



# **USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER**

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**Issue No. 762, 17 November 2009**

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RIA Novosti - Russian Information Agency  
14 November 2009

## **Turkey Offers to Store Uranium For Iran**

MOSCOW, November 14 (RIA Novosti) - Turkey has said it would be willing to store enriched uranium for use in Iranian atomic power plants, to ease international concerns over Iran's nuclear program.

Turkish Energy Minister Taner Yildiz said on Friday that no formal request from Iran has been received, but that if asked, Turkey "would not say no".

The issue was discussed on Thursday by International Atomic Energy Agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei and Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu.

Iran has so far rejected offers from nuclear powers Russia and France to store its low-enriched uranium, and is under international pressure to accept a compromise. The UN nuclear watchdog had suggested Turkey as a neutral country, which has built good relations with Iran in recent months.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan met in Tehran last month.

<http://en.rian.ru/world/20091114/156832911.html>

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Reuters  
November 15, 2009

## **France's Kouchner Pessimistic On Iran Uranium Deal**

JERUSALEM, Nov 15 (Reuters) - Iran appears set on rejecting a U.N.-drafted deal with world powers designed to deny it the means to produce nuclear weapons-grade uranium, French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner said in comments published on Sunday.

Under last month's proposal, Iran would export some 75 percent of its low-enriched uranium (LEU) abroad to be turned into fuel for a Tehran research reactor. Diplomats said Iran's counter-offer would leave it enough LEU to convert into bomb material, a non-starter for France and the United States.

Asked in an Israeli newspaper interview whether a final Iranian decision was pending, Kouchner said: "You could phrase it that way, but in effect the answer has almost been given already, and it is negative. That's a shame, a shame, a shame."

"We demanded to take a large quantity of (LEU) because we do not want them, while we are enriching uranium on their behalf, to continue themselves enriching uranium which could one day be used for military purposes," he told Yedioth Ahronoth daily.

Kouchner said none of the negotiation conferences between Iran and a group of six world powers had been especially successful. "We are waiting. This is not good, and very dangerous."

Iran denies seeking nuclear weapons, but the secrecy around its projects and its vituperation of Israel have stirred war fears.

Israel, assumed to have the region's only atomic arsenal, has hinted at possible preemptive strikes against its arch-foe.

"I don't want to comment on a possible Israeli attack. I don't want it to happen," said Kouchner, who visits Israel later this week. "That is a big danger and therefore talks and peacemaking must be embarked on speedily." (Writing by Dan Williams; Editing by Mark Trevelyan)

<http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSLF216762>

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Los Angeles Times  
November 16, 2009

## **U.S., Russia Agree On Dissatisfaction With Iran**

By Peter Nicholas and Borzou Daragahi

Reporting from Singapore, Shanghai and Beirut--Presenting a united front on Iran's nuclear energy program, President Obama and Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev warned Sunday that they were losing patience with Tehran and wouldn't wait much longer for it to accept a proposal to resolve the dispute.

After an hourlong meeting in Singapore on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, the two leaders expressed dissatisfaction with Iran's response to a proposal to ship its enriched uranium abroad to be refined further for use in an Iranian reactor to produce medical isotopes. In Geneva last month, Iran agreed to the deal in principle, but Western officials said Iranian leaders have since put up obstacles.

"Unfortunately, so far at least, Iran appears to have been unable to say yes to what everyone acknowledges is a creative and constructive approach," Obama said after meeting with Medvedev. Obama called the offer to Iran a fair one.

If Tehran refuses, Obama said, "the alternative would be an approach that would involve increasing pressure on Iran to meet its international obligations."

Medvedev, for his part, said, "We're still not satisfied with the pace of advancement of the process."

Obama moved on to China after the meeting in Singapore, and at a town hall-style meeting in Shanghai today he tried to reassure an audience of more than 400 students that Washington does not seek to continue the Cold War-era policy of containment. But he declared that the U.S. would speak out for human rights.

Students from eight Shanghai universities were present. They had to apply to attend and were interviewed and chosen by department heads.

Russian leaders other than Medvedev, notably Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, have been more averse to the prospect of increased economic sanctions. U.S. officials said Iran had till year-end to act.

The U.S. and Russia hope the threat of more sanctions will be enough to win agreement from Iran, and officials said the two leaders discussed a timetable for possible actions.

The U.S. and many other Western powers allege that Iran is seeking to develop nuclear weapons; the outsourcing proposal would diminish Iran's stockpile of uranium below the level needed to make a single nuclear bomb if it were further enriched. Iran insists its nuclear development program is for civilian energy purposes only.

On Sunday, Michael McFaul, a senior advisor to Obama, told reporters, "Both presidents said time is running out. And therefore we have to make preparations now to deal with the contingencies should the Iranians decide they don't want to be serious about the diplomatic path."

China is Iran's largest trading partner, and Obama will have his work cut out in persuading Beijing to apply more pressure on Tehran.

No Iranian official reacted immediately to the comments in Singapore. But the powerful speaker of Iran's parliament delivered some of his harshest words yet against Obama, who had taken office pledging to use diplomacy to overcome decades of hostility between Tehran and Washington and resolve the nuclear dispute.

Speaker Ali Larijani criticized the Obama administration for extending sanctions against the Islamic Republic for another year and seizing the U.S. assets of the Alavi Foundation, an Islamic charity allegedly linked to funding the Iranian nuclear program.

"One year after making hollow speeches and slogans, it is disgraceful that the attitude of the U.S. president was nothing different from that of his predecessor," Larijani said in an address Sunday to lawmakers, the official Islamic Republic News Agency reported.

"All these acts indicated that Obama's alleged changes were nothing more than a deceptive symbol for stupid politicians."

The U.S. and the International Atomic Energy Agency continue to await a definitive response to a proposal to transfer the bulk of Iran's nuclear fuel to Russia and France to be further refined and fitted into fuel rods for a medical reactor in Tehran. Larijani, who has described the nuclear fuel proposal as against Iran's interests, dismissed such a deal as "unacceptable."

French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner told an Israeli newspaper Sunday that his nation had grown pessimistic about the prospect of a deal. "In effect the answer has almost been given already, and it is negative," he told the daily Yediot Aharonot. "That's a shame, a shame, a shame."

He added, "We are waiting. This is not good, and very dangerous."

