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Articles & Other Documents:

[Obama to Russia: Stop Iranian Nuclear Weapon and US Will Scrap Missile Defence](#)

[Cyberattacks Jam Government and Commercial Web Sites in U.S. and South Korea](#)

[China Urges Russia, U.S. to Massively Cut Nuclear Arms](#)

[N.K. Cyber Combat Unit Has 100 Hackers](#)

[U.S., Russia Agree on Nuclear Arms Reductions](#)

[US, UAE Nuclear Deal would End if Terms Violated](#)

[US and Russia in Nuclear Accord](#)

[Iran Dominates US Hearing on UAE Nuclear Deal](#)

[G8 Leaders Support Russia-U.S. Agreement on Arms Reduction](#)

[India not Signing NPT: Chavan](#)

[G8: Britain could Cut Nuclear Stockpile, Gordon Brown says](#)

[India Plans to Source Nuclear Fuel from Central Asia, Africa](#)

[Obama: Washington and Moscow must Lead on Nukes](#)

[India to Launch First Nuclear Submarine](#)

[Russia's Lavrov says U.S. Missile Shield Plans Counterproductive](#)

[Russia Resumes Pre-Delivery Trials of Nuclear Sub for India](#)

[Poland Reassured over US Missile Shield Plans: Minister](#)

[Washington to Host Nuclear Talks](#)

[Missile Defence, Iran Issues should be Considered Separately-MP](#)

[Russians Start Work on Floating Nuclear Power Plant](#)

[U.S. puts Missile Defense on Hold - Russian MP](#)

[Obama's New Deal for Russia](#)

[Cyber Attackers Target South Korea and US](#)

[Russia, U.S. could Cooperate to Resolve Iranian Nuclear Problem](#)

[North Korea Suspected in Cyberattack](#)

[Obama's Big Missile Test](#)

[Cyber Attacks May Not Have Come From North Korea](#)

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Times of London

7 July 2009

Obama to Russia: Stop Iranian Nuclear Weapon and US Will Scrap Missile Defence

TONY HALPIN IN MOSCOW

President Obama today offered to scrap plans for a missile defence shield in Eastern Europe if Russia helped to stop Iran developing a nuclear bomb.

He appealed in Moscow for a new era of partnership between Russia and the United States to fight the spread of nuclear weapons to rogue states and terrorist groups.

"That is why we should be united in opposing North Korea's efforts to become a nuclear power and preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon," he said.

Russia strongly opposes US plans to site the missile shield in Poland and the Czech Republic, which Washington says is necessary to defend against a surprise attack from Iran. Mr Obama made clear that he was willing to strike a deal with the Kremlin.

"I know Russia opposes the planned configuration for missile defence in Europe . . . I have made it clear that this system is directed at preventing a potential attack from Iran and has nothing to do with Russia," Mr Obama said in a speech to students graduating from Moscow's New Economic School.

"I want us to work together on a missile defence architecture that makes us all safer. But if the threat from Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes is eliminated, the driving force for missile defence in Europe will be eliminated. That is in our mutual interest."

A failure to uphold agreements to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons would turn international law into "the law of the jungle". The US and Russia had learnt to respect a "balance of terror" during the Cold War, but "we have to ask whether 10 or 20 or 50 nuclear-armed nations will protect their arsenals and refrain from using them".

In a speech laced with compliments for Russian culture, and notably light on concerns over democracy and human rights abuses, Mr Obama said that America wanted "a strong, peaceful and prosperous Russia".

He paid tribute to the "unimaginable hardship" suffered by the people of the Soviet Union in defeating Nazi Germany. Future threats required "global partnership and that partnership will be stronger if Russia occupies its rightful place as a great power".

Mr Obama continued: "In 2009, a great power does not show strength by dominating or demonising other countries. The days when empires could treat sovereign states as pieces on a chess board are over.

"Any world order that tries to elevate one nation or group of people over another will inevitably fail. The pursuit of power is no longer a zero-sum game — progress must be shared. That is why I have called for a 'reset' in relations between the United States and Russia."

Mr Obama stood up for Ukraine and Georgia against Russian efforts to prevent them seeking membership in Nato, saying that states "must have the right to borders that are secure and to their own foreign policies".

"Any system that cedes those rights will lead to anarchy. That is why this principle must apply to all nations – including Georgia and Ukraine," Mr Obama said. He stopped short of criticising Russia for recognising the breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states after last August's war with Georgia.

Mr Obama pulled his punches over the state of Russian democracy and individual freedom, disappointing liberal critics of the Kremlin. He made no direct criticism of Russia but instead declared that America had an interest in "democratic governments that protect the rights of their people".

"The arc of history shows us that governments which serve their own people survive and thrive; governments which serve only their own power do not," he said. "Governments that represent the will of their people are far less likely to descend into failed states, to terrorise their citizens, or to wage war on others."

Mr Obama insisted that America "will not seek to impose any system of government on any other country, nor would we presume to choose which party or individual should run a country". He admitted that the US had "not always done what we should have on that front".

"I will work tirelessly to protect America's security and advance our interests. But no one nation can meet the challenges of the 21st century on its own, nor dictate its terms to the world. That is something that America now understands just as Russia understands," he said.

Earlier, Mr Obama met Vladimir Putin for the first time and praised his "extraordinary work" as president and prime minister. The tone of the meeting at Mr Putin's country residence was in stark contrast to Mr Obama's criticism of him last week as a man with "one foot in the old ways of doing business".

Over a Russian breakfast of smoked Beluga and tea from a samovar, served up by waiters in folk costumes, Mr Putin told his guest: "We associate your name with the hopes of developing our relations."

Mr Obama said that their meeting provided an "excellent opportunity to put US-Russian relations on a much stronger footing". A senior US official later told reporters that the President had changed his view of Mr Putin and was now "convinced the Prime Minister is a man of today".

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article6658328.ece>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

China View
7 July 2009

China Urges Russia, U.S. to Massively Cut Nuclear Arms

BEIJING, July 7 (Xinhua) -- China on Tuesday welcomed the new Russia-U.S. document on strategic weapons and urged both nations to massively cut nuclear arms.

"China welcomes the Russia-U.S. document on reducing strategic arms and hopes both nations will reach an early deal and aggressively cut nuclear arms," Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang told the regular briefing.

Qin's comments came as Russian President Dmitri Medvedev and his U.S. counterpart Barack Obama on Monday signed a document of understanding on nuclear weapon control.

Under the framework document, within seven years after a new treaty comes into force, the limits for strategic delivery systems should be within 500-1,100 units and for warheads linked to them within 1,500-1,675 units.

The new deal is expected to replace the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) signed in 1991 between the United States and the Soviet Union.

START I, due to expire in December, places a limit of 6,000 strategic or long-range nuclear warheads on both sides.

"As the world's biggest nuclear arms countries, Russia and the United States should cut their nuclear arsenals in a verifiable and irreversible manner, which will pave the way for the comprehensive and thorough nuclear disarmament," Qin said.

The spokesman said China always maintained a comprehensive ban on and a thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. He said: "China would like to work with other parties to make positive contribution to nuclear disarmament."

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Dallas Morning News

July 7, 2009

U.S., Russia Agree on Nuclear Arms Reductions

FROM WIRE REPORTS Clifford J. Levy and Peter Baker, The New York Times

MOSCOW – The United States and Russia, seeking to move forward on one of the most significant arms control treaties since the end of the Cold War, announced Monday that they had reached a preliminary agreement on cutting each country's stockpiles of strategic nuclear weapons by as much as one-third.

The so-called framework agreement, which is intended to replace the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, or START, was put together by negotiators as President Barack Obama arrived in Moscow for his first Russian-American summit meeting. It was approved by Obama and Russia's president, Dmitry Medvedev.

Since taking office in January, Obama has vowed to improve Russian relations, which had steadily worsened in the final years of his predecessor, George W. Bush.

Less than a year ago, Russia's war with Georgia had caused the deepest strains between Moscow and the West since the fall of the Soviet Union.

At a news conference Monday, Obama and Medvedev hailed the arms control framework and a range of other agreements on Afghanistan, Iran and other issues. Both men spoke warmly of their negotiations, indicating that they hoped the summit was an important step in renewed cooperation.

Medvedev appeared to indicate more willingness for Russia to assist the U.S. in stopping the proliferation of nuclear weapons in Iran and North Korea, a priority of the Obama administration.

"It's our common, joint responsibility, and we should do our utmost to prevent any negative trends there, and we are ready to do that," Medvedev said. "Our negotiations with President Obama have demonstrated that we share the same attitude towards this problem."

Obama declared that the U.S. and Russia had to set an example by reducing their own arsenals.

