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RIA Novosti

10 July 2009

Russia May Still Reply To U.S. Shield With Baltic Missiles

L'AQUILA, July 10 (RIA Novosti) - Russia could still deploy tactical missiles in its westernmost exclave if the U.S. goes ahead with its plans for a missile shield in Central Europe, the Russian president said on Friday.

Dmitry Medvedev said Russia's position on U.S. missile defense in Central Europe had not changed.

"We are ready to participate in the construction of a global missile defense by providing both intellectual input and our radars," Medvedev said after the G8 summit in Italy's L'Aquila. "We are glad that there is a readiness in the U.S. to review its plans."

Russia opposes the missile shield as a threat to its national security and Medvedev said last November that it would deploy Iskander-M missiles in the Kaliningrad region, which borders NATO members Poland and Lithuania, if the shield was put into place.

U.S. President Barack Obama, who completed a three-day visit to Moscow on Wednesday, has shown less interest than President George Bush in the missile shield. Obama has not yet announced a final decision on whether to move ahead with its deployment.

However Medvedev said that if no agreement was reached on the issue, "the consequences are well known," adding that his proposal, made in his state of the nation address in November 2008, "has not been withdrawn yet."

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

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090710/155495000.html>

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RIA Novosti

10 July 2009

Russia's New Nuclear Sub Completes First Round of Sea Trials

MOSCOW, July 10 (RIA Novosti) - Russia's newest Borey class strategic nuclear submarine, the Yury Dolgoruky, has completed the first round of sea trials and is returning to a shipyard in northern Russia, the Sevmas plant said on Friday.

Sea trials of the submarine, which is expected to be armed with new Bulava sea-based ballistic missiles, started on June 24 in the White Sea.

"A team of workers and submariners has successfully completed the set tasks," Sevmas general director Nikolai Kalistratov said.

He added that the Yury Dolgoruky would still have to pass a number of sea trials later this year to test equipment and performance levels.

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

The construction cost of the submarine totaled 23 billion rubles (about \$713 mln), including 9 billion rubles (\$280 mln) for research and development.

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

According to Navy officials, fourth-generation Borey class nuclear-powered submarines will form the core of Russia's fleet of modern strategic submarines, and will be deployed with Russia's Northern and Pacific fleets.

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20090710/155493140.html

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RIA Novosti

10 July 2009

Russia's Nerpa Nuclear Submarine Resumes Sea Trials in Pacific

KHABAROVSK, July 10 (RIA Novosti) - Russia's Nerpa nuclear-powered submarine, which was damaged in a fatal accident during previous tests, resumed sea trials on Friday in the Sea of Japan, a spokesperson for the Amur shipyard said.

"The Nerpa nuclear submarine...has left a repair facility in the town of Bolshoy Kamen in the Primorye Territory and is headed for a series of sea trials," Marina Radayeva said.

On November 8, 2008, while the Nerpa was undergoing sea trials in the Sea of Japan, its on-board fire suppression system went off, releasing a deadly gas into the sleeping quarters. Three crewmembers and 17 shipyard workers were killed. There were 208 people, 81 of them submariners, on board the vessel at the time.

Following the repairs, which cost an estimated 1.9 billion rubles (about \$60 mln), the submarine was cleared for final sea trials before being commissioned with the Russian Navy and leased to the Indian Navy by the end of 2009.

India reportedly paid \$650 million for a 10-year lease of the 12,000-ton K-152 Nerpa, an Akula II class nuclear-powered attack submarine.

Akula II class vessels are considered the quietest and deadliest of all Russian nuclear-powered attack submarines.

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20090710/155488008.html

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London Guardian

13 July 2009

Voters want Britain to Scrap All Nuclear Weapons, ICM Poll Shows

Julian Glover

Voters want Britain to scrap nuclear weapons altogether rather than replace Trident, according to a new Guardian/ICM poll today. The result marks a sharp turnaround in public opinion amid growing debate about the cost of a new generation of nuclear weapons and the impact of conventional defence cutbacks on the war in Afghanistan.

For decades nuclear disarmament has been seen as a minority issue, with most voters assumed to favour continued investment in an independent British nuclear weapons system. But today's poll shows that 54% of all voters would prefer to abandon nuclear weapons rather than put money into a new generation of Trident warheads, as the government plans.

Last week's G8 summit brought suggestions that Britain might include Trident in international disarmament talks. "What we need is collective action by the nuclear weapons powers to say that we are prepared to reduce our nuclear weapons," said Gordon Brown.

Today's figures mark a dramatic turnaround in public opinion since Trident renewal was announced by Brown three years ago. In July 2006, 51% backed renewal, while 39% opposed it. Since then support for a new Trident system has fallen by nine points while opposition has grown by 15 points.

Overall, only 42% of all voters now back renewal, according to the poll. Until now a majority of voters have always supported a British nuclear system, although one other recent ICM poll showed most people wanting to extend the life of the existing Trident system rather than spend money upgrading it.

In 2006 Gordon Brown reaffirmed Britain's commitment to Trident, and the government won Commons backing, thanks to Tory support. A design contract is expected to be signed this September, during the parliamentary recess, and the nuclear weapons were excluded from the defence review announced last week.

The poll shows for the first time that a majority of Labour voters oppose nuclear weapons, as well as most Liberal Democrats.

On balance, 59% of Labour voters want Britain to scrap nuclear weapons, against 40% who want to replace them. In 2006 Trident renewal was backed by a majority of Labour voters. Even among Conservative voters, 41% would now rather see unilateral nuclear disarmament than a new generation of weapons. That may encourage the opposition to defer renewal as part of a package of spending cuts.

Today's results are one consequence of the growing political battle over public spending, with retired defence chiefs, Labour and Liberal Democrat MPs suggesting that the £20bn cost of replacing Trident would be better spent on conventional forces.

The poll also suggests that the Conservatives are outflanking Labour in the debate over spending. More than two-thirds of voters say they want spending to be cut, double the proportion who believe the government should increase expenditure, as some ministers continue to argue. Even a majority of Labour voters want to see cutbacks.

As a result the Conservative party has extended its lead over Labour to 14 points. At 41%, up two, Tory support is at its highest in an ICM poll since March, before the expenses scandal broke. Labour, unchanged on 27%, is stuck on its second-lowest ICM score since June last year.

The Liberal Democrats are on 20%, up two points, while backing for other parties is 12%, down three as minor party support from the European elections fades.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2009/jul/13/icm-poll-nuclear-weapons>

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RIA Novosti

13 July 2009

Russian Submarine Successfully Test-Launches Strategic Missile

SOCHI, July 13 (RIA Novosti) - Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said on Monday that Russia had successfully test-launched a strategic missile from a submarine.

"The target was hit and the pieces of the missile landed in the designated area," the president said at a meeting with Navy personnel in Russia's Black Sea resort of Sochi.

The president said the test occurred on Monday, but did not specify the type of missile or the name of the submarine.

Last month Adm. Vladimir Vysotsky, the Russian Navy commander, said Russia would carry out the next test of a Bulava sea-launched ballistic missile in late July, one of a total of four or five launches this year.

Despite five failures in 10 trials, the last unsuccessful trial being in December 2008, Russia's Defense Ministry is planning to complete Bulava tests and put the ICBM into service by the end of 2009.

The Russian military says the Bulava, along with Topol-M ballistic missiles, will become the backbone of Russia's nuclear triad.

The triad comprises land-based ballistic missile systems, nuclear-powered submarines armed with sea-launched ballistic missiles, and strategic bombers carrying nuclear bombs and nuclear-capable cruise missiles.

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090713/155516504.html>

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Reuters.com
July 14, 2009

Russia says No Iran Sanctions for START Deal: Report

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia will not agree to tougher sanctions against Iran over its nuclear program in exchange for a new nuclear arms cuts deal with Washington, Interfax news agency quoted a foreign ministry source as saying Tuesday.

Last week, U.S. President Barack Obama's nuclear adviser suggested that progress on a U.S.-Russian nuclear arms pact could help persuade Moscow to be more cooperative on Iran.

"There are no reasons to link these issues or count on Russia being more cooperative in toughening sanctions against Iran if there is progress in talks with the United States on further cuts in strategic offensive weapons," the source said.

Russia is negotiating a new nuclear arms cuts deal with the United States to replace the 1991 START-1 pact, which expires in December. It is also involved in international efforts to persuade Iran to give up its uranium enrichment program.

The sharp tone of the Russian comments contrasted with the positive mood that dominated last week during Obama's visit to Moscow aimed at "resetting" thorny bilateral ties.

Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev committed themselves during the talks to working on the new START pact despite outstanding disagreements over U.S. plans to deploy elements of an anti-missile system in Europe.

Obama has said that the European elements of the missile shield will not be needed if Iran halts what the West argues is a military program to create its own nuclear bomb.

Russia, a veto-wielding permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, has been reluctant to allow strong sanctions against Iran and has praised Obama for promising to pursue direct dialogue with Iranian leaders.

Obama's special assistant for arms control, Gary Samore, made his comments about the potential for a change in Russia's stance at London's International Institute for Strategic Studies last week.

"If we make concessions on strategic nuclear issues the Russians are much more willing to be cooperative when it comes to Iran," Samore told experts.

A Kremlin source told Reuters that the exchange of remarks over START and Iran did not indicate any change in the overall atmosphere of Russia-U.S. contacts.

