



USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER

CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL

Maxwell AFB, Alabama

Issue No. 736, 19 August 2009

Articles & Other Documents:

[Russia to Revamp Air-Space Defenses by 2020 - Air Force chief](#)

[Germany, EU Increasingly Ready to Impose Tough New Sanctions on Iran](#)

[Russian Submarine Designer Certain of Bulava Missile Success](#)

[Iran Official Denies He made Nuclear Talks Statement](#)

[Russia Sends Another Strategic Nuclear Submarine for Scrapping](#)

[GAO: Missile Site Costs Likely To Rise](#)

[Missile's Future in Doubt](#)

[Militants have Sought Pakistan Nukes](#)

[S. Korea's First Rocket Set Up on Launch Pad](#)

[Islamic Rebels Gain Strength in the Sahara](#)

[S. Korean Launch Raises Questions](#)

[Pakistan Could Face Internal Threat to Nuclear Weapons, Experts Warn](#)

[North Korea Threatens Nuclear Strike over Joint Military Exercises](#)

[New Confirmation of Taliban Leader's Death](#)

[N. Korea Apparently Loosening Strategy](#)

[Central Asia Sounds Alarm on Islamic Radicalism](#)

[South Korea Rocket Launch Bound to Rile the North](#)

[Hackers Stole IDs For Attacks](#)

[Arab League Presses EU To Make Israel Expose Nukes](#)

[A Laser Defense Hit](#)

[Clerics' Call for Removal Challenges Iran Leader](#)

[Dr. Shaun Gregory's 'The Terrorist Threat to Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons'](#)

[Israel Envoy To U.S.: We Have No Plans To Strike Iran](#)

[The Hawkish Case for Nuclear Disarmament](#)

Welcome to the CPC Outreach Journal. As part of USAF Counterproliferation Center's mission to counter weapons of mass destruction through education and research, we're providing our government and civilian community a source for timely counterproliferation information. This information includes articles, papers and other documents addressing issues pertinent to US military response options for dealing with chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) threats and countermeasures. It's our hope this information resource will help enhance your counterproliferation issue awareness.

Established in 1998, the USAF/CPC provides education and research to present and future leaders of the Air Force, as well as to members of other branches of the armed services and Department of Defense. Our purpose is to help those agencies better prepare to counter the threat from weapons of mass destruction. Please feel free to visit our web site at <http://cpc.au.af.mil/> for in-depth information and specific points of contact. The following articles, papers or documents do not necessarily reflect official endorsement of the United States Air Force, Department of Defense, or other US government agencies. Reproduction for private use or commercial gain is subject to original copyright restrictions. All rights are reserved.

RIA Novosti
11 August 2009

Russia to Revamp Air-Space Defenses by 2020 - Air Force chief

MOSCOW, August 11 (RIA Novosti) - Russia will create a new generation of air and space defenses to counter any strikes against its territory by 2020 due to a potential foreign threat, the Air Force commander said on Tuesday.

"By 2030...foreign countries, particularly the United States, will be able to deliver coordinated high-precision strikes from air and space against any target on the whole territory of Russia," Col. Gen. Alexander Zelin said, referring to the potential for new hypersonic and space-based offensive weapons.

"That is why the main goal of the development of the Russian Air Force until 2020 is to create a new branch of the Armed Forces, which would form the core of the country's air and space defenses to provide a reliable deterrent during peacetime, and repel any military aggression with the use of conventional and nuclear arsenals in a time of war," the general said.

According to Zelin, all Russian Air Force units will be constantly combat-ready by 2020.

"We are planning to conduct a gradual transition of Air Force units to a constant combat-ready status...and accomplish this task by 2020," the commander said.

During this period, the Air Force will bring combat units to full strength, equip them with modernized and new weaponry, and significantly improve combat training of military pilots.

Zelin said under the new concept, air-space defense brigades will be created within Russia's Air Force, and they will be equipped with advanced S-400 and planned S-500 air defense systems.

"In line with the new air-space defense concept, we have already formed a number of brigades, which will be armed with S-400 and S-500 air defense systems," Zelin said at a news conference in Moscow.

The S-400 Triumf (SA-21 Growler) is designed to intercept and destroy airborne targets at a distance of up to 400 kilometers (250 miles), twice the range of the U.S. MIM-104 Patriot, and 2 1/2 times that of Russia's S-300PMU-2.

The system is also believed to be able to destroy stealth aircraft, cruise missiles and ballistic missiles, and is effective at ranges up to 3,500 kilometers (2,200 miles) and speeds up to 4.8 kilometers (3 miles) per second.

Russia's Defense Ministry considers the delivery of S-400 air defense missile systems to the Russian Armed Forces a priority, and wants the defense industry to increase the production of these systems despite the current economic crisis.

The fifth-generation S-500 air defense system, which is currently in the blueprint stage and is expected to be rolled out by 2012, would outperform the S-400 as well as the U.S. Patriot Advanced Capability-3 system.

"The S-500 system is being developed under a unique design...and will be capable of destroying hypersonic and ballistic targets," the general said.

Meanwhile, the Soviet-era MiG-31 Foxhound supersonic interceptor aircraft will most likely be used as part of the new air-space defense network, as was intended when it was designed.

"We are upgrading this system to be able to accomplish the same [air-space defense] tasks," Zelin said.

According to some sources, Russia has over 280 MiG-31 aircraft in active service and about 100 aircraft in reserve.

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20090811/155782307.html

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

RIA Novosti
14 August 2009

Russian Submarine Designer Certain of Bulava Missile Success

MOSCOW, August 14 (RIA Novosti) - Russia's troubled Bulava ballistic missile will be developed and put into service with the Navy, the general designer of the Rubin design bureau for marine engineering has said.

The missile, which is being developed by the Moscow-based Institute of Thermal Technology (MITT), has suffered six failures in 11 tests. The general director of the institute has resigned over the failures, seen as a setback in the development of Russia's nuclear deterrent.

Sergei Kovalyov, who helped design three generations of Russia's strategic submarines, said the testing of Bulava, which is the most advanced submarine-launched ballistic missile ever developed in Russia, is a very complex process and takes time and effort to succeed.

"Beyond any doubt, Bulava is a much more sophisticated missile [than the previous missiles]. Although we lag behind in the electronics, it uses far more sophisticated materials and components. Solid-fuel missiles are used around the world. The Topol [land-based missile] flies. I am convinced that Bulava will fly as well," Kovalyov said in an interview published by the Rossiiskaya Gazeta government daily on Thursday.

The Bulava (SS-NX-30) submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) carries up to 10 MIRV warheads and has an estimated range of over 8,000 kilometers (5,000 miles). The three-stage solid-propellant ballistic missile is designed for deployment on new Borey class nuclear-powered strategic submarines.

The Russian military expects the Bulava, along with Topol-M land-based ballistic missiles, to become the core of Russia's nuclear triad.

The expert dismissed criticism over serious problems in the Bulava missile testing process, saying the designers were forced to bypass required testing stages due to a lack of funds and the lack of necessary facilities.

"In Soviet times, during the first stage of trials, dummy missiles were fired from a floating launch pad in Balaklava [a town on the Crimean Peninsula, which now belongs to Ukraine] to test the underwater segment of the trajectory," Kovalyov said.

"After that, similar tests were conducted on board a re-equipped submarine. They were followed by a number of launches from a land-based launch pad in Nenoks in the Arkhangelsk region to test the flight range," he said.

In the case of the Bulava missile, "there were no conditions to carry out tests at a floating launch pad in Balaklava, and there was no opportunity to conduct ground-based tests of the missile either, because the funds needed to build launch pads and a new silo were not provided."

The expert also complained about the poor quality of missile components provided by a large number of sub-contractors, and the absence of military representatives at manufacturing plants to ensure quality control.

"Some of the failed launches were caused by faulty components, which the military reps would never allow to pass," Kovalyov said.

He also dismissed as "pure nonsense" media speculation that the U.S. was interfering with Bulava tests by using powerful radars or laser beams.

"No country in the world possesses such a capability," the designer said.

The Russian Defense Ministry said in July the Bulava tests could resume as early as in August.

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20090814/155810587.html

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

RIA Novosti
14 August 2009

Russia Sends Another Strategic Nuclear Submarine for Scrapping

MOSCOW, August 14 (RIA Novosti) - An official farewell ceremony for a strategic nuclear submarine from the Russian Northern Fleet was held on Friday at the Zvezdochka shipyard in northern Russia.

The K-496 Borisoglebsk, a Delta III class ballistic missile nuclear submarine, was decommissioned in December 2008 after over 30 years service. The operational lifetime of these submarines is estimated to be 20-25 years.

"The submarine's crew, Zvezdochka and Sevmash workers, Northern Fleet's active-duty personnel and veterans attended the farewell ceremony on August 14," the shipyard said in a statement.

The Borisoglebsk is known for its March 1993 collision with the Graling U.S. nuclear submarine, which had been tracking the Russian sub at the distance of 11-13 kilometers. The K-496 was subsequently sent for repairs to the Zvezdochka shipyard.

The Delta class submarines have formed the backbone of the Soviet and Russian strategic submarine fleet since their introduction in 1973. They carry nuclear ballistic missiles of the R-29 Vysota family.

Russia has signed cooperation agreements on the disposal of decommissioned nuclear submarines with the United States, Britain, Canada, Japan, Italy and Norway.

Russian Rosatom state nuclear corporation, the U.S. and Canada will finance the dismantling of the Borisoglebsk submarine at the Zvezdochka shipyard.