"This is an urgent issue, and one in which the United States and Russia have to take leadership," Obama said. "It is very difficult for us to exert that leadership unless we are showing ourselves willing to deal with our own nuclear stockpiles in a more rational way."

In the negotiations, both sides seemed to try to skirt a dispute that could have derailed the summit – the fate of an American missile defense system in Poland and the Czech Republic, which was proposed by the Bush administration.

American officials have said the system is intended to ward off attacks from countries like Iran, but the Kremlin views it as a threat to Russia.

Before the summit, Medvedev asserted that the United States needed to compromise on the system before Russia would sign off on an arms control agreement.

While Obama is not as enthusiastic about the system as Bush was, he has not abandoned it and is awaiting a review by his advisers. In the meantime, he had resisted linking the missile defense system to the arms reduction negotiations.

On Monday, the two sides issued a joint statement indicating that they would continue to discuss the anti-missile system. They also agreed to undertake a joint assessment of any threats presented by Iran.

But Medvedev said at the news conference that he believed that Russia had made progress on the issue because he said the U.S. had acknowledged that negotiations on arms control would be connected to the missile defense program. Obama did not acknowledge any change in the American position. On arms control, the framework document sets the parameters for talks through the end of the year, according to officials. The START treaty expires Dec. 5. The two countries said they then wanted to build momentum for a broader agreement to be negotiated

starting next year to impose even deeper cuts in their nuclear arsenals and put the world on a path toward eliminating nuclear weapons altogether.

On the immediate treaty, negotiators are to be instructed to craft an agreement that would cut strategic warheads for each side to between 1,500 and 1,675, down from the limit of 2,200 slated to take effect in 2012 under the Treaty of Moscow, which was signed in 2002 by the presidents at the time, Bush and Vladimir Putin.

http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/news/world/stories/DN-usrussia_07int.ART.State.Edition2.18188b.html

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Financial Times – U.K.
July 7, 2009

US and Russia in Nuclear Accord

By Stefan Wagstyl in Moscow and Daniel Dombey in Washington

The US and Russia yesterday pledged to make big cuts in their strategic nuclear arsenals and pursue closer ties but failed to settle their most serious dispute, a row over US plans to install an anti-missile defence system in eastern Europe.

At the first US-Russia summit in Moscow in seven years, US president Barack Obama and his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev said their countries would co-operate in addressing global issues, including nuclear non-proliferation, terrorism and instability in Afghanistan.

In a clear effort to build on recent improvements in relations, Mr Medvedev said Russia and the US had "a lot in common" and "lots of mutual interests". Mr Obama said he and Mr Medvedev were "committed to leaving behind the suspicion and rivalry of the past so that we can advance the interests that we hold in common".

"It would be hard to talk of a revolution in relations between Russia and the US," said Alexei Malashenko, an analyst at the Moscow Carnegie Center think-tank. "But a reset in relations has definitely taken place."

The presidents agreed to work on an arms control pact to replace the 1991 Start treaty which expires in December. They plan to cut warheads from a ceiling of 2,200 to 1,500-1,675 and delivery vehicles from 1,600 to 500-1,100. Moscow agreed to allow US planes taking soldiers and weapons to Afghanistan to cross Russian airspace. The two sides signed a statement pledging co-operation over Afghanistan in battling terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking.

The presidents established a commission to develop bilateral relations on issues ranging from the economy to culture, along the lines of the Gore-Chernomyrdin commission of the 1990s. It will be headed by Mr Obama and Mr Medvedev and run by their foreign ministers, Hillary Clinton and Sergei Lavrov.

The two leaders admitted differences remained over anti-missile defence. Mr Obama said, for the first time, that he recognised that it was legitimate to talk not only about offensive weapons, such as warheads covered by the Start treaty, but also defensive systems, including anti-missile defence.

Mr Obama's comments will give comfort to Russia, which has long argued that the two issues are linked. Mr Medvedev said they were linked in the joint summit statements, even though no such specific words appeared in the texts distributed to journalists. Mr Obama gave no ground on the east European bases, saying the whole missile defence project was under a review which would be completed this summer.

Mr Obama said he had restated his "firm belief that Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity must be respected".

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/803c4972-6a8d-11de-ad04-00144feabdc0.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

RIA Novosti
09 July 2009

G8 Leaders Support Russia-U.S. Agreement on Arms Reduction

MOSCOW, July 9 (RIA Novosti) - Participants in the G8 summit in Italy have unanimously backed recent Russian and U.S. agreements to conclude a new strategic arms reduction deal by the end of the year, a Russian deputy foreign minister said on Thursday.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and U.S. President Barack Obama signed an agreement on Monday outlining the provisions of the final treaty, including cutting their countries' nuclear arsenals to 1,500-1,675 operational warheads and delivery vehicles to 500-1,000.

"The [G8] leaders made an important statement on the issue of non-proliferation and disarmament during the summit. The statement expressed, in particular, their unanimous and collective support of recently reached agreements between Russia and the United States, concluded at the highest level through the mutual understanding of the two presidents," Sergei Ryabkov said.

Three rounds of comprehensive talks have already been held on drafting a new nuclear arms reduction pact to replace the START 1 treaty, which expires on December 5, and a new round could begin as early as next week.

The START 1 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 document, 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.

<http://en.rian.ru/world/20090709/155481876.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

London Telegraph
10 July 2009

G8: Britain could Cut Nuclear Stockpile, Gordon Brown says

By James Kirkup in L'Aquila

US-brokered talks next year aimed at preventing nuclear proliferation could pave the way for Britain to reduce its 160-warhead arsenal in return for proof from aspiring nuclear states that they had stopped their weapons programmes.

President Barack Obama has invited as many as 30 nations to talks in Washington next March. The White House said the talks would focus on preventing the spread of nuclear material to rogue states and terrorist groups.

Talks could lead to more intrusive international inspections, and pressure for countries other than the US and Russia, which together account for 95 per cent of the world's nuclear weapons, to contribute to disarmament. Mr Obama earlier this week got the promise of a pact with Russia to reduce nuclear arms.

Speaking at the G8 summit in Italy, Mr Brown insisted there was no question of abandoning plans to replace the Trident weapons system. But he signalled that the number of British warheads and nuclear-armed submarines could be reduced as part of a new international agreement.

"What we need is collective action by the nuclear weapons powers to say that we are prepared to reduce our nuclear weapons, but we need assurances also that other countries will not proliferate them," he said.

Mr Brown said the meeting could also help to draw up a replacement for the international Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Mr Brown said that the number of states with nuclear weapons had risen to nine from the treaty's five original signers and that there was the "threat of a big rise in nuclear weapon states in this decade."

He said: "The whole point of a non-proliferation treaty is those who have weapons will be looking at reducing them as far as possible."

Mr Brown gave no details on the scale of any cuts in the British deterrent. However, a 2006 Government White Paper on replacing Trident committed Britain to reducing the number of warheads to fewer than 160. The Government has never specified what the new number will be, keeping the figure confidential.

However, Britain's operational nuclear deterrent is routinely based on fewer than 50 warheads. A Vanguard-class submarine sails with a maximum of 48 warheads. There is normally only one submarine deployed on operational duty at any given time.

The Royal Navy has four Vanguard-class submarines capable of carrying Trident nuclear missiles. The Ministry of Defence is considering plans to cut that number to three when the Vanguards are replaced.

Bob Ainsworth, the Defence Secretary, announced this week that Labour, like the Conservatives, would hold a full Strategic Defence Review after the next election.

That raised doubts about the Trident replacement, but Mr Brown made clear he was not prepared to consider getting rid of all of Britain's nuclear weapons, saying they remained vital to national security. He said: "Iran is attempting to build a nuclear weapon, North Korea is attempting to build a nuclear weapon. Unilateral action by the UK would not be seen as the best way."

Russia and the US – which hold 90 per cent of the world's warheads – made a preliminary agreement last week to cut their arsenals by as much as a third.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/g8/5791510/G8-Britain-could-cut-nuclear-stockpile-Gordon-Brown-says.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Associated Press (AP)
News Hosted by Google
10 July 2009

Obama: Washington and Moscow must Lead on Nukes

L'AQUILA, Italy (AP) — President Barack Obama says the United States and Russia must show they're "fulfilling their commitments" to lead global efforts to curb the spread of nuclear weapons.

Obama told a news conference at the end of the G-8 summit that if the two superpowers demonstrate that they will limit or eliminate these weapons, it would strengthen their moral authority to speak to others, like North Korea and Iran.

The president said it was important that other countries understand that efforts to control the spread of these weapons are "not just being imposed" on them by countries which already have a nuclear weapons capability.