In their private meeting, Obama and Medvedev also discussed arms control between their nations, which are negotiating a nuclear arms reduction treaty that would succeed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty set to expire early next month.

White House officials said they expected to agree to keep the arms control arrangements in place until the two governments forge a new accord, which would need to be ratified by the U.S. Senate and the Russian Duma.

In recent weeks, Ellen Tauscher, U.S. undersecretary of State for arms control, has expressed disappointment over the Russian response to an offer put forward by the U.S. After Sunday's meeting, Obama expressed confidence the two nations would meet the Jan. 1 deadline "if we work hard and with a sense of urgency about it."

Obama and Medvedev joined other leaders of the 21-member Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting for discussions on a number of economic and social issues.

For Obama, the visit and meetings in Asia are part of a broader effort to reengage in a region that many believe the U.S. has neglected -- while China, an emerging global superpower, has significantly increased its influence.

Obama's agenda includes pressing for a shift in Asian economic policies to buy more American goods as well as laying out his vision on nuclear nonproliferation, the environment and human rights. So far, he hasn't come away with many tangible results.

In Singapore, he and other APEC leaders acknowledged that it was unlikely that next month's U.N. summit on climate change in Copenhagen would result in a binding accord, and as such agreed that they should instead focus on a more limited agreement.

Obama will be discussing climate change with his Chinese counterpart, Hu Jintao, in Beijing. And Obama is also expected to raise two other sensitive topics -- Chinese currency policy and human rights.

The U.S. was met with criticism of protectionism from Mexico and others in Singapore, and the APEC statement issued at the conclusion of the summit did not mention currency exchange policies, something that was resisted by Chinese officials.

In his main speech of the trip, delivered in Japan, Obama spoke about the importance of human rights, but he did not mention Tibet or other specifics related to China. The president did cite concerns about Myanmar's military regime, and during a meeting in Singapore with the smaller Assn. of Southeast Asian Nations, which includes Myanmar, White House officials said he reiterated his call for the release of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

The ASEAN group's joint statement, however, made no mention of Suu Kyi.

[http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-obama-asia16-2009nov16\\_0,5308552.story](http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-obama-asia16-2009nov16_0,5308552.story)

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Bloomberg.com

November 16, 2009

## **UN Atomic Inspectors Can't Rule Out More Secret Iranian Sites**

By Jonathan Tirone

Nov. 16 (Bloomberg) -- The United Nations atomic agency said it has lost confidence in Iran's truthfulness and can't be sure the country isn't hiding more nuclear facilities.

Iran's concealment of its Fordo plant, built into the side of a mountain and revealed in a Sept. 21 letter, "gives rise to questions about whether there were any other nuclear facilities in Iran which had not been declared," the International Atomic Energy Agency said today in a seven-page report.

Iran plans to start enriching uranium at Fordo in 2011, the Vienna-based IAEA said in the document.

World powers await Iran's decision on a UN-brokered proposal for the country to ship most of its stockpile of low-enriched uranium abroad in return for reactor-grade fuel. France, Russia and the U.S. have agreed to the plan, which would supply a Tehran research reactor that makes medical isotopes.

Acceptance of the plan would improve the prospects for further talks over Iran's nuclear program, which the U.S. and several major allies allege is cover for development of a weapon. Under the proposal, Iran would get back uranium in a more highly enriched form suitable for use in a reactor and not in an atomic bomb. Iran says it wants nuclear technology only for peaceful purposes, including the generation of electricity.

IAEA Director-General Mohamed ElBaradei, who retires after 12 years at the end of this month, said Sept. 30 that Iran was "on the wrong side of the law" when it failed to tell inspectors about the Fordo site. Elbaradei said Iran should have notified the agency on the day construction began. Iran argued it was obliged to inform the IAEA of the facility's existence some months before uranium enters the site, adding that the plant is 18 months away from operation.

'Disturbing Pattern'

Iran began building the plant seven years ago, the Associated Press reported Nov. 12, citing unidentified diplomats.

The Fordo facility, about 100 miles (160 kilometers) south of Tehran near the city of Qom, "continues a disturbing pattern of Iranian evasion," President Barack Obama said Sept. 26. Iran's government concealed atomic work from the IAEA for two decades until 2003.

Obama yesterday said time is short for Iran to accept the terms of the fuel-exchange deal, under which its low-enriched uranium could be shipped to Turkey.

"We are now running out of time," Obama said after meeting with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Singapore.

'Not Satisfied'

Medvedev said that Russia is "not satisfied" with the pace of negotiations on Iran's nuclear program and that "other options remain on the table."

Iran is ready for "constructive and honest" cooperation with Western countries on its nuclear technology, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said yesterday, according to a posting on the presidential Web site.

"Cooperating with Iran is in the interest of the West," Ahmadinejad said. "Their disapproval will make Iran more powerful and more advanced."

Iran installed 5 percent more centrifuges at its Natanz fuel enrichment facility since the IAEA's Aug. 28 report, when the agency said there were 8,308 machines ready to enrich uranium. The country raised its stockpile of low-enriched uranium to some 1,700 kilograms (3,748 pounds) from about 1,500 kilograms in August.

About 630 kilograms of low-enriched uranium could yield the 15 to 22 kilograms of weapons-grade uranium needed by an expert bomb-maker to craft a weapon, according to the London-based Verification Research, Training and Information Center, a non-governmental observer to the IAEA that is funded by European governments.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601103&sid=aRBU1vcNPljM>

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Seattle Pilot  
November 16, 2009

## **UN Says Once-Secret Iran Facility To Start In 2011**

By GEORGE JAHN AND NASSER KARIMI  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

VIENNA -- A senior official says the U.N nuclear agency believes Iran plans to start enriching uranium at a previously secret facility in 2011.

The official says the International Atomic Energy Agency also believes that the site near the holy city of Qom will be able to house 3,000 uranium-enriching centrifuges.

A senior international official familiar with a new IAEA report said Monday that number could allow Iran to enrich enough material to be able to arm one nuclear warhead a year. He spoke on condition of anonymity because of the restricted nature of the information.

Iran denies it wants a nuclear weapons program, saying it is enriching only to create nuclear fuel.

President Barack Obama turned up the pressure Sunday by saying Iran is running out of time to agree a U.N.-brokered plan to ship its low-enriched uranium out of the country to enrich it to a higher level. The West had hoped this plan would dramatically reduce its stockpile of enriched uranium and thwart any attempts to build nuclear weapons.