Zvezdochka is Russia's biggest shipyard for repairing and dismantling of nuclear-powered submarines. The shipyard has the capacity to dismantle up to four nuclear submarines per year.

During the dismantlement, spent nuclear fuel is removed from the submarine's reactors and sent into storage, the hull is cut into three sections, and the bow and stern sections are removed and destroyed. The reactor section is sealed and transferred into storage.

Russia has scrapped more than 200 out of 250 nuclear submarines built in the Soviet Union and pledged to dismantle the remaining outdated vessels by 2012.

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20090814/155812349.html

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

Moscow Times
August 17, 2009

Missile's Future in Doubt

The military may halt development of its accident-prone Bulava sea-based nuclear missiles and opt for another system if future tests fail to work successfully, Interfax reported Friday, citing industry sources.

Instead, the Sineva missile that has already entered service could be installed on new Borei-class submarines intended to carry the Bulava, Interfax reported.

“The Sineva, which was adopted in 2007, is the most probable alternative to the Bulava,” Interfax quoted a source in the rocket and space industry as saying. “This procedure will be expensive, but there is just no more acceptable option for such a scenario.”

<http://www.moscowtimes.ru/article/1010/42/380858.htm>

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

Yonhap News
August 17, 2009

S. Korea's First Rocket Set Up on Launch Pad

By Lee Joon-seung

SEOUL (Yonhap) -- S. Korea's first space rocket has been safely put onto its launch pad ahead of its historic launch scheduled for this week, the state-run aerospace institute said Monday.

Korea Aerospace Research Institute (KARI), responsible for the launch, said despite a light drizzle reported at the Naro Space Center 485km south of Seoul, engineers and launch coordinators moved the rocket from the assembly building to the pad without any complications.

It said the Korea Space Launch Vehicle-1 (KSLV-1) has been placed vertically on the launch pad at 16:15 (Seoul Time), with engineers to complete connecting the various fuel lines and system control cables to the rocket by 21:30.

Once all the cables are placed, a final "rehearsal" for the launch is planned for Tuesday to determine if the blastoff can take place on time. Wednesday's blastoff is expected to take place sometime between 16:40 and 18:20.

"The exact time of the rocket launch should be made at 14:00 on Tuesday, after experts have examined all conditions, including the weather at the Naro center," a ministry official said.

South Korea already notified both the International Civil Aviation Organization and the International Maritime Organization that the KSLV-1 will be launched Aug. 19, although it reserved a "window" until Aug. 26 in case of unforeseen delays.

The blastoff date was originally scheduled for July 30, but was pushed back to Aug. 11 after Russia said it could not conduct the critical fire test on time. It was again postponed earlier in the month following the discovery of an abnormal spike in revolution numbers in a support booster pump in the engine, which was found to be caused by a diagnostic glitch.

South Korea, which has no experience in launching a space rocket capable of carrying a satellite into orbit, has been working with Russia to build the KSLV-1. Russia's Khrunichev State Research and Production Space Center is responsible for building and testing the main first stage rocket.

The rocket, developed at a cost of 502.5 billion won (US\$405.5 million), stands 33m tall, has a diameter of 2.9m, weighs 140 tons and can generate 170 tons of thrust. The first stage liquid-fueled rocket was made in Russia, while the satellite and the smaller, second stage solid-fueled rocket were made domestically.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/techscience/2009/08/17/49/0601000000AEN20090817007300320F.HTML>

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

Washington Post
August 18, 2009

S. Korean Launch Raises Questions

By R. Jeffrey Smith and Stella Kim, Washington Post Staff Writers

South Korea on Wednesday plans to launch a satellite into space using technology capable, in theory, of eventually delivering nuclear warheads or other weapons of mass destruction.

A successful launch from an island off South Korea's southwestern coast will add that country to an elite club of nine nations that have demonstrated the capability to orbit a satellite and -- if they choose -- to conduct long-range missile strikes against an enemy. But it will probably not attract the same kind of international criticism heaped on North Korea when it recently attempted a similar launch.

Proliferation experts say the launch is problematic, even if South Korea, a close U.S. ally, says it is for scientific purposes.

Under U.S. pressure, South Korea agreed in 2001 to adhere to an international agreement limiting the range of its ballistic missiles. But it has since taken advantage of what many proliferation experts call a loophole exempting "national space programs" that typically involve identical technologies.

"From a nonproliferation purist point of view, it is of concern when any country, in good international standing or not, develops the kind of capability that could be transferred to a ballistic missile," said Greg Thielmann, a senior fellow at the Arms Control Association who formerly directed the strategic, proliferation and military affairs office at the State Department's intelligence bureau.

The space launch is occurring as South Korea expands its cruise missile programs, and as some officials there are calling for a renegotiation of the ballistic and cruise missile limits agreed to with Washington. "There is some concern" that South Korea might not be complying with the cruise missile limits, said Dennis C. Wilder, who served as a National Security Council official from 2005 until last January and is now at the Brookings Institution.

Getting Russia's Aid

Years ago, the U.S. government spurned South Korea's appeals for assistance under what a diplomatic official last week described as a long-standing policy of "not supporting new space launch vehicles" anywhere.

South Korea responded by spending an estimated \$200 million to obtain the assistance of Russia, whose ballistic missile technology has also directly or indirectly benefited North Korea, Brazil, Iran and Syria. Russia and South Korea have pledged to respect the Missile Technology Control Regime, a voluntary group of countries that limits transfers explicitly related to long-range ballistic or cruise missiles but welcomes cooperation on space programs.

According to South Korean officials, Washington subsequently intervened in 2006 with Russia, which is supplying the first stage of the rocket about to be launched, to try to limit the technology transfer and ensure that Moscow would monitor the technology's use.

The Obama administration has sought to reassure the South of Washington's commitment to its security in the wake of threatening rhetoric from North Korea; it has been mum about the imminent launch. None of the allied capitals that roundly denounced North Korea's April missile launch -- which it maintained was meant to orbit a satellite -- has registered complaints.

Japan had pressed the U.N. Security Council to censure North Korea. But Motosada Matano, a first secretary at the Japanese Embassy in Washington, said Tokyo hopes the South Korean launch "will be successful."

That hope emanates in part from the fact that South Korea's two-stage rocket is supposed to pass through Japanese airspace before orbiting a payload that officials say will be used for scientific purposes over the next two years. But the supportive rhetoric from Tokyo and elsewhere will disappoint officials in North Korea, who issued a warning last week that they "will closely watch" to see if Seoul's neighbors raise objections and demand similar U.N. sanctions.

'A Different Context'

"Their reaction and attitude towards South Korea's satellite launch will once again clearly prove whether the principle of equality exists or has collapsed," a spokesman for the North Korean Foreign Ministry told the country's official press agency.

Moon Tae-young, a deputy minister at South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, responded that any comparison between the two missile launches is "inappropriate." He noted that South Korea has pledged to abide by international norms governing the peaceful use of space and missile technology transfers, and has conducted its preparations transparently.

North Korea, in contrast, acted despite a 2006 order by the Security Council to refrain from ballistic-missile-related activities. It also has a nuclear arsenal that could effectively be used only with ballistic missiles, has shrouded its purported space program in secrecy, and has issued military threats against neighbors.

"It is a different context that North Korea operates in," said a U.S. official involved in proliferation policy, who requested anonymity in order to speak freely. The question is, "are they allies or friends, or people who have generally been belligerent?"

Such distinctions vex independent analysts such as Dennis M. Gormley, a senior fellow at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies. "This is a backdoor way of avoiding an agreement made in 2001" by Washington and Seoul to bar South Korea's development of long-range missiles that might heighten regional tensions, he said.

"We have a different way of looking at our friends and allies, but creating this differentiation in the end does not do us well. It creates the notion that we only have ground rules that apply in certain places," Gormley said.

Similarly, Henry Sokolski, executive director of the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center, said: "If we wink at this nuclear-capable rocket launch . . . how in the world can we object to North Korean and Iranian tests without looking like hypocrites?"

Relaxing a Policy

Sokolski says Washington has been slowly relaxing a missile nonproliferation policy that led to sanctions or other pressures against South Africa, Australia, Israel, India, Brazil and Argentina. Besides the five permanent members of the Security Council, only Japan, India, Israel and Iran have successfully launched satellites. North Korea's April launch did not loft a satellite, according to U.S. officials.

Several experts said the administration faces a delicate balancing act in trying to avoid further regional tensions in the face of unconstrained North Korean missile tests and South Korea's work on at least four cruise missiles, including one capable of reaching much of southern China and Japan as well as all of North Korea.

"To an extent, there is [an] element of competition against North Korea in terms of acquiring technical advancement," said Kim Seung-Jo, chairman of the Korean Society for Aeronautical and Astronautical Science in Seoul. "But we don't want to create undesirable misunderstanding about our motivation, because we gain nothing by that."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/08/17/AR2009081702913.html>

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

Times of London
August 18, 2009

North Korea Threatens Nuclear Strike over Joint Military Exercises

RICHARD LLOYD PARRY

After months of threats and military provocations, North Korea announced this morning the reopening of joint economic projects with South Korea. But any expectations of an improvement in relations with the isolated dictatorship were lowered when it threatened nuclear attack against South Korean and US forces undertaking a military exercise.

North Korea's state media announced that it will resume a range of reconciliation activities, which have been suspended over the past year in an atmosphere of increasing tension between the two Koreas. Pyongyang will relax border restrictions on travel to and from the Kaesong Industrial complex, where 40,000 North Koreans are employed by South Korean companies. It will also resume reunions between elderly people separated by the 1950-53 Korean War, which divided the peninsula.