Obama said there is a need to build "a system of international norms" for nuclear weapons. With respect to North Korea and Iran, he said "it's not a matter of singling them out ... but a standard that everybody can live by."

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5jDOqYIO47SQyqDBUXenzcK0aqofQD99BJEQ80>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

RIA Novosti
07 July 2009

Russia's Lavrov says U.S. Missile Shield Plans Counterproductive

MOSCOW, July 7 (RIA Novosti) - Moscow hopes that Washington will realize the 'counter productivity' of its plan to deploy elements of U.S. missile shield in central Europe, the Russian foreign minister said on Tuesday.

"I hope that the revision [of the missile shield plans] in Washington... will result in an understanding that unilateral steps in this sphere are counterproductive," Sergei Lavrov said in an interview with Russia's Vesti channel.

U.S. President Barack Obama, currently in Moscow on a three-day visit, has shown less interest than President George Bush in opening a missile interceptor base in Poland and a radar station in the Czech Republic, which Moscow has fiercely opposed as a security threat.

Obama has not yet announced a final decision on whether to move ahead with the missile shield. The Bush administration said the missile defense shield elements were to counter possible strikes from "rogue" states, and not aimed against Russia.

"They [the U.S.] want to analyze this project, and they intend to complete their review in a two- or three-month period, as President Obama promised President Medvedev," Lavrov said.

Medvedev said on Monday after talks with the U.S. leader that the Obama administration, unlike its predecessor, had taken a pause and was examining the situation to formulate a final position on the missile defense plans.

Lavrov also said that talks on a new treaty to replace the START 1 deal due to expire in December would be completed by the end of the year.

"There are reasons to believe that we will complete the work by December," Lavrov said.

He added that Russia would want any new START treaty to stipulate large cuts in strategic delivery systems.

"We are for the maximum possible limits on delivery systems," he said.

The Russian and U.S. presidents signed a preliminary agreement on Monday to cut their countries' nuclear arsenals to 1,500-1,675 operational warheads and their strategic delivery systems to between 500-1,100 units.

<http://en.rian.ru/world/20090707/155462457.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Agence France-Press (AFP)

News Hosted by Google

8 July 2009

Poland Reassured over US Missile Shield Plans: Minister

By Jonathan Fowler

WARSAW (AFP) — Washington has calmed concerns that in a drive to rebuild ties with Russia it could drop a plan to set up a US anti-missile base in Poland, Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski said Wednesday.

"I'm reassured," Sikorski told reporters after he was briefed by US Assistant Secretary of State Stephen Mull on this week's Moscow summit between US President Barack Obama and his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev.

"We know that a decision will be taken by the United States and its Polish and Czech allies, and not by third parties. And that's good news," he said.

In 2008, Warsaw and Washington struck a deal on deploying 10 US long-range interceptor missiles in Poland as part of a global air-defence system which was heavily pushed by the US administration of George W. Bush.

Bush's successor Obama has launched a review of the controversial system -- which Washington says is meant to block potential Iranian attacks, but which is fiercely opposed by Russia.

"We're strictly focused on what is the threat to our allies and to us, secondly what is the best way to respond to that, and thirdly what's the most cost-efficient way to do it," Mull underscored.

"We're going to finish that study, which we've accelerated, by the end of the summer. We will discuss it internally with our Polish allies and our Czech allies and within NATO before announcing it more broadly," he added.

The anti-missile system, meant to be ready by 2013, would also include a radar base in the Czech Republic, Poland's southern neighbour.

Moscow has been enraged by what it sees as the latest US foray into its Soviet-era sphere of influence and has threatened to train nuclear warheads on Poland and the Czech Republic. Both broke free from the communist bloc in 1989 and joined NATO 10 years later.

Obama's review sparked concerns in Warsaw and Prague that after sticking out their necks for Washington, they would be left to take the flak from Moscow amid a thawing of ties between the two giants.

Following Obama's talks with Medvedev on Monday, the US leader kept the door open for further discussions on Russia's concerns.

Medvedev highlighted as the main "step forward" an agreement by the United States for the issue of both defensive and offensive weapons to be included in broader negotiations on a treaty to replace a 1991 accord on limiting the two powers' nuclear arsenals, due to expire in December.

On Tuesday, however, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov reaffirmed that the shield plan could jeopardise future nuclear arms cuts.

Last month, the Polish government had complained Washington was fudging on the shield and a related plan to boost Poland's air defences by deploying Patriot missiles here.

Both the anti-missile base and the Patriot deployment hinge on the conclusion of a so-called Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) governing the presence of US troops on Polish soil.

"The SOFA negotiations are proceeding at a steady pace. Another round is planned in Washington next week," Sikorski said.

Mull noted that the issue was "very complicated."

"But we're very optimistic, we're making big progress," he said.

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hSO47YdXb7UsEL7dNv7g8AA17tXA>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Itar-Tass – Russia

8 July 2009

Missile Defence, Iran Issues should be Considered Separately-MP

MOSCOW, July 8 (Itar-Tass) - The issues of missile defence and Iran should be considered separately from each other, believes head of the international affairs committee of the State Duma lower house of Russia's parliament Konstantin Kosachev. "The missile defence issue and Iran should not be mixed, no matter how the Americans insist on this," the lawmaker said on the Echo of Moscow radio station on Tuesday commenting on US President Barack Obama's speech.

"Each of these issues is important from the viewpoint of Russian interests in the security sphere," Kosachev said. "These issues are self-sufficient and should be considered separately, and not like the American side is trying to propose," he noted.

"Irrespective of what is happening in Iran, and this situation is not transparent for us as well, and this situation causes our certain concern, but nevertheless, irrespective of this the issues of nuclear balance are very important, they are too significant from the global security viewpoint for tying them to specific scenarios evolving in specific countries," believes the parliamentarian.

"The Americans at all times have justified the creation of the missile defence system in Europe by the Iranian nuclear threat. But sometimes I had the impression that the Iranian nuclear threat was largely exaggerated just for somehow justifying the plans of the creation of the 'third positioning area' of the US missile defence system in Europe," Kosachev noted.

Delivering a speech at the New Economic School (NES) in Moscow on Tuesday Obama noted that the United States wants to work together with Russia on the creation of a new international security system saying that if the threats disappear then there will be no need to create the missile defence system. The missile shield is being created only for the prevention of an attack from Iran or North Korea, the US president stressed.

He said, "Whether America or Russia, neither of us would benefit from a nuclear arms race in East Asia or the Middle East. That's why we should be united in opposing North Korea's efforts to become a nuclear power, and opposing Iran's efforts to acquire a nuclear weapon. And I'm pleased that President Medvedev and I agreed upon a joint threat assessment of the ballistic challenges-ballistic missile challenges of the 21st century, including from Iran and North Korea."

"This is not about singling out individual nations-it's about the responsibilities of all nations. If we fail to stand together, then the NPT and the Security Council will lose credibility, and international law will give way to the law of the jungle. And that benefits no one. As I said in Prague, rules must be binding, violations must be punished and words must mean something," Obama noted.

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

RIA Novosti
08 July 2009

U.S. puts Missile Defense on Hold - Russian MP

MOSCOW, July 8 (RIA Novosti) - Washington has frozen its missile defense plans for Europe and could subsequently review them, a senior Russian MP said on Wednesday, commenting on the U.S.-Russian presidential summit in Moscow.

U.S. President Barack Obama, who completed a three-day visit to Moscow on Wednesday, has shown less interest than President George Bush in opening a missile interceptor base in Poland and a radar station in the Czech Republic, which Moscow has fiercely opposed as a security threat.

Konstantin Kosachyov, head of the Russian lower house's international committee said "strong signals are coming" from both President Obama and his inner circle indicating that "the Americans have, as a minimum, halted and as a maximum are reviewing" their missile defense program.

He said that Obama understood Russia's logic, realizing that Moscow was not opposed to the deployment of anti-missile systems in principle but was against any "unilateral" decisions.

Obama has not yet announced a final decision on whether to move ahead with the deployment. The Bush administration said the missile defense shield elements were to counter possible strikes from "rogue" states, and not aimed against Russia.

During his visit to Moscow, Obama said the planned U.S. missile defenses in Europe would not provide protection from Russia's nuclear arsenal and should not be linked to strategic arms cuts, stating that it was intended to deal with a totally different threat.

The presidents signed a preliminary agreement on Monday to cut their countries' nuclear arsenals to 1,500-1,675 operational warheads within seven years after a new arms reduction treaty comes into force.

Obama pledged on Tuesday to consider Russia's concerns on missile defense, a senior Russian government official said.

