



# **USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER**

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Washington Post

## **U.S.-Russia Arms Deal Unlikely Before February: Report**

Reuters

Saturday, December 19, 2009

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia and the United States are unlikely to clinch a deal to cut Cold War stocks of nuclear arms before February as two issues remain to be resolved, Kommersant newspaper reported on Saturday, citing a source.

The two countries missed a December 5 deadline to agree a successor to the 1991 START I pact. Their leaders also failed to sign a deal when they met in Copenhagen on Friday, although U.S. President Barack Obama said they were "quite close" to agreement.

Talks are set to resume in January.

A deal is now unlikely before February, Kommersant reported, citing an unnamed participant in Friday's talks.

"It is a fundamentally new document compared to START I. Its main difference is that it will contain absolute parity on all the issues. And that takes time," the source said.

The world's two largest nuclear powers have been trying since April to find a replacement for START I. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said on Friday that there were "certain technical details ... which require further work."

Kommersant quoted its source as saying the outstanding issues were more serious and include the need to agree on the sharing of telemetric data.

"Thanks to the two leaders, we managed to push through three fundamental issues. Two remain and they are far from being technical details. They are serious things which demand political will," the source said, adding that there was every reason to expect a successful conclusion to the negotiations.

However, the source did not give details of the two remaining problems.

An unnamed source in the Russian delegation told Kommersant that the two sides will not set any more dates or deadlines for the agreement but it will be signed soon.

Russia returns to work after new year holidays on January 11.

(Writing by Toni Vorobyova; editing by David Stamp)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/12/19/AR2009121900560.html>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

## **Russia-U.S. Strategic Deal Demands 'Radical' Arms Cuts - Lavrov**

22 December 2009

The new Russian-U.S. strategic arms reduction treaty envisions "radical" cuts in the number of strategic offensive weapons, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Tuesday.

"The treaty will stipulate radical, unprecedented cuts in strategic offensive weapons," Lavrov said, addressing the faculty and students at the University of Global Economy and Diplomacy in the Uzbek capital.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and his U.S. counterpart Barack Obama announced at their first meeting in April that the countries would replace the START I treaty as part of their efforts to "reset" bilateral ties.

The treaty's outline agreed by the presidents included cutting nuclear arsenals to 1,500-1,675 operational warheads and delivery vehicles to 500-1,000.

Lavrov said the new treaty would "envision symmetrical [arms cuts] measures based on mutual trust and certain control procedures," and link the reduction of nuclear arsenals with limitations on the number of non-nuclear strategic offensive weapons possessed by both countries.

Moscow and Washington are expected to sign the new document to replace START I treaty, which expired on December 5, at the beginning of 2010.

TASHKENT, December 22 (RIA Novosti)

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20091222/157322451.html>

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BBC News – U.K.

29 December 2009

## **Putin Attacks US Missile Defence**

**US plans for a missile defence shield are holding up a new nuclear disarmament treaty, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has said.**

Russia and the US are yet to find a successor to the Cold War-era Start I treaty, which expired on 5 December.

Analysts say Moscow wants a clause in the new treaty that would limit the scale of any US defence shield.

The US has shelved plans for missile defence stations in Central Europe, but intends to use a sea-based system.

Asked by a reporter what was the biggest problem blocking a new treaty, Mr Putin said: "What is the problem? The problem is that our American partners are building an anti-missile shield and we are not building one."

"By building such an umbrella over themselves, our [US] partners could feel themselves fully secure and will do whatever they want, which upsets the balance," the Russian premier added.

He said that "to preserve the balance, we must develop offensive weapons systems", but did not specify what kinds he had in mind.

Earlier this month, President Dmitry Medvedev said Russia would continue to develop new warheads, delivery vehicles and launchers despite the disarmament talks, describing this as "routine practice".

Russia and the US are negotiating in Geneva on the details of a new treaty. Last week, the Russian foreign minister said a deal was very close.

The 1991 Start I treaty led to deep cuts in nuclear arsenals by Washington and Moscow.

Both sides have agreed to continue observing Start I until they reach a new agreement.

Under a joint understanding signed in July, deployed nuclear warheads should be cut to fewer than 1,700 on each side within seven years of a new treaty - a huge cut on Soviet-era levels.

Nonetheless, between them the two countries will retain enough firepower to destroy the world several times over.

The BBC's Rupert Wingfield-Hayes in Moscow says that Russia's nuclear arsenal is the only part of its military that remains world-class, and therefore it fears that it could be disadvantaged by cuts to nuclear capability.

Mr Putin's comments could be a negotiating ploy, rather than a reversal of Russia's commitment to a treaty, our correspondent says.

Analysts in Moscow think what Mr Putin really wants is a commitment from Washington to only deploy a small scale missile defence system, that would be effective against Iran and North Korea but would not neutralise Russia's nuclear missile force, he adds.

### **ANALYSIS**

Rupert Wingfield-Hayes, BBC Moscow correspondent Russia's government said until just a few days ago that these strategic arms reduction treaty talks were in their final stages, that they were perhaps just a couple of weeks away from signing a new document.

And now suddenly Mr Putin has come out with this statement, which really does put a spanner in the works.

It shows just how nervous Russia is about the idea of a US missile defence shield, despite the fact President Obama in September said they were going to scrap land-based missile defence in Europe.

The US plans to build another system; the Russians don't know exactly how that's going to affect them and how it may neutralise their nuclear deterrent. I think Mr Putin is voicing a concern that is held by many experts in this country.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8433352.stm>

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Washington Times  
Wednesday, December 30, 2009

## **Putin Threatens New Missiles To Counter U.S. Shield**

By Eli Lake

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin warned Tuesday that Russia will have to go ahead with a new class of advanced offensive nuclear missiles if the United States continues with plans to develop a defensive missile shield.

The powerful ex-president said in Vladivostok that the dispute was the main issue holding up negotiations on a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START).

Those tensions could be eased if Washington provides Moscow with full details of the missile shield plan, Mr. Putin added. He said Russia would reciprocate with information about its offensive missiles.

Russia analysts said the remarks appeared to be an effort by Mr. Putin to squeeze as many concessions as possible from the Obama administration before agreeing to a new treaty to replace an arms reduction pact that expired Dec. 5.

"It's a negotiating ploy," said Clifford Kupchan, a Russia specialist at the Eurasia Group, a risk analysis and consulting firm. "Both sides want a START treaty, but Putin wants at least informal constraints even around Obama's missile defense lite."

Earlier this year, the Obama administration scrapped plans by the George W. Bush administration to base interceptors and radar in the Czech Republic and Poland in favor of a largely sea-based program.

Nevertheless, Mr. Kupchan said, Russia remains "in perpetuity scared of a potential U.S. ability to neutralize their second strike capability."

A former U.S. intercontinental ballistic missile officer and current Defense Department official told The Washington Times that Mr. Putin is "trying to get us to drop as many missile defense systems as we will drop. He is going to push until he finds that line where we say, 'No more.' "

The official spoke on the condition of anonymity because he is not authorized to speak to the media.

Mr. Putin, who is widely considered to be more powerful than Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, appeared to deliberately link U.S. missile defense plans to the treaty aimed at reducing U.S. and Russian stockpiles of offensive nuclear weapons.

"If we want to retain the balance, we have to establish an exchange of information: Let the U.S. partners provide us information on [their] missile defense while we will give them information on [our] offensive weapons," Mr. Putin said.

