age of 13. Given a personal tutor at Kim Il Sung University in Pyongyang, he received his master's degree at the age of 19 and a doctorate at 21, according to a defector from the North who worked under him.

Kim was one of a nucleus of around 20 scientists who received the best education and lifestyles that North Korea could provide and in return were expected to develop new weapons for the regime. Kim, who was considered the most senior in the group, was required to give regular progress reports directly to Kim Jong-Il.

Kim Jong-un, who was unveiled in September as the heir to his father's position as head of state, has been credited with unmasking the scientist as a traitor.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/northkorea/8122067/North-Koreas-nuclear-chief-arrested-for-passing-secrets-to-a-foreign-power.html>

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Yonhap News – South Korea

November 10, 2010

N. Korea Refuses to make Concessions Before Six-party Talks

Resume

By Sam Kim

SEOUL, Nov. 10 (Yonhap) -- North Korea on Wednesday ruled out allowing international nuclear monitors back on its soil and freezing its atomic activities as gestures toward the resumption of six-nation denuclearization talks.

In an editorial, the Rodong Sinmun, the paper of the North's ruling Workers' Party, instead demanded that South Korea retract its accusation that the communist state attacked the Cheonan, a South Korean warship that sank in March near their Yellow Sea border.

"It is South Korea and the United States that have blocked the resumption process of the six-party talks by raising the Cheonan warship issue which we have no relation to," the paper said.

The six-party talks, which the North has insisted should reopen, also involve South Korea, the U.S., Japan, Russia and China.

Commenting on South Korean Foreign Minister Kim Sung-hwan, who said last month that the North should make concessions over its nuclear arms programs before the talks can reopen, the paper said his remark was "vain."

"Not only that, he is admonishing us to allow International Atomic Energy Agency monitors back in and announce the freezing of atomic facilities. Kim Sung-hwan must be unable to see what the real obstacle to the resumption of six-party talks is," it said.

South Korea initially opposed resuming the talks until the North apologizes for the sinking. Officials here, however, have suggested in the past few months that an apology is not a prerequisite to resuming the talks, which have been stalled since late 2008.

Citing a multinational investigation, South Korea concluded in May that the North was responsible for the sinking that killed 46 sailors. South Korea has since held a series of naval drills, often teaming up with the U.S., in a show of force against the North, drawing bitter statements from Pyongyang.

In a meeting Wednesday with a U.S. expert on Korean affairs, Jack Pritchard, who met with North Korean foreign ministry officials in Pyongyang last week, South Korea's Vice Unification Minister Um Jong-sik reiterated that the North should show "a responsible attitude" over the Cheonan sinking in order to improve inter-Korean relations.

South and North Korea remain technically at war after the 1950-53 Korean War ended in a truce. Tension remains at the highest point in years after the warship sinking blamed on a North Korean torpedo.

In a separate article, the Rodong Sinmun called on the South to agree to talks over cross-border tours to a mountain resort in the North that were suspended in 2008 over the shooting death of a tourist from Seoul.

South Korea has yet to respond to a weeks-old proposal by North Korea that the sides hold talks to discuss ways to restore the tours, a rare cash cow for the impoverished North.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2010/11/10/44/0401000000AEN20101110008800315F.HTML>

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Times of India – India

N Korea Supplying Nuclear Technology to Iran and Myanmar: Report

Press Trust of India (PTI)

November 10, 2010

UNITED NATIONS - A UN report, which alleges that North Korea may have supplied nuclear technology to Syria, Iran and Myanmar, may be submitted before the Security Council today after being blocked by China for the past six months.

The 75-page report, "reinforces US claims that North Korea has emerged as a key supplier of banned weapons materials to Washington's greatest rivals," 'The Washington Post' reported.

The findings of the report indicate, "North Korean involvement in nuclear ballistic missile related activities in certain other countries, including Iran, Syria and Myanmar".

The report also said it was investigating "suspicious activity" by a sanctioned North Korean firm in Burma, as well as reports that Japan had arrested three individuals last year for "attempting to illegally export a magnetometer to Myanmar".

The Post, explained that "a magnetometer" has civilian and military uses - and can be used in a missile guidance system.

China has lifted its hold on the report two days ahead of President Barack Obama's meeting with China's President Hu Jintao at the G20 meeting in Seoul.

North Korea has been under UN sanctions since it conducted nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009.

Myanmar has also been suspected of initiating a nuclear programme but there is no clear evidence of its existence.

Iran denies that it is trying to build a nuclear programme, and insists that its uranium enrichment programme is to make medical isotopes to treat cancer.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/rest-of-world/N-Korea-supplying-nuclear-technology-to-Iran-and-Myanmar-Report/articleshow/6900876.cms>

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China Daily – China

Obama Reiterates Washington's Stance on DPRK

By Xinhua

November 11, 2010

SEOUL -- US President Barack Obama on Thursday urged the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to abandon its nuclear program and refrain from provocative moves.

Obama made the appeal when he visited Yongsan Garrison, a US military base located in central Seoul.

"If they choose to fulfill their international obligations and commitments to the international community, they will have the chance to offer their people lives of growing opportunity instead of crushing poverty -- a future of greater security and greater respect; a future that includes the prosperity and opportunity available to citizens on this end of the Korean Peninsula," Obama said.

Meanwhile, Obama warned the DPRK against any further provocative moves, stressing that the United States "will never waver" in its commitment to the security of the Republic of Korea (ROK) in south.