<http://en.rian.ru/world/20090708/155470381.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

London Guardian
8 July 2009

Cyber Attackers Target South Korea and US

Matthew Weaver and agencies

North Korean hackers are suspected of launching a cyber-attack on some of the most important government offices in the US and South Korea in recent days, including the White House, the Pentagon, the New York Stock Exchange and the presidential Blue House in Seoul.

The attack took out some of South Korea's most important websites, including those of the Blue House, the defence ministry, the national assembly, Shinhan bank, Korea Exchange bank and the top internet portal Naver.

Ahn Jeong-eun, a spokeswoman for Korea Information Security Agency, said the websites of 11 organisations had either gone down or had access problems.

The Associated Press reported that the White House, Pentagon and New York Stock Exchange were also targeted, but apparently deflected the electronic barrage. South Korea's Yonhap news agency said military intelligence officers were looking into the possibility that the attack may have been carried out by North Korean hackers and pro-North Korea forces in the South.

It resembles an attack that began last Saturday on government websites in the US, including some that are responsible for fighting cyber-crime.

John Bumgarner, director of research at the US Cyber Consequences Unit, said: "There's been a lot chatter recently about cyber-war. The North Koreans may have felt they were not getting enough attention launching missiles so they moved into another potential warfare – cyber. It's a form of sabre rattling. But the big question is, did the North Koreans launch it themselves or did someone do it for them?"

Yang Moo-jin, a professor at Seoul's University of North Korean Studies, said he doubted whether the North had the capability to knock down the websites.

But Hong Hyun-ik, an analyst at the Sejong Institute thinktank, said the attack could have been carried out by either North Korea or China, saying he "heard North Korea has been working hard to hack into" South Korean networks.

South Korea's National Intelligence Service told a group of politicians today that it believes that North Korea or its sympathisers were behind the attacks, a source at the meeting told Associated Press.

The agency refused to comment, but it confirmed it was working with US authorities to investigate the attack. It said it believed the attack was thoroughly prepared and committed "at the level of a certain organisation or state".

The attacks appeared to be linked to problems on the US sites, although investigators were still unsure who was behind them, Ahn said.

In the US, the treasury department, secret service, Federal Trade Commission and transport department websites were all down at varying points over the 4 July holiday weekend. Some of the sites were still experiencing problems last night.

The website of the Washington Post was also affected. Its computer security writer Brian Krebs blamed "malicious software" that ordered infected PCs to repeatedly visit targeted websites. A large proportion of the PCs involved were located in South Korea, he reported.

An initial investigation in South Korea found that many personal computers were infected with a virus ordering them to visit official websites in South Korea and the US at the same time, the Korean information agency official Shin Hwa-su said.

The US homeland security department confirmed that officials had received reports of "malicious web activity" and said they were investigating. Two government officials confirmed that the treasury and secret service sites had been brought down, and said the agencies were working with their internet service provider to resolve the problem.

Ben Rushlo, director of internet technologies at the website monitoring company Keynote Systems, called it a "massive outage".

Denial of service attacks against websites are not uncommon, and are usually caused when sites are deluged with internet traffic to take them offline. Documenting cyber-attacks against government sites is difficult, and depends heavily on how agencies characterise an incident and how successful or damaging it is.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/jul/08/south-korea-cyber-attack>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Washington Post

July 8, 2009

North Korea Suspected in Cyberattack

By Blaine Harden, Brian Krebs and Ellen Nakashima

Washington Post Staff Writers

TOKYO, July 8 -- South Korea's intelligence agency suspects that North Korea may have been behind an Internet attack that on Tuesday and Wednesday targeted government Web sites in South Korea and the United States, lawmakers in Seoul told Yonhap news service.

Twenty-six Internet sites in the two countries, including the office of South Korea's president and the defense ministry, were targeted, the South Korean National Intelligence Service said in a statement. In the United States, the

attack targeted Web sites operated by major government agencies, including the departments of Homeland Security and Defense, the Federal Aviation Administration and the Federal Trade Commission, according to several computer security researchers.

"The attacks appear to have been elaborately prepared and executed at the level of a group or a state," reported Yonhap, the South Korean news service. Some members of the intelligence committee in the country's National Assembly were told by intelligence officials that North Korea or its sympathizers were prime suspects in the attacks, according to Yonhap, which cited unnamed legislators.

But no hard evidence has emerged that North Korea is responsible for the attacks. A spokesman for the South Korean intelligence agency said it could not confirm the Yonhap report.

The attacks were described as a "distributed denial of service," a relatively unsophisticated form of hacking in which personal computers are commanded to overwhelm certain Web sites with a blizzard of data. The effort did not involve siphoning off of sensitive information or disabling crucial operational systems, government and security experts said. But it was widespread, resilient and aimed at both U.S. and South Korean government websites, security researchers said.

Eleven Web sites in the United States had problems similar to those that occurred in South Korea, the Korean Information Security Agency said. About 12,000 personal computers in South Korea and 8,000 outside the country were commandeered in the attack, the intelligence service said.

South Korea is one of the world's most wired countries, with broadband access in more than 90 percent of homes and Internet data-transfer speeds that are much faster than in most of the United States. Earlier this year a number of South Korean news organizations reported that North Korea was running a cyber-warfare unit that targets military computer networks in South Korea and the United States.

In the United States, the White House Web site was among those affected, Yonhap reported. But a White House official said Tuesday that denial-of-service attacks on federal government Web sites are a regular occurrence and that there have not been any disruptions on White House Web sites recently. U.S. government officials declined last light to confirm the agencies affected by the attack.

The attacks involved thousands of computers around the globe infected with rogue software that told them to repeatedly attempt to access the targeted sites, a tactic aimed at driving up traffic beyond the sites' normal capacity and denying access to legitimate users, according to the researchers, many of whom spoke on condition of anonymity because they are helping with the investigation.

Department of Homeland Security spokeswoman Amy Kudwa said that the agency was aware of ongoing attacks and that the government's Computer Emergency Response Team had issued guidance to public- and private-sector Web sites on stemming the attacks.

"We see attacks on federal networks every day, and measures in place have minimized the impact to federal Web sites," Kudwa said. The attacks did not penetrate the targeted Web sites, and the attackers did not steal any data, she said.

Before reports emerged of North Korea's alleged involvement, a U.S. official familiar with the attacks who spoke on condition of anonymity said that not knowing who's behind them is "problematic" from the standpoint of preventing future attacks. But regarding the response, he said, the government and private-sector Internet service providers have been able to "keep this down to a dull roar."

He said that the attacks were major in the sense that they were widespread and well-coordinated, and that though the FTC Web site was down most of the day Tuesday, "the reality is that most of the Web sites have been up most of the time, so the countermeasures have been pretty effective."

In addition to sites run by government agencies, several commercial Web sites were attacked, including those operated by Nasdaq, the New York Stock Exchange and The Washington Post.

In South Korea, no classified information was compromised during the attacks in the past two days, the intelligence agency said, adding that it was cooperating with U.S. officials to track the source of the problem. The agency said it would present an analysis of the attacks to parliament on Thursday.

Targeted government sites included the foreign ministry, the ruling party, parliament and the U.S.-South Korean military command. Also targeted were two large South Korean banks, a newspaper and the country's largest Internet portal. Most sites had returned to normal by Wednesday afternoon.

North Korea in recent months has provoked its neighbors by launching a long-range missile, detonating its second nuclear device and repeatedly threatening war. On the Fourth of July, it launched seven missiles into the Sea of Japan.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/story/2009/07/08/ST2009070801296.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Reuters.com
July 8, 2009

Cyber Attacks May Not Have Come From North Korea

By Clare Baldwin and Jim Christie - Analysis

SAN FRANCISCO (Reuters) - Cybersecurity analysts raised doubts on Wednesday that the North Korean state launched recent attacks on U.S. government and South Korean websites, saying industrial spies or pranksters could be the villains.

More than two dozen websites in the United States and South Korea, including that of the U.S. State Department, were attacked in recent days.

South Korea's spy agency has said North Korea may be behind the attacks, while the U.S. government has said it is too soon to make such claims -- and Internet security experts agree.

The implications of a state-sponsored attack are severe, said SecureITExperts' Mark Rasch, who led the U.S. Department of Justice computer crimes unit from 1983 to 1991.

"There's no difference between dropping a logic bomb and dropping a TNT bomb in the law of war," he said, but added that while North Korea could have been behind the maneuvers, they did not appear to be coming from computers physically located in the reclusive Asian country.

"This is not something that your average 'script kitty' can do. On the other hand it doesn't require it to be state-sponsored," Rasch said.

The relatively simple "denial of service" attacks aim to overwhelm computers with requests for information. They are designed primarily to disrupt systems rather than penetrate and obtain data, analysts said. They are also difficult to trace.

