



USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER

CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL

Maxwell AFB, Alabama

Issue No. 696, 20 March 2009

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RIA Novosti
17 March 2009

Second S-400 Air Defense Regiment Put into Service in Russia

MOSCOW- The second regiment equipped with advanced S-400 Triumf air defense missile systems has been put into combat service in Russia, the defense minister said on Tuesday. In 2007, Russia successfully conducted live firing tests of the S-400 air defense complex at the Kapustin Yar firing range in south Russia's Astrakhan Region, and deployed the first missile regiment equipped with the new system to protect the airspace surrounding Moscow and industrial zones in the center of Russia's European territory.

The S-400 Triumf (SA-21 Growler) air defense system is expected to form the new cornerstone of Russia's theater air and missile defenses up to 2020 or even 2025. The S-400 is designed to intercept and destroy airborne targets at a distance of up to 400 kilometers (250 miles), twice the range of the U.S. MIM-104 Patriot, and 2.5 times that of the S-300PMU-2. The system is also believed to be able to destroy stealth aircraft, cruise missiles, and ballistic missiles, with an effective range of up to 3,500 kilometers (2,200 miles) and a speed of up to 4.8 kilometers (3 miles) per second. A regular S-400 battalion comprises at least eight launchers with 32 missiles and a mobile command post, according to various sources. The new state arms procurement program until 2015 stipulates the purchase of enough S-400 air defense systems to arm 18 battalions during this period.

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090317/120604177.html>

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RIA Novosti
17 March 2009

Russia to Begin Large-Scale Rearmament of Armed Forces in 2011

MOSCOW, -- A comprehensive rearmament of Russia's Armed Forces will begin in 2011, President Dmitry Medvedev said on Tuesday. "Last year we equipped a number of military units with new weaponry, and we will start large-scale rearmament of the Armed Forces in 2011," Medvedev said at a meeting with Defense Ministry officials.

He said that the current military-political situation in the world calls for a thorough modernization of the Russian Armed Forces, primarily its strategic nuclear forces. "They must be able to accomplish all tasks aimed at ensuring Russia's military security," Medvedev said, adding that this process would involve the enhancement of combat readiness of all military units. The president reiterated that "despite the current financial difficulties, Russia has never had better favorable conditions to create modern and highly efficient armed forces."

Medvedev also said that the Russian Security Council would soon endorse a national security strategy for the period up to 2020. "Long-term plans in the defense sphere should be based on a Russian national security strategy for the period up to 2020, which the Security Council should endorse in the near future," Medvedev said.

The president announced last year that Russia would make the modernization of its nuclear deterrent and Armed Forces a priority in light of the August military conflict with Georgia. Russia's military expenditure has been steadily growing recently, and the country reportedly plans to increase the current defense budget of \$40 billion by 50% in the next three years. Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov said on Tuesday that the share of modern weaponry in the Russian Armed Forces would reach 30% by 2015, and would total 70% by 2020.

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090317/120599733.html>

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London Times
March 17, 2009

Hawkish Medvedev Orders Major Rearmament for Russian Military

TONY HALPIN, MOSCOW

President Medvedev ordered a major military rearmament today, warning that Russia faced the risk of "significant conflict". In a stark assessment, Mr Medvedev said that Nato was still intent on expanding closer to Russia's borders and told military chiefs to raise the combat readiness of the country's armed forces. Russia's Defence Minister also lashed out at the United States, accusing it of plotting to take control of energy and mineral resources in states bordering Russia. Mr Medvedev called for modernisation of Russia's nuclear forces and said that "large-scale rearmament" of the army and navy would commence in 2011. "Analysis of the military-political situation in the world shows that serious conflict potential remains in some regions.... attempts to expand the military infrastructure of Nato near the borders of our country are continuing," he told Defence Ministry officials.

"The primary task is to increase the combat readiness of our forces, first of all our strategic nuclear forces. They must be able to fulfil all tasks necessary to ensure Russia's security." The hawkish tone of the remarks came despite recent improvements in relations between Russia and Nato, and attempts by President Obama to ease tensions with the United States over missile defence in eastern Europe that built up under his predecessor George W. Bush. They also coincided with Gordon Brown's most progressive speech yet on nuclear disarmament, in which the Prime Minister called for a "forward plan" to be agreed by nuclear and non-nuclear states. Anatoly Serdyukov, the Defence Minister, told the same meeting that the US was attempting to gain control of oil and gas resources in Russia's former Soviet neighbours in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Mr Serdyukov warned that "the likelihood of armed conflicts and their potential danger for our state are rising" as America sought to expand its influence around Russia's borders and push Moscow out. "The military-political situation has been characterised by the US leadership's desire to attain global leadership and expand the United States' and their allies' military presence in regions adjacent to Russia," he said. "America's aspirations have been aimed at getting access to mineral, energy, and other resources of CIS countries, and it has actively supported processes aimed at ousting Russia from the area of its traditional interests." Mr Serdyukov admitted, however, that most of Russia's weaponry was "old and obsolete". Modern equipment accounted for only 10 per cent of the army's existing arsenal. Mr Medvedev ordered an increase in military exercises to improve combat readiness and told army chiefs that "no expense should be spared for that" despite the economic crisis sweeping through Russia.

The conflict with Georgia over South Ossetia last August had exposed weaknesses in Russia's weaponry and communications systems that had to be rectified quickly. Mr Medvedev has stationed more than 7,000 troops in South Ossetia and Georgia's other breakaway region of Abkhazia. He recognised them as independent after the war, a move condemned by Nato, the US and the European Union. The previous Republican administration under President Bush pushed hard for Nato to offer Membership Action Plans to Georgia and Ukraine, a move fiercely opposed by Moscow. Mr Obama has given no indication so far that he is as enthusiastic about Nato expansion. He held out the prospect of a deal with the Kremlin over missile defence earlier this month in return for help with preventing Iran developing a nuclear bomb. Mr Obama wrote to his Russian counterpart, saying that the plan to base interceptor missiles in Poland and a radar in the Czech Republic would be unnecessary if the nuclear threat from Iran was removed. Mr Medvedev insisted that he would not engage in any "trade-off" but appeared encouraged at the time by what he described as the new signals coming from Washington. The initiative came shortly after Joe Biden, the US Vice-President, declared that the US wanted to press the "reset" button on relations with Russia.

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article5923560.ece>

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New York Times
March 18, 2009

Russia Plans 'Large-Scale Rearming'

By CLIFFORD J. LEVY

MOSCOW — President Dmitri A. Medvedev said on Tuesday that Russia would begin a “large-scale rearming” in 2011 in response to what he described as threats to the country’s security. In a speech before generals in Moscow, Mr. Medvedev cited encroachment by NATO as a primary reason for bolstering the armed and nuclear forces. Mr. Medvedev did not offer specifics on how much the budget would grow for the military, whose capabilities deteriorated significantly after the fall of Soviet Union. Russia has increased military spending sharply in recent years, but with the financial crisis and the drop in the price of oil, the country’s finances are under pressure, suggesting that it would be hard to lift these expenditures further.

Even so, Mr. Medvedev’s timing was notable. He is expected to hold his first meeting with President Obama in early April in London on the sidelines of the summit of the Group of 20 industrialized and developing countries. In recent weeks, he has said he is looking forward to the meeting, and both he and Russia’s paramount leader, Prime Minister Vladimir V. Putin, have been expressing some optimism about improving relations with the United States under the new administration.

Mr. Medvedev’s comments on Tuesday, though, indicated that Kremlin did not want the United States and its NATO allies to presume that Russia was coming to the table from a position of weakness. “An analysis of the military-political situation in the world shows that there are a range of regions where there remain serious potential for conflicts,” Mr. Medvedev said. “Threats remain that can bring about local crises and international terrorism. NATO is not halting its efforts to widen its military infrastructure near the borders of our country. All of this demands a quality modernization of our armed forces.” Mr. Medvedev emphasized that Russia would not be deterred in this plan by the financial crisis. His announcement comes as the Kremlin has already begun an effort to overhaul the operations of the armed forces, which are still run largely according to Soviet-style dictates.