"We have made it clear that North Korea (DPRK)'s continued pursuit of nuclear weapons will only lead to more isolation and less security," Obama said.

Obama arrived in Seoul late Wednesday for the two-day G20 summit due to start late Thursday. The ROK is the third stop on Obama's four-nation trip to Asia after India and Indonesia.

The United States deploys 28,500 troops in the ROK as a deterrent against the DPRK.

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2010-11/11/content_11536835.htm

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Asahi Shimbun – Japan

S. Korea, U.S. to Talk about 'Nuclear Umbrella'

BY YOSHIHIRO MAKINO CORRESPONDENT

November 11, 2010

SEOUL--South Korea and the United States will begin discussions before the end of the year on policies related to the U.S. "nuclear umbrella" as well as the specific operation of a ballistic missile defense system.

The talks will be held at an Extended Deterrence Policy Committee, to be newly established.

A joint communique of the U.S.-South Korea Security Consultative Meeting issued on Oct. 8 said the two nations had "agreed to institutionalize" the committee.

Defense officials at the ministerial director-general level of the two nations will hold discussions to decide on the agenda and structure of the committee.

Japan also began discussions with the United States in February on extended deterrence, more commonly known as the nuclear umbrella, provided by the United States.

Both Japan and South Korea asked the United States for such discussions following the nuclear tests conducted by North Korea in October 2006 and May 2009, as well as a review by the United States of its extended deterrence strategy.

South Korean defense sources said Seoul would initially seek the sharing of military intelligence related to Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program in the Extended Deterrence Policy Committee.

South Korean officials would also want to discuss such issues as the possible selling by North Korea of its nuclear weapons and materials and how to respond to specific types of nuclear attacks, sources said.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization has set up a Nuclear Planning Group that allows for the sharing of information on responding to nuclear attacks. That is possible in part because NATO members such as Britain have their own nuclear arsenal.

However, in the case of Japan and South Korea, which are not nuclear powers, the United States has only made political guarantees to provide a nuclear umbrella without providing specific military information such as tactics to deal with a nuclear attack.

One reason the United States has been hesitant about sharing such information is due to concerns that such a move could trigger a nuclear domino effect in East Asia and antagonize China, which is a nuclear power, as well as to provide the rationale to allow North Korea to legitimize its efforts to develop nuclear weapons.

However, South Korea has been pushing for discussions on extended deterrence to alleviate concerns among the public about the effects from a reduction in U.S. troops based in South Korea.

The Joint Vision statement for the U.S.-South Korea alliance released in June 2009 included wording on extended deterrence, and preparations were made to push the process forward.

Moves on the part of Japan fueled momentum in South Korea as well.

After North Korea's first nuclear test in 2006, the importance of the extended deterrence of the United States again gained attention in Japan. A meeting of defense and foreign ministers of Japan and the United States held in 2007 touched upon the issue.

At a Security Sub-Committee meeting of high-ranking officials in defense and foreign policy held in July 2009, Japan and the United States agreed to begin regular discussions on the U.S. nuclear umbrella, and the first meeting was held in February.

A U.S. review of its nuclear policy has also prompted Japan and South Korea to hold talks to reconfirm Washington's commitment to the nuclear umbrella.

As to why Washington is leaning toward holding those discussions, a South Korean source said the United States "may have become worried that if it did not make a virtual guarantee of its nuclear umbrella, (South Korea) might have decided to embark on its own nuclear weapons development."

<http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201011110412.html>

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Yonhap News – South Korea

November 11, 2010

Seoul Sees Power Succession in N. Korea 'Accelerating'

SEOUL, Nov. 11 (Yonhap) -- The power transfer in North Korea from its current leader Kim Jong-il to his third and youngest son appears to be "accelerating" with the senior Kim making public appearances with the heir apparent, the defense ministry here said Thursday.

Kim Jong-un, believed to be in his late 20s, was appointed a four-star general and vice chairman of the North Korean ruling party's military commission in September, in what appeared to be the start of a long-anticipated power transition in the communist state.

"The process of power succession is accelerating with Kim Jong-un joining field inspections with Kim Jong-il," the ministry said in a report to lawmakers on its latest assessment of North Korea.

The North's next leader has been the subject of intense media speculation since leader Kim Jong-il, 68, suffered a stroke in 2008. But many analysts believe the senior Kim still retains a firm grip on the Pyongyang regime.

The senior Kim is also continuing a "brisk" schedule of public activities this year, the ministry said. So far this year, Kim Jong-il has made a total of 156 public outings, compared with 170 last year, according to the ministry report.

Since Kim Jong-un's rapid ascension, North Korea's media has reported public appearances by him and his father at a military drill, a musical performance and a field inspection of industrial plants.

Late last month, the two Kims attended a large-scale rally in Pyongyang marking the 60th anniversary of their country's military alliance with China, along with the Chinese delegation led by Col. General Guo Boxiong, vice chairman of China's Central Military Commission.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2010/11/11/97/0401000000AEN20101111006900315F.HTML>

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London Guardian – U.K.

Nuclear Smuggling: Armenia Arrests Suspected Supplier

Man held in 2005 over illicit weapons grade uranium arrested again following Georgian trial of two Armenians

Julian Borger, diplomatic editor

Monday, 8 November 2010

The Armenian government said today it had detained a man suspected of supplying nuclear bomb-grade uranium to two smugglers caught in Georgia earlier this year trying to sell it on the black market.

The Armenian national security service said Garik Dadayan, who served several months in 2005 for a previous attempt to smuggle highly enriched uranium, had been arrested after information from Georgian investigators.