The attacks could have been a "shot across the bow" by North Korea, the computer equivalent of its recent missile launches, but could also have been conjured up by hackers looking to make quick money or secure bragging rights.

They also could mask malicious activity like inserting spyware or malware computer programs that could later be activated, analysts said.

MERCENARIES FOR HIRE

The attacks began on July 4th, the U.S. Independence Day holiday.

But Rodger Baker, Stratfor's director of East Asia analysis, pointed out the date is also close to the anniversary of the death of North Korea's founder Kim Il Sung and North Korean missile launches, which might lend some credence to speculation that the country was behind the attacks.

Other analysts shied away from pinpointing North Korea and said the attacks could be financially motivated.

"There's a trillion dollars in economic losses sustained due to hacking every year, not just financial data theft but also industrial espionage," Core Security Technologies' Tom Kellermann said.

"You're seeing a massive community of mercenaries for hire who are leveraging their computer skill sets, particularly in this global recession, the laid off IT professionals et cetera that are leveraging their attack capabilities and their technological experience to break in and out of systems."

Analysts struggled to explain why North Korea would launch such an unsophisticated attack. Despite its financial strains, the country has a cyber warfare unit and a "hacking academy," Kellermann said.

"In our experience, state-sponsored events are under the radar," said Mandiant executive Mike Malin.

"If you were going to launch a sophisticated attack, you wouldn't warn people with this kind of attack. This woke up all the network defenders and you lose the element of surprise," said James Lewis, a fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/newsOne/idUSTRE5680C220090709?sp=true>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times
July 10, 2009

Cyberattacks Jam Government and Commercial Web Sites in U.S. and South Korea

By CHOE SANG-HUN and JOHN MARKOFF

SEOUL, South Korea — A wave of cyberattacks aimed at 27 American and South Korean government agencies and commercial Web sites temporarily jammed more than a third of them over the past five days, and several sites in South Korea came under renewed attack on Thursday.

The latest bout of attacks, which affected service on one government and six commercial Web sites in South Korea, was relatively minor, and all but two of the sites were fully functional within a few hours, said an official from the state-run Korea Communications Commission.

"An aggressive distribution of vaccine programs against the attack has helped fight back," the official, Shin Hwa-soo, said. "But we are not keeping our guard down. We are distributing the vaccine programs as widely as possible and monitoring the situations closely because there might be a new attack."

Officials and computer experts in the United States said Wednesday that the attacks, which began over the July 4 weekend, were unsophisticated and on a relatively small scale, and that their origins had not been determined. They said 50,000 to 65,000 computers had been commandeered by hackers and ordered to flood specific Web sites with access requests, causing them to slow or stall. Such robotic networks, or botnets, can involve more than a million computers.

The Web sites of the Treasury Department, Secret Service, Federal Trade Commission and Transportation Department were all affected at some point over the weekend and into this week, The Associated Press reported Tuesday, citing American officials.

A White House spokesman, Nick Shapiro, said in a statement on Wednesday that "all federal Web sites were back up and running" by Tuesday night and that the White House site had also been attacked.

He said, "The preventative measures in place to deal with frequent attempts to disrupt whitehouse.gov's service performed as planned, keeping the site stable and available to the general public, although visitors from regions in Asia may have been affected."

The Web site of the New York Stock Exchange also came under attack, as well as the sites of Nasdaq, Yahoo's finance section and The Washington Post.

Researchers who are following the attacks said that they began July 4 and focused on the small group of United States government Web sites, but that the list later expanded to include commercial sites in the United States and then commercial and government sites in South Korea. Files stored on computers that are part of the attacking system show that 27 Web sites are now targets.

In South Korea, at least 11 major sites have slowed or crashed since Tuesday, including those of the presidential Blue House, the Defense Ministry, the National Assembly, Shinhan Bank, the mass-circulation newspaper Chosun Ilbo and the top Internet portal Naver.com, according to the government's Korea Information Security Agency.

On Wednesday, some of the South Korean sites regained service, but others remained unstable or inaccessible.

"This is not a simple attack by an individual hacker, but appears to be thoroughly planned and executed by a specific organization or on a state level," the South Korean spy agency, the National Intelligence Service, said in a statement, adding that it was cooperating with the American authorities to investigate the attacks.

The spy agency said the attacks appeared to have been carried out by a hostile group or government, and the news agency Yonhap reported that the agency had implicated North Korea or pro-North Korean groups.

A spokesman at the intelligence agency said it could not confirm the Yonhap report about North Korea's possible role. The opposition Democratic Party accused the spy agency of spreading rumors to whip up support for an antiterrorism bill that would give it more power.

Although most of the North Korean military's hardware is decrepit, the South Korean authorities have recently expressed concern over possible cyberattacks from the North. In May, South Korean media reported that North Korea was running a cyberwarfare unit that operated through the Chinese Internet network and tried to hack into American and South Korean military networks. United States computer security researchers who have examined the attacking software and watched network traffic played down the sophistication and extent of the attacks.

"I would call this a garden-variety attack," said Jose Nazario, manager of security research at Arbor Networks, a network security firm that is based in Chelmsford, Mass. He said that the attackers were generating about 23 megabits of data a second, not enough to cause major disruptions of the Internet at most of the sites that were being attacked.

"The code is really pretty elementary in many respects," he added. "I'm doubting that the author is a computer science graduate student."

As for possible origins, there were only hints. One researcher, Joe Stewart, of Secureworks' Counter Threat Unit in Atlanta, said the attacking software contained the text string "get/China/DNS," with DNS referring to China's Internet routing system. He said that it appeared that the data generated by the attacking program was based on a Korean-language browser.

Amy Kudwa, a Department of Homeland Security spokeswoman, said that the agency was aware of the attacks and that it had issued a notice to federal departments and agencies, as well as to other partner organizations, advising them of steps to take to help mitigate attacks.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/10/technology/10cyber.html?hpw>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Korea Herald

July 10, 2009

N.K. Cyber Combat Unit Has 100 Hackers

By Kim So-hyun

Many eyes are on North Korea's cyber warfare capabilities as several officials in Seoul and Washington fingered the reclusive state as the origin of recent cyber attacks.

The National Intelligence Service suspects North Korea or its sympathizers may have been behind the internet attack against major South Korean websites of government agencies, banks and internet portals, which was first detected Tuesday evening, according to sources who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The spy agency briefed some of the lawmakers on an individual basis or showed written reports that mention North Korea as the suspected source of the attack.

Washington officials also said on Wednesday that the DDoS attacks on some 30 South Korean and U.S. websites came from an internet IP address in North Korea.

The North Korea link, described by three U.S. officials who asked for anonymity, firmly connected the attacks on U.S. government websites to cyber assaults that hit South Korean websites.

The officials said that while the internet IP addresses have been traced to North Korea, that does not necessarily mean the attack involved the Kim Jong-il government in Pyongyang.

In early May, South Korean intelligence officials said that North Korea has expanded its cyber combat unit in charge of intelligence gathering through the internet and hacking South Korean or U.S. military computer networks.

The General Staff of the North Korean People's Army has for years been running what it calls the "technology reconnaissance team," which consists of about 100 hackers, mostly graduates of a leading military academy in Pyongyang.

"The unit's job is to penetrate military computer networks to withdraw classified information and spread computer viruses to paralyze South Korean or U.S. systems," a South Korean intelligence official said in May.

After years of tracking which countries visited U.S. military websites the most, the U.S. Pentagon found that users from North Korea logged on most frequently.

The North Korean military also developed a variety of war simulation software including one called "100 combat methods" and computer programs that identify gunshots.

Seoul and Washington signed a memorandum of understanding on April 30 to bolster cooperation in fighting cyber terrorism against their defense networks.

Due to the distributed denial of service attacks, internet home pages, including foreign and defense ministries, as well as the presidential office, were shut down or slowed down for hours.

North Korea, which has been shooting missiles and making threats against the United States and the Lee Myung-bak administration, has been suspected to have accumulated enough technological knowhow and brainpower to initiate cyber warfare.

South Korea's defense ministry said yesterday it will set up a military command next year, instead of 2012 as planned earlier, to better protect the nation's systems from possible cyber attacks.

http://www.koreaherald.co.kr/NEWKHSITE/data/html_dir/2009/07/10/200907100026.asp

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Associated Press (AP)
News Hosted by Google
8 July 2009

US, UAE Nuclear Deal would End if Terms Violated

By RICHARD LARDNER

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. would cancel a nuclear energy agreement with the United Arab Emirates if the Middle East nation were to violate any terms of the deal, an Obama administration official said Wednesday.