It will restart tours to the North's Kumgang mountain holiday resort and the historic city of Kaesong, and allow South Korean visitors to visit country's holiest mountain, Mount Paektu in the north of the country. But within a few hours, North Korea was making announcements in a more familiar tone – one of violent indignation against South Korean and US forces in the South,

Its fury was provoked by an annual series of computer simulated exercises called Ulchi Freedom Guardian, conducted over ten days by the US and South Korea. The North routinely accuses the two allies of using the exercise as a pretext for preparing an invasion.

"Should the US and South Korea commit even the slightest military provocation infringing upon [North Korea's] sovereignty, it will mount a merciless and prompt annihilating strike at the aggressors with all offensive and defensive means including nuclear deterrent." the Korean Central News Agency reported.

But the familiar bellicosity does not quite cancel out the unexpectedly positive news about the joint projects which emerged after a visit to Pyongyang by Hyun Jung Eun, the chairwoman of Hyundai, the company which operates the joint projects.

Ms Hyun met personally with the North Korean leader, Kim Jong Il, and secured the release of a Hyundai worker who had been detained after allegedly being overheard criticising North Korea. It comes two weeks after Bill Clinton took home two American journalists who had been convicted of illegally crossing into North Korea from China.

The motivation for sudden gestures of co-operation is difficult to identify, especially after such an extended period of confrontation with the outside world. North Korean diplomacy has always been moody and unpredictable, and this may be a deliberate strategy to keep its antagonists on the back foot.

It may also be driven by money. The tours to Kumgang, a range of famously beautiful mountains, have alone brought in some \$410 million (£251 million) in revenues to the North Korean Government, excluding the value of the hotels and facilities created by Hyundai companies.

It was the South Korean Government which closed down the tours last summer after a middle-aged housewife who was on holiday in Kumgang was shot dead by a North Korean soldier after apparently wandering by accident into a restricted zone. Seoul would therefore have to give its approval to any resumption of the tours.

"We need concrete accords to be worked out through talks between the authorities of the two Koreas to implement this agreement," a spokesman for Seoul's Unification Ministry said. "The government will make active efforts to reach the accords between the authorities ... as early as possible."

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article6799617.ece>

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

Washington Post
August 18, 2009

N. Korea Apparently Loosening Strategy

By Blaine Harden, Washington Post Foreign Service

TOKYO, Aug. 17 -- In a shift from pugnacious confrontation to measured conciliation, North Korea appears to be recalibrating its relations with the United States, South Korea and the outside world.

The isolated communist state began the year by launching missiles and testing a nuclear bomb, but this month it has released two U.S. journalists, freed a South Korean worker and on Monday agreed to resume reunions of families divided by the North-South border. It also said it will restart a cross-border tourism business.

Leader Kim Jong Il, 67, who had a stroke a year ago and whose fitness to run the country has been widely questioned, has chosen to grant highly publicized audiences with two important outsiders.

He met for more than three hours this month with former president Bill Clinton, who flew to Pyongyang to retrieve the American journalists.

On Sunday, in a meeting that the South Korean government described as "positive," Kim held talks with the chairman of Hyundai Group, the South Korean conglomerate that is the largest investor in the North.

The official Korean Central News Agency said that the conversation with Hyun Jung-eun was "cordial" and that Kim "complied with all her requests."

"My luncheon meeting with Chairman Kim proceeded in a friendly atmosphere," Hyun said Monday upon returning to Seoul after a week in North Korea. "We exchanged views on the resumption of the joint tourism project . . . and other pending issues."

On Thursday, North Korea released a Hyundai employee whom it had detained in the spring on vague charges of political misbehavior.

The reasons behind North Korea's apparent softening in strategy are known only to Kim and his inner circle. But analysts in South Korea have speculated that much of North Korea's saber rattling this year was for internal consumption, as Kim began to prepare the country for a succession process that may hand power to his third son, Kim Jong Un, who is just 26.

"North Korea has put all its cards on the table and now it wants some kind of negotiations with the United States," said Koh Yu-hwan, a professor of North Korean studies at Dongguk University in Seoul.

The Obama administration has said that it is willing to have bilateral discussions with North Korea, but that it also wants Pyongyang to return to six-party talks focused on ridding the North of nuclear weapons.

Kim's government has said it will never return to those talks, which include the United States, South Korea, Japan, China and Russia.

But in another potentially conciliatory development, South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported Monday that Wu Dawei, China's senior nuclear envoy, was planning to go to North Korea to try to restart the six-party talks.

The North, meanwhile, is being squeezed by U.N. economic sanctions and by intense U.S. efforts to seal off the country from the world's banking system. The sanctions were toughened in the spring in reaction to the North's nuclear test.

Pyongyang announced Monday that it would relax rules on North-South border traffic and "energize" its joint industrial complex at Kaesong, where more than 100 South Korean companies employ about 40,000 North Korean workers.

The future of the complex, which injects desperately needed hard currency into the moribund North Korean economy, has been in jeopardy since early this year, when the North demanded a huge increase in rent and salaries.

A possible reason for North Korea's new flexibility in relations with South Korea is lack of food.

North Korea suffers from chronic food shortages, and U.N. food agencies have said that about 37 percent of the country's 23.5 million people will need aid this year.

Food-supply problems may have increased in recent weeks, as North Korean state television has reported that flooding damaged crops.

Earlier this year, the North severely restricted the ability of U.N. agencies to distribute food inside the country.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/08/16/AR2009081600275.html>

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

Reuters India

August 18, 2009

South Korea Rocket Launch Bound to Rile the North

By Jon Herskovitz

SEOUL (Reuters) - South Korea is counting down to its first space launch on Wednesday that will likely open the door to its nascent rocket program and rile neighbor North Korea, hit by U.N. sanctions after its own rocket launch in April.

South Korea, which has relied on other countries to launch its satellites, plans to send a domestically built satellite into orbit on its rocket Korea Space Launch Vehicle-1, also known as Naro-1, from its space center in the south of country.

The Naro-1 is 33 meters (108 ft) long and the two-stage rocket was built at a cost of 502.5 billion won (\$400 million), according to the South's Yonhap news agency.

It is supposed to launch a 100-kg (220.5-lb) satellite into orbit that will monitor the Earth's radiant energy. Lift-off is planned for 0740 GMT Wednesday at a site about 350 km (220 miles) south of Seoul.

South Korea has relied on Russia's help with the Naro-1, with its Khrunichev space production center building the first stage, providing technical assistance and conducting tests.

"If we complete the development of the first-stage engine, we will then have the power to launch on our own. This is a tedious task though," said Yoon Young-bin, an aerospace specialist at Seoul National University.

South Korea wants to build a rocket on its own by 2018 and send a probe to monitor the moon by 2025. It also wants to develop a commercial service to launch satellites.

But it lags far behind Japan, China, India, and to some extent North Korea, and is betting that after its first successful launch it can use its technical prowess to catch up quickly with its rivals.

South Korea's space agency tried to play down expectations for the launch, saying in a report that only about 30 percent of countries' first attempts to put a satellite into orbit succeed.

NORTH KOREA IS WATCHING

The South's satellite launch serves as a point of pride and irritation for North Korea, which in April shot off a long-range rocket and was hit by U.N. punishment because the move was widely seen as a disguised missile test that violated U.N. resolutions.

North Korea, whose economy is about 2 percent the size of the South's, has boasted about sending a satellite into orbit, circling the globe playing revolutionary songs, ahead of its richer southern neighbor.

U.S. and South Korean officials have said nothing was put into orbit.

North Korea chastised the United Nations for punishing it for the April launch and a Foreign Ministry spokesman said this month the state will be closely watching how the world body reacts to the South's.

Apart from North Korea, few doubt the South's launch will be anything but for its civilian space program. But the launch does raise questions about implications for regional security.

South Korea has an agreement with its U.S. military ally not to develop long-range missiles, which was reached to prevent an arms race in the economically vibrant North Asia region.

(Additional reporting by Christine Kim; Editing by Jonathan Hopfner and Nick Macfie)

<http://in.reuters.com/article/scienceNews/idINTRE57H0UA20090818?sp=true>

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

Jerusalem Post
August 16, 2009

Arab League Presses EU To Make Israel Expose Nukes

VIENNA (AP) – Arab states are lobbying the European Union for support in their drive to force Israel to open up its nuclear program to international perusal, documents made available to The Associated Press show.

In a letter addressed to Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt, Amr Moussa, secretary-general of the Arab League, urges Sweden to back an Arab resolution titled “Israel’s Nuclear Capabilities.”

The document is to be submitted for a vote at next month’s 150-nation general assembly of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Sweden currently holds the EU’s rotating presidency. Diplomats from EU member countries and from other nations accredited to the IAEA said on Thursday that the same letter was sent to the foreign ministers of the other 26 EU member countries.

The votes of the 27 members of the EU are important for both opponents and proponents of censuring Israel at the conference – a motion critical of the Jewish state was only narrowly defeated last year. That indicated growing support for the Arab initiative, particularly among developing countries.

General conference resolutions sponsored by the Arab League express concern about “Israeli nuclear capabilities” and ask the IAEA to help implement the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime on Israel.

A draft of the resolution prepared for next month’s conference that was attached to the letter to Bildt gives voice to those same concerns and demands.