Iran's president warned the West not to pressure Tehran over its nuclear program, saying this only makes the country more determined to gain power by advancing its nuclear technology.

The comment by Mahmoud Ahmadinejad appeared to be a veiled threat that Iran would try to intensify its efforts to enrich uranium if nuclear negotiations with the international community fail.

"Cooperation with Iran in the nuclear field is in the interests of Westerners. Their opposition will make Iran more powerful and advanced," Ahmadinejad said in a statement posted late Sunday on the presidential Web site.

Iran sees its nuclear program as a matter of national pride and regional influence.

[http://www.seattlepi.com/national/1103ap\\_iran\\_nuclear.html](http://www.seattlepi.com/national/1103ap_iran_nuclear.html)

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Bangkok Post – Thailand

16 November 2009

## **Iran Taunts Nuclear 'Enemies' Amid New US Warning**

Agence France-Presse (AFP)

Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on Monday the "enemies" of his country's nuclear programme had been defeated ahead of the release of the latest UN report on the atomic drive.

International attention focused on the report as US President Barack Obama said "time is running out" for Iran to respond to a UN plan aiming to ease international fears that the Islamic Republic is working on a nuclear bomb.

Russia, meanwhile, announced that a controversial nuclear power plant it is building in Iran will not start operations by the end of 2009 as previously announced.

Ahmadinejad said the West would have to come to terms with Iran's nuclear progress, Iran's state broadcaster quoted the president as saying on his website. Related article: [US, Russia warn Iran over nuclear crisis](#)

"Enemies have politicised the nuclear issue using all of their abilities to try to make the Iranian nation surrender, but they have been defeated," Ahmadinejad said.

Nuclear cooperation with Iran is "beneficial to the Westerners because their opposition to it will make Iran stronger and more advanced," he added insisting that Iran's nuclear rights are "non-negotiable" and the research was being pursued "entirely under International Atomic Energy Agency supervision."

The IAEA sent its new report, having stated several times that Iran is not cooperating with UN Security Council demands, backed by three rounds of sanctions, that it halt uranium enrichment.

The new report will also give details of an October visit to an atomic site at Qom, that Iran had until recently kept secret.

Obama on Sunday won the strongest backing yet from Russian President Dmitry Medvedev over international frustration at Iran's failure to answer an offer to enrich uranium outside of Iran. Related article: [Russia delays Iran nuclear plant](#)

"Unfortunately, so far at least, Iran has been unable to say yes" to the proposal, Obama said after talks with Medvedev in Singapore. "We now are running out of time with respect to that approach."

Russia, which has the strongest ties with Tehran of any big power, has traditionally been unwilling to punish Iran with tough measures. But Medvedev said that Tehran risked sanctions if the crisis continued.

He said Moscow was "not completely happy about the pace" of efforts to resolve the crisis.

"In case we fail, the other options remain on the table, in order to move the process in a different direction," he said in a reference to new UN sanctions against Tehran.

Russia's Energy Minister Sergei Shmatko said that the Bushehr nuclear plant would not now be ready this year, Russian news agencies reported. Shmatko insisted the delay was technical and the project would still go forward.

Russia, like the United States, is a veto-wielding UN Security Council permanent member, and its support is crucial if US warnings of tough sanctions are to carry weight.

Obama described as "fair" the proposal offered to Iran, which would see Russia lead an international consortium helping Tehran to further enrich uranium for a research reactor.

Referring to sanctions, he said that "we will begin to discuss and prepare for these other pathways" as Tehran could not be counted on to fulfil its international obligations.

The West suspects Tehran is trying to develop a nuclear weapon under cover of its civilian nuclear energy programme. Iran vehemently denies the claims while Russia has said there is no evidence to support the accusations.

IAEA Secretary General Mohamed ElBaradei, whose mandate finishes this month, is to chair his last board of governor's meeting on November 26, during which the new report will be discussed.

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/world/160203/iran-taunts-nuclear-enemies-amid-new-us-warning>

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Tehran Times – Iran  
November 17, 2009

## **‘Iran Will Only Deliver Its Uranium After Receiving Nuclear Fuel’**

Tehran Times Political Desk

TEHRAN - Senior Presidential Advisor Parviz Davoudi has said that Iran will only deliver its 3.5 percent enriched uranium after it receives the 20 percent enriched uranium in exchange.

“The administration will consider national interests in the (nuclear) fuel exchange. If an agreement is reached in this regard, we will (only) deliver the 3.5 (percent enriched) fuel after we have received the 20 percent fuel,” he told IRNA on Monday.

Davoudi added that the West has come to understand that Iran will not back down from its stance on peaceful nuclear technology and has recognized its inalienable right to civilian nuclear technology.

“At one time, the Westerners could not tolerate even a few centrifuges. However, today, they are forced to accept Iran’s nuclear advances,” he said.

He also stated that Iran has not had a good experience in its dealings with France since France did not fulfill any of its commitments in previous agreements, and this has made Iran suspicious about Westerners.

The nuclear fuel talks between Iran, Russia, the United States, and France in Vienna concluded on October 21 without a final agreement, but IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei then presented a proposal for the four countries to study.

Under the draft deal, a large consignment of Iran’s enriched uranium would be shipped out of the country for processing into fuel rods with a purity of 20 percent, which would be used by a research reactor in Tehran that manufactures medical radioisotopes.

On October 23, diplomats from Russia, France, and the United States submitted their formal approvals of the deal to process Iran’s nuclear fuel abroad.

Several senior Iranian officials, including Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani, have strongly criticized the deal, saying it is neither logical nor legal.

Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee rapporteur Kazem Jalali had said earlier that the proposed exchange of uranium should be done in Iran.

Fuel exchange is out of the question

MP Hossein Ebrahimi of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee has said that the issue of a fuel exchange is totally out of the question.

“Iran is capable of enriching uranium to 20 percent,” he told the Mehr News Agency on Monday.

However, Iran is ready to buy the 20 percent enriched uranium from other countries, he added.

Ebrahimi also stated that the International Atomic Energy Agency should respond to Iran’s legal requests, not the Western powers.

Buying enriched uranium is Iran’s priority

MP Mohammad-Karim Abedi of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee has stated that Iran’s priority is buying uranium from other countries.