A U.S. official who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the delicate state of negotiations told The Times, "We are aware of Putin's comments. The bottom line is that as the president said alongside President Medvedev in Copenhagen, we continue to work on the START treaty."

Indeed, Mr. Medvedev said in Copenhagen on Dec. 18, "Our positions are very close and almost all the issues that we've been discussing for the last month are almost closed. And there are certain technical details which we can encounter, many agreements which require further work. I hope that we will be able to do it in a quite brief period of time."

The Obama administration -- like its predecessor -- has insisted that missile defense is aimed not at Russia but at Iran and North Korea. Its decision to scrap the Bush plan, however, was seen by many as a concession to Russia and part of an effort to "reset" relations and improve cooperation on other issues, including Iran.

Toby Gati, who was a special assistant for Russia to President Clinton and is a former assistant secretary of state for intelligence and research, said the Russians "always regard their missile forces as the one element of their national defense which is the absolute equivalent of U.S. systems and gives them the stature of a great power on par with the United States in this area. They jealously guard any action which might undermine it."

Mrs. Gati said the Putin remarks could reflect Russian concern that the U.S. decision not to base a missile defense system in the Czech Republic and Poland did not eliminate plans for the system altogether.

"The Russians have always been concerned about our defensive systems, and their original satisfaction that we backed away from the plan in Central Europe is now over," she said. "Now they are facing the realities of what that

new system is and the fact that the U.S. continues and will continue to have systems that they regard as a threat, even if these systems are not a threat."

• Barbara Slavin contributed to this report.

[http://washingtontimes.com/news/2009/dec/30/putin-threatens-new-missiles-to-counter-us-shield/?feat=home\\_headlines](http://washingtontimes.com/news/2009/dec/30/putin-threatens-new-missiles-to-counter-us-shield/?feat=home_headlines)

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Boston Globe

## **Top US Officer: Force Must Be Option For Iran**

By Anne Gearan, AP National Security Writer

December 21, 2009

WASHINGTON --Military force would have only limited effect in stopping Iran from developing nuclear weapons but must remain an option, the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said Monday.

Tehran shows no signs of backing down in the standoff over what the United States and other countries say is its drive for a nuclear bomb, Adm. Mike Mullen, the top U.S. military officer, told his staff in an annual assessment of the nation's risks and priorities.

"My belief remains that political means are the best tools to attain regional security and that military force will have limited results," Mullen wrote. "However, should the president call for military options, we must have them ready."

Iran denies that its nuclear program is aimed at producing a weapon. The Mideast nation says it is developing nuclear energy.

In the past two or three years the United States had all but ruled out an attack on Iran's known nuclear facilities as too risky, because of the backlash it might unleash.

"Most critically, Iran's internal unrest, unpredictable leadership and sponsorship of terrorism make it a regional and global concern," heightened by what Mullen called "its determined pursuit of nuclear weapons."

Mullen and other military leaders have suggested that if Iran was determined to build a weapon, an attack would probably fail to completely stop that effort. Mullen has tried to dissuade Israel from launching its own attack on Iran, whose leaders have called for Israel's destruction.

Mullen's annual review says nothing about what kind of military force he wants at hand, but any attack would presumably be done by air.

President Barack Obama has set a rough deadline of the end of this year for Iran to respond to an offer of dialogue and to show that it will allay fears of weapons development. The Obama administration is working with allies to ready a new set of international economic sanctions on Iran for repeatedly defying international demands to halt questionable activities and come clean about the nature and extent of the program.

On Monday, Republican Sen. John McCain of Arizona voiced support for attempting economic pressure against Iran before considering military action, but warned that time was slipping.

"We've wasted a year," he said on ABC's "Good Morning America." "Sanctions have to be tried before we explore the last option. The worst option is a military action."

But McCain, the top Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee, wondered whether Israel would have the patience to see if sanctions will work.

Mullen, the president's chief military adviser, had said separately on Sunday that he is worried about Iran's intentions and said the clock is running on Obama's offer of engagement.

"I've said for a long time we don't need another conflict in that part of the world," he told reporters traveling with him on a visit to Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq. "I'm not predicting that would happen, but I think they've got to get to a position where they are a constructive force and not a destabilizing force."

In his assessment released Monday, Mullen also wrote that the main effort in Afghanistan must be to push forces into the war zone quickly, including the shifting of some personnel from Iraq. His year-end message serves as general marching orders for the coming year for his large staff of planners and others.

"Afghanistan has deteriorated in the last year, but reversing the Taliban's momentum is achievable," Mullen wrote.

As to Iraq, he said security improvements mean the planned U.S. withdrawal can go ahead.

"We must finish well in Iraq," he wrote.

Mullen listed several other threats and concerns, including threats that aren't identified with a given country such as terrorism, piracy and cyber attacks.

"The United States has given more thought and resources to the cyber threat," he wrote, "but "impeded progress here is a serious risk to our national security posture."

[http://www.boston.com/news/nation/washington/articles/2009/12/21/top\\_us\\_officer\\_force\\_must\\_be\\_option\\_for\\_iran\\_1261401677/](http://www.boston.com/news/nation/washington/articles/2009/12/21/top_us_officer_force_must_be_option_for_iran_1261401677/)

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Tehran Times – Iran

December 21, 2009

## Iran Testing New Generations Of Centrifuges

TEHRAN (FNA) - Iran is testing new generations of home-made centrifuges for enriching uranium, a senior Iranian nuclear official announced.

""At present we have included the new generations of centrifuges in our (uranium) enrichment activities and these new generations (centrifuges) are passing necessary tests rapidly,"" Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Ali Akbar Salehi said in an exclusive interview with FNA.

Salehi explained that Iran's nuclear scientists are currently testing two advanced models of home-made centrifuges named IR3 and IR4, and added, ""Hopefully we can use the new generations of centrifuges by the end of the next (Iranian) year (early 2011) and after removing all flaws and problems.""

The Iranian official said the tests are aimed at resolving the technical flaws of the new generations, but meantime underlined that Tehran ""is not in a rush to enter the industrial-scale production stage"".

""That is not a good idea to enter the production stage without passing the required technical and industrial phases,"" Salehi told FNA.

Asked about the number of centrifuges currently spinning at Iran's nuclear facilities, Salehi put it at over 6,000 centrifuges.

Meantime, a senior aide to Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on Sunday that Tehran has access to the technical know-how required for enriching uranium to the purity level of 20 percent.

""We have no problem in the production of nuclear fuel (for the Tehran research reactor),"" Mojtaba Hashemi Samareh said at a meeting here in Tehran dubbed as 'Iran's International Position Following Negotiations with the 5+1 group'.

Experts speculate that the new generations of Iran-made centrifuges would enable Tehran to enrich uranium over the current purity level of 5 percent.

Uranium enriched to the purity levels of up to 5 percent is used for fueling nuclear power plants while 20-percent enriched uranium is used in production of radioisotopes for medicinal use. Production of nuclear bombs needs highly-enriched (over 90 percent) uranium.

[http://www.tehrantimes.com/Index\\_view.asp?code=210354](http://www.tehrantimes.com/Index_view.asp?code=210354)

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London Guardian

## Mahmoud Ahmadinejad Says US Fabricated Nuclear Documents

*Iranian president dismisses western deadline to accept deal to swap enriched uranium for nuclear fuel*

By Mark Tran

Tuesday 22 December 2009

The Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, today dismissed a year-end deadline set by the US for Iran to accept a UN-brokered deal to swap enriched uranium for nuclear fuel.