But in a new twist, it welcomes “recent initiatives calling for a ‘nuclear weapons-free world’” – an allusion to US President Barack Obama’s April call to abolish nuclear weapons that appeared calculated to generate extra support for the anti-Israel resolution.

While the Americans are not expected to end their support for Israel at the weeklong conference, which opens on September 14, the phrase was expected to give a platform for US rivals such as Iran in their criticism of Washington’s backing of Israel.

“We are hopeful that your country would support the Arab draft resolution,” says the June 29 letter to Bildt. “Unfortunately,” Sweden was among the EU nations voting to block action on the document last year, Moussa wrote.

In Stockholm, Swedish Foreign Ministry spokesman Anders Jorle said on Thursday the Swedish EU presidency was preparing an answer on behalf of the European Union but no final stance had yet been decided.

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1249418604358&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>

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

New York Times
August 17, 2009

Clerics’ Call for Removal Challenges Iran Leader

By ROBERT F. WORTH and NAZILA FATHI

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — A group of Iranian clerics has issued an anonymous letter calling Iran’s supreme leader a dictator and demanding his removal, the latest and perhaps strongest rhetorical attack on him yet in the country’s post-election turmoil.

While the impact of the clerics’ letter, posted late Saturday on opposition Web sites, may have been diluted by the withholding of their signatures, two Iranian experts vouched for its authenticity. Its publication followed other unusual verbal attacks on the leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in recent days.

Last week a group of former lawmakers issued their own letter calling his qualifications into question. A day earlier, a member of the state body empowered to dismiss Ayatollah Khamenei called for an “emergency meeting” to address criticisms.

The letters do not pose any real threat to Ayatollah Khamenei, who retains the loyalty of the security services and most of the political elite. The clerical establishment is heavily dependent on him, and scarcely any member would dare challenge him openly.

Still, the verbal attacks illustrate the erosion of a powerful taboo. Long unquestioned, Ayatollah Khamenei's status as a neutral arbiter and Islamic figurehead have suffered in the weeks since he blessed the June 12 presidential election, which many Iranians believe was rigged. The harsh crackdown on street protests that followed has only deepened public anger with him. In recent days the phrase "death to Khamenei" has begun appearing in graffiti on Tehran walls, a phrase that would have been almost unimaginable not long ago.

In their 11-page letter, the clerics blamed Ayatollah Khamenei for the violence after the elections, in which dozens of people, and possibly many more, were killed.

They accused him of turning the Revolutionary Guards into "his own private guard, and the media into an instrument to defend and propagate him."

The clerics wrote that fear of Ayatollah Khamenei made it impossible for them to sign their names: "there is such a dictatorship that we, as defenders of religion who are also close to public officials, have to practice Taqieh," a reference to a Shiite practice of lying or concealment for expediency.

Initially, some Iran experts seemed skeptical about the letter's origins, but a prominent Iranian cleric and a former lawmaker said on Sunday that they had spoken to some of the authors and had no doubt the letter was genuine.

The cleric who said he had spoken to the authors said they number several dozen, and are mostly midranking figures from Qum, Isfahan and Mashhad, where Iran's major seminaries are located. The cleric — who spoke on condition of anonymity for the same reasons as the letter's authors — said he had tried unsuccessfully to persuade them to sign the letter.

"The pressure on clerics in Qum is much worse than the pressure on activists because the establishment is afraid that if they say anything they can turn the more traditional sectors of society against the regime," the cleric said.

As one indication, he noted that three senior clerics from Qum who have led Friday Prayer for years, but who signaled their support for the opposition movement, have been absent for several weeks.

The former lawmaker who said she had spoken to the authors, Fatemeh Haghighatjoo, said she found the letter significant because it gave reasons why Ayatollah Khamenei was no longer fit to rule.

"This letter is in fact pushing the movement one step ahead," said Ms. Haghighatjoo, now a visiting scholar at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. "This is a very sensitive issue because even criticizing the supreme leader was one of the red lines."

For its part, the government has sought to silence the opposition movement with a mass trial, which held its third session on Sunday.

Charges were read out against 28 men who protested after the election, the semiofficial Fars news agency reported. Fars said many read out apologies in court, asking the judge to show "Islamic clemency."

The news agency also emphasized one unusual theme: several defendants blamed opposition leaders or newspapers for persuading them to take to the streets and riot or protest.

One defendant, Mehrdad Aslan, singled out the opposition leader Mir Hussein Moussavi.

Those accusations would appear to suggest a deliberate message from the authorities. A number of conservative figures have called in recent days for the arrest of Mr. Moussavi, who announced the formation of a new political and social movement on Saturday. In the past trial sessions, some defendants made confessions in which they recanted their political beliefs and blamed former allies. Their friends and relatives said those statements were coerced through torture.

As the trial continued Sunday, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced his first six proposed cabinet appointments on state television, including two women and a new intelligence minister who is a loyalist with limited experience in security issues. All of the proposed ministers require approval by Parliament.

The proposed intelligence minister, a midranking cleric named Haidar Moslehi, is a former adviser to Mr. Ahmadinejad and had served as a representative of Ayatollah Khamenei in the paramilitary Basij organization.

Of the two female appointees, Fatemeh Ajorloo was named to run the Welfare Ministry and Dr. Marzieh Vahid Dastjerdi was named to run the Health Ministry. Dr. Vahid Dastjerdi is an obstetrician, a former Parliament member and a conservative who called for the segregation of hospitals by gender several years ago.

In a move likely to arouse anger among his critics in Parliament, Mr. Ahmadinejad proposed to retain the minister of industry, Ali Akbar Mehrabian, despite his fraud conviction for stealing the design of an earthquake safe room.

A number of lawmakers, including the speaker of Parliament, Ali Larijani, have issued strong warnings to Mr. Ahmadinejad to name the most qualified people. Last week Mohsen Rezai, an influential senior conservative who ran against Mr. Ahmadinejad for president, said that a government "whose sole quality is that it conforms with the ideas of the president" would be weak.

French Defendant at Embassy

PARIS — The French government announced Sunday that Clotilde Reiss, a French schoolteacher charged with espionage in Tehran and accused of a role in the demonstrations after the Iranian election, was released from prison into the custody of the French Embassy.

Ms. Reiss, 24, who has denied the charge, will be able to live there until the verdict.

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/17/world/middleeast/17iran.html?_r=1&ref=world

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

Ha'aretz -Israel
August 17, 2009

Israel Envoy To U.S.: We Have No Plans To Strike Iran

By Haaretz Service

Yesterday Israel's ambassador to the United States, Michael Oren, rejected recent assessments that Israel was planning an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities.

In an interview with Fareed Zakaria on CNN, Oren was asked about several reports suggesting that Israel was planning to strike Iran's facilities to prevent the Islamic Republic from obtaining nuclear weapons, although Iran insists its nuclear program has only peaceful goals. Zakaria said that John Bolton, the former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, had gone as far as to say that he believed Israel was likely to attack Iran by the end of this year.

"I don't think it's true. I think that we are far from even contemplating such things right now," Oren said in response. "The government of Israel has supported President [Barack] Obama in his approach to Iran - the engagement, the outreach to Iran."

Zakaria questioned Oren's statement, saying, "You're just saying this, Michael. It is well known that the government of Israel is deeply uncomfortable and nervous about the idea of engagement with Iran."

Oren dismissed his interviewer's comment, and said: "We were, but we were greatly comforted during the prime minister [Benjamin Netanyahu's] visit here [in the U.S.] in May, when the president told him, assured him, that there would be a serious reassessment of the policy before the end of the year. We are further reassured now that the end of the year deadline has been moved up to September. We are comforted by the fact that the administration in the aftermath of recent events in Iran has exhibited greater willingness to consider formulating a package of serious sanctions against Iran even now, in advance of the reassessment."

According to the envoy, Iran is also involved in stirring up tensions in the Palestinian arena. Oren said that Gaza was ruled by a terror organization supported by Iran, and that it was committed not only to the destruction of Israel, but also to undermining Fatah rule in the West Bank.

<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1107978.html>

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

Der Spiegel
17 August 2009

Germany, EU Increasingly Ready to Impose Tough New Sanctions on Iran

Berlin and Brussels are increasingly prepared to impose massive embargoes on Iran unless Tehran signals soon that it's ready to compromise in their nuclear dispute.

SPIEGEL has learned that Germany and the EU are considering stopping all exports of gasoline to Iran, which according to analysts' estimates depends on imports to cover 30 percent of its gasoline supplies, even though it exports crude oil.

Diplomats are also considering imposing further restrictions on shipping and air traffic to and from Iran, for example by banning Iranian ships or aircraft from docking or landing in the EU.

Major insurance companies that insure many freight shipments to and from Iran, such as Lloyd's, may be forced to cease such deals.

The German government will initially try to get these additional sanctions passed by the UN Security Council, where veto powers China and Russia have been hesitant on measures against Iran. But senior German diplomats have said the EU and the US would be prepared to impose "very strict sanctions" on their own.

Western nations including the US say Iran's nuclear program is aimed at making weapons. Iran says it is for power generation only and has refused to halt uranium enrichment despite three rounds of UN sanctions.

The US Congress is discussing draft legislation to impose sanctions on firms that supply Iran with gasoline. But the Americans and Europeans don't appear to have come up with joint lists of punitive measures yet.

If Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad remains unwilling to negotiate with the West, it is likely that a new round of sanctions could be launched during the UN General Assembly in New York at the end of September.

