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Moscow Times
08 June 2009

Kremlin Downplays Hopes for Arms Deal With Obama

Reuters

The Kremlin is playing down hopes of a breakthrough on reducing nuclear arsenals ahead of a visit to Moscow by the U.S. president, linking arms cuts with U.S. plans to deploy a missile defense system in Central Europe.

The United States and Russia are negotiating a nuclear disarmament treaty to replace the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, or START I, which is due to expire on Dec. 5.

The visit of U.S. President Barack Obama to Moscow from July 6 to 8 is not likely to trigger a major announcement on ongoing arms control talks or on other issues, the Kremlin said in a statement posted Friday on its web site.

"We are pragmatic. We do not have high expectations of the outcome of the visit," the Kremlin statement said. "The process of improving relations will take time and honest effort on both sides," it said, acknowledging that the United States was trying to improve relations.

But Moscow will not reduce its own nuclear potential until there is clarity on Washington's plans for a missile defense system in Central Europe, General Nikolai Makarov, head of the military's General Staff, said in separate comments Friday. "So long as the situation in the world is not clear, including on the missile defense system, we will not touch our nuclear potential," Makarov said, in a reference to U.S. plans to install interceptor missiles in Poland and a radar base in the Czech Republic.

"The question of strategic nuclear forces for us is sacred. We will provide as many resources as are needed to maintain stability in the world," he said. "We will leave our strategic missile forces practically unchanged."

A U.S. administration official declined to comment on Makarov's comments. On a conference call with reporters after Obama held talks with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the official said he had just read the report and said it would not be prudent to say anything.

<http://www.moscowtimes.ru/article/1010/42/378144.htm>

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RIA Novosti
10 June 2009

Russia Against Unilateral Steps in Cutting Armaments – Lavrov

MOSCOW, June 10 (RIA Novosti) - It is impossible for Russia or the United States to take unilateral steps in the area of nuclear disarmament, as it should also be in missile defense, the Russian foreign minister said Wednesday.

"Unilateral steps are not expected from either the Russian Federation or the United States. And I hope that such a rejection of unilateralism will also be expanded to cover the sphere of strategic defensive systems, by which I mean missile defense," Sergei Lavrov told journalists after talks with his German counterpart.

Russia opposes U.S. plans to deploy interceptor missiles in Poland and a tracking radar in the Czech Republic as a threat to its security. Washington says the shield elements are needed to counter possible strikes from rogue states such as Iran.

Russian and U.S. negotiators have held two rounds of full-format talks on a replacement for the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I), which expires on December 5, and agreed to report the first results of the work on a new treaty at a Russian-U.S. summit in Moscow.

START 1, signed in 1991, commits Russia and the United States to each reduce nuclear warheads to 6,000 and their delivery vehicles to 1,600. In 2002, a follow-up agreement on strategic offensive arms reduction was concluded in Moscow. The agreement, known as the Moscow Treaty, envisioned cuts to 1,700-2,200 warheads by December 2012.

<http://en.rian.ru/world/20090610/155221391.html>

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RIA Novosti
10 June 2009

Russia to Keep at least 1,500 Nuclear Warheads

BALABANOVO (Kaluga Region), June 10 (RIA Novosti) - Russia's strategic nuclear forces need at least 1,500 nuclear warheads, and this must be taken into account in a new strategic arms deal, the commander of the Strategic Missile Forces said on Wednesday.

Col. Gen. Nikolai Solovtsov said Russia "must not go below the level of 1,500 nuclear warheads, but that is up to the country's political leadership to decide."

Under the Strategic Arms Reductions Treaty (START I), which expires on December 5, Russia and the United States are to reduce their nuclear warheads to 6,000 and their delivery vehicles to 1,600 each. In 2002, a follow-up agreement on strategic offensive arms reduction was concluded in Moscow. The agreement, known as the Moscow Treaty, envisioned cuts to 1,700-2,200 warheads by December 2012.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and U.S. President Barack Obama agreed during their London meeting in early April on an immediate start to talks on a new strategic arms reduction treaty.

According to a report published by the U.S. State Department in April, as of January 1 Russia had 3,909 nuclear warheads and 814 delivery vehicles, including ground-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM), submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBM) and strategic bombers.

The same report said the United States had 5,576 warheads and 1,198 delivery vehicles.

Russia, which proposed a new arms reduction agreement with the U.S. in 2005, expects Washington to agree on a deal that would restrict not only the numbers of nuclear warheads, but also place limits on all existing kinds of delivery vehicles.

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090610/155218357.html>

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RIA Novosti
10 June 2009

Russia Could Scrap Nuclear Arms Alongside Other Nations – Putin

MOSCOW, June 10 (RIA Novosti) - Russia could abandon nuclear weapons if other nuclear powers - official and unofficial - scrap them, the Russian prime minister said on Wednesday.

Asked by German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier if he believed Russia could be secure without nuclear weapons, Vladimir Putin said: "You bet."

"Why do we need nuclear weapons?" he said. "Did we invent them or did we ever use them? If those who made the atomic bomb and used it are ready to abandon it, and if, as I hope, other powers that possess them [weapons] officially or unofficially are ready to do the same, we will heartily welcome and promote this process."

He added that Germany could make a valuable contribution to the process.

The official "nuclear club" comprises Russia, the United States, China, Britain and France, but Pakistan and India also possess nuclear weapons and North Korea conducted its second nuclear test on May 25.

In addition, Israel is widely suspected to have a nuclear arsenal.

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090610/155221140.html>

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RIA Novosti

10 June 2009

Russia to Improve Missile Defense Penetration Capability by 2016

BALABANOVO (Moscow Region), June 10 (RIA Novosti) - Russia plans by 2016 to improve the ability of its range of ballistic missiles to overcome missile defenses, the Strategic Missile Forces (SMF) commander said on Wednesday.

"By 2016, we will significantly modernize not only missile systems but also command-and-control systems in order to improve their ability to overcome missile defenses and increase the survivability of delivery vehicles," Col. Gen. Nikolai Solovtsov said at an SMF reserve command center.

At present, six types of silo-based and mobile ICBM systems are on combat duty with the SMF, including the heavy Vovayoda (SS-18 Satan), capable of carrying 10 warheads, and the Topol-M (Stalin) systems.

According to open sources, the total arsenal of Russia's SMF comprises 538 ICBMs, including 306 SS-25 Topol (Sickle) missiles and 56 SS-27 Topol-M missiles.

Silo-based missiles constitute 45% of the total ballistic missile arsenal. They carry about 85% of nuclear warheads deployed by the SMF.

Solovtsov earlier said Russia would put a regiment of new-generation RS-24 intercontinental ballistic missiles into service in December.

RS-24 ICBMs, with multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle (MIRV) warheads, would help bolster the SMF's ability to overpower missile defense systems, "thus strengthening the nuclear deterrence potential of the Russian nuclear triad," the general said.

The SMF will also adopt in the near future a third-generation command-and-control system to improve the launch and targeting procedures for ballistic missiles.

"This system, apart from traditional tasks related to launch procedures, gathering of various data, and control over combat readiness of the launchers, will facilitate a quick response to changing deployment plans and quick retargeting of the missiles," Solovtsov said.

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20090610/155219177.html

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RIA Novosti

10 June 2009

New Arms Treaty must Exclude Weapons in Space - Russian General

BALABANOVO (Russia), June 10 (RIA Novosti) - A new strategic arms reduction pact with the United States must prohibit any kinds of offensive weapons in space, Russia's Strategic Missile Forces commander said on Wednesday.

"Our country is interested in including limitations not only on the number of nuclear warheads, but also on the number of their delivery vehicles in the new arms reduction treaty. We also stand for maintaining the ban on the deployment of strategic weapons, offensive and defensive, outside national borders, the prohibition of any kinds of offensive weapons in space, and a more efficient use of inspection and data exchange mechanisms established in line with the START 1 treaty," Col. Gen. Nikolai Solovtsov said.

Russia and the United States are currently negotiating a replacement to the Strategic Arms Reductions Treaty (START 1) treaty, which expires in December.

The treaty obliges Russia and the United States to reduce nuclear warheads to 6,000 and their delivery vehicles to 1,600 each. In 2002, a follow-up agreement on strategic offensive arms reduction was concluded in Moscow. The agreement, known as the Moscow Treaty, envisioned cuts to 1,700-2,200 warheads by December 2012.

According to a report published by the U.S. State Department in April, as of January 1 Russia had 3,909 nuclear warheads and 814 delivery vehicles, including ground-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM), submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBM) and strategic bombers.

