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New York Times
November 24, 2010

G.O.P. Senators Detail Objections to Arms Treaty

By PETER BAKER

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration's plans to modernize the nation's nuclear weapons complex remain inadequate and should be further refined before the ratification of a new arms control treaty with Russia, the lead Senate Republican negotiator said Wednesday.

In a memorandum to his colleagues, the senator, Jon Kyl of Arizona, the No. 2 Republican in the upper chamber and his party's point man on the treaty, called New Start, detailed his objections for the first time since declaring last week that there was not enough time to consider the treaty this year.

From the beginning, Mr. Kyl wrote, he has been clear that he "could not support reductions in U.S. nuclear forces unless there is adequate attention to modernizing those forces and the infrastructure that supports them." The administration has committed to spend more money for that purpose, but "there remain a few substantial concerns about the adequacy of the proposed budget," the memo said.

"Until these issues are resolved, it will be difficult to adequately assess the updated 1251 plan, despite the welcome increases in proposed spending," the memo added, using a term referring to the modernization proposal. "And as has always been clear, assurances from the appropriate authorizers and appropriators must be obtained to ensure that the enacted budget reflects the president's request."

The memo, circulated privately to Republican senators on Wednesday and obtained by The New York Times, was also signed by Senator Bob Corker, Republican of Tennessee, another important figure in the debate. Mr. Corker voted for New Start when it was passed by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in September, but now agrees with Mr. Kyl that it should not come to a floor vote during the current lame-duck session of Congress.

The White House argued that the problem predated Mr. Obama's time in office. "We agree with Senators Kyl and Corker," said Bob Jensen, a White House spokesman. "Modernization is needed. As the paper notes, the weapons complex was underfunded" for the five previous years. "It took several years of underfunding in the period before the president took office to get in this hole," he said. "President Obama has a plan to get us out of it."

Since Mr. Kyl's statement last week, the White House has mounted a high-profile campaign to press the Senate to approve the treaty before the end of the year, making it a signal test of President Obama's political strength at home after an election that cost his party control of the House as well as his credibility abroad as he tries to rebuild the relationship with Russia.

In an opinion article in The Wall Street Journal on Wednesday, Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. said that the stakes for the treaty were high. "Our uniformed military supports it," he wrote. "Our European allies support it. Our national security interests are at stake. It is time for the Senate to approve New Start."

The White House has been working with Mr. Kyl for months and contends that it has gone out of its way to address his concerns about modernization. It had already proposed spending \$80 billion over 10 years on the nuclear complex and added \$4.1 billion on Nov. 12 and a little more last week. White House officials felt blindsided by Mr. Kyl's statement that not enough had been done to assuage him on the treaty.

In their seven-page memo on Wednesday, Mr. Kyl and Mr. Corker said they welcomed the administration's effort, but wanted further assurances. For one thing, they wrote, the vast bulk of the original \$80 billion would have been spent anyway, just "keeping the lights on" at nuclear laboratories and plants for safety, security, upkeep and routine warhead maintenance. Only \$10 billion was new money for weapons activity, they wrote, a point the administration disputes. The latest administration plan, delivered Nov. 17, increased the total 10-year plan to between \$85.4 billion and \$86.2 billion.

Most of the new money would go to designing and building a new plutonium processing plant at the Los Alamos complex in New Mexico, and a new uranium processing plant at the Oak Ridge complex in Tennessee. The new facilities would replace buildings left over from the Manhattan Project era, when the first nuclear bombs were developed.

But while the facilities would begin partial operations by 2020, they would not be fully functional until 2023 and 2024. "Additional funding could be applied to accelerate the construction of these facilities to ensure on schedule completion," the Republican memo said.

Moreover, the new facilities would not have the capacity to produce enough weapons for a larger arsenal should the international political situation demand a renewed buildup, the memo said. And it said the administration should be

more clear about its vision for the nuclear triad, meaning the bombers, missiles and submarines that make up the nation's nuclear force.

The White House played down the differences. "To the extent there are concerns outlined in the paper, they are about details of the plan," Mr. Jensen said. "We can discuss those with the Congress and will continue to do so."

The memo did not address the treaty's merits or urge its rejection. Instead, it compared the nation's nuclear laboratories to a rundown garage trying to maintain Ferraris that have sat in storage for 30 years: "This is the state of our nuclear deterrent today, except we're dealing not with cars, but with the most sophisticated and dangerous weapons ever devised by man."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/25/world/europe/25start.html?src=me>

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Washington Post

Senator: Arms Treaty Less Urgent than Other Issues

By MATTHEW LEE, the Associated Press

Sunday, November 28, 2010

WASHINGTON -- A leading Republican lawmaker on Sunday rejected the Obama administration's assertion that ratification of a new arms control treaty with Russia is so pressing that it must be dealt with by the lame-duck Senate.

Sen. Jon Kyl of Arizona denied there was any partisanship behind his calls for a delay. He said the Senate has more urgent business to attend to in the weeks before it breaks for Christmas, including dealing with potential tax increases and funding the government through the rest of the budget year.

"It's more a view of reality rather than policy," he said. "These are higher priority items."

Kyl said the treaty, known as New START, is extremely complex and can wait until the Senate reconvenes with newly elected members in January. He also said he has unresolved concerns about the pact, which the administration has said is an urgent national security priority and should be voted on as soon as possible.

"My issue is that you can't do everything" in the limited time the current Senate has, said Kyl, the No. 2 GOP leader in the Senate who has emerged as the Republicans' top arms control manager.

Kyl's position has stunned the administration, which thought it had addressed his concerns. Officials have suggested he is simply trying to sabotage one of President Barack Obama's foreign policy priorities.

"There's some game-playing going on with the START treaty, and it's all about politics and it's all about trying to damage the president of the United States," said Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo.

But Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., said that Kyl has a valid argument. He said the nonbinding preamble to the treaty has been interpreted by the Russians as limiting America's ability to deploy missile defense systems. And, he said he was concerned that the treaty allows Russia - along with the U.S. - to pull out of the agreement.

"If it's going to be interpreted by the Russians that way, I need to know before I vote," he said. "If the Russians say that they will withdraw from the treaty if we develop strategic missile defense systems, I need to know that. If they that it doesn't mean that, then I think we're a lot closer to the treaty being enacted."

Administration officials and Democrats have appealed for Kyl to drop his objections to considering START, maintaining that the United States would be less safe until the treaty were ratified. Without it, as of next week, the U.S. will have had no weapons inspectors in Russia to verify cuts in its nuclear arsenal since the last treaty expired in 2009.

"We live in a dangerous world," said Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill. "The failure of the United States Senate to ratify the START treaty immediately is going to cause a danger to the United States and its security."

"There is no excuse for us to ignore this responsibility and to say we'll wait several months," he said. "While we wait, there will be no inspectors on the ground in Russia to make sure that their nuclear weapons are safe and treaty compliant."

Rose Gottemoeller, one of the State Department's negotiator for the treaty, said START is "first and foremost" a U.S. national security interest. "It begins with the fact that it is our best way to predict what's going on with Russian nuclear weapons."

Obama sees the treaty as an opening for improved relations with Russia and has argued that it is essential for U.S. national security. It would reduce U.S. and Russian limits on strategic warheads and set up new procedures to allow both countries to inspect each other's arsenals to verify compliance.

Republicans have called those verifications procedures inadequate and contended that the treaty would limit U.S. missile defense options. Most Republican senators probably would vote against the treaty. Others have said they would follow Kyl's lead.

Kyl has argued that it does not make sense to reduce U.S. warheads until more is done to maintain and modernize the remaining arsenal. To answer Kyl's concerns, the administration last week delivered a proposal to significantly boost funding for the U.S. nuclear weapons complex.

Kyl and Durbin spoke on NBC's "Meet the Press." McCaskill and Graham were on "Fox News Sunday" and Gottemoeller appeared on C-SPAN's "Washington Journal."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/11/28/AR2010112801547.html>

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Expatica – Russia

Key US Senator may Block Russia Nuclear Pact

28 November 2010

Agence France-Presse

A key US senator suggested Sunday he would block a new nuclear arms treaty with Russia without weeks of debate, rejecting warnings from President Barack Obama that failure to act would hurt national security.

"It is more a view of reality rather than policy," senator John Kyl told NBC's "Meet the Press," calling for lengthy debate on the details of the new START arms reduction treaty despite a tight calendar for legislative action before the end of the year.

Obama has repeatedly called on senators to quickly ratify the treaty, warning that failure to approve it would result in serious consequences for US security.

Kyl noted that Democratic Senate leader Harry Reid is likely to use the final weeks of the year to finalize government spending bills and hammer out a compromise on taxes.

"Theoretically there would be time, but he's made it clear he had a different agenda in mind. They're going to have to set some priorities here."

Last week, the Arizona Republican stunned the White House when he said there would not be enough time during the "lame duck" legislative session, held after November mid-term elections, to pass the treaty.

Leading Democratic Senator Dick Durbin slammed Kyl's position.

"Here is the reality: We live in a dangerous world. The failure of the United States Senate to ratify the START treaty immediately is going to pose a danger to the United States and its security," Durbin told NBC.

"There is no excuse for us to ignore this responsibility."