While Russia’s far larger military easily triumphed over Georgia’s in the conflict in August, the fighting exposed what many experts described as flaws in training, weapons and equipment.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/18/world/europe/18medvedev.html>

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Washington Post
March 18, 2009
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Russia Signaling Interest in Deal on Iran, Analysts Say

Still, Obama Effort Faces Obstacles

By Philip P. Pan and Karen DeYoung, Washington Post Foreign Service

As President Obama seeks to recast relations with Russia and persuade it to help contain Iran's nuclear ambitions, he must win over leaders who are deeply suspicious of U.S. intentions and who have long been reluctant to damage what they consider a strategic partnership with Iran. But the Kremlin has indicated it is willing to explore a deal with Washington, and analysts say it may be more open to new sanctions against Iran than expected.

The Obama administration has all but decided not to make a new push for sanctions until after it tries engaging Iran diplomatically and improving ties with Moscow, according to administration officials and Russia analysts. If the overture to Iran fails, as many expect, administration officials believe they will be able to make a stronger case for sanctions to Russian leaders they hope will be more invested in a new relationship with the United States.

In a meeting last week with a bipartisan commission studying U.S. policy toward Russia, President Dmitry Medvedev expressed alarm in "very graphic language" over Iran's successful test launch of a satellite last month, linking it to Tehran's nuclear program, said Dmitri Simes, director of the commission. "Medvedev said it demonstrated how far-reaching Iran's nuclear ambitions are, and that he was very concerned," said Simes, who is also president of the Nixon Center in Washington. "He felt it was a clear challenge to both Russian and American interests and said he would like both countries to work on this challenge together."

In another sign of Russian concern, Iranian Defense Minister Mostafa Mohammad Najar traveled to Moscow last month for talks that were expected to focus on delivery of Russia's advanced S-300 antiaircraft missile system, which Iran says it has signed a contract to buy. But Russian media reported that the Kremlin informed him it was putting the deal on hold. Both the United States and Israel have objected to the sale. In remarks during Najar's visit, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov denied that Russia was toughening its stand toward Iran, but called for

intensification of international efforts to settle the nuclear standoff. He appeared to accept the Obama administration's argument that progress on the Iranian issue could help remove another major problem in U.S.-Russia relations -- American plans to build a missile defense shield in Eastern Europe.

Simes said Russian leaders appear to be signaling their interest in striking a strategic bargain with Washington. "They want to send a message to the Obama administration that they're prepared to have a new relationship, but it will have to be quid pro quo," he said. "If they have to sacrifice their special relationship with Iran, they want to see a change in their relationship with the United States." Russia has backed three rounds of sanctions against Iran in the U.N. Security Council but blocked a fourth set of sanctions last summer as relations between Washington and Moscow soured after the Russian-Georgian war in August. In the meeting last week, Simes said, Medvedev indicated that Russia was willing to consider "serious sanctions" against Iran but argued that sanctions alone would not be enough and should be accompanied by a new package of incentives for Iran to cooperate.

What Obama is willing to offer to either Russia or Iran is unclear. The administration is conducting separate internal reviews of U.S. policy toward Iran and Russia, and administration officials declined to discuss the strategy on the record while the reviews are ongoing.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton has already said Iran will be invited to an international conference on Afghanistan in The Hague on March 31. Other moves under consideration in the policy review include low-level contacts in countries where both the United States and Iran have embassies, further discussions on cooperation in Afghanistan and a proposal for each country to open a representative office in the other's capital.

Meanwhile, the administration has said it plans to "reset" relations with Russia and quickly engage Moscow in nuclear arms control talks. After meeting in Geneva this month, Clinton and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov agreed to make a priority of negotiating a pact to replace the landmark Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, which is set to expire in December. Clinton said she wanted Obama and Medvedev to have a general plan for a new treaty before they meet for the first time at the Group of 20 summit in London on April 2.

Administration officials believe putting the arms control talks at the top of the agenda will reinforce Russia's self-image as an equal partner that shares the same goals as the United States. At the same time, the administration appears to be playing down high-profile issues that angered Russia during the Bush administration, including the missile defense shield and the push to bring Ukraine and Georgia into NATO. Other moves under discussion include a drive to repeal the Jackson-Vanik amendment, the Cold War-era measure imposing trade sanctions on Russia and other countries because of human rights violations.

But Russian analysts said the administration's approach faces several hurdles. Russia does not want Iran to build a nuclear weapon, but it sees the problem with less urgency than the United States and believes the prolonged standoff with Tehran gives it leverage over Washington. In addition, analysts said, Russia's leaders will be wary because previous administrations promised better relations but then ignored Russian concerns on issues such as missile defense and NATO expansion.

Russian leaders may also prefer to continue demonizing the United States to divert public anger as Russia weathers a severe economic crisis, said Georgy Mirsky, a foreign policy scholar at the Institute of World Economy and International Relations in Moscow. Vladimir Sotnikov, a research fellow at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, said U.S. officials overestimate Russia's influence on Iran and underestimate the Islamic republic's strategic value to the Kremlin. Russia sees Iran as an important partner in a volatile neighborhood, and it appreciates, and worries about, Iran's influence on Muslim populations in southern Russia and in the neighboring countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia, he said.

At the same time, Russia can apply only limited economic pressure on Iran, he said. With less than \$3 billion in bilateral trade annually, far behind Japan, China, Germany and Italy, Russia doesn't make the list of Iran's top 10 trading partners. Alexander Pikayev, a top arms control scholar in Moscow, said Russian policy toward Iran will be determined by competing interest groups and political factions. Defense manufacturers and the atomic energy industry oppose tougher sanctions, for example, but the United States could win over the latter by reviving a bilateral pact on civilian nuclear cooperation that was frozen after the Georgian war, he said.

Pikayev said Medvedev may be more likely to support sanctions because a breakthrough in U.S. relations would boost his political stature at home and set him apart from his powerful predecessor, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. Putin might resist, but his relationship with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is said to be strained and he surprised Russia's foreign policy establishment by endorsing earlier U.N. sanctions, Pikayev said. "The consensus for improved relations with the United States is wider than for any Iran policy," Pikayev said. "That gives the U.S. some room to maneuver."

Pan reported from Moscow, and DeYoung reported from Washington.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/17/AR2009031703033.html>

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RIA Novosti
18 March 2009

Russia Has Not Delivered S-300 Missile Systems to Iran - Source

MOSCOW, - Iran has not yet received any S-300 air defense systems under a 2007 contract and the deal depends on the leadership in Moscow, a Russian military exports source said on Wednesday. "S-300 systems have not been yet delivered to Iran under the contract concluded two years ago. The contract itself, though, is being gradually executed," the source in the Federal Military-Technical Cooperation Service told RIA Novosti.

Iranian media have repeatedly reported, citing senior security officials, that Russia has started delivering elements of the advanced version of the S-300 missile to Tehran. "Russia is interested in fulfilling the contract, which is worth hundreds of millions of dollars," the source said, adding that the future of the contract would largely depend on the current situation in international affairs and the position of the Russian leadership.

The latest version of the S-300 family is the S-300PMU2 Favorit, which has a range of up to 195 kilometers (about 120 miles) and can intercept aircraft and ballistic missiles at altitudes from 10 meters to 27 kilometers. It is considered one of the world's most effective all-altitude regional air defense systems, comparable in performance to the U.S. MIM-104 Patriot system.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said on Wednesday that military-technical ties between Moscow and Tehran had always been transparent and confirmed that S-300 air defense systems had not been supplied to Iran yet. "We have delivered to Tehran a variety of equipment for defense purposes, which cannot destabilize the situation on the region," the ministry said in a statement.

Iran recently took delivery of 29 Russian-made Tor-M1 air defense missile systems under a \$700-million contract signed in late 2005. Russia has also trained Iranian Tor-M1 specialists, including radar operators and crew commanders. The S-300 system is significantly superior to the Tor-M1.