The same report said the United States had 5,576 warheads and 1,198 delivery vehicles.

However, the U.S. is currently developing a new national missile defense program that is widely seen as a revival of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) program drawn up in the 1980s, nicknamed 'Star Wars'.

Under the SDI, ground and space-based forces were to protect the U.S. from a nuclear missile attack.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and U.S. President Barack Obama agreed during their London meeting in early April on an immediate start to talks on a new strategic arms reduction treaty.

The first round of full-format negotiations was held in Moscow on May 19-21, and the sides described it as a success.

The second round of discussions on a replacement for the START 1 treaty took place on June 1-3 in Geneva.

Russian presidential spokeswoman Natalya Timakova said on June 2 a new draft strategic arms reduction deal to replace the START 1 treaty may be ready before U.S. President Barack Obama's visit to Moscow on July 6-8.

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20090610/155220015.html

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RIA Novosti
10 June 2009

Russian Missile Commander Opposes Conventional Warheads on ICBMs

BALABANOVO (Moscow Region), June 10 (RIA Novosti) - Arming intercontinental ballistic missiles with conventional warheads would undermine global security, the commander of the Russian Strategic Missile Forces said on Wednesday.

U.S. media reports have suggested the Pentagon is considering the possibility of arming ballistic missiles with conventional precision-guided warheads.

"Arming strategic missiles with non-nuclear precision-guided warheads could seriously erode not only the international nuclear arms control regime but international security as a whole," Col. Gen. Nikolai Solovtsov said.

He said the existing missile attack warning systems were unable to distinguish between a nuclear and conventionally armed ballistic missile, adding that a state receiving real-time data about a missile launch would proceed from the "worst-case scenario."

With insufficient time for analysis of response options, that "could place mankind on the verge of a nuclear catastrophe," the general said.

He also said that any new strategic arms deal with the United States had to take into account the minimum requirements of Russia's strategic nuclear forces.

Solovtsov said Russia "must not go below the level of 1,500 nuclear warheads, but that is up to the country's political leadership to decide."

Under the Strategic Arms Reductions Treaty (START I), which expires on December 5, Russia and the United States are to reduce their nuclear warheads to 6,000 and their delivery vehicles to 1,600 each. In 2002, a follow-up agreement on strategic offensive arms reduction was concluded in Moscow. The agreement, known as the Moscow Treaty, envisioned cuts to 1,700-2,200 warheads by December 2012.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and U.S. President Barack Obama agreed during their London meeting in early April on an immediate start to talks on a new strategic arms reduction treaty.

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The same report said the United States had 5,576 warheads and 1,198 delivery vehicles.

Russia, which proposed a new arms reduction agreement with the United States in 2005, expects Washington to agree on a deal that would restrict not only the numbers of nuclear warheads, but also place limits on all existing kinds of delivery vehicles.

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090610/155220240.html>

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RIA Novosti
10 June 2009

Topol-M, Bulava Missiles to be Core of Russian Nuclear Triad

BALABANOVO (Russia), June 10 (RIA Novosti) - Topol-M and Bulava ballistic missiles will constitute the backbone of Russia's nuclear triad, a senior defense ministry official said on Wednesday.

Russia's nuclear triad comprises land-based ballistic missile systems, nuclear-powered submarines equipped with sea-based ballistic missiles, and strategic bombers carrying nuclear bombs and nuclear-capable cruise missiles.

"Topol-M and Bulava ballistic missile systems will be the core of the Russian nuclear triad," said Maj. Gen. Alexander Shevchenko, in charge of Armed Forces' armaments maintenance and support.

At present, six types of silo-based and mobile ICBM system of the fourth and the fifth generation, including the heavy Voyevoda (SS-18 Satan), capable of carrying 10 warheads, and the Topol-M (Stalin) systems, are on combat duty with the Strategic Missile Forces.

According to open sources, the total arsenal of Russia's SMF comprises 538 ICBMs, including 306 SS-25 Topol (Sickle) missiles and 56 SS-27 Topol-M missiles.

In line with a new military doctrine, Russia will completely modernize the naval component of its nuclear triad by 2016.

Fourth-generation Borey-class nuclear-powered submarines armed with Bulava ballistic missiles will form the core of Russia's fleet of modern strategic submarines.

Shevchenko said the Russian Navy would commission two Borey-class nuclear submarines, Yury Dolgoruky and Alexander Nevsky, in the near future.

Each submarine is capable of carrying up to 16 Bulava-M ballistic missiles.

Russia will also modernize and expand its fleet of strategic bombers and create a national air-and-space defense network.

According to various sources, the Russian Air Force currently deploys 141 Tu-22M3 Backfire bombers, 40 Tu-95MS Bear bombers, and 14 Tu-160 Blackjack planes.

Russia plans to build at least one new Tu-160 bomber every one or two years to increase the number of available aircraft to 30.

Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Ivanov said in February that Russia would continue developing and modernizing its nuclear triad despite the current global economic crisis.

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20090610/155218930.html

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Deutsche Welle
11 June 2009

Steinmeier Pushes for Arms Cuts on Moscow Visit

"With the entry into office of President Obama, there is a genuine chance for new cooperation between the United States, the European Union and Russia," Steinmeier said.

"The ghost of the Cold war has been banished... So I would like to say that the extended hand of the US president should be boldly accepted," he said.

Earlier, Steinmeier told reporters that the Security Council's five permanent members - Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States - as well as Japan and South Korea had agreed to toughen their stance against North Korea after Pyongyang tested a nuclear device and launched several missiles in recent weeks.

"The efforts made for a resolution were rewarded with success," Steinmeier said at a joint press conference with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Moscow on Wednesday.

Diplomats say the latest draft resolution "calls upon" countries to inspect North Korean ships carrying suspicious cargo that might violate a partial UN trade and arms embargo, although it does not demand it.

The document does, however, require governments to deny fuel to any suspicious North Korea vessels and direct them to dock at "an appropriate and convenient port."

Reaching out

Disarmament was a key theme throughout Steinmeier's two-day visit to Moscow, during which he also met with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev.

In his address to the Russian Academy of Science, Steinmeier said that all nations should make constructive efforts to disarm.

"This has to be the year when international disarmament efforts move back to the top of the agenda," he said.

Steinmeier stressed that the talks between Russia and the US on replacing the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) were "a vital step on the difficult path towards a world free of nuclear weapons."

Steinmeier called the warming of relations between the Kremlin and the US a "unique historic opportunity."

Thawing fronts?

US President Obama is scheduled to travel to Moscow early next month for key talks on a follow-up to START, which expires on December 5.

US and Russian negotiators have been holding preliminary meetings ahead of those talks. Moscow has said it wants to link the nuclear talks to Washington's plans to deploy an anti-missile shield in central Europe - a plan the Kremlin firmly opposes.

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said the Kremlin would consider getting rid of its nuclear arsenal if all other countries agreed to do so as well.

After meeting the German foreign minister, Putin was asked if he could imagine a Russia without nuclear weapons.

"Of course," he answered. "What do we need nuclear weapons for?"

Putin's answer did have one caveat, however.

"If those who invented the atomic bomb, and used it, are prepared to do away with atom bombs, then we would welcome this," he said, suggesting his country's involvement is dependent on US disarmament.

The Russian news agency Interfax, however, has reported that Russia wants to keep at least 1,500 nuclear warheads.

Other business

In addition to disarmament, Steinmeier also spoke with Russian leaders about combating the effects of the global financial crisis.

Putin praised Berlin's active role in negotiating a plan to rescue struggling carmaker Opel, which now counts Russian state-owned lender Sberbank as one of its major stakeholders.

The three leaders agreed to increase cooperation in the energy sector, particularly in renewable fuel sources and efficiency.

Steinmeier also addressed the controversial topics of human rights and Moscow's relations with Tbilisi in the wake of last year's military conflict between Russia and Georgia.

He urged Moscow to adopt a "constructive" role in the Caucasus and stressed that unresolved territorial disputes did not have a place in the Europe of the 21st century.

During a visit to the editorial office of the Novaya Gazeta, a newspaper known for being critical of the Kremlin, Steinmeier wrote that democracy and a free press go together like breathing and air.

http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,4317689,00.html?maca=en-en_nr-1893-xml-atom

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RIA Novosti
11 June 2009

Russia Will Not Make Its Soil Available for U.S. Missile Defenses

MOSCOW, June 11 (RIA Novosti) - Russia will not advance U.S. military plans aimed at itself and will not make its territory available for the deployment of U.S. missile defense elements, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said on Thursday.