Ellen Tauscher, undersecretary of state for arms control and international security, sought to convince lawmakers that the pact is designed to keep sensitive technology from flowing to Iran or allowing the UAE to develop atomic weapons.

"We have set a very high bar," Tauscher told the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

The administration approved plans in May to help the UAE become the first Arab country with a civilian nuclear power industry that would fuel its growing demand for electricity.

The U.S. is promoting the deal as a counterweight to Iran's pursuit of atomic weapons and a model for others in the Middle East to follow.

Under the pact, the UAE must import, rather than produce, fuel for its nuclear reactors. It also has committed not to enrich uranium or reprocess spent nuclear fuel for plutonium, which is used in nuclear bombs.

The agreement would run for 30 years and create the legal framework for the U.S. to transfer nuclear equipment, reactors and materiel for civil nuclear research to the UAE. The pact was signed in January by the departing Bush administration, which left the final decision to President Barack Obama.

Congress has until Oct. 17 to pass legislation either amending or rejecting the deal. If no bill passes, the agreement goes into effect.

Concerns have been raised about the UAE's history as a transshipment point for material intended for Iran's nuclear program. Al-Qaida and other terrorist groups have used financial networks in the UAE to launder money, critics also say.

While the UAE has taken steps to combat terrorist financing and tighten its export control laws, it's too soon to enter into such a major deal, they said.

The UAE has a "long history of complicity or negligence regarding trade with Iran and other countries of concern," said Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, R-Fla.

Tauscher said the UAE is a trusted ally and will follow the highest nonproliferation standards.

"This is not a risk reward situation," Tauscher said. "We think that this is a very good deal for us when it comes to nonproliferation and national security concerns."

The committee chairman, Rep. Howard Berman, D-Calif., said the agreement was "the best one" the U.S. ever has negotiated with an ally. But he also had concerns about how aggressively the UAE has cracked down on controlling illegal shipments through its ports.

http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5iU9SP_dfANadOiyt7pQveOZYItpwD99AEEF01

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Reuters.com

July 8, 2009

Iran Dominates US Hearing on UAE Nuclear Deal

By Doug Palmer

WASHINGTON, July 8 (Reuters) - U.S. lawmakers expressed concern on Wednesday about the United Arab Emirates' ties with Iran as they debated a U.S. nuclear cooperation agreement with the moderate Gulf state that is expected to go into force in October.

Iran is one of the UAE's biggest trading partners but lawmakers said the relationship also poses security risks. The West fears Iran's nuclear program could be used to build nuclear weapons but Tehran says it is solely for civilian power generation.

Representative Howard Berman, who chairs the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee, said the main issue was "the extent to which the UAE has been a reliable partner of the United States in working to prevent Iran's efforts to develop a nuclear weapons capability."

"For many years, Iran has sought to use the UAE as a transit point to illicitly procure items to support its nuclear and other WMD (weapons of mass destruction) programs."

Although the UAE has taken steps over the last two years to combat money laundering and terrorist financing and to strengthen export controls, "a nuclear cooperation agreement at this point ... is one line some of us are not prepared to cross," said Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, the top Republican on the panel.

President Barack Obama formally submitted the so-called "123 Agreement" to Congress in May after determining it would enhance U.S. national security, rather than pose an unreasonable risk.

The pact was negotiated and signed by the administration of former President George W. Bush before leaving office.

Undersecretary of State Ellen Tauscher told lawmakers the UAE made a number of "unprecedented commitments" in the pact to ensure it would not use U.S. technology to develop a nuclear weapon or help others in the region do that.

"The UAE's expressed commitment not to pursue enrichment and reprocessing capabilities is a marked contrast to Iran, which continues to defy its international obligations...," she said.

Although the UAE was the world's third-largest oil exporter in 2007, it plans to build a number of nuclear reactors to meet an expected need for an additional 40,000 megawatts of electricity by 2017.

U.S. nuclear reactor builders GE (GE.N) and Westinghouse Electric Co, a subsidiary of Toshiba Corp (6502.T), hope to get a big share of the expected \$40 billion market if Congress does not block the deal.

Stopping it would require both the House and the Senate to approve a joint resolution of disapproval within 90 days of Obama submitting to Congress. Berman said the review period for the agreement would end on Oct. 17.

Representative James McGovern said he was concerned about a video that surfaced this spring that "depicts Sheikh Issa bin Zayed al Nahyan severely torturing an Afghani grain dealer with the help of his uniformed official personnel."

Sheikh Issa, a member of Abu Dhabi's ruling family, was detained by prosecutors in May after the 2004 video surfaced. But McGovern said he was concerned by reports that Sheikh Issa still has not been charged with any crime.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/rbssConsumerGoodsAndRetailNews/idUSN0839374420090708?sp=true>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Hindustan Times
July 08, 2009

India not Signing NPT: Chavan

Press Trust of India
New Delhi

India is not considering signing the Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty, government informed the Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

This was stated by Minister of State in PMO Prithviraj Chavan in a written reply to a question raised by Kalikesh Singh Deo in the Lok Sabha.

"No Sir," Chavan said to a query on whether the government was considering signing the Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty.

In reply to a separate question, Chavan said the government had received suggestions to amend the Atomic Energy Act, 1962 to allow private participation in nuclear power generation.

He said the Indian private sector can participate in nuclear power generation projects as a minority partner under the present Atomic Energy Act.

State-owned Nuclear Power Corporation Limited runs all the nuclear power plants in the country.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/StoryPage.aspx?sectionName=HomePage&id=24b07a67-234e-4c6b-b0ad-727f5331f810&Headline=India+not+signing+NPT%3a+Chavan>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Times of India
8 July 2009

India Plans to Source Nuclear Fuel from Central Asia, Africa

PUNE: Up against shortage of vital nuclear fuel like uranium for running the nuclear power plants to their optimum capacity, India is looking towards the Central Asian and African countries for sourcing nuclear fuel.

Speaking to reporters here on Tuesday, Atomic Energy Commission chief Anil Kakodkar said, the nuclear power generation in the country is between 55 to 60 per cent of the total installed capacity of 4,100 MW. "This is primarily because of shortage of fuel like uranium," he said.

Referring to the target of adding an extra 3,000 MW to the existing installed capacity for nuclear power in the country by end of 2010, Kakodkar said that the AEC plans to meet this objective by sourcing fuel from different countries.

"Recently, we got 300 tonnes of uranium from France. We also entered into an agreement with Russia in February 2009 and are expecting 2,000 tonnes of nuclear fuel from this arrangement," Kakodkar said. Next, he added that Central Asian and African countries are being tapped for sourcing nuclear fuel.

According to Kakodkar, the country's total installed capacity for nuclear power would go up to 6,700 MW by early 2011, with the addition of 2,600 MW to the existing installed capacity of 4,100 MW. "This will happen in a phased manner," he said.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Pune/India-plans-to-source-nuclear-fuel-from-central-Asia-Africa/articleshow/4750624.cms>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Financial Times

July 9, 2009

India to Launch First Nuclear Submarine

By Varun Sood in Mumbai and James Lamont in New Delhi

India is expected to launch a locally built nuclear-powered submarine later this month, making it one of only a handful of countries with the technology to produce such a vessel.

Manmohan Singh, India's prime minister, is scheduled to visit the Visakhapatnam naval base in Andhra Pradesh on July 26 to inspect the submarine before it is launched from its dry dock for sea trials, senior government officials told the Financial Times.

The deployment of a nuclear-powered submarine would be a major step for the Indian navy, which is anxious to maintain its authority in the shipping lanes of the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea. The submarine could allow New Delhi to develop a nuclear weapon strike capability from the sea.

The submarine, the *INS Chakra*, has been produced at a cost of \$2.9bn under the country's Advanced Technology Vessel Programme and is expected to go into full service in two years' time. The vessel is based on the Russian Akula-I class submarine, and is powered by a single pressurised water reactor. Its nuclear reactor has been developed at the Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research at Kalpakkam in the southern state of Tamil Nadu.

India's government is channelling spending towards the modernisation of India's armed forces, to the ire of development agencies, who say the money would be better spent on poverty alleviation. The finance ministry raised military spending by 25 per cent in the national budget earlier this week.

India has plans to lease an Akula-class nuclear submarine from Moscow. It is also awaiting the delivery of a 30-year-old refitted Russian aircraft carrier, the *Admiral Gorshkov*. Additionally, India is building six French-designed Scorpene diesel submarines.

The country lags behind China's naval might in the region. C. Uday Bhaskar, director of the Delhi-based National Maritime Foundation and a respected military analyst, said Beijing had a fleet of eight nuclear submarines, some with ballistic missile capability, although it lacked an aircraft carrier.

The Chinese navy has three times the number of combat vessels (about 630) as India and a personnel strength of 225,000 — five times that of the Indian navy.

