



# **USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER**

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RIA Novosti  
3 March 2009

## **Russia Ready to Drop Iskander Plans if U.S. Scraps Missile Shield**

MOSCOW, March 3 (RIA Novosti) - The Russian defense minister reiterated on Tuesday that Moscow would not place Iskander missiles on the EU's doorstep if Washington abandoned its plans to deploy missile defenses in Central Europe.

"If the deployment [of U.S. missile defense elements] is suspended, we will not start the retaliatory measures we planned," Anatoly Serdyukov said.

Serdyukov was speaking after a Moscow meeting with his German counterpart, Franz Josef Jung, to discuss issues of bilateral military cooperation, including the rail and air transit of military cargo for German troops in Afghanistan through Russia.

"We are ready to continue discussions on this [missile defense] issue, including in the framework of the Russia-NATO Council," the minister added.

Washington has agreed with Warsaw and Prague on plans to deploy 10 interceptor missiles in Poland and a radar in the Czech Republic by 2013. The United States says the defenses are needed to deter possible strikes from "rogue states" such as Iran.

Russia has consistently opposed the missile shield as a threat to its national security and President Dmitry Medvedev threatened in November to deploy Iskander-M missiles in the country's westernmost exclave of Kaliningrad, which borders NATO members Poland and Lithuania, if the shield was put into operation.

Top Russian officials have repeatedly expressed hope that U.S. President Barack Obama will not follow through with his predecessor's missile defense plans.

The Kremlin denied on Tuesday media reports claiming that a letter sent by Obama to Medvedev contained new missile defense proposals.

The reports cited unnamed sources as saying the U.S. president had told his Russian counterpart that Russian help in resolving the issue of Iran's nuclear program would make Washington's plans for a missile shield in Central Europe unnecessary.

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090303/120399917.html>

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RIA Novosti  
3 March 2009

## **Medvedev Denies Iran-missile Shield Tradeoff with U.S.**

MADRID, March 3 (RIA Novosti) - Russia's president denied on Tuesday media reports claiming that Washington had pledged to drop its Central European missile shield plans if Moscow helped resolve Iran's controversial nuclear program.

A number of media outlets, including the New York Times and Russian business daily Kommersant, reported on Monday that a letter sent by U.S. President Barack Obama to Dmitry Medvedev had stated that the U.S. was ready

to give up its plans to deploy missile shield elements in Central Europe in exchange for Russia's assistance on the Iranian nuclear program.

"We are in correspondence, but no tradeoffs have been discussed, I assure you," Medvedev told a news conference in Madrid.

Iran's controversial nuclear program was cited by the U.S. as one of the reasons behind its plans to deploy a missile base in Poland and radar in the Czech Republic. The missile shield has been strongly opposed by Russia, which views it as a threat to its national security. The dispute has strained relations between the former Cold War rivals, already tense over a host of other differences.

The United States and other Western nations suspect Tehran of secretly seeking nuclear weapons. Iran says its nuclear program is purely aimed at generating electricity. However, unlike his predecessor, George W. Bush, Obama has stated a preference for diplomatic efforts to resolve the dispute.

Top Russian officials have repeatedly expressed hope that Obama will not follow through with his predecessor's missile defense plans.

Medvedev said however on Tuesday that he viewed the United States' readiness to address the missile defense problems as a positive sign.

"If the new U.S. administration shows common sense in this regard and proposes a new setup, one which would suit all Europeans, as well as the U.S. itself, and which would, needless to say, also be acceptable to our country, we'd be ready to discuss it," he said.

<http://en.rian.ru/world/20090303/120403903.html>

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RIA Novosti  
5 March 2009

## **Russia to Put into Service Bulava Ballistic Missiles in 2009**

MOSCOW, March 5 (RIA Novosti) - Russia's Defense Ministry is planning to complete tests and put into service sea-based Bulava intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) in 2009, a deputy defense minister said on Thursday.

The Bulava (SS-NX-30) ICBM carries up to 10 nuclear warheads and has a range of 8,000 kilometers (5,000 miles). It is designed for deployment on Borey-class Project 955 nuclear-powered submarines.

"We are planning to complete the firing tests and put the Bulava missile system on combat duty aboard the Yury Dolgoruky submarine this year," Gen. Vladimir Popovkin said.

The latest unsuccessful submerged test launch on December 23 from the Dmitry Donskoi strategic nuclear-powered submarine in the White Sea, off Russia's northwest coast, was Bulava's fifth failure in ten trials.

However, the Russian military said that production flaws could be to blame for the unsuccessful test launches and insisted that the tests would continue until the missile was ready for production.

Popovkin said the number of Bulava tests in 2009 could exceed five, and the first test would be conducted not earlier than in June.

Meanwhile, sea trials of Yury Dolgoruky, Russia's first Borey-class strategic nuclear submarine are due to start in the spring when navigation begins in the White Sea.

The submarine was built at the Sevmash plant in northern Russia and was taken out of dry dock in April 2007.

The vessel is 170 meters (580 feet) long, has a hull diameter of 13 meters (42 feet), a crew of 107, including 55 officers, a maximum depth of 450 meters (about 1,500 feet) and a submerged speed of about 29 knots. It can carry up to 16 ballistic missiles and torpedoes.

Two other Borey-class nuclear submarines, the Alexander Nevsky and the Vladimir Monomakh, are currently under construction at the Sevmash shipyard and are expected to be completed in 2009 and 2011. Russia is planning to build a total of eight submarines of this class by 2015.

Popovkin said a quarter of funds from Russia's state defense orders would be allocated in 2009 to support the strategic nuclear forces, including their naval component.

Russia's state defense orders for 2009 are worth about 1 trillion rubles (\$28 billion), with money allocated to the Defense Ministry, as well as to more than 10 other ministries and agencies.

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090305/120438860.html>

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Sydney Morning Herald

March 5, 2009

## **Russia Warms to US Stance**

RUSSIA is open to overtures from the US on its proposed missile defence plan but not to a deal in which the US would shelve the plan in exchange for Russia's help on Iran.

The Russian President, Dmitry Medvedev, said he was responding to a report about a private letter he was given from President Barack Obama. In the letter Mr Obama said the proposed missile defence system would not be necessary if Moscow could help stop Iran developing long-range weapons and nuclear warheads.

Mr Obama and Mr Medvedev spoke of the letter on Tuesday as an opening to the possibility of co-operation on an issue that has divided their countries. "If we talk about some bargain or exchange, I can say that the issues were not raised in this way, because it's counterproductive," Mr Medvedev said at a news conference in Madrid.

"What we are getting from our US partners shows at least one thing - that our US partners are ready to discuss the issue.

"That's good, because only a few months ago we were getting different signals - that the decision has been made, there is nothing to talk about, that we will do everything as it has been decided."

When reporters asked Mr Obama about the letter he said it was not "some sort of quid pro quo" but a statement of fact.

"What I said in the letter was that obviously to the extent that we are lessening Iran's commitment to nuclear weapons, that reduces the pressure for, or the need for, a missile defence system," he said. Mr Obama's predecessor, George Bush, championed the missile plan despite passionate Russian opposition.

Presenting further evidence of a shift in US foreign policy, the Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, said on Tuesday that Washington would send two senior officials to Syria for "preliminary conversations".

She said she could not predict where the talks would lead. But: "We don't engage in discussions for the sake of having a conversation. There has to be a purpose to them, there has to be some perceived benefit accruing to the United States and our allies."

US officials said Jeffrey Feltman, the State Department's top Middle East diplomat, would go to Damascus with Dan Shapiro of the White House's national security council. Last week Mr Feltman met the Syrian ambassador to Washington, the highest-level contact between the countries since the start of the Obama Administration.

<http://www.smh.com.au/world/russia-warms-to-us-stance-20090304-8om1.html>

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Barents Observer – Norway

1 March 2009

## **Four More Floating Nuke-plants**

Rosatom and the Republic of Yakutia signed an agreement last week for implementing investments to build four floating nuclear power plants for use in the northern coastal areas of the Siberian Republic.

The deal was signed on February 24th and is by Rosatom State Nuclear Energy Corporation considered to be a new page in the history of Russian nuclear industry.

- It will help to preserve Russian leadership in this high-tech sector, writes Irina Tsurina, head of Rosatom's Analytical Department of Propaganda on the web-site of the state agency.

- FNPP (floating nuclear power plant) is a new abbreviation that will soon come into general use. It is very important for us to make it associable with Russia - as sputnik and cosmonaut were in the Soviet times - as floating NPP is a unique Russian technology, Tsurina writes.

The deal between Yakutia and Rosatom outlines a series of investment projects in addition to the floating nuclear power plants, like uranium mining and a processing combine, reports Interfax.