It will also agree to a fuel exchange under certain conditions, he told the Mehr News Agency on Monday.

The MP also stated that the IAEA has adopted a double standard on Iran’s nuclear issue mainly due to pressure by the United States.

Iran should not give up all its enriched uranium

MP Mohammad Karami-Rad stated that Iran will have no alternative besides enriching uranium to 20 percent purity itself if other countries do not want to sell the uranium to Iran.

The MP made the remarks in an interview with the Mehr News Agency on Monday.

Karami-Rad added that Iran is ready to buy uranium from any country in the framework of IAEA regulations.

But it is illogical to ask Iran to give up all its enriched uranium, he noted.

The MP also stated that it is unfortunate that Russia is affected by the West’s pressure and expressed hope that the Russians will act in a way that does not undermine Tehran-Moscow relations.

[http://www.tehrantimes.com/index\\_View.asp?code=208104](http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=208104)

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Dallas Morning News

November 17, 2009

## **Iran Already At Advanced Stage With Nuclear Facility, U.N. Agency Says**

George Jahn, The Associated Press

VIENNA – Iran's construction of a previously secret uranium enrichment site is at an advanced stage, with high-tech equipment in place at the fortified facility ahead of its 2011 start-up, the International Atomic Energy Agency said in a report Monday.

The revelation of the existence of the underground plant known as Fordo, near the holy city of Qom, has heightened concerns of other possible undeclared Iranian facilities that are not subject to IAEA oversight and therefore could be used for military purposes.

In Washington, State Department spokesman Ian Kelly said the IAEA report "underscores that Iran still refuses to comply fully with its international nuclear obligations."

The IAEA report offered no estimate of Fordo's capabilities, but a senior international official familiar with the U.N. agency's work in Iran said it appears designed to produce about a ton of enriched uranium a year. Experts say that would be enough for a nuclear warhead, but too little for Iran's civilian reactors that have yet to come online. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was citing confidential information.

The IAEA also said production at Iran's main enrichment site at Natanz – revealed by dissidents in 2002 and under IAEA monitoring – was stagnating. The report did not offer a reason. But the official suggested that experts who used to work at Natanz could be busy finishing the Fordo site.

As early as three years ago, Iran said immediate plans for Natanz were to install about 8,000 enriching centrifuges, and Monday's report suggested Tehran has reached that goal.



Iran insists it only wants to enrich uranium to make fuel to power nuclear reactors for civilian purposes, but fears that it could at some point use the technology to make weapons have resulted in three sets of U.N. Security Council sanctions meant to pressure Tehran into freezing the activity.

The restricted document also noted that "for well over a year," Iran has stonewalled IAEA efforts to investigate allegations it actively worked on a nuclear weapons program.

The report's main focus was Fordo, a highly fortified underground space. Iran told the IAEA only in September that it was building the facility, leading U.S., British and French leaders to denounce Tehran for keeping it secret. IAEA inspectors visited the plant last month, and the report noted "an advanced stage of construction."

The senior official said that as of Monday, Iran had not responded to a Nov. 6 IAEA letter seeking assurance that Iran was not actively planning to build any other nuclear facilities.

[http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/news/world/stories/DN-iran\\_17int.ART.State.Edition1.4b58b5c.html](http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/news/world/stories/DN-iran_17int.ART.State.Edition1.4b58b5c.html)

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New York Times  
November 17, 2009

## **Inspectors Fear Iran Is Hiding Nuclear Plants**

By David E. Sanger and William J. Broad

WASHINGTON — International inspectors who gained access to Iran's newly revealed underground nuclear enrichment plant voiced strong suspicions in a report on Monday that the country was concealing other atomic facilities.

The report was the first independent account of what was contained in the once secret plant, tunneled into the side of a mountain, and came as the Obama administration was expressing growing impatience with Iran's slow response in nuclear negotiations.

In unusually tough language, the International Atomic Energy Agency appeared highly skeptical that Iran would have built the enrichment plant without also constructing a variety of other facilities that would give it an alternative way to produce nuclear fuel if its main centers were bombed. So far, Iran has denied that it built other hidden sites in addition to the one deep underground on a military base about 12 miles north of the holy city of Qum. The inspectors were given access to the plant late last month and reported that they had found it in "an advanced state" of construction, but that no centrifuges — the fast-spinning machines needed to make nuclear fuel — had yet been installed.

The inspectors said Iran had "provided access to all areas of the facility" and planned to complete it by 2011. They also said they had been unable to interview its director and designers.

The inspectors confirmed American and European intelligence reports that the site had been built to house about 3,000 centrifuges, enough to produce enough material for one or two nuclear weapons a year. But that is too small to be useful in the production of fuel for civilian nuclear power, which is what Iran insists is the intended purpose of the site.

The plant's existence was revealed in September, as many as seven years after construction had begun.

The report comes just two days after President Obama, on a trip to Asia, said "we are running out of time" for Iran to sign on to a deal to ship part of its nuclear fuel out of the country. He said he would begin to plan for far more stringent economic sanctions against Tehran.

He was joined during that announcement by President Dmitri A. Medvedev of Russia, but Mr. Medvedev was vague about whether Russia was prepared to join in those sanctions. Mr. Obama was expected to take up the issue on Tuesday with President Hu Jintao of China, where Mr. Obama is on a state visit. China, like Russia, has historically resisted sanctions on Iran.

In its report, the agency said that Iran's belated "declaration of the new facility reduces the level of confidence in the absence of other nuclear facilities under construction, and gives rise to questions about whether there were any other nuclear facilities in Iran which had not been declared to the agency."

Ian C. Kelly, a spokesman for the State Department, said the report “underscores that Iran still refuses to comply fully with its international nuclear obligations.”

Both International Atomic Energy Agency officials and American and European diplomats and nuclear experts have argued that the existence of the hidden facility at Qum would make little sense unless there was a network of related covert facilities to feed it with raw nuclear fuel.

Iran denied that it had any other facilities it had failed to report to the agency. But in a letter to the nuclear inspectors, parts of which the report quoted, Iranian officials said they had been motivated to build the underground plant by “the threats of military attacks against Iran,” a reference to the belief that Israel, the United States or other Western powers might take military action against its main uranium enrichment plant at Natanz.