"It was nothing more than an exchange of remarks over a specific suggestion," the source said.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSTRE56D1CR20090714>

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Global Security Newswire
July 10, 2009

U.S. General Promotes Missile Defense "Partnership" With Russia

The United States hopes to develop a "full partnership" with Russia aimed at resolving their long-standing disagreements over the deployment of missile shield technology to Europe, the director of the U.S. Missile Defense Agency said yesterday (see *GSN*, July 9).

"The (new) approach is to lay out ideas, and not to have a fully developed plan," Lt. Gen. Patrick O'Reilly told Reuters in reference to U.S.-Russian missile defense talks.

"You need to move forward at a prudent pace so that there are collaborative decisions, intermediate decisions made along the way, so that there is true partnership," O'Reilly added.

The general said he had not been asked "to deviate" from a Bush administration proposal to field missile interceptors in Poland and a radar station in the Czech Republic. Russia has adamantly opposed the plan as a threat to its security, largely dismissing U.S. explanations that the system would be focused on an Iranian missile threat (Jim Wolf, Reuters I, July 9).

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev today reaffirmed Moscow's threat to deploy short-range missiles near Poland if Washington moved to field the European defense system.

"If we don't manage to agree on the issues, you know the consequences. What I said during my state of the nation address has not been revoked," Medvedev said (Oleg Shchedrov, Reuters II, July 10).

Russia yesterday expressed willingness to collaborate with the United States on missile defense if Washington first dropped the Europe proposal, Interfax reported.

"We are prepared for cooperation (in missile defense), on condition that this cooperation is equitable. Therefore, we are waiting for our U.S. partners to decide on the future of a third missile defense launch site in Europe," Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Andrei Nesterenko said.

"In the meantime, we are ready to continue assessing possible missile threats requiring our joint reaction. This was laid down in the presidential statement," Nesterenko said, referring to a "joint understanding" on arms control signed Monday by Obama and Medvedev (see *GSN*, July 6; Interfax I, July 9).

Moscow and Washington have both discussed ideas for missile defense cooperation, but nothing has yet stuck.

By partnering on missile defense, the former Cold War rivals could help address nuclear threats posed by Iran and other Middle Eastern states, said Vladimir Yevseyev with the Institute of Global Economy and International Relations.

"Iran is not the only missile threat because there are many countries in the vast Middle East area which have developed missile programs and arms. Some of them would like to create a nuclear infrastructure," Yevseyev said yesterday in Moscow.

"If we look at the threats we have, we can choose other places [than sites proposed by the United States] to deploy parts of the missile defense system, and use, for instance, Russia's S-400 air defense system and the U.S. Patriot system, which are both capable of intercepting missiles from the Middle East," he said.

Yevseyev backed a proposed Joint Data Exchange Center that would enable Russia and the United States to share information on missile launches. Sharing such data in real time, he said, would be "a very important first step toward creating a common European security system, in which Russia would find a place worthy of itself" (Interfax II, July 9).

Space systems designer Boris Chertok recommended building a U.S.-Russian missile defense system in outer space, Interfax reported.

"Russia and the United States will fail in the next five to 10 years to develop an effective missile defense system in a geostationary orbit on their own," Chertok wrote in an article published Wednesday by the Russian Federal Space Agency. Such a platform, he wrote, would detect missiles during launch preparation or liftoff and destroy them with lasers.

"If material expenses, intellectual potentials and space enthusiasm are pooled together the same as in the [International Space Station] project, a fundamentally new technological system of safeguarding peace could be developed," he wrote.

Chertok also endorsed a proposal, developed by Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor Theodore Postol, to target long-range Iranian or North Korean weapons before launch or early in their flight. Postol recommended fielding unmanned aerial vehicles or other antimissile technology to counter such threats, according to Interfax.

"However, if the number of such countries posing rocket threats approaches five such a missile defense system will hardly prove effective," and a space-based system would be more appropriate, Chertok wrote (Interfax III, July 9).

http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20090710_6514.php

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Washington Post
July 13, 2009

Missile Pact Based On Old Plan

By Walter Pincus, Washington Post Staff Writer

President Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev last week agreed to a joint missile-launch monitoring facility, but their new agreement is based on an old plan.

The original proposal dates to President Bill Clinton, who first discussed it with Russian leader Boris Yeltsin and later settled on a plan with Yeltsin's successor, Vladimir Putin.

The new proposal is more ambitious, though. Originally conceived a decade ago as a facility that would monitor launches by the United States and Russia and any missiles aimed at the two countries by others nations, the new facility would attempt to monitor missile launches around the globe.

But first, it has to be finalized. And last time, the proposal -- for a facility to be known as the Joint Data Exchange Center -- lost momentum and fizzled.

Still, the plans got fairly detailed, right down to a potential location: the site of an old Russian school in Moscow. Sitting side-by-side, U.S. and Russian technicians would receive data from their own country's early-warning systems. They would notify each other within minutes when they detected ballistic missile launches -- whether from land or water -- or space-launch vehicles headed toward either country.

Data were also to be exchanged on third-country launches, but only those that appeared to pose a direct threat to either Russia or the United States and thus could lead to misinterpretation as to who launched them. One interesting element was that while the information would be exchanged between the two countries, "the sources of the data shall not be specified," according to the agreement.

There were to be 16 Americans and 17 Russians working in crews to provide round-the-clock coverage, with an additional 60 people assigned for security and maintenance. Russian and American supervisors would share management of the operations. No "country symbols" would be displayed on the exterior walls of the facility, and although only Russian would be used outside the building, English and Russian signs would be displayed within the facility. The plan was to begin operations in 2001, but time and events overtook the project. Initially, with the arrival of a new president, George W. Bush, it was red tape. Later, it was shelved as the Bush administration lost interest and Moscow became concerned about the proposal to station U.S. missile defense elements in Poland and the Czech Republic. In 2007, Putin suggested to Bush that there be two facilities: one in Moscow, the other in Brussels. But it all came to naught.

During the campaign, President Obama talked favorably about resurrecting the joint center.

At the same time, Rose Gottemoeller, then an Obama adviser, co-authored a July 2008 article in Arms Control Today, saying the Clinton-Putin agreement "remains intact . . . and the center could be rapidly established as a venue for confidence building on missile defenses."

Today, Gottemoeller, now Obama's chief negotiator with the Russians, may be the one to make it a reality.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/07/12/AR2009071201954.html>

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Moscow Times
July 13, 2009

Medvedev Warns U.S. Against Shield

By Oleg Shchedrov, Reuters

L'AQUILA, Italy — President Dmitry Medvedev warned the United States on Friday that if it did not reach agreement with Russia on plans for missile defense systems, Moscow would deploy rockets in the Kaliningrad exclave near Poland.

In sharp contrast to his positive words during President Barack Obama's visit to Moscow earlier in the week when the two reached broad agreement on nuclear arms cuts, Medvedev used a news conference at the Group of Eight summit to return to Russia's earlier tough rhetoric on arms control.

Referring to an order he gave earlier this year to prepare deployment of short-range missiles in Kaliningrad to answer any U.S. deployment of a missile shield in Central Europe, Medvedev said:

“If we don’t manage to agree on the issues, you know the consequences. What I said during my state of the nation address has not been revoked.”

Medvedev also appeared to change his tone on the missile defense shield itself.

During Obama’s visit, he told the U.S. leader, using markedly softer language than normal, that “no one is saying that missile defense is harmful in itself or that it poses a threat to someone.”

But at the G8 summit in Italy on Friday, Medvedev returned to a traditional posture on the system, describing it as “harmful” and “threatening to Russia.”

In Moscow, Medvedev and Obama agreed to a target for cuts in nuclear arms and a year-end deadline for a reduction deal. Obama praised Medvedev as a “straightforward professional” leader.

Before his Moscow visit, Obama made clear that he would not accept any effort by Moscow to link arms control to missile defense and reiterated Washington’s stance that any system would be to protect against a threat from Iran, not from Russia.

He has been less enthusiastic about the plan, which will put a radar installation in the Czech Republic and 10 interceptor missiles in Poland, than predecessor George W. Bush but seems unlikely to abandon it without getting something in return.

The Czech Republic and Poland have signed treaties with Washington on the plan, with both governments making the project a priority to counter what they see as Russia’s continued influence in the region.

In Washington, meanwhile, the head of the Pentagon’s Missile Defense Agency said the Obama administration was seeking full partnership with Moscow to bridge ballistic missile-defense differences that have strained U.S.-Russian ties for years.

“The [new] approach is to lay out ideas, and not to have a fully developed plan,” Army Lieutenant General Patrick O’Reilly said Thursday, referring to missile defense discussions with Russia.

“You need to move forward at a prudent pace so that there are collaborative decisions, intermediate decisions made along the way, so that there is true partnership,” he said.

Obama, during his visit to Moscow, called for a fresh era in bilateral security ties focusing on mutual interests. He and Medvedev agreed to pursue a plan, first floated in the 1990s, to open a “Joint Data Exchange Center” that would become the basis for sharing information on missile launches worldwide.

O’Reilly said he had not received any orders “to deviate” from expanding U.S. missile defenses into Poland and the Czech Republic.

O’Reilly said it would take up to five years for a missile field to be built in Poland and 4 1/2 years for the radar in the Czech Republic. These timelines are important because U.S. intelligence estimates Iran may be able to fire a long-range missile possibly tipped with a chemical, biological or nuclear warhead by 2015 or so.

Neither Poland nor the Czech Republic is expected to go ahead with ratification until they get a clear signal from the Obama administration that it is sticking with the Bush-era plan. The administration is studying possible alternatives as part of a broader missile defense review due to be completed in December, O’Reilly said.

“At this point, they’re still laying out alternatives,” he said. “Really, it’s pre-decisional.”