The construction of Russia's first floating nuclear power plant started at the Sevmash yard in Severodvinsk in April 2007, but in August 2008 Rosatom transferred the assignment to the Baltiiskii Yard in Sankt Petersburg. Before Christmas last year BarentsObserver reported that transferring the construction from Severodvinsk to St. Petersburg did not bring progress to the project. Rossiiskaya Gazeta reported that the Russian plans for a series of floating nuclear power plants is far from being materialized.

However, Rosatom still maintain that the world's first nuclear electricity production on a floating barge will be ready by May 2010, writes Interfax. BarentsObserver earlier reported that the intention with this first plant is to supply the Severodvinsk region with electricity.

No information is given about where the four new floating nuclear power plants will be built, in Severodvinsk or in St. Petersburg.

If built in St. Petersburg the plants have to be towed out of the Baltic Sea and all the way along the coast of Norway before sailing into the Arctic waters to their ports in Yakutia.

When the plants need maintenance and change its highly radioactive spent nuclear, normally after 4-5 years, it will be towed back to Murmansk or Arkhangelsk regions. Today, spent fuel can be transferred either at a naval yard on the Kola Peninsula or in Severodvinsk, but it could take place at the civilian Atomflot base, outskirts Murmansk. From Atomflot, spent nuclear fuel is shipped by train to the Mayak reprocessing plant in the South-Urals.

Rosatom is planning to construct a total of seven or eight floating nuclear power plants by 2015, writes World Nuclear News.

Each floating nuclear power plant will be equipped with two water cooled reactors of the KLT-40S type. This reactor technology is a slightly modernized version of the reactors today in use onboard Russia's fleet of civilian nuclear powered icebreakers based in Murmansk.

<http://www.barentsobserver.com/four-more-floating-nuke-plants.4562188-116320.html>

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Barents Observer – Norway  
5 March 2009

## **Floating NPPs Pose Proliferation Risk**

The environmental group Bellona says Russia has not taken into consideration the enormous nuclear proliferation risks posed by placing floating nuclear power plants (FNPP) in remote Arctic areas.

The planned floating nuclear power plants use highly enriched uranium fuel to operate.

- This makes FNPP fuel an even more attractive acquisition for potential nuclear terrorists than fuel for land based reactors. Higher enrichment means less work to build a full-fledged nuclear device, Bellona argues.

BarentsObserver reported earlier this week that Rosatom and the Republic of Yakutia signed an agreement for implementing investments to build four floating nuclear power plants for use in the northern coastal areas of the Siberian Republic.

Refueling the plants uranium fuel would involve towing them hundreds of kilometers back to the Murmansk or Arkhangelsk regions, as would any scheduled or unscheduled maintenance.

Bellona believes the technology is far too dangerous to put into use.

- At present, Russia lacks the infrastructure to deal with any emergencies that might occur at one of these far-flung

plants. Neither have authorities drawn up any suitable plan for transporting or disposing of the spent nuclear fuel (SNF) from these remote reactors, and is disregarding the proliferation risks associated with isolated, largely unguarded reactors that require by their design more highly enriched uranium fuel to operate, says Bellona.

<http://www.barentsobserver.com/floating-npps-pose-proliferation-risk.4563690-16176.html>

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International Herald Tribune

Tuesday, March 3, 2009

## **U.S.-Russia Missile Deal could be a Setback for Czechs**

By Judy Dempsey

BERLIN: President Barack Obama's offer to Russia to halt the deployment of the U.S missile defense system in Eastern Europe in return for Russian help to prevent Iran from developing long-range weapons could be a serious setback for the Czech Republic's strategic interests, analysts said Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Poland, which reached an advantageous bargain with Washington in the event the missile defense system is not deployed, was more sanguine in its reaction to the U.S. offer.

Both the Czech Republic, which is to be the host of a high-tech radar facility, and Poland, the planned site of 10 interceptor missiles, see the defense system as a guarantee of extra protection from the United States, above and beyond the mutual aid that NATO members can demand of allies if they are attacked.

Both countries have strong memories of Soviet domination and a history of centuries of dismemberment or foreign occupation.

Nikola Hynek, a defense expert at the Institute of International Relations in Prague, noted that without the radar system, there would be no U.S. soldiers in his country. "The government here is becoming very anxious," he said.

One sign of that nervousness was the lack of official reaction from the government in Prague on Tuesday - in contrast to assured statements from the foreign minister of Poland and his spokesman.

The decision to base the radar system in the Czech Republic was signed last July by the administration of former President George W. Bush. A month later, after Russian tanks rolled into Georgia, Poland and the United States agreed to base up to 10 interceptors on Polish territory. Russia denounced the accords, saying any U.S. missile system based in Eastern Europe, which was under Soviet domination from 1945 until 1989, would be considered a threat to Russia.

The Czech and Polish governments have always said that the shield was to protect Europe against possible attack from countries in the Middle East, particularly Iran.

The Czech government, which is firmly pro-Washington, had set very few conditions for stationing the radar system close to Prague, and it has little recourse if the Obama administration decides to halt the project altogether.

Hynek said it was too early to tell how worried the Czech government should be. "Obama is not putting missile defense in the deep freeze as such," he said. "He is putting it in the fridge. It means it can be taken out depending on Russia."

The administration's shift on missile defense was evident during the Munich Security Conference last month. Vice President Joseph Biden Jr. said there that any decision to go ahead with the missile shield in Eastern Europe depended not only on cost, but also the efficiency of the system.

Two weeks ago, at a NATO defense ministers' meeting in Krakow, Poland, the U.S. defense secretary, Robert Gates, asked the Polish authorities for more time before decisions were taken on putting interceptors in Poland.

Poland, which adopted a much tougher negotiating stance - agreeing to accept U.S. interceptors only if its own air defenses were upgraded - struck a much calmer tone after learning of the U.S. offer to Russia.

"We expect the American side to fulfill the agreement made last year," said Piotr Paszkowski, a spokesman for Poland's Foreign Ministry. "Even if the U.S decides not to deploy the interceptors, which is a U.S., not a Polish, project, the government here expects that the U.S will provide Poland with Patriot batteries. This was what was agreed. The two are not interdependent."



Radek Sikorski, Poland's foreign minister, who last week held talks in Washington with the U.S. secretary of state, Hillary Rodham Clinton, told Polish television that "the secretary of state said that we are going to carry out what really matters to Poland." Sikorski said the United States and Poland would go ahead with a deal for "first the temporary and then permanent stationing of a battery of Patriot missiles" in Poland.

"What we would like to be honored is what went along with the missile defense system," added Sikorski, who was in Washington to win support for his campaign to become NATO's next secretary general in June, when the post of the current secretary general ends.

<http://www.iht.com/articles/2009/03/03/europe/shield.php>

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Washington Post

March 4, 2009

## **Obama Team Seeks To Redefine Russia Ties**

By Karen DeYoung, Washington Post Staff Writer

The Obama administration is preparing a wide-ranging set of initiatives designed to put shaky relations between the United States and Russia on a more solid footing, including resumption of strategic arms control talks as early as this spring, reactivation of the moribund NATO-Russia Council and possible U.S. reconsideration of plans to deploy a missile defense system in Eastern Europe, senior administration officials said.

The proposals, which President Obama plans to present to Russian President Dmitry Medvedev when they meet for the first time next month, will also offer enhanced economic cooperation.

The administration hopes that the offer of a comprehensive new strategic relationship will encourage Russia to be more helpful in achieving U.S. goals in Afghanistan and Iran. At the same time, the White House is eager to give Medvedev a chance to put his stamp on the U.S.-Russia relationship, dominated for the past decade by former president and current Prime Minister Vladimir Putin.

But as Obama's national security team rushes to put the package together, officials remain unsure of the reception it will get. An exchange of public comments and private letters between Obama and Medvedev over the past five weeks has left the administration optimistic but uncertain whether the Russian president is willing or able to deliver.

So far, both governments have spoken in generalities, each prodding the other to move toward substance. Medvedev said yesterday that a discussion of missile defense contained in a lengthy letter Obama sent him last month was "a disappointment" and that he was looking for more "specific proposals" when they sit down together at an April 2 economic summit in London.

Obama yesterday disputed news reports that his letter -- a response to a missive from Medvedev -- offered to abandon plans to deploy missile defense components near the Russian border in Poland and the Czech Republic in exchange for Moscow's help in stopping the Iranian nuclear program. He said he had merely repeated a previous, public observation that removal of the Iranian threat would eliminate the need to defend against it.

His message to Medvedev, Obama said, addressed "a whole range of issues, from nuclear proliferation to how we are going to deal with a set of common security concerns along the Afghan border, and terrorism. . . . My hope is that we can have a constructive relationship where, based on common respect and mutual interest, we can move forward."