The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty -- signed by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and Obama 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 Russian lower house of parliament, the State Duma, has indicated it will rubber-stamp the treaty only after its ratification in the United States.

The agreement, a top Obama foreign policy initiative, replaces a previous accord that lapsed in December 2009.

"Without ratification this year, the United States will have no inspectors on the ground, and no ability to verify Russian nuclear activities," Obama warned earlier this month.

"Without ratification, we put at risk the coalition that we have built to put pressure on Iran, and the transit route through Russia that we use to equip our troops in Afghanistan," the president continued.

"And without ratification, we risk undoing decades of American leadership on nuclear security, and decades of bipartisanship on this issue. Our security and our position in the world are at stake."

Republicans 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 -- but some acknowledged privately that they did not want to hand Obama a major diplomatic victory before the elections.

The treaty requires 67 votes to pass the Senate, meaning a minimum of eight Republicans need to back it.

The task of ratifying the accord will be even tougher in January when a new Congress, elected in November 2 polls in which Republicans routed Democrats, takes office.

http://www.expatica.ru/news/russian-news/key-us-senator-may-block-russia-nuclear-pact_113588.html

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BusinessWeek

Russia Dismisses Report of Nuclear Deployment near NATO Borders

November 30, 2010

By Henry Meyer

Nov. 30 (Bloomberg) -- A senior Russian lawmaker dismissed a report that Russia has moved short-range tactical nuclear warheads closer to the borders of North Atlantic Treaty Organization member states.

"We have relations of trust now with our American partners and don't take any steps without informing our partners and consulting with them," Mikhail Margelov, head of the upper house of parliament's foreign affairs committee, said today in a phone interview.

The Wall Street Journal today cited unidentified U.S. officials as saying that Russia moved the weapons as recently as this spring, coinciding with the deployment of U.S. Patriot missiles in Poland, near Russia's Baltic exclave Kaliningrad.

The report may be aimed at torpedoing ratification of the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty with Russia, which has run into Republican opposition, said Pavel Felgenhauer, a Moscow-based defense analyst.

"Some people in the U.S. don't want START to be ratified," Felgenhauer said by phone. "The treaty has become a partisan issue."

Russia's Defense Ministry declined to comment on the Wall Street Journal report. "We don't confirm or deny rumors," said Yury Ivanov, a spokesman for the ministry in Moscow.

Russia has plans to modernize its tactical missile units, including those in Kaliningrad, with Iskander missiles, and "of course this is well-known to the Pentagon," Felgenhauer said. The Iskander, first tested in 1995, has a range of as much as 400 kilometers (250 miles), according to Jane's Information Group, which publishes information on global defense resources.

Russian Upgrade

President Dmitry Medvedev in November 2008 said he would deploy nuclear-capable Iskander missiles in Kaliningrad to "neutralize" a planned U.S. missile defense system in Poland and the Czech Republic.

This threat, along with Medvedev's pledge to drop the deployment after the U.S. scrapped a proposed missile shield, are "meaningless" because Russia must eventually station Iskanders in Kaliningrad, Felgenhauer said.

President Barack Obama in September 2009 canceled former President George W. Bush's proposed missile-shield in favor of a more flexible system that opened the door to revisit Russian proposals for a joint system.

Even so, the U.S. deployed Patriot missile batteries and their crews to northern Poland in May for what the U.S. Army described as a two-year training mission. Russia's Foreign Ministry said at the time that the deployment wouldn't improve security or help build relations in the region.

START Opposition

President Barack Obama said Nov. 20 the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, which he and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev signed in April, was "fundamental" to U.S. security as he urged the Senate to ratify it.

Medvedev said the same day it would be "very unpleasant" if the Senate failed to approve the treaty, adding that he hoped legislators will demonstrate a "responsible" approach.

"The work of many people aimed at the general relaxation of tension, on resetting relations both between Russia and the United States, but also between Russia and NATO -- all of that would be in vain," Medvedev told reporters at the NATO summit Nov. 20 in Lisbon.

Russia agreed at the summit to take part in a NATO missile-defense system, promising to expand cooperation between the former Cold War adversaries.

Ratification of the treaty stalled in the Senate after the Republican gains in the Nov. 2 elections, which will make it more difficult to reach the required two-thirds vote after the new lawmakers take office in January.

Obama has asked the Senate to ratify the treaty this year. Arizona Senator Jon Kyl, the chamber's second-ranking Republican and one of his party's leading voices on nuclear-weapons policy, said Sept. 16 that pressing business wouldn't allow full consideration before year's end of "the complex and unresolved issues related to START."

The treaty limits each side's strategic warheads to no more than 1,550, down from the 2,200 allowed previously, and sets a maximum of 800 land-, air- and sea-based launchers.

With assistance from Lyubov Pronina in Moscow. Editors: Willy Morris, Balazs Penz

<http://www.businessweek.com/news/2010-11-30/russia-dismisses-report-of-nuclear-deployment-near-nato-borders.html>

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France24.com – France
28 NOVEMBER 2010

Iran Obtained Missiles from North Korea: Leaked US Documents

By Agence France-Presse (AFP)

AFP - US intelligence believes Iran has obtained advanced missiles from North Korea capable of striking Europe, according to US documents leaked by WikiLeaks and cited by the New York Times on Sunday.

The newspaper, in a diplomatic cable dated February 24, said "secret American intelligence assessments have concluded that Iran has obtained a cache of advanced missiles, based on a Russian design."

Iran obtained 19 of the North Korean missiles, an improved version of Russia's R-27, from North Korea, the cable said, and was "taking pains to master the technology in an attempt to build a new generation of missiles."

At the request of US President Barack Obama's administration, the New York Times said it had agreed not to publish the text of that cable.

"The North Korean version of the advanced missile, known as the BM-25, could carry a nuclear warhead," said the newspaper, adding it had a range of up to 2,000 miles (more than 3,000 kilometres).

"If fired from Iran, that range, in theory, would let its warheads reach targets as far away as Western Europe, including Berlin. If fired northwestward, the warheads could reach Moscow," it said, referring to other dispatches.

"The cables say that Iran not only obtained the BM-25, but also saw the advanced technology as a way to learn how to design and build a new class of more powerful engines," said the Times.

<http://www.france24.com/en/20101128-iran-obtained-missiles-north-korea-leaked-us-documents>

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London Guardian – U.K.

Arab States Scorn 'Evil' Iran

US embassy cables reveal Tehran's reputation as a meddling, lying troublemaker intent on building nuclear weapons

Ian Black, Middle East editor
Sunday, 28 November 2010

King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia urged Iran's foreign minister to "spare us your evil" in a meeting that reflected profound Arab hostility to the Islamic Republic – a recurrent theme of high-level private conversations in the Middle East in recent times.

Leaked state department cables catalogue a litany of complaints from the Saudis and smaller Gulf states, as well as Egypt, Jordan and others, on issues from Tehran's nuclear ambitions, to its involvement in Iraq and support for Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Palestinian Hamas.

"You as Persians have no business meddling in Arab matters," the Saudi monarch was quoted as telling Manouchehr Mottaki, Iran's foreign minister. "Iran's goal is to cause problems," he continued in a conversation with a senior White House official. "There is no doubt something unstable about them."

Abdullah declared: "May God prevent us from falling victim to their evil. We have had correct relations over the years, but the bottom line is that they cannot be trusted." US diplomats recorded similar comments earlier this year

from the United Arab Emirates, described as being "46 seconds from Iran as measured by the flight time of a ballistic missile". Abu Dhabi's crown prince and deputy commander of the UAE armed forces, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan, referred to Iran as an "existential threat" and was concerned about "getting caught in the crossfire if Iran is provoked by the US or Israel". In one earlier conversation Bin Zayed even suggested that the US should send in ground forces if air strikes were not enough to "take out" Iranian nuclear targets.

Arab-Persian enmity, with a strong undercurrent of rivalry between Sunni and Shia Muslims, dates back centuries but increased markedly after the overthrow of the shah and the Islamic revolution in 1979 and is now viewed as a struggle for hegemony in the region. The conservative Sunni-ruled regimes in Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states detect the "hidden hand" of Iranian subversion, sometimes where none exists. Tehran's fervent support for Hezbollah and Hamas are seen as ways of extending Iranian influence.

In the UAE the foreign minister is described as viewing "Iran as a huge problem that goes far beyond nuclear capabilities", the embassy reported in February 2010. "Iranian support for terrorism is broader than just Hamas and Hezbollah. Iran has influence in Afghanistan, Yemen, Kuwait, Bahrain, the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia and Africa."

Speaking to General David Petraeus of US central command in late 2009, Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa "pointed to Iran as the source of much of the trouble in both Iraq and Afghanistan ... [and] argued forcefully for taking action to terminate their nuclear programme, by whatever means necessary. That programme must be stopped. The danger of letting it go on is greater than the danger of stopping it."

In Oman, Sultan Qaboos bin Said al-Said told the then commander of US central command, Admiral William Fallon: "Iran is a big country with muscles and we must deal with it." A senior Omani minister singled out Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar as the three Gulf countries that would probably want the US to attack Iran.