As Iran faces a renewed US drive for further sanctions, Ahmadinejad made light of the threat. "If Iran wanted to make a bomb, we would be brave enough to tell you," he told supporters in the southern city of Shiraz. He said the west could give Iran "as many deadlines as they want, we don't care".

In an interview aired on US television yesterday, Ahmadinejad dismissed documents apparently describing Iranian efforts to make a nuclear trigger as "fabricated and distributed by the US".

The president brushed away a report in last week's Times newspaper that cited confidential Iranian technical documents detailing a four-year plan to test a neutron initiator, the part of a nuclear warhead that triggers detonation.

"No, I don't want to see them at all. I don't," he said. "They are all fabricated bunch of papers continuously being forged and disseminated by the American government," Ahmadinejad told ABC News.

David Axelrod, a top White House adviser, said the charge that the US had forged the documents was "nonsense".

Last week, the Iranian foreign ministry called the report "baseless ... not worthy of attention, intended to put political and psychological pressure on Iran".

Iran insists that its uranium enrichment programme is to generate electricity so that it can export more gas and oil, but the west suspects that Iran wants to make bombs from enriched uranium, and cites its record of nuclear secrecy. Such suspicions were fuelled in September, when Iran admitted that it had been secretly building a second uranium-enrichment facility near the holy city of Qom. The revelation reinforced US determination to push for more sanctions against the Iranian government at a time when it is facing undiminished domestic opposition.

The US, which is pushing for a world free of nuclear weapons, has given Iran until the end of the year to respond to a United Nations plan under which Iran would ship most of its low-enriched uranium out of the country, leaving it temporarily without enough uranium stockpiles to enrich for a nuclear bomb.

In his interview with Diane Sawyer of ABC News, Ahmadinejad, who was combative and playful, declined to give a yes-or-no answer on whether he could assure the west that Iran would never make a nuclear bomb.

Instead, he shook his head and said: "We have got a saying in Iran which says 'How many times shall I repeat the same thing?' You should say something only once. We have said once that we don't want nuclear bomb. We don't accept it."

Ahmadinejad sniped at western threats to impose further sanctions: "They tell us 'let's negotiate'. Then from the other hand, they are saying 'sanctions are coming'. They show the stick.

"Respectable lady, this approach has failed ... raising the stick of sanctions and then saying let's negotiate. It has failed. It's over. It's not repeatable."

The French foreign minister, Bernard Kouchner, said yesterday that the UN security council had no choice but to impose new sanctions on Iran because of its refusal to co-operate on the nuclear issue. Kouchner said he believed all of the council members would support new sanctions targeting members of Ahmadinejad's government and its supporters. The council is expected to take up the matter next month.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/dec/22/mahmoud-ahmadinejad-us-nuclear-documents>

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New York Times  
December 25, 2009

## **Hard-Line Rise Alters View Of Iran's Nuclear Ambition**

By MICHAEL SLACKMAN

CAIRO — Until Iran's current political crisis, Iranian experts largely agreed that the Islamic republic wanted to develop the capacity to build nuclear weapons, without actually producing them.

Now, not everyone is so sure.

The main reason for the shift in thinking is the rise of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps as the most powerful decision-making bloc in the country. But the change is also a result of the political struggle among the elite, which has upended previous assessments about Iran's decision-making process, silenced more pragmatic voices and made it nearly impossible for anyone to support nuclear cooperation without being accused of capitulating to the West.

This move toward a harder line has stymied President Obama's attempts to open a new channel of communication with the Iranian leadership. And now, having set a year-end deadline for Iran to cooperate, the United States and its

Western allies seem likely to seek to impose tougher sanctions on Iran, a step that some analysts fear could enable the more radical forces to monopolize power, at least in the short term.

“A Revolutionary Guards-dominated state that we have witnessed since the presidential election has proven to be a lot less prudent, and a whole lot more violent, than what was the ordinary behavior of the Islamic Republic of Iran before,” said Rasool Nafisi, an Iran researcher in Virginia who co-wrote a report on the Revolutionary Guards for the RAND Corporation. “One should calculate the impact of such a state on nuclear development with more caution.”

That is not to say that Iran is necessarily preparing to drop out of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty or to make a bomb and declare itself a nuclear weapons state, the way North Korea did. But Iranians who support full-on confrontation with the West have the upper hand in the country’s public debate and decision making at the moment, Iran experts and European diplomats said.

Hossein Shariatmadari, editor of Kayhan, the newspaper that serves as a bulletin board for Iran’s supreme leader and the most radical forces in the Revolutionary Guards, wrote last month that “under the circumstances, is it possible to still argue that Iran’s membership” in the treaty is prudent? “Isn’t it wise, honorable and expedient to withdraw from the treaty instead?” he continued. “Why not?!”

It is not clear what the West can do about the problem.

While the type of new sanctions under consideration and the willingness of China and Russia to impose them are still uncertain, some Iran experts and diplomats are skeptical that they can reverse the country’s evolution toward a more militarized and radical leadership. Some fear that a sharper confrontation with the West could even accelerate that process.

“The idea, of course, is to see whether sanctions can contribute to setting in motion an internal political shift,” said a European diplomat with many years of service in Iran who insisted on anonymity in keeping with diplomatic protocol. “But that is doubtful.” The diplomat said the government had shifted from cynical authoritarianism to radical repression.

Iran has not so far embraced the North Korea model of renouncing the nonproliferation treaty and bargaining with the outside world as a self-declared nuclear weapons state. But there are concerns that the leadership in Tehran is feeling so paranoid and vulnerable because of the internal divisions that if pushed, it might head in that direction.

“The aftermath of the election has isolated them,” said Muhammad Sahimi, an Iran expert who closely follows events through a network of friends there. “They are under tremendous pressure, both internally and externally. They also are not sure whether they can count on unified support of the people if attacked militarily, due to what has happened.”

Iran would still have a great deal to lose by formally dropping out of the treaty and declining to negotiate with the West, and some experts say they still doubt that the embattled leadership will take that step.

Pulling out would undermine Iran’s central claim that its nuclear program is peaceful in nature. It might also erode the willingness of China and Russia to continue to support Iran at the United Nations Security Council, and it might encourage Israel to wage a military strike with the silent approval of the West, experts said. It would also commit Iran to the most radical path and use up a powerful point of leverage for future negotiations, they said.

“As long as Tehran can cast the issue as one of imperialists trying to deny their rights to nuclear technology, Iran gets the support of a significant swath of the developing world,” said Mark Fitzpatrick, a senior fellow for nonproliferation with the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London.

In the best of times, reading Iran’s intentions is difficult, because while there were elected institutions full of public debate, the most important decisions were forged in secret by the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, his aides and a core of the political elite. But the political crisis appears to have diminished the process of consultation by neutralizing some of the nation’s most powerful figures. Among them are Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, a former president, and on the nuclear issue, even the president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

In the opportunistic, factionalized postelection environment, Mr. Ahmadinejad has emerged as a voice of pragmatism on the nuclear issue, in relative terms, while so-called pragmatic conservatives, like Ali Larijani, the speaker of Parliament, and even reformers, like Mir Hussein Moussavi, who lost the election to Mr. Ahmadinejad, have opposed an agreement with the West that was under discussion in the fall.