O’Reilly, who was in Moscow in May for missile-defense talks, said Russia was now seeing more eye to eye with the United States on the perceived danger from Iranian and North Korean progress in ballistic missile development.

“I think there was agreement on the facts, but disagreement on the interpretation of the data or the intent” previously, he said. “And as North Korea and Iran continue to demonstrate capability, those controversies are being eliminated.”

<http://www.moscowtimes.ru/article/1010/42/379470.htm>

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11 July 2009

N. Korean Military Behind Cyber Attacks on S. Korea: Spy Agency

SEOUL, July 10 (Yonhap) -- The North Korean military's cyber warfare unit appears to be responsible for this week's massive cyber attacks on key South Korean and U.S. government Web sites, Seoul's spy agency was quoted as telling lawmakers Friday.

The National Intelligence Service (NIS) said in a closed-door briefing for lawmakers that a research center called "Number 110," under the wing of the General Staff of the People's Army, seems to have orchestrated the so-called "distributed denial-of-service" (DDoS) attacks, in which 86 Internet protocol addresses in 16 countries -- including South Korea, the United States, Japan, China and Guatemala -- were used, according to a participant who asked not to be named.

North Korea was not on the list, but that does not mean the secretive communist nation was not involved in the attacks, the NIS said.

"The research center is a well-trained unit on cyber attacks," the participant said.

Speaking in public, Park Young-Sun from the main opposition Democratic Party also said, "The NIS still suspects North Korea or pro-North Korean forces are behind the attacks."

She said the spy agency provided no clear evidence of its suspicion, saying it cannot be sure until the ongoing probe is completed."

One reason for the suspicion is that in response to a plan to take part in a U.S.-led drill against cyber attacks, the North's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea said last month that Pyongyang was "fully ready for any form of high-tech war."

Since late Tuesday, Web sites operated by the government and media organizations, along with major Internet portals in South Korea and the U.S. have reported access delays and failures, apparently due to the DDoS attacks.

Such attacks use a multitude of infected computers to request information from a single target, overloading it and causing legitimate users to be denied access.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2009/07/10/62/0401000000AEN20090710007400315F.HTML>

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Yonhap News

11 July 2009

Intelligence Has Yet To Confirm North's Role In Cyber Attacks

SEOUL July 11 (Yonhap) -- South Korea's main intelligence agency said Saturday it has yet to conclude that North Korea was behind massive cyber attacks that severely slowed or disrupted dozens of South Korean government and business Web sites earlier this week.

But the National Intelligence Service (NIS) said there is ample circumstantial evidence that points to North Korean involvement in the attacks on 36 South Korean Web sites, including the presidential Cheong Wa Dae, for three days starting on Tuesday.

"A thorough investigation is under way to find out concrete evidence that the North is responsible for the attacks," the intelligence said in a statement, adding that it has yet to make a final conclusion.

Earlier, the spy agency was quoted as reporting to the ruling Grand National Party (GNP) that it has obtained a North Korean document ordering its military hacking unit to "destroy" the South's communication networks.

"The intelligence obtained a document in which North Korea ordered on June 7 a hacking unit, 'Number 100,' under the wing of the General Staff of the People's Army, to destroy puppet communication networks of the South," a GNP official said after the meeting with the intelligence agency.

In the purported document, North Korea also ordered its military to develop hacking programs that conceal the identity of the attackers, according to the party official.

In a closed-door meeting with National Assembly's information committee members a day earlier, the intelligence agency also pointed its finger to North Korea but did not present any concrete evidence, according to Park Young-sun, a lawmaker from the main opposition Democratic Party.

Other key South Korean Web sites that come under attack also included the Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs, commercial banks and a major newspaper. By Saturday, all those sites were back up and running normally, officials said.

On Friday, the nation's telecom regulator, the Korea Communications Commission, blocked five Internet addresses found to have diffused the malicious codes that launched the so-called "distributed denial-of-service (DDos)" attacks.

DDos attacks invite massive amounts of computers to a single site simultaneously, bringing a server into a breakdown.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2009/07/11/86/0401000000AEN20090711002200320F.HTML>

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London Guardian
13 July 2009

Kim Jong-il 'has Pancreatic Cancer'

Tania Branigan in Beijing and agencies

North Korea's "dear leader", Kim Jong-il, has life-threatening cancer, South Korean media claimed today, prompting fears for the country's long-term stability.

The reports came days after images appeared of the 67-year-old looking gaunt in a rare public appearance, increasing speculation that his health was worsening after a reported stroke last year.

Seoul's YTN television channel reported that Kim had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, citing unidentified intelligence officials in South Korea and China as saying the illness was threatening his life.

South Korea's National Intelligence Service said it could not confirm the report, and a unification ministry spokesman, Chun Hae-sung, told reporters he knew nothing of the claims. US officials contacted by Reuters were unable to comment.

Tensions on the peninsula have been running high in recent months, since the North's nuclear and missile tests, making the stability of the regime a more pressing issue than ever.

Analysts initially suggested Pyongyang was seeking to grab the Obama administration's attention and force the US to the negotiating table, but some now believe that it is more concerned with shoring up domestic support and ensuring a successful leadership transition.

Kim's youngest son, 25-year-old Kim Jong-un, is said to have been chosen as his heir, but North Korea has made no such announcement.

Today's report came a week after Kim attended an annual memorial for his late father, North Korea's founder Kim Il-sung. The appearance was only his second at a state event since his reported stroke last year.

While he looked thin and limped slightly, analysts said his attendance sent out the message that he was still in charge.

Daniel Pinkston, a senior analyst and expert on North Korea at the International Crisis Group, warned that Japanese media had floated many rumours about Kim's health. He pointed out that the subject was so sensitive that a specific diagnosis of illness seemed "a little odd", adding: "This kind of information would not be shared easily or casually."

The US National Cancer Institute puts the five-year survival rate for pancreatic cancer at 5.5%.

But Pinkston acknowledged Kim looked unwell. "It would explain a lot of things that may be going on internally: the rapidness of some of their actions over the past eight months or so, with the attempted satellite launch, nuclear test and missile tests," he said.

"Now they are going through things as if they have a plan or schedule."

Analysts say the leader's early death or incapacitation could complicate the transition of power to Kim Jong-un, who is thought to have the backing of Kim's brother-in-law Jang Song-thaek, effectively the country's second-in-command since a promotion to the National Defence Commission this spring.

Pinkston said the regime had planned for this transition.

"They have a playbook. Whether it works according to plan when Kim's not on the scene remains to be seen."

The Kim family, the military and other top officials have a personal stake in ensuring the regime survives.

But some experts believe a military takeover or factionalism, which could lead to the collapse of the state, are possible..

Even if Kim Jong-un takes and maintains control, few expect him to rule with the kind of authority his father had. Most analysts suggest he would be more of a figurehead or central arbitrator.

But Pinkston noted: "Twenty years ago, people were saying if Kim Il-sung died, the whole thing would collapse because Kim Jong-il did not have the abilities of his father."

Kim – celebrated in North Korea for accomplishments such as hitting 11 holes-in-one in the first round of golf he ever played – took power in 1994. But while he took over the military National Defence Commission and the Workers' party, he did not become president, instead naming his late father as "eternal leader".

In a separate development, senior Chinese and South Korean nuclear negotiators met today to discuss implementing a UN sanctions resolution against North Korea and resuming stalled six-party talks with the isolated communist nation. The Chinese deputy foreign minister, Wu Dawei, met a South Korean envoy, Wi Sung-lac, in Seoul.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/jul/13/kim-jong-il-cancer>

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Yonhap News
13 July 2009

S. Korea has 'No Information' on Kim Jong-il's Reported Pancreatic Cancer

By Kim Hyun

SEOUL, July 13 (Yonhap) -- The South Korean government has no information on North Korean leader Kim Jong-il having pancreatic cancer as reported by a local broadcaster Monday, officials said.

"This morning, there was another report about Chairman Kim Jong-il's health, mentioning a particular illness. With regard to today's report, so far, I have no information," Unification Ministry spokesman Chun Hae-sung said in a press briefing.

Citing unidentified intelligence sources in Seoul and Washington, the cable news channel YTN said Kim, 67, was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer around the same time he is believed to have had a stroke in August last year.

The report, quoting medical sources in Beijing, said the illness was "life-threatening." Kim may not live more than five years, given the high mortality rate of pancreatic cancer patients and his old age, it said.

An official from the National Intelligence Service also said he was "unable to confirm the report."

Medical specialists in Seoul say it is impossible to judge from photographs and videos whether Kim is indeed suffering from the reported new illness. In the latest video image released last week, filmed during a memorial service for his father and North Korean founder Kim Il-sung, Kim's hair was thinner particularly on the top of his head and his build more gaunt than in early April. Such signs have been said to stem from the stroke and diabetes, which Kim has long been known to have.

"Just with the way he looks, we don't know whether it's pancreatic cancer," Park Se-hun, a cancer specialist at Samsung Medical Center, said. One can lose hair and weight from the side effects of chemotherapy, but those symptoms are not limited to pancreatic cancer," he said.

Kim's health condition is at the center of international media attention, being a decisive factor in what happens to the communist country if he dies without publicly naming a successor.

Kim is rumored to have internally named his third and youngest son, Jong-un, to succeed him. Jong-un, born to Kim's deceased third wife Ko Yong-hui and either 25 or 26 years old, is said to most resemble the leader in temperament and appearance among his siblings.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2009/07/13/46/0401000000AEN20090713004200315F.HTML>

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Bloomberg.com

13 July 2009

China Agrees to Sanction of North Korea Officials

By Bill Varner

July 13 (Bloomberg) -- China has agreed for the first time to punish senior North Korean government officials for the nation's defiance of United Nations resolutions barring nuclear and missile tests, China's deputy ambassador said.