Despite the attention paid to missile defense, the most urgent task before the administration is putting in place a negotiating team to begin work on a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty to replace the 1991 agreement with Moscow that expires at the end of this year. Although Obama has voiced strong support for additional sharp reductions, he has not specified any numbers. The Russians are likely to favor a relatively slow additional drawdown, but both sides are anxious to begin the process.

Medvedev also touched on other issues in comments made during a visit this week to Spain. "As to our cooperation on Afghanistan," he said, "we are interested in stepping it up rather than stopping it. . . . It is my understanding that this issue is high on the foreign policy agenda of the new U.S. president. We share this approach." Yesterday, the Russian government informed the U.S. Embassy in Moscow that the first shipment of American supplies to Afghanistan crossing Russian territory under a new agreement had reached the border of Kazakhstan.

Some experts say the administration may find itself disappointed by the intractability of the issues involved, while others are critical of what they see as Obama's over-willingness to make concessions. Moscow "will use our desire to bring the temperature down" to its advantage, on issues such as Russia's desire for hegemony over the former Soviet republics on its borders, said Robert Kagan of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Russia's response to the overall U.S. package, officials and nongovernmental experts said, will depend on several intangibles. First is the government's calculation on whether rising public unrest over deteriorating economic conditions in Russia -- including riots in the western city of Vladivostok last month that resulted in the government dispatch of special forces units -- is better countered by blaming the West, or seeking its political and economic support. Putin and other senior Russian officials have drawn parallels between growing domestic opposition in Russia and Western-backed "revolutions" that led to the installation of pro-Western governments in Georgia and Ukraine.

The second consideration is the still-unclear power relationship between Putin and Medvedev, his hand-picked successor. The Obama administration thinks its chances of long-term rapprochement are better with Medvedev, viewed as a member of Russia's new, post-communist generation, than with Putin, a former party member and KGB agent.

"It depends on their domestic political assessment," said Klaus Scharioth, Germany's ambassador to the United States. "I think none of us really knows." He said Russia gave "some positive signals" last month at a security conference in Munich, where Vice President Biden said the Obama administration planned to "push the reset button" on its relations with Moscow, which had sharply deteriorated last year. "But there was no statement saying, 'Yes, we will,' or 'No, we won't,'" Scharioth said of Russia's response. "Just some positive noises."

The NATO-Russia Council, a proven avenue of cooperation between the East and the West whose operations were suspended in the wake of Russia's invasion of Georgia last summer, is likely to be revived at a meeting of NATO foreign ministers this week. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton will then hold her first meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

NATO and the administration are hopeful that an active council will lessen Russia's insistence on maintaining a regional "sphere of influence." NATO's major European players, including Germany, are anxious to move beyond the upheavals of last year resulting from the Georgia conflict and Russia's protests over consideration of alliance membership for Georgia and Ukraine. They would like to make clear to Moscow that both countries are years away from NATO admission, a point the Obama administration, unlike its predecessor in the White House, quietly concedes.

The administration is also open to the possibility of considering missile defense within the council -- a move that would probably be met with protests from Poland and the Czech Republic, both NATO members that view their selection as sites for system components as insurance against Russian influence.

Although looking forward yesterday to dealing with Russia on "common security concerns," Obama was quick to note that any changes in U.S. missile defense plans would "in no way . . . diminish" American security support for Poland and the Czech Republic.

*Staff writer Philip P. Pan contributed to this report from Moscow.*

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/story/2009/03/03/ST2009030301054.html>

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USA Today  
March 4, 2009

## **Obama: Missile System May Not Be Necessary**

By Mimi Hall and Jim Michaels, USA Today

WASHINGTON — President Obama, in one of his first efforts to "reset or reboot" the nation's icy relationship with Russia, said Tuesday he has told Moscow that the United States might not need to build a controversial missile-defense system in Eastern Europe.

In a letter sent last month to Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, Obama included a big *if* — the system could be scrapped, he said, if Iran halted its quest for a nuclear weapon.



Obama said he did not press Russia to exert its influence over Iran or issue a "quid pro quo" for not building the system. "What I said in the letter was, obviously, to the extent that we are lessening Iran's commitment to nuclear weapons, then that reduces the pressure for, or the need for, a missile-defense system," he said.

Russia has bitterly opposed U.S. plans, promoted by the Bush administration, to build missile defenses in Poland and the Czech Republic at a cost of at least \$4 billion.

The United States has been developing such a system on U.S. soil since the 1980s. In light of growing threats from rogue nations, including Iran, the Bush administration pushed hard for expanding the system into Europe.

Obama said he restated the U.S. position that the defense systems are directed at Iran — not Russia. "That has always been the concern — that you have potentially a missile from Iran that threatened either the United States or Europe," he said.

U.S.-Russian relations, soured over a host of issues including U.S. support for missile defense, NATO expansion and independence in Georgia, need improvement, Obama said. "We need to reset or reboot the relationship there," he said. "My hope is that we can have a constructive relationship."

Medvedev called Obama's letter a positive development, using the kind of friendly language that rarely has been used between U.S. and Russian leaders recently.

"Our American partners are ready to discuss the problem, and that's already positive," he said at a news conference in Madrid. "Several months ago, we were hearing different signals: The decision has been made, there is nothing to discuss, we will do what we have decided to do."

James Collins, U.S. ambassador to Russia from 1997-2001, said Obama's letter "should be seen as an opening to engage in a discussion where a whole lot of things are on the table."

Dan Fata, a former senior Pentagon official in the Bush administration, said the missile shield is needed because Iran remains a serious threat. At least five times in the past two years, he said, Tehran has test-launched a long-range missile.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates, a Bush administration holdover, said Tuesday that he told Russian leaders a year ago that without an Iranian missile threat, a defense system wouldn't be needed in Europe. "I don't think at all that this is about trying to put the Russians on the spot," Gates said at a news conference. "I think it is trying to reopen a dialogue and say we are open to talking with you about how we address this problem."

Obama and Medvedev will have a chance to discuss the issue next month, when they meet in London at the G-20 economic summit.

Some observers said they were baffled by Obama's letter. "I'm not sure what the administration is doing," said James Carafano of the conservative Heritage Foundation think tank. "You can't negotiate away something that doesn't exist. It's just nutty."

White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said Obama would weigh a number of factors in deciding whether to proceed with a missile-defense system, "including whether or not the system worked and the cost of the system."

Michael Mandelbaum, a professor at The Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, said Obama's "charm offensive" is not likely to work with Iran, Syria and other U.S. adversaries. But pursuing it with Russia, he said, is the right course.

"If we could trade these (missile) deployments for serious Russian pressure on Iran" to stop its nuclear ambitions, he said, "that would be a very good trade for us."

*Contributing: Associated Press*

[http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2009-03-03-missile\\_N.htm?csp=34](http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2009-03-03-missile_N.htm?csp=34)

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International Herald Tribune

March 4, 2009

## **Russian Welcomes Letter from Obama**

By Ellen Barry

MOSCOW: The Russian president, Dmitri Medvedev, said Tuesday that Russia was open to United States overtures on its proposed missile defense plan, but dismissed the notion of a deal in which the United States would shelve the plan in exchange for Russia's help on Iran.

The statement came in response to a report in The New York Times about a private letter from President Barack Obama to his Russian counterpart, saying the proposed missile defense system would not be necessary if Moscow could help stop Iran from developing long-range weapons and nuclear warheads.

The letter, hand-delivered three weeks ago by senior American officials visiting Moscow, was meant more as an incentive for Moscow to work with Washington on Iran than a specific deal, according to American officials. Both Obama and Medvedev spoke of the letter on Tuesday as an opening to the possibility of cooperation on an issue that has deeply divided their countries.

"If we talk about some bargain or exchange, I can say that the issues were not raised in this way, because it's counter-productive," Medvedev said at a news conference in Madrid, where he was meeting with the Spanish prime minister.

"What we are getting from our U.S. partners shows at least one thing, that our U.S. partners are ready to discuss the issue," he said. "That's good, because only a few months ago we were getting different signals that the decision has been made, there is nothing to talk about, that we will do everything as it has been decided."

Asked about the letter by reporters at an appearance with the British prime minister, Gordon Brown, Obama said it was not "some sort of quid pro quo" but a statement of fact.

"What I said in the letter was that obviously to the extent that we are lessening Iran's commitment to nuclear weapons, then that reduces the pressure for, or the need for, a missile defense system," he said. He added that the discussions with Russia do not "diminish my commitment to making sure that Poland, the Czech Republic and other NATO members are fully enjoying the partnership, the alliance and U.S. support with respect to their security."