Officials, speaking to the Guardian on condition of anonymity, said that Armenian security officials were conducting a joint investigation into the March incident with their Georgian counterparts.

Two Armenians, Hrant Ohanyan and Sumbat Tonoyan, have pleaded guilty in a Tbilisi court to an attempt to sell a weapons-grade sample of highly enriched uranium in the Georgian capital to a man they believed to be a representative of an Islamist jihadist group. The would-be buyer in the alleged 11 March deal was an undercover Georgian security agent.

Ohanyan and Tonoyan, who are expected to be sentenced in the next two weeks, admitted smuggling 18 grams of the uranium into Georgia hidden in a lead-lined cigarette box which had been stashed in a maintenance hatch aboard a night train from Yerevan, the Armenian capital.

They told Georgian investigators they had been given the weapons-grade uranium by Dadayan, a petty trader and an acquaintance of Ohanyan's, who had boasted he could get hold of much more from contacts in the Urals and in Siberia.

The incident, the third case of highly enriched uranium smuggling uncovered in Georgia in seven years, raises fresh questions on the security of nuclear stockpiles left in the former Soviet Union. Russia is estimated to have about 700 tonnes of the material held in hundreds of facilities all with varying levels of security.

Dadayan was caught in 2003, when the 200 grams of weapons grade uranium he was carrying triggered a radiation sensor at the Armenian-Georgian border. He bribed his way out of detention but was later arrested by Armenian authorities. He only served a few months of a two and half year sentence.

Georgian investigators told the Guardian they suspect Dadayan was allowed to keep some of his stash by the Georgian border guards that he paid off in 2003, and that he supplied this remnant to Ohanyan and Tonoyan, hoping they could find a buyer. The Armenian smugglers were asking \$50,000 a gram for their sample and were offering more if the sale was successful.

The US has spent billions of dollars in recent years trying to lock up vulnerable nuclear stockpiles in Russia.

Shota Utiashvili, head of analysis at the Georgian interior ministry, said it was encouraging that the amounts of highly enriched uranium being offered on the black market appeared to be diminishing, but he warned that developments in Russia could lead to a resurgence of the illicit trade in nuclear bomb parts. "There is a new danger that the level of corruption in Russia and the increasing immunity of senior officers means that they may well try to sell this stuff again," Utiashvili said.

Relations between Georgia and Russia have been tense since the two countries went to war in 2008. Russian security services, who gave some assistance in two previous uranium smuggling incidents in Georgia, are not co-operating this time.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/nov/08/nuclear-smuggling-armenia-arrest>

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Times of India - India

NATO to Offer Russia Access to US Satellite Data: Report

Agence France-Presse (AFP)

November 12, 2010

MOSCOW: NATO will offer Russia access to some US military satellite data in exchange for its participation in a missile shield project for continental Europe, a Moscow newspaper reported Friday.

The offer will come as part of a broader deal to be extended to Russia at the NATO-Russia Council that immediately follows the 28-member alliance's November 19-20 summit in Lisbon, Nezavisimaya Gazeta quoted a NATO source as saying.

NATO officials in Brussels could not immediately confirm the report.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has accepted an invitation to attend the talks, which besides long-range missile defences will also focus on NATO's activities in Afghanistan, in which Russia is also taking part.

NATO chief Anders Fogh Rasmussen has invited Russia to join the proposed missile shield, at the same time stressing that "we do not want to impose a specific missile defence architecture on Russia."

Foreign minister Sergei Lavrov said Friday that Russia was opened to such cooperation, but only if gave Moscow an equal role.

"We proceed from the fact that if it's equal cooperation... then such cooperation is quite possible," Lavrov told reporters on the sidelines of a G20 summit in the South Korean capital.

"Strategic partnership should be built on an equal basis."

Medvedev has also cautiously welcomed the deal but said Russia would like to see more details.

Nezavisimaya Gazeta cited a NATO source as saying that the deal involves a proposal to share information about missile and other threats, and to grant Russia access to some US satellite intelligence imagery, including about countries such as North Korea.

"By joining the NATO ABM system ... Moscow could strengthen the territorial security of Russia by receiving 'certain information' from US satellites -- for example, images of the DPRK (North Korea)," the newspaper wrote, citing its NATO source.

The offer's other elements include "an exchange of data with US and potentially NATO sensors, and an exchange of information about early warnings about missile launches," the NATO source was quoted as saying.

Russia would also be offered broader political consultations that give Moscow a chance to voice any potential concerns about the shield, and invited to joint NATO exercises and training sessions, the report said.

NATO officials in Brussels appeared surprised by the Moscow news report.

"I don't know what it's talking about," NATO spokesman James Appathurai said when asked about the Nezavisimaya Gazeta story.

"It's the first time I've heard of this," Appathurai said when contacted by AFP.

Moscow has fiercely opposed US plans to deploy an anti-missile system in eastern Europe.

Washington insists the missile shield is designed to fend off threats from rogue states like Iran and is not aimed at undermining Russia's missile force as a deterrent. It has promised to modify its plans.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/europe/NATO-to-offer-Russia-access-to-US-satellite-data-Report/articleshow/6913847.cms>

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People's Daily – China

Friday, November 12, 2010

Russia Ready to Cooperate with NATO on Missile Defense

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Friday reiterated a readiness to cooperate with NATO on a joint missile defense system on an equal basis, news agencies reported.

Russia had heard from NATO how such cooperation on missile defense might proceed, Lavrov told reporters in Seoul.