Ambassador Liu Zhenmin said his government would support imposition of a travel ban and asset freeze on "some, but not all" North Korean officials proposed by the U.S. as targets for UN sanctions. No government officials had been subject to the sanctions adopted by the Security Council following North Korea's nuclear test in 2006.

Liu, speaking in an interview, declined to identify the officials, other than to say they hold "senior" government positions.

China's acceptance of sanctions against North Korean officials and companies, as well as material that might contribute to development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, clears the way for Security Council action this week. Russia acquiesced last week, leaving the panel to await China's decision.

Ambassador Fazli Corman of Turkey, which holds the rotating presidency of the Security Council this month, said formal agreement by its 15 member governments would come within days.

Frozen Assets

The Security Council in April agreed to freeze the foreign assets of two North Korean companies and a bank and also said the government in Pyongyang was barred from acquiring items designated by the Missile Technology Control Regime, a coalition of 34 nations to curb proliferation of missile technology. It was the first time the 2006 sanctions had been enforced.

China's action followed adoption last month of a resolution to punish North Korea for its May 25 nuclear bomb test and missile launches. The measure seeks to curb loans and money transfers to the communist nation and step up inspection of cargoes suspected of containing material that might contribute to the development of nuclear weapons or ballistic missiles.

The text, which was adopted unanimously on June 12, called for a Security Council committee to designate additional entities, goods and persons to be subject to the 2006 travel ban and asset freeze. The committee was given 30 days to agree on the new targets of the sanctions.

North Korea was condemned by the Security Council after the government in Pyongyang launched several missiles earlier this month in defiance of the UN resolutions. North Korea fired four short- or medium-range missiles on July 2 and seven on July 4.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601087&sid=anva0DO4uNqA#>

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Global Security Newswire

July 10, 2009

Iran Might Not Build Nuclear Weapon Immediately, Analyses Indicate

The United States and Israel doubt that Iran intends to assemble a nuclear weapon in the next year although they consider it capable of doing so, according to Israeli analyses reported yesterday by the *Jerusalem Post* (see *GSN*, July 9).

Israel, the United States and some European nations suspect that Iran's uranium enrichment program is geared toward producing nuclear-weapon material; Tehran has insisted the effort would only produce low-enriched uranium for use in nuclear power plants.

Washington and Jerusalem have reached similar conclusions about the length of time Iran would need to complete a nuclear weapon -- Adm. Michael Mullen, head of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, this week put the estimate at one to three years -- , but they both believe that "worst-case scenario is not likely to materialize," according to the Israeli analyses.

In the short-term, Iran intends to continue producing low-enriched uranium while pressing ahead with ballistic missile technology to a degree that would not prompt any new backlash from the international community, according to one high-level official.

"I would be careful about all the declarations on this matter," the official added, referring to predictions of when Iran would acquire a nuclear weapon. Tehran has yet to take various actions that would set it on a clear course toward building a nuclear bomb, the source said.

Iran might intend to gradually acquire the materials and technical prowess needed to assemble an arsenal of nuclear weapons in just weeks or months, according to some U.S. and Israeli analysts.

With its statement on Iran this week, the Group of Eight industrialized nations indicated to Jerusalem that it is determined to address the nuclear dispute quickly, the official added. The source expressed regret, though, that the release did not take a tougher stand against Tehran's crackdown on election demonstrators.

It remains uncertain how the political tension sparked by Iran's disputed June presidential election would affect the country's nuclear policies, the official indicated.

"While the regime is more vulnerable than in the past to pressure from the international community, this may lead in the early stages to a hardening of its positions," said the official. "When you are weak domestically, you can't show that you are weak externally as well. The opposite is true. You have to take a tougher stand with the world so they don't conclude that because you are under domestic pressure, you will fold under external pressure" (Herb Keinon, *Jerusalem Post*, July 9).

U.S. President Barack Obama today sought to apply more pressure, saying the Group of Eight industrialized nations would not "indefinitely" allow Iran to move toward a nuclear-weapon capability, Agence France-Presse reported. Tehran must understand that "world opinion is very clear" on the matter, Obama said as the G-8 leaders wrapped up their annual summit in Italy (Agence France-Presse I/Spacewar.com, July 10).

French President Nicolas Sarkozy warned yesterday that an Israeli strike on Iranian nuclear sites would be an "absolute catastrophe," according to AFP.

"Israel should know that it is not alone and look at all this calm. If I have fought so hard in the name of France to get people talking about Iran it's also a message to the Israelis that they are not alone," Sarkozy said from the summit in L'Aquila.

The French president repeated his warning that "there will be sanctions" if Iran does not rejoin negotiations aimed at ending its disputed nuclear work (Agence France-Presse II/Spacewar.com, July 9).

http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20090710_8844.php

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China View
11 July 2009

FM: Iran Preparing New Package of Proposals on World Issues

TEHRAN, July 11 (Xinhua) -- Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said on Saturday that Tehran was preparing a new package of proposals on major political, security and international issues.

"We are preparing a new package of proposals which would be considered as the basis for Tehran's negotiations on major regional and international developments," the official IRNA news agency quoted Mottaki as saying.

Speaking at a joint press conference with visiting Omani Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs Yousuf Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah, Mottaki also said that "Iran has received no new messages from the Group of Eight (G8) summit."

The leaders participating the G8 summit, which ended on Friday in L'Aquila, Italy, issued a joint declaration urging a negotiated resolution to the standoff over Iran's nuclear issue.

U.S. President Barack Obama on Friday told a press conference after the end of the summit that G8 nations will not wait "indefinitely" to allow Iran to develop nuclear weapons.

"World opinion is very clear ... Our premise is that we provide the door, but we also say we're not going to just wait indefinitely and allow for the development of the nuclear weapon, the breach of international treaties," Obama said.

On Wednesday, the G8 leaders urged Iran to cooperate and accept negotiations on its nuclear issue, saying they would "take stock of the situation" at a meeting in September.

In response to a revised packages of incentives by the United States, Russia, China, France and Britain, plus Germany (G5+1) last year to encourage Iran to halt its sensitive nuclear program, Iran later offered its own package, in which Tehran's concern had been directed to the global issues.

In April, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced that Iran would offer a new package of proposals to the world to solve various world issues, including Tehran's nuclear program.

The United States and other Western countries claim that Iran intends to secretly develop nuclear weapons. The UN Security Council also requires Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment activity.

Iran, however, insists that its nuclear plan is only for peaceful purposes, vowing to continue its uranium enrichment activity despite pressure and sanctions from Western countries.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-07/11/content_11692684.htm

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London Guardian
12 July 2009

Western Leaders Sceptical as Iran Offers Olive Branch on Nuclear Programme

Peter Beaumont, foreign affairs editor
The Observer

Iran said yesterday that it was preparing a new package of "political, security and international" issues to put to the west in negotiations over its pursuit of nuclear technology.

On Friday, the G8 meeting in Italy gave Tehran a September deadline for entering talks or risk facing a new round of sanctions.

Iran's foreign minister, Manouchehr Mottaki, said yesterday: "The package can be a good basis for talks with the west. It will contain Iran's stances on political, security and international issues." The latest statement follows the promise in April by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad that Iran would offer new proposals to the world to solve various world issues, including Tehran's nuclear programme.

There was, however, speculation that the package on offer was the same as that offered in May 2008, suggesting partnerships to produce nuclear fuel, including within Iran.

President Nicolas Sarkozy of France said last week the G8 would give Iran until September to accept negotiations over its nuclear ambitions or face tougher sanctions. President Barack Obama added later that global leaders were "deeply troubled" by Iran's nuclear programme. Obama warned Iran on Friday that the world would not wait indefinitely for it to end its nuclear defiance.

In Iran's first reaction to Sarkozy's statement, Mottaki said the Islamic state had not received "any new message" from the summit. "But based on the news we have received, they had different views on different issues which did not lead to a unanimous agreement in some areas."

The EU troika of Britain, France and Germany has led negotiations with Iran over nuclear work that the west suspects is aimed at bomb-making, despite the comments of the incoming head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Yukiya Amano of Japan, that he had seen "no evidence" in the agency's documents to support this claim.

Tehran says its nuclear work is wholly peaceful. Together with the US, Russia and China, the EU nations have offered a package of incentives to Iran if it will stop enriching uranium, a process that can produce fuel for power plants or, potentially, a nuclear bomb. Iran has rejected the demand, saying it has the right to pursue such work as a signatory of the non-proliferation treaty.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/jul/12/iran-package-nuclear-weapons-g8>

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RIA Novosti

11 July 2009

Russia, Bangladesh to Sign Nuclear Cooperation Agreement in July

NEW DELHI, July 11 (RIA Novosti) - Russia and Bangladesh will sign a nuclear cooperation agreement after a Bangladeshi delegation inspects Russian nuclear facilities, a local news agency reported Saturday.

"We have recently received an invitation from the Russian government to visit various [nuclear] facilities," the United News of Bangladesh quoted a Bangladeshi IT Ministry high-ranking official as saying. "They propose that we pay a visit late this month."

Representatives of the Russian state nuclear corporation Rosatom and the Bangladeshi government signed on May 13 a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the nuclear sphere. The key element of Bangladesh's nuclear program is the construction of the country's first nuclear power plant.

Bangladesh, which is badly short of energy, plans to build two reactors in the city of Ruppur.