Commenting on the S-300 deal, Ruslan Pukhov, director of the Moscow-based Center for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies, suggested that the Kremlin regards military-technical cooperation with Iran as leverage in a political game with the West. "Moscow is using the S-300 contract, as well as its cooperation with Iran in general, simply as a tool in a political tradeoff with the West, rather than as a means to satisfy its fundamental defense and commercial interests," Pukhov said.

Meanwhile, he said that arms deliveries to Iran are important to Russia because Moscow is quickly losing its positions on key Asian arms markets in China and India. "In these circumstances, it would be unwise to ignore the Iranian market with its potential demand valued at \$300-500 million a year," the analyst said. Pukhov warned that if Russia continued its cautious and two-faced policy in relation to Iran, Tehran would eventually choose China as key arms supplier, which could in the near future offer the Islamic Republic competitive products in all segments of the arms market.

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090318/120623475.html>

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Council on Foreign Relations
18 March 2009

Russians See U.S. Missile Defense in Poland Posing Nuclear Threat

Interviewee: Pavel Felgenhauer, Defense Columnist, Novaya Gazeta

Interviewer: Bernard Gwertzman, Consulting Editor, CFR.org

Pavel Felgenhauer, an independent defense analyst in Moscow, says some Russian military leaders fear the U.S. missile defense system planned for installation in Poland and the Czech Republic is really intended to deploy nuclear-armed missiles. Felgenhauer says some Russian military officials warn these missiles could present a deadly first-strike threat against Moscow. Felgenhauer says the Kremlin wants a new arms control treaty with the United States that limits missile defense capabilities. "Though many Democrats are rather skeptical about missile defense, the notion of missile defense is nevertheless popular in the United States, and I don't believe that the two sides could approve any new treaty which will not forbid future development of a global missile defense," he says.

How would you describe the overall relationship between the United States and Russia? President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev plan their first summit meeting in London around April 1, just ahead of the G-20 meeting.

There's guarded hope that the relations may improve. There's the political will expressed from both sides to try to improve relations. That does not mean, however, that that's going to happen.

Now the key issue from the Russian side in recent years has been the plan to develop a missile defense in Poland and the Czech Republic, ostensibly to protect against possible Iranian missiles. Is that still the main issue worrying the Russian side?

Yes, it's seen as very undesirable by Moscow. The Russian military has been telling its political leaders that this missile plan is actually not what the Americans say it is. The Russian military says that these missiles will be nuclear-armed because the Russian military doesn't believe that non-nuclear defensive missiles are possible. At least most of them don't.

Please explain.

Russia has its own deployed missile defense shield. This is its nuclear defense. A nuclear warhead, a megaton-quality capable of exposing a couple of kilometers of targets, can disable incoming nuclear warheads. The Russian military believes that such a missile defense is more or less possible, but the American notion of non-nuclear warheads, "bullets hitting bullets," is a smokescreen. They believe that nuclear missiles will be deployed in Poland near Russia and these nuclear missiles will have also a first-strike capability and could hit Moscow before [Russia's response] could get airborne, so this is going to actually be seen not so much as missile defense as a deployment of first-strike capability.

And that's why Russia is so nervous.

That's why Russia is so insistent that there should be Russian inspectors on the site to see that there is no nuclear deployment. What made Moscow so nervous specifically about the [planned] deployment in Poland is that, as a missile defense, it cannot really threaten Russia at all. But it's seen differently as a nuclear first strike threat.

Is the Russian concern about the missile deployment also political?

Moscow does not like the Americans deploying any kind of military infrastructure in the former Warsaw Pact countries like Poland, the Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria, and also of course the Baltic republics [Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania]. Moscow would want to be consulted on any military infrastructure deployment in these former Soviet-dominated nations, which would actually mean that Russia would have an equal power over deployment of any military infrastructure. Then there's the problem of missile defense in not just Poland and the Czech Republic, but the [potential for] global missile defense being created by the United States. Right now there is no global defense, but sometime after 2020 or 2030 this defense could be deployed and could threaten the effectiveness of the Russian nuclear deterrent.

So right now, in the run-up to this April 1 summit in London, Moscow has further spelled out its desire for a new treaty on arms control, which includes the creation of some kind of updated Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty. Moscow very much wants in writing a pledge from the United States that a global missile defense will not develop. This, I believe, is the main stumbling block in the future relationship between the Kremlin and the Obama administration. Though many Democrats are rather skeptical about missile defense, the notion of missile defense is nevertheless popular in the United States, and I don't believe that the two sides could approve any new treaty which will not forbid future development of a global missile defense.

There was a well-publicized but unpublished letter from Obama to Medvedev which apparently touched on missile defense but indicated that the United States would be willing to slow down the deployment in Poland and the Czech Republic if there were signs that Iran had agreed to halt its nuclear program. How much influence does Russia have on Iran?

Not much at all, actually. And that's why this notion that was reported in the press was more or less turned down by Moscow. It was seen as an American hoax to say, "Well, there will be no missile defense in Poland if you pressure Iran to stop its nuclear and missile program." We know that we cannot do that, and by accepting such an exchange, we in fact would legalize the deployment of missile defense in Poland and the Czech Republic.

Iran is rather independent from Moscow. Of course, there were attempts a couple of years ago to form a kind of partnership with Iran, but this has run into different kinds of problems over time. We sell them weapons, of course, but not all the weapons they want. Israel pressured us not to sell them the long-range S-300 anti-aircraft missiles. Moscow, by the way, now has very good relations with Israel.

Don't the Russians sell the Iranians nuclear technology?

That's right. We sell them some nuclear technologies, but again with a sort of limit. Iran has territorial claims in the Caspian which Russia does not accept. Iran does not really want Russia to restore Soviet-style influence in Central Asia. So on some issues we agree with them and other issues we disagree with them. And they are not our client.

Let me go to another issue. When the president of Kyrgyzstan was in Moscow the Russians offered to give him a loan of \$2.5 billion, and he then said the American base at Manas had to close. Yet the Russians in another voice said they'd allow NATO civilian aid to Afghanistan to go through Russia by railroad. Is this an effort by Moscow to show that it wants to control its former Soviet republics?

Yes, of course we want to control them. What that means is that we want to show Washington that if they want to have logistical support from former Soviet territories for operations in Afghanistan, they have to go to Moscow and make a deal here.

That was a rather crude move with the Kyrgyz president, a public sort of bribe.

Well that's the way the Russians deal. That's the old Soviet style. It's kind of a gangland style of negotiating.

The United States is promoting a global conference on Afghanistan later this month through the United Nations. What is Russia's view on Afghanistan?

Russia does not want the United States to have a foothold in Central Asia. We don't like them, of course, increasing their presence in Afghanistan, which is close to Central Asia. But on the other hand, we don't want the Taliban to succeed and again threaten Central Asia as it happened when the Taliban more or less took over all of Afghanistan in the year 2000. Russia then was actively supporting the forces of the Northern Alliance and closely worked with the United States in overthrowing the Taliban regime. This rather mimics the policy of Iran, which also doesn't work for the United States but also doesn't like the Taliban at all.

So if you're a U.S. president or secretary of state or defense secretary, are you going to get help from the Russians?

That depends on other issues actually. Most of the Russian foreign policy since after 9/11 has leaned toward having a kind of a grand deal with the United States. After 9/11 the Kremlin believed it had a deal: We will help the Americans in the "war on terror." We'll help you in Afghanistan. In return, you should give us an undisputed sphere of influence in the former Soviet space.