Mr. Ahmadinejad, who has said that it is time to cooperate, seemed to favor a deal struck by Iranian negotiators during talks in Geneva in October. They agreed to send much of Iran’s low-enriched uranium to Russia, and then



France, where it would be converted to fuel rods. The rods, which could be used to power a medical reactor but would be difficult to convert into weapons fuel, would then be sent to Iran. The West accepted the idea because it would have delayed, by about a year, Iran's ability to make a bomb.

But once the deal was announced, Mr. Ahmadinejad's political enemies back home attacked him, eager to undermine his credibility and legitimacy with the same blunt instrument he had used for so long against his political rivals, the nuclear issue.

"Given divisions within the ranks — the first time that real power brokers are divided, and that is something Obama has achieved with the Geneva deal much more so than street protests — the leadership knows that it does not want to conclude a deal," said a Washington-based Iran expert who asked not to be identified because he sometimes visits Iran.

In this environment, Mr. Larijani, who is close to the supreme leader and whose family has close ties to the most influential clergy members in the country, raised the prospect of abandoning the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty altogether.

"Those who seek peaceful nuclear technology should continue to do so without any attention to the treaty because it does nothing but complicate matters even more," Mr. Larijani said, according to Iran's semiofficial ILNA news service.

Mr. Ahmadinejad has tried to regroup, with his government insisting that it is still ready to agree to turn over much of its low-enriched uranium, but on its own terms, which the West has already rejected. The government has also insisted that Iran will not withdraw from the treaty.

In the past, Iran's equivocating would be seen as a strategy aimed at dividing the West from Russia and China. But while that is probably part of the explanation, there is a general sense that it also reflects the inability of such a fractured nation to reach a firm decision on the issue. The question the West needs to calculate is, What will that decision ultimately be?

"A majority of analysts believe that Iran will stop short of making a bomb but would like to be bomb-ready," said Mr. Nafisi, the researcher in Virginia. "But I think it depends a lot on the political situation when Iran has enough fissile materials to build a bomb."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/25/world/middleeast/25iran.html?pagewanted=all>

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Khaleej Times – U.A.E

## **Iran Nuclear Plant Immune To Conventional Strike**

Agence France-Presse (AFP)

28 December 2009

JERUSALEM - Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak said on Monday that Iran's recently disclosed second uranium enrichment plant is "immune" to conventional bombing.

"The new site near Qom is meant for enrichment. What was revealed by the Iranians had been built over years and is located in bunkers that cannot be destroyed through a conventional attack," Barak told parliament's foreign affairs and defence committee.

Iran notified the UN nuclear watchdog in September that it was building a second enrichment plant near the central shrine city of Qom, after Washington accused it of covertly evading its notification responsibilities under the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Confirmation of the construction work drew criticism not only from Western governments but also from the United Nations.

Enriched uranium can make the fuel for nuclear power plants but in highly extended form can also produce the fissile core of an atomic bomb.

Along with Western governments, Israel suspects Iran of seeking to develop a weapons capability under the guise of a civil nuclear programme, an accusation Tehran denies.

Along with its US ally, Israel, the region's sole if undeclared nuclear power, has refused to rule out a resort to military action to prevent Iran developing a bomb.

Barak said he feared Iran could develop a weapon by 2011.

"I believe that by early 2010 Iran will hold threshold technology (for building a bomb). That means that if it wanted, it could develop nuclear weapons within a year from obtaining threshold technology," a senior official quoted him as telling the parliamentary committee.

[http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2009/December/middleeast\\_December637.xml&section=middleeast](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2009/December/middleeast_December637.xml&section=middleeast)

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Ha'aretz Daily – Israel  
Tuesday, December 29, 2009

## **Israel Can't Launch Strike Against Iran On Its Own**

By Amos Harel, Haaretz Correspondent

The year 2010 will be the year of Iran. Granted, we have said the same thing every year since 2005. But stopping the Iranian nuclear program will continue to top Israel's priorities during the year that begins in two days' time. The major powers are expected to announce soon that diplomacy has failed to persuade Tehran to freeze its nuclear project. And Western intelligence services believe the Iranians have already accumulated enough enriched uranium to build a nuclear bomb or two.

In the meantime, Israel is striving to develop a military option. Judging by certain leaks and remarks emanating from Jerusalem, the use of force seems to be a real possibility. Such preparations are necessary: The Israel Defense Forces must have a military plan in case other measures fail. The defense establishment needs to improve its protection of the home front, which would be hit by thousands of rockets and missiles even in the event of a limited war with Hezbollah or Hamas.

Military preparations are also essential to prod the United States and Europe to exert maximum pressure on the Islamic Republic. This will not happen unless Western states come to believe that Israel Air Force planes are starting to rev up their engines.

This date with destiny has caused some Israeli leaders to adopt a messianic tone. Some even see a tempting opportunity to change the wider strategic reality in the region. Yet opinions are divided: Air force pilots, as they have stated on several occasions, are confident in their own abilities should the order to strike be given, but senior defense officials are describing their primary mission as preventing any foolish acts in the coming year. The IDF General Staff, as it did during the Gaza offensive, is likely to behave as an operational subcontractor, content merely to present the government with various military scenarios and their possible implications.

It must be stated plainly: Israel does not have independent strike capability against Iran - not in the broad sense of the term. The air force is capable of delivering a certain amount of explosives to a given target and bringing most of its aircraft back home intact. But it is doubtful whether Israel can allow itself to act against the wishes of the United States - to stand alone against an Iranian response and begin an open-ended operation against a nation of 70 million people.

An attack must be the last resort, not just another option placed on the table. It is best to disabuse ourselves of illusions about our ability to dictate a new Mideast order. That is the lesson learned, in blood, by Menachem Begin and Ariel Sharon in Lebanon in 1982 and by George W. Bush in Iraq in 2003.

This week, new protests erupted against the Iranian regime. It is difficult to predict whether the demonstrations will ultimately topple the government or simply strengthen it, along with the Revolutionary Guards. Maj. Gen. (Res.) Aharon Ze'evi-Farkash, formerly the head of Military Intelligence, recently compared the two most significant developments in Iran - the demonstrations and the nuclear program - to two trucks: "Both of them moved up a gear in the past six months, but it is unclear which will reach its destination first. The regime is losing its legitimacy with so much blood spilled on the streets. Israel must now show caution and patience."

Over the past year, the Obama administration has provided the world with ample reason to criticize it for its naivete, its overblown confidence in the power of the spoken word to tear down walls and its impotence on North Korea. On the Iranian front, however, it has acted exactly as it should. Its pursuit of dialogue has pushed Tehran into an uncomfortable corner, created unanticipated common ground between the United States and Russia and could even lead to harsh sanctions against Iran.

What Israel needs now is a responsible adult, one who knows how to pull the emergency lever should the need arise. If such an adult cannot be found in Jerusalem, we must hope there is one sitting in the White House.

<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1138680.html>

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Yonhap News – South Korea

25 December 2009

## **N. Korea May Detonate 3rd Nuclear Device: Think Tank**

SEOUL, Dec. 25 (Yonhap) -- North Korea may detonate a third nuclear device and provoke border clashes in the future that could escalate tension on the Korean Peninsula, a report by a state-run think tank said Friday.