Kuwait's military intelligence chief told Petraeus that Iran was supporting Shia groups in the Gulf and extremists in Yemen. Yemen and Saudi Arabia have repeatedly accused Iran of supplying weapons and money to the Houthi rebels in Yemen's Saada region, though the evidence is not conclusive. US diplomatic cables also confirmed that Qatar, the wealthiest country in the region, was an outspoken critic of Iran in private, while maintaining cordial public relations with it and the US.

"Iran is clever and makes its opponents dizzy in the quest for deals," said the Qatari prime minister, Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber al-Thani. "They will keep you working on a deal and then start from scratch with a new interlocutor. Iran will make no deal. Iran wants nuclear weapons." Bin Jassim "would not be surprised to see Iran test one to demonstrate to the world its achievement". Late last year he gave a succinct summary of Doha's relationship with Tehran: "They lie to us, and we lie to them".

Washington's main Arab allies outside the Gulf, Jordan and Egypt – which both have unpopular peace treaties with Israel – are also deeply hostile to Iran.

Egyptian views on Iran are uniformly negative, as quoted by US interlocutors. General Omar Suleiman, its intelligence chief, called Iran "a significant threat to Egypt ... supporting jihad and spoiling peace". He said he had warned Iran against meddling in domestic affairs (and supporting groups like the Muslim Brotherhood) and received a "very positive message" from his Iranian counterpart indicating that Iran would not interfere in Egypt.

President Hosni Mubarak attacked his Iranian counterpart, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, as an extremist who "does not think rationally". He told a US congressman: "Iran is always stirring trouble".

Mubarak, like Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah, was sceptical about US plans to try to engage with Tehran after Barack Obama's inauguration. Margaret Scobey, the US ambassador in Cairo, described Mubarak as having "a visceral hatred for the Islamic Republic, referring repeatedly to Iranians as 'liars', and denouncing them for seeking to destabilise Egypt and the region. He sees the Syrians and Qataris as sycophants to Tehran and liars themselves."

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/nov/28/arab-states-scorn-iranian-evil>

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New York Times
November 30, 2010

Date Set for Nuclear Talks with Iran

By WILLIAM YONG and J. DAVID GOODMAN

TEHRAN — Iran and the European Union agreed on Tuesday to a date and time for nuclear talks in Geneva next week, but President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad insisted in a speech that Iran would not give "one iota" in the discussions.

The meeting between Saeed Jalili, Iran's top nuclear negotiator, and Catherine Ashton, the European Union's foreign policy chief, would be the first high-level negotiations in more than a year and comes amid revelations, in leaked diplomatic communications, of widespread concern among Iran's Arab neighbors about its nuclear program. The agreement on when to hold the meeting also came a day after the killing of an Iranian nuclear scientist in Tehran.

Speaking to a crowd of supporters in northern Iran on Tuesday, Mr. Ahmadinejad took a hard stance ahead of the talks. Iran had always been willing to talk "under the conditions of justice and respect," he said, but added that "the people of Iran will not back down one iota" on demands to curb the nation's nuclear program, which Iran claims is directed only at nonmilitary purposes.

Mr. Ahmadinejad appeared to frame the Geneva meeting, scheduled for Dec. 6 and 7, in terms of the economic sanctions imposed by the Western powers. "I advise that if they want to get results from these talks, they must put aside their outdated behavior" in order to talk "about international cooperation, solving the problems of humanity and about economic and nuclear issues," he said in a speech that was broadcast on state television.

In the view of American and European officials, Iran's new willingness to engage in talks may indicate that new and tougher sanctions, approved this year, are having an effect on its troubled economy.

Officials from the United States, Russia, China, France, Germany and Britain are expected to attend the meeting, although Ms. Aston said she would negotiate with Iran "on behalf" of those six nations, her office said in a statement confirming the meeting.

On Monday, attackers riding motorcycles killed one prominent Iranian nuclear scientist and wounded another in separate bombings in Tehran. The scientist who survived, Fereydoon Abbasi, is on the United Nations Security Council's sanctions list for ties to the nuclear effort, and the highly targeted nature of the attacks led to accusations of a renewed effort by the United States and Israel to disrupt Iran's program.

In diplomatic cables revealed by the Web site WikiLeaks on Sunday, Arab allies of the United States, including King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, candidly voiced concerns over the leadership of Mr. Ahmadinejad and Iran's path on nuclear weapons.

William Yong reported from Tehran, and J. David Goodman from New York. Stephen Castle contributed reporting from Brussels.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/01/world/middleeast/01iran.html?partner=rss&emc=rss>

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London Daily Telegraph – U.K.

Kim Jong-il 'Laying the Ground for Succession' with Military Attacks

Palace power-struggles between North Korea's new-generation political leadership and its hawkish military establishment could spark off a full war on the Peninsula, South Korean and US authorities are warning.

By Praveen Swami, Diplomatic Editor

28 November 2010

Last week's attack on Yeonpyeong island, a senior South Korean defence official told The Daily Telegraph, was personally approved by North Korea's supreme leader, Kim Jong-il and his son and heir-apparent Kim Jong-un, in an effort to curry favour with hostile military hawks.

"I fear we're going to see much more fighting in weeks to come," the official said.

Hardship has mounted in North Korea ever since sanctions were imposed to punish its pursuit of nuclear weapons. Hundreds of North Korean soldiers are reported to have fled across the border into China seeking food in recent months. In August, a North Korean pilot's attempt to escape to Russia ended when his jet crashed in China's Liaoning province.

But Kim Jong-il, US government sources said, is determined not to rejoin talks aimed at curbing North Korea's nuclear programme in return for aid, fearful of upsetting military leaders. He hopes precipitating a crisis will lead the generals to rally behind his son and compel South Korea and the West to engage in dialogue on his terms.

Kim Jong-un was made a four-star general and named vice-chairman of the country's National Defence Commission in September – even though the Swiss-educated 27-year-old had no military experience. "The generals saw Kim Jong-un as a puppy who wasn't even lavatory trained," said Kongdan Oh Hassig, a North Korea expert, "not a credible leader. There was lots of fuming."

Bruce Bennett, another North Korea specialist, said the succession left generals "asking themselves how much longer they would have a role in government". He noted that replacements of officials in North Korea "usually occur as the result of a purge or a 'traffic accident,' so that could be cause for some instability."

"Every time there's been a succession in North Korea," Dr. Hassig noted, "you've had trouble, because the leadership has needed to reassure the military."

Kim Jong-il ordered the bombing of a Korean Air plane in 1987, killing all 115, and an attack on officials which left 17 dead.

Little noticed in the West, tensions with the military have often threatened North Korea's ruling family. In 1991-1992, there were reports that a group of generals had been planning to assassinate Kim Il-sung, in order to implement a programme of radical modernisation. Later, in 1995, elements of North Korea's VI corps in famine-hit North Hamgyong province almost revolted.

"The Kims are playing the Crazy Fearsome Cripple Gambit," a US military official told The Daily Telegraph, referring to a term coined by the strategic analyst George Friedman.

North Korea's regime, Mr Friedman argued, wilfully chose to be an economically-crippled state to make itself unattractive as a target for intervention. Then it sought to inspire fear by developing nuclear weapons.

Finally, Mr Friedman argued, "having established that they were crippled and fearsome, the critical element was to establish their insanity". Since no one would wish for a nuclear-armed North Korea to engage in a crazy military adventure, it would give the regime what it wanted.

Both Koreas are now holding out threats of further fighting. North Korea's official news agency warned on Saturday that the "situation on the Korean peninsula is inching closer to the brink of war".

Lieutenant General Yoo Nak Joon, commander of the South Korean Marine Corps, meanwhile, called on his troops to "put our feelings of rage and animosity in our bones and take our revenge on North Korea".

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/northkorea/8166343/Kim-Jong-il-laying-the-ground-for-succession-with-military-attacks.html>

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Wall Street Journal
November 29, 2010

Japan Rejects China's Proposed Six-Party Talks

By YUKA HAYASHI

TOKYO—Japanese Foreign Minister Seiji Maehara rejected China's new proposal to hold emergency talks between North Korea and related nations, saying Pyongyang must first display sincere effort to ease its confrontational posture.

Mr. Maehara said in an interview Monday that there would be no point in holding further six-party talks unless the participants can make real progress.

Following last week's deadly artillery strike on a South Korean island by the North, Beijing on Sunday proposed the six nations—the two Koreas, China, the U.S., Russia and Japan—resume the long-suspended series of talks, originally designed to persuade North Korea to disarm.

"It's unacceptable for us to hold six-party talks only because North Korea has gone amok," the minister said. "We must first see some kind of sincere effort from North Korea on its uranium enrichment program and the latest incident."

Mr. Maehara's remarks suggest the difficulty the international community may face in trying to resolve the conflict on the Korean Peninsula through coordinated effort.

The proposal from China, Pyongyang's close ally, came as major naval drills by the U.S. and South Korea appeared to fuel tensions. South Korean President Lee Myung-bak, however, told Beijing now was not the "right time" for the six-party talks.

For Mr. Maehara's Democratic Party of Japan, responding to the North Korean attack, which left four people dead, has become the latest in the series of foreign policy headaches that have tormented Prime Minister Naoto Kan and helped to push down the popular support for his government.