The leaders of present Russia want to stabilize the situation, meaning that they want to be in power for at least twenty more years. And they want to control not only Russia but also to control or have a kind of belt of dependency from the former Soviet republics around Russian borders. They want the West to be out, meaning not Western business whose money is welcomed, but they want the Western ideas and values that the Western governments spin, like democracy, not to be spread out through the former Soviet states. We want to control it, and we don't want any kind of democratic revolutions around.

http://www.cfr.org/publication/18813/russians_see_us_missile_defense_in_poland_posing_nuclear_threat.html?breadcrumb=%2Fpublication%2Fpublication_list%3Ftype%3Dinterview

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RIA Novosti
19 March 2009

[Russia Says Missile Defense Deal with U.S. Possible](#)

MOSCOW, - There is scope for Russia and the United States to reach an agreement on missile defense, the Russian Foreign Ministry's official spokesman said on Thursday. "In theory, we have every opportunity to agree on the missile defense issue," Andrei Nesterenko said. He also said Russia welcomed the Czech Republic's decision to put off a vote in parliament on the ratification of a deal to place a radar on its soil as part of a U.S. missile shield. "We believe this decision reflects prevailing public opinion in the country," Nesterenko said.

The United States has cited Iran's controversial nuclear program 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.

Top Russian officials have repeatedly expressed their hope that President Barack Obama will not follow through with the missile defense plans of his predecessor, George W. Bush.

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090319/120646905.html>

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Deutsche Welle
17 March 2009

Czech Government Postpones Parliamentary Vote on Missile Defence Shield

The Czech government has temporarily withdrawn controversial missile defence treaties from a parliament ratification process. Prime Minister Mirek Topolanek said the coalition government had decided to withdraw the item from the current parliamentary session because it currently did not have enough support in the lower chamber. He emphasised the government was not giving up on the ratification process, adding that the issue of hosting a US defence radar would be taken up again after talks with Washington and a NATO summit in April. The Czech Parliament's upper house, the Senate, approved the radar treaties in December but the unpopular project has faced hurdles in the closely-divided lower house. The planned base near Prague would be part of a shield that Washington says is aimed at preventing attacks from Iran.

http://www.dw-world.de/dw/function/0,,12215_cid_4107092.00.html?maca=en-en_nr-1893-xml-atom

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Houston Chronicle
March 17, 2009

US Intercepts Ballistic Missile in Hawaii Test

By AUDREY McAVOY Associated Press Writer

HONOLULU —The military's ground-based mobile missile defense system successfully shot down a medium-range ballistic missile during a test in Hawaii, the Missile Defense Agency said Tuesday. It was the first time the military fired two interceptors at one target using the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system, a program designed to shoot down ballistic missiles in their last stage of flight. The drill followed through on a test that was planned for last September but had to be aborted when the target malfunctioned shortly after launch. On Tuesday, the target missile was fired from a vessel off the island of Kauai.

Soldiers with the Army's 6th Air Defense Artillery Brigade then launched two interceptors from the Pacific Missile Range Facility on Kauai's west coast. Two interceptors were used to increase the chances of success. The first shot down the target over the Pacific Ocean. The second was destroyed. "Any time you're in a combat situation, more than likely you will launch more than one interceptor in case one fails," said Missile Defense Agency spokesman Rick Lehner. The target separated in flight, meaning the interceptors had to differentiate between the target missile's warhead and booster.

The military also has Patriot anti-missile batteries to intercept missiles just before they strike. But the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system is designed to protect larger areas than the Patriot system because it

intercepts targets at higher altitudes. Even so, it can only target short and medium-range missiles. Intercontinental ballistic missiles are out of its range. THAAD is one of two missile defense systems the military tests at the Pacific Missile Range Facility on Kauai. The other is the sea-based Aegis system. The Missile Defense Agency coordinates U.S. missile tests in cooperation with the Army, Navy and Air Force. The artillery brigade is based in Fort Bliss, Texas.

<http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/ap/tx/6318170.html>

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New York Times
March 18, 2009

Soaring Costs Jeopardize Missile Defense Systems

By CHRISTOPHER DREW

Congressional auditors estimated that the national missile defense programs could have cost overruns of \$2 billion to \$3 billion, reinforcing widespread expectations that they will be subject to cuts by the Obama administration. The estimate was released by the Government Accountability Office on Monday, as Pentagon officials stepped up a review of the military's most expensive acquisition programs.

The defense secretary, Robert M. Gates, has said he expects to propose cuts in some of the most troubled programs as part of an effort to remake a contracting system that has been plagued by cost overruns and delays. The G.A.O. said that the Pentagon's Missile Defense Agency has spent almost \$56 billion since it began developing and fielding defense systems in 2002, and it is likely to spend \$50 billion more over the next five years.

The auditors also said the agency's budgeting practices were not precise enough, and that 2008 was the sixth consecutive year they could not determine its actual costs. The agency has been developing a layered system of defenses against missile attacks on American troops overseas, on allied countries and on the United States.

Defense analysts say that some parts of the system, like updated versions of the Patriot missile defense batteries and a ground-based system meant to destroy short- to intermediate missiles in late flight, are already working or are close to it. A sea-based Aegis system has been deployed on 18 Navy ships. But the analysts said they believe Mr. Gates and other Pentagon officials are looking closely at more exotic programs, like an airborne laser system being developed by Boeing and a project led by Northrop Grumman to develop a mobile land-based interception system.

James McAleese, who advises defense contractors, said he expected Mr. Gates to seek about \$2 billion in annual cuts from the missile defense programs. Mr. McAleese said it seemed clear that programs still being tested, like the laser, which would be mounted on a Boeing 747 plane, and the mobile system, known as the Kinetic Energy Interceptors, would be among the most vulnerable. But Mira Ricardel, vice president for business development at Boeing Missile Defense Systems, cautioned that the various defense systems were meant to work together in an integrated fashion. "You can't just pull these things out and not have a broader impact," she said. Ms. Ricardel also said that the airborne laser and Boeing's ground-based midcourse defense system met recent developmental milestones. She said the midcourse system recently intercepted a test missile, while the airborne laser is on track for a similar test this year.

But the G.A.O. also found that poorly performing target missiles "have been a persistent problem" in some tests, and it criticized the agency for moving ahead with production on some of the systems despite testing delays. Richard Lehner, a spokesman for the Missile Defense Agency, said it is working to improve its budgeting and program management. He said it also is completing a new master plan to improve the testing.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/18/business/18missile.html?ref=politics>

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Daily Telegraph
March 17, 2009

Gordon Brown: Iran Can Have Nuclear Power if it Works with The West

By James Kirkup, Political Correspondent

The Prime Minister will say that Britain and other Western states will help Iran build civil nuclear plans on condition that it abides by United Nations rules about its energy programmes. The International Atomic Energy Agency has estimated that Iran had already acquired enough low-enriched uranium to build a nuclear weapon, an assessment recently echoed by America's most senior military commander.

Iran insists that its nuclear programme is entirely peaceful, but the United Nations Security Council has told the Islamic Republic to halt its nuclear work until that can be independently verified. Tehran has ignored those orders and last month test-fired its first nuclear power plant at Bushehr. Europe, America and Russia have a standing offer to help Iran with a civil nuclear power programme if it accepts UN inspections, but that offer has made no progress.

Mr Brown will renew the offer following signals from Barack Obama's US administration that he may be willing to enter direct talks with Iran over its nuclear work. In a speech to the Chatham House thinktank, Mr Brown will urge a new "a new international system" to help non-nuclear states peacefully acquire the new sources of energy in order to wean them off fossil fuels like oil and so cut their CO2 emissions. "Iran is a test case for this new philosophy of the right to civil nuclear power with sanctions for rule breakers," Mr Brown will say. "Let me be unequivocal: Iran has the same absolute right to a peaceful civil nuclear programme as any other country. Indeed the UK and international community stand ready to help Iran achieve it. But let me be equally clear that Iran's current nuclear programme is unacceptable."

Iran faces a "clear choice" between co-operation and confrontation, Mr Brown will say. However, he will stop well short of suggesting that failure to co-operate could result in military intervention, instead saying that the consequence will be more economic sanctions and increased tensions with its neighbours. He will say: "I hope that Iran will make the right choice and take advantage of the international community's willingness to negotiate, including President Obama's offer of engagement, rather than face further sanctions and regional instability."