Russia has passionately opposed the missile defense plan championed by former President George W. Bush, contending that its siting of radar and other equipment in Poland and the Czech Republic infringed on Moscow's sphere of influence. Before Bush left office, Russia proposed an alternate system that would be jointly operated and integrated with a facility on Russian territory; that offer was rejected.

The Obama administration may be more flexible. Obama has never been a strong proponent of the missile defense plan, saying he will back it only if it can be proved effective and affordable.

The American officials who cast the letter as an incentive rather than a specific offer spoke on condition of anonymity, because the letter had not been made public.

Asked about the letter at a news conference in Washington on Tuesday, Defense Secretary Robert Gates said the administration was not "trying to put the Russians on the spot."

"I think it is trying to reopen a dialogue," he said, adding that one option was "incorporating them in a partnership that makes them a full partner in missile defense, because the reality is that the missiles that the Iranians are testing can reach a good part of Russia, as well as Eastern Europe and part of Western Europe."

Still, the possibility of a change to the missile defense plan has unnerved leaders in Poland and the Czech Republic, who staked political capital in signing treaties with the United States. Gates said he had asked the Polish prime minister, Donald Tusk, to "give us a little time" to review relations between the United States and Russia.

"My sense is that the Poles were somewhat reassured," he said. "They obviously would like to see us move forward quickly and strongly."

Czech authorities made no official comment on the matter on Tuesday. Nikola Hynek, a defense expert at the Institute of International Relations, said it was too early to say how worried they should be.

"Obama is not putting missile defense in the deep freeze as such," he said. "He is putting it in the fridge. It means it can be taken out depending on Russia."

Alexander Rahr, a Russia expert at the German Council on Foreign Relations, said the Obama administration was willing to back down on the plan, but "they want the Russians to pay a price." It was clear on Tuesday, he said, that the Russians are unwilling to link the issues of Iran and missile defense, especially amid the publicity that surrounded the letter from Obama.

"It is not in the interest of Russian diplomacy to be presented on the world stage as a junior partner, as a country which has been pressed into doing something," he said.

The matter will likely come up at a Friday meeting in Geneva between Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. The two presidents will meet for the first time on April 2 in London.

<http://www.iht.com/articles/2009/03/03/america/04russia.php>

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Washington Post  
EDITORIAL

## **No Deal**

March 4, 2009

Pg. A14

PROPOSERS of a diplomatic "grand bargain" between the Obama administration and Russia -- by which the United States would obtain Russian cooperation in stopping Iran's nuclear program in exchange for concessions to what Moscow sees as its security interests in Europe -- got a double drenching of cold water yesterday. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev told a news conference that "any swaps" between action on Iran and a planned U.S. missile defense system in Poland and the Czech Republic "would not be productive." For his part, President Obama made clear that his administration's decisions on missile defense would be guided not by Russian behavior but by the threat from Iran.

As Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton prepares for her first official meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Saturday, these were revealing and important clarifications. Vice President Biden's call for a "reset" in U.S.-Russian relations and long-standing questions about the efficacy and cost of missile defense may have encouraged Russian expectations that the new administration could be bluffed into retreating from the deals struck by the Bush administration with Poland and the Czech Republic to deploy missile interceptors and a radar station. If undertaken as a concession to Russia, any such move would have the effect of undermining the bonds between former Soviet bloc members and the United States and NATO -- which, of course, is Moscow's aim.

That's why it was important for Mr. Obama to say yesterday that his willingness to reconsider missile defense would be based on judgments about Iran, not about Russia -- and that any decision made in that context does not diminish "my commitment to making sure that Poland, the Czech Republic and other NATO members are fully enjoying the partnership, the alliance and U.S. support with respect to their security." One way to back up that principle is for the administration to make clear in public -- as it has in private -- that deployment of a U.S. Patriot missile defense battery to Poland, promised by the Bush administration, will go ahead regardless of what is ultimately decided about the larger missile defense system.

Such a statement might be somewhat out of sync with the honeymoonish tone of much of the public rhetoric between Moscow and Washington since Mr. Obama's inauguration. But as Mr. Medvedev made clear yesterday, so far there isn't much substance behind the cheery facade. He declared that Russia, which is about to complete a nuclear power plant for Iran and has repeatedly opposed tough sanctions, is "already working in close contact" with the United States on Iran. In other words, while Russia expects the new administration to "show common sense" on missile defense by proposing something that "would be acceptable to us," it shouldn't expect more help stopping an Iranian bomb. Perhaps the Kremlin leadership believes that "reset" is another way of saying "capitulate." If so, Ms. Clinton would do well to clarify the administration's policy when she meets Mr. Lavrov.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/03/AR2009030303285.html>

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Los Angeles Times  
March 3, 2009

## **Clinton says U.S. Diplomacy Unlikely to End Iran Nuclear Program**

By Paul Richter

Reporting from Sharm El Sheik, Egypt — The Obama administration has already concluded that a diplomatic overture to Iran, one of the central promises of the president's election campaign, is unlikely to persuade Tehran to give up its nuclear ambitions.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton told the foreign minister of the United Arab Emirates in a private meeting Monday that it is "very doubtful" a U.S. approach will persuade Iran to relent, said a senior State Department official, who spoke on condition of anonymity under customary diplomatic rules.

But Clinton, in Egypt for a conference to raise money for the war-scarred Gaza Strip, said an Iranian rebuff could strengthen America's diplomatic position.

She told Foreign Minister Sheik Abdullah ibn Zayed al Nuhayyan that the move would quell complaints that the United States has not exhausted diplomatic routes. At the same time, it could help persuade U.S. allies to join it in increasing pressure on the Islamic regime.

Clinton said that Iran's "worst nightmare is an international community that is united and an American government willing to engage Iran," according to the State official. During the election campaign, President Obama made an overture to Iran one of his central foreign policy ideas, saying that engagement would be better than the Bush administration's policy of seeking to isolate adversary regimes. Bush refused to deal with Iran while the country's rulers pursued a nuclear program that they insist is intended for civilian energy but that U.S. officials and allies maintain is for producing the fuel for nuclear weapons.

Many foreign policy experts, including some in Democratic circles, have questioned whether talks alone would persuade Iran to give up its nuclear program.

Clinton's comments suggest that even as U.S. officials weigh a diplomatic overture, they have begun looking ahead to the next stage in dealing with Iran. The remarks also indicate that the administration believes it may need to press ahead with the diplomatic and economic pressures begun by the Bush administration.

The U.S. official said that Nuhayyan expressed concern over a U.S.-Iranian deal, which could leave Persian Gulf states with reduced Western support amid tensions with Tehran.

But he said Clinton assured the minister that the administration is "under no illusions" and would consult with allies in the region.

The new U.S. administration is considering several ways to try to engage Iran. Richard C. Holbrooke, the special envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan, has said that he would like to enlist Iranian help to stabilize its neighbor to the east, Afghanistan. And Clinton last month named veteran Mideast negotiator Dennis B. Ross as a special advisor, with Iran as part of his assignment.

U.S. officials elsewhere sought to rekindle progress on international disarmament. In Vienna on Monday, the Obama administration disclosed plans to reduce its nuclear arsenal as a way of persuading other nations, including Iran, to scale back their own ambitions.

U.S. envoy Gregory L. Schulte, speaking in a closed-door meeting of the International Atomic Energy Association's board of governors, noted the new administration's "readiness for direct engagement with Tehran."

Schulte also said the U.S. would resurrect nuclear disarmament efforts that fell by the wayside during the Bush administration, including "dramatic reductions" in U.S. and Russian stockpiles and a ban on production of "new nuclear weapons material," according to a copy of his prepared remarks.

"President Obama supports the goal of working toward a world without nuclear weapons," he said. "His administration intends to renew America's commitment to disarmament."

The statement came a day after U.S. Navy Admiral Michael G. Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Iran had enough low-enriched uranium for a weapon, a conclusion also drawn by International Atomic Energy Agency officials last month.

An Iranian official Monday denied the claims as "baseless."

Clinton's comments about Iran came on the sidelines of a gathering in this Sinai resort of more than 75 countries for a Gaza Strip donors conference. Clinton told the group, "We are committed to a comprehensive peace between Israel and its neighbors, and we will pursue it on many fronts."

Her reference to a "comprehensive peace" hinted at U.S. interest in a deal between Israel and Syria, as well as between Israel and the Palestinians.

The Egyptian sponsors of the event said it brought pledges of \$4.5 billion for humanitarian relief and reconstruction. But officials from Europe, Arab states and international organizations also demanded that Israel ease restrictions on border crossings to speed the delivery of relief supplies and rebuilding materials after a 22-day Israeli offensive aimed at stopping cross-border rocket fire from Gaza.