"If we proceed on the basis of equal cooperation, starting with a joint analysis, joint assessment of risks, which exist in the sphere of missile proliferation, then such cooperation is completely feasible," he said.

At the upcoming Russia-NATO summit in Lisbon, President Dmitry Medvedev would present additional proposals "on the subject of creating a missile pool of interested states with the participation of Russia, the United States and the European states," Lavrov said.

He said Russia regarded NATO's eastward expansion, rather than the alliance itself, as a threat.

He also echoed NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, who recently visited Russia, by viewing the Lisbon summit as a chance to "put an end to the post-Cold War period".

Rasmussen has previously suggested launching an anti-missile defense shield from the Canadian city of Vancouver to Russia's far-eastern city of Vladivostok, thus combining the U.S. missile defense system with NATO's while at the same time engaging Russia.

Russia has been firmly opposed to the deployment of missile defense elements near its borders, which it claimed would be a security threat. However, NATO and the United States said the missile shield was not aimed at Russia.

The Russia-NATO Council summit in Lisbon is scheduled for Nov. 20. It will be the first time for Medvedev to attend a summit with NATO after bilateral ties soured due to a brief war between Russia and Georgia in August 2008.

Source: Xinhua

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90777/90853/7198180.html>

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U.S. Department of Defense

Air Force Command Brings Focus to Nuclear Enterprise

By Cheryl Pellerin

November 9, 2010

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Nov. 9, 2010 – Over the past 15 months, the Air Force has built from scratch a model new command that will sustain and modernize U.S. intercontinental ballistic missile wings and the nuclear-capable bomber fleet, the general who leads the new command said today.

“Some people have likened that to trying to build an airplane while actually having to fly it,” Air Force Lt. Gen. Frank G. Klotz told a group of defense reporters here. “And at times, it has seemed like that to us.”

Global Strike Command is the Air Force’s first new major command in 27 years. It’s also part of a larger strategy that Air Force Secretary Michael B. Donley and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton A. Schwartz drafted “to bring focus and attention back to the nuclear enterprise,” Klotz said.

The command, activated in August 2009 with headquarters at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., has gone from 47 permanent staff and an equal number of temporary-duty staff to a staff of 800, plus 100 contractors.

“We had to publish the guidance, the instructions and the checklists that govern activities inside the bomber and the ICBM worlds,” Klotz said. “As it turned out, we had to write nearly 200 of these documents that were several hundred pages long and ensure that they got trained and implemented in the field. It’s a pretty daunting task.”

The command is responsible for three ICBM wings, two B-52 Stratofortress wings and the only B-2 Spirit wing. About 23,000 people assigned to the command work in locations around the world.

For the first time since the end of the Cold War, Klotz said, the Air Force legs of the nuclear triad -- which is composed of land-based ICBMs, strategic missiles and ballistic-missile submarines -- are back under one command.

During the Cold War, Strategic Air Command was responsible for the Air Force segments of the triad.

“At the end of the Cold War, ... those responsibilities were divested,” Klotz said. “The bombers went to Air Combat Command and the ICBMs went to ... Air Force Space Command.”

That meant two different commands with two different commanders and two different organizations with different priorities and different resources were focusing on the Air Force nuclear enterprise, Klotz said.

“Our thought was that there was some fraying in the nuclear enterprise as a result,” he added, “and to bring focus back to the enterprise, a number of steps were taken, including creation of the Air Force Global Strike Command.”

In April 2009, President Barack Obama told a large audience in Hradčany Square in Prague in the Czech Republic that the United States would take concrete steps toward helping to create a world without nuclear weapons.

“We will reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy and urge others to do the same,” Obama said, adding that as long as such weapons exist, the United States “will maintain a safe, secure and effective arsenal to deter any adversary, and guarantee that defense to our allies.”

That position is manifest in the Defense Department’s April 2010 Nuclear Posture Review Report, Klotz said, “and in the attention to our enterprise provided by senior leadership from [Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates] on down, as well as the resourcing that goes with it.”

Still, the number of U.S. nuclear weapons is declining, from nine operational bases and 1,054 missiles to three bases today and 450 missiles, he said. During the Cold War, Strategic Air Command had more than 1,000 bombers. Today, 76 B-52s and 20 B-2s make up the bomber inventory.

“But I still think there is a compelling need for a balance across the bomber, the ICBM and the sea-launched ballistic legs,” Klotz said.

Klotz said he also supports ratification of a new strategic arms reduction treaty between the United States and Russia, which together are stewards of more than 90 percent of the world's nuclear weapons. The old START treaty lapsed Dec. 5, and the Senate has not yet voted on the new treaty.

"The secretary of defense, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the commander of [U.S.] Strategic Command and virtually every former commander of Strategic Command have very cogent and compelling arguments in favor of ratifying the treaty," he said.

Klotz, who has been working in arms control and arms control policy since the mid-1970s, said such a treaty facilitates important communication between the two largest nuclear powers.

"It's critically important that the United States and Russia ... have a continuous dialog on issues related to nuclear policy, including such areas as security, safety and command and control," he said.

"This type of interaction in which the arms control treaties are the centerpiece, the nexus around which all that takes place, are critically important for understanding, for transparency and for openness between the two largest nuclear powers," the general added.

<http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=61633>

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National Defense Magazine

November 9, 2010

'Prompt Global Strike' Weapons Still Years Away

By Stew Magnuson

A program to deliver conventional warheads anywhere on the planet within minutes is moving forward, but must wait for the technology to catch up with the concept, the leader of the Air Force's nuclear weapons forces said Nov. 9.