Leaders from the US, Russia, China, France, the United Kingdom and Germany will be discussing increasing the pressure on Iran during a G20 summit scheduled for the end of September in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,643193,00.html>

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

Reuters

August 18, 2009

Iran Official Denies He made Nuclear Talks Statement

By [Zahra Hosseinian](#)

TEHRAN (Reuters) - A senior Iranian official denied on Tuesday he had made any statement saying Tehran was ready for talks with the West on its disputed nuclear program, state television reported.

The same television network earlier said the official -- Iran's envoy to the U.N. nuclear watchdog, Ali Asghar Soltanieh -- "announced Iran's readiness to take part in any negotiations with the West based on mutual respect."

But it later quoted Soltanieh, Iran's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) representative, as saying he had not given any interviews or made any comments on the issue, without elaborating where the initial report came from.

"Iran's main policies are not changed and that is to pursue its peaceful nuclear activities within the framework of the IAEA," Soltanieh said.

U.S. President Barack Obama has given Iran until September to take up a six-power offer of talks on trade benefits if it shelves sensitive nuclear enrichment, or face harsher sanctions.

Iranian officials have made statements in the past about possible discussions on Tehran's nuclear activities based on mutual respect and without preconditions, while vowing not to back down in the row with the West.

But political turmoil in the Islamic state following its June election clouded prospects for dialogue.

"NATIONAL INTERESTS"

The West suspects Iran of seeking to build nuclear weapons. Iran, the world's fifth-largest oil exporter, says its program is aimed at peaceful power generation and has ruled out suspending or freezing its activities.

The poll and its turbulent aftermath have plunged Iran into its biggest internal crisis since the 1979 Islamic revolution, exposing deepening divisions within its ruling elite and also further straining relations with the West.

Obama's offer of engagement with Iran if it "unclenched its fist" ran into trouble after Iran accused the United States and other Western nations of inciting protests after the election, and Washington strongly condemned the government's crackdown.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has signaled a tougher approach toward the West, declaring last month that his next government "would bring down the global arrogance," a term used to refer to the United States and its allies.

Ahmadinejad's reformist opponents say the June vote was rigged to secure his re-election. He denies it.

The last time Iran held talks with major powers on its nuclear program was in July 2008 in Geneva. The six powers involved in the issue are: the United States, China, Russia, France, Germany and Britain.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSTRE57H19G20090818>

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

Washington Post

August 15, 2009

GAO: Missile Site Costs Likely To Rise

By Walter Pincus, Washington Post Staff Writer

The cost of building and operating the controversial U.S. ballistic missile sites in Europe could substantially exceed the original estimate of more than \$4 billion, the Government Accountability Office has told Congress.

The Defense Department's original estimate of \$837 million for constructing the sites in Poland and the Czech Republic "did not fully account for the cost of power and utilities at the sites, among other things," the GAO said in a report sent recently to Sens. Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawaii), chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Tim Johnson (D-N.D.), chairman of the panel's military construction subcommittee, and Robert C. Byrd (D-W.Va.).

That estimate, contained in the fiscal 2009 budget, was sent before accomplishing key design milestones and without a review by the Army Corps of Engineers, the GAO said. In May 2009, according to the report, an Army Corps of Engineers official said after reviewing design data that the construction estimate should be raised "to almost \$1.2 billion -- \$803 million for site in Poland . . . that would house the 10 interceptors and \$369 million for the Czech Republic site for the mid-course radar site."

The Corps of Engineers, after surveying the sites in the two countries, said more money would be needed for additional power generation, water and wastewater treatment facilities and for emergency support services.

In addition, the initial estimates did not include the need to construct support facilities such as housing for the Army personnel who would operate the Polish facility and the Air Force personnel at the Czech Republic radar site.

The GAO also said that the \$612 million originally allocated to operation of the sites over the five-year period covered by the budgeting was too low. For example, the report said, the estimate did not include funds for security at bases, a figure that depends on how much the host countries will pay for.

That decision awaits ratification of agreements with the hosts. But both the Polish and Czech parliaments are waiting for word from President Obama on whether he will go ahead with the sites as planned by the Bush administration.

The delay in ratification, which was expected last spring, will set back completion dates of construction for the radar sites in fall 2012 and spring 2013 for the interceptor site.

Also included in the original \$4 billion estimate was \$2.6 billion for development, testing, and procurement costs.

The GAO recommended that the Defense Department develop "accurate, realistic, and complete cost estimates for military construction and operations and support for ballistic missile defenses in Europe" and that the Army and Air Force reach agreement on how the facilities will be funded over the long term.

In written comments on the report, the Pentagon said that it is taking steps to address the issues it identified but that new estimates would not be ready in time for the fiscal year 2011 budget submission, as the report recommended.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/08/14/AR2009081403349.html>

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

UPI.com

August 15, 2009

Militants have Sought Pakistan Nukes

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan -- Islamic extremists bent on getting their hands on nuclear weapons have attacked Pakistani facilities three times in the past two years, an expert says.

Deutsche Welle reported Saturday that Shaun Gregory, who heads the Pakistan Security Research Unit at the University of Bradford in England, said in a recent article for the the anti-terrorism center at the U.S. Military Academy there were two terrorist attacks on Pakistan's nuclear weapons facilities in 2007 and one in 2008.

Taliban and al-Qaida, Gregory concludes, present a "real and present danger" for Pakistan's nuclear weapons, the German broadcaster said.

Deutsche Welle said last month the leader of a terror group in Afghanistan told the Arabic television network al-Jazeera al-Qaida would use Pakistan's nuclear weapons against the United States if it could obtain them.

The Pakistani military denies there's any danger that could happen and says no nuclear weapons were involved in the three incidents.

The U.S. military also says Pakistan is adequately protecting its nuclear weapons.

Still, experts say the threat isn't going away and vigilance is key.

"Probably the smallest problem is the danger of theft of an operational nuclear weapon," said Oliver Meier, international representative of the Arms Control Association. "What is worrying though is that components of nuclear material may be stolen or lost and that could also be used of course for a radiological attack."

Terror groups could work with individuals with access to Pakistan's nuclear secrets, he said.

http://www.upi.com/Top_News/2009/08/15/Militants-have-sought-Pakistan-nukes/UPI-46481250372436/

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

Wall Street Journal

August 15, 2009

Islamic Rebels Gain Strength in the Sahara

By YAROSLAV TROFIMOV

NOUAKCHOTT, Mauritania -- Al Qaeda-affiliated rebels are spreading far beyond their original battleground in Algeria and increasingly threatening Africa's Sahara belt, scaring away investors and tourists as they undercut the region's fragile economies.

Dozens of security personnel, as well as an American aid worker and a British tourist, were killed by militants in several attacks in the region this summer alone. The attacks -- which prompted this year's lucrative Paris-Dakar car race to relocate to South America -- have become more frequent and brazen. Recent hits occurred not just in the remote desert but also in Mali's tourist magnet Timbuktu and in the Mauritanian capital Nouakchott, where a suicide bomber attacked the French Embassy last weekend.

Though still dominated by the veterans of Algeria's civil war, this Saharan insurgency has grown deep local roots. Armed bands roaming the desert include hundreds of recruits from Mauritania, Mali and Niger -- vast and impoverished countries that straddle the Arab world and black West Africa, and that relied on the now-collapsed tourism industry as the key source of foreign exchange.

"What had started out as an Algerian problem is now engulfing Mali and Mauritania. They are the weak link," says Zakaria Ould Ahmed Salem, a specialist on political Islam at the University of Nouakchott.

An Islamist insurgency that cost 200,000 lives erupted in Algeria 18 years ago, after that country's secular regime annulled the second round of elections that the Islamists were poised to win. But it is only in the past few years, as Algerian security forces contained the violence at home, that the rebels -- who seek to create an Islamic state encompassing North Africa -- began mounting operations in neighboring Saharan countries that had been unscathed by international terrorism.

Underlining its wider ambitions, the main Algerian insurgent movement, the Salafist Group for Call and Combat, re-branded itself in 2007 as al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, or AQIM. Actual operational links between AQIM militants in the Sahara and traditional al Qaeda leadership in Pakistan or Afghanistan are tenuous, if they exist at all, Western officials say.

But the group's new name has made it easier to find money and recruits for the cause outside Algeria. "Someone like Bin Laden is considered a hero here," explains Mohamed Fall Ould Oumere, publisher of La Tribune news weekly in Nouakchott.

Government officials here say that, without outside help, Saharan countries have little chance of defeating AQIM. "This is a zone that can't be controlled. We don't know who's out there in the vast desert and what are they doing," says Mohamed Ould Rzeizim, who served until this week as Mauritania's minister of interior.

To finance its campaign, AQIM is smuggling Europe-bound cigarettes, drugs and illegal immigrants through the desert, Mauritanian and Western officials say. Depots of untaxed cigarettes, often brought in by ship from South America, dot the desert along Mauritania's porous northern borders.

An equally important source of revenue for AQIM is ransom money -- estimated at tens of millions of dollars -- paid by European governments for the freedom of European tourists kidnapped in separate attacks in Algeria, Tunisia, Mali and Niger. The hostages were usually transported across the Sahara to AQIM's bases in lawless northern Mali, where local officials helped negotiate the ransom collection and the tourists' release.

Mali's role as a sanctuary for AQIM has long infuriated Algeria and the U.S. The country appears to be taking a harder line after the Islamist rebels -- who refrained from killing their hostages in the past -- announced in June that they executed their British captive, Edwin Dyer.