The democratic government of Bangladesh formed in January intends to launch the country's first NPP in 2017. A project to build an NPP in Ruppur would require \$1.5-2 billion, which could be given by the World Bank or other international financial organizations.

<http://en.rian.ru/world/20090711/155500300.html>

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Deutsche Welle

12 July 2009

Swiss Government Locks Horns with Judiciary over Nuclear Smuggling Case

The Swiss government is locked in an unprecedented and increasingly complex battle with the judiciary over its refusal to hand over documents in a case of alleged nuclear smuggling.

The row has brought to light an extraordinary range of controversial issues, including the possible involvement of the CIA and links to disgraced Pakistani nuclear scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan.

The government in Bern has argued that it acted in the interest of national security when it took the unusual step of blocking access of key documents from the court and ordering their destruction.

Parliament has stood up against the decision, saying that the government's refusal of access is an act of interference which violates the Swiss constitution.

On Wednesday, President Hans-Rudolf Merz told Swiss public radio that ministers planned to shred some documents that were believed to contain nuclear warhead designs. Switzerland, which is not a nuclear power, is not permitted to possess such plans under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

A day later, cantonal police, armed with a court order, raided the Federal Criminal Police offices in Bern and seized a safe containing the key to the secret documents.

Following the court's extraordinary move to seize the safe, the government said all texts related to the manufacture of nuclear weapons would be destroyed.

"There is no appeal against this type of decision of the Federal Council. The decision is absolute," said a government statement. The federal judge's order had "no effect", it added.

Swiss engineers' role unclear

The court has directed the government to submit the papers as evidence in the so-called Tinner case relating to two brothers and their father, all engineers, who have been accused of helping Libya develop a nuclear weapons program.

The Tinnings were also alleged to have been in contact with Abdul Qadeer Khan, the disgraced Pakistani scientist who is accused of being the kingpin of a network supplying nuclear technology to so-called "rogue states."

However, some reports claim that the Tinner family was, in fact, recruited by the US Central Intelligence Agency to help thwart attempts by Libya and Iran to develop nuclear weapons, and that Swiss and US authorities colluded after they were arrested.

According to a report published in the *New York Times* in October, the real reason for Bern's bid to conceal the documents was pressure from the CIA, which feared its ties with the family of Swiss engineers would be exposed.

The Tinnings maintain they are innocent. One of them claimed he was working for American spies when word got out that a Libya-bound ship was carrying centrifuge parts essential for making a bomb.

That incident forced Libya to admit its nuclear ambitions, which it subsequently abandoned.

Uproar over disclosure

Last year, Switzerland revealed that the three Swiss engineers accused of having allegedly smuggled nuclear secrets to Libya were in possession of detailed plans on how to make such weapons. The government said it destroyed some of these documents in November 2007 "to prevent them falling into the hands of a terrorist organization or non-authorized state."

That disclosure sparked an uproar as judges and lawmakers said it would compromise investigations into the Swiss engineers' involvement.

However, authorities revealed in December that there were more case documents at the Swiss federal prosecutor's office. Subsequently, a parliamentary commission sought to have them preserved.

Sensitive documents

But earlier this month, the Swiss government vowed that it would destroy the remaining documents, saying that the parliamentary commission did not have the "competence" to issue such orders.

"From the point of view of security policies, it is imperative that the most sensitive documents, which detail the making of nuclear weapons, are destroyed," it added.

Insisting that there were no grounds to reverse its decision, the government said in a statement that it took into account "in a measured manner the needs of the prosecuting authorities and Switzerland's international engagements."

However, Swiss parliamentarians say their country has no international obligation to destroy the documents.

Crucial evidence

Meanwhile, investigators say the documents are crucial evidence in the nuclear-smuggling case.

In a statement posted on the government's website, Swiss authorities said they had agreed with the International Atomic Energy Agency that documents related to uranium enrichment or atomic weapon design posed a risk.

The Swiss were apparently told by the IAEA they could either transfer the files to one of the five nuclear powers allowed to possess such documents -- the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia -- or destroy them.

However, some reports quote the Vienna-based nuclear watchdog as saying that Switzerland is capable of safely storing the documents.

http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,4474060,00.html?maca=en-en_nr-1893-xml-atom

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The Hindu
July 11, 2009

India to Take Up Nuclear Issue During Clinton Visit

New Delhi (IANS) India is concerned over the G8 declaration "to curb transfer of enrichment and reprocessing (ENR) technology", which can undermine the "clean" waiver it has obtained from the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), and plans to take this up during US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's visit here later this month.

The G8 declaration adopted at the L'Aquila summit in Italy commits the world's most developed eight countries, which are also members of the NSG, to ban the transfer of ENR items to countries which have not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

"To reduce the proliferation risks associated with the spread of enrichment and reprocessing facilities, equipment and technology, we welcome the progress that continues to be made by the NSG on mechanisms to strengthen controls on transfers of such enrichment and reprocessing items and technology," the G8 declaration said on Friday.

The declaration, however, commits these countries to implement on a "national basis" the "useful and constructive proposals" on ways of strengthening controls on ENR items and technology "contained in the NSG's 'clean text' developed at the 20 November 2008 Consultative Group meeting".

The declaration at the end of the G8 summit, which was also attended by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, also called upon all countries to sign the NPT while deciding to step up efforts for a swift conclusion of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

The message, according to observers, was aimed at India - the only NPT holdout at the summit.

The G8 position on ENR technology has taken the Indian government by surprise as such a ban negates the spirit of the NSG waiver.

The waiver was seen as a triumph of Indian diplomacy with Indian officials emphasising that New Delhi managed to get a "clean and full" waiver from the NSG amid formidable opposition from some of its members.

However, reliable sources close to the government told IANS that New Delhi is not unduly worried as it will go by the NSG waiver, which they insisted was "clean", and the 123 agreement that governs nuclear trade between the two countries.

The 123 agreement envisages India setting up a dedicated reprocessing facility under international safeguards for which the US was ready to supply the necessary ENR technology.

India's access to ENR transfer was a major sticking point between India and the US, but a breakthrough was achieved in the last stages of negotiations with Washington agreeing to New Delhi's demand for full civil nuclear cooperation, though on condition that a separate agreement will be required to facilitate the transfer of ENR.

"We will go by the NSG waiver and the 123 agreement. Anything else is extraneous," the sources said.

The issue will figure in Clinton's discussions with Indian leaders in New Delhi. Civil nuclear cooperation will figure prominently in the discussions, the sources said.

The NSG, the global grouping that controls international nuclear trade, made an exception for India, a non-signatory to the NPT, Sep 6, 2008 by rewriting its rules to allow the nuclear suppliers to resume civil nuclear business with New Delhi after a gap of 34 years.

With India insisting on "clean and unconditional waiver", including its right of access to ENR technologies, the NSG, while granting the waiver, had stated that "participating governments may transfer nuclear-related dual-use equipment, materials, software and related technology to India for peaceful purposes and for use in IAEA safeguarded civil nuclear facilities".

<http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/holnus/000200907112085.htm>

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The Hindu
July 12, 2009

G8 Ban on ENR Sales Shuts Russian Door on India

By Siddharth Varadarajan

New Delhi: By not moving quickly to conclude an umbrella nuclear cooperation agreement with Russia before the international goalposts for commerce were moved again, India has made it easier for Washington to roll back the clean exemption the Nuclear Suppliers Group granted New Delhi from its export restrictions last year.

Diplomatic sources told *The Hindu* that Moscow had approached the Indian side several months ago for the negotiation of an agreement going beyond the one already signed for the purchase of additional reactors at Kudankulam. Such an agreement could have provided for cooperation across the full range of civil nuclear activities and technologies, including enrichment and reprocessing (ENR), and allowed Russia to buck new rules restricting international trade in these technologies by saying such cooperation with India had already been “grandfathered.”

Draft agreement

Though a draft agreement was developed, India showed no urgency in the matter. And now, it may be too late.

On July 8, the G8 declared: “Pending completion of work in the NSG [on new rules restricting ENR sales], we agree to implement [the “clean text” developed at the 20 November 2008 Consultative Group meeting] on a national basis in the next year.”

According to G8 diplomats, this text prohibits the sale of ENR items and technology to countries like India that are not parties to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty.

After being blindsided by the G8’s decision, officials here scrambled on Saturday to make light of the consequences. South Block officials said that the U.S. had been trying from the outset to exclude ENR items from the purview of nuclear cooperation with India and that it was “only to be expected” that Washington would keep working in this direction.

Despite this knowledge, however, no attempts were made to enlist the support of Russia or France — two countries that stand to make billions from reactor sales to India — in the battle to prevent dilution of the principle of “full civil nuclear cooperation.”

<http://www.hindu.com/2009/07/12/stories/2009071250330100.htm>

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Chandigarh Tribune - India
July 12, 2009,

Move on Nuclear Trade Surprises India

Ashok Tuteja
Tribune News Service

New Delhi, July 11-Though surprised, India is not unduly perturbed at this stage over the G-8 countries’ move to adopt a joint statement on non-proliferation, vowing to ban the transfer of enrichment and reprocessing (ENR) technology to countries which have not signed the controversial nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT).

“We got a clean waiver from the nuclear suppliers’ group (NSG) that allows us to engage in nuclear trade and the G-8 move will not have any direct implication on us. However, we are concerned about the timing of the resolution,” official sources here said.

The sources observed that the G-8 resolution went against the spirit of the NSG's decision, amending its strict rules at the initiative of US last September to permit India to join the nuclear mainstream. They said the G-8 resolution was not binding on India in any manner as New Delhi was working on nuclear deals with individual countries and not with any grouping as such. Countries like Russia and France obviously would gain a lot from the nuclear accords with India and the loser could obviously be the US.