“The Natanz enrichment plant was among the targets threatened with military attacks,” the Iranian letter, dated Oct. 28, argued. It said that, as a result, Iran’s Atomic Energy Organization went to a little-known military authority identified as the “Passive Defense Organization” and asked for a “contingency enrichment plant.”

The mountainous site was turned over to the nuclear authorities, they said, “in the second half of 2007,” or roughly two years before Iran made its existence known. The Obama administration has said that Iran made the news public only after it had determined that the secrecy around the facility was pierced.

The date of late 2007 is significant because earlier that year Iran had unilaterally renounced an agreement it had signed with the agency to report on any planned nuclear facilities. The agency says that, in the case of Qum, Iran has violated that agreement, which the agency contends is still in force.

In fact, it appears that the construction of the underground plant began years earlier, and the inspectors’ report noted that satellite imagery shows that tunneling work began “between 2002 and 2004,” or shortly after the revelations about the existence of Natanz, which was also built underground. That construction paused in 2004, after the Iraq war began, the report indicated, but was “resumed in 2006.”

Why Iran then resumed the construction work is unclear. But in 2006, the Bush administration indicated a greater willingness to negotiate with Iran if it first complied with three United Nations Security Council resolutions to halt enrichment activity at Natanz. Iran refused, and Monday’s report indicated it now produced about 3,900 pounds of low-enriched uranium, enough for one to two weapons if it was further enriched.

Iran does not appear to be producing fuel as quickly as it could, and there are reports that it has run into technical difficulties.

But the fact that it is continuing to add to its stockpile has, in the words of one Obama administration official, “made us increasingly less interested” in the deal to ship part of Iran’s fuel out of the country temporarily, for processing into a form that could be used in a medical reactor in Tehran. The more uranium Iran produces, the official said, the less time it would take the country to replenish enough of its supplies to build a weapon, if it decided to take that step.

Because Iran continued to produce fuel despite the United Nations resolutions, President George W. Bush also authorized a covert program, focused on the Natanz site, that was intended to disrupt its enrichment activity, by attacking both the computer and electrical infrastructure around the plant.

It is not clear that any of those actions have proven successful. But the construction of an alternative plant, protected by the adjacent Iranian Revolutionary Guards base, appeared to some Western nuclear experts to constitute an Iranian effort to have a backup plan in case it lost use of the Natanz facility.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/17/world/middleeast/17nuke.html>

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Reuters

November 17, 2009

## **New Nuclear Site Shows Iran Immune To Threats**

By Mark Heinrich

VIENNA (Reuters) - Building a second uranium enrichment site is a "political message" from Iran that neither sanctions nor possible military attack will ever stop its nuclear programme, a senior Iranian official said on Tuesday.

In an interview, Ali Asghar Soltanieh, Iran's envoy to the U.N. nuclear watchdog, said the agency's concern Tehran may be hiding more nuclear work after it unveiled the enrichment site was wrong, unfair and a political judgment beyond its mandate.

He told Reuters Iran's disclosure in September of the Fordow site near Qom, being erected in case its much larger Natanz enrichment center was bombed, showed it was heeding transparency commitments to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In a report on Monday, the IAEA said Iran's acknowledgement of the Fordow plant's existence was long overdue and "reduces confidence" that Tehran was not concealing other sites -- possibly support facilities Fordow.

It said Iran had told the IAEA it started building the plant within a bunker beneath a mountain in the second half of 2007, but the IAEA had satellite pictures and intelligence evidence indicating construction work got under way as early as 2002.

Iran granted IAEA inspectors full access to the site on October 26-27 but not to the plant's director and original designers. The report said Iran had not yet convincingly ruled out the existence of more covert nuclear sites or plans for any.

Referring to the scepticism conveyed by the IAEA report, Soltanieh said: "We reject this 100 percent. This kind of judgment is absolutely wrong, unfair, political and beyond the (IAEA's) mandate. There is no justification for it."

"The new Fordow site ... is a clear political message that neither U.N. Security Council sanctions nor the threat of military attack can stop (our) enrichment under full scope safeguards of the IAEA," he said, speaking in English.

#### WEST MUST FACE REALITY

"So the advice to those (Western powers) who have so far not coped with this reality is to cope with this reality -- that this enrichment will continue at any price under IAEA (monitoring) for peaceful purposes," said Soltanieh.

"This is a contingency site, complementary to Natanz, in order that our enrichment process will never, ever be suspended. Its purpose is just to have a more protected, secure site."

The inspectors found the Fordow installation in "an advanced" state of construction. Iranian officials told them it would start up with 3,000 centrifuge machines in 2011.

Iran says the site, like Natanz, is meant to yield low-enriched fuel only for civilian power plants, of which it has none except for the almost completed Bushehr facility which is to be run with Russian enriched uranium.

Western nuclear analysts say Fordow's small capacity makes it unsuitable for any purpose but to enrich smaller quantities of uranium suitable for a bomb. Enrichment sites generally need tens of thousands of centrifuges to feed a nuclear power plant.

Western suspicions rest on Iran's history of nuclear secrecy and restricting IAEA inspections and access for investigations.

Iran has defied U.N. Security Council resolutions imposing sanctions over its refusal to suspend enrichment in exchange for trade benefits or grant unfettered IAEA inspections meant to verify it has no clandestine nuclear arms programme.

Western diplomats said in September that Iran owned up to the Fordow site only after learning that their spy services had detected it and an announcement by Western leaders was imminent.

At a G-20 summit in Pittsburgh on September 25, they condemned Iran's cloak of secrecy over the plant and said it heightened suspicions Iran's professed peaceful enrichment programme was a facade for efforts to "weaponize" the technology.

Soltanieh said Iran's subjection of the plant to IAEA monitoring made a mockery of the Western stance.

"(We have shown) that the reaction in Pittsburgh, these speculations and misjudgements and other avalanches of bombardments in the (Western) media were unjustified," he said.

Soltanieh said Iran had declared the site's existence "well in advance" of its legal obligations to the IAEA.

But IAEA chief Mohammed ElBaradei told reporters during a visit to Italy on Tuesday: "(Iran) should have declared it from the day they decided to do it. They were on the wrong side of the law by not complying with our regulations."

The IAEA toughened its transparency statute for member states in 1992 to require them to alert it of nuclear plans as soon as they are drafted. Iran accepted the new code a decade later, but renounced it in 2007 in protest at sanctions.

Iran re-adopted the previous rule mandating only 180 days' notice before nuclear materials are brought into a new facility.