Commenting on U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates' suggestion that U.S. missile defense sites could be deployed on Russian soil, Andrei Nesterenko said there could be no partnership "in building facilities that are essentially designed to counter Russia's strategic deterrence forces."

He said Moscow hoped for a mutually acceptable solution to the issue of missile defense, based on a joint assessment of threats, but at present the sides' assessments "do not coincide."

He stressed Russian-U.S. cooperation must be built on the basis of equality, which would include, among other things, the scrapping of Washington's plans for the so-called third missile-defense site, in Central Europe.

"However, on that issue, Gates holds the opposite opinion," Nesterenko said.

The U.S. defense secretary said on Tuesday the United States had offered to put radar or data exchange centers in Russia as part of its response to Iran's missile threat.

"The Russians have come back to us and acknowledged that we were right in terms of the nearness of the Iranian missile threat, and that they had been wrong. And so my hope is we can build on that," he said during a Senate committee hearing.

Washington has agreed plans with Warsaw and Prague 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 the balance of power in Europe. Medvedev threatened in November to retaliate if the U.S. plans went ahead by deploying Iskander-M missiles in the country's westernmost exclave of Kaliningrad, which borders NATO members Poland and Lithuania.

U.S. President Barack Obama has indicated he could put on hold his predecessor George Bush's plans concerning the third site for Washington's global missile defense system, which he said needed more analysis.

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090611/155229176.html>

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London Guardian
11 June 2009

Russia Assesses Option to Cohost US Missile Defence Shield

Luke Harding in Moscow

Moscow is closely scrutinising an apparent offer from the US defence secretary, Robert Gates, to site part of the Pentagon's controversial missile defence shield on Russian territory.

The Kremlin has been implacably opposed to the US plans to deploy elements of the shield in Poland and the Czech Republic, claiming it poses a direct threat to Russia's security. Washington says it is aimed at a rogue missile that could be fired by a nuclear Iran or North Korea.

Speaking before a Senate appropriations panel on Tuesday, Gates suggested that Moscow had swallowed its objections to the system and might be prepared to collaborate. Russia had come to share the American view that Iran posed a real and growing danger, he said.

Gates recalled how he had discussed Iran's nuclear capacities with the Russian prime minister, Vladimir Putin, who "basically dismissed the idea that the Iranians would have a missile that would have the range to reach much of western Europe and much of Russia before 2020 or so. And he showed me a map that his intelligence guys had prepared. I told him he needed a new intelligence service."

Gates went on: "The fact of the matter is, the Russians have come back to us and acknowledged that we were right in terms of the nearness of the Iranian missile threat, and that they had been wrong. And so my hope is we can build on that."

Today Russia's Kommersant newspaper described Gates's proposal as "sensational". Experts were sceptical that the Kremlin would agree to host a system that Russia's hawkish leadership and top brass have repeatedly denounced. "It's day-dreaming," Pavel Felgenhauer, a Moscow-based defence expert, said today. "Not in this life."

Gates's intriguing suggestion comes three weeks before the Russian president, Dmitry Medvedev, receives Barack Obama on a visit to Moscow on July 6-8. Russian and US officials are working feverishly on a new agreement to replace the 1991 strategic arms reduction treaty, or Start 1, which expires in December.

There is pessimism that the two sides can reach a swift deal. Since Obama's speech in Prague in April, in which he set out his vision of a nuclear-free world, both Washington and Moscow have agreed a deal in principle to reduce their respective nuclear arsenals of 5,500 and 3,900 to 1,500 warheads each.

As part of any new treaty, the Russians are likely to insist that the White House shelve its missile defence project in central Europe. Obama has delayed previous plans by the Bush administration to go ahead with the scheme, but would face opposition in the Senate were he to dump it entirely.

"There is a broad political agreement [between Russia and the US on nuclear arms reduction]," Felgenhauer said. "But there are a lot of nasty details that could drag the process out."

Asked whether missile defence could prove a stumbling block for Russia, he said: "It isn't clear right now. There are different signals from Moscow."

According to Michael Bohm, writing in today's Moscow Times, Russia is unhappy about the prospect of Washington storing rather than destroying its 4,000 dismantled warheads, which could be hastily redeployed in times of war. It has little genuine incentive to press ahead with nuclear arms reduction, as Russia's conventional army is vastly inferior to that of the US, he pointed out.

Bohm concluded: "For the first time in the post-cold war era teams of brainy arms control experts are once again shuttling between Moscow and other cities to work out the painstakingly minute details of bean-counting nuclear warheads and delivery vehicles and clarifying verification procedures and inspection rules.

"Just like in the good old days. The only problem is that these aren't the good old days. Russia is no longer the Soviet Union ... and can no longer negotiate from the same position of superpower strength. This means that despite all the energy spent on finding a replacement for Start, the two sides are likely to walk away from the negotiating table empty handed."

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/jun/11/russia-us-missile-defence-shield>

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New York Times
June 12, 2009

Russia Rejects the Notion of a Joint Missile System in Europe

By Ellen Barry

MOSCOW — Responding to remarks by Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, a top Russian diplomat said Thursday that Russia would not collaborate with the United States on missile defense unless Washington scrapped plans to deploy elements of the shield in Poland and the Czech Republic.

“We cannot partner in the creation of objects whose goal is to oppose the strategic deterrent forces of the Russian Federation,” said the Foreign Ministry spokesman, Andrei A. Nesterenko. “No one will do something that harms himself.”

“Only the United States’ rejection of plans to base in Europe the so-called third position area of the missile-defense shield could mark the beginning of a full-fledged dialogue on the question of cooperation and reaction to likely missile risk,” Mr. Nesterenko said. He added that Russia expected “it will be possible to find a common denominator.”

In Senate testimony on Tuesday, Mr. Gates said that Russia might “partner with us and Poland and the Czech Republic in going forward with missile defense.” American policymakers have long sought common ground with Russia on missile defense, but Mr. Gates’s remarks were unusually specific, suggesting that one option might be a jointly operated facility on Russian territory.

The remarks passed without notice in the United States but were picked up by major Russian newspapers like the daily Kommersant, which described the “sensational statement” in a front-page article in Thursday’s edition.

Moscow has long protested American plans to build a radar site in the Czech Republic and to deploy 10 interceptor missiles in Poland, arguing that the system could target Russia. Two years ago, Vladimir V. Putin, then the president, proposed jointly operating a radar station in Azerbaijan, a former Soviet republic, or one on Russian territory, but American military officials did not see them as substitutes for the planned Czech site.

The Obama administration appears to be reconsidering the idea of collaborating on missile defense as part of the “reset” of its relations with Russia.

During testimony before the Senate on Tuesday, Mr. Gates said he believed that Russian leaders now agreed with Washington on the potential nuclear threat posed by Iran.

“When I first met with President Putin and talked about this, he basically dismissed the idea that the Iranians would have a missile” capable of reaching Europe, Mr. Gates said. “And the fact of the matter is, the Russians have come back to us and acknowledged that we were right in terms of the nearness of the Iranian missile threat.”

He said Washington had put forward some options for collaboration, among them “putting radars in Russia, having data-exchange centers in Russia.” He said at the July summit meeting between Mr. Obama and the Russian president, Dmitri A. Medvedev, that the leaders could “make some steps where they will partner with us and Poland and the Czech Republic in going forward with missile defense in this third site.”

A spokesman for Mr. Gates had no comment on Thursday.

Moscow received the remarks coolly, with Mr. Nesterenko commenting that they “reflect the U.S.’s wishful thinking, rather than the way things actually are.”

For Russia, any reconfiguration that preserves sites in Poland and the Czech Republic “is just window dressing,” said Dmitri V. Trenin, a political analyst.

“I’m not sure everyone in the U.S. understands how much is at stake as far as the Russians are concerned,” said Mr. Trenin, director of the Carnegie Moscow Center. “The issue for the Russians is, what are the U.S.’s long-term intentions vis-à-vis Russia? And they are looking at missile defense for the answer to that question.”

An unwillingness to scrap the Eastern European facilities would be seen by hawks in Moscow as evidence that “the hidden agenda is to contain and destroy Russia,” he said.

Some observers saw positive signs in the exchange, noting that missile defense might ultimately matter more to Russia than renegotiating the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, the mutually agreed-upon first step in the “reset.” Maj. Gen. Vladimir Dvorkin, a researcher at the Russian Academy of Sciences, said a radar site in Russia was only one in an array of options for reconfiguring missile defense. Others, he said, are the use of Russian radars in Belarus, Russian missile-testing ranges, Russian expertise in antimissile rockets or even Russian S-400 missile complexes as part of the shield.