A few days after the killing of Mr. Dyer, suspected militants also gunned down in Timbuktu the regional chief of Malian intelligence, Lt. Col. Lamina Ould Bou. The colonel, an ethnic Arab and former Islamist rebel, had played a crucial role in Mali's efforts against AQIM. According to Malian government accounts and al Qaeda Internet postings, armed clashes in the region in following weeks killed dozens of Malian troops and Islamist guerrillas.

"We are now engaged in a total struggle against al Qaeda," Mali's President Amadou Toumani Touré declared last month.

The Saharan rebels have so far targeted only foreigners and security forces, sparing civilian targets like restaurants and hotels. In Algeria, Pakistan and Iraq, by contrast, al Qaeda-affiliated militants showed no concern about killing large numbers of Muslim civilians.

"These youngsters are not yet ready to carry out blind attacks and to explode car bombs, Algerian-style. They have not yet completely broken with the Mauritanian society," says Mr. Moustafa, the AQIM expert. But, he cautions, bloodier attacks are likely to happen soon: "They have bad teachers. Their future targets will be Mauritanian."

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB125030117348933737.html#>

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

Global Security Newswire
August 17, 2009

Pakistan Could Face Internal Threat to Nuclear Weapons, Experts Warn

A U.S. analyst has said that terrorists are not likely to acquire a ready-to-use nuclear bomb in Pakistan, but that does not rule out the potentially devastating intersection of extremism and sensitive materials in the South Asian nation, Rediff.com reported last week (see *GSN*, Aug. 12).

Former CIA analyst Lisa Curtis acknowledged the recent report that militants over the last two years had conducted three attacks on Pakistani facilities that house nuclear-weapon operations. However, she said "there is little need to panic about this issue, at least in the short-term," noting Pakistani nuclear-security efforts that have reportedly received \$100 million in funding from the United States.

"Even before 9/11, the Pakistan army had an interest in safeguarding its nuclear facilities and therefore almost certainly has dispersed its nuclear assets throughout the country, making it nearly impossible to terrorists to gain access to an assembled nuclear weapon, especially through a single violent attack," according to Curtis, now a South Asia expert at the conservative Heritage Foundation.

"A more plausible scenario is one in which extremists infiltrate the nuclear establishment slowly over time and gain access to nuclear materials or technology that could help them eventually build a nuclear device themselves, or even a dirty bomb," Curtis said.

"The fact that elements of Pakistan's army and intelligence service retain links to extremists who they view as strategic assets in pursuing goals vis-à-vis Afghanistan and India opens the door for the unwelcome possibility of Pakistani officials with access to nuclear information developing sympathy for al-Qaeda goals," she added, pointing to Osama bin Laden's meetings with Pakistani officials in August 2001.

Washington should "have in place contingency strategies in the event the Pakistan military becomes less capable of protecting its nuclear assets," Curtis said (Aziz Haniffa, Rediff.com, Aug. 13).

Other observers also expressed concerns about the internal threat to the Pakistani nuclear complex.

Pakistani civilian professionals with access to highly enriched uranium do not undergo the same rigorous scrutiny as Pakistani military personnel involved in weapons operations, according to Asian News International.

"In Pakistan, the military provides generally respected security for the (mostly) HEU-based nuclear weapons material in their possession, and carefully vets the responsible personnel," an unidentified U.S. nonproliferation expert told *Congressional Quarterly* reporter Jeff Stein.

"However, there's a concern over security at the civilian plants where the HEU is actually produced. HEU is far easier to fashion into a nuclear weapon than is plutonium and easier to slip off the base," the expert said (Asian News International I/*New Kerala*, Aug. 16).

"There is quite a large danger that people inside Pakistan's nuclear complex might feel tempted to share material or knowledge that could be used to build nuclear weapons with terrorists," according to Oliver Meier of the Arms Control Association.

"Given the fact that there are between 7,000 and 8,000 scientists working in the nuclear weapons complex, and probably as far as we know about 70,000 people all in all working in the nuclear weapons complex, this is a very large number of people to keep screening," he said.

Pakistan expert Jochen Hippler said the Pakistani military is at significantly less risk than it was one to two decades ago of being infiltrated by Islamic militants, ANI reported yesterday. He argued, though, that "incompetence" and "corruption" in Islamabad does indeed put Pakistan's existing nuclear stockpiles at risk.

"The Taliban will never be able to conquer the country militarily. There is no way to do that. But on the other hand, the Pakistani state may just fail because of incompetence, lack of organization, corruption and because the Pakistani political elite are incredibly incompetent and greedy," Hippler said.

Hippler said that Western nations should consider shifting their attention from Afghanistan to Pakistan in order to support Islamabad's efforts to protect the country's nuclear materials.

"If we think Pakistan is more important than Afghanistan, which it definitely is because of nuclear weapons, because of 170 million people, because of millions of Pakistani migrants in Britain and Canada and elsewhere, then that has to have some repercussions for our Afghan strategy and for our stabilizing strategy for Pakistan," he said (Asian News International II/*New Kerala*, Aug. 16).

http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20090814_2732.php

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

Los Angeles Times
August 18, 2009

New Confirmation of Taliban Leader's Death

By Alex Rodriguez and Zulfiqar Ali
Reporting from Islamabad, Pakistan

The Taliban's top spokesman in Pakistan, captured this week by tribal fighters and security forces, has confirmed that the country's most wanted militant was killed recently by a U.S. missile strike, sources familiar with his interrogation said today.

Maulvi Umar was arrested in the remote Mohmand region along the Afghan border late Monday night with the help of a tribal militia, according to military sources who requested anonymity because they were not authorized to speak about the matter. Umar has served as the Taliban's primary spokesman and was a top deputy for militant chief Baitullah Mahsud.

While being questioned, Umar acknowledged that Mahsud was killed during a strike by an unmanned U.S. aircraft Aug. 5, according to intelligence sources.

Umar's confirmation appears to cement the belief held by U.S. and Pakistani authorities that Mahsud was dead. Taliban commanders deny that their leader was killed and have promised to air audio or video footage confirming he was alive, but have so far failed to do so.

Pakistani authorities have said they are sure Mahsud was killed, but have been trying to obtain forensic evidence to verify his death. The missile struck the home of Mahsud's father-in-law in South Waziristan, where the Taliban leader had been staying. His second wife was also killed in the attack.

Umar's capture marked the second arrest of a major Taliban figure within a 24-hour span. Earlier Monday, police said they arrested Taliban commander Qari Saifullah at a private hospital in Islamabad, where he was recovering from injuries suffered in a U.S. missile strike in Pakistan's tribal areas. Pakistani media have reported that Saifullah is linked to Al Qaeda and was another of Mahsud's top aides. He was arrested along with his younger brother, Zaid Akram, another Taliban deputy.

Umar was arrested while heading for the tribal Bajaur region, military sources said. Tribal militia fighters seized him and called a nearby Pakistani military checkpoint to report his capture.

The arrests of Umar and Saifullah come at a time when the Pakistani Taliban has been struggling to regroup in the wake of Mahsud's death. Factions within the Taliban have been at odds over the selection of Mahsud's successor, and Pakistani authorities have reported clashes breaking out between rival groups in the country's volatile tribal areas along the Afghan border.

However, recent suicide bombings and other attacks in northwest Pakistan suggest the Taliban resolved to keep up the pressure on Pakistani security forces. The Taliban claimed responsibility for a bomb blast Monday at a gas station near the city of Peshawar that killed seven people, including three children. Police said Taliban militants had planted the timed explosive in a pickup truck. When the truck pulled up to the gas station, the bomb exploded.

Suicide bomb blasts in the Swat Valley over the weekend killed seven people. The blasts occurred at the same time that President Obama's special envoy to Pakistan and Afghanistan, Richard Holbrooke, had been planning to visit the Swat Valley. Holbrooke's visit to Swat has been postponed, a delay authorities have attributed to bad weather.

After the bombings, Swat Taliban spokesman Muslim Khan called the Associated Press and said the bomb attacks were "a gift to Holbrooke. The Taliban cannot be eliminated."

Pakistani troops have regained control over much of the Swat Valley and the nearby districts of Dir and Buner, but soldiers continue to confront pockets of resistance, primarily in the region's heavily forested mountainsides.

Rodriguez reported from Islamabad and special correspondent Ali from Peshawar.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-pakistan-captured19-2009aug19.0.4261088.story>

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

New York Times
August 18, 2009

Central Asia Sounds Alarm on Islamic Radicalism

By CLIFFORD J. LEVY

KOSH-KORGON, Kyrgyzstan — The three men were locals who were said to have once crossed into nearby Afghanistan to wage war alongside the Taliban. They then returned, militant wayfarers apparently bent on inciting an Afghan-style insurgency in this tinderbox of a valley in Central Asia. By late June, they were holed up in a house here, stockpiling Kalashnikov rifles and watching pirated DVDs of martial arts movies.

Their exact plans will most likely never be known. The Kyrgyz security services tracked them down a week after their arrival and stormed the building, according to officials and village residents. All three men were killed, including one who blew himself up with a grenade after being wounded.

The security operation was one in a recent spate of firefights and attacks in Central Asia that have raised concerns that homegrown militants with experience in Afghanistan and Pakistan may be trying to move north to take on the region's brittle governments.

Senior officials and analysts across Central Asia have said in recent weeks that there is evidence that some Central Asians who were allied with the Taliban are retreating from Afghanistan because of pressure from the NATO mission there.