Opposition parties have criticized Mr. Kan over a deadlock on the relocation of a key U.S. base in Okinawa and the flare-ups in territorial disputes with China and Russia. Most recently, the government came under attack for what many saw as a slow response to the Korean emergency. Specifically, they criticized the Kan administration for taking seven hours before lodging a protest against North Korea after its artillery attack on civilian targets in South Korea.

According to an opinion poll published by the Nihon Keizai Shinbun economic daily Monday, the approval rating for the Kan Cabinet plummeted to 30%, down 10 percentage points from a month earlier and a nosedive from the 70% levels just a few months before. Some 60% of the respondents said they didn't approve of the cabinet, and cited its "lack of diplomatic sense" as their chief reason.

"The opposition and some in the media have criticized us that the Futenma [base in Okinawa] issue has made the U.S.-Japan relations shaky. Then the Senkaku Islands issue broke out, topped up by a visit to the Northern Territories by the Russian President," he said. "They connect these dots and say that the DPJ's diplomatic and national security policies are subpar. That's not how I look at things."

The minister said these incidents were not related to each other, and efforts by some to bunch them together "would only result in undermining Japan's national interest."

Mr. Maehara then repeated Tokyo's position that the Senkaku islands, known as Diaoyu in China, are Japan's unique territory and Tokyo will "willingly use its might to defend its sovereignty" over the islands.

Bilateral ties between the two nations sank to the lowest levels in many years recently after Japan arrested the captain of a fishing trawler that rammed into its coast guard vessels in September in the disputed waters in the East China Sea. The government's decision to release the captain without indictment was criticized harshly by many in Japan as caving into pressure from Beijing.

The release of the captain was soon followed by a visit by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev to a group of islands north of Hokkaido whose sovereignty has long been disputed between Russia and Japan.

As for the heightened local opposition to U.S. bases in Okinawa, Mr. Maehara said the result of a closely watched gubernatorial election there on Sunday won't affect the government's policy to stick with an agreement with the U.S. to relocate the controversial Marine Corps. facility at Futenma to a new location in Okinawa.

A victory by the conservative incumbent governor over a staunch critic of the U.S. military presence was welcoming news for the two governments. But Tokyo still faces a tough job of convincing the Okinawans, who are fed up with a burden of hosting a disproportionately large number of U.S. bases compared with the rest of Japan. Governor Hirokazu Nakaima had previously supported the base relocation plan but began calling for moving it off the island during his re-election campaign. His change of mind came amid the rising anti-base sentiment in Okinawa, triggered by a DPJ campaign pledge last year to move the facility elsewhere—a promise since abandoned by Tokyo, under pressure from Washington.

"We'd like to first apologize to the people in Okinawa for changing our promise and then sincerely and persistently continue dialogues to persuade them," Mr. Maehara said. "All we can do is to try to find a clue to solving the issue through that process."

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704584804575644121854906074.html>

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The Star – Malaysia
Tuesday, November 30, 2010

Now North Korea Boasts Advances in Nuclear Programme

By Jeremy Laurence

SEOUL (Reuters) - Secretive North Korea boasted advances in its nuclear programme on Tuesday, making sure it held the world's attention, saying it had thousands of working centrifuges, as pressure built on China to rein in its ally.

Nuclear-armed Pyongyang's revelations about its uranium enrichment, which gives it a second route to make a nuclear bomb, came a week after it fired an artillery barrage at a South Korean island, killing four people, including two civilians.

Experts have voiced surprise at the sophistication of a uranium enrichment plant and light-water reactor at the North's main nuclear complex, which were shown to a U.S. scientist earlier this month. There has been no way to

verify the North's claims. The North is also seen as a proliferation risk, accused by the West of supplying Syria, and possibly Iran, with nuclear know-how.

"Currently, construction of a light-water reactor is in progress actively and a modern uranium enrichment plant equipped with several thousands of centrifuges, to secure the supply of fuels, is operating," the Rodong Sinmun newspaper reported.

"Nuclear energy development projects will become more active for peaceful purpose in the future," added the paper, according to the state news agency KCNA.

New revelations by whistle-blower Wikileaks, meanwhile, suggested that some Chinese officials did not view North Korea as a useful ally and would take no action if it collapsed.

By staging provocations and flexing its nuclear muscle, analysts say the isolated North is seeking to increase its leverage as it pushes for a resumption of talks with regional powers, which it walked out of two years ago, in return for aid.

Andrei Lankov, a North Korea expert at Seoul's Kookmin University, said Pyongyang was simply following a typical pattern.

"For the last two years, both Washington and Seoul have tried to ignore them, so now they use both artillery and centrifuges to say: 'we are here, we are dangerous, and we cannot be ignored. We can make a lot of trouble, but also we behave reasonably if rewarded generously enough'," Lankov wrote on the East Asia Forum website.

North Korea has conducted two nuclear tests to date and is believed to have enough fissile material from its plutonium-based programme to make between six and 12 bombs.

It is impossible to verify the North's uranium enrichment programme, which it first announced last year. International inspectors were expelled from the country last year, but Washington has said since 2002 that it suspected Pyongyang had such a programme.

Analysts say its actions are also linked to family politics, as ailing leader Kim Jong-il seeks to burnish a military image for his inexperienced son and chosen successor Kim Jong-un.

THREE-WAY MEETING

South Korea's Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday the North's nuclear programme, last week's attack on Yeonpyeong island and a Chinese proposal for emergency talks would be raised at meeting of foreign ministers in Washington in early December.

South Korea, Japan and the United States, three of the six countries involved in the on-off disarmament talks, will attend.

Talks host China has proposed a summit meeting of the six parties that have been trying to rein in North Korea's nuclear programme. Russia and North Korea are also part of that group.

"Returning to consultation and talks is in the interests of all sides," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei said at a regular news briefing.

"Ensuring the peace and stability of the Korean peninsula is the shared responsibility of all sides. We call on all sides to do more to stabilise the situation."

Japan's Kyodo news agency quoted diplomatic sources in Beijing as saying that Chinese State Councillor Dai Bingguo, who advises leaders on foreign policy, would visit North Korea as early as Wednesday.

He is likely to urge North Korea to take part in the talks, Kyodo reported.

The new Wikileaks revelations, purporting to be from U.S. State Department cables and published by several Western papers, raised questions about the future of the relationship between China and North Korea described in the past as being as close as "lips and teeth".

In one cable by the U.S. ambassador to Seoul, a top South Korean official is described as saying in February that some Chinese officials would not intervene if North Korea collapsed.

U.S. Ambassador Kathleen Stephens wrote that Chun Yung-woo, then the vice foreign minister for South Korea, said the younger generation of Communist leaders in China would not risk new armed conflict on the Korean Peninsula, the Guardian reported.

Some analysts were skeptical.

"My personal advice is that the report has been misplaced," said Wang Dong, a professor at Peking University. "North Korea is a strategic question for China, not a financial or economic one. They've made a mistake about China's viewpoint."

The United States wants Beijing to use its leverage to restrain its ally North Korea, whose shelling of Yeonpyeong last week was the first attack on civilians on South Korean soil since the end of the Korean war in 1953.

The U.S. and South Korean militaries started a third day of large-scale joint exercises off the peninsula's west coast on Tuesday in a show of force they say is meant to deter Pyongyang from staging further provocations.

Additional reporting by Yoo Choonsik in Seoul; Chris Buckley in Beijing; and Patrick Worsnip in New York; Editing by Nick Macfie and Ron Popeski

http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2010/11/30/worldupdates/2010-11-30T174235Z_01_NOOTR_RTRMDNC_0_-532305-5&sec=Worldupdates

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Washington Post

India Test-Fires Nuclear-Capable Ballistic Missile

By KATY DAIGLE, the Associated Press
Thursday, November 25, 2010

NEW DELHI -- India successfully tested a short-range version of its most powerful nuclear-capable missile on Thursday during an army training exercise, the Defense Ministry said.

Nuclear-armed rivals India and Pakistan regularly test missiles, and in some cases give each other advance notice. Ministry spokesman Sitanshu Kar said Pakistan was informed ahead of Thursday's test as part of "standard practice."

The upgraded Agni-I - with a 435-mile (700-kilometer) range - was fired from a testing range on an island off the eastern state of Orissa, Kar said.

"The missile followed the trajectory perfectly and reached the designated spot in the Bay of Bengal," where ships witnessed its detonation, Kar said.

The 12-ton missile, developed in India, has an advanced navigation system and can carry payloads of up to 2,200 pounds (1,000 kilograms).

It has been tested several times in the past, including on March 28 at the same Orissa firing range, as part of ongoing army training to improve skills among defense personnel.

New Delhi has said it developed its current crop of missiles - including the short-range Prithvi missile, the anti-tank Nag missile and the supersonic BrahMos cruise missile - as a deterrent against neighbors China and Pakistan.

Its Agni-II missile, with a range of up to 1,250 miles (2,000 kilometers), can put areas of southern China within striking distance. And the Agni-III, successfully tested last year, can carry nuclear warheads across much of Asia and the Middle East.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/11/25/AR2010112500692.html?hpid=news-col-blog>

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Arab News – Saudi Arabia

Pakistan Can't be Denuclearized at this Stage: A.Q. Khan

By AZHAR MASOOD, ARAB NEWS
November 27, 2010

ISLAMABAD: The architect of Pakistan's nuclear program Abdul Qadeer Khan has said Pakistan cannot be denuclearized at this stage.