(Additional reporting by Maurizio Troccoli in Italy; Editing by [Samia Nakhoul](#))

<http://www.reuters.com/article/newsOne/idUSTRE5AG41520091117?sp=true>

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Arizona Daily Star (Tucson)

November 15, 2009

## **US-Russia Nuclear-Arms Pact On Obama's Agenda In Asia**

By Jennifer Loven, Associated Press

SINGAPORE — A major pact within tantalizing reach, President Obama aims to nudge forward an arms-control deal in talks with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev.

The 21-nation Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum brought Obama to Singapore, but he is focusing on individual meetings today with Medvedev and with Indonesia's Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, president of the world's largest Muslim nation and Obama's home as a boy. The U.S.-Russia meeting takes place as the nations seek a successor to a Cold War-era agreement.

Obama planned another milestone: joining a larger meeting that includes the leader of military-ruled Myanmar. Obama is sure to face criticism at home, particularly from conservatives, for doing so — a significant step up in his administration's new policy of "pragmatic engagement" that is a shift from years of U.S. isolation and sanctions.

The leaders at the APEC forum also planned an informal breakfast meeting, organized by Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Mexican President Felipe Calderón, to discuss the progress of negotiations on a climate change agreement. The prime minister of Denmark, Lars Loekke Rasmussen, the chairman of next month's U.N. climate conference in Copenhagen, was expected to attend.

Obama and Medvedev agreed in April to reach a new nuclear arms reduction treaty to replace Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty I before it expires on Dec. 5. Later, in Moscow in July, they agreed further to cut the number of nuclear warheads each nation possesses to between 1,500 and 1,675 within seven years.

U.S. officials say that the two nations now have agreed on the broad outlines of a new treaty, with the expectation that the leaders will sign one during Obama's travels to Europe in early December to accept the Nobel Peace Prize.

Such an agreement would be a big feather in Obama's cap and bragging rights toward his promise to work toward a nuclear-free world, offering momentum for other arms-control and nonproliferation efforts. The president has been hinting at his optimism on the issue leading up to and during his Asia trip.

"We are already taking steps to bring down our nuclear stockpiles in cooperation with the Russian government," he said during a news conference in Japan with Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama.

A new treaty also could boost relations with Russia at a time that Washington is looking for its cooperation on issues including reining in Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Negotiators already have worked through a number of contentious issues and agreed on the number of warheads, the number of delivery systems and what will count as a delivery system, officials said.

The remaining issues in negotiations involve procedures for the two countries to verify that the other side is meeting the terms of the treaty, two administration officials said.

"I don't foresee a major problem that can't be resolved within the next four weeks," said Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association, which follows the negotiations. "Neither side wants to go without a new agreement for very long."

Ben Rhodes, deputy national security adviser to Obama, suggested it wasn't likely the leaders would announce a breakthrough but that holding talks at such a high level while they are going on could help bring one about.

The existing START treaty, signed by Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and President George H.W. Bush in 1991, led each country to cut its nuclear warheads by at least one-quarter, to about 6,000. In 2002, Presidents Vladimir Putin and George W. Bush signed the Treaty of Moscow, which specified further cuts to between 1,700 and 2,200 operationally deployed warheads by 2012.

The U.S. now has about 2,200 such warheads deployed, compared to about 2,800 for the Russians. Once a deal is signed, it still would need ratification by the Russian Duma and the U.S. Senate to take effect.

<http://www.azstarnet.com/allheadlines/317617>

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Washington Times  
November 15, 2009

## **U.S. Optimistic On Russian Arms Control Talks**

By Desmond Butler, Associated Press

The United States and Russia have agreed on the broad outlines of a deal to replace a major Cold-War era arms control agreement and are trying to work out remaining technical issues, U.S. officials say.

The U.S. administration hopes that President Obama and his Russian counterpart, Dmitry Medvedev, will be able to sign a replacement for the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty when Mr. Obama travels to Europe to accept his Nobel Peace Prize on Dec. 10.

A new agreement would be a step toward fulfilling the Obama administration's promise to work toward a nuclear-free world and could offer momentum for other arms control and nonproliferation goals. It would also illustrate improving relations with Russia at a time when Washington is looking for cooperation on issues including reining in Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Mr. Obama and Mr. Medvedev agreed at a Moscow summit in July to cut the number of nuclear warheads each possesses to between 1,500 and 1,675 within seven years as part of a broad new treaty. The existing Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, or START, which set a limit of 6,000 warheads each, expires Dec. 5.

The remaining issues in negotiations involve procedures for the two countries to verify that the other side is meeting the terms of the treaty, two administration officials said, speaking on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the negotiations. Both sides view verification procedures under the existing treaty as too onerous.

Late last month, Mr. Obama's national security adviser, James L. Jones, delivered in Moscow what the United States hoped would be a final package of proposals for the agreement.

Russian officials responded with a counterproposal, however, and negotiators in Geneva, led by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller and Kremlin arms negotiator Anatoly Antonov, are trying to resolve the final differences.

Both sides appear to be motivated to conclude a deal quickly. Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association, who is following the negotiations, said they have been difficult only because of the time pressure of the expiring treaty. Earlier negotiations during the Bush administration had stalled.

"I don't foresee a major problem that can't be resolved within the next four weeks," Mr. Kimball said. "Neither side wants to go without a new agreement for very long."

Negotiators already have worked through a number of contentious issues and agreed on the number of warheads, the number of delivery systems and what will count as a delivery system, officials said.

Russia had been pushing for an explicit link in the new treaty between offensive weapons and missile defense, but it is unlikely that the final deal will include any limitation on U.S. missile defense. A joint statement in July by Mr. Medvedev and Mr. Obama linked the two, but any missile defense restrictions would complicate the treaty's approval by the U.S. Senate.

The existing START treaty, signed by Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and President George H.W. Bush in 1991, led each country to cut its nuclear warheads by at least one-quarter, to about 6,000 each.

In 2002, then-Presidents Vladimir Putin and George W. Bush signed the Treaty of Moscow, which specified further cuts to between 1,700 and 2,200 operationally deployed warheads by 2012.

Even if negotiators conclude a deal by the expiration of the existing START treaty, the new treaty will not take effect until the Russian Duma and the U.S. Senate have ratified it, which could take months. For the interval, Sen. Richard G. Lugar, Indiana Republican, who supports a new treaty, has introduced legislation that would give Mr. Obama authority to allow Russian inspectors at U.S. facilities.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/nov/15/us-optimistic-on-russian-arms-control-talks/>

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Khaleej Times – U.A.E.