However, what has come as a surprise to Indian officials is the fact that such a resolution was adopted by the G-8 countries at their summit at L'Aquila where Prime Minister Manmohan Singh too was present. The G-8 articulation on non-proliferation was buried in a separate document, which did not even attract the proper attention of the media.

"In order to reduce the proliferation risks associated with the spread of enrichment and reprocessing facilities, equipment and technology, we welcome the progress that continues to be made by the NSG on mechanisms to strengthen controls on transfer of such enrichment and reprocessing items and technology," said the joint statement.

While noting that the NSG has not yet reached consensus on this issue, the G-8 nations said: "We agree that NSG discussions have yielded useful and constructive proposals contained in the NSG's 'clean text' developed at the November 20, 2008, consultative group meeting." Pending completion of work in the NSG, the statement said, "We agree to implement this text on a national basis next year."

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/2009/20090712/main2.htm>

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China View
13 July 2009

India Looks Forward to Building Defense, Nuclear Partnership with France

NEW DELHI, July 13 (Xinhua) -- Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh Monday said that the country would look forward to building a strategic partnership with France in the field of nuclear energy and defense, as he embarked on a visit to the European nation to attend the Bastille Day's celebrations.

"India and France enjoy a close and wide ranging strategic partnership. Our relations with France encompass a large number of areas and have served our national interests well. We would like to build upon our partnership in the areas of trade and investment, high technology, space, nuclear energy, defence, education, culture, tourism and scientific research and development," Singh said in a departure statement to the media.

In a related statement to the media, French President Nicolas Sarkozy said that he wished to honor France's strategic partnership with India through Singh's visit.

"France fully supported India's bid for UN Security Council seat and had called for enlargement of G-8 to include India, Brazil and China, and other emerging economies in the grouping," he said.

From France, Singh will leave for Egypt to attend the NAM summit, where he is expected to meet his Pakistani counterpart Yousuf Raza Gilani and seek Islamabad's commitment in bringing the perpetrators of the Mumbai terror attacks to justice, said Indian officials

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-07/13/content_11702389.htm

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London Times
July 10, 2009

Seven Somalis Beheaded by Extremists for 'Spying for Government'

Tristan McConnell in Nairobi

Seven Somalis accused of renouncing Islam and spying for the government were beheaded by Islamic insurgents today in a brutal reminder of the rebels' growing authority.

The killings were carried out by the extremist al-Shabaab group, which is fighting the interim government in Mogadishu and has implemented a strict interpretation of Islamic law in those parts of the country that it controls.

"Al-Shabaab told us that they were beheaded for being Christian followers and spies," a relative said after the executions were carried out. A witness described seeing the decapitated bodies lying in the back of a truck in the town of Baidoa.

Today's killings were the largest number to take place at one time. But there were only the latest in a series of beheadings, amputations and stoning to death ordered by al-Shabaab, which is accused of having links to al-Qaeda and is listed as a terrorist organisation by the United States.

In areas that al-Shabaab controls – including most of southern Somalia and large parts of the capital Mogadishu – numerous others accused of collaborating with the government or committing crimes such as adultery, rape, theft and murder have been publicly executed, flogged or had amputations ordered in recent weeks.

“This is a worrying new development,” said Roger Middleton, a Somalia analyst at the Chatham House think-tank. “It shows that al-Shabaab is willing to use these kind of extreme punishments and that the government has no ability to influence events on the ground in places where it has no military presence.”

President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed’s weak Transitional Federal Government is protected by 4,300 African Union peacekeepers, backed by the United Nations and propped up by Western governments which supply its forces with weapons and training. But its authority extends to just a few blocks of the seaside capital and roads connecting the port and airport.

Mr Ahmed’s administration is unable to carry out any of the functions of government – including the provision of law and order – leaving a void that al-Shabaab is filling with its own bloody kind of justice.

Late last month a group of four teenagers accused of theft each had a hand and a foot publicly chopped off in Mogadishu while in the southern town of Wanlaweyn a married man accused of rape and murder was buried up to his neck in sand and stoned to death by a squad of ten masked men.

The brutality with which this informal justice is meted out has outraged human rights activists, none more so than in October last year when a 13-year-old victim of gang rape was convicted of adultery in a Sharia court and stoned to death in Kismayo, near the Kenyan border.

The UN human rights chief warned today that both the Islamist insurgents and government forces might be committing war crimes in renewed fighting that has killed hundreds and forced over 200,000 civilians to flee Mogadishu since early May.

Navi Pillay said: “Witnesses have told UN investigators that the so-called al-Shabaab groups fighting to topple the transitional government have carried out extrajudicial executions, planted mines, bombs and other explosive devices in civilian areas and used civilians as human shields.

“Fighters from both sides are reported to have used torture and fired mortars indiscriminately into areas populated or frequented by civilians. Some of these acts might amount to war crimes.”

In moves reminiscent of the Taleban, who in 2001 destroyed two vast statues of Buddha, the Somali hardliners have desecrated the tombs of saints worshipped by Sufis, a mystical branch of Islam despised by the extremists but widespread among ordinary Somalis.

They have also enforced changes in behaviour making women wear veils, banning dances and other events at which men and women mix and outlawing the chewing of qat, a popular mild stimulant herb.

Analysts say that an influx of hundreds of foreign jihadis from Britain, Pakistan and elsewhere has further radicalised al-Shabaab and transformed it into a more effective guerrilla fighting force.

With the help of these foreign fighters al-Shabaab launched a fresh offensive in early May besieging the government of Mr Ahmed and carrying out at least one deadly suicide attack in which a senior minister was killed in the town of Beledweyne close to the border with Ethiopia.

Al-Shabaab’s growing confidence has been reflected in recent threats to launch attacks in neighbouring Kenya and Ethiopia, seen by the extremists as Western stooges. African governments and Western intelligence agencies take the threats seriously.

Despite the imposition of a UN arms embargo more than 16-years ago the Islamists remain well supplied with new weapons. Last month the African Union called for sanctions on nearby Eritrea which it accuses of helping fund and arm al-Shabaab.

Eritrea has repeatedly denied the accusations but the UN Security Council said yesterday that it was considering “what action to take” against Eritrea for its continued support of al-Shabaab.

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/africa/article6683148.ece>

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New York Daily News
July 10th 2009

Osama Bin Laden's Son, Omar, says Dad is Evil in New Memoir

BY James Gordon Meek
DAILY NEWS WASHINGTON BUREAU

OSAMA BIN LADEN'S son Omar first realized the depth of his father's evil when his beloved dogs were taken away and gassed in a chemical warfare experiment, he says in a new memoir.

Omar also confirms what U.S. officials have long believed - that his father was tipped off to a 1998 U.S. attempt to kill him.

He writes that Bin Laden got a secret communication and fled his Afghan camp two hours before cruise missiles struck it.

He does not identify the source of the tip, which the U.S. suspects was Pakistani intelligence.

Omar's book, "Growing Up Bin Laden," written with his mother, Najwa - the Al Qaeda leader's first wife - describes the ultimate dysfunctional family.

The Bin Ladens lived austere as their father staked his horrific claim as the world's most wanted man. His son eventually concluded Bin Laden hated his enemies more than he loved his family.

Omar, 28, describes weeping as a teenager when told that Al Qaeda needed his pets to conduct chemical warfare tests.

"After I learned the truth about the puppies, I turned even further away from my father," whose jihad led only to death, Omar writes in the book set for release by St. Martin's Press later this year.

It has been widely reported that Bin Laden's goons tested nerve agents at the Derunta camp in Afghanistan. In 2002, CNN obtained and showed video of dogs - fully grown - being gassed by visible toxic fumes.

Bin Laden's fourth son admits he knew in advance of plots against targets like the 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in East Africa, where 224 perished.

He called the 9/11 attacks "horrific." They occurred after he was told by his best friend - Al Qaeda operative Abu al-Haadi - that a "new mission" would be much bigger than the embassy bombings. Omar mourned al-Haadi's death in the resulting U.S. invasion of Afghanistan.

http://www.nydailynews.com/news/us_world/2009/07/10/2009-07-10_osama_bin_ladens_son_omar_says_dad_is_evil_in_new_memoir.html#ixzz0KshmpzJ3&D

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The Nation – Pakistan
10 July 2009

Al-Qaeda Leadership Resides in Fata: US

Washington (Online) - Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, has said the al-Qaeda leadership resides in the Federally-Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan and the United States is determined to defeat them.

"The top priority, with respect to that strategy, is to defeat al-Qaeda, whose leadership resides in the FATA - in the federal areas, the tribal areas - in Western Pakistan," Mullen said in his remarks at a luncheon held at the National Press Club in Washington on Thursday.

Referring to the recent developments in Pakistan and Afghanistan, Mullen said things are now moving in the right direction and the United States now needs to remain engaged in both the countries. "A year ago, not many people would have said that the Pakistani military could pull that (Swat) off, and yet they have made an awful lot of progress," he said.

“Then that kind of both effort and the cooperation that we’re trying to generate through our engagement in the long run, I think, with the development of the Afghan security forces and the Pakistani security forces, puts growing and continued pressure on that threat that I talked about earlier,” Mullen said. “It is not perfect. We still are working our way. We have ways to go in terms of those relationships, which are between Pakistan and Afghanistan. And that’s, I think, historically known, and obviously we’ve got a ways to go with our own relationships for those two countries. But I think we need to stay engaged, and overall, we’re moving in the right direction,” Mullen said.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Politics/10-Jul-2009/AlQaeda-leadership-resides-in-Fata-US>

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London Sunday Times
July 12, 2009

Stop Bombing Us: Osama Isn't Here, Says Pakistan

By Christina Lamb, in Karachi

Osama bin Laden and the top Al-Qaeda leadership are not in Pakistan, making US missile attacks against them futile, according to the country’s interior minister.