John Hutton, the Defence Secretary, described Mr Brown's speech as "a restatement of what our policy is, and an invitation to Iran." "The offer is still on the table," he told BBC Radio Four. "They can develop their civil nuclear power programme in the know that they will have the fuel they need to power their nuclear reactors. They will have access to the fuel they need. That is guaranteed by the worlds leading civil nuclear powers. "If they were to do that, the terms of trade would very dramatically change," he said. If not, he said, the Iran will be seen as "a very serious proliferation threat and that would be threatening for the region and the world. The consequences of that are unthinkable". Nuclear proliferation is "perhaps the greatest security challenge the world faces at the moment," Mr Hutton said.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/5002140/Gordon-Brown-Iran-can-have-nuclear-power-if-it-works-with-the-West.html>

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China View
18 March 2009

[British PM: Iran Faces "Clear Choice" Over Nuclear Program](#)

LONDON, -- British Prime Minister Gordon Brown warned Iran on Tuesday that it faces a "clear choice" over its nuclear program, and urged Tehran to let the world help it get civil nuclear power. In a two-day conference here, Brown said that unless it agreed to the UN overseeing the program, Iran faced "further and tougher sanctions."

The conference is looking at how countries can gain access to nuclear power without developing their own uranium enrichment facilities that raise the risk of being used for military purposes. More than 100 officials from 37 countries, not including Iran, are taking part in the conference, as well as experts from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the nuclear industry.

Six world powers have offered Iran civil nuclear cooperation and other incentives to try to persuade it to stop uranium enrichment, which the West fears is aimed at building a nuclear bomb. Iran says it only wants nuclear power for peaceful purposes and has pledged to press on with its program.

"Iran's current nuclear program is unacceptable," Brown said. "Iran has concealed its nuclear activities, refused to cooperate with the IAEA, flouted UN Security Council resolutions and its refusal to play by the rules leads us to view its nuclear program as a critical nuclear threat." "Iran therefore faces a clear choice: to continue in this way and face further and tougher sanction, or change to a UN-overseen civil nuclear energy program, that will bring the greatest benefits to its citizens," he said. But Brown added that the world needed "moral leadership," urging "collaboration, not isolation." Britain would be "at the forefront" of efforts toward general nuclear disarmament when international talks are held next year, the prime minister said. "If it is possible to reduce the number we have of our own warheads ... Britain will be ready to do so," he announced.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-03/18/content_11028174.htm

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FOX News
March 19, 2009

[Iranian Defector Reportedly Tipped Off U.S. on Syria Nuke Plant](#)

Associated Press

GENEVA — A top-ranked Iranian defector told the United States that Iran was financing North Korean moves to make Syria into a nuclear weapons power, leading to the Israeli air strike that destroyed a secret reactor, a report said Thursday.

The article in the daily Neue Zuercher Zeitung goes into detail about an Iranian connection and fills in gaps about Israel's Sept. 6, 2007, raid that knocked out Syria's nearly completed Al Kabir reactor in the country's eastern desert.

The February 2007 defection to the United States of Ali Reza Asghari, a retired general in Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards and a former deputy defense minister, provided considerable information on Iran's own nuclear program, said the article, written by Hans Rühle, former chief of the planning staff of the German Defense Ministry. "The biggest surprise, however, was his assertion that Iran was financing a secret nuclear project of Syria and North Korea," he said. "No one in the American intelligence scene had heard anything of it. And the Israelis who were immediately informed also were completely unaware."

Rühle, who did not identify the sources of his information, publishes and comments on security and nuclear proliferation in different European newspapers and broadcasts and has held prominent roles in German and NATO institutions. U.S. intelligence had detected North Korean ship deliveries of construction supplies to Syria that started in 2002, and American satellites spotted the construction as early as 2003, but regarded the work as nothing unusual, in part because the Syrians had banned radio and telephones from the site and handled communications solely by messengers — "medieval but effective," Rühle said.

Intensive investigation followed by U.S. and Israeli intelligence services until Israel sent a 12-man commando unit in two helicopters to the site in August 2007 to take photographs and soil samples, he said. "The analysis was conclusive that it was a North Korean-type reactor," a gas graphite model, Ruehle said.

Other sources have suggested that the reactor might have been large enough to make about one nuclear weapon's worth of plutonium a year. Just before the Israeli commando raid, a North Korean ship was intercepted en route to Syria with nuclear fuel rods, underscoring the need for fast action, he said. "On the morning of Sept. 6, 2007, seven Israeli F-15 fighter bombers took off to the north. They flew along the Mediterranean coast, brushed past Turkey and pressed on into Syria. Fifty kilometers (30 miles) from their target they fired 22 rockets at the three identified objects inside the Kibar complex. "The Syrians were completely surprised. By the time their air defense systems were ready, the Israeli planes were well out of range. The mission was successful, the reactor destroyed," Ruehle said.

Israel estimates that Iran had paid North Korea between \$1 billion and \$2 billion for the project, Ruehle said. Israel has not commented on the strike, but after a delay of several months Washington presented intelligence purporting to show the target was a reactor being built with North Korean help.

Iranian officials were not available for comment because of a national holiday. In general, Iran has been silent about the Syrian facility bombed by Israel. Syrian officials could not be reached for comment. But Syria has denied the facility was a nuclear plant, saying it was an unused military building. It has also denied any nuclear cooperation with North Korea or Iran.

The International Atomic Energy Agency earlier this year said U.N. inspectors had found processed uranium traces in samples taken from the site. Syria has suggested the traces came from Israel ordnance used to hit the site, but the IAEA said the composition of the uranium made that unlikely. Israel has denied it was the source of the uranium. Syria has told diplomats that it built a missile facility over the ruins of the site.

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,509813,00.html>

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Daily Guardian
16 March 2009

New Generation of Nuclear Power Stations 'Risk Terrorist Anarchy'

Terry Macalister

The new generation of atomic power stations planned for Britain, China and many other parts of the world risks proliferation that could lead to "nuclear anarchy", a security expert warned in a report published today.

Governments and multilateral organisations must come up with a strategy to deal the impact of the new nuclear age, which will produce enough plutonium to make 1m nuclear weapons by 2075, argues Frank Barnaby from the Oxford Research Group thinktank in a paper for the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR). "We are at a crossroads. Unless governments work together to safeguard nuclear energy supplies, the rise in unsecured nuclear technology will put us all in danger. Without this, we are hurtling towards a state of nuclear anarchy where terrorists or rogue states have the ways and means of making nuclear weapons or 'dirty bombs', the consequences of which are unimaginable," says Barnaby.

Any country choosing to operate new-generation nuclear reactors in future would have relatively easy access to plutonium, which is used to make the most efficient atomic weapons, along with the nuclear physicists and engineers to design them. These countries would be latent nuclear-weapon powers "and it is to be expected that some will take the political decision to become actual nuclear weapons powers," argues Barnaby in his paper submitted to the IPPR's independent Commission on National Security chaired by former Nato boss, Lord George Robertson.

The issue of nuclear proliferation security has been largely ignored until today as the nuclear power debate has concentrated on the economics, social issues and how to deal with radioactive waste.

Ministers in the UK have made clear their desire to see a new generation of facilities to replace existing ones at a time when North Sea gas is running out and the country needs to reduce its reliance on fossil fuels to meet its Kyoto

protocol carbon emission targets. Nuclear power plants across the life cycle produce one third of the CO₂ of gas-fired ones.

Barnaby says that a shortage of uranium for the kind of reactors that EDF and others are considering building in Britain could encourage them to reprocess fuel and produce more plutonium. But he is equally convinced that a nuclear renaissance will lead to fast breeder reactors which produce more nuclear fuel than they use and which could be useful to terrorists.

The Atomic Energy Agency and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development have already suggested that uranium resources would last less than 70 years if processed using the current generation of light water nuclear reactors.

Barnaby wants the non-proliferation treaty strengthened at a "make or break" review conference next year and would also like to see countries as yet without nuclear capabilities discouraged from obtaining enriched uranium, a problem highlighted in the case of Iran.