In a report on possible developments in 2010, the Korea Institute for Defense Analyses (KIDA) warned Pyongyang may test another nuclear device to show the world that it has no plans to give up its atomic weapons program.

"Such a step could highlight that North Korea is a nuclear power," the report said. It added that North Korea might even launch an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of reaching U.S. territories in the Pacific and the western coast of North America.

The communist country tested its first nuclear weapon in October 2006 and another more powerful device on May 25. The explosion that took place earlier in the year is estimated to have had a yield five times that of the 2006 device.

"The recent explosion has been estimated to have had a 4-kiloton yield, indicating that the North has made headway in developing an operational nuclear weapon," the latest findings said.

KIDA said that if the international community starts to accept the North as a nuclear power, this can cause public opinion in South Korea to move toward building up its own nuclear deterrent capabilities.

In addition, the institute said the North may try to incite military clashes along the inter-Korean border.

It said if the North were to invade islands in the Yellow Sea just south of the Northern Limit Line (NLL), it could trigger a strong response by South Korea. Such developments may cause the dismantlement of the armistice regime signed after the Korea War (1950-1953) and weaken the NLL that has been the de facto sea border between the two countries.

There has been a total three clashes along the NLL so far, with the latest taking place on Nov. 10.

KIDA, meanwhile said that although clashes along the 248-kilometer demilitarized zone could take place, such events will probably be short firefights between troops, while air-to-air combat is not likely due to the North's weak Air Force assets.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2009/12/25/21/0401000000AEN20091225001700320F.HTML>

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Washington Post

## **Pakistani Scientist Depicts More Advanced Nuclear Program In North Korea**

By R. Jeffrey Smith and Joby Warrick

Washington Post Staff Writer

Monday, December 28, 2009

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North Korea has constructed a plant to manufacture a gas needed for uranium enrichment, according to a previously unpublicized account by the father of Pakistan's atomic bomb program, a development that indicates Pyongyang opened a second way to build nuclear weapons as early as the 1990s.

Pakistani scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan also said that North Korea may have been enriching uranium on a small scale by 2002, with "maybe 3,000 or even more" centrifuges, and that Pakistan helped the country with vital machinery, drawings and technical advice for at least six years.

North Korea's nuclear program is among the world's most opaque, and Khan's account could not be independently corroborated. But one U.S. intelligence official and a U.S. diplomat said his information adds to their suspicions that

North Korea has long pursued the enrichment of uranium in addition to making plutonium for bombs, and may help explain Pyongyang's assertion in September that it is in the final stages of such enrichment.

Khan's account of the pilot plant, which he says North Korea built without help, is included in a narrative that depicts relations between the two countries' scientists as exceptionally close for nearly a decade. Khan says, for example, that during a visit to North Korea in 1999, he toured a mountain tunnel. There his hosts showed him boxes containing components of three finished nuclear warheads, which he was told could be assembled for use atop missiles within an hour.

"While they explained the construction [design of their bombs], they quietly showed me the six boxes" containing split cores for the warheads, as well as "64 ignitors/detonators per bomb packed in 6 separate boxes," Khan said.

### **Old assumptions**

His visit occurred seven years before the country's first detonation, prompting some current and former U.S. officials to say that Khan's account, if correct, suggests North Korea's achievements were more advanced than previously known, and that the country may have more sophisticated weapons, or a larger number, than earlier estimated.

But Siegfried S. Hecker, a former Los Alamos National Laboratory director who was allowed to see some North Korean plutonium during a visit to its nuclear facilities in January 2004, said after hearing Khan's description of the trip he remains unconvinced that the country in 1999 had enough fissile material on hand to make such weapons.

Hecker said Khan may have tried to get himself "off the hook, to say what [he] . . . did was not that bad because these guys already had nuclear weapons. That's a nice way to cover his own tracks."

Since some of Khan's actions were exposed in 2003 and 2004, top Pakistani officials have called him a rogue proliferator. Khan said, however, there was a tacit agreement between the two governments that his laboratory "would advise and guide them with the centrifuge program and that the North Koreans would help Pakistan in fitting the nuclear warhead into the Ghauri missile" -- his country's name for its version of the Nodong missiles that Pakistan bought from North Korea.

Pakistan gave North Korea vital equipment and software, and in return North Korea also "taught us how to make Krytrons" -- extremely fast electrical switches that are used in nuclear detonations and are tightly controlled in international commerce. Contradicting Pakistani statements that the government had no involvement in such sensitive transfers, Khan says his assistance was approved by top political and Army officials, including then-Lt. Gen. Khalid Kidwai, who currently oversees Pakistan's atomic arsenal.

Khan, 73, is under house arrest in Islamabad. He has threatened to disclose sensitive information if he remains in confinement.

### **A contentious issue**

The issue of what the hermetic country has been doing with uranium and when it started has been especially contentious since 2002. When an Obama administration envoy, Stephen Bosworth, visited North Korea this month, he "strongly put down a marker" that future talks must include discussion of uranium, a senior U.S. official said.

Pakistani officials in Washington dismissed Khan's assertions as baseless, without responding to questions about Kidwai's role. "Pakistan, as a nuclear weapons state, has always acted with full responsibility and never engaged itself in any activity in violation of the non-proliferation norms," the embassy said in a statement.

Song Ryol Han, the North Korean ambassador to the United Nations, denied that his country had a uranium program before last spring or that it ever discussed the issue "with Dr. Khan in Pakistan." Song said that "only after last April, when the U.S. hostility entered extremely critical stage" did the country start such a program as a "nuclear deterrence" measure.

Khan described his dealings with the country in official documents and in correspondence with a former British journalist, Simon Henderson, who said he thinks an accurate understanding of Pakistan's nuclear history is relevant for U.S. policymaking. The Washington Post independently verified that the documents were produced by Khan.

In his written account, Khan said the capacity of North Korea's plant for making the centrifuge feedstock, a caustic material known as uranium hexafluoride, "initially was two tons per year" and later was raised to 10 tons a year. He did not give the plant's location but said that at one point North Korea sent a kilogram of the gas it had made to Pakistan for testing. He also stated that Pakistan shared a sample of its own gas to be used as a manufacturing standard by the North Koreans.

A U.S. government nuclear expert, speaking on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the subject, said constructing a plant of this size will probably be seen as "a very serious commitment" to making nuclear arms with a method that is hard to detect. The official noted that the country was obligated to report such facilities under a global treaty to which it was a party until 2003.

Khan said he understood that North Korea's ambition was to produce enriched uranium fuel for an aged reactor because it could not rely on a continuing foreign supply of such fuel. But two officials noted that if North Korea indeed had 3,000 or more centrifuges operating by 2002, which Khan called "quite likely," then work on that scale opens the door to industrial-scale enrichment for weapons as well.

Khan said he negotiated the purchase of 10 Nodong missiles and related technology for \$150 million after visiting North Korea in 1994 at the request of Benazir Bhutto, then Pakistan's prime minister, and top army officials. "As a result of this deal, 10 North Korean experts came to Kahuta and were housed within the complex," Khan said, referring to the city in northeastern Pakistan where his laboratory is situated.

Khan said three army staff chiefs approved the stay of the North Koreans, who "were officially allowed to visit all the workshops and meet and discuss freely with the scientists and engineers," including those working on P-1 centrifuges, as well as more advanced models known as P-2s.