15 November 2009

## **US, Russia See Deal On Missile Cuts By Year-End**

Agence France-Presse (AFP)

SINGAPORE - The leaders of Russia and the United States said Sunday they were on target to agree by the end of the year the text of a new treaty setting out major cuts in their nuclear weapons arsenals.

But a senior White House adviser warned there was not time for the successor to the 1991 START agreement to be ratified by December 5 when the old treaty elapses, meaning a temporary bridging deal would be needed.

“I expect that we can have a final text of the agreement by December,” Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said after talks with his US counterpart Barack Obama on the sidelines of an Asia-Pacific summit in Singapore.

Obama said: “Our goal continues to be to complete the negotiations and to be able to sign a deal before the end of the year.

“I’m confident that if we work hard and with a sense of urgency about it that we should be able to get that done.”

Medvedev said there were “technical” issues that needed to be resolved on the agreement, which will take over from the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) that was signed just before the collapse of the Soviet Union.

“We agreed to give an extra dynamic to these talks to find solutions to outstanding questions,” Medvedev said after the conclusion of the two-day Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in Singapore.

“In some cases these are technical questions, in other cases these are questions which demand political decisions.”

Russian officials have insisted the treaty must establish a link between missile defence systems and strategic arms and have also expressed concern about the number of “carriers” that can deliver nuclear warheads.

Russia also does not want the new treaty to require US inspections of its mobile ground-base intercontinental ballistic missiles — as was the case under START — saying this is unfair as the US does not possess such systems.

US and Russian experts have been holding almost non-stop closed door talks in Geneva to agree on every detail of the new document.

White House advisor Mike McFaul said that while an agreement was expected in December, it could not be ratified by the legislatures in both countries by December 5 when START expires.

“What I do know for sure is that we will not have a ratified treaty in place by December 5. It still has to go through the US Senate and the Russian Duma,” he told reporters.

“What is for sure is that we do need a bridging agreement,” he said, adding this was being worked on in the talks in parallel to discussions on the main treaty.

During a visit by Obama to Moscow earlier this year, the two presidents called for a reduction in the number of nuclear warheads in the Russian and US strategic arsenals to between 1,500 and 1,675 within seven years.

[http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?col=&section=international&xfile=data/international/2009/November/international\\_November918.xml](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?col=&section=international&xfile=data/international/2009/November/international_November918.xml)

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

17 November 2009

## **Lavrov Hopes Russia, U.S. To Sign New Nuclear Arms Deal By Dec. 5**

A new nuclear arms reduction treaty between Russia and the United States may yet be signed by December 5, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Tuesday.

"There is a firm agreement between the [Russian and U.S.] presidents to do everything possible at the Geneva negotiations and sign a new treaty by the date of expiry of the current treaty," Lavrov said, adding that ratification of the deal would take some time.

Moscow and Washington are negotiating a replacement for the current Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I), the basis for Russian-U.S. strategic nuclear disarmament, which expires on December 5.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev expressed the hope on Sunday that it would be possible to sign a new deal in December.

"We, indeed, devoted most of the time to discussing a treaty on the reduction of offensive armaments and recognized the need to provide additional impetus to these negotiations," Medvedev said after talks with his U.S. counterpart Barack Obama at the summit of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) member states in Singapore.

The chief of the Russian General Staff said earlier that the ongoing talks between Russia and the U.S. had thrown up differences on inspection and verification procedures.

An outline of the new pact was agreed during the Russian and U.S. presidents' bilateral summit in Moscow in July and includes cutting their countries' nuclear arsenals to 1,500-1,675 operational warheads and delivery vehicles to 500-1,000.

START I commits the parties to reducing their nuclear warheads to 6,000 and their delivery vehicles to 1,600 each. In 2002, a follow-up strategic arms reduction agreement was concluded in Moscow. The document, known as the Moscow Treaty, envisioned cuts to 1,700-2,200 warheads by December 2012.

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20091117/156873901.html>

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Yonhap News – South Korea  
16 November 2009

## **N. Korea Unwilling To Give Up Nuclear Ambition: Former U.S. Diplomat**

By Tony Chang

SEOUL, Nov. 16 (Yonhap) -- North Korea does not have any intention of abandoning its nuclear ambitions in the near future, a former senior U.S. diplomat said Monday, forecasting that an upcoming meeting between Washington and Pyongyang will do little to resolve stalled multilateral denuclearization talks.

David Straub, associate director of the Korean Studies Program at the Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center at Stanford University, said at a seminar in Seoul that the U.S. representative for North Korea policy will basically "convey a short and simple message" to the country's leaders during his visit.

North Korea has hinted at a possible return to the six-party talks, which also involve South Korea, China, Japan and Russia, contingent on its bilateral talks with the U.S.

State Department spokesman Ian Kelly recently announced that Stephen Bosworth will go to Pyongyang between "the end of this month or the beginning of December" to woo the North back to the six-party talks.

Straub, a former U.S. diplomat and one-time head of the Korea desk at the State Department, recently accompanied former U.S. President Bill Clinton on a trip to Pyongyang to negotiate the release of two U.S. journalists.

The message, according to Straub, is that the U.S. is "prepared to strike a deal with North Korea to end its nuclear program in exchange for normalized relations ... a peace regime and provision of economic assistance."

Straub, however, predicted that the North will not accept the offer, saying that North Koreans will not seriously consider giving up their nuclear weapons and the U.S. is unlikely to fall for Pyongyang's "salami tactic" of dividing its denuclearization process into a multitude of bargaining chips and demanding incentives for each of them.

"What does this mean? It probably means a long stalemate. I see no indication that North Korea, in the foreseeable future, is prepared to give up its nuclear weapons programs on terms that the U.S. will find politically acceptable."

He also predicted that the current U.S. government won't consider any military option on North Korea.

"I don't anticipate war. The Obama administration is smart enough to realize that a military option is not a practical thing because of the security of our South Korean ally," he said, adding that any option resulting in a disaster for South Korea will result in a "political disaster" for any U.S. president.

Straub also predicted that South Korea may play an increasingly important role in shaping the outcome of the denuclearization talks.