“What’s new,” he said, “is a desire and determination for cooperation on many issues.”

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/12/world/europe/12missile.html?ref=global-home>

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Seattle Post-Intelligencer

June 9, 2009

Gates: Russia Wary Of Growing Iranian Threat

By Lara Jakes, Associated Press

WASHINGTON -- Prospects for a U.S.-Russian partnership on a missile defense system have improved slightly as Moscow grows increasingly concerned about Iran, Pentagon chief Robert Gates said Tuesday.

The defense secretary told senators that U.S. offers to put radar or data exchange centers in Russia are among the options being discussed.

Gates recounted a meeting he had with Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin during which the then-president "basically dismissed the idea that the Iranians would have a missile that would have the range to reach much of western Europe and much of Russia before 2020 or so."

"And he showed me a map that his intelligence guys had prepared," Gates told a Senate Appropriations panel. "I told him he needed a new intelligence service."

He did not say when the meeting occurred.

But Gates added: "The fact of the matter is, the Russians have come back to us and acknowledged that we were right in terms of the nearness of the Iranian missile threat, and that they had been wrong. And so my hope is we can build on that."

Russian and U.S. officials are working intensively on a successor deal to the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, or START I, which expires in December. Negotiators are aiming for some results by July 6-8 when Russian President Dmitry Medvedev hosts President Barack Obama in Moscow.

Obama has delayed previous plans by the Bush administration to build a small missile defense system in Poland and the Czech Republic, with the aim of intercepting missiles from Iran targeted at the West. Russia prefers that Washington scrap the system altogether.

Gates called the chance of making progress toward a deal "somewhat improved" but did not explicitly say why, or what concessions the United States might be prepared to make.

Earlier, Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., raised the issue of whether Israel would attack Iran. Gates sidestepped her question on whether that possibility has increased over the last year, but said concern about Iran's nuclear weapons and missile programs certainly has grown.

He said the United States and Israel are wary "given the unwillingness of the Iranians to slow, stop or even indicate a willingness to talk about their programs."

Gates also cited concerns about North Korea's missile program, and repeated his belief that the United States could defend itself against a missile should Pyongyang launch one.

Last week, North Korea moved a long-range missile - the second in three months - that some believe could hit the United States. But it's not clear what Pyongyang plans to do with its new system.

The Pentagon chief also reiterated his pledge to add additional missile interceptors to centers in California and Alaska should North Korea or threats from other nations deem them necessary. The Pentagon is storing - or in the process of building - up to 30 interceptors at its Fort Greely, Alaska, facility, but has rejected plans for more.

However, Gates has said he's open to building additional interceptors should the threat warrant it.

"If that threat were to begin to develop more quickly than anybody anticipates, or in a way that people haven't anticipated, where the 30 interceptors would not look like they were sufficient, it would be very easy to reason this program and expand the number of silos," he said.

http://www.seattlepi.com/national/1152ap_us_missile_defense.html

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Global Security Newswire

June 10, 2009

Iran Could Put U.S. in Missile Range by 2015, Air Force Report Warns

With support from outside sources, Iran within six years could produce an ICBM capable of hitting the United States, the U.S. Air Force's National Air and Space Intelligence Center said in a new report made public yesterday by the Federation of American Scientists (see *GSN*, May 22).

"Iran has ambitious ballistic missile and space launch development programs and, with sufficient foreign assistance, Iran could develop and test an ICBM capable of reaching the United States by 2015," the report says.

In the preceding paragraph, the report warns that North Korea's Taepodong 2 missile could also be developed as an ICBM could put the United States in range and warns that the weapon "could be exported to other countries in the future" (see *GSN*, June 3).

China, deemed to have "the most active and diverse ballistic missile program in the world," has begun deploying its newer DF-31 and DF-31A ICBMs, the report states. The report states that "less than 15" of the missiles have been fielded, an increase from the Defense Department's March estimate, based on 2008 data, that "less than 10" of the weapons had been deployed (see *GSN*, March 26).

Neither of China's two submarine-launched ballistic missiles have entered operation, the report states, indicating that the country has not completed work on its new JL-2 missile or finished modernizing its Xia ballistic missile submarine, which is designed to carry the older JL-1 missile.

Although the report describes all of China's current ballistic missiles as single-warhead vehicles, it asserts that Beijing could modify some of the weapons to carry multiple warheads and would "probably" develop new ICBMs with multiple-warhead capabilities. The U.S. intelligence community has long maintained that the development of U.S. missile defenses could prompt Beijing to pursue multiple-warhead offensive capabilities, according to the Federation of American Scientists.

The number of Chinese ICBMs capable of reaching the United States could increase to "well over 100 in the next 15 years," the report states, an assertion similar to some made in previous U.S. reports. Still, the number of Chinese ICBMs "primarily targeted against the United States" is smaller than the number of weapons merely capable of reaching the country, the FAS analysis notes. In addition, the time line of China's missile progression has "slipped" since 2001, when the CIA estimated that China would have between 75 and 100 ICBMs trained primarily on U.S. targets by 2015, the analysis says.

Russia, meanwhile, "will probably retain the largest ICBM force outside the United States," the Air Force report states, adding that "most of these [Russian] missiles are maintained on alert, capable of being launched within minutes of receiving a launch order." The assessment says that Russia possesses roughly 2,000 nuclear warheads topping ICBMs, which likely encompasses submarine-launched ballistic missiles, according to the science organization.

The report classifies Russia's multiple-warhead RS-24 ICBM as a modification of an earlier missile; the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty bans adding warheads to missiles declared under the pact (see *GSN*, Dec. 18, 2008).

The report also discounts a previous NASIC estimate that Russia's submarine-launched Sineva ballistic missiles could carry up to 10 warheads each; the new document lowers the estimated capacity to four warheads.

India began to field its Agni 1 and Agni 2 ballistic missiles only recently and has so far deployed "fewer than 25" mobile launchers, the report states, countering independent Indian reports that the weapons were already deployed.

India is developing two new short-range SLBMs, dubbed Dhanush and Sagarika, the report asserts, suggesting that Sagarika would enter operation after next year.

The U.S. report makes no reference to an Indian nuclear-capable cruise missile despite reports that New Delhi is pursuing such a weapon.

Pakistan possesses fewer than 50 launchers for its mobile Ghaznavi and Shaheen 1 short-range ballistic missiles, and the country has not yet commissioned its longer-range Shaheen 2 missile, the Air Force report says (Hans Kristensen, Federation of American Scientists, June 9).

http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20090610_2876.php

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Financial Times – United Kingdom
June 11 2009

Kerry Defends Tehran on Uranium

By Daniel Dombey in Washington

One of the most senior Democrats in Washington has dismissed the west's longstanding strategy on Iran's nuclear programme as "ridiculous". His comments throw open the debate about how far the US and its partners should go in seeking a compromise with Tehran after tomorrow's presidential election.

John Kerry, chairman of the Senate foreign relations committee and the Democrats' 2004 presidential nominee, told the Financial Times in an interview that Iran had a right to uranium enrichment - a process that can produce both nuclear fuel and weapons-grade material.

The US and the world's other big powers have repeatedly demanded that Tehran suspend enrichment - a policy pioneered by the former Bush administration that has since been given the force of international law by successive United Nations Security Council resolutions.

"The Bush administration [argument of] no enrichment was ridiculous . . . because it seemed so un-reasonable to people," said Mr Kerry, citing Iran's rights as a signatory of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. "It was bombastic diplomacy. It was wasted energy. It sort of hardened the lines, if you will," he added. "They have a right to peaceful nuclear power and to enrichment in that purpose."

His comments come as Mahmoud Ahmadi-Nejad, Iran's president, faces off against Mir-Hossein Moussavi, his main challenger in an increasingly intense re-election battle, with the first round of voting taking place tomorrow. They also come amid increasing nervousness in Israel about the US stance on Tehran, in light of a series of warnings by Obama administration officials against an Israeli strike on Iran's nuclear facilities, which Washington believes would be counterproductive.

Enrichment - championed by Mr Ahmadi-Nejad, but supported by almost all of Iran's political class, with wide popular backing - is at the heart of the Iranian nuclear dispute.

Although the UN Security Council resolutions demanding Iran suspend enrichment date back to March 2006, Tehran has systematically accelerated its nuclear programme, producing 1.3 tonnes of low enriched uranium - more than enough, if further processed, for one nuclear device.

Mr Kerry argues that in the wake of the former Bush administration's failure to enforce the "red lines" it set Iran, Barack Obama needs to build an international coalition around an enforceable demand that at the minimum would provide more information about the nature of Iran's programme.