“If Osama was in Pakistan we would know, with all the thousands of troops we have sent into the tribal areas in recent months,” Rehman Malik told The Sunday Times. “If he and all these four or five top people were in our area they would have been caught, the way we are searching.”

He added: “According to our information Osama is in Afghanistan, probably Kunar, as most of the activities against Pakistan are being directed from Kunar.”

Washington does not directly acknowledge its missile attacks on Pakistani territory by unmanned drone aircraft but Pakistani officials say the US has carried out more than 40 attacks inside its borders in the past 10 months, killing hundreds of people.

CIA officials claim these attacks have been highly effective in disrupting Al-Qaeda’s ability to operate. However, Malik insists they are a waste of time because the Al-Qaeda leadership is on the other side of the border in eastern Afghanistan.

“They’re getting mid-level people not big fish,” he said. “And they are counterproductive because they are killing civilians and turning locals against our government. We try to win people’s hearts, then one drone attack drives them away. One attack alone last week killed 50 people.”

US officials in Islamabad say Pakistan’s government is being disingenuous, claiming to oppose the drone attacks to win domestic support, while being quite happy to benefit from them.

On Friday two missiles fired from a drone destroyed a communications centre in South Waziristan that belonged to Baitullah Mehsud, the leader of the Pakistani Taliban responsible for a recent string of suicide attacks in Pakistan.

Pakistan’s military admits it has been helped by intelligence from US surveillance flights over the tribal areas as well as the mountain region of Swat, where thousands of troops have been battling against another Taliban group which had taken over the area, forcing more than 2m people to flee.

Yesterday, the government told the refugees that it had cleared Taliban forces from most of Swat and they should return home.

Most refugees are reluctant, worried about continued hostilities and lack of food after fighting disrupted the harvest. Abdullah Yusufzai, a medical student who returned to the main city of Mingo-ra, said: “There is a real shortage of food and fighting is ongoing in the hills and the army is still blowing up houses of suspected militants.”

The army has not yet caught the leaders of the Swat Taliban though the interior minister claims that the main leader, Maulana Fazlullah, has been hit twice and is badly wounded. “I’m quite confident we’ll get them,” he said.

“Not only have we killed most of them but we’ve also destroyed their hideouts and arms depots,” he added. “We discovered long, wide tunnels they were using for weapons.”

According to Malik, the families of the militant leaders had been discovered hiding in the refugee camps. Fazlullah’s family was found in a camp in Haripur and taken into custody.

Troops will remain in Swat to prevent the Taliban from returning but the army's main focus is switching to the tribal areas of Waziristan, home to one of the area's fiercest tribes. South Waziristan is the headquarters of Mehsud, and the north is also a base of Jalaluddin Haqqani, an Afghan warlord with close links to Al-Qaeda believed to be responsible for the capture of an American soldier last week.

"Wherever these militants are, we'll get them out," said Malik. "The decision of the government is very firm - no mercy, no negotiation. They must surrender or die."

For all Washington's talk of an "AfPak strategy", he said, Pakistan's efforts to take on the Taliban their side of the border are being hampered by the failure of American and British troops in Afghanistan to monitor their side.

"Two years ago we were being criticised by the West for our ISI [Inter-Services Intelligence agency] helping the Taliban cross into Afghanistan," he said. "We have stopped the border crossing. Now we're finding the same situation - they're coming from the other side, bringing arms and fighters from Helmand into Baluchistan and into Waziristan. Should we say it's Afghan or western intelligence helping them?"

He argued that Nato troops in Afghanistan should have first sealed the border before stepping up the fighting. "If we can't seal it totally we should seal it as much as possible," he said. "If we can't have a wall, at least let's put up barbed wire."

"They should replicate what we've done," he added. "We have 1,000 checkpoints on our side - they have only 100, of which only 60 are working. It makes no sense to both be fighting either side of the border without stopping the militants crossing."

Karachi target

Political leaders have warned that Baitullah Mehsud, Pakistan's Taliban commander, is exploiting the political and refugee crisis to destabilise Karachi, the largest city in the country, writes Nicola Smith.

Thousands of Pashtun refugees loyal to Mehsud have fled to Karachi in the past few months to escape fighting in the northwest. More are expected to arrive from South Waziristan, on the border with Afghanistan.

This has led to fears that Pakistan's commercial capital, home to the banking industry and stock exchange, is becoming "Talibanised".

Syed Mustafa Kamal, mayor of Karachi, warned that Taliban insurgents are using their refugee status to establish strongholds.

Explaining that remittances were funding Taliban fighters, he said: "Karachi has become the revenue engine for the Taliban. If our enemies hit Karachi, then Pakistan's stability will be in question. Karachi is the fuel for Pakistan's economy."

The mayor claimed the city had 3,000 madrasahs (religious schools), which were closed to local students, and that the Taliban had begun to threaten women in short sleeves. Police said militants planned a terrorist strike.

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article6689741.ece>

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Washington Post

July 14, 2009

CIA Had Program to Kill Al-Qaeda Leaders

By Joby Warrick and Ben Pershing

Washington Post Staff Writers

The CIA ran a secret program for nearly eight years that aspired to kill top al-Qaeda leaders with specially trained assassins, but the agency declined to tell Congress because the initiative never came close to bringing Osama bin Laden and his deputies into U.S. cross hairs, U.S. intelligence and congressional officials said yesterday.

The plan to deploy teams of assassins to kill senior terrorists was legally authorized by the administration of George W. Bush, but it never became fully operational, according to sources briefed on the matter. The sources confirmed that then-Vice President Richard B. Cheney had urged the CIA to delay notifying Congress about the diplomatically sensitive plan -- a bid for secrecy that congressional Democrats now say thwarted proper oversight.

The program, which was terminated last month, touched off a political firestorm last week when several Democrats said the CIA had misled Congress by not disclosing its existence. CIA Director Leon E. Panetta gave lawmakers their first overview on June 24, within hours of learning about it, the officials said.

Some officials familiar with the program said certain elements of it were operational and should have been disclosed because they involved "significant resources and high risk," as one intelligence official described it. But others said the initiative never advanced beyond concepts and feasibility studies.

Intelligence officials also offered conflicting views of Cheney's alleged role. One official recalled that the vice president ordered only a temporary delay in notifying Congress, until the planning for an al-Qaeda hit crossed certain thresholds -- for example, a planned movement of operatives across international boundaries. "What is being labeled now as covert action never reached that point," said the official, who is familiar with intelligence committee briefings on the matter.

Three former intelligence officials who were close to the program said it operated within legal guidelines.

"Everything we did fell under the [authorizations] of both administrations, Democratic and Republican," said one former counterterrorism official with detailed knowledge of the program. "We would have been professionally negligent if we had not taken the actions we did. There was zero legal risk in my mind."

Panetta's revelation that he had terminated the program drew fresh criticism from Republican lawmakers yesterday.

"Why would you cancel it?" asked Sen. Christopher S. Bond (Mo.), the ranking Republican on the Senate intelligence committee. "If the CIA weren't trying to do something like this, we'd be asking 'Why not?'"

Neither the officials nor the CIA would elaborate on the program or explain how it differed from other, well-understood attempts to destroy al-Qaeda's senior leadership. But one U.S. intelligence official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said the program was small and intermittent and "exactly the kind of work people would expect the agency to be doing."

The CIA was authorized in 2001 to use lethal force against a small group of top al-Qaeda leaders. Although the agency's attacks on terrorist camps using pilotless aircraft is well documented, the newly disclosed program involved operatives "striking at two feet instead of 10,000 feet," an intelligence official said.

Senior White House officials said President Obama was briefed on Panetta's decision after returning to Washington early Sunday from an overseas trip. The officials said the White House was not consulted before Panetta canceled the program. They declined to elaborate.

On Sunday, key Democrats called for an investigation of whether the CIA broke the law by not briefing Congress. The claims of inappropriate secrecy also fueled calls for the Obama administration to begin a formal investigation of the CIA's counterterrorism policies during the Bush administration.

Some details about the CIA's newly disclosed program were first described in an article on the Wall Street Journal's Web site Sunday night. Yesterday, former and current intelligence officials characterized the initiative as a series of discrete attempts to locate and kill bin Laden and his top deputies as new leads surfaced about their possible whereabouts. Bin Laden is believed to be living in a rugged area along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

U.S. officials have said they think bin Laden is in Pakistan, so any attempt to kill him using ground forces probably would require an incursion into Pakistani territory.

One current intelligence official said the program was always small, but over time the agency considered different approaches that took advantage of evolving technical capabilities. Options were being actively weighed as recently as this spring, said the official, who added that Panetta learned of the program during a briefing that described new CIA proposals for going after bin Laden.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/07/13/AR2009071302589.html>

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Daily Telegraph
OPINION
July 10th, 2009

Britain must not Sacrifice Trident to Please Obama

As the *Telegraph* has reported, President Obama has called for a 30-nation summit in Washington next March to discuss nuclear non-proliferation. This follows a reckless preliminary agreement between Obama and Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev in Moscow to cut America's nuclear stockpile and delivery systems by up to a third, a deal which is stunningly good for the Russians but hugely damaging for America's interests.