"This [the building of the nuclear submarine] is a historic and big step forward," said C. Raja Mohan, professor of South Asian studies at the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. "The project is quite indigenous and it opens the door for deploying nuclear weapons in the ocean."

An official spokesman declined to confirm that Mr Singh, who is currently attending the Group of Eight summit in Italy, would visit Visakhapatnam.

But K. Santhanam, former chief of the Defence Research and Development Organisation, a state defence contractor, said: "This [visit] is partly a public relations exercise and partly to give a fillip to the [submarine] project."

India embarked on its quest for a nuclear submarine in 1982. They are considered better than conventional diesel counterparts as they can go deeper and faster and spend lengthy times at sea.

Defence industry experts stressed that the commissioning of the *INS Chakra* may still have some way to go.

"The technology required to build a small but powerful and safe reactor that can perform through the difficulties of a wartime environment is no easy task," said one. "Some of India's great projects in defence have gone on for decades and been unbelievably costly."

Naval forces

India -- 55,000 troops (including 7,000 naval aviation and 1,200 marines); 16 submarines; 8 destroyers; 14 frigates

China -- 255,000 troops (including 26,000 naval aviation, 10,000 marines, 40,000 conscripts); 62 submarines; 28 destroyers; 50 frigates

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/af9a4f8a-6bcc-11de-9320-00144feabdc0.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Times of India

10 Jul 2009

Russia Resumes Pre-Delivery Trials of Nuclear Sub for India

MOSCOW: Russia on Friday resumed sea trials of its Akula class nuclear attack submarine to be leased to the Indian Navy, months after they were halted following an accident that killed 20 crew and staff members.

The Akula II class submarine was cleared for final sea trials before being commissioned with the Russian Navy and leased to the Indian Navy by end of 2009.

The submarine is to be leased to India for 10 years under a secret clause of the larger Gorshkov package signed in 2004.

"The sea trials of the Nerpa nuclear submarine will continue for two weeks. All damage on the vessel found during the investigation of the accident has been repaired," a defence official was quoted as saying by RIA Novosti.

The trials were halted after 20 crew members and technical staff of the shipyard were killed and 17 injured in the accidental triggering of fire suppression system filled with highly toxic Freon gas in the sleeping quarters on November 8, while the submarine was in the Sea of Japan.

India reportedly paid \$650 million for a 10-year lease of the 12,000-ton K-152 Nerpa, considered the quietest and deadliest of all Russian nuclear-powered attack submarines.

'Human error' was identified as the cause of the worst accident on Russian submarines since the sinking of the Kursk in August 2000, in which 118 crew members were killed after a blast in the torpedo room.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/World/Europe/Russia-resumes-pre-delivery-trials-of-nuclear-sub-for-India/articleshow/4762722.cms>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Financial Times

July 10, 2009

Washington to Host Nuclear Talks

By James Blitz and George Parker

President Barack Obama on Thursday launched a new initiative in his strategy to reduce nuclear proliferation around the world, announcing that he will host a summit in Washington next year aimed at combating the illegal trade in fissile material.

As the US and Russia outline plans to reduce nuclear stockpiles before the end of the year, Mr Obama told his G8 counterparts in L'Aquila that the summit will be aimed at enhancing the security of material used in atomic energy programmes.

According to Mr Obama's senior advisers, the president wants the conference next March to look at ways of combatting efforts by terrorist groups to traffic in these materials in black markets.

They said the US will invite all the "key players" to the summit, citing the permanent five members of the United Nations Security Council plus Japan, South Korea, Egypt, South Africa, Mexico and Brazil.

Mr Obama's advisers say the president believes that nuclear terrorism is the biggest threat to US security. "The more that nuclear power spreads around the world, the more important it is that we have adequate protections over nuclear materials," said Gary Samore, the president's chief adviser on nuclear non-proliferation.

Speaking at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, Mr Samore made clear the Washington summit would be focused on nuclear security and would be distinct from the more broad ranging nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) conference to be held two months later. At the NPT review conference, the US will want to ensure that there is a toughening of the rules to stop states that run civil nuclear energy programmes diversifying into atomic weapons production.

Gordon Brown, UK prime minister, said in L'Aquila that a possible scaling back of Britain's nuclear deterrent could be part of the NPT review process. However, Mr Brown said: "Nobody is calling on us as part of non-proliferation treaty to give up our nuclear weapons."

In London, Mr Samore reinforced the point, saying there is no US pressure on the UK or France to cut warheads. "It's important obviously for the UK and other nuclear states to make clear their commitment to moving on nuclear disarmament. But in terms of nuclear weapons reductions it is for now a bilateral US-Russia game."

He also welcomed the appointment of Yukiya Amano of Japan as the next director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency. He said Mr Amano was "the perfect person to host the agency when it need to focus on its technical responsibilities for safeguards and nuclear security".

John Holdren, chief scientific advisor to Mr Obama, said on Thursday that uranium enrichment – a key process for generating nuclear energy, but can also be used to produce nuclear weapons – should be overseen by an international body.

"I would like to see uranium enrichment round the world put under international control," he said. He called enrichment one of the "vulnerabilities" in the global nuclear marketplace, along with fuel reprocessing, as spent fuel can also be reprocessed for reuse in power stations or for weapons.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/435022b2-6caf-11de-af56-00144feabdc0.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Power Engineering Magazine

7 July 2009

Russians Start Work on Floating Nuclear Power Plant

Russia's United Industrial Corporation (OPK) announced this week that work had begun in May in their St. Petersburg shipyards on the world's first nuclear power plant.

The work is being undertaken under a contract, signed by OPK and "Concern Energoatom" PLC on February 27, 2009, authorizing the construction, launching, rebuilding and testing of the power plant. The exploitation of the head floating power-generating unit, with KLT-40C type reactor, is the final step of this project. According to the contract, the construction of the floating power-generating unit started on February 27th, 2009. By the II quarter of 2012 it is due to be completed. In the IV quarter of 2012, after testing, it will be operating.

"The construction of the first in the world floating nuclear power plant is an important milestone in global history," said Alexander Gнусarev, chairman of the Management Board, at the setting in ceremony. "At present foreign partners are already interested in the technologies involved in the construction of this project," said Gнусarev.

OPK said in a statement that the global economic crisis favours the Floating Nuclear Power Plant (FNPP) construction as the cost of electricity generation per kW per hour equals that of a hydropower station, therefore the exploitation of such plant will be much in demand both in industrial and developing regions. The ability to physically move these plants is of great value, as different regions have diverging needs for electric energy.

Russia is the first country to build a floating nuclear power plant. Similar projects have been mooted in other countries, but never realized. One of the designers of the "Iceberg" design bureau evoked the idea of the utilization of such particular plants.

The first FNPP will be finalized by 2012, to be set in service in Kamchatka in the port of Viluchinsk.

http://pepei.pennnet.com/display_article/365776/6/ARTCL/none/none/1/Russians-start-work-on-floating-nuclear-power-plant/

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Boston Globe
OPINION
July 7, 2009

Obama's New Deal for Russia

PRESIDENT OBAMA made a good start yesterday in Moscow on his effort to "reset" US-Russian relations, announcing a "joint understanding" on reductions of strategic nuclear weapons and delivery systems after talks with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev. Although the details need to be thrashed out, the outlined extension of the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty that expires on Dec. 5 suggests both sides are ready for fruitful give-and-take. Both want to prevent a new nuclear arms race, and both have better things to spend their money on.

In the prelude to this week's summit, the Russians hinted they may try to link cooperation on a new START agreement to US concessions on the missile defense system President Bush had planned to deploy in Poland and the Czech Republic. The Kremlin wants Obama to cancel the system entirely or else enter into a joint missile defense arrangement with Russia.

This demand for linkage is somewhat of an empty threat; Russia, which has fewer warheads and less money to maintain its arsenal, has a greater need to seek reductions. But Obama would do well to propose his own version of linkage. Russian military planners have convinced themselves that the Bush plan for a radar station in the Czech Republic and 10 interceptor missiles in Poland could be a step toward building a globe-spanning US missile shield that would allow the Americans to contemplate a first-strike nuclear attack on Russia. This is pure paranoia.

Obama should be willing to cancel or suspend the missile defense deployments in Central Europe not because of Russian anxieties but because the system can offer no protection against the Iranian missiles it is meant to intercept. A letter released last week by 20 eminent scientists, including 10 Nobel recipients, advised Obama: "This system has not been proven and does not merit deployment. It would offer little or no defensive capability, even in principle."