He added that he had sent Mr Obama his suggestions in a memo.

The president himself, who Mr Kerry helped rise to national prominence, has steered clear of specific statements favoured by George W. Bush, former president, over whether Iran should cease all enrichment. Instead he has stressed his goal of ensuring Tehran does not become a nuclear weapon state and called for negotiations, which Washington hopes will begin once the Iranian elections have concluded.

"We are willing to have direct negotiations with the Iranians . . . without preconditions," Mr Obama said at the weekend, arguing Tehran needed to give the world confidence it was not seeking nuclear weapons.

http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/a60d5dd8-5621-11de-ab7e-00144feabdc0.html?nclick_check=1

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FARs News Agency – Iran
11 June 2009

Russia: Completion of Bushehr's N-plant Delayed

TEHRAN (FNA)- The completion of Iran's first nuclear plant is being delayed due to Russian banks' refusal to work with Iran.

The head of the Russian state-run contractor that is constructing the Bushehr plant said that the company is trying to find new ways for financing the project.

Atomstroieexport Chief Dan Belenky, however, did not name the banks and did not give a new schedule for the completion of the project. "This is a very difficult process, so I think to speak of a concrete date for the launch is still early," Belenky told the Interfax news agency.

"The problems with financing exist because not all Russian banks are ready to work with Iran, and we have to find alternative options. Due to this there are problems, but this is more a technical issue, and certainly not the fault of the Iranian side," the head of Atomstroieexport, added.

Earlier, Iranian officials had said that the plant would start operating in the next few months.

The Bushehr project has experienced numerous delays, including some that were linked by the contractor to problems in Iran's payments to Russia.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=8803210563>

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Times of London

9 June 2009

Kim's No 1 Son Confirms Succession of Little Brother Kim Jong Un

RICHARD LLOYD PARRY, ASIA EDITOR

The oldest son of Kim Jong Il, North Korea's supreme leader, has given the first confirmation that his youngest brother is to inherit power in the isolated dictatorship, even as its Government is threatening pre-emptive nuclear attack against any infringements of its "dignity and sovereignty".

Months of rumours and speculation were confirmed today when Kim Jong Nam, the first son of the country's "Dear Leader", told Japanese television that his half-brother, Kim Jong Un, 26, had been designated heir apparent.

"I hear the news by media. I think it's true," Mr Kim told the Japanese television station TV Asahi in an interview recorded in the Chinese enclave of Macau, where he is a regular visitor. "[it] is my father's decision, so once he decides we have to support . . .

"I hope he can do his best for North Korean people for their happiness and better life."

Mr Kim added: "I cannot tell what kind of person is my brother. Just I can say it's my brother. My father loves very much my brother as his son."

He denied rumours circulating among Asian diplomats that people close to him in North Korea have been purged, and said that he had no personal interest in power. "Sorry, I'm not interested in politics," he said.

At 37, Kim Jong Nam is the oldest of the Dear Leader's three sons by two different mothers. In 2001 he was humiliated after being detained in Japan while attempting to visit Tokyo Disneyland on a forged passport. He has also been spotted in Paris, Beijing and most often recently in Macao, the Chinese gambling enclave.

The succession in the world's most closed and isolated nuclear-armed state had been a subject of intense speculation since Kim Jong Il suffered an apparent stroke last year.

It seems possible that the recent nuclear tests, and the continuing escalation of official rhetoric, are intended at whipping up support and enthusiasm for the Government at a time of uncertainty and transition.

For the first time since the emergence of North Korea's nuclear weapons programme 15 years ago, the state media referred to it yesterday as an offensive, rather than merely defensive, weapon.

"Our nuclear deterrent will be a strong defensive means . . . as well as a merciless offensive means to deal a just retaliatory strike to those who touch the country's dignity and sovereignty even a bit," said an opinion article on the Korean Central News Agency.

"It is the revolutionary spirit of the army and people and the mode of counter-action for self-defence to decisively wipe out the aggressors," it continued, promising "the toughest measures and . . . pre-emptive attack with the advanced pre-emptive strikes".

The families of Laura Ling and Euna Lee, the two American journalists sentenced to 12 years' hard labour after crossing North Korea's border with China, today begged Pyongyang to release them. "We ask the Government of North Korea to show compassion and grant Laura and Euna clemency and allow them to return home to their families," the relatives said in a statement.

"We think the imprisonment, trial and sentencing of Laura and Euna should be viewed as a humanitarian matter," Hillary Clinton, the US secretary of state, said. "We hope that the North Koreans will grant clemency and deport them."

Mrs Clinton has promised "significant action" against Pyongyang, but there is still no clear indication what form this will take.

"The character of North Korea's behaviour is a fairly familiar pattern of doing something outrageous and then expecting to be paid for stopping doing it," Dennis Blair, President Obama's director of national intelligence, said in a speech in Washington late yesterday.

"Overlaid on that are the succession concerns of the current leader. He had a stroke last summer and recently designated his son as his successor . . . any time you have a combination of this behaviour, doing provocative things in order to excite a response, plus succession questions, you have a potentially dangerous mixture."

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article6463430.ece>

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UPI.com

June 9, 2009

S. Korea: Nuke Test Evidence Hard to Find

South Korea still is struggling to produce scientific data confirming North Korea detonated a nuclear device in May, officials in Seoul said Tuesday.

The Korea Institute of Nuclear Safety leads the South Korean effort to detect radioactivity in air particles blowing from North Korea, but haven't found xenon and krypton, two gases generated after nuclear testing or reprocessing, South Korea news agency Yonhap reported.

North Korea, which conducted its first underground nuclear test in 2006, said last it conducted a second nuclear test May 25, drawing condemnation from around the world.

"Chances of finding (xenon and krypton) are getting slimmer as time lapses," said Kim Si-sun, a government official who oversees the nuclear safety project. "We may even have to end our search this week."

Sung Ki-tak, a researcher at the National Fisheries Research and Development Institute, told Yonhap the institute's effort to find traces of seaborne radioactive material also produced few results.

"We have not found a meaningful amount of radioactivity in the East Sea," he said.

A South Korean defense official said it was unlikely that Pyongyang faked a nuclear test because it already demonstrated the capability to conduct one.

"But we may never have scientific evidence that the second explosion indeed involved a nuclear device," he said.

http://www.upi.com/Top_News/2009/06/09/S-Korea-Nuke-test-evidence-hard-to-find/UPI-71811244556288/

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London Daily Telegraph

10 June 2009

UN Agrees Draft Proposal on New Sanctions against North Korea

By Alex Spillius in Washington

The sanctions would allow foreign countries to stop and search ships heading to and from the reclusive communist state, pending approval from the country whose flag the vessel was flying.

The resolution, which is expected to be formally approved at the UN on Friday, does not, however, authorise the use of force should the stopped ships refuse to allow searches, but the sanctions should allow for more ships to be checked.

It would expand an arms embargo against North Korea, seek to curtail the North's financial dealings with the outside world, and freeze assets of North Korean companies.

Most past sanctions have had little effect in dissuading the regime from pursuing its nuclear ambitions, though Susan Rice, the US ambassador to the UN, said these would "bite, and bite in a significant way".

"We think that the message that the council will send should it adopt this resolution is that North Korea's behaviour is unacceptable, they must pay a price," she said.

The agreement comes after two weeks of by ambassadors from the five permanent Security Council nations – the US, Britain and France, China and Russia – as well neighbours Japan and South Korea.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/northkorea/5498486/UN-agrees-draft-proposal-on-new-sanctions-against-North-Korea.html>

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London Daily Telegraph
10 June 2009

Russia says North Korea to Launch New Ballistic Missile

By Malcolm Moore in Shanghai

"We have certain information on the type and characteristics of the rocket. However there is no precise information on the timing of its launch," said a source in Russia's General Staff. He added that Russia would monitor the launch.

He did not specify if it would be a long or short-range missile. In the past week, South Korean and American intelligence have identified a missile being moved to the Musudan launch pad, one of North Korea's most commonly-used sites.

Yonhap, the South Korean news agency, said a missile capable of hitting the West coast of the United States could be launched in mid-June.

A second source, this time at the Russian Foreign ministry, told ITAR-TASS that "judging by everything, a launch will take place. There are signs that preparations for this are under way."

Tensions on the Korean peninsula have been high since the North tested a nuclear bomb on May 25. The United Nations Security Council is still debating what action to take over the test, which contravened a UN resolution.

The US has been moving more aggressively, and is considering levying its own financial sanctions on the rogue state. South Korea has passed information to the US about as many as 20 North Korean bank accounts which are used for moving money.