The Defense Department, particularly U.S. Strategic Command, has been studying the "prompt global strike" concept for a number of years. The Air Force and Navy have the ability to deliver nuclear warheads on distant targets within minutes through Trident missiles based on submarines, or Minuteman III missiles located in silos.

Since the advent of the so-called war on terrorism, combatant commanders have expressed a desire to have access to non-nuclear weapons that can be dropped, precisely, on targets in hard-to-reach areas. A terrorist leader, or other fleeting targets, may only be in one spot for a few minutes. By the time air strikes are under way, or ships are in place to launch cruise missiles, the opportunity to eliminate a target may be gone.

The Army, Navy and Air Force are all working on separate prompt conventional strike concepts.

Lt. Gen. Frank G. Klotz, commander of the Air Force Global Strike Command, said the concept is very much alive, but the ability to carry out such attacks may be a number of years away.

Air Force Space Command did much of the early work on the Air Force, but that portfolio has been transferred to the Global Strike Command, which was formed in August 2009.

"We're still in the very, very early stages in this work," Klotz told reporters in Washington, D.C.

There is a "technology maturation phase" that has to be completed before a decision is made to move forward with a program of record. The ultimate solution may come from the Army, Navy or Air Force, he said.

A State Department fact sheet on the new Strategic Arms Reduction (START) treaty, currently awaiting ratification by the U.S. Senate, said the document does not prohibit conventional strike. Early concepts would have had Trident missiles armed with conventional explosives rather than nuclear warheads aboard U.S. submarines. However, there were concerns that other nuclear-armed nations would not be able to distinguish between nuclear and non-nuclear warheads, and might mistake the launching of the missiles as the beginning of a nuclear war.

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency has embarked on a hypersonic technology vehicle program. The Air Force Space and Missile Center is investigating a conventional strike missile using kinetic energy and the Army Space and Missile Command is working on an advanced hypersonic weapon, the fact sheet said.

U.S. Air Force Space Command worked out most of the policy issues and basing concepts before Global Strike Command took over responsibility for the program. U.S. Strategic Command oversees the three services' efforts.

“The technology we would like to have is not there yet,” Klotz added. He declined to speculate when a prompt global strike capability could be fielded. “I ask that same question,” he said. “I think it’s probably some years off now.”

<http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/blog/Lists/Posts/Post.aspx?ID=246>

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National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA)
Press Release

NNSA Ships Additional Special Nuclear Material from Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory as Part of Deinventory Project

Wednesday, November 10, 2010

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) today announced that Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory has removed 80 percent of its special nuclear material requiring the highest level of security protection.

LLNL has completed shipments to five different receiver sites, including Los Alamos National Laboratory, the Nevada National Security Site, the Savannah River Site, Y-12 Security Complex, and the Idaho National Laboratory, since the de-inventory project was initiated in October 2006. These shipments were completed in full compliance with safety and environmental laws and procedures. All federal and receiver site requirements were met for these shipments.

“The removal of 80 percent of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory’s highest security category nuclear material demonstrates continued progress and is the result of some very hard work,” said NNSA Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs Don Cook. “NNSA continues to make tremendous strides in transforming a Cold War nuclear weapons complex into a 21st century nuclear security enterprise that is smaller, safer, and more efficient. Safely and efficiently removing special nuclear material from Livermore by the end of 2012 is a major part of that effort.”

The move is part of NNSA’s efforts to consolidate special nuclear material at five sites by the end of 2012, with significantly reduced square footage at those sites by 2017. This will further improve security and reduce costs as part of NNSA’s overall effort to transform the Cold War era nuclear weapons enterprise into a 21st century nuclear security enterprise.

Originally, NNSA initiated a plan, based on equipment capability and capacity, to remove all high-security material from Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in 2014. Subsequently, NNSA was able to develop an accelerated timeline to remove this material safely and securely in 2012.

<http://www.nnsa.energy.gov/mediaroom/pressreleases/llnldeinventory11.10.10>

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Toronto Star – Canada

DND Questions Nuke-Free “Vision” for World, One Month after Obama’s Speech

Wednesday, November 10, 2010

Mike Blanchfield, the Canadian Press

OTTAWA—Canadian military strategists poured cold water on the notion of a world free of nuclear weapons — weeks after U.S. President Barack Obama said that was his “vision” for the future.

The assessment is contained in a confidential briefing note prepared for Defence Minister Peter MacKay on May 26, 2009, in response to a North Korean underground nuclear test the previous day.

“North Korea’s nuclear test provides stark relief to the recent swell of international political support for nuclear disarmament and demonstrates how difficult it will be to translate the vision of a nuclear-free world into reality,” said the memo, obtained by The Canadian Press under the Access to Information Act.

The analysis for MacKay was written only seven weeks after Obama gave a major speech in Prague, where he articulated his vision for “a world without nuclear weapons.”

“I’m not naïve,” the U.S. president told his audience. “This goal will not be reached quickly — perhaps not in my lifetime. It will take patience and persistence. But now we, too, must ignore the voices who tell us that the world cannot change. We have to insist, ‘Yes, we can’.”

Obama’s speech in the Czech Republic made major international news gave new impetus to non-proliferation efforts around the world.

Five months earlier, the new Global Zero campaign was launched to rid the world of nuclear weapons, and its long list of high-profile international supporters include Obama’s current NATO ambassador, Ivo Daalder, Canada’s previous foreign minister, Lloyd Axworthy, and the Soviet Union’s last leader, Mikhail Gorbachev.