Talking to Arab News at the residence of Pakistan Muslim League (Q) President, Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, Khan said: "On a regular basis we hear that some powers can deprive Pakistan of its nuclear assets. Let me tell you Pakistan has one of the best command and control systems for its nuclear-tipped missiles.

"Pakistan has kept its warheads at different safe and well-guarded places. Its missiles are deployed with best available Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and its nuclear facilities are located at very secure places."

Khan said after an Israeli attack on Iraq's nuclear plant, Pakistan learned a lesson. "The lesson was to decentralize its uranium enrichment facility and to relocate its uranium enrichment at more than one place."

Khan, interned by former President Gen. Pervez Musharraf with allegations of running an underworld nuclear network, appeared quite weak due to poor health but the nuclear boffin was in high spirits.

Referring to the security of Pakistan's nuclear program, Khan further said: "Over the years, we have produced so many nuclear scientists that no one can deprive us from nuclear capabilities."

During the conversation, Khan made no effort to hide his bitterness about Gen. Musharraf.

<http://arabnews.com/world/article201541.ece?comments=all>

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The Daily Star - Bangladesh

November 29, 2010

US Standoff with Pakistan over Nuclear Fuel

By Masroor Gilani (AFP)

The United States has led top secret efforts to remove highly enriched uranium from Pakistan for years, worried it could be used to make an "illicit" nuclear device, according to leaked US cables.

Pakistan yesterday criticized the release of classified US diplomatic cables that reportedly raise concerns that highly enriched uranium could be diverted from its nuclear program to build an illicit weapon.

"We condemn the irresponsible disclosure of sensitive official documents," said Pakistani Foreign Ministry spokesman Abdul Basit.

The New York Times said they were among quarter of a million confidential American diplomatic cables released by whistleblower WikiLeaks in what Pakistan condemned as an "irresponsible disclosure of sensitive official documents".

The country's nuclear arsenal is one of the most sensitive topics for the United States as it tries to improve relations with the conservative Muslim nation on the front line in the campaign against al-Qaeda and the Taliban.

Islamist militants embarked on a nationwide bombing campaign across Pakistan in 2007, the same year that the Times said the secret efforts began.

In May 2009, it quoted then US ambassador Anne Patterson as saying that Pakistan was refusing to schedule a visit by American technical experts.

Islamabad has been adamant that its nuclear weapons are in safe hands and US President Barack Obama has publicly concurred.

But the Times said the leaked documents showed the United States trying to remove the uranium from a research reactor, fearing it could be diverted for use in an "illicit nuclear device".

The newspaper did not elaborate on how the United States had sought to remove the uranium or the nature of any such device.

Experts estimate that Pakistan already has up to 100 nuclear weapons.

Pakistan's foreign ministry said it had been officially informed of the leaks by the US government in advance.

The king of Saudi Arabia reportedly called Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari the greatest obstacle to the country's progress, The New York Times said.

"When the head is rotten, it affects the whole body," the newspaper quoted King Abdullah as saying.

Presidential spokesman Farhatullah Babar dismissed the reported comment, saying "President Zardari regards Saudi King Abdullah as his elder brother."

"The so-called leaks are no more than an attempt to create misperceptions between two important Muslim countries," he said.

"At this stage we are examining the relevant documents and their contents," ministry spokesman Abdul Basit told AFP when asked about the Times report.

The United States has longstanding concerns about proliferation from Pakistan and is reported to have set up an elite squad that could fly into the country and attempt to secure its weapons should the government disintegrate.

Pakistan announced that it had nuclear weapons in 1998, scrambling to secure the technology after India's first nuclear test in 1974.

Western analysts believe China assisted Pakistan in developing the Khushab nuclear site to produce plutonium, which can be miniaturised for cruise missiles -- presumably aimed at India.

In 2004, Abdul Qadeer Khan, the father of Pakistan's bomb, confessed to running a nuclear black market that sent secrets to Iran, Libya and North Korea. He was put under house arrest for five years.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=164201>

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The Atlantic

A Nuclear Standoff with Libya

By Max Fisher

November 27, 2010

In November 2009, six years after the government of Libya first agreed to disarm its nuclear weapons program, Libyan nuclear workers wheeled the last of their country's highly enriched uranium out in front of the Tajoura nuclear facility, just east of Tripoli. U.S. and Russian officials overseeing Libya's disarmament began preparations to ship this final batch of weapons-grade nuclear material to Russia, where it would be treated and destroyed.

The plan was to load the uranium onto a massive Russian cargo plane, one of the few in the world specially equipped to fly nuclear materials. On November 20, the day before the plane was to leave for a nuclear facility in Russia, Libyan officials unexpectedly halted the shipment. Without explanation, they declared that the uranium would not be permitted to leave Libya. They left the seven five-ton casks out in the open and under light guard, vulnerable to theft by the al-Qaeda factions that still operate in the region or by any rogue government that learned of their presence.

For one month and one day, U.S. and Russian diplomats negotiated with Libya for the uranium to be released and flown out of the country. At the same time, engineers from both countries worked to secure the nuclear material from theft or leakage, two serious dangers that became more likely the longer the casks sat exposed. On December 21, Libya finally allowed a Russian plane to remove the casks, ending Libya's nuclear weapons program and with it the low-grade game of nuclear blackmail they had been playing.

The month-long crisis, never revealed by the Obama administration or reported in the press, is recorded in U.S. State Department documents obtained by The Atlantic. Those documents tell the story of frantic diplomatic maneuvering as U.S. and Russian officials pushed Libyan leaders to honor their disarmament pledge. A person with access to the cables provided them to The Atlantic in order to publicize the dangers of loose nuclear materials under the control of unpredictable regimes in unstable countries.

Key details of the episode were confirmed by a U.S. official and an international nuclear monitor. Owing to the sensitive nature of nuclear counterproliferation, a number of technical details have been omitted from this account, as have the names of all U.S. officials in Libya.

A State Department spokesman declined to comment on this story, saying only that the United States enjoys a "normalized" relationship with Libya. He stressed that the Libyans "did meet their commitment" to dismantle their nuclear weapons program.

The United States had a troubled relationship with Libya during the later years of the last century. In the two decades after Muammar al-Qaddafi seized power in 1969, Libya targeted the U.S. and its allies with state-sponsored acts of terrorism that killed hundreds of civilians. In three incidents in the 1980s, Libya's military attacked U.S. navy ships and fighter jets in the Mediterranean. For its part, the U.S. responded with airstrikes and decades of crippling economic sanctions. However, relations between the two countries have warmed in recent years, beginning with Libya's 2003 pledge to dismantle its nuclear program and peaking in 2007 with President George W. Bush's decision to send a U.S. ambassador to Tripoli, the first in 35 years.

Libya agreed to remove its weapons-grade materials and equipment shortly after a 2003 incident in which the U.S. government intercepted a ship bound for that country with Pakistani-made black-market centrifuges. For six years, Libyan officials complied with U.S.-led international efforts to dismantle the program. In November of last year, when officials without notice halted the dismantling process, the Libyans were down to their last 5.2 kilograms--still enough to make a bomb. A few days later, the U.S. embassy was contacted by Saif al-Islam al-Qaddafi. The son of Muammar al-Qaddafi, Saif is widely seen as Libya's great hope for reform should he win out against his more

conservative brother, Mutassim, and succeed their father. But on that day, Saif told the U.S. ambassador to Libya that he was "fed up" with the U.S. He warned, "Slowly, slowly, we are moving backward rather than forward."

Saif, according to the State Department cables reviewed by The Atlantic, told U.S. representatives that he could "fix" the nuclear crisis--if the U.S. met his demands. His list included military equipment, assistance in building a nuclear medical facility, relaxation of trade embargoes against Libya, and a sum of money that he implied would be in the tens of millions of dollars. But Saif made clear that what he sought most was respect. He suggested that the United States and Libya end their decades of enmity with a grand gesture of détente, even recommending that the senior Qaddafi and President Obama hold a joint summit. The incongruity of demanding friendship from the U.S. while simultaneously blackmailing it with the risk of loose nuclear materials does not appear to have bothered Saif. He concluded with a bit of American vernacular, telling the ambassador, "The ball is in your court."

The U.S. ambassador warned Saif that the Libyans had "chosen a very dangerous issue on which to express its apparent pique about perceived problems in the bilateral relationship," as an embassy official later put it in summarizing the meeting. According to that official, whose cable to Washington was among the 115 pages reviewed by The Atlantic, the ambassador added, "By its actions, Libya was jeopardizing its relationship with the whole international community."

As Saif laid out his demands to the United States, Libya's uranium sat outside Tajoura inviting more and more risk each day. The casks holding the uranium were designed for easy transportation but only short-term storage, a dangerous combination that made them susceptible to theft and cracking. Though International Atomic Energy Agency seals had been placed on the casks, the seals were only meant to indicate whether tampering had occurred and could be easily broken.

At one point, according to the documents, U.S. officials were alarmed to find only a single armed guard at the nuclear facility, and "they did not know if [his gun] was loaded." Perhaps most worryingly, the casks had been left near the facility's large loading crane. U.S. officials worried about the security of the casks. It would have been easy for anyone with a gun and a truck to drive up, overpower the guard, use the crane to load the casks onto the truck, and drive off into the vast Libyan desert.