In 2005, the US imposed financial restrictions on Banco Delta Asia, a bank in the Chinese territory of Macau, over allegations of money laundering and other financial crimes involving North Korea. The move effectively cut the North off from the global financial system.

Separately, South Korea's Finance ministry has imposed sanctions on three North Korean companies for helping the country's April 5 long-range rocket test. The move was largely symbolic because the companies don't do business with South Korea.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/northkorea/5493351/Russia-says-North-Korea-to-launch-new-ballistic-missile.html>

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Times of London
June 11, 2009

China Backs Plan to Search North Korean Ships and Halt Arms Deals

JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK AND LEO LEWIS IN TOKYO

The major powers, including the United States and China, agreed yesterday on a system to inspect suspect cargoes in and out of North Korea despite Pyongyang's warning that it would regard such checks as an act of war.

The draft UN resolution — a response to North Korea's nuclear test on May 25 — would also expand the arms embargo on the country and clamp down on arms-related money transfers. The full 15-nation Security Council is expected to endorse the plan as early as tomorrow.

“This sanctions resolution, if passed by the Security Council, will bite and bite in a meaningful way,” Susan Rice, Washington's UN Ambassador, said.

China, the closest North Korea has to a powerful ally, threw its weight behind the plan after watering down some of the language on inspections. “I hope countries will endorse the text,” Liu Zhenmin, China's UN representative, said.

The proposed resolution is a tough response by the Obama Administration as it tries to break the cycle of offering repeated concessions to North Korea in return for broken promises of co-operation.

The provision for the inspection of ships and aircraft could provide a flashpoint with the reclusive Stalinist regime in North Korea, where a succession struggle appears to be under way.

North Korea's nuclear test was a response to a UN decision to blacklist three North Korean companies. This week the official North Korean press threatened that any attacks would be met with a pre-emptive nuclear strike.

Washington, Tokyo and Seoul are discussing a wholesale shake-up of America's nuclear deterrence in Asia, in the wake of last month's detonation of an atomic bomb by North Korea and rumours of chronic instability in the regime of Kim Jong Il.

The talks on nuclear deterrence are understood to have intensified after Russian intelligence reports suggested that Pyongyang may be preparing to launch a ballistic missile along with expected test-firings of various medium-range weapons.

Wallace Gregson, a senior US Defence Department official, said that America's existing deterrence capability was now under review and that the unfolding nuclear crisis in North Korea called for an entirely new approach. “In our view we can't continue on the course that we have been on for the last 15 years because that hasn't been working . . . so now we need something else,” Mr Gregson said. “Japan certainly has the right to consider all available options,” he added. “The United States is concerned that we adequately reassure Japan of the full range of our security guarantees to Japan.”

The draft UN resolution was agreed by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council — Britain, France, China, Russia and the US — plus the regional powers Japan and South Korea. It would put in place the most detailed system yet for inspecting aircraft and ships carrying suspect cargoes into and out of North Korea.

The UN Security Council authorised cargo inspections after North Korea's first nuclear test in 2006. The new resolution fleshes out the detail, particularly with respect to suspect ships on the high seas. The US had wanted a mandatory inspection but China softened the language so that it became a political rather than a legal commitment.

The draft resolution “calls upon member states to inspect all cargo to and from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea if the state concerned has information that provides reasonable grounds to believe the cargo contains prohibited items.

It calls on all UN member states to inspect suspect ships on the high seas. If banned material, such as arms, nuclear technology or missile components are found in the inspection, they must be seized and disposed of.

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article6474442.ece>

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Reuters

11 June 2009

North Korea, Iran Joined on Missile Work: U.S. General

By Jim Wolf

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Iran and North Korea have worked together and made significant progress on ballistic missiles that could carry deadly warheads, the head of the Pentagon's Missile Defense Agency said on Thursday.

"It really is an international effort going on out there to develop ballistic missile capability between these countries," Army Lieutenant General Patrick O'Reilly told a forum on Capitol Hill.

Iran and North Korea each are at odds with their neighbors and with much of the international community over nuclear programs. Each has demonstrated a capability to launch missiles that fired through their second stages this spring.

They represent the most pronounced example of a kind of international "coalition" sharing know-how on avionics, propulsion and materials among other things, O'Reilly said.

"We've seen it for years and it continues," he said of such cooperation between North Korea and Iran.

Their ability to fire missiles with a stable ignition and launch a second stage represents "a significant step forward" for both of them, O'Reilly said.

Asked which was further along in missile development, he said it could be described as a "horse race" with no clear leader.

The U.S. Air Force's National Air and Space Intelligence Center, in a new report, said Iran, with support from outside sources, within six years could produce an ocean-leaping missile capable of hitting the United States.

"Iran has ambitious ballistic missile and space launch development programs and, with sufficient foreign assistance, Iran could develop and test an ICBM capable of reaching the United States by 2015," the report said.

The report, made available by the Federation of American Scientists, said North Korea's Taepodong 2 missile also could be developed as an intercontinental ballistic missile that could put the United States in range and said the weapon "could be exported to other countries in the future."

The Obama administration has asked Congress for \$7.8 billion for missile defense in fiscal 2010, down about \$1.2 billion from 2009. Congress is considering adding more funds.

(Reporting by Jim Wolf; editing by Bill Trott)

<http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSTRE55A4E720090611>

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Philadelphia Inquirer

June 12, 2009

N. Korea Readying Third Nuclear Test?

By Pamela Hess, Associated Press

WASHINGTON -- North Korea may be preparing for its third nuclear test, a show of defiance as the United Nations considers new sanctions on the country for conducting a nuclear test in May, according to a U.S. official.

North Korea conducted an underground explosion May 25, its first since a 2006 test. The official, who spoke yesterday on condition of anonymity, would not provide details regarding the assessment.

A draft U.N. resolution proposed Wednesday would impose tough sanctions on North Korea's weapons exports and financial dealings and allow inspections of suspect cargo in ports and on the high seas. North Korea has threatened to retaliate.

North Korea already is a pariah to many countries and has been under tough economic sanctions for years. Last month's reported test defied a Security Council resolution adopted after the North's first underground atomic blast in October 2006.

The White House National Security Council would not comment on the assessment of a possible third test.

"We have come to expect North Korea to act recklessly and dangerously," NSC spokesman Mike Hammer said.

"But while the world unites to pass a strong new Security Council resolution, it is clear that North Korea's behavior is succeeding only in further isolating itself."

President Obama's special envoy on North Korea, Stephen Bosworth, said yesterday that the United States was determined to make sure the North faced serious consequences for its actions. Bosworth told lawmakers at a hearing that the administration was considering freezing North Korean accounts at banks outside the country.

Tensions rose further yesterday when North Korea demanded a 3,000 percent increase in rent for a lucrative joint industrial park. The complex has been the biggest symbol of reconciliation between North and South Korea.

Pyongyang also seeks a fourfold increase in wages for 40,000 workers employed by South Korean companies at the park, in the North Korean border town of Kaesong. The demands were made during talks between the two sides at Kaesong, an official said.

The complex, which opened in 2004, combines South Korean capital and technology with cheap North Korean labor.

http://www.philly.com/inquirer/world_us/20090612_N_Korea_readying_third_nuclear_test_.html

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London Daily Telegraph
12 June 2009

US Fears Third Nuclear Test in North Korea

By Peter Foster in Beijing

According to US intelligence sources, there are "fresh indications" that North Korea is preparing another nuclear test and a test-launch of its Taepodong-2 ballistic missile.

The sources, quoted by CNN and Fox Television, added that Pyongyang was also planning to re-start its reactor at Yongbyon to make more weapons-grade plutonium.

The reports come as the Security Council prepares a range of economic and military sanctions against North Korea in punishment for its second nuclear bomb test last month.

The resolution, which should come to a vote today, is expected to ban North Korea from importing all except light weapons and calls on all 192 member states to stop, search and if necessary impound the country's cargo vessels if they are suspected of carrying nuclear technology. America believes that Kim Jong-il, North Korea's dictator, may try to sell the technology to make nuclear weapons to the highest bidder and views this threat as the greatest danger posed by the isolated country.

A UN committee monitoring the implementation of sanctions is also expected, with 30 days, to name further North Korean companies or individuals for asset freezes or travel bans. Three such companies were named in April, to North Korea's public fury.

The last time the UN censured North Korea - following its ballistic missile test last April - Mr Kim left the six-party talks on nuclear disarmament, withdrew from the 1953 truce which silenced the guns in the Korea War and then tested an atomic weapon.