North Korea’s nuclear defiance looms large over Obama, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and their fellow G20 leaders, all of whom are now in South Korea for their latest summit.

The Foreign Affairs Department says that Canada’s goal is to “work toward the total elimination of all nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.”

But the Defence Department memo offers a sharp counterpoint.

“There unfortunately remain no good options for dealing with the North Korean nuclear challenge. Neither diplomacy nor sanctions have been effective in persuading Pyongyang to give up its nuclear ambitions in the face of what it perceives to be threats to its national security and regime survival,” concluded the four-page briefing note by the Defence Department’s Directorate of Arms and Proliferation Control Policy.

The memo also said that further negotiations with the rogue regime “should not be discounted.” It also noted that Canada supports the Six Party Talks, the continuing peace process between the two Koreas, the United States, Japan, Russia and China.

Canada is not a player in those talks, but recently slapped additional sanctions on North Korea. The Harper government has admitted that the move is mainly symbolic, to aid international efforts.

Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon has also said that the new round of sanctions on North Korea is a direct retaliation for its sinking of a South Korean warship earlier this year. Canada sent three military experts to assist the international probe into the sinking of the South Korean vessel.

MacKay played host last weekend to international politicians, diplomats and scholars at a major security forum where the possibility of a nuclear free world was a major agenda item.

Michele Flournoy, the Pentagon’s undersecretary for defence policy, told the Halifax symposium that Obama’s April 2009 speech was “vision” and an “aspiration” that may not happen in our lifetimes, but was one worth stating nonetheless.

Charles Kupchan, of the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations, said he appreciated the symbolic importance of committing to “global zero” but that it might be doing more harm than good.

“Are the Iranians or Brazilians or others making decisions about their own weapon systems, or the desire to head in that direction, on the basis of our commitment to go global zero, which they may not have seen as credible?”

<http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/article/888793--dnd-questions-nuke-free-vision-for-world-one-month-after-obama-s-speech>

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The Hill
Congress Blog

It's Time to Get Serious about North Korean Nuclear Proliferation

By Rep. Pete Hoekstra (R-Mich.)

November 10, 2010

U.S. Rep. Pete Hoekstra (R-Mich.), the top Republican on the House Intelligence Committee, issued the following statement after excerpts of an upcoming United Nations report on North Korean nuclear proliferation activities appeared in the press:

The United Nations will apparently confirm what many in the international community already know — that North Korea is led by a rogue regime that is actively trafficking in nuclear material with other rogue nations. North Korea, Iran, Syria and Burma are four countries where it is in no nation’s interest to see nuclear weapon and ballistic missile proliferation activities. Yet we are confronted repeatedly by public and international reports of their efforts to purchase and proliferate weapons of mass destruction.

China, Russia and the United Nations need to get serious about this growing and dangerous threat. It is irresponsible for world powers to continue whistling past the problem as the threats to international stability posed by North Korean and Iranian nuclear efforts continue to grow. President Obama also must speak forcefully about the risks and challenges of nuclear proliferation and push the U.N. toward forceful and necessary action to halt the spread of these weapons.

The time is now for much tougher and determined international action to halt nuclear and missile proliferation by irresponsible state actors before we are forced to confront a global nightmare — the acquisition of WMD by terrorist, non-state actors.

<http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/foreign-policy/128611-its-time-to-get-serious-about-north-korean-nuclear-proliferation-rep-pete-hoekstra>

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The Independent – U.K.

OPINION

Rupert Cornwell: Time for the US to level with Russia

Thursday, 11 November 2010

The US lame-duck Congress on Monday reassembles for its final session. The most important thing it must do is ratify the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (Start), signed in Prague last April by Presidents Obama and Medvedev, cutting the US and Russian strategic nuclear arsenals. If not now, it may be never – and the consequences could be dire.

But why the fuss, it will be asked? The Cold War is long since over, the two countries are no longer locked in an ideological and military battle for global supremacy. And the new treaty doesn't even impose very dramatic reductions; can't it wait? The answer is, no.

Right now, the required two-thirds majority of 67 votes is just about there in the outgoing Senate, where Democrats have a 59-41 advantage. Come January, when a Tea Party-driven Republican Party takes control of the House and adds six seats to its strength in the Senate, that will no longer be the case. Conservatives will be in the ascendancy, making the familiar, overblown argument that the treaty sells US national security down the river.

Ratification, they and indeed some liberals here will add, would also signify tacit US acceptance of the growing authoritarianism and general lawlessness of the Russian government (as in the brutal and unpunished attacks against journalists whose work displeases those in power, and the farcical retrial – or rather show trial – of the former oligarch Mikhail Khordokovsky).

Right on cue, that old neo-con warhorse John Bolton popped up in The New York Times yesterday, claiming that the new treaty was a sell-out on missile defence, and would gravely weaken the American "nuclear umbrella" that underpins international security. Congress, he argued, should have nothing to do with it. But such arguments do not hold water.

First and foremost, for the US to shelve this treaty would send – not for the first time – a message about the hypocrisy of Washington's efforts to halt the spread of nuclear weapons, above all, of course, to Iran. The fragile edifice of non-proliferation rests on a bargain between the nuclear and non-nuclear powers. The former will not try to acquire nuclear weapons if the former reduce, and ultimately eliminate, their own arsenals. If Start is not ratified, the US will yet again stand guilty of telling the world: "Do as I say, not as I do".