Even if the uranium was not stolen, Russian nuclear engineers warned of the likelihood that the casks would eventually crack, leaking radiation and causing a biological and environmental disaster. But as the meetings between U.S. and Libyan officials stretched on, it was not clear when, if ever, Libya would consent to removing the casks.

The Russian engineers busied themselves with finding a way to secure the uranium, something that required them to "develop entirely new technology" on the fly, as a U.S. official wrote. Faced with an unprecedented problem--nuclear material abandoned in temporary casks that could not be moved --they set out to improvise a solution. The uranium had to be removed from the casks but was far too radioactive to be handled by humans. The engineers settled on a remote-controlled device that they hoped could safely extract the uranium and move it to the Tajoura facility's built-in ponds, where it would be better contained. The so-called grapple would have been the first of its kind. They even planned to train Tajoura's Libyan engineers in the grapple's use. Department of Energy officials in Libya called it "an unprecedented operation."

The Russian engineers never had a chance to build the grapple, much less use it. On December 7, Saif sent word to the U.S. embassy that he would allow Russia to put the uranium on board the plane. Saif's message, delivered by an intermediary, promised that formal permission would arrive soon after. Saif said he had ultimately been appeased not by the promise of an arms sale or financial assistance--there is no evidence any such concessions had been offered by the United States--but by a December 3 phone call from U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to Libyan Foreign Minister Musa Kusa. The exact nature of the conversation between Clinton and Kusa is not recorded in these documents. But in the cable from the U.S. embassy requesting the call, American officials asked that Clinton give "a general statement of commitment to the relationship, a commitment to work with the Libyans to move the relationship ahead, and a strong point insisting that the [uranium] shipment be allowed to go forward immediately."

That gesture of diplomatic courtship seems to have been adequate to defuse the crisis. Nuclear officials in Russia received a formal letter on December 15 announcing that Libya would allow the uranium to be removed. Six days later the seven casks were on their way to Russia.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2010/11/a-nuclear-standoff-with-libya/67076>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia to Place Air and Space Defenses under Unified Command in 2011

30 November 2010

Russia must create a unified strategic command combining air, missile and space defenses in 2011, President Dmitry Medvedev said on Tuesday.

"Next year we must focus on strengthening our air and space defenses, and combine the existing air defense and missile defense networks, missile early-warning systems and airspace monitoring systems under a unified strategic command," Medvedev said in his annual address to the Federal Assembly.

The Russian political and military leadership have long considered plans to develop strong missile and space defenses by 2020, but no concrete steps have been taken so far and the country does not even have a well-defined command structure to tackle this problem.

According to one proposal, the unified aerospace defense command will absorb some air defense units which are currently part of the Russian Air Force, and Space Forces units.

The Russian military plans to build a comprehensive air and space defense network consisting of S-400 Triumf and future S-500 air defense systems and the Soviet-era MiG-31 Foxhound supersonic interceptors.

The S-500 system is expected to have an extended range of up to 600 km (over 370 miles) and simultaneously engage up to 10 targets. The system will be capable of destroying hypersonic and ballistic targets.

Russia's leading missile manufacturer Almaz-Antei said in March that it was developing at least six types of advanced air defense systems to be available for the Russian military around 2015.

MOSCOW, November 30 (RIA Novosti)

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20101130/161563707.html

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Philadelphia Inquirer

Tuesday, November 30, 2010

Medvedev: Russia, NATO Must Reach Missile Deal

By MANSUR MIROVALEV, the Associated Press

MOSCOW - NATO's failure to build a joint European missile shield with Moscow may force Russia to deploy new offensive weapons and trigger a new arms race, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said Tuesday in a stern warning reflecting the deeply rooted Kremlin distrust of Western intentions.

Some experts downplayed the threat, saying that Russia lacks money and technologies to mount a military buildup.

NATO leaders have approved a plan for a missile defense in Europe at a summit in Lisbon earlier this month and invited Russia to join. Experts from both sides will analyze the issue and report to defense ministers in July.

"In the next 10 years, the following alternatives await us, either we reach agreement on missile defense and create a full joint cooperation mechanism, or, if we don't reach a constructive agreement, a new phase of the arms race will begin," Medvedev said in his annual address to both houses of parliament that burst into the loud applause. "And we will have to make a decision on deploying new means of attack. It's quite obvious that such a scenario would be extremely grave."

Medvedev, who attended the Russia-NATO summit in Lisbon, was receptive of NATO's proposal but didn't make a definitive commitment. He warned then that Russia might decide against joining the U.S.-led effort if it doesn't feel it is being treated equally as a partner.

Medvedev's aide Arkady Dvorkovich told reporters Tuesday that the president views that scenario as "undoubtedly negative." "We will have to do everything to come to an agreement," he said.

Russia was strongly critical of the previous U.S. administration plan to deploy missile defense sites in Poland and the Czech Republic and hailed President Barack Obama's decision to scrap it. But Moscow has remained concerned about the revamped U.S. missile defense plans, seeing them as potentially dangerous to its security.

The New START nuclear arms reduction treaty that Obama and Medvedev signed in April doesn't prevent the U.S. from building new missile defense systems, but Russia has stated it could withdraw from the treaty if it feels threatened by such a system in the future. The pact's future look bleak now after a key Senate Republican said earlier this month that he does not want to vote on the treaty during the current session.

In Moscow on Tuesday, some experts viewed Medvedev's warning about the possibility of a new arms race with skepticism, saying that it could be part of muscle-flexing aimed at speeding up talks with the West and emphasizing that Moscow can't afford a Cold War-style arms race anyway.

"This is sheer nonsense," Alexander Konovalov, director of the Moscow-based Institute for Strategic Assessment, an independent think tank, told The Associated Press. "Russia won't have the finances, technologies and industrial assets for any arms race."

Pavel Felgenhauer, an independent Moscow-based military analyst, also noted that despite the Kremlin's recent efforts to modernize military arsenals, Russia's current scientific and financial capabilities are far weaker than the Soviet military machine. "Because of Russia's technological backwardness, a real build-up is impossible," he said.

Despite such limitations, some observers say that Russia's hawkish military officials and defense corporations have been pushing for more spending on new weapons.

"We have enough corporations, groups and institutions that would push for the development of a multitude of new arms systems," foreign policy analyst Alexei Arbatov was quoted as saying by RIA Novosti news agency.

Apart from the technological weaknesses, the Russian military also faces a manpower shortage. The problem is partly related to the demographic plunge Russia has faced after the Soviet collapse.

Medvedev dedicated part of his 72-minute address to the problem, exhorting lawmakers to make improving the lives of children Russia's top task and proposed giving free land to families with three or more children.

Because of high mortality rates and a declining birth rate, Russia's population shrank some 7 million people from its 1991 high. However, the country reported a small population increase last year, to 141.8 million.

Associated Press writers Jim Heintz, David Nowak, Nataliya Vasilyeva and Vladimir Isachenkov contributed to this report.

http://www.philly.com/philly/wires/ap/business/20101130_ap_medvedevrussianatomustreachmissiledeal.html

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia's Missile Forces to Replace Topol-M with Multiple-Warhead RS-24

30 November 2010

Russia's Strategic Missile Forces (SMF) will be rearmed with multiple-warhead RS-24 missiles instead of the RS-12M Topol-M (SS-27 Sickle) mobile intercontinental ballistic missile systems, SMF Commander Lt. Gen. Sergei Karakayev said on Tuesday.

"The mobile missile system with the RS-24 ballistic missile is an improved version of the Topol-M, and during production experience with fifth generation mobile missile systems was taken into account," Karakayev said, adding that the missile proved itself a reliable weapon. "Therefore it was decided to rearm the SMF with this type of missile system," he continued. "At the same the Topol-M mobile missile system will not be supplied to the Strategic Missile Forces in the future."

RS-24 is believed to have up to six independent warheads, and is thus more likely to be able to penetrate anti-missile defense systems than the single warhead Topol-M.

The SMF said in August that the Topol-M and RS-24 missiles would be the mainstay of the ground-based component of Russia's nuclear triad and would account for no less than 80% of the SMF's arsenal by 2016.

As of June 2010, the SMF operated at least 50 silo-based and 18 road-mobile Topol-M missile systems. The RS-24 was commissioned in 2010 after successful testing.

The RS-12M Topol is a single-warhead intercontinental ballistic missile, approximately the same size and shape as the U.S. Minuteman ICBM. The first Topol missiles entered service in 1985.

The missile has a maximum range of 10,000 km (6,125 miles) and can carry a nuclear warhead with a yield of 550 kilotons.

Next year the SMF will hold 10 intercontinental ballistic missile launches, twice as many as in 2010, Karakayev said.

MOSCOW, November 30 (RIA Novosti)

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20101130/161558446.html

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Knoxville News Sentinel Blog
Frank Monger's Atomic Underground
November 25, 2010

Where'd the Soviet WMD Scientists Go?

In the post-Cold War period, one of the concerns has been that out-of-work scientists once part of the Soviet nuclear weapons complex would take their expertise elsewhere and create proliferation nightmares. Thus, a number of programs, often U.S.-inspired and funded, were established to provide work for the weapons experts and tap the talent for peaceful purposes.