After gaining the approval of an army chief and after the payment of funds by North Korea, "I asked my people to prepare 20 outdated P-1 machines and gave them. Since they were working in the plant and were familiar with the P-2 machines, they asked for 4 of these too."

### **Undermining a pledge?**

Several former U.S. officials, after being informed of Khan's statements, said they undermine North Korea's 1994 pledge to work with the United States "for peace and security on a nuclear-free Korean peninsula."

"This paints a picture of even more collaboration than I assumed those countries had," said Robert G. Joseph, a prominent critic of the 1994 agreement. Joseph served as the principal nonproliferation official at the White House under President George W. Bush from 2001 to 2005 and then as undersecretary of state for arms control.

Khan said Gen. Pervez Musharraf, the chief of the army staff from 1998 to 2007 and president from 2001 to 2008, and "his right-hand men" -- including Kidwai, Khan asserted -- "knew everything and were controlling incoming and outgoing consignments." Kidwai heads the group that controls Pakistan's arsenal, estimated by some U.S. government analysts at more than 100 weapons.

But Musharraf, in his 2006 autobiography, said that Khan was responsible for all of the nuclear-related exports to North Korea and that "neither the Pakistan Army nor any of the past governments of Pakistan was ever involved or had any knowledge of A.Q.'s proliferation activities."

*Staff researcher Julie Tate contributed to this report.*

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/12/27/AR200912270122701205.html>

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New York Times  
December 19, 2009

## **U.S. To Make Stopping Nuclear Terror Key Aim**

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By Thom Shanker and Eric Scmitt

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration's classified review of nuclear weapons policy will for the first time make thwarting nuclear-armed terrorists a central aim of American strategic nuclear planning, according to senior Pentagon officials.

When completed next year, the Nuclear Posture Review will order the entire government to focus on countering nuclear terrorists — whether armed with rudimentary bombs, stolen warheads or devices surreptitiously supplied by a hostile state — as a task equal to the traditional mission of deterring a strike by major powers or emerging nuclear adversaries.

The nuclear review will affect how warheads are developed by the Department of Energy, deployed by the Department of Defense and limited through negotiations by the Department of State, as well as how the intelligence community and the military do their jobs and spend money. That could mean, for example, devoting less money to

modernizing bombers, missiles and submarines, and more to surveillance satellites, reconnaissance planes and undercover agents.

To underscore the point that concrete consequences will follow its guiding philosophy, the Nuclear Posture Review is scheduled to be released along with the Obama administration's next budget in February.

Although the internal debate is not quite over, and the president has not approved a final version of the review, a senior Defense Department official said its priorities were taking shape.

"The first — and in many ways the most urgent for where we are today — is the threat posed by nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism," said the official, who was granted anonymity to describe the current draft of the review.

At the core of this threat, which officials say has been growing steadily since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, is "the possible transfer of nuclear weapons or materials to a terrorist or substate actor," he said.

The problem has been that the classical model of deterrence — of threatening to respond with overwhelming nuclear force to a nuclear attack from another country — is of uncertain relevance in the context of transnational terrorism.

Although the government-wide review is led by the Defense Department, the primary tools for countering this new danger are not nuclear weapons, but efforts to halt nuclear proliferation, to identify and attack terrorist networks, and to strengthen security measures with allies and partners. This would include American and international efforts to "secure nuclear weapons and materials worldwide," the official said.

So the review is likely to recommend more vigorous intelligence aimed at tracking nuclear smugglers and anticipating terrorist attacks, and more robust actions within the nuclear laboratories to expand abilities to identify nuclear materials in other nations that might be passed surreptitiously to terrorists. All of these efforts could require additional money.

While similar goals have been expressed before, no previous formal review elevated the threat of nuclear terrorism to a central element of the government's strategic blueprint.

In comparison, the previous nuclear review, completed under President George W. Bush, called for new nuclear weapons to destroy underground bunkers, including those that might hold unconventional weapons, in Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Syria and Libya.

The Obama administration's review, in addition to elevating the threat of nuclear terrorism, also calls for strengthening deterrence — and strengthening America's "extended deterrence" to protect allies — while reducing the roles and numbers of nuclear weapons over coming years.

And it cautions that as long as these weapons do exist, the United States must maintain a safe, secure and effective nuclear arsenal.

There has been ample tension during the review, in particular inside the Pentagon, in dealing with President Obama's pledge to "reduce the role of nuclear weapons" and urge other countries to do the same. Mr. Obama's long-term goal is to eliminate nuclear arms altogether.

But Pentagon and military officials said this week that both Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates and Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had endorsed the lower warhead levels that the review would propose, a number that already is shaping current nuclear negotiations with Russia and a projected follow-up series of arms talks.

In examining the nation's nuclear arsenal, the review considered an array of alternatives to the traditional mix of bombers, submarines and ground-based missiles. For at least the near term, though, warhead numbers are expected to remain sufficiently high to allow the continuation of all three legs of the nuclear triad.

Even as the review enters its final stages, two important issues remain unresolved, officials said.

One is the proper approach to maintaining and modernizing the stockpile of nuclear warheads, which would lead to a decision on whether current warheads should be reused and refurbished, or whether they should be replaced by a new generation of weapons.

"There is no urgent problem that we need to address in terms of our arsenal or stockpile or maintaining them that requires immediate decisions," said Stephen W. Young, senior analyst at the Union of Concerned Scientists. "They have time to get these answers right."

The other unresolved matter is whether the United States should declare that it would never be first to use nuclear weapons. Over the decades, the United States deliberately maintained ambiguity in public statements about its nuclear policy: when it would strike, what it would strike and in response to which actions by an adversary. This was deemed important to keep adversaries off balance and give American leaders options.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/19/us/politics/19nuke.html>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency  
OPINION & ANALYSIS

## **Development Of Strategic Nuclear Fleet Under Threat?**

18 December 2009

The unsuccessful Bulava missile test calls into question the entire development strategy Russia has chosen for its strategic nuclear forces. At present the Russian Navy plans to introduce eight Project 955 submarines armed with 16 R-30 Bulava ballistic missiles for strategic nuclear purposes in the next 10 to 12 years. The failed missile test calls these plans into question.

At present, the first Project 955 ballistic missile submarine, the Yuri Dolgoruky, is being tested, while another two - the Alexander Nevsky and the Vladimir Monomakh - are expected to be launched in 2010 and 2011 respectively. Construction is slated to begin on the fourth submarine in the series - called the Svyatitel Nikolai according to some sources - on December 22, 2009.

After the failed Bulava missile test on December 9, 2009, the issue was raised once again of the feasibility of the current plan and possible alternatives to the Bulava. On December 11, Nikolai Kalistratov, the director of the Sevماش plant that builds the Project 955 nuclear submarines, said that it was necessary to consider the practicality of building a fourth Project 955 ballistic missile submarine in the absence of a "flying" missile. Some media sources have reported that initial construction of the new ballistic missile submarine had been postponed, although the Russian Defense Ministry denied these reports. Nevertheless, unnamed sources in the ministry subsequently reported that initial construction on the fourth Project 955 submarine had been postponed until the first quarter of 2010.

The Bulava tests are expected to resume in the first quarter of next year: in March 2010 to be exact. A number of experts see a connection between these two events and believe the decision to continue building Project 955 submarines will depend on the results of the next missile launch.