"The situation at the border crossings is intolerable," said United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

Officials at the conference also called for a settlement between the two rival Palestinian movements, Hamas and Fatah. Europeans warned they would not continue to fund reconstruction work unless Israelis and Palestinians tried to settle their differences.

"Will we once again reconstruct something that we built a few years ago and has now been hammered and flattened?" asked Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre. "Many donors, despite pledges, will wish to see political progress before they commit to infrastructure reconstruction."

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-clinton3-2009mar03,0,2804433.story>

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Deutsche Welle  
4 March 2009

## **Five Security Council Powers, Germany Offer Direct Dialog With Iran**

A joint statement from the six nations -- Britain, China, France, Russia and the US plus Germany -- called on Iran to "take this opportunity for engagement with us and thereby maximize opportunities for a negotiated way forward.

"We remain firmly committed to a comprehensive diplomatic solution, including through direct dialogue," the so-called P5+1 nations said in a statement read to a closed-door meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) board of governors in Vienna.

The six voiced serious concern at Iran's atomic advances and increasing restrictions on UN inspectors trying to keep track of them, but did not mention toughening sanctions as a way to rein in Iran.

Sanctions threats have been common in statements by Western members at earlier IAEA meetings. But Russia and China oppose further punitive steps.

### **Iranian threats**

Less than a day after the P5+1 statement, Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei maintained his country's aggressive rhetoric against Israel, urging the Muslim world to join the Palestinian resistance against the Jewish state.

"The only way to save Palestine is resistance," Khamenei said in his address to open a two-day global summit Tehran organized in aid of Gaza and the Palestinians.

"Support and help to Palestinians is a mandatory duty of all Muslims," he said. "I now tell all Muslim brothers and sisters to join forces and break the immunity of the Zionist criminals.

"Even the new president of the United States who came to power with the motto of changing the (George W) Bush administration's policies talks about unconditional commitment to secure Israel. This is defending terrorism by a government."

Wednesday also saw comments from the commander-in-chief of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, Mohammad Ali Jafari, who said Tehran possessed missiles capable of hitting Israeli nuclear installations.

Military analysts question whether Iran's missiles were sophisticated enough to hit such long-range targets.

### **US diplomatic effort**

Tuesday's statement from the six nations came one day after the US ambassador to the IAEA, Gregory Schulte, outlined his country's intention to "strengthen diplomatic efforts" to address the challenges of Iran and Syria.

Under President Barack Obama, the United States has signaled its intention to enter into dialog with nations such as Iran, a step away from the isolationist strategies of the former US administration under George W. Bush.

Iran has reacted cautiously to Washington's new approach, saying it was open to fair talks while demanding fundamental changes in US policy, by which it means US-driven sanctions and accusations that Iran actively seeks nuclear weapons and supports terrorism.

### **Little progress**

After six years of investigation, the IAEA has been unable to confirm whether Iran's nuclear program is for entirely peaceful purposes, as Tehran claims, or a cover for a nuclear weapons program, as the West fears.

Iran has stated that its uranium enrichment facility in Natanz produces fuel for a civilian nuclear reactor and not for any atomic weapons program. The country has dismissed indications that it has conducted weapons-related research in the past.

But Iran's first satellite launch in February and the announcement that its first nuclear power plant in Bushehr could go online within months have heightened proliferation concerns in many Western countries.

Tehran has ignored three rounds of UN sanctions aimed at halting its uranium-enrichment program, and has turned its back on economic and political incentives by the P5+1 offered in return for a cessation of nuclear activities.

IAEA Director General Mohamed El Baradei on Tuesday expressed "serious concern" over Iran's refusal to answer questions from the nuclear watchdog on past research that could have been related to nuclear weapons.

"In this regard, we call on Iran to cooperate fully with IAEA by providing the agency such access and information that it requests to resolve these issues," the P5+1 statement said.

### **Missile defense and Iran**

Obama said Tuesday that preventing Iran from developing a nuclear weapon would diminish the need for the US to base a missile-defense system in Eastern Europe.

Obama commented on the planned deployment after *The New York Times* reported he had written to Russian President Dmitri Medvedev conveying his position. But Obama downplayed suggestions that he would give up the system in return for a stronger commitment from Russia on Iran.

"What I said in the letter was that, obviously, to the extent that we are lessening Iran's commitment to nuclear weapons, then that reduces the pressure for, or the need for, a missile-defense system," Obama said at a meeting with British Prime Minister Gordon Brown at the White House on Tuesday.

"The missile defense that we have talked about deploying is directed not towards Russia, but Iran" he said. "That has always been the concern, that you had potentially a missile from Iran that threatened either the United States or Europe."

<http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,4071760,00.html>

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Washington Post  
March 5, 2009  
Pg. A11

## **Iranian Leaders Fault Obama, Warn Israel Again**

By Thomas Erdbrink, Washington Post Foreign Service



TEHRAN, March 4 -- Iranian leaders said Wednesday that President Obama follows the "crooked ways" of his predecessor, repeated earlier warnings that Iranian missiles could reach Israel and reiterated that the Holocaust was "a lie."

Iran's president and other officials have at times appeared to welcome Obama's proposal for greater dialogue, but the remarks Wednesday suggested that Iranian positions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and other issues would pose obstacles. The comments were also a reminder that Iran's complex leadership structure brings together clerics and political leaders with views that sometimes differ sharply.

In his first public comments on the new U.S. administration, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who is Iran's supreme leader and has the final say over foreign policy, said Obama had adopted former president George W. Bush's support for Israel, which Khamenei called a "cancerous tumor."

"Even the new American president, who came to office with the slogan of bringing change in the policies of the Bush administration, avows unconditional commitment to Israel's security," Khamenei told representatives of pro-Palestinian groups at a conference in Tehran. "This commitment to Israel's security means the defense of state terrorism, injustice, oppression and a 22-day-long massacre of hundreds of Palestinian men, women and children," he said.

Khamenei was referring to Israel's recent assault on Hamas, the Iranian-backed Islamist movement that controls the Gaza Strip and rejects Israel's existence. About 1300 Palestinians, among them hundreds of civilians, and 13 Israelis, including three civilians, were killed during fighting in December and January.

Khamenei criticized Palestinian leaders who have sought a negotiated settlement with Israel, including Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas. "By now, those who advocated a 'pragmatic' approach under the illusion of the invincibility of the Zionist regime, and who succumbed to surrender and compromise with the usurpers, should have realized their mistakes," Khamenei said.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, while briefing reporters traveling from the Middle East to Brussels, said Khamenei's comments about Abbas "were a clear interference in the internal affairs of the Palestinian people." She added: "There is a great deal of concern about Iran in the entire region."

Iranian leaders, including President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, have repeatedly said that they are ready for "real" talks with the Obama administration but that they first want to see a significant change in U.S. policies.

"That the Obama administration wants to think all this through and take its time is a positive sign," Seyed Mohammad Marandi, head of the North American studies department at the University of Tehran, said in a recent interview. But he added that Iranian leaders need to see "change from them on several issues."

Iranian politicians seek U.S. recognition of their country's cleric-led system of government and its development of nuclear power, which Iran says is for peaceful purposes but which the United States, Israel and other nations worry is part of a weapons program. Iranians have also demanded that the United States apologize for orchestrating the 1953 overthrow of President Mohammed Mossadegh and for the 1988 downing of an Iran Air passenger jet, with 290 people aboard, by an American warship. U.S. officials said at the time that the airliner was shot down inadvertently and apologized.

"At this point, there is no need for Iran to compromise," Marandi said. "Let's face it, [Americans] are in a poor position. Their economy has run aground, they have no need for more instability in the region. They need us more than we need them."

On Wednesday, Khamenei made clear that Iran's support for "resistance movements" such as Hamas and Lebanon's Hezbollah is unequivocal; the United States has designated both as terrorist organizations. Iranian politicians and analysts say that their country's backing of Palestinian groups parallels U.S. political, financial and military support for Israel.

The United States and European nations favor a negotiated two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but Khamenei said a "democratic referendum" was the path to a resolution.

"All those who have a legitimate stake in the territory of Palestine, including Muslims, Christians and Jews, could choose their own system of government in a general referendum," Khamenei said.

Ahmadinejad, also speaking to the conference of pro-Palestinian groups, repeated his assertion that the Holocaust is a "big lie." Earlier statements of this kind have drawn international criticism and caused Israeli leaders to worry that Iran seeks Israel's destruction.

"The Holocaust story -- people without a country, country without a people -- and portraying Zionists as wronged and oppressed are among the great lies of our age and the prelude to crimes and occupation," Ahmadinejad said.