“Our belief is that because of the blow they suffered in Afghanistan, they left for a calmer place in Central Asia where they could resume operations — either to regroup or to even open up a new front,” said Kadyr K. Malikov, director of the Independent Analytical Research Center for Religion, Law and Politics in Bishkek, the Kyrgyz capital.

The officials and analysts said one result could be a strengthening of Islamic movements in Central Asia, especially here in the Fergana Valley, which includes parts of Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. All three countries are former Soviet republics with secular leaders and Muslim populations.

The valley has long been considered one of the region's most unstable areas because of poverty, militancy and loose borders. In 2005, in the Uzbek section of the valley, soldiers killed hundreds of people massing in an antigovernment protest.

Warnings about the spread of Islamic radicalism to Central Asia are not new, and the region's governments have long used this supposed threat to justify severe restrictions on political freedom. But if these recent signs point to a revival, it could pose difficulties for the United States and other NATO members, which have military bases throughout Central Asia that support operations in Afghanistan.

The Obama administration only recently persuaded the Kyrgyz president to allow the United States to remain at a major air base on the outskirts of Bishkek.

The fervency of some in the Fergana Valley was evident in Friday Prayer in a recent visit to a nearby mosque, whose imam was killed in 2006 by security forces after being accused of extremism. The mosque is a meeting place for followers of Hizb ut-Tahrir, a worldwide Islamist group that wants to establish a pan-national Muslim state, called a caliphate, albeit nonviolently.

“The people in Afghanistan who are helping the Americans have sold out their faith, sold out their consciences,” said Noomanjan Turgunov, 60, one of the worshippers.

“We support the Taliban because they are upholding and fighting for our faith — it is for Islam,” he said. “Only God knows for sure whether the Taliban will come here or not. But if you ask me, I think that they will come. Our president has sold out our faith for a little money from the Americans.”

The interview was interrupted by an undercover Kyrgyz security agent, who was apparently monitoring the mosque, in part because Hizb ut-Tahrir is outlawed in Kyrgyzstan. This month, several of its members were arrested in Osh, the largest Kyrgyz city in the Fergana Valley, and charged with promoting extremism.

Whatever the deeply held views of people here, some experts and opposition politicians in Central Asia said the danger of a renewed Islamic insurgency was being overstated. They pointed out that these countries are secular in character because of their decades in the Soviet Union.

They said that it would be all but impossible for the Taliban to gain a foothold here because they are rooted in an ethnic group, the Pashtuns, that differs from those in Central Asia. And they maintained that rampant corruption and drug trafficking (connected to Afghan opium) were far more grievous issues, saying that the authorities described bandits as terrorists in order to cover up the problem.

“In the valley, I would say that practically all the officers in the security services are involved in drug trafficking,” said Isa Omurkulov, a Kyrgyz opposition leader.

The most well-known radical group in the region is the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, which fought along with the Taliban in the 1990s but is believed to have been severely weakened by the NATO operation in Afghanistan.

Governments in Central Asia have linked some recent attacks to a revitalized Uzbek movement, but that is difficult to prove. Kyrgyz officials identified the leader of the group killed in Kosh-Korgon as Hasan Suleimanov, 32, who had been trained in Pakistan and was accused of having links to the Uzbek movement.

Russia also has military bases in Central Asia and is on the alert for any signs that Islamic extremism could spread into Muslim parts of Russia. In recent weeks, it reached a tentative agreement with the Kyrgyz government to establish a military base in the Fergana Valley, in part to help ensure stability here. The base would be Russia’s second major one in Kyrgyzstan.

The Kyrgyz president, Kurmanbek Bakiyev, began issuing louder alarms about radicalism just as he was seeking to rally the public around his re-election, which he won easily on July 23 in a campaign that was marred by widespread reports of electoral fraud and violence against the opposition.

Mr. Bakiyev said in an interview that he viewed requests for bases from the Americans and Russians more favorably recently because he was worried about the conflict in Afghanistan. He said the danger was not urgent but was growing.

He noted that eight extremists had been killed recently in the Kyrgyz part of the Fergana Valley, and many others were arrested.

“These are all people who received special training in Pakistan for terrorist activity,” Mr. Bakiyev said. “All their weapons and ammunition and documents demonstrate this.”

His claims could not be independently confirmed. And some people attending Friday Prayer at the mosque in the Fergana Valley expressed deep suspicions about recent security operations, suggesting that they were contrived to drum up backing for the government.

“It is all a show, and that is very clear,” said Dilshat Rumbaev, 33, a merchant. “We have no militants here, and we are not a threat.”

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/18/world/asia/18kyrgyz.html?_r=1&ref=world

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

Wall Street Journal
August 17, 2009

Hackers Stole IDs For Attacks

By Siobhan Gorman

WASHINGTON -- Russian hackers hijacked American identities and U.S. software tools and used them in an attack on Georgian government Web sites during the war between Russia and Georgia last year, according to new research to be released Monday by a nonprofit U.S. group.

In addition to refashioning common Microsoft Corp. software into a cyber-weapon, hackers collaborated on popular U.S.-based social-networking sites, including Twitter and Facebook Inc., to coordinate attacks on Georgian sites, the U.S. Cyber Consequences Unit found. While the cyberattacks on Georgia were examined shortly after the events last year, these U.S. connections weren't previously known.

The research shows how cyber-warfare has outpaced military and international agreements, which don't take into account the possibility of American resources and civilian technology being turned into weapons.

Identity theft, social networking, and modifying commercial software are all common means of attack, but combining them elevates the attack method to a new level, said Amit Yoran, a former cybersecurity chief at the Department of Homeland Security. "Each one of these things by itself is not all that new, but this combines them in ways we just haven't seen before," said Mr. Yoran, now CEO of computer-security company NetWitness Corp.

The five-day Russian-Georgian conflict in August 2008 left hundreds of people dead, crushed Georgia's army, and left two parts of its territory on the border with Russia -- Abkhazia and South Ossetia -- under Russian occupation.

The cyberattacks in August 2008 significantly disrupted Georgia's communications capabilities, disabling 20 Web sites for more than a week. Among the sites taken down last year were those of the Georgian president and defense minister, as well as the National Bank of Georgia and major news outlets.

Taking out communications systems at the onset of an attack is standard military practice, said John Bumgarner, chief technical officer at the USCCU and a former cyber-sleuth at the National Security Agency and the Central Intelligence Agency.

The USCCU assesses the economic and national-security implications of cybersecurity threats and briefs top U.S. officials, officials in key industries and international institutions.

"U.S. corporations and U.S. citizens need to understand that they can become pawns in a global cyberwar," said Mr. Bumgarner, who wrote the report.

The White House completed a review of cybersecurity policy in April. Among the issues Obama administration officials are now studying is how laws of war and international obligations need to be reworked to account for cyberattacks.

Homeland Security department spokeswoman Amy Kudwa said she couldn't comment on a report that she hadn't seen and hadn't been released yet.

Last year was the first time such cyberattacks were known to have coincided with a military campaign.

The Georgian attacks, according to the group's findings, were perpetrated by Russian criminal groups and had no clear link to the Russian government. However, the timing of the attacks, just hours after the Russian military incursion began, suggests the Russian government may have at least indirectly coordinated with the cyberattackers, Mr. Bumgarner's report concluded.

"Russian officials and the Russian military had nothing to do with the cyberattacks on the Georgian Web sites last year," said Yevgeniy Khorishko, a spokesman at the Russian Embassy in Washington.

The USCCU plans to release a nine-page report on the attacks to the public on Monday.

Mr. Bumgarner traced the attacks back to 10 Web sites registered in Russia and Turkey. Nine of the sites were registered using identification and credit-card information stolen from Americans; one site was registered with information stolen from a person in France.

The 10 sites were used to coordinate the "botnet" attacks, which harnessed the power of thousands of computers around the world to disable the Georgian government sites as well as those of large Georgian banks and media outlets. The botnet attack commandeered thousands of other computers and instructed them to try to access the target Web sites all at once, overwhelming them.

The Russian and Turkish computer servers used in the attacks had been previously used by cybercriminal organizations, according to the USCCU.

Early reports last year pinned the attacks on the cyber equivalent of the Russian mafia, known as the "Russian Business Network." Mr. Bumgarner said it wasn't possible to connect the attacks directly to that group. Security experts disagree on whether the group still exists.

Some of the software used to carry out the attacks was a modified version of Microsoft code commonly used by network administrators to test their computer systems, Mr. Bumgarner found. The code remains freely available on Microsoft's Web site, he said, declining to name it.

A Microsoft spokesman declined to comment on the finding because he hadn't seen the report.

Once the botnet attacks had launched, Mr. Bumgarner said, other would-be attackers noticed them and started to collaborate on various Web forums, including Twitter and Facebook.

Mr. Bumgarner used data-mining tools to review Facebook pages (which some people don't keep private) and Twitter for certain Russian words that indicated they were likely involved in the attack. He saw users on those sites and others swapping attack code and target lists, and encouraging others to join.

"It's a difficult problem to handle," said Facebook spokesman Barry Schnitt, because it is impossible to detect such collaboration without monitoring conversations. Facebook has mechanisms to verify user identities and users can report inappropriate activities on the site, he said, but it doesn't monitor communications of its users.

Twitter didn't respond to requests to comment.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB125046431841935299.html>

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

Wall Street Journal

OPINION

August 15, 2009

A Laser Defense Hit

Never has Ronald Reagan's dream of layered missile defenses—Star Wars, for short—been as politically out of favor as in the Age of Obama. Nor as close, at least technologically, to becoming realized.