Ian Kearns, deputy commissioner of the IPPR's security commission, said it was crucial that the rush to address climate change did not worsen the international security environment. "A global nuclear renaissance, if badly managed, could bring enormous complications in terms of nuclear non-proliferation and terrorism. Policymakers need to be alert to the dangers and to construct policies that bring secure low-carbon energy and a stable nuclear weapons environment," he said.

Companies such as E.ON of Germany who want to build new nuclear plants in Britain declined to comment on the issue.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/mar/16/nuclearpower-nuclear-waste>

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Daily Telegraph
17 March 2009

Gordon Brown Calls for Efforts Towards A World Free From Nuclear Weapons

Mr Brown indicated that Britain stands ready to reduce the number of its own warheads as part of a broader negotiation involving the US and Russia. Multi-lateral reductions in nuclear arsenals should be part of a new "grand global bargain" which will see all states - including Iran - given the possibility to develop civilian atomic power programmes under strict conditions, said Mr Brown.

He restated calls for the Iranian regime in Tehran to take up the offer of a civil nuclear energy programme overseen by the United Nations, or face tougher international sanctions. And he called for improved nuclear security to prevent weapons from falling into the hands of unstable states or terror groups by beefing up the monitoring activities of UN watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and establishing a system of multilateral control of the nuclear fuel cycle.

Speaking to an audience of diplomats and scientists from 37 countries in London, the PM pledged to put Britain "at the forefront of an international campaign to prevent nuclear proliferation and accelerate multi-lateral nuclear disarmament". He announced that the UK will host a conference of recognised nuclear weapons states and will set out a plan for action in advance of next year's Non-Proliferation Treaty review conference.

A key aim of the Road to 2010 Plan will be to develop "a credible roadmap towards disarmament by all the nuclear weapons states through measures that will command the confidence of all non-nuclear weapons states", he said.

Mr Brown called for a "spirit of progressive multi-lateralism" to ensure that nuclear technology is used to provide sustainable energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while the threat of nuclear war is averted. "The only way to guarantee that our children and grandchildren will be free from the threat of nuclear war is to create a world in which countries can, with confidence, refuse to take up nuclear weapons in the knowledge that they will never be required," he said. "I know from President (Barack) Obama and the new US administration that America shares with us the ultimate ambition of a world free from nuclear weapons. "But let me be clear this will be a difficult path that will be crossed in steps - not in one leap "With each step we must aim to build confidence, confidence that

action to prevent proliferation is working and that states with weapons are making strides to live up to their commitments."

Mr Brown said that the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) enshrined a bargain which was "a covenant of hope between nations". "Under this bargain there is a right for all states to develop civil nuclear power. But there is a responsibility for these states to reject the development of nuclear weapons," he said. "And there is a responsibility too on nuclear weapons states to reduce their nuclear weapons." Mr Brown accepted that no nuclear state can be expected to disarm unilaterally. But he added: "Step by step, we have to transform the discussion of nuclear disarmament from one of platitudes to one of hard commitments."

He welcomed the commitment from the USA and Russia - who together possess 95% of all nuclear weapons - to work for a legally-binding successor to the Start arms-reduction treaty. And he added: "For our part - as soon as it becomes useful for our arsenal to be included in a broader negotiation, Britain stands ready to participate and to act. "The nuclear choices being made today will determine whether we face a future arms race or a future of arms control."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/energy/nuclearpower/5005948/Gordon-Brown-calls-for-efforts-towards-a-world-free-from-nuclear-weapons.html>

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Press Release of Senator Lugar
Monday, March 16, 2009

Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program February Update

U.S. Sen. Dick Lugar announced the following accomplishments for the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program in February:

- 8 Intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) destroyed;
- 4 nuclear weapons transport train shipments secured; and
- 1 biological monitoring station built and equipped in Georgia.

The biological monitoring station was the fifth station built and equipped in Georgia. The stations are intended to establish the first line of defense against infectious diseases by detecting outbreaks earlier and serving as a liaison with medical experts in the region and the United States. Of the 17 monitoring stations built to date, one is in Azerbaijan, five in Georgia, two in Kazakhstan, one in Ukraine, and eight in Uzbekistan. The Nunn-Lugar Program is also increasing security in cooperation with host governments to ensure that dangerous diseases and pathogens are appropriately safeguarded and inventoried.

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

The Nunn-Lugar scorecard now totals 7,504 strategic nuclear warheads deactivated, 752 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) destroyed, 496 ICBM silos eliminated, 143 ICBM mobile launchers destroyed, 633 submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) eliminated, 476 SLBM launchers eliminated, 31 nuclear submarines capable of launching ballistic missiles destroyed, 155 bomber eliminated, 906 nuclear air-to-surface missiles (ASMs) destroyed, 194 nuclear test tunnels eliminated, 429 nuclear weapons transport train shipments secured, upgraded security at 24 nuclear weapons storage sites, and built and equipped 17 biological monitoring stations. Perhaps most importantly, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus are nuclear weapons free as a result of cooperative efforts under the Nunn-Lugar program. Those countries were the third, fourth and eighth largest nuclear weapons powers in the world.

Beyond nuclear, chemical and biological elimination, the Nunn-Lugar program has worked to reemploy scientists and facilities related to weapons of mass destruction in peaceful research initiatives. The International Science and Technology Centers, of which the United States is the leading sponsor, engaged 58,000 former weapons scientists in peaceful work. The National Nuclear Security Administration's Global Initiatives for Proliferation Prevention program has funded over 750 projects, engaging thousands of former weapons scientists at over 180 facilities and resulting in the creation of 2,300 new peaceful high-tech jobs.

Lugar makes annual oversight trips to Nunn-Lugar sites around the world.

<http://lugar.senate.gov/record.cfm?id=309843&>

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Daily Telegraph
March 17, 2009

Britain Prepared to Cut Nuclear Arsenal as Part of Arms Deal

By James Kirkup, Political Correspondent

The Prime Minister hinted at fresh reductions in Britain's arsenal as he repeated an offer to help Iran develop a civil nuclear power capacity in exchange for agreeing not to develop nuclear arms. Despite plans to replace the Trident nuclear deterrent with a new system of submarine-based missiles, Britain is already committed to reducing its nuclear weapons.

In the 2006 White Paper confirming the decision to replace Trident, the Government committed itself to cutting the number of operational nuclear warheads to less than 160, almost half the total in 1997.

In a speech to diplomats and foreign policy experts in London, Mr Brown said the UK could now be willing to go below that figure. "If it is possible to reduce the number of UK warheads further, consistent with our national deterrence requirements and with the progress of multilateral discussions, Britain will be ready to do so," he said. The UK will be "at the forefront of an international campaign to prevent nuclear proliferation and accelerate multilateral nuclear disarmament," the Prime Minister said. Mr Brown said the UK would host a conference of recognised nuclear weapons states, seeking to agree plan for action in advance of next year's Non-Proliferation Treaty review conference.

A key aim of the "Road to 2010 Plan" will be to develop "a credible road map towards disarmament by all the nuclear weapons states through measures that will command the confidence of all non-nuclear weapons states", Mr Brown said. Mr Brown's overtures have been carefully co-ordinated with the new US administration, which has signalled a willingness to make concessions on nuclear disarmament. Barack Obama, the US president has announced that he will quickly convene new US-Russia negotiations to replace the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, the landmark agreement to reduce nuclear weapons that signalled the end of the Cold War. The Obama administration has also said it is considering halting all work on the Reliable Replacement Warhead program, which aims to create the next generation of US nuclear weapons.