"There is no country in the world that spends more time, resources and worries more about North Korea than South Korea," Straub said, noting that Seoul's role is expected to increase even more, "in part because the gap with North Korea is going to continue to grow."

"The U.S. governments, now and in the future, will pay very very close attention to the attitudes of South Korea, because South Korea is very important. And increasingly China will too."

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2009/11/16/32/0401000000AEN20091116006400315F.HTML>

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Thaindian News – Thailand

November 14, 2009

## **‘US Has No Specific Concern About Nuclear Proliferation From Pakistan’**

Washington, Nov.14 (ANI): The US State Department has said it has no specific concern about nuclear proliferation from Pakistan.

“We don’t have any specific concerns about proliferation per se specifically from Pakistan. We feel confident that the command and control of nuclear weapons in Pakistan secure,” The News quoted spokesman Ian Kelly, as saying.

The statement came hours after reports were flashed in the media about China providing weapons-grade uranium, sufficient for making two atomic bombs, to Pakistan in 1982.

The transfer of nuclear fuel was ‘part of a broad-ranging, secret nuclear deal approved years earlier by Mao Zedong and Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto that culminated in an exceptional, deliberate act of proliferation by a nuclear power,’ a US newspaper had reported.

The United States maintains that had information about illegal nuke transfers between Pakistan and China, but has never raised the issue in public.

The issue is expected to come up for discussion during President Barack Obama’s maiden Beijing visit next week. (ANI)

[http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/south-asia/us-has-no-specific-concern-about-nuclear-proliferation-from-pakistan\\_100274630.html](http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/south-asia/us-has-no-specific-concern-about-nuclear-proliferation-from-pakistan_100274630.html)

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Xinhua News - China

15 November 2009

## **Pakistan's Nuclear Assets Safe and Sound: PM**

ISLAMABAD, Nov. 15 (Xinhua) -- Pakistani Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani said Sunday that the country's nuclear assets are in safe hands and no body including the United States can have access to them.



Speaking to reporters at the eastern Pakistani city of Multan, Gilani said that Pakistan's defence is in strong hands as the country's army is highly professional with complete sense of responsibility to defend the borders.

To a question, Gilani said that no time frame can be given regarding completion of the ongoing military operation in South Waziristan but will be completed well before the expectations of the people.

He said that there is no military operation going on in the southwestern Pakistani province of Balochistan and the government is determined to resolve the problems of the people of the province through political means.

The prime minister said that the government has finalized a comprehensive package in consultation with all stakeholders for removing grievances of Balochistan and its rapid development that would be announced shortly.

To another question, Gilani said that he had asked U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to take Pakistan into confidence while reviewing its Afghan policy. He said that the U.S. national security Advisor James Jones visited Islamabad to discuss future U.S. Afghan policy and include Pakistan's input in it.

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-11/15/content\\_12463474.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-11/15/content_12463474.htm)

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

OPINION

16 November 2009

## **New Russian-U.S. Arms Reduction Treaty Hampered By Differences**

MOSCOW. (RIA Novosti military commentator Ilya Kramnik) - Russia and the United States cannot agree on a new strategic arms reduction treaty to replace the START-1, which will expire on December 5, 2009.

The problems concern control of mobile missile systems, cuts in delivery vehicles, and a connection between the new treaty and limits on the deployment of ballistic missile defense systems.

The START-1 treaty signed in 1991 stipulated the size of mobile missile systems' deployment areas and the number of basing stations for rail missile systems. It also limited the number of missile systems that can be simultaneously deployed outside their deployment sites, and the duration of such deployment.

The liquidation procedures stipulated for mobile missiles are stricter than for silo-based missiles. In particular, mobile missiles must be liquidated together with their delivery vehicles, whereas the cuts for silo- and submarine-launched missiles stipulate only the liquidation of silos and submarines.

Topol is the only mobile intercontinental ballistic missile on combat duty in Russia. The United States decided in the early 1990s that submarine-launched Trident II missiles could replace its land-based mobile systems.

When the silo-based group of missiles was cut in Russia, the focus was shifted to the Topol missiles. The role of mobile systems increased when the Topol-M system was introduced and the RS-24 Yars MIRVed missile, which is heavier than Topol-M and can carry up to ten independently targetable warheads, was created.

Given the current trends, land-based mobile missiles will constitute the bulk of Russia's Strategic Missile Force in the next 20 years. Russia might also deploy new rail missile systems.

In this situation, limits put on the deployment areas and movement of mobile systems will deprive Russia's Strategic Missile Force of its main advantage - mobility, which ensures a degree of safety in case of a first strike. However, the survival of silo-based missiles in a first strike is not assured either, given the growing precision of reentry vehicles.

The U.S. strategic nuclear might is based on the naval element of the nuclear triad, in particular its 14 Ohio-class nuclear submarines armed with 336 Trident II missiles, each with eight individually targeted warheads. It would be useless to try to limit the deployment areas and movement of submarines, because such a limitation cannot be effectively verified.

Another bone of contention is the number of delivery vehicles. Russia has proposed cutting them to 500, whereas the United States sets the limit at 1,000. This explains the big difference in the proposed limitations, between 500 and 1,100 delivery vehicles and 1,500-1,675 nuclear warheads.

The issue of delivery vehicles is closely connected to the "upload potential," which is the number of warheads for cruise missiles carried by heavy bombers that can be stored for potential deployment in a dangerous period. The more delivery vehicles a side's strategic nuclear forces have, the larger the upload potential, which makes strategic arms reductions senseless.

And lastly, the main problem of the new reduction treaty is a connection between strategic nuclear weapons and ballistic missile defense (ABM) systems. Russia insists that the ABM systems should be curtailed, whereas the United States is only prepared to recognize a connection between strategic offensive arms and ballistic defense systems in the preamble to the new treaty.

Unless the sides agree on this issue, the new treaty will be a useless document suiting neither side. This will not please the United States, the economically stronger partner. At present Russia plans to supply 30 new missiles to its strategic nuclear forces annually and may step up the process. If necessary, Russia will be able to maintain its nuclear forces at standards guaranteeing unacceptable damage to the aggressor, irrespective of the ABM systems.

If the sides do not sign the new treaty, or if the treaty does not limit the deployment of ABM systems, this will actually restart a nuclear missile race, even if at a lower level than in the 1950s through 1980s.

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

<http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20091116/156858364.html>

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