The latest encouraging news came Thursday courtesy of the Missile Defense Agency. The Airborne Laser prototype aircraft this week found, tracked, engaged and simulated an intercept with a missile seconds after liftoff. It was the first time the Agency used an "instrumented" missile to confirm the laser works as expected. Next up this fall will be the first live attempt to bring down a ballistic missile, but this test confirms how far along this innovative effort has come.

Along with space-based weapons, the Airborne Laser is the next defense frontier. The modified Boeing 747 is supposed to send an intense beam of light over hundreds of miles to destroy missiles in the "boost phase," before they can release decoys and at a point in their trajectory when they would fall back down on enemy territory. It's a pioneering use of directed energy in defense. The laser complements the sea- and ground-based missile defenses that keep proving themselves in tests.

Yet the Obama Administration isn't buying it. Funding for missile defense was cut in the 2010 budget by some 15%—\$1.2 billion to \$1.6 billion, depending on how you calculate it. The number of ground-based interceptors was reduced. The Missile Defense Agency's budget for the Airborne Laser is to be slashed in half, and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates pulled the plug on buying a second plane. The Pentagon says the program will have three tries to hit a live missile, or be killed altogether.

As the Administration keeps defense spending growth flat, while breaking the bank on its domestic priorities, Secretary Gates has to make hard choices. But he might try harder to convince his boss at the White House that Star Wars isn't a sci-fi fantasy. That's what critics used to say about stealth aircraft as well.

With time, and inevitable setbacks, the technology to make layered missile defenses a reality is being proven to work. The Airborne Laser could be—unless prematurely vaporized—an important part of a system to protect America and its allies from rogue states and their nuclear missiles.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203863204574348822530004230.html>

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

Pakistan Daily

OPINION

August 15, 2009

Dr. Shaun Gregory's 'The Terrorist Threat to Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons'

Having served in the Pakistan military in sensitive posts for over three decades, at both the PAF bases where the purported terrorist attacks took place for over a decade and having interacted with Dr. Gregory in person and through e-mail, I have to say that I have not come across a more ludicrous piece of writing.

On one hand, he admits that Pakistan has been able to establish a 'robust' nuclear weapons security system while on the other, he shocks the reader by construing three blatant acts of terror to be attacks against Pakistan's amply secure nuclear weapons arsenal.

Both of the attacks in the vicinity of the PAF bases were on vehicles plying on main thoroughfares – the one at Sargodha was on a military bus carrying personnel on their way to work at Kirana and occurred on the main Sargodha – Faisalabad road. The attack near Kamra was on a school bus, which was travelling on the main road connecting Kamra with Attock. Since the school children were from PAF families, the bus conveying them was a military vehicle.

The point is that even if any nuclear facilities exist in Sargodha and Kamra (remember I served at both places for almost 12 years), both these attacks were typical terrorist attacks targeting human lives, and innocent ones at that too. He conveniently forgets to highlight that since these two attacks on the vehicles occurred on main inter-city roads, there was no breach of security whatsoever in both instances.

As to the third attack on the main entrance of the Pakistan Ordnance Factories in Wah, his assumption that this was targeting Pakistan nuclear weapons is proved incorrect by the following:

POF Wah is a civilian manned and run organization which comes under the Ministry of Defence. To think that the Pakistan military would select these factory premises for storing / assembling nuclear weapons is, to say the least, preposterous. The military which guards Pakistan's nuclear assets jealously would never permit any significant involvement of a civilian set-up in such sensitive matters. To prove my point further, I might add that to my knowledge, there is no active unit of the Pakistan Army deployed in or around Wah with even the security of the POF being delegated to elements of the paramilitary Defence Services Guards (DSGs). Could anyone believe that the Pakistan military would have entrusted the security of an installation of nuclear significance to elements of the ill-equipped and inadequately trained DSGs.

The attack in Wah also was aimed at causing maximum loss of human lives and did not target any facility or infrastructure whatsoever. Those who have travelled on the branch of the old Grand Trunk Road between Islamabad and Peshawar which traverses through POF Wah would know that the main worker's entrance to the POF is located just a few hundred yards away from this busy thoroughfare and approaching it does not require one to negotiate any significant security barriers.

While I concur with Dr. Gregory in that the extremist militants have an eye on Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, I would fault his conclusion, which is based on painting the above mentioned three acts of terrorism as attacks against Pakistan's nuclear weapons. This incorrect depiction of these three acts of terrorism has tainted an otherwise scholarly treatise with 'sensationalism' and has made the author's conclusions border on the ridiculous.

Tariq Mahmud Ashraf
Air Commodore (Retired)
Fujairah, UAE

<http://www.daily.pk/dr-shaun-gregorys-the-terrorist-threat-to-pakistans-nuclear-weapons-8974/>

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

Los Angeles Times
Opinion
August 16, 2009

The Hawkish Case for Nuclear Disarmament

By J. Peter Scoblic

Last week, peace activists around the world commemorated the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, arguing that nuclear weapons should be abolished so that such destruction will never be repeated. Their call for peace through disarmament has traditionally been a rallying cry of the left. In fact, the peace sign, that ultimate icon of 1960s war protests, is actually a rendering of the semaphoric symbols for the letters "N" and "D": "Nuclear Disarmament."

Conservatives, by contrast, have put their faith in "peace through strength," an ancient notion made fresh during the Cold War by Ronald Reagan. Which is why, in April, when President Obama outlined his vision of a world without nuclear weapons, the right reacted with incredulity, as if he had suggested pacifying the Taliban with a group hug. Newt Gingrich, for one, called the president's disarmament speech a "fantasy."

As the president moves to reduce the U.S. nuclear arsenal in concert with Russia's and implement new arms control measures, the allegedly foolish goal of disarmament has become an obvious target for hawks hoping to undermine the president's agenda. But if the abolition of nuclear weapons is a fantasy, it's one that ought to excite the country's hawks as much as its doves.

Traditionally, military power was measured in relative, not absolute, terms, meaning that your security was a function not of how many weapons you had, but of how many more you had than your enemy. The advent of nuclear weapons skewed that calculation. Because it would take only a few nuclear weapons to destroy a civilization, the atomic bomb became an equalizer for Davids confronting Goliath-sized enemies.

During the Cold War, one could argue that that dynamic helped the U.S. because Warsaw Pact forces outnumbered NATO's. But today, with the specter of rogue-state nuclear programs, it's more likely that we are the ones who would be deterred. For example, would we have waged Operation Desert Storm (let alone Operation Iraqi Freedom) if Saddam Hussein had been able to strike New York or Washington with a nuclear weapon? Probably not. Our half-trillion-dollar-a-year military can, in essence, be defanged by any dictator with a handful of A-bombs.

That is a remarkable waste of America's incredible conventional superiority. Our fleet of stealth fighters and bombers can establish air dominance in virtually any scenario, allowing us to obliterate an adversary's military infrastructure at will. At sea, our fleet is larger than the next 17 navies combined and includes 11 carrier battle groups that can project power around the globe. (By contrast, few of our potential adversaries field even a single carrier.) All in all, the U.S. accounts for just shy of half the world's defense spending, more than the next 45 nations combined. That's six times more than China, 10 times more than Russia and nearly 100 times more than Iran.

Yet despite potential flash points with nations such as Russia (over Georgia) or China (over Taiwan), it would be lunacy to engage in combat with either because of the risk of escalation to a nuclear conflict. Abolishing nuclear weapons would obviously not make conflict with those states a good idea, but it would dramatically increase American freedom of action in a crisis. That should make hawks, with their strong faith in the efficacy of American military power, very happy. Indeed, if anyone opposes disarmament, it should be our rivals.

American conservatives cling to our arsenal as though it gives us great sway over foreign countries. Yet when our conventional power has proved insufficient, nukes have done little to augment our influence abroad.

In the early years of the Cold War, when we had a nuclear monopoly, the Soviet Union reneged on promises made at Yalta and solidified its control over Eastern Europe. In 1949, despite our assistance to the Kuomintang, the Chinese Communists took over the mainland and formed the People's Republic, and the following year they stormed across the Yalu River and into the Korean War even though our atomic arsenal could have wiped out their cities as easily as Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Years later, the bomb did nothing to prevent, shorten or decide the Vietnam War. And, of course, nukes have provided no assistance in stabilizing Iraq or Afghanistan. Today, they threaten us far more than they protect us: Nuclear terrorism is the greatest threat we face, but our own nuclear arsenal cannot protect us from an attack.

Nuclear weapons do deter states from attacking us with nuclear weapons -- and few would suggest that we unilaterally give up our arsenal while others retain theirs. But, oddly, it is here that conservatives seem to doubt the utility of nuclear weapons more than their counterparts on the left. Whereas many liberals and realists believe that Iran could be deterred if it built the bomb, conservatives are far less sanguine, insisting that a nuclear Tehran is an unacceptable threat. They too understand that the U.S. arsenal is no guarantor of security, and that even a handful of nuclear weapons in enemy hands threatens to neuter our conventional advantage.

Of course, we're a long way from disarmament. But, today, beyond the small number of weapons each nuclear state can justify as a credible deterrent, every additional weapon represents only a greater risk -- of theft, accident or unauthorized use. Which is why the president's efforts to reduce the U.S. and Russian arsenals, ban nuclear testing and prevent the further production of fissile material are so valuable. Each of these measures will help protect the U.S., and if they bring us closer to disarmament, then that is a cause for celebration by hawks and doves alike.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/commentary/la-oe-scoblic16-2009aug16.0.6364046.story>

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