The commander in chief of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, Mohammad Ali Jafari, told reporters at the conference that "the nuclear facilities in different parts of the land under the occupation of the Zionist regime are in the reach of Iran's missile defenses," according to the semi-official Iranian Students' News Agency.

Iran has long said that its missiles are capable of reaching Israel, but Jafari's mention of possible targets was unusual.

Western missile experts say Tehran's most advanced ballistic missile, the Shahab-3, has a range of about 900 miles and would be capable of hitting targets in Israel. The Shahab-3 was built with North Korean help, and Iran has sought to make improvements in recent years, including a solid-fuel engine that offers greater stability.

Iran likes to show off its advanced missiles because "it plays to the crowd -- it's a macho thing," said a senior Israeli official in Washington, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was not cleared to discuss such matters publicly. But the official said Iran would be unlikely to use its missiles in an attack because of the certainty of retaliation.

*Staff writers Glenn Kessler, traveling with Clinton, and Joby Warrick in Washington contributed to this report.*

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/04/AR2009030400330.html>

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London Times  
March 3, 2009

## **Japan Prepares for First Use of 'Son of Star Wars' Missile Defence**

Richard Lloyd Parry, Tokyo

Japan is preparing to deploy a controversial missile defence system against an imminent North Korean rocket launch, in what could be the first use of the so-called "Son of Star Wars" system to knock out an intercontinental ballistic missile.

In a move that could have strategic implications for the whole northeast Asian region, the Japanese Government plans to dispatch naval destroyers equipped with anti-missile systems to the seas off North Korea, as the isolated dictatorship continues preparations for the launch of a rocket.

As long as the weapon passes through the atmosphere far above Japan, as seems to be the intention, the system will probably not be fired. But if the rocket malfunctions and threatens any of its islands, then Japan will become the first nation to use a long-range missile defence system in anger.

"If it is capable of reaching Japan then it goes without saying that we will react," Japan's defence minister, Yasukazu Hamada, said today. "We have been making preparations, including BMD [ballistic missile defence], for any incident which could affect Japan. If it will affect Japan then it will be our target."

Japan's Kyodo news agency reported today that the destroyers *Kongo* and *Chokai* will be sent to the Sea of Japan that separates the two countries. Both are equipped with SM-3 missiles that are designed to intercept an incoming ballistic missile midway through its course, after it has passed beyond the earth's atmosphere and into space. But the political and strategic risks of such an attempt are very large.

If Japan tries and fails to take out a North Korean rocket, it will be an international humiliation and a crushing blow to the expensive missile defence programme, which is already expected to surpass its estimated cost of as much as \$8.9 billion (£63 billion) by 2012. If it succeeds, it will rattle China, which already fears that the combined US-Japan missile defence effort will undermine its own limited nuclear deterrent.

But it will also enrage North Korea, which insists that the rocket being prepared at the Musudan-ri launch site in the northeast of the country is not a weapon but the vehicle for the launch of a peaceful communications satellite. Of all its foes – including South Korea, and its ally and protector the United States – none are more hated than the "imperialist" Japanese. To lose a proud piece of technology to a Japanese attack would provoke intense and unpredictable fury.

Whatever the outcome it would be a new chapter in the history of warfare – anti-missile missiles have not been used in combat since US Patriot missiles took out the Iraqi Scuds in the first Gulf War in 1991, and they were short-range weapons fired at a relatively low altitude.

In 1998 North Korea test fired its first long-range missile, a Taepodong-1, which flew over northern Japan, causing fear and consternation. To their chagrin, Japan's Self-Defence Forces were not even aware that it had been fired until they were informed by the US military. In 2002 a second test of a more advanced missile exploded 40 seconds after launch, demonstrating the weapons' capacity for unpredictable malfunction. The next year, Junichiro Koizumi, then Japanese Prime Minister, a close friend of President George Bush, decided to acquire a two-part missile defence system.

The first part is the ship-launched SM-3s, which target a missile in space at a range of up to 1,000 kilometres. The second consists of batteries of ground-launched Patriot Advance Capabilities-3 or PAC-3s, which are aimed at any as they come into strike. These have already been positioned around Tokyo, and will eventually be deployed around Japan's other biggest cities.

The first test of the SM-3 in 2007 was successful, but the second one in September last year failed, leaving uncertainty over the effectiveness of the system even in the highly structured situation of a test exercise. Masako Toki, of the Centre for Non-Proliferation Studies in Washington DC, wrote last month: "In a real missile launch, it's highly unlikely that the launch location, timing of launch, and flight trajectories will be known, making it almost impossible to predict the percentage of success of an intercept in a real-world attack."

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article5838084.ece>

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China View  
4 March 2009

## **U.S. Remains Committed to Removing Nuclear Facilities on Korean Peninsula**

BEIJING, March 4 (Xinhua) -- U.S. special representative on the issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Stephen Bosworth said that the new U.S. administration remained committed to removing nuclear facilities on the Korean Peninsula.

Bosworth made the remarks at a briefing here Wednesday after meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi, saying that the United States' aim of removing nuclear facilities will not change.

Bosworth also said his visit to Northeast Asia demonstrated the importance that the new administration attached actively to the issues of the Korean Peninsula, and the most important of those is to resume the six-party talks as soon as possible.

The six parties ended their third meeting during the sixth round of talks last December in Beijing without substantial progress on how to verify the DPRK's nuclear facilities.

"We believe the six-party-talks are central to all our efforts to deal with what's happening on the Peninsula," Bosworth said.

The DPRK said last month that it was preparing to launch a communications satellite, which South Korea and the United States officials believed could be a test of a long-range missile that in theory could reach the U.S. west coast.

"It was far better not to see the launch," Bosworth stressed.

Bosworth arrived here on Tuesday, and is scheduled to fly to Tokyo on Thursday for talks with Japanese officials. After that, he will also travel to Seoul to meet with meet Russian as well as South Korean officials.

Bosworth served as U.S. ambassador to the Republic of Korea from 1997 to 2000, and executive director of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization from 1995-1997. He was dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University before taking up the present post.

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-03/04/content\\_10944400.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-03/04/content_10944400.htm)

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Global Security Newswire

## **U.S. Can Shoot down North Korean Missile, Admiral says**

Wednesday, March 4, 2009

The United States is capable of bringing down any missile fired from North Korea, the head of U.S. Pacific Command said recently (see *GSN*, March 3).

Navy vessels loaded with interceptor missiles are prepared to fire "on a moment's notice," Keating said in an interview with ABC News.

His comments followed Pyongyang's announcement that it was preparing to fire a satellite into orbit from a northeastern launch facility. The United States and other nations suspect North Korea actually plans another test-launch of its Taepodong 2 long-range missile.

Should it look like it's something other than a satellite launch, we will be fully prepared to respond as the president directs," Keating said. "Odds are very high that we'll hit what we're aiming at. That should be a source of great confidence and reassurance for our allies."

The Navy has installed Aegis missile defense systems on 18 ships. The technology has also been deployed on Japanese and South Korean naval vessels, Agence France-Presse reported.

Heritage Foundation analyst Bruce Klingner said there is a 70 percent to 80 percent likelihood of a North Korean missile launch.

"It is the next step in Pyongyang's escalating efforts to try to get the U.S. to soften its demands in the six-way talks and back away from the requirement of international standards for verification" of nuclear disarmament, he said.

A missile test could produce a number of long-term responses, such as increased missile defense activities in South Korea, Klingner said.

"A successful launch would significantly and overnight alter the threat perception in Northeast Asia," he said (see *GSN*, March 3; Agence France-Presse/Channelnewsasia.com, March 4).

Seoul said today that Pyongyang appears to be continuing to move toward a launch, which observers believe could occur in late March or early April, the Associated Press reported.

"Various preparations are progressing [but] a launch does not appear to be very imminent," said South Korean Unification Minister Hyun In-taek.

Stephen Bosworth, U.S. special envoy to North Korea, said during a trip to China that Beijing and Washington "both believe it would not be a good idea to have a missile launch."

Bosworth is traveling to China, Japan and South Korea for talks on the nuclear negotiations, which have been stalled since late last year (Jae-Soon Chang, Associated Press/*Yahoo!News*, March 4).

[http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw\\_20090304\\_8706.php](http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20090304_8706.php)

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International Herald Tribune

March 5, 2009

## **North Korea Threatens Civilian Planes**

The Associated Press

SEOUL: North Korea warned Thursday that it might shoot down South Korean commercial airliners flying near its territory during U.S.-South Korean military drills next week, ratcheting up threats against its neighbor.

"Security cannot be guaranteed for South Korean civil airplanes flying through the territorial air of our side and its vicinity" while the military exercises are under way, the official KCNA news agency reported, quoting a statement from a government official.