Obama should heed this advice. At no cost to US interests, he could offer the Russians something they believe they desperately need in exchange for something America wants: Russia's cooperation in persuading Iran to forgo its apparent pursuit of nuclear weapons.

Something similar applies to Russia's fears about NATO admission for Georgia and Ukraine. Major Western European allies are opposed to NATO membership for those two former Soviet republics any time soon. The Kremlin's cooperation on energy security, Afghanistan, and even greater respect for human rights in Russia might be had for a halt in the eastward expansion of NATO. The most valuable reset buttons are on Obama's side of the table.

http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/editorials/articles/2009/07/07/obamas_new_deal_for_russia/

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

RIA Novosti
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Russia, U.S. could Cooperate to Resolve Iranian Nuclear Problem

MOSCOW. (Vladimir Yevseyev for RIA Novosti) - U.S. President Barack Obama's first visit to Russia has produced several surprises. Nobody expected it to boost cooperation in the sphere of ballistic missile defense, yet the sides signed a joint statement on the issue on July 6. It stipulates the establishment of the Joint Data Exchange Center, which is to become the basis for a multilateral missile launch notification regime.

"If the threat from Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile program is eliminated, the driving force for missile defense in Europe will be eliminated," Obama said in his remarks prepared for delivery to graduates of Moscow's New Economic School on July 7.

Back in February, Obama wrote in a letter to Russian President Dmitry Medvedev that the U.S. "would not need to proceed with the interceptor system" in Europe if Russia helped convince Iran to halt "any efforts to build nuclear warheads and ballistic missiles."

At that time, the Russian leaders rejected the possibility of such an exchange. But Washington persisted, for several likely reasons.

First, the United States cannot resolve Iran's nuclear problem single-handedly.

Second, Iran has greatly progressed in its nuclear and missile programs. As of the end of May, 4,920 centrifuges were actively enriching uranium at its Natanz secret nuclear facility, 2,132 centrifuges were installed and undergoing dry-run tests, and a further 169 machines installed but not spinning.

Third, Iran and North Korea continued cooperating in the missile and possibly nuclear spheres.

Fourth, the United States wants to enhance its security against the potential missile threats coming from Iran and other countries by deploying ABM systems outside its national territory.

No serious politician in Iran - not even former presidential candidate Mir-Hossein Mousavi - would dare demand an end to its nuclear and missile programs. Iranians are proud of these projects, and besides, billions of dollars have been invested in them.

However, the situation has not yet calcified into a stalemate. Despite its aggressive rhetoric, Tehran continues to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency and is so far producing only low-enriched, not weapons-grade uranium.

Iranian officials claim that they only want to have the capacity to independently produce fuel for the Bushehr nuclear power plant. If this is indeed so, the international community can help it by certifying its uranium as nuclear fuel.

At the same time, Iran has been energetically developing its nuclear infrastructure, which can be used as a research and technology basis for creating nuclear weapons.

At first glance, there are no serious reasons for concern, because Japan, Germany and several other countries have similar capabilities that can turn them into nuclear powers within months or years. But these countries have no conflicts with their neighbors, and therefore their nuclear infrastructure does not seem threatening.

But Iran is a completely different matter. It created its nuclear program secretly, with forays into the black market of nuclear materials and technologies and assistance from Abdul Qadeer Khan, the founding father of Pakistan's nuclear industry, who confessed in 2004 that he had been involved in a clandestine international network of nuclear weapons technology proliferation from Pakistan to Libya, Iran and North Korea.

Iran used that network to import its first gas centrifuges complete with technical documents, and its uranium enrichment facility at Natanz was designed as a high-security installation.

It would seem that Russian-Iranian relations should not be a cause for concern. However, the Iranian regime is highly unpredictable and its ideology is based on orthodox Khomeinism, the religious and political doctrines of the Ayatollah Khomeini, who founded the Islamic Republic in Iran in 1979. One of its features is support for radical Islamic movements.

At present, over 20 million Russians live within the range of Iran's Shahab-3 missile, which is a major potential threat to Russia. This is why the Kremlin has opposed the militarization of Iran's nuclear program and supported the international efforts to curtail its missile program.

In other words, the United States and Russia are both interested in a nuclear-free Iran, and this aspiration can be used as the basis for cooperation in this area. But Moscow does not see a direct connection between Tehran's nuclear ambitions and the U.S. missile defense plans for Poland and the Czech Republic.

Moreover, Iran is not the only Mideast country with an advanced missile program and an interest in creating a nuclear infrastructure.

This is why Russia insists that we should start by analyzing missile threats before taking a joint decision on ABM deployment. This approach allows for an easy integration of available information systems and selection of the best sites for the deployment of the requisite strike systems.

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The opinions expressed in this article are the author's and do not necessarily represent those of RIA Novosti.

<http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20090708/155471431.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times

OPINION

July 9, 2009

Obama's Big Missile Test

By Philip Taubman

Stanford, Calif. -- AS President Obama will soon discover, erasing the nuclear weapons legacy of the cold war is like running the Snake River rapids in Wyoming — the first moments in the tranquil upstream waters offer little hint of the vortex ahead. Now that Mr. Obama has set a promising arms reduction agenda with President Dmitri A. Medvedev of Russia, he faces the greater challenge of getting his own government and the American nuclear weapons establishment to support his audacious plan to make deep weapons cuts and ultimately eliminate nuclear weapons.

So far, Mr. Obama has effectively coupled an overarching vision of getting to a world without nuclear weapons, outlined in a speech in Prague earlier this year, with concrete first steps like the one-quarter reduction in operational strategic nuclear weapons promised in Moscow this week. Given his short time in office, and the looming December expiration of the treaty with Russia covering strategic nuclear arms reductions, the new limits are a good, realistic start. It is especially important to extend the monitoring and verification provisions of the expiring arms accord.

But the overall Obama approach involves a balancing act that requires him to move boldly while reassuring opponents that he is not endangering our security. Put simply, he has to maintain a potent nuclear arsenal while slashing it.

Mr. Obama might consider Ronald Reagan's experience when he tried to set a similar course. The nuclear weapons crowd practically disowned Reagan when he proposed abolishing nuclear weapons during his 1986 summit meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev in Reykjavik, Iceland. After the meeting, when Reagan asked his generals to explore the ramifications of possibly sharply cutting warheads and eliminating nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles, they politely but firmly told their commander in chief it was a terrible idea.

Mr. Obama's moment of truth with his generals is coming later this year when the Pentagon completes its periodic Nuclear Posture Review. This, in the Pentagon's words, "will establish U.S. nuclear deterrence policy, strategy and force posture for the next 5 to 10 years." So it will be the American nuclear weapons bible for the remainder of Mr. Obama's presidency, one term or two.

President Obama must make sure it reflects his thinking. That will not be automatic, because the nuclear weapons complex — the array of Pentagon and Energy Department agencies involved in nuclear operations, including the armed services and the weapons labs — harbors considerable doubt about his plans. The same goes for the wider world of defense strategists. There is resistance in Congress, too.

The view in these quarters is that the weapons cuts Mr. Obama envisions — deeper than the modest goals set in Moscow this week — would dangerously undermine the power of America's arsenal to deter attacks against the United States and its allies. Sentiment also favors building a new generation of warheads, a step Mr. Obama has rejected.

If the White House does not assert itself, the Nuclear Posture Review could easily spin off in unhelpful directions. The review that was produced when Bill Clinton was president in 1994 offered a rehash of cold war policies. The one that was done when George W. Bush took office in 2001 was more unconventional, but was quickly overshadowed by the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and the war in Iraq.

To serve Mr. Obama's interests, the new review should lay the groundwork for pronounced cuts in weapons and shape America's nuclear stockpile to fit a world in which threats are more likely to come from states like North Korea and Iran than from a heavily armed power like Russia.

After the review, the next big test for Mr. Obama will likely be Senate consideration of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. He has pledged to resubmit this 1996 United Nations treaty, which was flatly rejected by the Senate in 1999.

To get the two-thirds majority needed for its approval, Mr. Obama will need to hold his fellow Democrats in line — far from a sure thing — and also pick up some Republican support. Two influential Republican senators — John McCain and Richard Lugar — are pivotal. Both voted against the treaty in 1999.

Opponents wrongly argue that the treaty is unverifiable. That might have been the case a decade ago, but technological advances make monitoring of even small underground nuclear tests possible today. Critics also say a

permanent ban on testing — the United States has honored a moratorium since 1992 — would eventually cripple the nation's ability to maintain reliable warheads. So far, most weapons experts would say, that has not proven to be true and should not be for many years.

Few presidential moments are more glittering than the announcement of arms reduction accords in the Kremlin's gilded halls. For Mr. Obama, that was the easy part.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/09/opinion/09taubman.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)