As the UN sanctions vote drew near, a statement from America's National Security Council, made clear that the US was prepared for Mr Kim possible retaliation.

"We have come to expect North Korea to act recklessly and dangerously," it said. "But while the world unites to pass a strong new Security Council resolution, it is clear that North Korea's behaviour is succeeding only in further isolating itself."

North Korea has continued to goad America and its allies. Earlier this week, a court in Pyongyang sentenced two US journalists to 12 years hard labour allegedly for straying across North Korea's border with China while on a reporting assignment last March.

The official rhetoric from Pyongyang has grown increasingly shrill. On Monday, an official newspaper repeated that North Korea would consider any new sanctions resolution a "declaration of war". A day later, the country said it would use nuclear weapons in a "merciless offensive" if attacked.

The US has refused to rise to North Korea's belligerent language. President Barack Obama said last week that America would not take military action and called on North Korea to return to the negotiating table.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/northkorea/5512806/US-fears-third-nuclear-test-in-North-Korea.html>

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Reuters

June 12, 2009

SCENARIOS: Retaliation North Korea may take against UN

By Jack Kim

SEOUL (Reuters) - North Korea is unlikely to respond militarily to planned U.N. sanctions for its nuclear test, but the possibility should not be completely dismissed, U.S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates said.

Here are some steps the reclusive state could take if the resolution, written by the United States and endorsed by the four other permanent members plus Japan and South Korea, is adopted:

ANGRY RHETORIC, THEN DIPLOMACY

- North Korea might fire off a diatribe if the resolution is adopted but not respond militarily using either its conventional or strategic weapons. When the Security Council passed a resolution in 2006 after the North's first nuclear test, its U.N. envoy called the move "gangster-like" and a "coercive" act. Its foreign ministry called it a declaration of war.

- The North, however, set itself on course to return to the negotiating table two months later, ending a year-long deadlock in disarmament talks.

- Officials and experts say the North's recent provocative moves are linked to leader Kim Jong-il arranging for one of his sons to take over. Fighting against perceived hostility from the international community has been a staple of the North's domestic propaganda, used to consolidate power around Kim.

MISSILE TESTS

- North Korea has said it would test fire an intercontinental ballistic missile if the U.N. Security Council does not apologize for punishing it for its April rocket launch, widely seen as a disguised missile test that violated U.N. resolutions. The North appears to be preparing a long-range missile for a test that could be conducted as early as this month.

- Pyongyang also appears to be readying for tests of mid-range missiles that could strike anywhere in South Korea or most of Japan.

MORE NUCLEAR TESTS

- Experts said the North needs more tests in order to build a nuclear warhead it can mount on a missile.

- Each test eats into the North's meager supply of fissile material, thought before the May test to be enough for six to eight bombs.

- Additional tests depend on balancing a desire to make a nuclear device it can deliver on a missile with perfecting the bomb design.

NUCLEAR ARMS PROGRAMME

- North Korea could resume all operations at its Yongbyon nuclear plant and has said it is already processing plutonium there.

- It may also look to step up enriching uranium for weapons.

U.S. JOURNALISTS

- North Korea sentenced two U.S. journalists to 12 years hard labor on Monday and may want to use them to increase bargaining leverage with the United States.

(Additional reporting by Jon Herskovitz)

<http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSTRE55B0Q220090612?sp=true>

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New York Times
OPINION
June 12, 2009

Why Beijing Props Up Pyongyang

By ANDREI LANKOV

SEOUL — The situation around North Korea is deteriorating fast. A missile launch in April was followed by an underground nuclear test in May, and an intercontinental ballistic missile seems to be on its way to the launch pad. Two American journalists arrested in North Korea received an unusually harsh prison sentence, and North Korea has made new demands that are bound to undermine the last surviving North-South cooperation project.

International sanctions, introduced after the first nuclear test in 2006, have not had any noticeable effect — in part because they have not been seriously implemented. It is clear that no “stern warnings” from the United States or the United Nations Security Council will have any effect on Pyongyang’s behavior.

With all other approaches failing, one last hope is often cited — China. Today, some 45 percent of all North Korean trade is with China, and between 30 and 50 percent of China’s entire foreign aid budget is spent on this one small country. So, the reasoning goes, Beijing must have tremendous leverage over Pyongyang.

Indeed, there have been changes in the Chinese approach to North Korea. Beijing has taken an increasingly critical stance on Pyongyang’s nuclear program and supported a strongly worded U.N. resolution on the nuclear test. The official Chinese media has been unequivocal in its condemnation of North Korean actions. So, is China coming to the rescue?

Well, don’t hold your breath.

China clearly does not want a nuclear North Korea. Such a blatant violation of the nonproliferation regime undermines China’s own privileged standing as a “legitimate” nuclear power. In addition, the emergence of a nuclear North Korea is likely to provoke a nuclear arms race in East Asia, with Japan possibly emerging as a nuclear power — a nightmare for Chinese strategists. So North Korea’s nuclear ambitions are creating problems for China.

Nonetheless, there are compelling reasons why China is unlikely to press North Korea hard.

North Korea accepts Chinese aid, but it has shown no inclination to heel to Beijing’s advice. The North Korean regime is such that it is largely immune to foreign pressure. It has been tried before, but when the pressure is only moderate — such as a partial reduction of aid or less favorable trade conditions — North Korean leaders have simply ignored it.

That may lead to a further deterioration of living standards, but the well-being of the population has never been among Pyongyang’s major concerns. North Koreans have no influence on the state’s policies, and are unlikely to rebel. If deprived of food, they starve and die quietly. So in order to influence Pyongyang’s behavior, it has to be hit really hard — in China’s case, that might mean cutting all aid and stopping all shipments of fuel.

Such drastic measures, which approach a land blockade, would likely destabilize the fragile domestic situation inside North Korea, with regime collapse being a probable outcome.

For China, collapse of the North Korean state would mean millions of refugees, many of them armed soldiers, crossing into China. That would increase instability in some of China’s major industrial and population centers. Finally, it would result in a loss of control over North Korea’s stockpiles of weapons-grade plutonium, as well as chemical and biological weapons.

The longer-term consequences of a North Korean implosion are also unwelcome to Beijing. It would probably lead to the unification of the country under Seoul, depriving China of a strategic buffer and, even worse, creating a large U.S. ally. The alternative — military intervention — is a costly and risky option that Beijing would prefer to avoid.

In other words, China faces a choice between two evils: a nuclear North Korea or a collapsing North Korea. And a collapsing North Korea clearly represents a greater evil. This is why Beijing is negative on severe sanctions and is willing to continue providing aid to North Korea.

Thus Chinese inaction over North Korea is not a mistake but a rational choice that has shaped Beijing’s policy for the past decade and is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future.

China will make gestures of condemnation and, contrary to what some China-bashers believe, they will be sincere. But Beijing will not go much further: It will do nothing that might jeopardize the internal stability in the North. Like any rational player, China prefers to stick with a lesser evil.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/12/opinion/12iht-edlankov.html?hpw>

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OPINION

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Nuclear War is Kim Jong-il's Game Plan

By Kim Myong Chol

TOKYO - A little-noted fact about the second nuclear test conducted on May 25 by the Kim Jong-il administration of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is that it was a highly successful fission trigger test for multi-megaton warheads.

These types of warheads can be detonated in outer space, far above the United States, evaporating its key targets. This is a significant indication of the supreme leader's game plan for nuclear war with the crippled superpower and its allies, Japan and South Korea.

The North Korean Foreign Ministry on April 29 announced its plan to test-fire what it termed a long-awaited "intercontinental ballistic missile" (ICBM), the first public ICBM test after numerous missile tests, short-range, medium-range, and long-range, were conducted without notice.

On March 9, the General Staff of the nuclear-armed Korean People's Army had begun preparing to launch simultaneous retaliatory strikes on the US, Japan and South Korea in response to their act of war.

Although no appropriate test site for a thermonuclear bomb is available on the Korean Peninsula, North Korean scientists and engineers are confident, as a series of computer simulations have proved that their hydrogen bombs will be operational. The North Korean message is that any soft spots of the US, Japan and South Korea's defense lines will be used as the testing grounds for their thermonuclear weapons.

The Korean Central News Agency said on May 25 that the underground nuclear test was carried out at the request of nuclear scientists and engineers and reported:

The current nuclear test was safely conducted on a new higher level in terms of its explosive power and technology of its control and the results of the test helped satisfactorily settle the scientific and technological problems arising in further increasing the power of nuclear weapons and steadily developing nuclear technology.