The Bulava is currently the only ballistic missile that can be deployed on the new submarines. There has been some discussion of refitting the Project 955 submarines to carry the liquid-fueled Sineva missile, but this would require considerable time and additional funding. Reviving the Bark Project, which was mothballed after work began on the Bulava, will take even more time, and, because of the size and weight of the missile, refitting the new submarines for the Bark would be even more difficult, if not outright impossible.

There is also the option of using the Project 955 submarines that have already been built or are under construction as cruise missile submarines before they can be modified for the Bulava, similarly to how the U.S. Navy uses four out of its 18 existing Ohio-class nuclear submarines. This option would require the least amount of time and resources, but cruise missiles cannot serve as a satisfactory replacement for ballistic missiles.

The core of Russia's strategic nuclear forces currently consists of 11 ballistic missile submarines armed with Makeyev Design Bureau missiles - five Project 667BDR nuclear submarines armed with R-29R missiles and six Project 667BDRMs nuclear submarines armed with R-29RM and R-29RMU Sineva missiles. Nevertheless, these vessels will be decommissioned in the near future due to their physical aging; the Project 667BDRs will be retired in the next five to seven years and the Project 667BDRMs in 10 to 20 years.

Consequently, it is possible to predict the following scenarios if the next Bulava test is a failure:

1. Missile submarine construction could be put on hold until the missile is finished or a new project of similar dimensions is developed. The completed Yuri Dolgoruky and the nearly-completed Project 955 nuclear submarines could be temporarily converted into cruise missile submarines similar to the refitted American Ohio-class missile submarines.
2. Construction on the series could be halted until an upgraded Project 955 capable of carrying the Sineva can be developed. The completed Yuri Dolgoruky and the nearly completed Project 955 nuclear submarines could also be

refitted for the Sineva by replacing the missile compartment, as was done during the Soviet era when a series of Project 667A missile submarines were upgraded.

Both options would take a long time, and so the new fleet of strategic nuclear submarines could not actually be deployed until after 2015, which would require prolonging the service lives of the Project 667BDRM and possibly the Project 667BDR submarines. In addition, due to their age, considerable resources would have to be spent on overhauling and modernizing these older submarines to extend their service lives for the more or less long term.

It is apparent that a failure to bring the Bulava missile to a state of operational readiness would entail spending many billions of rubles to ensure the combat readiness of the strategic nuclear fleet. Moreover, the possibility cannot be ruled out of a breakdown in the strategic nuclear fleet's capabilities in the second half of the 2010s or the early 2020s. This would increase the burden on the two remaining pillars of the security triad - the Strategic Missile Force and long-range aviation. In this case, additional spending would be required to increase the combat strength of these two pillars in light of decreasing naval capabilities.

The reasons for such a situation are myriad, but Kalistratov clearly expressed the main reason in the aforementioned statement on December 11: "In both sports and in military hardware, you have to practice constantly. And we haven't practiced in this in our country for 15 years."

MOSCOW. (RIA Novosti military commentator Ilya Kramnik)

<http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20091218/157286164.html>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency  
OPINION & ANALYSIS

## **Russia, United States Ready To Compromise On Strategic Arms Reductions**

23 December 2009

MOSCOW. (Ilya Kramnik, RIA Novosti military commentator) - The new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) between Russia and the United States has become one of the most discussed issues of the year.

The United States and Russia are about to miss the second deadline for replacing the landmark 1991 treaty, which lead the two cold war powers to begin reducing their formidable nuclear arsenals. They failed to agree by the time START I expired on December 5, and now by the end of the year. However, negotiators on both sides expect to reach an agreement early next year.

The new START treaty would reportedly reduce each side's strategic nuclear warheads to between 1,500 and 1,675 and nuclear carriers to between 700 and 750. Earlier, the sides had discussed 500 to 1,100 carriers, which gave the United States an advantage given that Russian carriers will be naturally reduced over the next decade.

There are three major sticking points in the new agreement:

1. How to link strategic arms reduction with restricting the global missile-defense system.
2. Limiting the "return potential" - the number of carriers and warheads which are stockpiled but could be brought back into action.
3. Control over mobile ground systems and restrictions on the areas of their deployment.

The missile-defense system long ago became a political issue between Russia and the United States. Nevertheless, a missile defense system capable of protecting against several hundred intercontinental missiles is unlikely to be built in the next 15 to 20 years. Therefore, all it could do would be to minimize damage in case of an attack, and only if its first strike hits the bulk of the enemy's missiles. And, even so, in case of a hypothetical conflict between Russia and the United States, dozens of warheads would break through, and damage would be unacceptable.

Yet for Russia a global missile-defense system developed by the United States would mean a crushing blow to the existing nuclear-missile parity. In America, this issue has become a useful tool for many powerful political groups capable of blocking the treaty's ratification by Congress if it contains clauses restricting the U.S. missile defense plans.



Return potential is also an important issue for the new treaty. Previous agreements allowed both sides to transfer part of their nuclear carriers to non-nuclear forces and stockpile both carriers and warheads that would not be counted with regard to the agreement's "ceilings" but could still be readily available in an emergency.

In fact, both sides profited from this loophole, but the average age of U.S. carriers and warheads was lower and defense funding higher, which allowed the United States to stockpile more weapons while Russia was forced to discard aging ones.

This was especially true of strategic aviation: the United States removed nearly 100 B-1B bombers and a number of B-52 jets from the official START count by registering them as non-nuclear forces but still kept them available as potential nuclear weapons carriers.

However, by the available information, the United States has made concessions on the issue, agreeing to consider all strategic delivery vehicles as nuclear carriers, which significantly reduces the possibility of deploying additional warheads. The planned reduction of delivery vehicles to between 700 and 750 will further limit that possibility.

The restrictions on deployment of mobile systems are also an important aspect of the START treaty. One of Russia's negotiation achievements is that the United States agreed to give up control of the deployment of the Topol, Topol-M and RS-24 missile systems. This will increase the viability of Russia's strategic missile force and simultaneously devalue the hypothetical U.S. missile defense system, which largely depends on locating the enemy missile launch sites in advance.

Theoretically, having secured concessions on return potential and mobile systems deployment control, Russia can also compromise on restrictions of U.S. missile defense plans, which, in this case, will be far less valuable anyway.

So what has caused both sides' willingness to compromise? Russia vitally needs a mutual reduction of strategic nuclear forces, due to the natural aging of its own nuclear arsenal, much of which will have to be taken out of service in the next decade.

Current efforts to extend Soviet missiles' service lives could slow the aging process down, but at any rate Russia is unlikely to have more than 500 to 550 carriers.

And the United States will have to face this problem as well. Washington currently maintains its nuclear arsenal by repairing and refurbishing existing weapons and manufacturing even fewer missiles than Russia. Therefore, the ceiling of 700-750 strategic delivery vehicles becomes acceptable for both sides.

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

<http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20091223/157336226.html>

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New York Times  
OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR  
December 24, 2009

## **There's Only One Way to Stop Iran**

Page – A23

By ALAN J. KUPERMAN

PRESIDENT OBAMA should not lament but sigh in relief that Iran has rejected his nuclear deal, which was ill conceived from the start. Under the deal, which was formally offered through the United Nations, Iran was to surrender some 2,600 pounds of lightly enriched uranium (some three-quarters of its known stockpile) to Russia, and the next year get back a supply of uranium fuel sufficient to run its Tehran research reactor for three decades. The proposal did not require Iran to halt its enrichment program, despite several United Nations Security Council resolutions demanding such a moratorium.