The U.S. and South Korean militaries are slated to begin 12 days of exercises across South Korea on Monday - a joint annual effort that the allies call routine defensive drills but that the North has condemned as preparations for an attack.

The rise in rhetoric from Pyongyang comes amid mounting regional concerns that it will test-fire a long-range missile capable of reaching Alaska. Analysts say North Korea could use the launch as a bargaining chip in talks with Washington and four other nations seeking to disarm the regime of its nuclear program.

On Wednesday, President Barack Obama's new U.S. envoy to North Korea warned the country against conducting a missile test.

Stephen Bosworth, speaking in China before heading to Japan, said that Beijing and Washington were united in opposition to Pyongyang's alleged missile launch plan, saying, "We both believe it would not be a good idea to have a missile launch."

The North maintains it plans to send a communications satellite into orbit as part of its space program. But neighboring nations believe it intends to test a long-range missile, which would entail a similar delivery system.

The North is banned from engaging in any ballistic activity under a UN Security Council resolution passed in 2006 after the regime conducted an underground nuclear test and unsuccessfully test-fired a long-range missile.

The South Korean unification minister, Hyun In Taek, said Wednesday that "preparations are progressing" at the launch site in North Korea but said the launch did not appear imminent.

Analysts say North Korea is trying to grab Obama's attention with the threat of a missile at a time when the disarmament-for-aid pact signed in 2007 remains on hold and Pyongyang's ties with Seoul are at their lowest point in a decade.

After warning the United States against staging any attack on the North, the North promised Thursday that it would retaliate against "South Korean warmongers" if they went ahead with the joint exercises.

Seoul's "increased war hysteria for aggression against" North Korea "will only invite merciless and powerful retaliatory actions of the army and people" of North Korea, the state-run Minju Joson newspaper said in a commentary carried Thursday by KCNA.

Pyongyang routinely accuses South Korea and the United States, allies against in North in the 1950-3 Korean War, of plotting an attack.

Security pact with Australia

Australia and South Korea announced a new joint security cooperation pact on Thursday, The Associated Press reported from Canberra.

The South Korean president, Lee Myung Bak, and the Australian prime minister, Kevin Rudd, presented a statement on closer defense and security relations in a joint news conference in the national capital. Rudd called on North Korea to halt "threatening language" and to return to six-country talks aimed at ending the country's nuclear program. He also expressed his support for South Korean efforts to deal with North Korean threats.

<http://www.iht.com/articles/2009/03/05/asia/north.php>

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HSToday.com  
03 March 2009

## **GAO to DNDO: Improve Plans to Fight Nuclear Smuggling**

Mickey McCarter

The Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO) must concentrate on developing a global nuclear detection strategy with an immediate focus on the domestic part of that strategy, while conferring with other federal agencies that deal with nuclear threats, according to a report from congressional investigators released Monday.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) found DNDO has made progress in increasing detection capabilities for radiological threats to address "critical gaps and vulnerabilities" in protection against the smuggling of a nuclear weapon. This progress has included the establishment of radiation detectors at land border areas between US ports

of entry, aviation cargo holds, and ports for loading sea vessels, said the GAO report, titled "Nuclear Detection: Domestic Nuclear Detection Office Should Improve Planning to Better Address Gaps and Vulnerabilities."

"However, DNDO is still in the early stages of program development, and has not clearly developed long term plans, with costs and time frames, for achieving its goal of closing these gaps by expanding radiological and nuclear detection capabilities," the report added.

The report cited a couple of examples where DNDO progress has been incomplete. In its collaboration with US Customs and Border Protection (CBP), DNDO has tested radiation detection equipment for use between the ports of entry. But the tests are not complete and CBP is not expected to field the equipment until 2012.

In another example, DNDO is working with the US Coast Guard and Washington state law authorities to run a maritime pilot program in the Puget Sound of Washington. DNDO is sending test equipment and developing screening procedures for radiation detectors that would go there under a three-year pilot program. But DNDO has not made much progress in determining how to measure the success of the pilot and therefore expand it to other locations, the GAO reported, nor has it resolved some of the technological challenges the program presents.

To assist with overcoming these challenges and others, GAO acknowledged, DNDO is developing a global nuclear detection strategy as investigators recommended last year. The GAO added in its report that DNDO should concentrate on standing up the domestic part of that strategy.

To spur development of these plans, DNDO ought to collaborate through the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) with the departments of Defense (DOD), Energy (DOE) and State through their Joint Annual Interagency Review process. While DNDO has no authority over programs in these other departments, the office should draw upon their expertise, past lessons and ongoing efforts to build its global strategy, GAO said.

DHS rebutted GAO's observations with the assertion that DNDO has made substantial progress in the development of its global strategy.

"None of these gaps has a 'quick fix,'" wrote Michael McPoland of the DHS GAO liaison office. "In many cases, new technology and new concepts of operations will be needed to fully address the vulnerabilities. These new approaches will need to be adapted and refined based on lessons learned in the field to withstand the practical demands of deploying detection systems in challenging new settings. In some cases, a sustained effort over many years will be necessary."

McPoland added that long-term problems do not have instant, detailed solutions and DNDO would make progress on these details as opportunities present themselves.

DNDO calculated that DoD, DOE, DHS, and State had budgets totaling \$2.8 billion for combating nuclear smuggling globally in fiscal 2007, the last year for which it could provide a full analysis. About \$1.1 billion of that was dedicated to programs to combat nuclear smuggling overseas and another \$1.1 billion was for nuclear detection programs at US borders and within the United States.

[http://www.hstoday.us/index2.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=7462&pop=1&page=0&Itemid=128](http://www.hstoday.us/index2.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=7462&pop=1&page=0&Itemid=128)

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Washington Post  
Thursday, March 5, 2009

## **Task Force Urges Broader Role for Nuclear Labs**

By Walter Pincus  
Washington Post Staff Writer

The nation's nuclear weapons laboratories would be spun out of the Energy Department and become the center of an independent Agency for National Security Applications under a proposal to be released today by a bipartisan task force formed by the Stimson Center, a research organization devoted to security issues.

Changing the status of Los Alamos, Lawrence Livermore and Sandia National Laboratories and making wider use of the labs for other research would help reestablish and assure "the nation's global science and technology leadership in the 21st century," said the task force report. At present, the labs are directed by the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), which is a semiautonomous part of the Energy Department.



"This action would enable the laboratories to remain trusted third party advisors as well as providers of capabilities, but it would initiate a full transformation from a Cold War, industrial age mindset and culture," according to the task force, which was chaired by Frances Fragos Townsend, who was an assistant to President George W. Bush for homeland security and counterterrorism, and retired Lt. Gen. Donald Kerrick, who was deputy national security adviser to President Bill Clinton.

The proposal comes at a time when the future of the nation's multibillion-dollar nuclear weapons complex is under review. Congress last year halted a Bush administration plan to develop a new nuclear warhead and delayed an expensive plan to reduce the size of the complex and modernize many of its 50-year-old facilities. Members held up these programs while awaiting development of a comprehensive nuclear strategy that would determine the future size of the nation's nuclear stockpile and the complex needed to build or refurbish it.

A congressionally mandated commission is studying that issue and is to report later this year. The Defense Department's approach to the stockpile's future also will be determined by year's end, when it completes its Nuclear Posture Review. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) had ordered the Energy Department and the Defense Department to study the costs and potential benefits of transferring budget and management of NNSA or any of its components to Defense beginning in fiscal 2011.

Though still in its initial stage, the OMB idea of putting the nuclear complex under the Pentagon has already drawn widespread criticism from Capitol Hill and elsewhere. Rep. Ellen O. Tauscher (D-Calif.), who is chairman of the House Armed Services strategic subcommittee and whose district includes the Livermore laboratory, wrote to OMB Director Peter Orszag last month opposing the idea. Saying that moving the NNSA into the Defense Department had been rejected in the past, Tauscher wrote that "civilian control over our nuclear weapons laboratories and related facilities was established to ensure some independence from the military."

The Stimson task force recommendations stem primarily from concerns that reduced spending on nuclear weapons would result in a funding cut for the national laboratories at a time when their parent agency, the Energy Department, faces other growing financial demands.

For several decades, in order to draw some of the nation's best scientists, the laboratories have taken on work in addition to dealing with nuclear weapons. The task force said nuclear weapons funding in the lab budgets ranged from 43 percent at Sandia to 60 percent at Lawrence Livermore. But the remainder of the work they do, for the Pentagon, State Department, intelligence community and Department of Homeland Security, helps "to innovate new technologies to help address emerging national security threats."