In the wake of the Moscow summit, Gordon Brown has hinted he may include scrapping or weakening the Trident nuclear deterrent as part of a global agreement on non-proliferation. Eager to please the Obama White House, the Prime Minister has signaled his willingness to reduce Britain's 160 warheads as well as the number of nuclear submarines. This will be music to the ears of left-wing Labour backbenchers eager to see Trident obliterated.

This is all premised on the ludicrous notion that rogue states such as North Korea and Iran will pledge to end their nuclear weapons programmes, despite not a shred of evidence they will do so. It simply beggars belief that both Washington and London are seeking to reduce their defences at a time when key adversaries are seeking to acquire offensive nuclear capability, and are test-firing ballistic missiles left right and centre. The Iranians already possess weapons that can strike southern Europe, and it won't be long before they are capable of hitting the West too.

Deciding the future of Britain's defences should not be a faith-based exercise revolving around the false promises of Third world dictators like Kim Jong Il or Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Any agreement signed with them would not be worth the paper it's written on. Nor should British defence policy be dictated by the hugely naïve worldview of Barack Obama, whose vanity-driven vision of a nuclear-free world is a pipedream that bears no relation to current reality.

There is a clear British national interest in renewing and upgrading its nuclear deterrent, regardless of what the Obama administration decides to do in terms of cutting the US arsenal. Fortunately, Brown is unlikely to remain in power long enough to see through the further degrading of Britain's defences. A Conservative administration must make rebuilding British military power and force projection a top priority, and that includes strengthening the UK's long-term nuclear capability.

<http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/nilegardiner/100002860/britain-must-not-sacrifice-trident-to-please-obama/>

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Wall Street Journal

OPINION

13 July 2009

Why We Don't Want a Nuclear-Free World

By MELANIE KIRKPATRICK

"Nuclear weapons are used every day." So says former Defense Secretary James Schlesinger, speaking last month at his office in a wooded enclave of Maclean, Va. It's a serene setting for Doomsday talk, and Mr. Schlesinger's matter-of-fact tone belies the enormity of the concepts he's explaining -- concepts that were seemingly ignored in this week's Moscow summit between Presidents Barack Obama and Dmitry Medvedev.

We use nuclear weapons every day, Mr. Schlesinger goes on to explain, "to deter our potential foes and provide reassurance to the allies to whom we offer protection."

Mr. Obama likes to talk about his vision of a nuclear-free world, and in Moscow he and Mr. Medvedev signed an agreement setting targets for sweeping reductions in the world's largest nuclear arsenals. Reflecting on the hour I spent with Mr. Schlesinger, I can't help but think: Do we really want to do this?

For nuclear strategists, Mr. Schlesinger is Yoda, the master of their universe. In addition to being a former defense secretary (Nixon and Ford), he is a former energy secretary (Carter) and former director of central intelligence (Nixon). He has been studying the U.S. nuclear posture since the early 1960s, when he was at the RAND Corporation, a California think tank that often does research for the U.S. government. He's the expert whom Defense Secretary Robert Gates called on last year to lead an investigation into the Air Force's mishandling of nuclear weapons after nuclear-armed cruise missiles were mistakenly flown across the country on a B-52 and nuclear fuses were accidentally shipped to Taiwan. Most recently, he's vice chairman of a bipartisan congressional commission that in May issued an urgent warning about the need to maintain a strong U.S. deterrent.

But above all, Mr. Schlesinger is a nuclear realist. Are we heading toward a nuclear-free world anytime soon? He shoots back a one-word answer: "No." I keep silent, hoping he will go on. "We will need a strong deterrent," he finally says, "and that is measured at least in decades -- in my judgment, in fact, more or less in perpetuity. The

notion that we can abolish nuclear weapons reflects on a combination of American utopianism and American parochialism. . . . It's like the [1929] Kellogg-Briand Pact renouncing war as an instrument of national policy It's not based upon an understanding of reality."

In other words: Go ahead and wish for a nuclear-free world, but pray that you don't get what you wish for. A world without nukes would be even more dangerous than a world with them, Mr. Schlesinger argues.

"If, by some miracle, we were able to eliminate nuclear weapons," he says, "what we would have is a number of countries sitting around with breakout capabilities or rumors of breakout capabilities -- for intimidation purposes. . . . and finally, probably, a number of small clandestine stockpiles." This would make the U.S. more vulnerable.

Mr. Schlesinger makes the case for a strong U.S. deterrent. Yes, the Cold War has ended and, yes, while "we worry about Russia's nuclear posture to some degree, it is not just as prominent as it once was." The U.S. still needs to deter Russia, which has the largest nuclear capability of any potential adversary, and the Chinese, who have a modest (and growing) capability. The U.S. nuclear deterrent has no influence on North Korea or Iran, he says, or on nonstate actors. "They're not going to be deterred by the possibility of a nuclear response to actions that they might take," he says.

Mr. Schlesinger refers to the unanimous conclusion of the bipartisan Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States, which he co-led with Chairman William Perry. The commission "strongly" recommended that further discussions with the Russians on arms control are "desirable," he says, and that "we should proceed with negotiations on an extension of the START Treaty." That's what Mr. Obama set in motion in Moscow this week. The pact -- whose full name is the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty -- expires in December. But what's the hurry? Mr. Schlesinger warns about rushing to agree on cuts. "The treaty . . . can be extended for five years. And, if need be, I would extend it for five years."

There's another compelling reason for a strong U.S. deterrent: the U.S. nuclear umbrella, which protects more than 30 allies world-wide. "If we were only protecting the North American continent," he says, "we could do so with far fewer weapons than we have at present in the stockpile." But a principal aim of the U.S. nuclear deterrent is "to provide the necessary reassurance to our allies, both in Asia and in Europe." That includes "our new NATO allies such as Poland and the Baltic States," which, he notes dryly, continue to be concerned about their Russian neighbor. "Indeed, they inform us regularly that they understand the Russians far better than do we."

The congressional commission warned of a coming "tipping point" in proliferation, when more nations might decide to go nuclear if they were to lose confidence in the U.S. deterrent, or in Washington's will to use it. If U.S. allies lose confidence in Washington's ability to protect them, they'll kick off a new nuclear arms race.

That's a reason Mr. Schlesinger wants to bring Japan into the nuclear conversation. "One of the recommendations of the commission is that we start to have a dialogue with the Japanese about strategic capabilities in order both to help enlighten them and to provide reassurance that they will be protected by the U.S. nuclear umbrella. In the past, that has not been the case. Japan never was seriously threatened by Soviet capabilities and that the Soviets looked westward largely is a threat against Western Europe. But now that the Chinese forces have been growing into the many hundreds of weapons, we think that it's necessary to talk to the Japanese in the same way that we have talked to the Europeans over the years."

He reminds me of the comment of Japanese political leader Ichiro Ozawa, who said in 2002 that it would be "easy" for Japan to make nuclear warheads and that it had enough plutonium to make several thousand weapons. "When one contemplates a number like that," Mr. Schlesinger says, "one sees that a substantial role in nonproliferation has been the U.S. nuclear umbrella. Without that, some and perhaps a fair number of our allies would feel the necessity of having their own nuclear capabilities."

He worries about "contagion" in the Middle East, whereby countries will decide to go nuclear if Iran does. "We've long talked about Iran as a tipping point," he says, "in that it might induce Turkey, which has long been protected under NATO, Egypt [and] Saudi Arabia to respond in kind There has been talk about extending the nuclear umbrella to the Middle East in the event that the Iranians are successful in developing that capacity."

Mr. Schlesinger expresses concerns, too, about the safety and reliability of U.S. nuclear weapons, all of which are more than 20 years old. "I am worried about the reliability of the weapons . . . as time passes. Not this year, not next year, but as time passes and the stockpile ages." There is a worry, too, about the "intellectual infrastructure," he says, as Americans who know how to make nuclear weapons either retire or die. And he notes that the "physical infrastructure" is now "well over 60 years" old. Some of it "comes out of the Manhattan Project."

The U.S. is the only major nuclear power that is not modernizing its weapons. "The Russians have a shelf life for their weapons of about 10 years so they are continually replacing" them. The British and the French "stay up to date." And the Chinese and the Indians "continue to add to their stockpiles." But in the U.S., Congress won't even so much as fund R&D for the Reliable Replacement Warhead. "The RRW has become a toxic term on Capitol Hill," Mr. Schlesinger says. Give it a new name, he seems to be suggesting, and try again to get Congress to fund it. "We need to be much more vigorous about life-extension programs" for the weapons.

Finally, we chat about Mr. Schlesinger's nearly half-century as a nuclear strategist. Are we living in a world where the use of nuclear weapons is more likely than it was back then? "The likelihood of a nuclear exchange has substantially gone away," he says. That's the good news. "However, the likelihood of a nuclear terrorist attack on the United States" is greater.

During his RAND years, in the 1960s, Mr. Schlesinger recalls that "we were working on mitigating the possible effects [of a nuclear attack] through civil defense, which, may I say parenthetically, we should be working on now with respect, certainly, to the possibility of a terrorist weapon used against the United States. . . . We should have a much more rapid response capability. . . . We're not as well organized as we should be to respond."

Mr. Schlesinger sees another difference between now and when he started in this business: "Public interest in our strategic posture has faded over the decades," he says. "In the Cold War, it was a most prominent subject. Now, much of the public is barely interested in it. And that has been true of the Congress as well," creating what he delicately refers to as "something of a stalemate in expenditures."

He's raising the alarm. Congress, the administration and Americans ignore it at their peril.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124726489588925407.html>

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