John Pike, the founder and director of [globalsecurity.org](http://www.globalsecurity.org), told the Weekly Standard on October 19, 2006, that the North Korean nuclear test that year may have been a test of a "trigger device" for a much larger hydrogen bomb. Writing in the New York Times on April 7, 2009, he revealed that "North Korea's low-yield nuclear test in October 2006 did "coincide with the sub-kiloton tests of the fission trigger for a hydrogen bomb". He added, "possibly North Korea's hydrogen bombs can be easily fitted on missiles".

The Kim Jong-il administration has developed its global nuclear strike capability primarily as a deterrent to US invasion to keep the Korean Peninsula out of war. Secondly, it needs operational nuclear missiles targeted at US and Japanese targets in the event of a DPRK-US war.

The North Korean state-run newspaper, Minjo Josen, vowed on June 9 to use nuclear weapons in war as "merciless means of offense to deal retaliatory strikes" against anyone who "dares infringe upon the dignity and sovereignty of the DPRK even a bit".

Scenario for nuclear war

After shifting to a plan B, Supreme Leader Kim Jong-il has put in place a nuclear game plan as a part of the plan's military first policy to deal with nuclear rogue state America and its allies South Korea and Japan. (See Kim Jong-il shifts to plan B, Asia Times Online, May 21)

The nuclear game plan is designed firstly to militarily prevent the US from throwing a monkey wrench into the plans of the Kim Jong-il administration for economic prosperity by 2012 - the centenary of the birth of founding father Kim Il-sung - in a bid to complete its membership of the three elite clubs of nuclear, space and economic powers.

Its second aim is to win the hearts and minds of the 70 million Korean people, North, South and abroad, and leave little doubt in their eyes that Kim Jong-il has what it takes to neutralize and phase out the American presence in Korea. This will hasten the divided parts of ancestral Korean land - bequeathed by Dankun 5,000 years ago and Jumon 2,000 years ago - coming together under a confederal umbrella as a reunified state.

It is designed to impress upon the Korean population that Kim Jong-il is a Korean David heroically standing up to the American Goliath, that he can lead the epic effort to settle long-smoldering moral scores with the US over a more than 100-year-old grudge match that dates as far as the 1905 Taft-Katsura Agreement and the 1866 invasion of Korea by the *USS General Sherman*.

Third, Kim Jong-il has described the shift to plan B as a stern notice for the governments of the US and its junior allies that they cannot get away with their hostile behavior any longer, unless they are prepared to leave their booming economies consumed in a great conflagration of retaliatory thermonuclear attacks.

The game plan assumes that the US is unlikely to shake off its aggressive behavior until it is wiped off this planet. The Barack Obama administration has not taken much time to reveal its true colors, which are no different from the George W Bush administration. There have been four compelling signs:

First, the March 9-20 Key Resolve (Team Spirit) joint war games between the US and South Korea.

Second, the US-led United Nation Security Council's (UNSC) condemnation of an innocuous April 5 satellite launch.

Third, the rehashing of counterfeit money charges that the US has failed to produce compelling evidence to support. As Newsweek wrote in its June 8 issue, "The Treasury Department couldn't find a single shred of hard evidence pointing to North Korean production of counterfeit money."

Fourth, the presence of Bush holdovers in the Obama administration, such as Stuart Levy, the architect of Bush-era financial sanctions intended to criminalize the DPRK.

Four types of hydrogen bomb raids

The game plan for nuclear war specifies four types of thermonuclear assault: (1) the bombing of operating nuclear power stations; (2) detonations of a hydrogen bombs in seas off the US, Japan and South Korea; (3) detonations of H-bombs in space far above their heartlands; and (4) thermonuclear attacks on their urban centers.

The first attack involves converting operating nuclear power plants on the coastline of the three countries into makeshift multi-megaton H-bombs.

The New York Times on January 24, 1994, quoted Paul Leventhal, president of the Nuclear Control Institute, warning that North Korea could easily launch de-facto hydrogen bomb attacks on South Korea.

"North Korean retaliation to bombing could result in vastly more fallout in the South than in the North ... North Korean retaliatory bombing could bring Chernobyls multiplied."

If bombed, one average operating nuclear power station is estimated to spew out as much deadly fallout as 150-180 H-bombs. Bombing one nuclear power station would render the Japanese archipelago and South Korea uninhabitable. Doing the same to the US may require bombing one plant on its west coast and another on its east coast.

Nothing is easier than bombing a power plant on a coastline. There is no need to use a ballistic missile. Primitive means will do the job.

The US has 103 operating nuclear power stations with onsite storage of a huge quantity of spent fuel rods and Japan has 53 operating atomic power stations. Japan has a stockpile of weapons-grade plutonium - enough to assemble more than 1,000 atomic bombs in a short period of time. South Korea has 20 operating nuclear power stations with onsite storage of a huge quantity of spent fuel rods.

The detonation of sea-borne or undersea H-bombs planted on the three countries' continental shelves will trigger nuclear tsunamis with devastating consequences.

A 2006 RAND study of a ship-based 10-kiloton nuclear blast on the Port of Long Beach had some harrowing conclusions:

"Within the first 72 hours, the attack would devastate a vast portion of the Los Angeles metropolitan area. Because ground-burst explosions generate particularly large amounts of highly radioactive debris, fallout from the blast would cause much of the destruction. In some of the most dramatic possible outcomes:

- Sixty thousand people might die instantly from the blast itself or quickly thereafter from radiation poisoning.
 - One hundred and fifty thousand more might be exposed to hazardous levels of radioactive water and sediment from the port, requiring emergency medical treatment.
 - The blast and subsequent fires might completely destroy the entire infrastructure and all ships in the Port of Long Beach and the adjoining Port of Los Angeles.
 - Six million people might try to evacuate the Los Angeles region.
 - Two to three million people might need relocation because fallout will have contaminated a 500-square-kilometer area.
 - Gasoline supplies might run critically short across the entire region because of the loss of Long Beach's refineries - responsible for one-third of the gas west of the Rocky Mountains.
- RAND projects that the economic costs would exceed \$1 trillion.

The third possible attack, a high-altitude detonation of hydrogen bombs that would create a powerful electromagnetic pulse (EMP), would disrupt the communications and electrical infrastructure of the US, the whole of Japan, and South Korea.

Many of the essential systems needed to survive war would be knocked out, as computers are instantly rendered malfunctioning or unusable. Military and communications systems such as radars, antennas, and missiles, government offices, would be put out of use, as would energy sources such as nuclear power stations and transport and communications systems including airports, airplanes, railways, cars and cell phones.

Ironically the ubiquity of high-tech computing gadgets in the US, Japan and South Korea has made them most vulnerable to EMP attacks.

The last and fourth attack would be to order into action a global nuclear strike force of dozens of MIRVed ICBMs - each bearing a thermonuclear warhead on a prefixed target.

The Yongbyon nuclear site has always been a decoy to attract American attention and bring it into negotiations on a peace treaty to formally end the Korean War. Since as far back as the mid-1980, North Korea has assembled 100-300 nuclear warheads in an ultra-clandestine nuclear weapons program. The missiles can be mounted on medium-range missiles designed to be nuclear capable.

A prototype ICBM was assembled by the end of the 1980s. Two prototype ICBMs were test-fired on May 29, 1993, with one splashing down off Honolulu and the other off Guam. The Kim Jong-il administration gave an advance notice to the US government of the long-range missile test. But the American reaction was skeptical.

In April 2001, the Associated Press quoted Navy representative Mark Kirk's "terrifying encounter in 1993 with what seemed possible nuclear attack" from North Korea. He recalled:

It was a no notice, no warning missile launch out of North Korea, and for the first and only time in my career in the NMJIC [National Military Joint Intelligence Center], I got to see all of the panoply of the United States military wake up in a few seconds.

We did not know what kind of missile it was, so the impact area, at the beginning, was the entire United States, and you thought about what we might be doing in the next 12 minutes: would we be notifying the president that we had lost an American city? We were going to know the answer in 12 minutes.

At first it still included the Pacific Coast, then it included Hawaii.

AP added: "Little was made of the 1993 launch at the time because it wasn't determined until later that it likely flew over Japan and landed in the Pacific Ocean, Kirk said."

It was not until 1998 that the US notified the Japanese government of the flyover of a North Korean long-range missile before splashing down off Hawaii. The US National Aeronautics and Space Administration quietly labeled the 1998 satellite launch a success.

According to a February 12, 2003, AP report, US intelligence had concluded a few years earlier that North Korea has a ballistic missile capable of hitting the western United States and possibly targets farther inland.

<http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Korea/KF12Dg01.html>

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