David Miliband, the Foreign Secretary, last month set out a six-point plan for nuclear arms reduction and non-proliferation. In a policy paper, Mr Miliband supported Mr Obama's plan for deeper cuts in the US-Russian nuclear arsenals. Mr Brown's speech was welcomed by Labour critics of nuclear weapons. Nigel Griffiths, who resigned as a minister, over the decision to replace Trident, said: "Gordon Brown's message that he wants to see the number of nuclear weapons reduced, that UK numbers are not fixed and that he is ready to work reduce them further, is a significant step towards a safer and eventually nuclear-weapon free world.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/5007215/Britain-prepared-to-cut-nuclear-arsenal-as-part-of-arms-deal.html>

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London Times
March 18, 2009

Gordon Brown Offers to Cut Britain's Nuclear Arsenal

Philip Webster and Tony Halpin

Britain stands ready to give up part of its nuclear arsenal as part of a multilateral deal involving all weapon-holding states, Gordon Brown said yesterday. He promised to consider cutting the number of British operational warheads below the present 160 in a move to kick-start the next non-proliferation talks. Britain will continue with its plans to modernise the Trident submarine fleet, according to officials. In future there will be three submarines, each with four missile tubes, in operation at any one time, with a fourth submarine in dock on standby.

President Medvedev of Russia appeared to stall hopes of a multilateral deal, though, when he ordered a major military rearmament yesterday, warning that Nato was still intent on expanding closer to Russia's borders and that his country faced the risk of "significant conflict".

This was the first time that Mr Brown, who was speaking at an international conference in London, had shown a willingness to offer a significant proportion of Britain's nuclear deterrent in negotiations. Britain has cut the number of its nuclear warheads by 50 per cent since Labour came to power in 1997.

Speaking to an audience of diplomats and scientists from 37 countries, Mr Brown pledged to put Britain "at the forefront of an international campaign to prevent nuclear proliferation and accelerate multilateral nuclear disarmament". He announced that Britain would host a conference of recognised nuclear weapons states and set out a plan for action before next year's non-proliferation treaty review conference. A key ambition would be to develop "a credible roadmap towards disarmament by all the nuclear weapons states through measures that will command the confidence of all non-nuclear weapons states", he said.

Mr Brown's speech was generally welcomed by the Conservatives, with William Hague, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, saying that it adopted most of the Tory proposals on proliferation. Mr Brown welcomed the commitment from America and Russia to work for a legally binding successor to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. He added: "For our part — as soon as it becomes useful for our arsenal to be included in a broader negotiation, Britain stands ready to participate."

President Obama will meet President Medvedev for the first time at the G20 summit in London on April 2. The two countries possess 95 per cent of the world's nuclear weapons. Mr Medvedev's hawkish remarks came despite recent improvements in relations between Russia and Nato, and attempts by Mr Obama to ease tensions between Moscow and Washington over missile defence in eastern Europe.

Mr Medvedev called for the modernisation of Russia's nuclear forces and said that "large-scale rearmament" of the Army and Navy would start in 2011. "Attempts to expand the military infrastructure of Nato near the borders of our country are continuing," he told defence officials. "The primary task is to increase the combat readiness of our forces, first of all our strategic nuclear forces. They must be able to fulfil all tasks necessary to ensure Russia's security."

Mr Brown called for a "spirit of progressive multilateralism" to ensure that nuclear technology was used to provide sustainable energy and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while the threat of nuclear war was averted. "The only way to guarantee that our children and grandchildren will be free from the threat of nuclear war is to create a world in which countries can, with confidence, refuse to take up nuclear weapons in the knowledge that they will never be required," he said. "I know from President Obama and the new US Administration that America shares with us the ultimate ambition of a world free from nuclear weapons."

Multilateral reductions in nuclear arsenals should be part of a new "grand global bargain" that would entail all states — including Iran — being given the possibility to develop civilian atomic power programmes under strict conditions, Mr Brown said. He restated calls for Iran to take up the offer of a civil nuclear energy programme overseen by the United Nations, or face stronger sanctions.

Nuclear-armed states could not exercise "moral and political leadership" in preventing proliferation unless they demonstrated leadership on the question of disarmament of their own arsenals, he said. "Step by step, we have to transform the discussion of nuclear disarmament from one of platitudes to one of hard commitments."

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article5927160.ece>

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BBC News
19 March 2009

[Warning over Nuclear Submarines](#)

Two of the UK's four Vanguard nuclear subs will leave service in 2024, with work on replacing them under way. But the Public Accounts Committee said the timetable for replacement was "extremely tight" and the record of past procurement projects was not good. Ministers said there was no threat to the deterrent, in operation since 1968.

Trident renewal

Successive governments since then have remained committed to a continuous nuclear deterrent at sea, requiring at least one nuclear-armed submarine to be on patrol at any one time. Labour set out its plans to build a replacement fleet of submarines in 2006 when it also gave the go-ahead for the £20bn upgrade of its Trident nuclear missile capability.

The Committee said the Ministry of Defence (MoD) had given itself 17 years to complete the construction of the new submarines when best practice recommended a period of not less than 18. "The department's timetable for completing the design and build process is extremely tight," said its chairman, Conservative MP Edward Leigh. "The MoD's track record in delivering major defence projects on time is not exemplary," he added.

Vital decisions on design features, including the size of missile compartments, must be made by this autumn, Mr Leigh added. However, he expressed concerns that the question of the missile component would have to be taken in advance of work on developing a successor to the US Trident missile.

Despite US assurances about its compatibility, the committee was worried that the UK would have no control over the development of the next generation of missile. "Our programme to have a renewed nuclear deterrent will depend on yet to be taken decisions by the US on the dimensions of the successor missile," he said. "The MoD is taking steps to reduce the risk of a new missile not fitting in our submarines but there is no guarantee it will." But the MoD said there was no doubt that missiles and missile components in future submarines would be compatible. Defence procurement minister Quentin Davies said the UK's ability to maintain the submarine deterrent on a continuous basis was not in doubt. Gordon Brown said earlier this week that he was prepared to include the UK's nuclear arsenal in multilateral arms control talks.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/7951835.stm

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Korean Times
17 March 2009

Japan to Go Nuclear If Unified Korea Is Nuke-Armed

Japan will likely go nuclear if a unified Korea decides to keep the nuclear arsenal developed by North Korea, setting the stage for a tense military competition between the two Northeast Asian rivals, Yonhap News Agency reported Monday, quoting a U.S. congressional report.

"Any eventual reunification of the Korean Peninsula could further induce Japan to reconsider its nuclear stance," the report by the Congressional Research Service was quoted as saying. "If the two Koreas unify while North Korea still holds nuclear weapons and the new state opts to keep a nuclear arsenal, Japan may face a different calculation," said the Jan. 19 report, titled "Japan's Nuclear Future: Policy Debate, Prospects and U.S. Interests." It cites some Japanese analysts as describing a nuclear-armed unified Korea as "more of a threat than a nuclear-armed North Korea."

Many Koreans still harbor resentment of Japan over its colonization of the Korean Peninsula for nearly four decades from 1910. Hundreds of thousands of Korean women were forced to serve as sex slaves for Japanese soldiers and millions of Koreans were taken to forced labor camps. "If the closely neighboring Koreans exhibited hostility toward Japan, it may feel more compelled to develop a nuclear weapons capability," the report said, stressing the need for the U.S. to take into account Japan's possible nuclear armament in drawing up "U.S. contingency planning for future scenarios on the Korean Peninsula."

Japan is said to be a quasi-nuclear weapons state with ample plutonium for the production of warheads and advanced technology in the field. "Japan's technological advancement in the nuclear field, combined with its stocks of separated plutonium, have contributed to the conventional wisdom that Japan could produce nuclear weapons in a short period of time," the CRS report said.

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2009/03/113_41431.html

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Straits Times – Singapore
18 March 2009

Japan May Deploy Interceptors

TOKYO - JAPAN may move land and sea-based interceptor missiles into positions where they could shoot down a North Korean rocket if it threatens to hit its territory, the government said on Wednesday. Prime Minister Taro Aso's cabinet has yet to make a final decision on the plan but 'is earnestly considering it', said chief government spokesman Takeo Kawamura. 'Expecting every possible scenario of crisis management, we have to make an effort to secure the peace and safety for our people and assuage their concerns,' he told a regular media briefing.