As for pulling the rug from under US security, the treaty stipulates that after seven years neither side will be allowed to deploy more than 1,550 strategic warheads, or 700 launchers. In fact, the actual changes, thanks to past reductions and abstruse counting rules, will be relatively small. But the treaty reinstates an important inspection regime, and improves the climate for bigger cuts in the future.

Senate inaction (or, worse still, rejection of the treaty) could also have an impact on Russian internal politics – and one that would slow down progress on what human rights advocates here and everywhere desire: the transformation of Russia into a modern, law-governed state.

Right now, Moscow is consumed by a single question: who will be the establishment candidate in the 2012 presidential elections? Will it be the conservative former president Vladimir Putin, or his hand-picked successor, Dmitri Medvedev? It may of course already be a done deal, and Putin, ever the organ-grinder to Medvedev's monkey, has stitched up victory in advance.

But the current fierce jockeying within the Kremlin suggests otherwise. If so, then the 2012 election is shaping up as another instalment of the age-old struggle for Russia between Westernisers and Slavophiles.

In that case, the US and its allies are surely rooting for Medvedev who, however imperfectly, appears to represent modernising and Westernising forces within Russia, and who offers the best hope of improvement on the human rights front. Medvedev also has been the prime mover on the Russian side in efforts to "re-set" relations between Washington and Moscow, after the deep chill of the later Bush years. He happens, too, to be one of few foreign leaders with whom Obama has established genuinely close personal ties. Not to ratify Start would merely play into the hands of the Putin camp, and conservative nationalists who still smart at defeat in the Cold War and see a plot in every foreigner. As ever, they claim, the US wants to impose its will on Russia, and Congressional inaction on the treaty will be presented as further proof of that. The worst thing the US could do now is give a helping hand to an old guard seeking to turn the clock back. If the lame-duck Congress lets Start rot, it will do precisely that.

Obama won't find salvation in Asia

It's an old saw of US politics that when the going gets rough at home, a president heads for foreign parts. Richard Nixon sought refuge from Watergate in Soviet summitry, Bill Clinton went peacemaking in Ireland amid the Monica Lewinsky scandal. And now there is Barack Obama's trip to Asia, in the aftermath of his crushing midterm election setback.

The habit makes perfect sense. So often we forget that for all the might of his office, an American president's domestic power is limited – certainly in comparison to his French counterpart or a British prime minister. Foreign policy is where he has a pretty free hand.

But it's not exactly plain sailing for Obama abroad, either. The hopes inspired by his 2008 election, and the premature award of the Nobel Peace Prize a year later, have faded. He's been well received in India, and in Indonesia where he spent four years of his childhood. But in Seoul at the G20 he is walking into a currency war in which the US is widely perceived as villain. Maybe he should have stayed at home after all.

Rupert Cornwell has been with The Independent since its launch in 1986, he was the paper's first Moscow correspondent - covering the collapse of the Soviet Union – during which time he won two British Press Awards. Previously a foreign correspondent for the Financial Times and Reuters, he has also been a diplomatic correspondent, leader writer and columnist, and has served as Washington bureau editor.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/rupert-cornwell/rupert-cornwell-time-for-the-us-to-level-with-russia-2130528.html>

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International Relations and Security Network (ISN)

OPINION

November 11, 2010

Controlling Tactical Nuclear Weapons

Tactical nuclear weapons represent the final frontier of nuclear arms control. Controlling US and Russian supplies would reduce the potential for nuclear terrorism, decrease the perceived threat to US allies and maintain momentum toward Obama's goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

By Micah Zenko for ISN Insights

Of the panoply of cavils leveled by Republican opponents to the New START Treaty, the most credible criticism centers on its omission of tactical, or "non-strategic" nuclear weapons. However, US President Barack Obama's administration was right to bypass tactical nuclear weapons in the interest of reconstituting the transparency and predictability of monitoring Russia's strategic nuclear capabilities under the treaty's verification regime.

The criticism warrants further attention, however, and the Republicans are correct in arguing that limiting and controlling these threatening weapons, which Washington and Moscow have not formally addressed since the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, should be a priority for the next round of talks. Controlling US and Russian tactical nuclear weapons would reduce the potential for nuclear terrorism, decrease the perceived threat to US allies and maintain momentum toward Obama's goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

What are tactical nuclear weapons? There is no official definition, and although the lines between tactical and strategic nuclear weapons are often blurred, the distinction is usually based on their associated delivery vehicles. When compared to the strategic nuclear weapons covered in the new START Treaty, tactical nuclear weapons are generally smaller, have lower yields and are intended for shorter range or even for battlefield use.

Tactical nuclear weapons are maintained either in an operationally deployed or inactive reserve status. Unlike strategic nuclear weapons that can be launched on very short notice, tactical weapons are not routinely loaded on US or Russian missiles, bombers, jets or submarines. In both countries, however, there are clear distinctions between military bases that are dedicated to maintaining operational tactical nuclear weapons and permanent storage sites

that hold inactive reserves. The US and Russia each have a clear understanding of the differences between these sites. Operational bases contain tactical nuclear weapons that are equipped for deployment on short notice, as well as their air or naval delivery systems; permanent or nonoperational storage sites contain warheads rendered unusable due to the removal of limited-life components, such as tritium gas, and do not house delivery vehicles.