As currently operated, however, the task force said, the NNSA has to work within "an excessively bureaucratic" Energy Department culture that "has infiltrated NNSA as well," with the laboratories the eventual losers.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/04/AR2009030403614.html>

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Wall Street Journal  
OPINION  
March 4, 2009

## **Pakistan Is Steadfast Against Terror**

By Asif Ali Zardari

Last week's trilateral meeting in Washington between U.S. leaders and the foreign ministers, military and intelligence leaders of my country and Afghanistan was a crucial step forward in the war on terrorism and fanaticism in South and Central Asia. For the first time, Pakistan, the U.S. and Afghanistan agreed on a coherent military and political strategy to isolate and deal with those intent on destabilizing our region and terrorizing the world.

By reaching agreement, we have overcome the past legacy of distrust that has characterized Pakistani-Afghan relations for decades and has complicated strategic planning and common goals. Monday's terrorist attack against the Sri Lankan cricket team in Lahore shows once again the evil we are confronting.

But if Pakistan, Afghanistan and the U.S. are to prevail in the ongoing battle against terrorism, straight talk is essential. And this straight talk begins with a fact: Pakistan's fight against terrorism is relentless. Since the election

of a democratic government last year, we have successfully conducted military operations in our Federally Administered Tribal Areas and other parts of the country, capturing or killing high officials of al Qaeda and the Taliban, as well as hundreds of their fighters. In the highly volatile Swat Valley, our strategy has been to enter into talks with traditional local clerics to help restore peace to the area, and return the writ of the state.

We have not and will not negotiate with extremist Taliban and terrorists. The clerics with whom we have engaged are not Taliban. Indeed, in our dialogue we'd made it clear that it is their responsibility to rein in and neutralize Taliban and other insurgents. If they do so and lay down their arms, this initiative will have succeeded for the people of Swat Valley. If not, our security forces will act accordingly. Unfortunately, this process of weaning reconcilable elements of an insurgency away from the irreconcilables has been mischaracterized in the West.

Moreover, we have not and will not condone the closing of girls' schools, as we saw last year when militants closed schools in pockets of Swat Valley. Indeed, the government insists that the education of young women is mandatory. This is not an example of the government condoning or capitulating to extremism -- quite the opposite.

Our transitional Pakistani democracy is still restructuring after decades of episodic dictatorship. One of the most critical institutions that needs to be resurrected is an independent judiciary. Recent decisions of the Pakistani Supreme Court have been criticized by many in my country, and indeed by some in my political party. In particular, my government had taken legal steps to overturn a lower-court decision that would not allow former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his brother to serve in public office. The Supreme Court, however, chose to uphold the lower court decision. This is the nature of an independent judiciary, and this is the process of rule of law.

An overwhelming majority (57 out of 63) of superior court judges dismissed under the previous government's emergency rule has returned to the court. The judiciary of Pakistan has been restored, and is independent. In a mature polity, when one loses in court, one respects the decision of the court and moves on, seeking other constitutional remedies. It is not the nature of democracy to appeal court decisions to the streets. This is part of the culture of cynicism and negativity that for too long has permeated Pakistani politics.

When the U.S. Supreme Court decided the presidency in *Bush v. Gore*, Vice President Al Gore did not call for his millions of supporters to take to the streets to try to overturn by force the ruling of the court. He and the Democratic Party accepted the Supreme Court's decision and moved on. The Democrats later regained the Congress and now the presidency. That is the mark of a successful democracy. The recent agitation in the province of Punjab (supposedly in favor of Mr. Sharif) is an attempt to destabilize our democracy and a major distraction from Pakistan's critical problems, which include reviving our economy and fighting violent extremism.

I have long fought for democracy in my country. Thousands in my party and other parties have died through the years fighting against dictatorship and tyranny. The greatest champion of democracy in my country, my wife Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, gave her life fighting for the values of liberty. This is an existential battle. If we lose, so too will the world. Failure is not an option.

*Mr. Zardari is president of Pakistan.*

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123612594791323985.html>

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Washington Times

March 5, 2009

## **Terrorist Group Recruits In Midwest**

By Lolita C. Baldor, Associated Press

As people crowded into the capital for Barack Obama's inaugural celebration, senior counterterrorism officials huddled in the White House situation room, frantically trying to unravel intelligence about a possible attack on Washington.

By the afternoon of Jan. 20, as Mr. Obama took the oath of office, the threat of a terror plot by the Somalia-based al-Shabab organization had been debunked, but the flurry of activity underscored growing worries about this Islamic militant group.

"I think they are a serious problem, and I don't think that we should be glib and take it lightly," said Theresa Whelan, deputy assistant secretary of defense for African affairs. "Are they the ones that are going to plan the next major

terrorist attack in the United States and carry it out? Probably not. But could they provide some of the foot soldiers for it? Yes."

The State Department considers al-Shabab a terrorist organization with links to al Qaeda, something the group denies. Al-Shabab, which means "the Youth," has been gaining ground as Somalia's Western-backed government crumbles. The group's goal is to establish an Islamic state in Somalia.

U.S. counterterrorism officials say they detect a disturbing pattern, one that mirrors al Qaeda methods and could spawn homegrown insurgents and suicide bombers in the U.S.

Counterterrorism officials suspect that al-Shabab is recruiting young men from Somali communities in Minnesota and other Midwestern states, luring them back to their home country for terror training and creating cells of fighters who could travel to other countries, including the United States, to launch attacks.

Four months ago, a young Somali man left Minneapolis to become a suicide bomber. He detonated a bomb he was wearing - one step in a series of coordinated attacks targeting a U.N. compound, the Ethiopian Consulate and the presidential palace in Somaliland's capital, Hargeisa.

It was the first known time that a U.S. citizen was a suicide bomber.

In response, the FBI stepped up efforts to reach out to community leaders in the Minneapolis area, where young Somali-American men have disappeared and are thought to have traveled to Somalia to fight along with militants. FBI spokesman E.K. Wilson said that since the disappearances, the bureau has worked to expand relationships with community elders, religious leaders and others active in the local Somali population, which numbers about 80,000.

"We want them to come forward with concerns about their young people," Mr. Wilson said. "We share the same concerns. We want to help, and we need people with concerns to come forward with information."

U.S. officials aren't sure who is recruiting for al-Shabab, or whether recruits trained in Somalia have been returning to the United States. That uncertainty increased the concerns about the inaugural weekend intelligence reports. Counterterrorism officials described the time as tense as they faced a threat that appeared to grow in credibility as the hours passed.

At the National Counterterrorism Center in Northern Virginia, law enforcement, intelligence and military authorities worked to dissect the threat, which emanated from a suspect in Uganda. At the White House, outgoing Bush administration officials and their incoming Obama counterparts monitored the situation while preparing for the presidential transition.

The most alarming aspect, said one former Bush official, was that they knew the inauguration would be a good target for any terrorist group, because of the huge crowd and political significance. And there already had been several cases that linked some people, including Somalis, in the United States to terrorist acts in Somalia. Those included:

- Daniel Maldonado, a New Hampshire native, trained at a terrorist camp in Somalia alongside al Qaeda members in an effort to help overthrow the Somali government. He was captured by Kenyan military while trying to flee Somalia and is serving a 10-year prison sentence in the U.S.
- Rupert Shumpert, who was from Seattle, was indicted on counterfeit charges in a case that also concluded he spoke often in support of jihad. He fled the country and went to Somalia, where he was killed last year.
- Shirwa Ahmed, a young Somali-American, left his family in Minnesota and blew himself up in one of the coordinated suicide bombings in Somalia last Oct. 29.

Ms. Whelan, who has been a senior policy adviser on African issues at the Pentagon for 14 years, said the al-Shabab threat is complex and evolving, potentially becoming more serious as al Qaeda or other Islamic ideologues try to make inroads into the Somali communities in the U.S.

"There has been a lot of movement back and forth [to Somalia] for a long time, and that leaves us open to the potential that weaknesses will be exploited by those that have jihadist aims," she said. "We need to be very careful because we have seen that we are internally vulnerable because of the Somali Diaspora."

Federal authorities won't say whether they've tracked any of the Somali youth returning to the U.S. after traveling to their homeland and receiving terror training. But FBI Director Robert S. Mueller III expressed concern last week about efforts to recruit Somali youth and asserted that the FBI believes others are being "radicalized."

In remarks to the Council on Foreign Relations on Feb 23, Mr. Mueller said it is particularly unfortunate that parents who came to the United States to escape violence in their home country would see their children drawn back into violence, calling it a perversion of the immigrant's story.

He said it "raises the question of whether these young men will one day come home, and, if so, what they might undertake here."

The al-Shabab threat also has attracted attention in Congress, where the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee is planning to hold a hearing on the rise of al-Shabab.

*AP writer Devlin Barrett contributed to this report.*

<http://washingtontimes.com/news/2009/mar/05/terror-group-finds-recruits-in-midwest/>

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