Earlier this month, the National Nuclear Security Administration took part in celebrating the 15th anniversary of Ukraine's Science and Technology Center, which -- according to NNSA info -- "has engaged almost 18,000 former weapons scientists and supported more than 1,400 cooperative research projects as part of its mission to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) expertise."

A ceremony was held at the Kyiv-Polytechnic Institute, and among those attending were Mark Whitney, NNSA's Assistant Deputy Administrator for Nonproliferation and International Security; H.E. John Tefft, U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine; Academician Vladimir Semenzhenko, Head of the Ukrainian State Committee on Science, Innovation and Informatization; and Academician Boris Paton, President of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.

In a statement, Whitney said: "For 15 years, the STCU has played a critical role in helping prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons expertise and technology by engaging former weapons scientists in peaceful research projects. At the same time, the projects and activities supported by STCU have also advanced science, created jobs, brought new products to the market, facilitated innovation and competitiveness, and promoted unique international collaboration on topics ranging from new technologies for clean water to nuclear forensics."

The center has been supported by the U.S., Canada, Sweden and Ukraine. It was the first intergovernmental organization established in Ukraine following independence in 1991.

There are partner research institutes in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan, and the NNSA, through its Global Initiatives for Proliferation Prevention program, has funded projects that have reportedly led to "multiple new technologies, hundreds of new jobs and millions in additional revenue for STCU member countries."

http://blogs.knoxnews.com/munger/2010/11/whered_the_soviet_wmd_scientis.html

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Kitsap Sun

Navy's Trident Nuclear Warheads Hit the Highway, Bound for Texas

By Ed Friedrich
November 27, 2010

BANGOR — Hundreds of nuclear warheads are secretly being trucked between Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor and the Texas panhandle to have their lives extended.

The 100-kiloton W76 warheads are between 23 and 32 years old and need to be upgraded, according to the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA).

Bangor's eight Trident ballistic-missile submarines can each carry 24 D5 missiles. Those missiles can each carry up to eight W76 warheads.

Workers at the Pantex Plant outside of Amarillo, Texas, will add about 30 years to the weapons' lives.

The plant, which is charged with maintaining the safety, security and reliability of the nation's nuclear weapons stockpile, will refurbish the nuclear explosive package, the arming, firing and fusing system, and the gas transfer system, according to the NNSA.

The new fuse will allow more flexibility in setting the height of the burst, which, according to the Energy Department, would "enable W76 to take advantage of (the) higher accuracy of (the) D5 missile" and bring more targets, including hard targets, within range.

Fifty-five to 60 percent of the nation's W76 warheads, or about 1,600 to 1,800 of them, will be modernized, said Hans Kristensen, director of the Nuclear Information Project for the Federation of American Scientists. Eight of the Navy's 14 ballistic-missile submarines are based at Bangor, so about 900 to 1,000 warheads would be transported from and returned to Kitsap County in special unmarked tractor trailers.

The first W76 upgrade was completed in February 2009. The \$4 billion project will continue until 2018, Kristensen said.

The trailers can carry several warheads at a time. Shipping is conducted by the NNSA's Office of Secure Transportation. The organization has safely completed 100 percent of its shipments without compromising or losing a nuclear weapon or component, or releasing radioactive material, according to its website.

Nobody from the Office of Secure Transportation or the Navy could be reached by the Kitsap Sun for comment.

The tractor-trailers don't travel during bad weather. Should they run into it, federal agents who drive them pull into previously identified secure shelters. Although the trucks have sleeper berths, the armed drivers can't go more than 32 hours without eight hours of sleep in a regular bed.

The trailers protect the warheads during an accident. Even if the trailer crashed, the warheads wouldn't be damaged, according to the Office for Secure Transportation. An operations center tracks every convoy by satellite 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Officials from the Washington State Patrol, Department of Ecology, Department of Transportation and National Guard said they weren't notified of the increased shipments and never know when they're made. Phyllis Mann, director of the Kitsap County Department of Emergency Management, said the Office of Secure Transportation briefs local law enforcement and emergency agencies about its operations, but the shipments themselves are secret.

"I don't want to know about the movement of a warhead," Mann said. "It is classified information. There are some things you don't want to know, and this is one of them. If you keep telling a secret, the next thing you know you get subpoenaed and have to tell something you don't want to talk about."

Mann said she believes the State Patrol is the only agency with general knowledge about the shipments, but spokesman Dan Coon said troopers aren't in the loop.

"It is all military and we are not part of the plans," he said.

Live transport of nuclear weapons is always associated with risks, Kristensen said. That's why the Office of Secure Transportation takes it so seriously.

"You can have all sorts of things happening," he said. "Trucks rolling over, crashes involving fuel trucks, crazy people trying to do something even worse like terror attacks. It's a lot of warheads and there will be a lot of traffic."

Last week, the Energy Department inspector general's office said it reviewed 16 alcohol-related incidents involving agents, candidate-agents and others from the government's Office of Secure Transportation between 2007 through 2009. They included an agent arrested for public intoxication and two agents detained by police after a bar fight.

After the W76 life extension, about 150 of the Tridents' other warheads, the W88, will be shipped back to Pantex for new fuses, Kristensen said. That will take about 2 1/2 years. Then, in 2026, they're scheduled to return to Texas for full-blown life extensions, he said.

<http://www.kitsapsun.com/news/2010/nov/27/tridents-warheads-on-the-road-to-refurbishment/>

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New York Times

OPINION

International Herald Tribune Op-Ed Contributor

November 24, 2010

North Korean Blackmail

By ANDREI LANKOV

SEOUL — Last week, Siegfried Hecker, a former director of the Los Alamos National Laboratory was invited to visit the North Korean nuclear research center in Yongbyon. He was shown a uranium enrichment plant whose sophistication and likely output is well in excess of what most experts suspected about the North Korean uranium program. Then on Tuesday, North Korean artillery shelled a South Korean island, inflicting heavy damage.

The world is likely to say that the North Koreans are again acting "irrationally." But this is not the case — they are a very rational regime, actually the world's most Machiavellian.

North Korean leaders are sending a message. For the last two years, both Washington and Seoul have tried to ignore them, so now they use both artillery and centrifuges to say: “We are here, we are dangerous, and we cannot be ignored. We can make a lot of trouble, but also we behave reasonably if rewarded generously enough.”

Since 1994, U.S. policy toward Pyongyang has been based most of the time on the assumption that North Korea can be persuaded and bribed into surrendering its nuclear program.

It is an illusion, of course: The survival of the North Korean regime depends to a large extent on its blackmail diplomacy.

There has never been a chance that it would surrender its nuclear program, which alone makes it possible to extract sufficient aid from the outside world. Finally, after two nuclear tests and a number of broken agreements, Washington has realized that no amount of engagement is going to produce a nuclear-free North Korea.

So nowadays the major hope is sanctions. Many in Washington still entertain the idea that a tough sanctions regime would make North Korea surrender its nukes — or, perhaps, bring about regime collapse.

It might take a few years before it becomes clear that sanctions will not work either. The major — but by no means only — reason is that sanctions are quietly sabotaged by China. China believes that domestic instability in North Korea constitutes a greater threat to its interest than the North Korean nuclear program, so it does not want to see Pyongyang cornered.

The news from North Korea confirms that sanctions are not successful. Dr. Hecker was impressed by the scale and sophistication of the enrichment plant, and the general economic situation — albeit very bad by the normal standards — has clearly improved in the last years.

However, the stubborn refusal of the United States and South Korea to provide aid and concessions makes Pyongyang leaders uneasy — not because they are facing an immediate threat of collapse, but because sanctions make them increasingly dependent on China, their only sponsor.

And this goes against Pyongyang’s basic diplomatic principle: Since the times of the Sino-Soviet quarrel of the 1960s, it has always relied on two or three sponsors, preferably antagonistic and hence easier to manipulate.

So the North Korean leaders decided that this was the time to remind the world of their existence. They chose soft spots of their adversaries (and potential sponsors).

The Americans were reminded that sanctions or not, the North Korean nuclear program is steadily advancing, thus increasing the likelihood of proliferation.

The South Koreans were reminded that their major city lies within the shooting range of North Korean artillery (and also that their economy is dependent on international markets, which do not take news of shelling favorably).

North Korean leaders know that they are safe from military retaliation — a large-scale war against the North is winnable but prohibitively costly, while small-scale strikes against their military installations would only kill common soldiers, whose lives are expendable.

So what can be done? The easiest reply is to hold steadfast, and do not bow to the pressure.

This may sound great, but this policy is actually quite dangerous. A few more years of doing nothing will mean not only more provocations, but also a considerable increase in North Korea’s nuclear capabilities, missile technology and, perhaps, proliferation. In other words, waiting is not a solution.

In the short term, the answer would seem to be negotiations aimed at freezing the North Korean nuclear program — for a price, of course.

It should be done with a clear understanding that negotiations, even if a deal is reached, will merely buy time and make the problems less acute.

So long as the Kim family stays in power — and it could be around for a long time — North Korea will remain a problem with no diplomatic solution. It survives by making trouble, since it has to make trouble just to stay afloat.