US and Russian reserves

The US reportedly has 400 operationally deployed tactical nuclear weapons and an equal number in inactive reserve. The primary use of US tactical nuclear weapons is to reinforce the nuclear umbrella that covers at least 31 allied countries - North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members, Japan, South Korea, Australia and possibly Taiwan - as well as other unnamed "partner" countries.

NATO benefits from nuclear deterrence through a long-standing arrangement whereby US tactical nuclear warheads are forward-deployed in Europe under American military custody (reportedly in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey) but are on-hand for delivery by either European or US dual-capable aircraft. As a practical matter, the weapons are a political symbol of America's commitment to Europe; as one Pentagon official told me: "There are no war plans in NATO for using them."

There is uncertainty about the size of Russia's tactical nuclear arsenal, but it is estimated to contain 2,000 operationally deployed tactical nuclear weapons - some of which may be dedicated to a missile defense system for Moscow - with another 3,400 in inactive reserve. Most of Russia's operational tactical weapons are deployed at nuclear-certified bases along the borders of NATO countries.

The primary use of Russia's tactical arsenal, as spelled out in its (unclassified) military doctrine, is to respond to an attack involving nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction (WMD) against Russia or its allies or "in the event of aggression against the Russian Federation involving the use of conventional weapons when the very existence of the state is under threat." This latter option is primarily intended to deter NATO's vastly superior conventional offensive military. According to the latest reports on "treaty-limiting equipment" in the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, NATO maintains at least a two-to-one advantage over Russia and its allies in the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

Nuclear terrorism

The tactical nuclear weapons maintained by the US and especially by Russia represent a heightened security risk in light of their vulnerability to loss or theft. As early as the late 1970s, the CIA estimated that the well-known NATO warhead depots in western Europe constituted "the most vulnerable and therefore most likely targets for future terrorist activity." In 2008, a US Air Force report - which is challenged by some Pentagon officials - warned after site inspections to NATO warhead depots that "a consistently noted theme throughout the visits was that most sites require significant additional resources to meet Department of Defense security requirements." In January 2010, peace activists spent 90 minutes walking around the Kleine Brogel Airbase in Belgium, where 10 to 20 nuclear bombs are believed to be stored. Despite such incidents, Pentagon officials contend that the security features of the underground weapons' vaults where tactical nuclear weapons are stored make their unauthorized removal or use virtually impossible.

Less is known about the security of Russia's tactical arsenal. Since 1992, the US Cooperative Threat Reduction program has provided over \$12 billion to better account for, and secure, Russia's shrinking WMD stockpile. This includes funding enhanced security upgrades for permanent nuclear storage sites where Russia's nonoperational tactical nuclear weapons are maintained. However, US policy prohibits the funding of security upgrades at front-line nuclear-capable bases housing Russia's operational tactical arsenal.

Given ongoing security concerns, bringing America's tactical nuclear weapons home from Europe, and consolidating Russia's weapons at permanent storage sites that have received enhanced security upgrades should reduce their vulnerability to theft. Even though the current risk is small, the consequences of nuclear terrorism, which President Obama described as "the single biggest threat to U.S. security, both short-term, medium-term, and long-term," are of such a magnitude that such precautions are the only responsible approach.

An agreement to control tactical nuclear weapons

The broad outlines of a US-Russian agreement on tactical nuclear weapons are apparent: reciprocal *data exchange* on the size, location and related delivery system of the relevant weapons; *verification* procedures to enforce the provisions of the treaty; and an accepted *categorization* for the class of weapons systems to be included and their operational status. Given earlier failed attempts at bilateral talks on tactical nuclear weapons, it will be difficult - though necessary - for both Washington and Moscow to make progress on these three issues.

First, each country should reveal its tactical nuclear weapons inventory, location and operational status, either publicly or through a private data exchange mechanism, to produce a comprehensive database. To assuage Russia's

concerns about the security of its declared tactical arsenal, there are well-established cryptographic technologies that would permit Washington and Moscow to exchange detailed stockpile data while controlling access to its contents.

The second component of any agreement is to verify the data exchanged and confirm that the provisions of the treaty have been implemented on an agreed timeline. While verifying limits on Russia's operational tactical nuclear arsenal would be challenging, US officials believe that if the Kremlin reverses its earlier opposition, there are sufficient verification procedures and techniques in place to ensure Russian compliance with any treaty provisions, including radiation detection, remote measurement and tamper-indicating tags.

Although there is no universally accepted categorization for tactical nuclear weapons, US and Russian militaries have each published definitions so sufficiently similar that they could be used as the basis for a bilateral treaty. The more important categorization issue is what should constitute an "operationally deployed" tactical nuclear weapon. The goal would be to agree to a list of bases where any tactical nuclear weapons would be considered operational and permanent storage sites where they would be monitored as inactive reserves. To make tactical nuclear weapons limitations permanent, both sides should also verifiably dismantle non-operational warheads at assembly/disassembly facilities. The process of dismantling thousands of warheads will take decades; the current projected dismantlement queue in the US currently stretches to 2022.

The path to zero

Even after the New START Treaty goes into effect, the US and Russia will retain over 90 percent of the world's nuclear weapons. Tactical nuclear weapons represent the final frontier of nuclear arms control - a critical category of weapons that have been largely ignored in past treaties. While useful in deemphasizing the utility of the bomb in US and Russian foreign policy, warhead ceilings that do not include non-strategic nuclear weapons omit a crucial piece of the global nuclear puzzle. Limiting US and Russian tactical nuclear weapons within a bilateral agreement would help to lay the foundation for achieving Obama's vision of a world truly free of nuclear weapons.

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