Pyongyang has said it will launch a communications satellite between April 4-8. Washington and Seoul say the launch aims to test the Taepodong-2, the regime's first missile technically capable of reaching North America.

Japan's Kyodo News, quoting unnamed sources, reported that the cabinet may instruct Defence Minister Yasukazu Hamada to order interceptor missiles to be deployed underneath the North Korean rocket's announced trajectory.

Japan could position Patriot Advanced Capability-3 interceptors in northern Akita and Iwate prefectures, Kyodo reported. It could also deploy two Aegis-equipped destroyers carrying Standard Missile-3 ballistic missile interceptors - one to the Sea of Japan and the other to the Pacific Ocean - in coordination with the US military, it said. Japan, which has been developing a missile defence system with the United States, has said it is ready to shoot down a missile headed for its territory.

Pyongyang has said it would regard a missile interception as an act of war. -- AFP

http://www.straitstimes.com/Breaking%2BNews/Asia/Story/STIStory_351632.html

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Japan Times
March 20, 2009

Patriot Batteries May Shift North

By Associated Press

Japan may shift Patriot missile batteries to its northern coast to intercept debris that might be created if North Korea's rocket launch fails, the defense minister said Thursday as the prime minister warned of more sanctions against Pyongyang. Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada said some of the six PAC-3 missile batteries now protecting Tokyo may be shifted to intercept fragments that might fall on Japanese soil if North Korea's rocket malfunctions in midflight. The missile is expected to be launched between April 4 and 8. "We are considering various measures, including that," Hamada told reporters. Pyongyang has designated the waters off Akita and Iwate prefectures as a risk zone for falling debris.

The military is also considering mobilizing a pair of destroyers carrying the SM-3 ship-to-air missile defense system from their home port of Sasebo, and is in close contact with the U.S. military to coordinate responses in case of an emergency, a ministry official said on condition of anonymity, citing department policy. Earlier Thursday, Prime Minister Taro Aso said Japan could impose more sanctions on North Korea if it goes ahead with the rocket launch, regardless of its payload. He said Tokyo also plans to raise the issue with the U.N. Security Council. "We will make a comprehensive decision, including the possibility of imposing tougher sanctions," Prime Minister Taro Aso told a Diet committee.

North Korea says it intends to launch a rocket to put a telecommunications satellite into orbit, but many fear it could be used to test ballistic missile technology and have demanded it be stopped. The North is barred by U.N. sanctions from testing ballistic missiles.

Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone said Japan considers any launch, even if the payload is a satellite, as a missile test. North Korea has indicated the rocket would be launched in an easterly direction, taking it over Japan and the Pacific Ocean. "Obviously, it is our country that faces the most serious threat," Nakasone said. "We plan to take a leadership role so that the entire international community will join in solid action to support sanctions."

Members of the ruling party's committee on North Korea are calling for sanctions that include an extension of ongoing economic restrictions from six months to one year, a total export ban and tougher restrictions on money transfers to the North.

<http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20090320a3.html>

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Wall Street Journal
19 March 2009

Guantanamo Detainees May Be Released in U.S.

By EVAN PEREZ

WASHINGTON -- Attorney General Eric Holder said some detainees being held at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, may end up being released in the U.S. as the Obama administration works with foreign allies to resettle some of the prisoners. Mr. Holder, in a briefing with reporters, said administration officials are still reviewing individual cases of the approximately 250 detainees to determine which will be put on trial and which may be released to comply with plans to close the detention facility by next year.

Six weeks into his tenure, Mr. Holder is still trying to assemble much of the Justice senior leadership, with several nominees awaiting Senate confirmation. He said he has reviewed the department's handling of white-collar criminal cases in response to the financial crisis and is considering ways to increase coordination on financial fraud among federal prosecutors and state officials. He said he is trying to increase the budget dedicated to white-collar crime, while maintaining funding for national security.

European justice ministers met with Mr. Holder earlier this week and pressed for details on how many Guantanamo prisoners the U.S. planned to release domestically, as part of any agreement for allies to accept detainees. Mr. Holder said U.S. officials would work to respond to the questions European officials have over U.S. Guantanamo plans. For "people who can be released there are a variety of options that we have and among them is the possibility is that we would release them into this country," Mr. Holder said. "That process is ongoing and we've not made any determinations or made any requests of anybody at this point."

Among the detainees whose fate remains undetermined are 17 ethnic Uighurs, from the Central Asian region of China, who have been ordered released by a judge. The U.S. has refused to turn the men over to China, which considers them part of an separatist group.

Mr. Holder is planning to visit Mexico next month to meet with his counterparts and discuss efforts to fight the trafficking of guns from the U.S. into Mexico and the drug trade from Mexico into the U.S. "The Mexican government has been courageous in the way it has confronted the problems that now challenge it," Mr. Holder said, noting the violence that has resulted from battles against the drug cartels in Mexico.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123741378746277081.html>

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Daily Mail – U.K.
19 March 2009

Islamic Hate Preacher Anjem Choudary Probed Over Call to “Hide Terror Clues”

By Daily Mail Reporter

Radical Muslim Anjem Choudary could face a police inquiry over calls to his followers to hide evidence from investigators. Scotland Yard is examining a video of a 90-minute speech by Choudary on an extremist website.

On the tape he apparently says: 'Your house should be clean. There should be nothing at all there which they can come along and then can form some sort of intention.' He also allegedly urges terror suspects to flee Britain, telling them: 'Don't take your chance in court.' Choudary, 41, whose supporters recently hurled abuse at soldiers from the Royal Anglian Regiment returning from Afghanistan, is under constant review by MI5 and police. The Metropolitan Police's counter-terrorism command is examining his latest speech. Police are already believed to be examining whether he broke the law in calling for money to be collected for Islamic fighters. On a website he has allegedly

been heard calling on Muslims not to save money for their families but to give it to Mujahideen - holy warriors. It is an offence under the terrorism Act to raise money for terrorism, whether in this country or overseas.

Last week, the families of soldiers killed by friendly fire in Iraq reacted with fury after Choudary, the right-hand man to cleric of hate Omar Bakri, taunted them over the deaths of their loved ones. He added insult to the injury caused by Islamic extremists' protest against soldiers returning home from the war-torn region by claiming they were 'not heroes but closer to cowards who cannot fight, as their uncanny knack for death by friendly fire illustrates'.

The three soldiers to whom he was referring - Privates Robert Foster, 19, John Thrumble, 21, and Aaron McClure, 19 - were killed in Afghanistan in August 2007 when an American F-15 jet dropped a 500lb bomb on their position.

Choudary's extraordinary comments were delivered just hours after Muslim protesters waved offensive placards as members of 2nd Battalion Royal Anglian Regiment marched through Luton. He went on to attack the 'vile' parade. He claimed the soldiers were 'terrorists', comparing them to Nazi troops who 'cannot be excused for simply carrying out their duty'.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1163133/Islamic-hate-preacher-Anjem-Choudary-probed-hide-terror-clues.html#>

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Daily Telegraph
20 March 2009

Osama Bin Laden Urges Somalis to Overthrow President

Bin Laden's 11 minute audiotape focused entirely on the impoverished country which has been torn apart by fighting between warlords and Islamic militants. He called for the overthrow of President Sheik Sharif Sheik Ahmed, a moderate Islamist elected earlier this year promising to unify the country's factions.

In the audiotape, bin Laden said: "You are the first line of defence for the Islamic world in its southwestern part; and your patience and resolve supports your brothers in Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Islamic Maghreb, Pakistan and the rest of the fields of Jihad," he said. Experts said the focus on Somalia supports U.S. contentions that al-Qaida aimed to be a force there.

US counterterrorism officials have warned of al-Qaida's growing ties with Somalia's powerful al-Shabab militants, who frequently battle government troops and attack African Union peacekeepers in the country. Last year, the US State Department added al-Shabab, which means "the Youth," to its list of foreign terrorist organisations.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/somalia/5019663/Osama-bin-Laden-urges-Somalis-to-overthrow-president.html>

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