Andrei Lankov is a professor at Kookmin University in Seoul and the author of several books on North Korea.

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/25/opinion/25iht-edlankov.html?_r=1&ref=global

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Nuke Threats Are Designed to Reap Rewards

November 25, 2010

The message is clear from Pyongyang: We are building nuclear bombs. What can you do about it? It is a classic negotiating game that North Korea has been perfecting for decades. First, you tell your enemies what you are capable of or intend to do. Second, you act in irrational ways to raise the level of fear throughout the world. Third, you are ready to negotiate only when there are big incentives on offer. This formula has been deployed over and over again. It works every time, especially with the Americans and the United Nations agencies.

Despite all of its foreign policy enthusiasm, the Obama administration seems to be quite naive when it comes to dealing with the world's most notorious rouge regime.

President Barack Obama cannot be aggressive and talk tough like his predecessor, George W. Bush. He has the Nobel Peace Prize behind him, therefore he has to sound reasonable when talking to the North Koreans. Pyongyang is quite happy to exploit Obama's soft side.

One of the most dangerous consequences of this situation is that Pyongyang's nuclear brinkmanship will be emulated worldwide by other belligerent states that aspire to possess weapons of mass destruction. Within the region, Burma is one recipient of North Korean nuclear technology, even though a U.N.-sanctioned embargo is still in place. Again, the international community needs to be clearly reminded of the desire by these rogue states to possess nuclear weapons.

Pyongyang has deliberately revealed to Siegfried Hecker, a former director of the Los Alamos National Laboratory, a new and sophisticated plant for enriching uranium, which increases its nuclear capability. It is a good strategy for North Korea because the hermit kingdom wants to send a strong signal to the U.S. that it is ready for a new round of negotiations involving higher rewards. Obviously, some things have changed or gone wrong inside the country in recent months. North Korea's hush-hush leadership change-over and its worsening economic conditions could be major reasons for the new move. The newly anointed leader-in-waiting, Kim Jong-un, has appeared in public in the past few months, and has received worldwide publicity. But he has not created any positive impression.

The new revelation will immediately pressure the other members of the six-party talks — the U.S., China, Russia, Japan and South Korea — to move quickly to stop North Korea's further advancement of its uranium enrichment program. They should learn from Japan's experience. When Kim Jong-il surprisingly announced to the visiting former Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in 2002 that North Korea had indeed abducted Japanese citizens, Koizumi thought that Kim would tell him the truth and release all the abductees. As it turned out, the revelation was simply a negotiating tactic to obtain new economic commitments from Japan. Currently, the Japanese government continues to follow up on the case but without any progress.

Due to its strategic location on the Korean Peninsula, North Korea has a great advantage in being able to manipulate and destabilize global security and the East Asian strategic environment. Sad but true, despite North Korea's despicable behavior and its tough-talk on the nuclear issue, no country wants to see this isolated regime collapse anytime soon because it would create huge immediate problems for South Korea and China, and would affect the overall stability of Northeast Asia, if not the whole region.

As such, North Korea is effectively holding the world as its hostage. Ironically, all parties concerned continue to encourage Pyongyang to do just that.

(The Nation (Thailand), Nov. 23.)

<http://www.koreaherald.com/opinion/Detail.jsp?newsMLId=20101125000956>

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Times of India – India

OPINION

North Korea: Sticky Issues

By Nayan Chanda

November 27, 2010

The phrase 'hiding in plain sight' acquired a new significance this week when it was revealed that North Koreans had built a super-secret uranium reprocessing unit at Yongbyon. It is a well-established atomic research compound that must already feature among the most heavily surveilled sites on the planet. The revelation came because the North Korean regime wanted to parade its new prowess by inviting a veteran nuclear weapon scientist from the US. The disclosure about the ultra-modern enrichment plant that significantly boosts North Korea's weapons-making capacity has left US and South Korean intelligence agencies red-faced. But more than the embarrassment, the scale and

sophistication of the site called by the scientist as 'stunning' and 'astonishingly modern' have raised serious questions about the fate of the nuclear non-proliferation regime that the Obama administration has been desperately trying to shore up.

Indeed, the revelation about its state-of-the-art reprocessing facility - built in just 18 months under the watchful eyes of US, Japanese and South Korean reconnaissance satellites - casts fresh doubt on the 'expert' estimates of North Korea's nuclear build-up. Donald Rumsfeld's maxim about 'known unknowns' and 'unknown unknowns' suddenly takes on a whole new significance, with the US intelligence community undoubtedly wondering if and how it will ever come to know what it currently does not know.

First of all, if the North Koreans have been able to develop this facility, smack in the middle of Yongbyon of all places, how can anyone know for sure that there are not other, even larger, sites in the country's rugged mountain ranges? After all, as South Koreans have discovered over the years North Koreans are one of the world's most efficient tunnel-diggers. This new uncertainty about the state of North Korea's nuclear programme makes any future agreement or North Korean promise of disarmament highly suspect, if not meaningless.

The second conundrum stems from the sticky question of which countries were involved in helping North Korea to achieve this feat. The speed at which the reprocessing facility was erected and the stunningly modern equipment that it boasts make it almost certain that North Koreans had outside help. But who could that be? It is by now well known that the infamous A Q Khan network had supplied two dozen centrifuges to Pyongyang, but it seems likely the some or all of the thousands of gleaming new centrifuges that have now been shown to the world came from Iran. Recently a Washington-based research centre reported that "North Korea frequently procures for its uranium enrichment programme either directly in China or by using it as a trans-shipment point".

Which raises the third, and perhaps most worrying, problem: how could vast quantities of sensitive nuclear components travel undetected from Iran to North Korea, amid the most closely monitored stretches of land and sea anywhere in the world? If they were indeed transported over land, many countries - certainly including China - would surely have to have been involved. China has already been protective of its old ally North Korea in softening UN sanctions. Could China have possibly violated these sanctions as well by helping North Korea to develop a modern reprocessing plant?

The longer term issue raised by the North Korean revelation relates to the future of US and EU attempts to keep the nuclear genie in an increasingly cracked bottle. It seems unlikely that North Korea would ever surrender its hard-earned nuclear capabilities or its stockpile of bombs in return for diplomatic recognition and a no-attack pledge. On the other hand, what global repercussions might flow from the US's forced acceptance of North Korea as a nuclear weapon state? If Washington adopts a policy, recommended by some influential analysts, of "cap and trade" - cap the nuclear development and trade nukes for aid and recognition - how would the UN approach Iran, which has continued to defy sanctions to work on reprocessing uranium? How would Israel and the Arab world react if the West grudgingly came to adopt a similar 'cap-and-trade' approach to Iran?

In the light of the Korean and Iranian developments, India's 1998 decision to go nuclear and the unprecedented favour it has since received from Washington in the form of the civil nuclear agreement assume new significance.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/opinion/edit-page/North-Korea-Sticky-Issues/articleshow/6996224.cms>

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Las Vegas Sun
OPINION/Editorial

One for the Road

Agents responsible for hauling nuclear material accused of drinking on duty

Saturday, November 27, 2010

Federal agents who transport nuclear weapons and components across the country sometimes get drunk on the job, according to the Energy Department's inspector general. In a memo issued this month, the inspector general's office said that from 2007 to 2009, 16 "alcohol-related incidents" involved agents, trainees and other employees of the Energy Department's Office of Secure Transportation.

The inspector general highlighted two incidents it said happened on transport missions: An agent was arrested for public intoxication on one 2007 trip, and two agents were handcuffed and detained after "an incident" at a bar in 2009. Both incidents allegedly happened during planned stops on extended missions, in which the armed federal agents escort nuclear materials across the country. The inspector general said that during the stops, vehicles carrying the nuclear material were secured at "safe harbor" locations and the agents were sent to hotels to rest.

A spokesman for the Energy Department's National Nuclear Security Administration, which oversees the office, downplayed the report, arguing that there had been no drunken driving nor any problems with transporting the nuclear cargo. With nearly 600 agents on staff, the incidents were rare, the spokesman said, adding there were no systemic problems.

However, without going into much detail, the inspector general said the alcohol-related incidents create a "potential vulnerability in OST's critical national security mission."

The inspector general found that there have been "concerns" about alcohol use at the office's 20-week training academy at Fort Chaffee, Ark. The memo says the Office of Secure Transportation tried to address those concerns by, among other things, prohibiting trainees from keeping "kegs of beer or quantities of alcohol in excess of what is reasonable for personal use" in the academy's dormitory. The office also has "an informal designated driver program" for trainees at the academy.

No keggers and designated drivers? That's hardly dealing with the problem.

This is a serious issue. The agents are armed and have the power to use deadly force and make warrantless arrests as they transport incredibly dangerous materials across the country. Yet according to the inspector general, the agents are allowed to work with a blood-alcohol level up to 0.02.

What's next? Will the office send designated drivers out on the nuclear convoys as well just in case an agent needs to sleep off a night of partying on the road?

Rep. Edolphus Towns, D-N.Y., chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, pressed the inspector general for more information, saying a "potential vulnerability in the secure transportation of nuclear materials is entirely unacceptable."

Indeed. There is no margin for error dealing with nuclear materials. There should be no tolerance for any level of impairment because the risks are too great.

<http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/2010/nov/27/one-road/>

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