Iran was thus to be rewarded with much-coveted reactor fuel despite violating international law. Within a year, or sooner in light of its expanding enrichment program, Iran would almost certainly have replenished and augmented its stockpile of enriched uranium, nullifying any ostensible nonproliferation benefit of the deal.

Moreover, by providing reactor fuel, the plan would have fostered proliferation in two ways. First, Iran could have continued operating its research reactor, which has helped train Iranian scientists in weapons techniques like plutonium separation. (Yes, as Iran likes to point out, the reactor also produces medical isotopes. But those can be purchased commercially from abroad, as most countries do, including the United States.) Absent the deal, Iran's reactor will likely run out of fuel within two years, and only a half-dozen countries are able to supply fresh fuel for

it. This creates significant international leverage over Iran, which should be used to compel it to halt its enrichment program.

In addition, the vast surplus of higher-enriched fuel Iran was to get under the deal would have permitted some to be diverted to its bomb program. Indeed, many experts believe that the uranium in foreign-provided fuel would be easier to enrich to weapons grade because Iran's uranium contains impurities. Obama administration officials had claimed that delivering uranium in the form of fabricated fuel would prevent further enrichment for weapons, but this is false. Separating uranium from fuel elements so that it can be enriched further is a straightforward engineering task requiring at most a few weeks.

Thus, had the deal gone through, Iran could have benefited from a head start toward making weapons-grade 90 percent-enriched uranium (meaning that 90 percent of its makeup is the fissile isotope U-235) by starting with purified 20 percent-enriched uranium rather than its own weaker, contaminated stuff.

This raises a question: if the deal would have aided Iran's bomb program, why did the United States propose it, and Iran reject it? The main explanation on both sides is domestic politics. President Obama wanted to blunt Republican criticism that his multilateral approach was failing to stem Iran's nuclear program. The deal would have permitted him to claim, for a year or so, that he had defused the crisis by depriving Iran of sufficient enriched uranium to start a crash program to build one bomb.

But in reality no one ever expected Iran to do that, because such a headlong sprint is the one step most likely to provoke an international military response that could cripple the bomb program before it reaches fruition. Iran is far more likely to engage in "salami slicing" — a series of violations each too small to provoke retaliation, but that together will give it a nuclear arsenal. For example, while Iran permits international inspections at its declared enrichment plant at Natanz, it ignores United Nations demands that it close the plant, where it gains the expertise needed to produce weapons-grade uranium at other secret facilities like the nascent one recently uncovered near Qom.

In sum, the proposal would not have averted proliferation in the short run, because that risk always was low, but instead would have fostered it in the long run — a classic example of domestic politics undermining national security.

Tehran's rejection of the deal was likewise propelled by domestic politics — including last June's fraudulent elections and longstanding fears of Western manipulation. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad initially embraced the deal because he realized it aided Iran's bomb program. But his domestic political opponents, whom he has tried to label as foreign agents, turned the tables by accusing him of surrendering Iran's patrimony to the West.

Under such domestic pressure, Mr. Ahmadinejad reneged. But Iran still wants reactor fuel, so he threatened to enrich uranium domestically to the 20 percent level. This is a bluff, because even if Iran could further enrich its impure uranium, it lacks the capacity to fabricate that uranium into fuel elements. His real aim is to compel the international community into providing the fuel without requiring Iran to surrender most of the enriched uranium it has on hand.

Indeed, Iran's foreign minister has now proposed just that: offering to exchange a mere quarter of Iran's enriched uranium for an immediate 10-year supply of fuel for the research reactor. This would let Iran run the reactor, retain the bulk of its enriched uranium and continue to enrich more — a bargain unacceptable even to the Obama administration.

Tehran's rejection of the original proposal is revealing. It shows that Iran, for domestic political reasons, cannot make even temporary concessions on its bomb program, regardless of incentives or sanctions. Since peaceful carrots and sticks cannot work, and an invasion would be foolhardy, the United States faces a stark choice: military air strikes against Iran's nuclear facilities or acquiescence to Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons.

The risks of acquiescence are obvious. Iran supplies Islamist terrorist groups in violation of international embargoes. Even President Ahmadinejad's domestic opponents support this weapons traffic. If Iran acquired a nuclear arsenal, the risks would simply be too great that it could become a neighborhood bully or provide terrorists with the ultimate weapon, an atomic bomb.

As for knocking out its nuclear plants, admittedly, aerial bombing might not work. Some Iranian facilities are buried too deeply to destroy from the air. There may also be sites that American intelligence is unaware of. And military action could backfire in various ways, including by undermining Iran's political opposition, accelerating the bomb program or provoking retaliation against American forces and allies in the region.

But history suggests that military strikes could work. Israel's 1981 attack on the nearly finished Osirak reactor prevented Iraq's rapid acquisition of a plutonium-based nuclear weapon and compelled it to pursue a more gradual,

uranium-based bomb program. A decade later, the Persian Gulf war uncovered and enabled the destruction of that uranium initiative, which finally deterred Saddam Hussein from further pursuit of nuclear weapons (a fact that eluded American intelligence until after the 2003 invasion). Analogously, Iran's atomic sites might need to be bombed more than once to persuade Tehran to abandon its pursuit of nuclear weapons.

As for the risk of military strikes undermining Iran's opposition, history suggests that the effect would be temporary. For example, NATO's 1999 air campaign against Yugoslavia briefly bolstered support for President Slobodan Milosevic, but a democratic opposition ousted him the next year.

Yes, Iran could retaliate by aiding America's opponents in Iraq and Afghanistan, but it does that anyway. Iran's leaders are discouraged from taking more aggressive action against United States forces — and should continue to be — by the fear of provoking a stronger American counter-escalation. If nothing else, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have shown that the United States military can oust regimes in weeks if it wants to.

Incentives and sanctions will not work, but air strikes could degrade and deter Iran's bomb program at relatively little cost or risk, and therefore are worth a try. They should be precision attacks, aimed only at nuclear facilities, to remind Iran of the many other valuable sites that could be bombed if it were foolish enough to retaliate.

The final question is, who should launch the air strikes? Israel has shown an eagerness to do so if Iran does not stop enriching uranium, and some hawks in Washington favor letting Israel do the dirty work to avoid fueling anti-Americanism in the Islamic world.

But there are three compelling reasons that the United States itself should carry out the bombings. First, the Pentagon's weapons are better than Israel's at destroying buried facilities. Second, unlike Israel's relatively small air force, the United States military can discourage Iranian retaliation by threatening to expand the bombing campaign. (Yes, Israel could implicitly threaten nuclear counter-retaliation, but Iran might not perceive that as credible.) Finally, because the American military has global reach, air strikes against Iran would be a strong warning to other would-be proliferators.

Negotiation to prevent nuclear proliferation is always preferable to military action. But in the face of failed diplomacy, eschewing force is tantamount to appeasement. We have reached the point where air strikes are the only plausible option with any prospect of preventing Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons. Postponing military action merely provides Iran a window to expand, disperse and harden its nuclear facilities against attack. The sooner the United States takes action, the better.

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